Articles by Unknown Authors

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A Calendar Comment

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A loved one recently sent me the following from an old “choice Gleanings” calendar: “A great editor once said: ‘The true secret of editing is to know what to put in the waste basket’. This is also the secret of all true living.”

· to overthrow false ideas and ideologies or systems of thought by which men live (2 Cor. 10:3, 4);

· to face difficulties courageously (Phil. 4:13);

· to endure physical pain bravely (1 Pet. 4:12-14);

· to believe Christ is with us steadfastly when we don’t feel his presence with us at all (Heb. 13:5, 6);

· to fit in with other Christians humbly and helpfully, and support them in their hours of weakness and distress as well as in their daily routine (2 Cor. 1:4-7);

· to recognize temptations speedily and to resist them firmly (1 Cor. 10:13);

· to absorb solid teaching gratefully (Col. 2:6-9);

· to stand up for the truth uncompromisingly and with courtesy (Rom. 1:14-16; 16:25-27);

· to recognize continually that our natural resources, i.e., what we are by nature and past experience and what we have achieved by grace, are utterly inadequate to face today’s task, but that Christ’s grace is sufficient for us this very day (2 Cor. 3:16; 4:7);

· to have the ability to find some real delight in our weaknesses, for whenever we are weak, then, and then only, are we strong (2 Cor. 10:9-12).

How do we get the power of Christ's Spirit? True spiritual power, like joy and fellowship, is not an end in itself but a by-product graciously thrown in as we seek to fulfill the Christian obligations for which the power is needed. As we lay hold of the promise God has given us, the power is turned on. "Seek the Lord and his strength," says the Word of God. The Lord first, then his strength is found in his presence for the fulfillment of his will in our lives.

If we seek the Lord for the Lord's sake, then spiritual strength is surely given us so that we may go on seeking him singleheartedly and go out to serve him faithfully. We may not be conscious of the power at the time, only of our own weakness. It may be only when we hear later of blessing coming to others through our words or deeds that we can be sure the power of God was truly released. The power of God is imparted in the process of witnessing and worshiping, not just for the purpose of witnessing and worshiping. I can do all things through the empowering Christ, who continually imparts power, rather than giving it as a reservoir for us to draw on at will.

If we take the time to abide in his presence — i.e., to live in constant conscious dependence on him, browsing daily in his inspired Word — we can be sure that the power of Christ's Spirit will be released in us.

A Challenge For Today—Strong Words From The Past

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A Challenge For Today—

Strong Words From The Past

Selected

William Carey is recognized as a great missionary pioneer. In 1873 he arrived in India and a while later was joined by Joshua Marshman and William Word. In 1805 the three men drew up “the Serampore Covenant” — named for the location of their work. The items of that covenant could well serve as an inspiration and challenge to present-day Christians. They are as follows:

We agree:

1. To set an infinite value on men’s souls.

2. To acquaint ourselves with the snares which hold the minds of the people.

3. To abstain from whatever deepens India’s prejudice against the gospel.

4. To watch for every chance of doing the people good.

5. To preach “Christ crucified” as the grand means of conversions.

6. To esteem and treat Indians always as our equals.

7. To guard and build up “the hosts that may be gathered.”

8. To cultivate their spiritual gifts, ever pressing upon them their missionary obligation — since Indians only can win India for Christ.

9. To labour unceasingly in Biblical translation.

10. To be instant in the nature of personal religion.

11. To give ourselves without reserve to the cause, “not counting even the clothes we wear our own.”

A Christian Business Man

A Christian Business Man

From out the bank across the road there came a gentleman, who, with steady step and quiet mien, walked up street and turned into his store.

One of a group of men pointed toward him and exclaimed, “There goes Ed Swales, the best living man in our town.”

These words were not spoken in flattery; they were not the expression of vain eulogy, but the fixed opinion of many who had watched him during years of progress and in years of depression. Many still remembered how years ago they had sought to acclaim him their mayor; a worldly honour he had declined graciously. And some of the older men about town still recalled his faithful service in days long ago as secretary of the Sons of England.

What was the secret of this man’s life? Wherein lay the source of his success? Who had taught him the art of living? Why was his life inspired and brightened by a glorious hope when others appeared distressed and fearful? We might well ask such questions as these, and search the annals of his history for their answers.

Ed. Swales had known the advantage of a mother’s prayers. Grandma Swales loved the Lord Jesus. Many simple applications of the Word of God she made to her boy’s conscience, deeply impressing him, and finally convincing him that, in spite of his morality, all was not well for Eternity. This conviction grew deeper and deeper until he was made to realize his sinnership

before God, for on one occasion shortly after his marriage he went to church along with his young wife. The earnest Methodist preacher closed the meeting that night by asking the solemn question, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” And although everyone else in the building arose, this young couple remained seated. They were not on the Lord’s side; they had never been born into the divine family; they were not saved, so how could they stand up and pretend a lie.

Bitterness filled Ed Swales’ soul as a true conception of sin led him to conclude that he was altogether unworthy of God’s Heaven. “How could man be just with God?” was the cry of his heart. These matters made him so unhappy that he decided to go away alone to a quiet resort called Little Current for a holiday, where with his rod and line he might enjoy himself and forget his distress.

Wyebridge is a small place on the map, but a very important place in the history of this Christian gentleman. In the summer of 1900 two evangelists pitched a tent in the village, and conducted nightly services. One July evening Grandma Swales entered the tent with her daughter-in-law, a religious young woman. The first speaker took for his text, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” The message suited the young wife for through it she saw that her way did not lead to Heaven. Anxiously she watched the second preacher take his place, and announce the text, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” She was ungodly that she knew right well, but then, Christ died for the ungodly; therefore He must

have died for her. Thus through the substitutionary work of Christ, Mrs. Swales was saved.

The pleasant days at Little Current passed quickly, but the change and sport afforded no comfort to our troubled friend. With a sorrowful heart he commenced his trip home. On his way as he walked from Parry Harbour to Parry Sound his attention was drawn to a Scripture painted on a large mill burner: “Prepare to meet thy God.” This like another arrow pierced his conscience and greatly added to his anxiety. In making boat connections at Parry Sound he was compelled to wait over Sunday, so seeing the advertisement of special gospel meetings, he determined to go in the evening, and settle this great matter that had so distraught his mind. He went, listened to the messages that were given, but came away in utter despair, feeling that since he had sincerely tried to get saved and had not, most likely he would eventually be lost forever. On his arrival at Midland, Ontario, a warm welcome awaited him, but as he walked from the railway station to his house the thought came into his mind, I am home again, and not saved, there is nothing but hell for me. His little daughter of three dashed out and smothered him with kisses. Mrs. Swales, with a brighter smile than usual, in greeting him said, “Oh, Ed, I have good news for you.” Poor man! In later years he used to say, “What news could be good news to a man that was going to hell.” With rapt attention he listened to the happenings that had taken place at Wyebridge. As his wife told how simply she had been saved, he too believed the story of the gospel. He now saw that Christ had died for him; the burden rolled away; his soul was saved, and he was

happy. That week salvation came to his house, and now by the grace of God it has embraced his whole family.

Nearly forty years have gone since these events took place, and during that long time Mr. W. E. Swales has lived before the eye of the public. His business has been a success; his conduct has been an example and an inspiration to others; but more than these, his life has been a testimony for God in his home town. From the public platform and in private conversation he has witnessed for the Lord Jesus; so that, when the eternal day dawns many shall arise to call him blessed.

In honour to the memory of a prominent citizen the flag over the town hall, at half mast, flutters in the morning breezes. Down the street the blinds of the large haberdashery are drawn, and a purple crepe hangs on the door handle. It is with profound regret that the town hears of the passing of this Christian businessman who, in their midst, had lived a quiet consistent life; had worked with his own hands in a conscientious way, and had preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the early hours of October 5th, 1937, our beloved brother in Christ, quietly fell asleep in Jesus. Two days later, neighbours and friends, business associates and fellow Christians, gathered to do him honour, and to lay away his remains in certain hope of a glorious resurrection. He now rests from his labours but his works do follow him.

A Good Warfare!

A Good Warfare!

Selected

How deplorable it is when soldiers of the King of Kings who should be keeping ranks and standing shoulder to shoulder in “the fight of faith” show a mutinous spirit and fall out among themselves instead of minding the King’s business, being loyal and faithful to Him, obeying His orders.

Our ever watchful enemy must be pleased at this, and must greatly hope that mutiny may spread through all the opposing ranks, so that he may “View the chosen in selfish strife divided.”

How clever are “the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11)! “Fightings among you” (Jas. 4:1) is not “fighting the good fight” (1 Tim. 6:12).

The sword of the tongue (Psa. 57:4. Prov. 12:18; 18:21) is a poor substitute for “the sword of the Spirit.” Evil speaking about other soldiers (the wrong sword) is strongly condemned in the Bible; James 4:12 and Romans 14:4 are forgotten or entirely ignored.

The fight is against our adversary, the devil, who goes about “seeking whom he may devour.” He is the enemy we have to fight. Some of the soldiers seem to think that it is their fellow-soldiers they must fight, as the Word of God states, “Ye devour one another” (Gal. 5:15). They even act as “the accuser of the brethren,” employing tactics, playing into the hands of the enemy (Rev. 12:10).

May we seek to be more like those mighty men of old, “which could keep rank and were not of double heart,” who were “expert in war,” “men that had understanding of the times” (1 Chron. 12).

Let us “mark them that cause divisions” in the ranks, “and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). Let us follow after the things that “make for peace” (Rom. 14:19), and seek to please Him who has chosen us to be soldiers, good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3-4). May we earnestly contend, not for our own petty opinions as to how this or that fellow-soldier should act, but “for the Faith” (Jude 1-3).

A Lost Diamond

A quaint preacher of the olden days in our country, Dan Baker, puts the danger of delay in the way of a story. He tells of a man who was crossing the ocean. He was leaning over the side of the vessel; it was a bright sunny day, and a wave broke the surface of the water, just a little ripple here and there kissed by the rays of the sun. And the man, as he leaned over the rail of the vessel, was tossing something in the air, something which, when it fell through the sunlight, sparkled with singular radiance and glory; and he watched it so eagerly as he tossed it up and caught it as it fell. He tossed it up again and again and again, and it threw out its marvellous light as it fell through the sunlight. At last an onlooker came and said, "May I ask what that is that you are tossing up so carelessly?" "Certainly," he replied, "look at it, it is a diamond." "Is it of much value?" asked the onlooker. "Yes, of very great value. See the color of it, see the size of it. In fact, all I have in the world is in that diamond. I am going to a new country to seek my fortune, and I have sold everything I have, and have put it into that diamond, so as to get it into a portable shape." "Then if it is so valuable, is it not an awful risk you are running in tossing it up so carelessly?" "No risk at all. I have been doing this for the last half-hour," said the man. "But there might come a last time," said the onlooker; but the man laughed and threw it up again, and caught it as it fell, and again and again, and once more, and it flashed and blazed with glory as it fell through the sunlight, and he watches it so eagerly as it falls. Ah! but this time it is too far out. He reaches as far as he can over the rail of the vessel, but he cannot reach

far enough. There is a little splash in the ocean. He leans far over the rail and tries to penetrate with his eager gaze the unfathomable depths of deep blue ocean. Then cries, "Lost! lost! lost! All I have in the world is lost!"

You say, "No man would be so great a fool as that; that story is not true." That story is true, and the man is here tonight. Thou art the man! That ocean is eternity; that vessel, life; that diamond, your soul, that soul of such priceless value that Christ died to save it. And you have been trifling with it! I come to you tonight and say, "My friend, what is that in your hand which you are playing with so carelessly?" You say, "It is my soul." "Is it worth much?" "Worth much? More than the whole round earth, ‘for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’" "But don’t you think you are taking an awful risk?" "Oh, no," you say, "I have been doing this for the last five years, for the last ten, fifteen, twenty years." "Yes, but you might do it once too often." "Oh, no," you say, and tonight once more you throw it up. But you may throw it up once too often; it will fall too far out, beyond your reach; there will be a splash, and you will try to look after it; not into the impenetrable depths of the blue ocean, but into the unfathomable depths of the bottomless pit as it sinks and sinks and sinks, and you will cry, "Lost! lost! lost! my soul is lost!" That may be your cry some day. Come tonight, before it is too late, and put your soul where it will be everlastingly safe, in the keeping of the Son of God.

Author Unknown

A Natural Remedy That Can Be Fatal

There are many natural remedies that are being promoted today. Some of these do help, but many of them are simply a way for someone to make a good deal of money from misinformed and, often, desperate people.

Some natural remedies can actually be dangerous. Some of those using them are unaware of possible interactions these remedies can have with other medications they are taking. By way of example, echinacea is taken by many to help bolster their immune systems and to ward off colds or the flu. However, echinacea thins the blood. If they would need surgery, and the doctors do not know they have been taking it, it could lead to excessive bleeding and perhaps death.

There is, however, a more dangerous natural remedy. This remedy is not for a physical ailment, but a spiritual one. It is the remedy for “guilt.”

As some do with physical diseases, individuals just ignore the guilt of their sins until it is too late. However, millions turn to a very dangerous natural remedy—religion!

Religion is very dangerous because it has a way of masking the guilt without really providing a remedy. In other words it can make a person feel good, but never really cure the problem of their sins. It might be compared to a natural remedy that removes pain but not the disease.

Religion is “natural” in that it is man’s idea! It is not a supernatural remedy from God, but a product of man’s

thinking. Man thinks you can obtain forgiveness from God by “doing something” — go to church, say certain prayers, perform certain deeds, take part in religious sacraments. These are all natural remedies that may make one feel good about their sins, but never remove them in the sight of God. This is a deadly natural remedy, which is not a remedy at all! The Bible calls them “dead works.” (Hebrews 9:14) In others words, works that cannot produce spiritual life.

Listen to what the Bible says about the natural remedy of religious works. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5)

The Bible, in contrast to man’s natural thinking, says we are saved by grace and that grace cannot be earned by works. “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. (Romans 11:6) You cannot earn a gift!

This is the wonderful truth of the Bible—God wants to give you forgiveness and eternal life! He is not asking you to earn it by working for it. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty of your sins on the cross. Jesus said as He died, “It is finished!” (John 19:30)

You cannot receive forgiveness from God by man’s natural remedy of religion, but by accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior!

Read your Bible to see how you can be saved from God’s judgment and assured of going to heaven through faith in Jesus Christ. Start reading in the Gospel of John.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16 “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:4-5)

A Personal Testimony

A Personal Testimony

Brought up from his earliest youth deeply to feel his lost condition, the author of these lines, was early taught to have no confidence either in acts of ritual, in pretended good works, or in the piety of his parents, he found peace the day he simply rested upon Christ. He saw in the work accomplished once for all on the cross the expiation of his sins by Him who, now at the right hand of the Father, can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Thus enlightened and enfranchised for himself, he had no thought of attaching great importance to that which is usually called the question of the Church until, nevertheless, his attention was drawn to the fact that if Christ can suffice for His redeemed as individuals, He ought also to suffice for His redeemed ones as a whole. If each one of His members depends for himself on the Head, could the Body, looked at as a whole, know any other position, or the members among themselves a relation of different nature to that which exists with the Head? "For we are members of His Body" (Eph. 5:30).

This discovery was a veritable revelation, which lit up his Christian path and enabled him to find his way way amidst the labyrinth of contrary opinions which trouble the people of God, leading them far from the paths of the Word and the obedience of the Holy Spirit.

Let us cultivate this holy ambition to realize in the daily life the dependence of the member, directed by the

Head, and when together as a local expression of the Church of God.

—M. Ch. Aubert, Switzerland.

A Trip To Eternity

A Trip To Eternity

Except for the loved ones directly involved, how easily we forget the lingering sorrow and hurt experienced by so many in our modern times as a result of multiplied tragedies throughout the world.

It was almost a year ago, the exact date having been November 28, 1979, just one day before the 50th anniversary of U.S. Admiral Richard E. Byrd's historic flight over the South Pole. To help celebrate this significant anniversary, Air New Zealand advertized a tragically apt $340-a-ticket "trip to the end of the world." For 257 persons, including 21 Americans, who were aboard Air New Zealand's DC-10, this unusual and spectacular sightseeing flight over Antarctica ended with charred remains of the jet and all its passengers scattered along the frozen side of Mount Erebus, Antarctica's most active volcano.

Mr. Roy Thomson, the New Zealander who headed the recovery effort, said the DC-10 was not at fault. Instead, Thomson blamed the pilot, who had been with the airlines for 11 years but who was making his first Antarctic flight. Thomson said the pilot was on the wrong side of the 12,400-foot mountain when he descended to give the sightseers a closer look at the smoldering volcano. Apparently having entered some cloud cover in its descent, the jet smashed head-on against the mountain-evidence that the pilot never saw it.

When I first heard and read about this tragedy, I couldn't help but think of a few spiritual lessons which parallel the account. First, not one person who boarded that plane thought that November 28, 1979, would be his last day on earth. We all have an appointment with God and eternity (Heb. 9:27), and life at best is uncertain and brief. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we prepare to meet Him (Amos 4:12), and that we do so on His terms, receiving by faith His blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His precious blood and died on the cross for our sins. Now is the time to receive Him; tomorrow may be too late. The Bible says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

Second, the pilot thought he was on the right side of the mountain, but he wasn't. Again, the Word of God declares, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end therefore are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Third, clouds obviously hid from the pilot's view the danger toward which they were hurtling. Today, clouds of error confuse and blind the eyes of multitudes, making them utterly unaware of the spiritual disaster soon to overtake them. Therefore, it is not without good reason that the Scriptures, among other things, warn us of "seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1) which pervert the truth and blind the eyes of men and women as to their true condition and circumstance before the living God.

Fourth, we do not live unto ourselves; the decisions we make vitally affect others. The Bible asserts that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to

himself” (Rom. 14:7). We should seek above all else to know, do and love God’s will. By so doing we will avoid many snares and pitfalls and not miss His particular plan and purpose for our life. Then when we make our exodus from this world we will leave behind a godly example and influence.

Finally, we must all at one time or another trust our lives to others such as a pilot, a train engineer, a bus driver, or to a friend in whose car we are riding. However, no matter how competent and experienced earth’s “captains” may be, all are imperfect and fallible. In the final analysis the best and most important thing of all in life is to have genuinely placed our faith in the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:10). Have you done this personally?

A Warning from History

A Warning from History

Selected

Written by W. H. B. in 1891

Submitted by Robert McClurkin

The implications of the above article written so many years ago would surely warn us to avoid the bitter fruit of that which was sown among us in those early days. — R. McC.

The solemn warnings of the Lord Jesus touching “the leaven of the Pharisees” is not out of date. Though “the sect of the Pharisees” has ceased to be as it existed in the days of our Lord, “the leaven of the Pharisees” shows itself in various forms, the germ of it being in fallen human nature, and only requiring congenial soil for its ready development.

The history of the Pharisees reveals that what had begun well as a movement of recovery in a degenerate nation, inspired by the Spirit of God, soon fell to the level of the flesh. The later Pharisees grew in likeness to their predecessors in Isaiah’s day who walked after their own thoughts and said to others, “Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou” (Isa. 65:2-5). The self-complacence of the Pharisees found expression in the words, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,” in strong condemnation of all who did not do as they did, and supreme contempt of such as did not come up to their standard in the matter of light and knowledge. In their self-confidence they could thus

despise and pronounce as “cursed” some of the most godly of the nation, the true remnant who were “waiting for the consolation of Israel” and being prepared by the ministry of the Baptist, were ready to hear the Shepherd’s voice and to follow Him.

As before said, it is the degeneracy of what began in the fear of God, and with the desire for His glory, that causes the history of the Pharisees to be so full of instruction and warning to us, and it is the personal application of this lesson that we all so deeply need.

It may be easy to discern the corrupting leaven of the Pharisees in systems around us, and to see how men are being led away from the truth of God to traditions, and are substituting human forms for spiritual power. Inasmuch also as the Pharisees of the Lord’s day were unregenerate men, the ready thought of the heart might be that to such alone His warnings are applicable.

The fact that is was to His own disciples that the Lord said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,” shows us that this leaven may work in the children of God and servants of Christ. It may also suggest that the very effort to be faithful to God in a day of departure from His truth exposes us to the insidious working of this subtle evil. It behooves us, therefore, to consider in what way the Lord’s command may apply to us, and how we may profit by it. To help us in this, let us glance at another movement of the Spirit of God, its first results, and subsequent consequences.

About the year 1830 when the calling and hope of the Church of God were little known, it pleased God to lead some of His people to a more diligent study of His Word, and to enable them to put into practice what they had

learned. Some of the truths that became living realities to them were, the heavenly calling of the Church, the unity of the Body of Christ, the priesthood of believers and the bright hope of the Coming of the Lord Jesus. As the result of this they gathered together in the Name of the Lord alone, for worship and the breaking of bread in remembrance of Him, depending on God for the ministry of His Word through those whom He fitted to minister it. They sought in the personal and family life to live as those who were but pilgrims here. As in their assemblies they endeavoured to own the oneness of all who are in Christ, so in their homes they gave equal proof that separation from the world by His Cross was a reality to them. Thus, again, God gave some of His people a little reviving, and the joyful sound of the Gospel went forth for the deliverance of many souls that had been held in bondage through lack of the knowledge of the truth.

Satan’s eye was upon this great work, and it was not long before it was marred. God may have seen secret pride and allowed it to be tested. Some, not content with the plain truths of Scripture, went beyond its teaching into serious error. Error was met in the haste of the flesh, instead of in the spirit of faith and prayer. Thus division came, and many not only turned from error, but, bringing in new conditions of fellowship, gradually built up a system, which by its own weight has fallen to pieces.

That there is danger of compromise in such a position is very evident, and it is a danger that there are only two ways of avoiding. The one is by maintaining a spirit of watchfulness and prayer, with an individual walking with God in the path of obedience. The other is that of rigid separation from everything or everyone that does not

come up to what we regard as the divine standard. We may surely cherish a spirit of readiness to fellowship with saints who are not scripturally disqualified without compromising what we believe to be the truth. Any who disallow this, and think it necessary to adopt an alternative course, must make knowledge and attainment, with perfect agreement in external matters, the conditions of fellowship.

Of these two, the latter is by far the easier. The former can only be pursued in the grace and spirit of Christ, by wisdom and power received from Him continually, and therefore by constant dependence upon the Word and Spirit of God. The latter simply requires the laying down of a law, which may then be carried out with the zeal of a Jehu and with as little grace as he possessed. It is sad to see that some are diligently pressing this mode of action as if it were the only antidote to laxity, and charging those who do not follow them with unfaithfulness to God. The Pharisees went so far as to consider themselves defiled by contact even with other Jews, who, while faithful to the law, were not so vigorous as themselves in ritual observances. So those of whom we speak deem it necessary to refuse fellowship with others, who, while seeking to be obedient to the Word of God, do not join them in usurping the prerogative of our one Master, and sitting in the judgment-seat.

Those who were called out of worldly systems in those early days of the movement, did not need to make great professions of being separate, simply because they were separate, nor was it necessary for them to make rigid rules and conditions, for there was power among them. They had learned that “the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power” and instead of being loud in their

condemnation of other Christians, they were diligent in good works and their lives were a standing witness for Christ. They thought and spoke of Him more than of themselves. He was the great attraction to others. Just as in Israel's brightest days they gloried in what God was to them and what He had done for them. In their days of degeneracy ideas of themselves were uppermost and their empty boast was, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7:4).

In all human systems, ecclesiasticism is the chief thing, with conformity to external rule. The principle of Rome is, "Be a good Catholic, go to mass, pay your pence, and hate Protestantism, and you are all right." So in this country there is a widespread feeling that if only a man is a good churchman, it is of secondary importance what else he may be. The same principle is at work wherever there is a severing of what God has joined together, and even correct church position is made of more importance than the cultivation of personal godliness.

We cannot help seeing that this dangerous tendency is steadily growing in some quarters. In conference the one topic ever to the front is church position, while what would feed souls and stir hearts to practical godliness is altogether ignored. In this way those who are correct ecclesiastically are encouraged to regard themselves with complacency and despise others, and the young and inexperienced are trained to pass sentence upon the most devoted servants of Christ, who, while separate themselves from the various systems around them, would not refuse fellowship or brotherly intercourse with any true fellow-servants who do not fully take the same stand. It has even been said that he who is right

ecclesiastically, though his general conduct is not what it should be, glorifies God more than one who is in a wrong ecclesiastical position, however devoted and blameless he may be in His life. This simply puts into words the principle that underlies the teaching we refer to and gives evidence of its effect upon those who receive it.

We in no wise make light of scriptural position, or of the responsibility of all believers to own the Name of our Lord Jesus alone, in separation from worldly systems which call Him “Lord, Lord” but do not the things that He says. We are quite sure that amid the growing pretensions of priestism and the assumptions of clericalism, the Lord looks down with pleasure upon any little companies of His people who seek to give Him His true place, keeping His word and holding fast His Name. Those, who at much personal cost, take this despised place in fellowship with Him will have His approval in the coming day. But that against which we raise the warning voice is the strong tendency to make a certain position the one thing and thus to lead children of God to put conformity to the will of God in daily life, and the cherishing of the mind of Christ toward His people, in a secondary place. For in this way pride is fostered instead of humility, and the habit of suspecting everybody takes the place of the love that “hopeth all things.”

Does the constant pressing of one line of ecclesiastical truth lead to greater devotedness to Christ and greater zeal in the spread of the Gospel both in this land and abroad? Is it not the reverse?

In order to keep the soul healthy and fervent, all truth is needed in due proportion. And wherever Church position is made the one prominent point, to the setting aside of that which is designed to keep the soul exercised before God and the heart warmed with the love of Christ, the withering effect upon spiritual life and service is too evident, self-judgment is lacking, springs of sympathy and compassion are dried up and there can be little fruit for God.

Abide in Me

Abide In Me

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-11

This parable of the vine spoken by our Lord must be considered in its historical background. When this background is understood the parable becomes simpler.

At supper wine had been in use, and if, as some assert, the Lord's Supper was instituted, then all had heard it blessed and all had partaken. It is not difficult to see how the wine would suggest the vine, the natural source of "the fruit of the vine."

From the upper room one of the disciples had gone out and would not return; he would never again associate with them. In speaking of Himself as the vine and His disciples as the branches, the Lord had to explain the true relationship of Judas Iscariot during the years he had been one of them. The Lord also had to explain his untimely and tragic end. Throughout the centuries poor Judas has certainly been consumed in the fires of human gossip. The branch cut off from the vine suggests the final severance of Judas from the Lord and His disciples.

The Vine

Israel of old was likened to a vine (Isaiah 5:1-2, Jeremiah 2:21), but she failed to yield fruit to the glory of God; her grapes were sour and unpalatable. In contrast the Lord Jesus declared, "I am the true vine." In John's Gospel the Lord employs the adjective "true" several times to describe Himself. He is the "true bread", (6:32), the "true vine" (15:1), the "true light" (1:9). Christ was the

true, the genuine, the antitype of all shadows, the real substance.

The Husbandman

The Lord Jesus said., “My Father is the husbandman.” What a blessing! The owner of the vineyard is a father, one who loves little children and knows how to treat them. The allegory was used by the Lord in anticipation of the new relationship between God and the believer, as this was announced immediately after His resurrection: “I ascend unto my Father and your Father” (John 20:17).

The Branches

“Ye are the branches,” said the Lord Jesus to His disciples. In what He said about the branches there appears to be three different concepts.

1. Of the twelve disciples which had entered the upper room, one had left. Judas Iscariot had gone out never to return; he, the son of perdition, went out to betray the Lord Jesus. He had been a disciple in name only, not in heart; in pretence, not in reality. His act was a proof that he was merely a counterfeit. Judas was the dead and fruitless branch in the entire Vine at that time in the upper room, so he was taken away, cut off rather than cut back.

This concept suggests that the professed union and communion between Christ and the betrayer was hypocritical, it was false.

2. The next picture is that of the vine with all its branches, all in union with the stem, growing and producing fruit in various degrees, under the care of the husbandman. This image intimates a union of life

between the vine and the branches. Each separate branch is dependent upon the vine for life and sustenance.

This consideration, of course, indicates the closest possible relationship between Christ and His people — the organic oneness of all to Christ.

3. The final idea is not one of organic union with Christ but one of experiential communion between Christ and His own. The idea here is one of responsibility on the part of the branch. The branch must “abide” in Christ for vigor, and for sustenance through communion.

The word “abide” or “remain” is used ten times in the first eleven verses of this chapter. Thus would the Lord emphasize the importance of making this experience constant throughout the Christian life. The Christian is positionally and positively safe in Christ (Romans 8:1); conditionally, he should experientially remain in Christ, as a man during many years dwells in a home. Through communion the life and vigor which are available in the vine flow freely into the branches. In Christian experience they flow from Christ to Hiw own.

The Care

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2). In the original of this verse there is a play upon words. One commentator has expressed it thus, “The Father cleanseth away the unprofitable branch and cleanseth the others that they should bear fruit.”

Still another commentator paraphrases the verse in quite strong language: “The Father cutteth away (off)

the unprofitable branch and cutteth back the others that they might bear fruit." That is, the Father would remove the false professors like Judas. Their pretence would be exposed like that of Simon Magus (Acts 8:9), and they suffer the consequences of their hypocrisy.

"He purgeth," just as the vine-dresser prunes branches in order that they may bear more fruit; even so does the Lord as He cares for His own. The suggestion of pruning corresponds with divine chastisement within the family of God (Hebrews 12:5-11). Such chastisement has as its objective "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Many a saint has been able to say with the psalmist, "It was good that I was afflicted" (Psalm 119:71).

Fruit Bearing

There are three salient points here: the quality of the fruit, the amount of the fruit, and the objective of fruit bearing.

The quality of the fruit. There are some who have the idea that fruit bearing is limited to the winning of converts to the Lord. Thank God for all such fruit (Romans 1:10-16)! Fruit, according to several passages in the New Testament, is also seen in the character and conduct of the Christian (Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 1:11). Fruit in the believer is likewise seen in the contribution of His generosity toward others (2 Corinthians 9:1-10).

The amount of the fruit. This passage teaches us that we are to bear fruit (v. 4), to bear more fruit (v. 2), and to bear much fruit (v. 5). As in plant life, so in the Christian life, fruit and fragrance are produced and increased only as the branch submits to the care of the gardener and as

it remains in the stem of the plant. The believer is successful in these only as he abides in Christ.

The objective of fruit bearing. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (v. 8). The entire life and ministry of the Lord Jesus were fulfilled with this in view. At the close of all His activities here, He could say, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). Christ in this, as in all else, is the perfect example. May His desire also be ours; that is, to glorify the Father in a faithful, fruitful life, a life of spiritual produce.

The Admonition

The Lord implied much, very much, when He said, “Abide in me.” To simplify His imperative, we suggest that He meant:

1. Abide in Me for communion.

2. Abide in Me for enrichment.

3. Abide in Me for strength.

4. Abide in Me for fertility.

5. Abide in Me for all that you may ever need.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

Albert Kitcher

FFF 13:8 (Oct 1967)

Albert Kitcher

A Beloved Brother and Faithful Minister

In the passing of our esteemed brother, Albert E. Kitcher, the assemblies in Toronto, Ontario, in particular, and the Lord's people in general, suffered the loss of an ardent assembly worker and a tender spiritual shepherd.

Born in Barnstaple, England, March 19, 1894, at the turn of the century he emigrated to Canada with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Seymour Kitcher, and a younger brother Eric. The letter of commendation of Mr. and Mrs. Kitcher Sr. is a prized momento in the home for it bears the signature of the late Robert C. Chapman.

Following the death of his father when he was a mere boy of thirteen, Albert was deeply convicted of sin while listening at a street corner service. There and then he gave himself to the Lord Jesus. From that experience throughout more than sixty years he expended himself and his means in the service of the One he loved, the Lord Jesus. He worked faithfully in the spread of the gospel, and for fifty years was a Sunday School Superintendent.

During these years of service he helped to found and see established two testimonies: Bracondale and Westmount assemblies, Toronto, Ontario.

With Brother James Buchan, he set aside every Thursday for visitation among the ailing and bereaved. In sick rooms and hospital wards the presence and prayers of

these brethren have been benedictions not readily forgotten.

Brother Kitcher was one of the three Charter members of the Board of Elim Homes, Waubaushene, Ontario. As a Director he was faithful to the obligations that devolved upon him. Furthermore, for many years he served as Treasurer of the Corporation, executing this task with diligence and accuracy.

Annually he gave part of his vacation time to the aged in Rest Haven Home, Grand Rapids, Michigan and in The Gospel Hall Home for Aged Christians, Longport, New Jersey, where, in his capacity as a Chiropodist, he ministered comfort to many.

The Kitcher home was open-house to many servants of the Lord; there, Albert, with his hospitable wife liberally entertained them. The hospitality thus extended to those in the more public sphere was likewise extended to visiting saints from points far and near.

Our brother is survived by his wife Mahala Harper, his daughter Doreen (Mrs. Somers Peat), and grandchildren: Heather, Sharon, Clifford and Beryl.

In his eulogy at the funeral service, Mr. T. Ernest Wilson likened our brother to Barnabas who was a good man, to Barzillia who was a great man, and to the Lord Jesus who was a gracious man. Mr. William Pell prayed touchingly at the service and again at the graveside. Many came even from distances to pay tribute to one whose life and devotion to the Lord serve as an example we all might follow.

An Acrostic

An Acrostic

An ACROSTIC in relation to the Lord’s coming and its far-reaching consequences.

For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven. (1 Thess. 4:16)

Our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:4)

Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13)

Direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. (2 Thess. 3:5)

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come. (1 Cor. 11:26)

Our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3:20)

Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:13)

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven. (Acts 1:11)

Hold fast till I come. (Rev. 2:25)

Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. (1 John 3:3)

For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. (Heb. 10:37)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)

Our gathering together unto Him. (2 Thess. 2:1)

Coming of the Lord is at Hand. (James 5:8 R.V.)

Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 6:14)

—Stewart Lavery, Belfast, Ireland

An Open Letter

An Open Letter

Beloved of God (Col. 3:12)… heirs together of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7) and accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6).

GREETINGS:

How graciously and lovingly the Holy Spirit brings to our minds the eternal, spiritual and very practical truth that apart from our Lord Jesus Christ — the Church, His Body is nothing. Christ is the Head. All power and authority are derived directly from Him. Our risen Lord is seated at the right hand of God… over… all principality and might and dominion and every name that is named … and we are seated there with Him (Eph. 1).

What is taught in the Word of God is not theory. It is not the expression of beautiful, pious language or of impractical visions. The truths of the Word of God are of glorious significance to all who will receive them by faith.

The power of the Church, the Body of Christ, is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of Truth (John 14:7). The Spirit of Truth proceeds from the Father, brings all things to remembrance and testifies of Christ — of Christ alone.

The unity of the Body is the unity of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3). Indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, every child of God can enjoy the blessing of spiritual unity among all those who are guided by the same Holy Spirit. He is not the Spirit of confusion, but of unity and love (1 Cor. 14:33).

Flowing from this truth the Apostle Paul draws an illustration that reflects this truth in terms we understand so easily (Eph.5).

The Church is a family unit and as such can only remain intact and be effective as each individual family members recognize and accept his responsibility before God and his fellow-members. This recognition involves the faithful support of each; just as a faithful husband supports his family.

It is fitting that the image of marriage, given to us in Ephesians 5 is carried to the smaller unit of the local church. No church can be strong and grow without the loving, faithful support of individuals who have pledged themselves to strengthen this family unit physically, spiritually and financially. This type of support is seen within the context of their unconditional surrender and undivided loyalty to Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

The bonds of fellowship would appear to involve the same sense of responsibility and fidelity as that characterizing a strong, loving and sharing family unit. No family can remain intact when a husband “desiring to be free” shares the devotion and support of his wife with another. Each of them has assumed and willingly declared their vows and are no longer free. This voluntary relationship, though it involves a termination of certain freedoms, opens a way for mutual effort in the bonds of holy love. This freedom to love and to welcome the gift of another’s love, provides the stable foundation for growth, prosperity and joy within the family. This can only be true as mutual joys and responsibilities are responsibly shared.

Every injunction given to us in the Word of God needs to be scrutinized in the light of the total commandments given to us by God. Every command needs to be scrutinized in the light of the total commitment expected from each of us by God. None are so insignificant as to be exempt—none so exalted so as to be immune.

Commending you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all of them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32), it is the prayer of one who labours with you “that in all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1:18).

A servant in Christ. H. M.

Another Year Is Dawning

MIF 8:1 (Jan-Feb 1976)

Another Year Is Dawning

Selected

Another year is dawning!
Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee;
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast;
Another year of trusting,
Of quiet happy rest.
Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face;
Another year of progress,
Another year of praise;
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.
Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training

For holier work above.

Another year is dawning!

Dear Father, let it be

On earth, or else in heaven,

Another year for Thee.

—Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879)

Auricular Confession

Auricular Confession

Selected

“Confess Your Faults One to Another”—James 5:16

“What a wonderful teacher of the Word of God! He exalted Christ; he edified the saints; he strengthened the weak, encouraged the depressed, and stirred the indolent. Nevertheless, he was defeating the purpose of his ministry. His sarcasm and derogatory though humourous remarks were enkindling resentment and resistance in the minds of many of his listeners.”

The aged speaker was indulging in reminiscences, he was reliving a trying episode of more than three decades.

A very capable and forceful preacher had been invited to lecture at a Bible conference. Expectations had been great, and hopes high, but because of a personal fault in this guest speaker, the value of his ministry was being lost.

“One evening after we had returned home,” continued the speaker, “I decided to talk to him. I told him frankly what I thought, and although he said little, I detected the cloud that covered his formerly cheerful countenance.

“The next morning he was somewhat tardy in making his appearance for breakfast. Before we sat down at the table, he gently drew me out into the hallway, and said, ‘Last night when you spoke to me, I knew that you were right, but I was very angry, and decided to leave. I was

so determined that before I went to bed, I packed my luggage. I slept little, but when I awoke this morning, an inward voice challenged me; it seemed to say, You can give it to others but you cannot take it. You do not like when your feelings are hurt, but you expect others to be tolerant when their feelings are hurt. You had better apologize so that you may accomplish that for which you came!

"'I do sincerely apologize, and by God's grace, there will be no more complaints of this sort. I am sorry to be late for breakfast, but I have been unpacking my suitcases.'"

Be Specific!

Be Specific!

Sister Phoebe

The author of this brief but timely article on prayer wishes to remain anonymous. She is a personal friend, the Editor having had the pleasure of staying in her and her husband's home. As you can see, I have called her "Sister Phoebe," a pen name which, hopefully, will meet with her approval. This is her first article in Focus, and the Editor is grateful for her prayerful and practical interest in the magazine.

Ladies, take note! We do welcome articles from our sisters in the Lord.

If ever we need to pray for our loved ones it is today, and each day. When we send our children off to school, do we faithfully commend them to our Lord? As they leave our homes they go out into a society without morals, having no time for God, no rules or regulations, and an "anything goes" attitude. Do we just quickly pray, "Lord, bless John and Susie today," and hastily rush them out the door? God has given us our children to love and enjoy, and to care for them, but most important of all, to teach them the way of salvation. Possibly the Lord would have us be more specific in our prayers. Just what do we mean when we say, "Bless…"? Daniel Webster says bless or blessing means to "invoke divine care" or "confer happiness upon." Divine care and happiness are automatically ours the moment we receive Christ into our hearts, so we are already blessed of God. Let's be more specific. Ask God for protection, love, guidance

and strength for your child. Perhaps your son or daughter has a fear of some kind or is possibly concerned about a test. Mention the particular things individually for each child. Talk to the Lord about them just as you would discuss a problem with another loved one or friend.

Even in the field of homemaking, our Lord wants to share in every detail of our lives. Don't leave Him out. If we start our day with our Lord, taking time to quietly read His Word and pray, committing ourselves and our loved ones to Him for that day, we'll find our day will be brighter. As the saying goes, "Things go better with Christ." We can ask Him to keep our hearts and minds stayed upon Him. If God brings one of our children to our minds as we are working, we should offer up a prayer right at that moment for that particular child. Ask the Lord to bring to your mind thoughts of Himself and of His love; offer up thanksgiving and praise to Him. I think this is part of what God means when He says, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This can all be done during our daily routine of washing, scrubbing, ironing, and sewing. Your work will get done. In fact, you won't even mind doing it. Try it, it really works.

Then, too, wives, don't forget your husbands. They need our prayers. If you have a husband who is converted, thank God for him. If he is not saved, his salvation should be your first prayer for him. We need to pray daily for them that God will give them strength, wisdom, and knowledge for whatever job they are doing. We'll have a little taste of Heaven right here in our homes if we share our days with our Lord, and best of all, we will

have no time to think of ourselves, yet at the same time experience God's peace within.

Philippians 4:6-8 tells us, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus" (The Living Bible). What a wonderful Saviour and Lord we have. Let's take advantage of what we have in Him. He wants us to; He wants to become a part of every phase of our lives; yes, down to the little, nitty gritty things of daily moment by moment living. Let's be specific in our prayer life, remembering that this is a day by day experience and that specific requests receive specific answers. This full and abundant life is ours just for the asking. Praise the Lord.

Behold My Hands

Behold My Hands

“Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”John 20:27 Some years ago a solo by a young man deeply impressed me; the words of the refrain still linger in my memory:

“Wonderful hands! Hands of the Saviour!

Hands that were wounded for me,

Hands that were used in blessing on others,

Hands that will ever keep me.”

The present meditation results from the pleasure and the blessing of that occasion.

The post-resurrection scenes in the life of our beloved Lord, convey assurances to us of the care the Great Shepherd of the sheep expends upon His own. The disciples who were present on the first occasion of the Lord’s appearances after His resurrection said to Thomas, “We have seen the Lord.” Thomas vowed that he would not believe their story unless he could see Christ with the print of the nails in His hands. A few days later the Lord appeared again in their midst, and met the unbelief of Thomas, saying, “Behold My hands.” The sight of those hands dispelled the doubts and unbelief that had possessed the mind of that disciple, and confirmed his faith in the resurrection. As Thomas saw the wound marks in His hands, he cried, “My Lord and My God.” This, his confession, expresses the highest

form of worship, the giving to Christ the supreme place in the heart.

There are those who believe that a person's character may be known by the features of his hands. Certainly the character of Christ is manifest in His hands. We observe His Saving Character in the firm touch upon those He healed of disease. The blind man received his sight by the touch of His hand (Mark 8:23); the dumb man's tongue was loosed by the same touch of power {Mark 9:27); and the dead damsel was quickened into life as He took her by the hand and spoke the word of command (Mark 5:41). In response to the despairing cry of sinking Peter which reached the Saviour's heart, the hand of Jesus reached His distressed disciple, saved and strengthened him, and enabled him to walk upon the waves. The hand of Jesus was a human hand, and yet it was the hand of the Mighty God. His Sympathetic Character is also expressed by the delicate touch of His hand. He could have healed without the touch, but He shewed His sympathy with the sufferer in the gentle touch of His hand.

The hands of the Lord Jesus are:

Pierced Hands

"They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16). His pierced hands assure us of the authenticity of the inspired Word of God. How accurately the Psalmist describes the cross-work of Christ. When we remember that stoning to death was the method of execution known to David, it is wonderful that he, by prophecy, so carefully described the crucifixion of the Lord. How amazing that a heathen power, Rome, should fulfil the predicted purposes of God!

His wounded hands are a reminder of His claims upon us. When Thomas saw them, he confessed Christ as His own Lord. His nail-pierced hands were the visible proof and the confirmation of His love that day to the doubting disciple. A quiet little girl gazing into the features of her mother, said, “Mother, I do love your face, and I do love your eyes, but Mother, I do not like your hands.” The hands were dreadfully scarred. The mother then told her a lovely story. There was a house on fire with a baby girl asleep upstairs; a young mother rushed up the flaming stairs; saved her child, and rushed down again to safety, but her hands were terribly burned. When the story was finished, the mother, with a hug and a kiss, said, “Darling, that little baby girl was you, and that mother, was I.” Just for a moment the little girl sat silent, and then, with an adoring look at her mother, she exclaimed, “Mother, I love your hands best of all!” Those hands were the evidence of the sacrificial love of a mother. Christ endured the wounds in His hands because of infinite love for us; He was crucified to save us from sin and death. Wonderful hands!

Pleading Hands

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands” (Isa. 49:16).

As He pleads for us in our weaknesses, our Advocate keeps us in perpetual rememberance. Our names are graven upon His hands, so that it can be said of each, not one of them is forgotten before God. Even though we may forget Him, He will not forget us, therefore, we can sing most heartily:

“My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on His heart it remains,

In marks of indelible grace.”

Providing Hands

“Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:16). Remember, dear believer, there is no need too great that God in His infinite goodness will not meet, and there is no need too small that His loving heart will not provide. The little girl when told that God measures the waters in the hollow of His hand (Isa. 40), after a thoughtful silence, exclaimed, “My, but God must have a big hand!” The ability of God to provide is so great that man and beast are dependent on His care, a care expressed with infinite ease. The little boy who helped the vendor gather up the fruit when his wagon upset, when told to take a handful of cherries as a recompense for his trouble, said to the big man, “I would rather that you give them to me.” The fruit sellers hand was so big, that it filled both the hands of the young lad. The Lord’s hand is bigger than all our puny needs; may we therefore, have grace to let Him provide. In the feeding of the hungry multitude, the Lord opened His hand and all were satisfied.

Protecting Hands

“His left hand is under my head, and His right hand cloth embrace me” (Song of Solomon 2:6). The picture here is that of a bridegroom supporting his bride when she is faint and sick. In the Song the bride was so overcome with love that she needed the strengthening arms of the bridegroom to protect her. We bless our

Divine Bridegroom for His strengthening hands that support us when ready to faint by the way. Underneath and around us are the everlasting arms (Deut. 33:27). Trials and sorrows may beset us, but we are ever in the embrace of His all-powerful arms.

“Rise my soul; thy God directs thee;

Stranger hands no more impede;

Pass thou on; His hands protect thee,

Strength that has the captive freed.”

Priestly Hands

Israel’s high priest, having made atonement, lifted up his hands and blessed the people, a lovely foreshadowing of the scene in this passage. Christ, having finished the work of redemption, lifted His hands over His own in priestly benediction, and thus ascended into heaven. This attitude of blessing indicates the present ministry of Christ for His Church. He had richly blessed the “little flock” while He was with them, and the gracious character of His departure, assure them of continued blessing during His absence. His uplifted hands, as He pronounces His benediction upon His saints, should comfort us with the thought of His favour upon us. We can count on His protection and guidance in the dangers, trials, and conflicts, which may meet us in this sinful and miserable world. His hands remind us of His all-sufficient and perpetual ministry toward His sheep.

“Wonderful Hands! Hands of the Saviour

Wounded on Calvary’s tree;

Hands now in high-priestly service

Still with the nail prints for me.”

Believe in Me

Believe in Me

Selected

Scripture reading: John 13:31-14:6

“Believe in me” is one of those blessed imperatives used by our Lord. Its assertions were directed especially to those men who eventually became the foundation of the whole Christian Church, our representatives.

Let us examine the circumstances in which this imperative was used, then its very structure, and ultimately the results.

The Circumstances

In the circumstances the Lord and His disciples were all involved.

The Lord. The Lord Jesus knew who His betrayer was. Satan had already entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him. He had already bargained with the Jewish leaders to do this for thirty pieces of silver. Judas, therefore, arose at the supper and went out with a full understanding of his deception and wicked intention on his part. The Lord Jesus in His discourse recorded here spoke of His peace. He said, “My peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). Thank God for the holy calm, the divine tranquility, that was seen in the Master!

The disciples. Obviously, according to John 14:1, their hearts were troubled. There were numerous matters which had transpired in the upper room that evening to trouble and perplex them. For example, they had seen

the Master troubled in spirit (v. 21). They had heard that one of themselves would betray Him (vv. 18-21). They were baffled by the mysterious disappearance of Judas (vv. 27-30), and by the predicted inexplicable departure of the Lord Himself (v. 33), and by the warning to Peter (v. 38). Sufficient had happened on this occasion to really upset the disciples and to fill their hearts with dejection.

It was to these troubled and bewildered disciples that the Lord said, “Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Inasmuch as our Lord’s words are always contemporary, today He speaks these same words to each one of His own. What a proof that there is consolation in Christ (Phil. 2:1)!

The Imperative

The words of John 14:1 are difficult to understand because of the conflicting opinions of scholars and translators. There are some who look upon both clauses as being in the indicative mood: “Ye believe in God and ye also believe in me.” These are merely statements of facts. Others look upon both of them as being in the imperative mood: “Ye must believe in God and ye must also believe in me.” There are still others, along with the translators of the KJV, who believe that the first of these statements is in the indicative and the second in the imperative. The verse may thus be paraphrased: “Inasmuch as ye believe in God whom you haved never seen, when I am no longer with you, and am out of sight, ye must believe in me.” Sight may affect our feelings, but it should not affect our faith. Even in His absence, the Lord was to be the anchorage of their faith.

Their behavior. The manner in which the disciples conducted themselves between that night and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus indicates how little they understood what was said. How little they obeyed!

Think of the ignorance of Thomas (John 14:5), the denial of Peter (Luke 22:62-64), the departure of most (Matt. 26:56), the despair of the two from Emaus (Luke 24:13-32), and then again, the doubts of Thomas (John 20:4). Need we condemn them? Under trials much less severe our faith has failed us, and we have become very, very troubled.

The Results

Hope is a catalyst of faith; by it faith is prodded and becomes more operative. Such is the force of the remainder of this paragraph in John 14. The hope of a glorious future is to stimulate faith now. Let us look at some of the highlights of this paragraph.

My Father's house. Through these words we think instinctively of heaven, but when the disciples of our Lord first heard them it is doubtful that they thought of heaven. They had heard the Lord make reference to the temple, even Herod's temple, as His Father's house. He had asserted, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:16). The temple is used by the Lord as an illustration of the dwelling place of the redeemed.

Many mansions. There were three stories of apartments under the temple court and sanctuary. In heaven, the Father's house above, there are many mansions or dwelling places: a place for seraphim, a place for cherubim, a place for the archangel, a place for the elect

angels and for the legions of angels. In heaven there are dwelling places for the complete hierarchy of celestial beings and powers.

I go to prepare a place. It is obvious that none of the mansions, those beautiful dwelling places, were suitable for His bride, the Church, so He went to prepare a special place for her, a place near to Himself.

He did not go directly to heaven to sweep and furnish one of the mansions for us. He went to the cross to rend the veil and to open the way into the most intimate place in glory. In this work His death, burial, resurrection and ascension are all involved.

To prepare a place for you. Elizabeth Dark in her splendid hymn designates the place for us:

Soon shall all Thy saints be gathered

Inside the veil;

All at home, no more be scattered,

Inside the veil.

Naught from Thee our hearts shall sever;

We shall see Thee, grieve Thee never;

Praise the Lamb! Shall sound forever

Inside the veil.

Until Calvary the Holy Spirit signified that the way into the holiest was not yet opened (Heb. 9:8). Since Calvary the way has been open, and in spirit even now we may enter into the intimate, holy place (Heb. 10:19-25). In heaven even the rent veil will be removed completely (Rev. 8:3).

When Moses for the first time raised Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness, we read, "He put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil" (Ex. 40:26). This veil hung before the ark, the throne of God, who dwelt between the cherubim. In the glory this order will be changed. We read of the golden altar which is before the throne (Rev. 8:3). There is now no veil before the ark, the throne; it was removed at Calvary.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The Lord's departure becomes the very pledge of His return. What they feared most became a great blessing to them. Christ's very absence gave assurance of His eternal, intimate presence in a glorious future. He seems to say, "Just as I surely go away, so surely will I come again. Believe in me. Believe in me when you cannot understand the purposes of God. Believe in me when hope of advancement and success wane. Believe in me when others like Peter fail. Believe in me when some inward Thomas cries, "How can we know the way?"

Bible Readings For Men

Bible Readings For Men

Selected

It came as good news recently when it was announced in our assembly that special Bible Study sessions for brethren were going to commence in Toronto, Ontario. Not since the days of Mr. J. R. Little-proud in the mid-thirties have such meetings been convened.

This project results from the exercise of a number of brethren in various assemblies in and around this city. They have scheduled the meetings for two Monday evenings a month.

It is encouraging to see brethren of all ages seeking basic teaching on a variety of fundamental subjects. Each session is particularly set for the instruction of younger men, not only in the right ways of the Lord, but, with a view to developing a deeper personal study of God’s Word in order that they might eventually be able to teach others also.

These few remarks are written from an observer’s perspective, and as such I can say that one does not want to miss a single session. Our brother James Gunn has been especially helped of the Lord in the preparation and presentation of the ministry. It is our constant prayer that divine help will be his in all the sessions.

A small committee of experienced brethren representing several assemblies review details after each lecture so that the maximum benefit may be derived.

A library is being instituted that will be helpful to all. The books may be borrowed from session to session as further helps in these studies.

The order of the meeting stimulates participation by several brethren both during the prayer period and the discussion. The friendly discussion that follows each lecture helps to clarify points which are not previously grasped. Furthermore, it prompts younger brethren to speak in an atmosphere that is warm and understanding, even when divergent views are expressed. This attitude resolves in a better appreciation of God’s Word and of one another.

A schedule of purposed sessions may be obtained by writing to this magazine or at the next meeting, Monday, December 5, at 7.45 p.m. in Central Gospel Hall, 25 Charles Street East, Toronto, Ontario.

W. K. B.

Bold for Christ

This is a true story of something that happened just a few years ago at USC.

There was a professor of philosophy at USC who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester attempting to prove that God couldn't exist. His students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable logic. For twenty years, he had taught this class and no one had ever had the courage to stand up to him. Sure, some had argued in class at times, but no one had ever really stood up to him. Nobody would go against him because he had a reputation. At the end of every semester, on the last day, he would say to his class of 300 students, "If there's anyone here who still believes in Jesus, stand up!" In twenty years, no one had ever stood up. They knew what he was going to do next. He would say "Because anyone who does believe in God is a fool. If God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the ground and breaking. Such a simple task to prove that he is God, and yet he can't do it." And every year, he would drop the chalk onto the tile floor of the classroom and it would shatter into a hundred pieces. All of the students could do nothing but stop and stare. Most of the students were convinced that God couldn't exist. Certainly, a number of Christians had slipped through, but for 20 years, they had been too afraid to stand up.

Well, a few years ago, there was a freshman who happened to get enrolled in the class. He was a Christian, and had heard the stories about this

professor. He had to take the class because it was one of required classes for his major. And he was afraid. But for 3 months that semester, he prayed every morning that he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said or what the class thought. Nothing they said or did could ever shatter his faith, he hoped. Finally the day came. The professor said "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" The professor and the class of 300 people looked at him, shocked, as he stood up at the back of the classroom. The professor shouted "You FOOL!! If God existed, he could keep this piece of chalk from breaking when it hit the ground!" He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleat of his pants, down his leg, and off his shoe. As it hit the ground, it simply rolled away, unbroken. The professor's jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk.He looked up at the young man then ran out of the lecture hall. The young man who had stood up proceeded to walk to the front of the room and share his faith in Jesus for the next half hour. Three hundred students stayed and listened as he told of God's love for them and of His power through Jesus.

Book Review

Book Review

Tortured For His Faith by Haralan Popov.

One cannot read a book like this and remain the same. Theory cannot reach the heart and emotions — experience can and does!

As we view brother Popov being made to stand motionless for fourteen days without food and water, staring into a glossy white wall eight inches from his eyes and living to tell the story, we are overwhelmed. As we descend with him fifty feet below the other prisons into a totally dark, dank dungeon, we share his dismay when he is told by a high-ranking officer that he will rot there. The beatings and torture are intensified as he learns of the sufferings of his family, whom he cannot help.

We rejoice as we read of brother Popov's release from prison after thirteen years and his subsequent efforts on behalf of fellow Christians of the Underground Church in Communist lands today.

What does the reviewer and his readers know of suffering for Christ? Probably very little compared to that of brother Popov and many others who have and are languishing in communist prisons for their faith.

This book not only gives us an insight into the workings of international communism, but also acts as a mighty stimulus for prayer on behalf of our brethren and sisters in communist countries.

158 pages. About 250,000 copies in print. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

The Wineskins Are Bursting by Kevin G. Dyer.

Most of the ideas in the first two chapters of this interesting study are taken from Alvin Toffler's book, FUTURE SHOCK. The author states that they are included to give us a perspective of the future so that we can consider our effectiveness as believers.

Against this background of tremendous change, brother Dyer sketches in an easy-to-read style something of the deteriorating condition in the church, the home and in society generally. While the book raises more questions than it answers, a real purpose is served in drawing attention to the acceleration of change all about us and in providing much food for thought and further discussion.

The reviewer cannot agree with the intimation that older Christians are necessarily pharisaical or out of touch with the Lord, because they are faithful in attending the assembly meetings. All that has been built up in the past is not necessarily wrong. Nor can the reviewer go along with the virtually unqualified commendation of the "Jesus" people. One gets the feeling that someone with extensive experience in pioneer work and planting of new assemblies could perhaps write more convincingly on many of the matters discussed.

Nevertheless, many burning questions are brought to the fore. These include — the future of our assemblies — the effectiveness and support of North American full-time workers and foreign missionaries —gospel

meetings in our church buildings — rigidly programmed services — family breakdown and many others.

The book culminates with a call to personal repentance and confession of sin and victory in the triumphs of Christ. Recommended reading for assembly leaders and thoughtful Christians everywhere.

95 pages — 11 chapters. Published by Missionary Enterprises, Inc. Prospect Heights, Illinois, 60070, U.S.A.

—John Funk

Book Review

Book Review

Notes on the Pentateuch — Genesis to Deuteronomy: C. H. Mackintosh: Loizeaux Brothers Inc. Neptune, New Jersey.

One is deeply grateful that these notes are to be kept in circulation. We might well pray that should the Lord tarry these notes would always be available to the people of God.

Loizeaux Brothers are to be complimented not only for reprinting this exceptional ministry but for doing so in such a new and attractive form.

Dr. Wilbur M. Smith says: “This new one-volume edition of C. H. M.’s Notes on the Pentateuch has been completely reset, word for word from the original six-volume set published in 1880. It has been acclaimed by four generations of Bible students as a classic on the five books of Moses.

A deep evangelical tone marks all of Mackintosh’s writings. Andrew Miller commented in the Preface: ‘Man’s complete ruin in sin, and God’s perfect remedy in Christ are fully, celarly, and often strikingly presented’.”

Highly recommended: Loizeaux Brothers Inc. 1238 Corlies Avenue, Neptune, New Jersey, U.S.A. Price $10.95.

Books For Christian Reading

Books For Christian Reading

Section One Helps For Beginners

The Gospel:

(A) Grace & Truth; W. P. MacKay.

(A) Light for Anxious Souls; Geo. Cutting (LB).

(B) Salvation; Lewis Sperry Chafer (155 pp., Fund).

(C) Salvation from Start to Finish; Jas. M. Gray (Moody). Charge that to my Account; Ironside (LB).

Life in a Look; Baldwin (Moody).

Teaching For Young Christians:

(A) Early Paths for Young Believers; J. Ritchie (JR).

(A) Early Steps in the Christian Life; Tatford (W).

(A) The Old Nature and the New Birth; Geo. Cutting (LB).

The New Life. The New Man. The New Boy. The New Girl. The New Adorning; All by Capt. Reg Wallis (LB).

Section Two Reference Works. Introductory Studies. Side-Lights, Bibles, Various Editions:

(No reference is made here to ordinary editions).

Scofield Ref. Bible (variety of styles and bindings).

Pilgrim Bible. Something like Scofield, but simpler.

Loose Leaf Bible (In Ring binder); Practical Bible Press, Bible School Park New York.

Loose Leaf New Testament (American Bible Soc.) This is in the American Standard Version, page 8 1/2 x 11. Wide mar.

Bible Versions, Etc.

(B)Revised Version of the Bible; Various styles and prices.

New Test. in Modern Speech; Weymouth. Suggestive. (Notes in later editions misleading).

(B) New Translation; J. N. Darby. Various editions (LB). Other New Test. Versions are Berkeley, Wuest, Montgomery, Way, Amplified, Phillips, Williams. Use with care.

Revised Standard Version; scholarly but biased; not recommended for general use.

Bible Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Handbooks

International Standard Bible Encyclop. (5 vols., Eerd.)

(B) Dictionary of the Bible; John D. Davis (Moody)

(C) Handbook to the Bible; Angus-Green.

(B) New Bible Handbook; G. T. Manley (IVP) Introductory.

(C) Morrish's Bible Dictionary (LB). Contains more doctrine than Bible Dictionaries generally.

Diet. of Scripture Proper Names; Jackson (LB).

Charles Darwin

FFF 12:1 Jan 1966)

Charles Darwin

Neither the biographers of Charles Darwin, nor writers on Evolution, relate the following story of the last days of Charles Darwin, as told by Lady Hope, at meetings in Northfield, Mass. U.S.A.

It was a glorious autumn afternoon, when I was asked to go and sit with Charles Darwin. He was almost bedridden for months before he died. Propped up with pillows, his features seemed to be lit up with pleasure as I entered the room.

He waved his hand towards the window, as he pointed out the beautiful sunset scene beyond, while in the other hand he held an open Bible, which he was always studying.

“What are you reading now?” I asked.

“Hebrews,” he answered, “Still Hebrews. The Royal Book, I call it.” Then, placing his finger on certain passages, he commented on them.

I made some allusion to the strong opinions expressed by many on the history of Creation, and then their treatment of the earlier chapters of the Book of Genesis. He seemed distressed, his fingers twitched nervously, and a look of agony came over his face as he said, “I was a young man with unformed ideas, I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them.” Then he paused, and after a

few more sentences on the holiness of God, and the grandeur of this Book, looking at the Bible which he was holding tenderly all the time, he said:

“I have a summer house in the garden which holds about thirty people; it is over there” (pointing through the open window). “I want you very much to speak here. I know you read the Bible in the villages. Tomorrow afternoon I should like the servants on the place, some tenants, and a few neighbours, to gather there. Will you speak to them?”

“What shall I speak about?” I asked.

“Christ Jesus,” he replied in a clear emphatic voice, adding in a lower tone, “and His salvation. Is not that the best theme? And then I want you to sing some hymns with them. You lead on your small instrument, do you not?”

The look of brightness on his face as he said this I shall never forget; for he added: “If you take the meeting at three o’clock, this window will be open, and you will know that I am joining with the singing.”

—Christian Witness

Charles Holder

Charles Holder

Selected

Pioneer to the Bahamas

Many years ago an old man sat on a bench in Central Park, New York City. His clothing, which had been black, was much the worse of wear. His head, which was bare, was bent forward, and his hat lay on his knees. A much younger man on passing thought him a beggar and dropped a dime in his hat. The old man, who was none other than John Nelson Darby, looked up from his prayer, and talked long and earnestly with the young man. That conversation led Charles Holder to devote his life to the service of the Lord Jesus.

Eventually, Mr. Holder became one of the pioneers with the gospel on the Bahama Islands. So dilgently and successfully did he labour for the Lord, that, even to this day, some of the older folk are called Holderites.

Brother Holder and I met in Miami early in the year 1918; he was then on his way to the Islands for the last time. In the photograph he is sitting on the porch of the home of Mr. Hector Munro, and back of his chair is the small room in which, early in 1917, Mr. Munro, his wife, and I met weekly to study the Scriptures together. Those Bible studies resulted in the formation of what ultimately became in Miami the 29th Street assembly, the original “open meeting” in South Florida.

Two Scriptures brother Holder brought to my attention will not be forgotten. The first is in Deuteronomy 34:7.

Moses, said he about this verse, presents to us the Law which never loses its strength and vitality, and which cannot lead us in the “Promised Land,” the heavenly places in Christ. The second Scripture is in Romans, chapter three. He illustrated this by telling how a photographer, wishing to take his picture, approached him on Miami Beach, and how he told the photographer that God already had his portrait in the third chapter of Romans.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Holder’s influence had something to do with it, but actually the formation of the assembly in Miami was brought about by the labours, early in 1918, of two evangelists, Benjamin Bradford and Samuel McEwen. These brethren pitched a tent at what is now N. E. Second Avenue and Fourteenth Street, in those days on the outskirts, but now near the centre of the city.

God thus blessed the perseverance and ministry of His two servants and the influence and prayers of Charles Holder.

S. D. W.

Children’s Work

Children’s Work

Selected

The story is told of the Irishman who came puffing onto the station platform just too late to catch the commuter train for the city. Quipped a bystander, “Too bad, Pat; you did not run fast enough.” “Oh, I ran fast enough,” gasped the Irishman, “The trouble is I did not start soon enough.”

This could be said of a number of Vacation Bible Schools during the past year. The last few weeks and days before the opening session seemed to pass so quickly that plans and preparations were not complete. Why let this happen again in 1962? The time to begin preparation is now.

For example, the registration cards for the past season should be checked carefully. Are names and addresses filled in completely? Is the spelling correct? This could be checked with cards of older children in the family, or with the telephone directory.

These cards should be carefully retained so that announcements of 1962 Vacation Bible School may be mailed out a week or so in advance of your next opening.

Registration cards form a mailing list also for sending out announcements of the opening of fall Hobby Class sessions, or to invite these children to your Rally Day, or other special functions.

If your D.V.B.S. closed with a successful Parents’ Night, why not try a midwinter Reunion to which these same

children and parents are invited for a get-together? Bible School workers should be on hand to follow up previous contacts made, and the speaker should be one with whom the children are well acquainted. Such a rally forms an added contact with both the children and their parents.

Also, a meeting of the workers should be called as soon as posible after the close of the D.V.B.S. to review the work of the past season. A frank discussion is needed, to appraise the features that seemed to be successful and to consider the mistakes that were made. If too much time elapses before this meeting is held, details become hazy in the memory.

There are many complaints of unsuitable lesson material, especially where a uniform line of study is followed. There is, admittedly, not too much on the market that presents the clear Gospel in an appealing way. The more need, therefore, to start early in the search for suitable lessons and materials for the coming year.

Ideas for handicrafts and hobby work should be gathered well in advance, also. From time to time week-end newspapers or monthly magazines carry special articles on their children’s page from which suggestions may be gathered. Books are available at Hobby stores or public libraries giving helpful hints.

When hand-work is planned early, materials are more readily obtained. Wherever possible, look for projects in which a good Gospel verse may be incorporated. There is no limiting the life-giving power of the Word of God, even when appearing on a wall plaque or other novelty.

Even if you felt your school was running at capacity attendance during the past year, plan ways and means of handling additional scholars for the coming year. Remember every soul is precious and worth the utmost effort to be won for Christ.

Now is the time to enlist new recruits to help in your 1962 D.V.B.S. Remember that enthusiasm is as contagious as pessimism. Use an optimistic approach to your new prospects and they will catch fire from your warmth and zeal for the work.

The new helpers will need to be trained and instructed. During the winter months they could be shown how to handle the handicrafts that will be used during the summer. Also, they will benefit by helpful instruction in the teaching of the class lessons.

In many instances in the past, eager workers have found themselves unprepared to teach the lesson, or uninstructed in the handling of the craft work. As a result, their ardour is chilled by a sense of frustration and defeat. This situation might easily have been avoided had more experienced workers given helpful advice and instruction during the months preceding the opening of the school.

The value of careful planning and preparation is illustrated in the building of Solomon’s temple. This magnificent structure was dedicated to the Lord and was the means of bringing much praise, worship and glory to His Name.

Before the construction was started, David had given to Solomon the pattern, had prepared the materials and provided the necessary funds for the completion of the

edifice. Even the stones were prepared beforehand, hewn and shaped to fit into their allotted places.

It is likewise evident that in Vacation Bible School, as in any other work for the Lord, wise planning and careful preparation will, under the blessing of the Lord, produce better results.

“Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.” 1 Chronicles 22:16.

China News

China News

The information contained in these articles has been collected by Arthur G. Clarke, a former missionary to China for over 30 years. Brother Clarke suffered imprisonment during the Japanese occupation of China. His son, Arnold J. Clarke, was subjected to the diabolic treatment of brain washing, as were John McGehee of U.S.A. and Geoffrey Bull of England, and others.

This description of persecution in China under Communist tyranny is inserted in order that more prayer might be made on behalf of God's beloved suffering people in China by all readers.

So urgent is this matter, the space usually occupied by "The Forum" is being used to bring it to the attention of God's people. —ED.

One is frequently asked the question today, "How are the Christians in China faring under the Communist regime?" The following article is an attempt to give a comprehensive picture of the situation, a knowledge of which brings an insistent call to continual and fervent prayer for our fellow-believers in that great country.

It may be well first of all to describe something of the kind of life the Christians share in common with the rest of the population. Daily life is completely dominated by politics. Indoctrination classes in Marxism are compulsory. It is considered quite proper to spy upon ones neighbours and denounce them for supposed antagonism to the State. Self-criticism after the pattern usually seen in other Communist-ruled lands is also

advocated. There is no real liberty. Fear is a driving force seen at all levels of society.

Political enthusiasm, especially in the larger cities, is maintained by well-organized mass parades. It is mainly students and the younger folk who fill motor trucks, pedicabs and other vehicles and promenade the streets shouting Communist slogans to the accompaniment of blaring horns, clashing cymbals and the banging of drums. Banners are carried displaying Communist propaganda urging harder work and greater production.

Nearly 2500 years ago Confucius, the Chinese sage, taught family loyalties and may be credited with creating the tightly-knit clan and family system which has contributed so much to the solidarity of Chinese society down the centuries, despite the incidence of foreign invasions, internal revolutions, and the later impact of Western-style civilization. The present Government has shown scant respect for these age-old traditions. They have established a communal system in which they think nothing of separating husband and wife, parents and children in the supposed interests of the State.

In a slavish pursuance of doctrinaire Communism, Red China has embarked upon the most stupendous experiment in the world's history. What Russia has never seriously attempted, China is now carrying out in creating vast agricultural and industrial armies beyond anything hitherto conceived. The entire population of a rural area is united in a "commune" to become a labour force under central direction, available for any task chosen by the authorities and free to be switched from harvesting to road-building, or from dyke-building to

industry. The whole country is in fact one tremendous workshop. Young and old of both sexes must all work according to capacity. Even children of ten years old as well as elderly folk must do their share. Should any of the latter become too feeble for work, they are placed in so-called “happy homes” and are given “shots for their health”, which treatment generally kills them off within two weeks.

Hours of work are long, often up to sixteen hours a day including Sundays with a daily period of what is termed “social education”. In addition, young men and women must also perform their daily militia drill. Two rest days per month are permitted. To liberate women from domestic chores in order to engage in more productive work, communal kitchens provide food for all, and creches take full charge of the smaller children few of whom ever see their parents. The education of older children is taken care of by the State and, of course, is along lines agreeable to the views of the regime.

For the unmarried there are communal dormitories and for the married accommodation is set aside in communal buildings. Rations are meagre, often but slightly above starvation level. Labourers are given two bowls of rice at a meal, vegetables being supplied, if obtainable, by the individual himself. Wages amount to about $2 per month, of which one half must be repaid to pay for the rice. It will thus be seen that this conscription of the whole populace for forced labour has totally disrupted all normal social life. There is no place for the Christian home, or the Christian education of the young, and little leisure to cultivate the devotional life of believers or Christian fellowship of any kind.

Supposed to have no existence beyond this life and therefore no needs but material ones, the Chinese have been deprived of practically all the privileges prized by the ordinary person — privacy, family life, freedom of occupation and so on. They are being so incessantly indoctrinated that their minds are reduced to a state paralysing all independent thought. No personal opinion may be expressed. The worker must think and act instinctively in response to every directive of the authorities. The people are forced even to dress alike! Each individual is but a cog in the wheel of State.

In material achievements Red China has certainly made phenomenal progress. Within the past few years a mammoth industrial programme has been brought into operation. Steel production, for instance, is increasing at an astonishing rate and will soon rival that of the Western Powers. Heavy industries are being established all over the country. Great projects for river control and power supply and for building construction are already proceeding.

In the agricultural sphere, too, similar advance is recorded. Immensely increased harvest yields due to Government direction and pressure have made possible spectacular increases in the export of food stuffs, though often at the expense of the country's own needs. Health schemes, pest elimination, mass education and slum clearance are among other improvements introduced. Against all this, however, must be weighed the loss to the Chinese people of all their rights as individuals as we have shown. There is today no possession of private property. All belongs to the State. The army is largely in charge and the whole population has been organised on a para-military basis.

* * *

God’s people are like stars, that shine brightest in the darkest night; like gold, that is brighter for the furnace; like incense that becomes fragrant by burning; like the camomile plant, that grows fastest when trampled upon. — Anon.

Christ To The Galatians

Christ To The Galatians

Selected

A survey of the doctrine of Christ in Paul’s letter to the churches of Galatia reveals that He is referred to directly some forty-five times. Christ was the remedy for the deception that had affected those churches. He is the corrective for every error, the solution to every problem, and the Guide in every difficulty.

HIS PERSON: The Deity of Christ is suggested in verse three of chapter one. God the Father acts with authority to appoint Paul an apostle; the Lord Jesus is seen to act with equal authority. God the Father is pictured as the source of every blessing; the Lord Jesus is similarly pictured as the source of every blessing of grace and peace. The plan of redemption is presented as being according to the will of God, and at the same time as being accomplished by the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. Consequently, the Lord Jesus must be equal to the Father in authority, power, and redemptive purpose; therefore, equal with Him in nature.

In verse nineteen of this same chapter, there is a family seen in which there are two brothers, James and the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives us a precious and homey picture of the humanity of our Lord Jesus in His words, “James the Lord’s brother”.

HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS OWN: Christ the believer’s life (1:22; 3:26-29). The phrase “in Christ” suggests the most intimate possible union. The believer is seen not joined to Christ, nor with Christ, but “in Christ”.

Christ the believer's attire (3:27); Christ the believer's Master (1:10; 6:17); Christ the believer's Form (4:19); Christ the believer's Legislator.

Christian Confidence

MIF 12:2 (May-Apr 1980)

Christian Confidence

Selected

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me” (Psa. 138:8). Is the body weak? It will not remain weak; it will be strong. Are we ignorant? We shall not remain in ignorance, but we shall know fully as we are known. Are we tired and afflicted? All will be over at last; every tear will be wiped away from our eyes. Are we tempted? All will come to an end; we shall be delivered out of the power of the wicked one. “He who hath begun a good work will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ”; and therefore as to the body, as to the mind, as to the Spirit, as to outward circumstances, as to trials and afflictions, all, all will come to an end, and we shall have to bless and praise God for all His dealings with us here in this vale of tears. And what we have to do is to look forward to that day when with regard to everything concerning us will be found perfection.

And how comes all this? We deserve the contrary, but the reason is just this; “Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever.” In the way of grace He has begun to deal with us, in the way of grace He will continue to deal with us, and in the way of grace He deals with us continually.

Now, on account of this, we have not to be careless and indifferent, so far as it regards ourselves, but just because everything will be perfected regarding us, on the ground of the mercy of the Lord enduring forever, therefore it becomes us to pray, “Forsake not the works

of thine Own hands.” And here we see that real, true trust in God is invariably coupled with prayer, and wherever the profession of trust in God is not coupled with prayer, it is nothing but presumption. We believe that God will be graciously pleased to act on the ground of His Word, and to fulfil to us the promises made to us His children. Ask in faith, nothing wavering.” “He giveth more grace” (James 4:6).

—George Muller

Christian Fellowship

Christian Fellowship

Selected

When the gentleman who had reserved the lower berth bade her good evening, she looked as if sorry that hers was the upper, and promptly rebuffed him. For awhile she sat looking out of the train window at the drizzle. There certainly was no further attempt at conversation.

As the train neared the frontier, the American Immigration and Custom Officers passed from traveller to traveller asking for proper identification and for the reason to enter the United States. The gentleman had all necessary permits in order but not so the young woman. It appeared at first that she might be denied entry, but, finally, the officer was convinced of her sincerity and gave her the privilege to attend a missionary conference in one of the northern States.

After the officials had retired, a quiet conversation ensued. “You are to be commended for your caution while travelling,” said the gentleman, “and I do not wish to intrude upon your privacy, but from your request to the Immigration Officer, am I correct in assuming that you are a missionary nurse on furlough from an evangelical hospital in the Orient?” Her answer was shy but in the affirmative.

“Then,” asked the gentleman, “am I to assume also that you are a genuine Christian?” The reply was again in the affirmative, with this added information, “I have been a Christian for eight years, and am using my training in the Lord’s service abroad.”

“I have been a Christian for over forty years,” explained her fellow-traveller.

The change in her attitude and interest was instant; for long enough they conversed together. In the morning they had breakfast together in the dining car. If on their meeting there had been a cold aloofness, in their parting one would have thought them relatives. She detrained shortly after breakfast, and for a few moments she remained on the platform waving farewell to the gentleman whom she had so discourteously repulsed.

Obviously, they had discovered a relationship, not a natural one but one in Christ. It says in the Bible, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Christian Simplicity

Christian Simplicity

The biographer of Mr. James Lees tells a very interesting story about Mr. S. Zebrowski, a Roman Catholic priest in Poland who was pointed to Christ as Saviour by two devout nuns. These Christian nuns had found Christ for themselves through the reading of the Holy Bible.

Shortly after his conversion, he began to preach the Gospel with power in his own parish. Souls were saved under his instruction and influence, but opposition arose and eventually he was excommunicated by Rome.

Many of those who had found peace through his ministry, left with him and gathered in a simple manner around the Word of God.

A Russian Commissar was sent to investigate. In order that the new group be registered, the Commissar asked Mr. Zebrowski the name of the new sect that he had founded. “We have no name but Christian,” was his reply. “But,” said the Russian official, “all are Christians except the Jews.”

“We are only followers of the first Christians,” explained brother Zebrowski.” “That is a good name,” said the Russian, “A very good name.”

The result of this conversation was that the Christians who gather in simplicity in the name of the Lord Jesus in Warsaw are officially registered as “The Followers of the First Christians.”

Christ’s Advocacy

Christ’s Advocacy

The same thing is true in regard to His advocacy in virtue of the propitiation. Christ exercises His advocacy for us. If there is failure God sees it; but Jesus comes in and intercedes for us. Some say that we have to use the advocacy of Christ, but it is not so. Christ uses it for us. Why do I turn to God when I have failed? It is because He uses advocacy, and fresh grace is applied; fresh grace is wrought in my mind. There is nothing in us that brings us back to God but fresh grace working in our consciences. Therefore it is said, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.” It is not, “If any man repent.”

It is just as much pure grace as at first looked Upon us when we were in our sins. In the case of Peter, the Lord foretold him what would take place. “Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” We all need sifting; “but I have prayed for thee.” Before Peter got into the danger the Lord had prayed for him, and His grace is in exercise, and at the moment when it is needed. “He looked at Peter,” and his weeping was an avowal of Christ’s intercession.

The grace and intercession of Jesus is towards us in all the grace and wisdom of God. coming in with more grace. The righteousness is not called in question; it is not touched. It is through the intercession of Christ that I can get to God about my evil thoughts.

—J. N. Darby.

Correspondence

Correspondence

QUESTION: Is the baptism referred to in Ephesians 4:5 baptism in water or baptism in the Spirit?

Answer: The word “baptism,” as it occurs in this passage, has no qualifying word associated with it. It is therefore most naturally understood in its ordinary, every-day meaning, which is immersion in water. Wherever another meaning is intended the context makes that meaning clear. Moreover, the readers of the Epistle would be, for the most part, not theologians, but more or less unlettered believers, and it is hardly conceivable that they would attach to the word “baptism” any recondite meaning.

In answer to the question, “Is the `one baptism’ in Ephesians 4:5 baptism in water?” Prof. F. F. Bruce, in The Harvester of August, 1966 had this to say:

“Yes, I think so, and for this reason among others. The seven ‘uniquenesses’ (as Dr. Rowland C. Edwards has aptly called them) of Ephesians 4:4-6 are divided into three rhythmically equivalent sections (3-3-1) each of which is dominated by one of the Persons of the Godhead (one Spirit… one Lord… one God and Father’). If the ‘one baptism’ were baptism in the Spirit to the exclusion of baptism in water, it would naturally have come in the same section as ‘one Spirit,’ whereas it comes in the same section as ‘one Lord’ and ‘one faith.’ This is appropriate to baptism in water, which involves a confession of faith in our one Lord.”

It will be noted that in verse four mention is made of the “one body.” The very existence of that “one body” presupposes the baptism in the Spirit, for it is by that “baptism” that the body has been formed. A reference to it in verse five, therefore, would seem to be a repetition and unnecessary.

The thought of baptism in water falls quite naturally into the sequence of thought in verse five: “One Lord,” — the One to whom we owe allegiance; “one faith,” — the one way in which believers are united to the Lord; “one baptism,” — to be submitted to as a public expression of our identification with the Lord and of our allegiance to Him. (If we take, as many do, the “one faith” to be the body of doctrine committed to the saints, this logical association of ideas is not really affected.)

— F. W. Schwartz

Correspondence

Correspondence

In regard to the requests which have resulted from the statements made by R. McC. in the December number of Food for the Flock, and the letter addressed to R. McC. in the January number of Ministry in Focus, several matters demand serious consideration.

Humility of heart and a willingness to submit to the Word of God should be in greater evidence among us as the people of God. Pride of position frequently betrays a condition of spiritual poverty.

That there is a sad deterioration of assembly testimony in some areas is obvious. This should produce self-denial, prayer and a subjection to the Lordship of Christ rather than a spirit of aggrandizement and vain-glory.

Let us notice the general principles established in the New Testament relative to inter-assembly fellowship.

First: the idea of a circle or confederacy of assemblies formed by the adoption of a common man-made policy, or by a conformity to an accepted practice, is foreign to the teaching and to the examples presented in the New Testament. Did Philippi conform to the practice of Corinth? Thank God! No. In both policy and practice these churches are opposites. Did the church at Ephesus adopt the teaching accepted by the churches in Galatia? No. Yet, all were recognized by the Apostle Paul as churches of God. None were expelled from his affections; he sought to influence each for good.

Second: The basis of fellowship on any level is Christ, the life through Christ and the Lordship invested in Christ. The Apostle John wrote, probably to Ephesus, “about fellowship with the Father,” fellowship among the apostles which he calls “our fellowship,” and fellowship among the believers. This latter he intimates in the clause, “That ye may have fellowship with us.” See 1 John 1:3.

These aspects of fellowship are all based upon the manifestation of the Son of God in His first advent; He is both the primary cause and the ultimate objective of fellowship. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of (with) His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9).

Third, to draw a distinction “our assembly” and “other meetings” is not only discourteous, it is unscriptural. Could anyone imagine the church of Ephesus, with all its high truth, speaking of the assembly where Diotrephes wrongly assumed authority to act dictatorily as some “other meeting?”

The apostles would not have tolerated the derogatory terms which are current among some who profess to gather in the Lord’s name in Christian simplicity. It was the sectarian attitude at Corinth that provoked the Apostle Paul to write: “What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (1 Cor. 4:21).

In spite of the sad departure of the saints from what they had been taught, Paul did not refuse to visit them. He yearned over the cold, carnal Christian who had been diverted from the simplicity that there is toward

Christ. To the Galatians he wrote, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). To the Corinthians he explained, “Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand” (2 Cor. 1:23-24).

We cannot afford to evade the force of New Testament principles and examples, lest the charge be laid against us, “Ye are carnal;… and walk as men” (1 Cor. 3:3).

J.G.

Correspondence

Correspondence

We appreciate this pertinent correspondence from Australia. The letter to which it refers is reproduced in small type at the bottom of this column. Watch for further details in the next issue.

Church Problems

Dear Brother McC.

In the statement that appeared in the December 1968 number of Food for the Flock, you gave the impression that all the true assemblies are not one in their fellowship, the one with the other, that unjustly some have been put away from the fellowship of saints. Does not this act of their being put away or cut off constitute them as not being assemblies?

We have been taught that only those who walk by the same rule and mind the same thing (Phil. 3:16) are actually assemblies of God. Does not assembly fellowship require a conformity of practice, that is a practice in accord with the pattern in The Book of Acts, chapter two?

Some of our brethren speak of certain groups as being merely “other meetings.” Is this correct? Is it not scriptural to separate from those who do not conform to generally accepted practices? If other meetings are only pretending to be assemblies, and are not genuinely that, why associate with them?

These questions are not only troublesome, they form a dilemma in the minds of several young Christians with

whom I have recently spoken. Can you give an explanation? A number will be watching for your answer for they feel that it is wrong to shun those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Please give us some scriptural counsel in regard to these matters.

Yours in Christ, S.O.M.

Some time ago a letter appeared in Ministry in Focus asking for scriptural help on the subject of fellowship between assemblies. Such a question is timely, for a mass of tradition has developed over the years, the effect of which has been very effective to put asunder that which God has joined together. The purpose of this article is to deal with the question in a positive way, appealing only to the Scriptures for instruction, and referring to a minimal extent to grounds taken and traditions followed by various “schools of thought.”

In order that the subject may be considered fully and in proper perspective, it is proposed to look into the Word for its teaching on these matters: (1) What is an assembly?; (2) How is an assembly formed?; (3) When does an assembly cease? (4) Who are the subjects of discipline?; (5) What are New Testament rules?

1. What is an assembly?

The word “church” in the popular usage may refer to a building set apart for religious services, a denomination with member “churches” throughout the world (as the Methodist Church) or the aggregate Christians in a country or community (as the Indian church, the church in China). The New Testament knows nothing of such meanings. Apart from rare references to a secular

gathering (as Acts 19:32-41), the word is used only two ways in Scripture.

The Church of which the Lord spoke in Matthew 16:13, and of which He is the builder, is called also the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23). There is one Body (Eph. 2:16 - note also the “one” in verses 14, 15 and 18; Eph. 3:6; 4:4). Into this one Body all believers are baptised in the Spirit by the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). This Church is built historically, on the foundation of the apostles and (N.T.) prophets (Eph. 2:20). Being a living Body united to a living Head, it makes increase of itself (Eph. 4:16) and seeing that the Lord is the Builder, to use the other figure of the Church, it contains no stone out of place, and can never be disfigured or dismembered, even by the gates of hell (Eph. 5:27; Matt. 16:18). This Church is not the subject of the present paper, but recognition of the truth concerning it is essential to a proper application of truth regarding the other use of the word “Church,” which we shall now consider.

There is a plurality of churches (Acts 9:31 and many references). These are not member churches of any organization, but each is a whole church (1 Cor. 14:23) and is capable of being gathered together in one place, sometimes such a small place as a house (Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). Each church is, whatever man’s opinion may be, “a household of God, a church of a God who is living” (1 Tim. 3:15) in contrast with other “gods” who have “houses” but are not living, consequently behaviour in their houses is of little account. Each church is a support of the truth; this is a matter of fact. The divine “mystery” displayed by such churches has to do with Him who is the Truth, and a synopsis of this

truth essentially held by a church is given in the next verse (v. 16). It has to do with the person and work of Christ; this is the vital doctrine insisted on by Paul here, also by Peter and by John (2 Peter 1:12-18; 2 John 9-11).

Certain features of an assembly are brought before us by the Lord Himself in His messages to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2-3). Note that they did not constitute an Asian church, but are called repeatedly "the churches." All were churches, all were golden, all were light-bearers, despite what the Lord had to say about some of them. Now all seven messages were to be written in a book and sent to the seven churches, with which direction John complied (Rev. 1:4 and 11). This surely means that the Lord demanded recognition by each assembly of all the others. If Smyrna, against whom nothing is said, had taken the ground that there was unjudged evil in Pergamos and therefore they were not walking by the same rule, and had refused to pass on the book to Pergamos, then Smyrna would have been violating the expressed will of the Lord, and Pergamos would have been left without His message. Again, if Philadelphia, free from blame, had looked with eyes untaught by grace at poor naked Laodicea and said, "The Lord is outside; that is not an assembly; we'll not send the book there," that would have been sheer disobedience to the Word of the Lord, and Laodicean saints would not have been given the restoring message that the Lord loved them even as He loved those at Philadelphia (compare v. 19 with v. 9) and desired their fellowship (v. 20).

One church only in the New Testament is addressed as "the church of God" (1 Cor. 1:2). Let us notice a few things said about it: They were enriched in every thing

by Christ, coming behind in no gift (ch. 1:5-7); they were waiting for the Lord's coming, when they would be blameless (7-8): they were called into fellowship of God's Son (9). There were contentions among them, and they were in danger of division (10-11). They were carnal, walking as men, assuming the names of men in a factional spirit (ch. 3:1-4). They were God's husbandry, God's building (16), God's temple (9). They belonged to Christ (2); Come of them were puffed up (ch. 4:18); There was fornication of a most vicious sort among them, known but unlamented (ch. 5:1-2).

Brother went to law with brother, before the ungodly (ch. 6:6); They were washed, sanctified justified (11); They were praiseworthy, in that they had kept the ordinances as delivered to them (ch. 11:2); Their gatherings were not for the better, but for the worse; because they were divided, could not worthily eat the Lord's supper, were greedy (17-22); Other things needed to be set in order (34); They were all baptised in one Spirit into the one Body (ch. 12:13); They were "Body of Christ", and members in particular (27); They were zealous of spiritual gifts (ch. 14:12); Some among them said there is no resurrection of the dead (ch. 15:12).

Now if aberrations from the standard regarding assembly practice, morals or doctrine constitute a company of believers not an assembly but only a "meeting," then the congregation at Corinth was ruled out on all three counts; but it was not ruled out. Paul called them "Church of God, Temple of the Holy Spirit, Body of Christ." He purposed not only to come to visit them, but wanted to stay with them for a period. See chapter 16:5-7. Lest it be objected that he could go with apostolic authority to put things right, he says that he

tried to persuade Apollos to go (ch. 16:12) and he was sending Timothy, a younger man, to them (ch. 4:17; 16:10). And to what other church did he write, “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus”?

The Lord Jesus spoke a parable about a mote and a beam, introducing it by a cautionary word concerning the implications involved in our judgment of others (see, please, Matthew 7:1-5). One lesson is that if we can see only evil and wrong in our brethren, then there is something wrong with our eyesight. “Motes” aplenty there will always be, both in individual saints and in assemblies; but the eye with a mote in it is still an eye, and calls for care and delicacy in handling by reason of the mote that is in it. It is the mote, not the eye, which calls for removal.

So despite the evils at Corinth, which needed exposure and correction, the congregation there was a church of God. Despite the evils in five of the churches in Asia, six of the seven were commended by the Lord for some virtues they possessed, the seventh was told of possibilities for health, riches, communion and victory, and all seven in the Lord’s reckoning were churches. Assemblies are such not by the opinions, attitudes or actions of men, but by the Lord’s recognition. He has given us certain features by which we too can recognize a church — not in an official sense, but know it to be one. Is the congregation in question a company of Christians (that is, having no known or avowed unbelievers among them) resting on Christ alone for their collective entity (1 Cor. 3:10-11) and owning His authority alone for their gatherings and activities (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 5:4)? Is it independent, in an organizational sense, of all other companies, owning

responsibility to the Lord alone; is it capable of being gathered in its entirety into one place? Does it support the doctrine of Christ, and hold fast the ordinances at least to the extent of outward observation? If all these questions are answered in the affirmative, there is an assembly after the New Testament pattern. Failure and shortcoming there will almost certainly be; these, like the mote in the eye, will affect the usefulness and comfort, but not the identity of the church.

—L.R.S.

Correspondence

Correspondence

Financial Stability And Christian Giving

Dear Brother J:

I have been reading “Personal Financial Stability” in the current issue of Ministry in Focus, and find it disappointing. True, it contains practical suggestions as to the management of money, but it seems to me that it omits what is most essential from a Scriptural point of view.

It says nothing as to honoring the Lord with one’s substance, or of the benefits of doing so (Prov. 3:9, 10: Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:18, 19, etc.) It says nothing about the dangers of preoccupation with the getting of money, or of the possibility of making it an object of confidence, while failing to trust in the living God (1 Tim. 6:9, 17). It says nothing of the privilege of being “ready to distribute, willing to communicate (share)” (1 Tim. 6:18), which was so marked and so highly commended in the Macedonian Christians (2 Cor. 8).

While ordinary frugality certainly has a value, I think you will agree that these other virtues need to be earnestly cultivated by the child of God, and that there never was a time when they needed so much to be inculcated as they do in our day.

With cordial greetings and sincere love in the Lord,

As ever in Him,

F.W.S.

* * *

Dear Mr. Editor:

I have been encouraged and instructed by articles in Ministry in Focus, but take exception to “Personal Financial Stability” in the July-August number. We are exhorted to be diligent in business; but the principles, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,” and “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also,” still obtain.

Furthermore, in the suggested budget there is no allowance made for 1 Corinthians 16:2, “Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.”

In the Stock-Market crash of the 1930’s worldly-wise men with the keenest intellect lost all, despaired and suicided.

As those who are bought with a price, our chief concern should be to render substantial returns to God for His major investment.

A Faithful Reader,

E.M.G.

* * *

Dear Brother J.

I read the article on sound finances in Focus, and while recognizing the need for such soundness was impressed by the almost complete failure to speak of Christian giving responsibility.

Just thought that I would mention this. I have been enjoying the magazine much.

J.W.D.

Counsel for Counsellors --Part 1

Counsel for Counsellors

Part 1

This Counsel for Counsellors was compiled by four brethren who have been active in camp work, and whose ministry has been made a spiritual success on many occasions: Richard Burson, Leonard Linstead, Donald Norbie, and Karl J. Pfaff.

Realizing the need for help on Camp Counselling, the following has been compiled for those who may be making their first attempt at being a counsellor. Perhaps the whole prospect is a little “scary” as you think of being father, mother, and spiritual adviser to a group of youngsters. You have a wonderful opportunity and it is well to think of it seriously. During those few, precious days in camp, your influence may change the whole life and eternal destiny of some boy or girl. It surely is fitting to spend much time in prayer as preparation.

Perhaps you have not yet led a soul to Christ; therefore, the following advice may prove helpful to you. The goal of camp work is to bring the unsaved to Christ. This is the work of God; consequently, we humans must be cautious. We cannot turn out converts as we do Ford parts. It is our hope that these suggestions may prove helpful. If at any time you are in doubt as to what to do, have the camp director or one of the invited speakers help you in dealing with the child.

The first requisite in the work of leading a person to the Saviour is to ascertain whether or not that person knows his own spiritual need. For example, one might ask

himself these questions: Does this child see his need? Why does he want to be saved? When does he want to be saved? What is his attitude toward sin; toward God; toward Christ?

A satisfactory answer to these questions will naturally result in a scriptural presentation of human sinnership. This may be done by reading to the child such verses as: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6).

Such biblical lessons should lead to teaching the child human helplessness. There are so many passages in the Holy Scripture the reading of which to any normal child will clarify this truth: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). The parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15 always appeals to a child. The debtor in need of having his debt forgiven is readily understood by an older child. Read to him Luke 7:41-42, and illustrate how one may be lost and how search may be made for him in his helplessness, and transfer the truth of the illustration to the spiritual need of each boy and girl. Emphasize that only through the death of Christ sins are forgiven (Acts 13:28-39). A debt in the corner store is not cancelled by a decision to pay cash in the future. All past accounts must be paid. Impress the young soul with the fact that Christ found man in death, and by dying He paid the debt of sin, which man because of his helplessness could not pay.

Conviction of sin must be obvious to the soul-winner before he presents the Gospel. Any camper who thinks that tomorrow or some other time is soon enough to be

saved, is not actually convicted of his need of Christ. It is sometimes wise to ask the camper if it would not be a good idea to wait another day, or until after some future event.

One young camper came to his counsellor concerned for the salvation of another boy. “Why do you want to see your friend saved?” he was asked. “Because he is the only one in our cabin who is not saved, and we want him to get saved too, so that we can have a perfect cabin,” was his reply. “Did the friend in question want to be saved? Was there a realization of need with him?” The answers to these questions were not known.

God is a holy God, and sin is rebellion against Him. All need to be convinced that they stand as sinners before Him.

Presenting the Gospel

What a glorious message is found in the Gospel! “That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15: 3-4). The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ comprise the “good news” of salvation.

In the presentation of the Gospel, one must take into consideration the biblical concept of faith. What it means to believe. Of course, believing is receiving Him (John 1:12). One cannot receive unless he believes. Believing may be passive. One can believe a fact, and yet that belief not affect him, nor change in any way his life or habits. Receiving is active. It is taking Christ for one’s self as the Gift of God. A gift is gratefully received. Should not Christ be received gratefully: should He not

be received in the simple manner in which a gift is received?

This point may be illustrated by the act of marriage. At a wedding the groom takes the bride to himself. No strange, mystical sense of feeling gives assurance one is truly married. Having taken the other person for himself, the marriage goes on record.

Often the matter of believing is confusing to children. Most children believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God. What has not been done is the matter of simply taking Christ as one's personal Saviour. He must be confessed as Lord according to Romans 10:9, by first of all taking one's place before Him as sinner, and then resting upon His work.

Faith will rest completely in Christ, in the value of His work finished upon the cross for salvation. Some trust in baptism for this, some in church-membership, some in communion, and some in other things. Only resting in the finished work of Christ will bring salvation and eternal life (John 3:16).

The dying thief in Luke 23 committed himself to the Saviour in perfect trust and rested completely in Him. Notice his appeal, "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." First, he addressed Christ as "Lord." He acknowledged Him as Lord in compliance with Romans 10:9. This, of course, was a recognition of Christ's Deity. Second, he requested, "Remember me." He therefore anticipated the resurrection, for humanly speaking Christ was dying. Finally, he pleaded, "When Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

Counsel for Counsellors --Part 2

Counsel for Counsellors

Part 2

Counsel for Counsellors was prepared by four brethren who possess considerable experience in this type of work. The Editor is certain that should further help be needed by interested parties, any one of these would be pleased to co-operate: Richard Burson, Leonard Linstead, Donald Norbie and Karl Phfaff.

In giving spiritual counsel to an enquirer, after having instructed him in those matters which pertain to sin and its penalty, to salvation and its simplicity, one should then refer to those Scriptures which clarify the subject of assurance.

Assurance

This, of course, demands a presentation of the cross work of Christ. This is always basic to salvation, “Christ died for our sins.” An understanding of the work of Christ results in the assurance of salvation. The question might be asked, For how many of our sins did Christ die? The death of Christ is the full payment for all sin, therefore, the believer’s acceptance with God is perfect.

The Word of God gives assurance. Christ is, indeed, the Living Word, and He is revealed in the Written Word. How do we know that these things are so, but by His Word? The Lord Jesus said, “He that heareth My word” (John 5:24). John tells us, “These things have I written unto you that ye may know” (I John 5:13). Such then is the Word of God, and God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2).

We read, “The Spirit Himself beareth witness” (Rom. 8:16). He bears witness to the individual by making the Scriptures good to his heart.

Furthermore, it is well to present the truth of the resurrection of Christ to the concerned one. The work of Christ upon the cross accomplished salvation, and the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of that work. The soul enjoys assurance “in that God hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). God showed His satisfaction with the work of Christ by raising Him from among the dead.

Dangers And Problems

There is the possibility of being over-anxious. Avoid going from Scripture to Scripture when one or two texts carefully explained would be better. Avoid the use of too many verses which practice often only confuses the child.

Pressing for decisions is a grave danger. One who deals with souls should guard against attempting to bring every enquirer to a decision for Christ. Sometimes the time is better spent presenting the Gospel in personal and simple terms and letting the child go to his cabin to give the matter further thought. Sometimes such an one will be saved alone, or return with deeper conviction of his need. There is a decision made in every conversation, but not every decision is conversion. Salvation is not a religious vote.

Where the Gospel is faithfully presented, the Spirit of God will bring salvation, for “Salvation is of the Lord.” The counsellor who does not lead a soul to the Lord every time he deals with one, should not feel ashamed. He should be ashamed to force words of decision when

they are not the result of the influence of God the Holy Spirit. One must be cautious not to put an empty lamp in the camper's hand, making him join the vast and swelling company of false professors on the road to Hell. May the Lord enable to prayerfully and intelligently deal with seeking souls who come for help.

Do not mistake homesickness for conviction. Homesickness often brings tears. Do not mention the word "homesickness" in the presence of the camper.

Beware of mass production. Emphasize the sinfulness of man and the completeness of the work of Christ. Better no professions, than false professions.

Watch for the "Me too" camper. At times, when the Spirit of God is dealing with some there is the camper who says, "I want to be saved too." While not disregarding the desire to know Him, probe into the reason or motive for wanting to know the Lord.

Do not use unscriptural methods in getting a decision. For example do not say, "Confess your sins." This is impossible because one cannot remember all his sins. Moreover, each is biased in his own favour in regard to sins. If God forgave only what one might confess, not all his sins would be forgiven. It is God's prerogative to say what constitutes sin, not man's. Confessing sins does not save. It is the confession of Christ that brings salvation (Rom. 10:9).

The believer should constantly confess his sins in order to maintain fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:9). Do not confuse these truths.

A confession of one's sinnership is necessary. A sinner is what one is by nature and what one is in practice. Sin comes from within (Jer. 17:9. Matt. 15:18-20. Eph. 2:3).

How did the worm get into the apple? Did he come from the outside, or did he appear first in the inside? The germ was planted first in the blossom, it was there before the apple was formed. Sin begins on the inside, but very early in life manifests itself. There should be a desire to forsake sin (Prov. 28:13).

The danger of putting words into a child's mouth. Let the child speak for himself. Soul winning is the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin, and not a matter of man's persuasiveness. Do not argue; one can win an argument and lose a soul.

Beware of mere curiosity. Do not incorporate your own experience as a must for the camper. Each one is an individual and is to be dealt with as an individual. Each experience is different. All are saved through simple faith in Jesus Christ, although the circumstance may differ.

Do not adhere to one system of leading campers to the Lord Jesus. Each one is an individual, and not all have the same problems or difficulties.

Many confuse feeling of some sort with salvation. Make clear the facts: "All have sinned" (Rom. 6:23). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), the necessity of faith in the finished work of Christ, "He that heareth My word, and believeth" (John 5:24), "As many as received Him,…even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

The feeling expresses itself from the joy and the relief of having received Christ. This may not be the same with any two individuals, and surely need not be emphasized. If the first two are genuine, the third is sure to follow.

Current Events

Vol 4:12 (Dec 1958)

Current Events

“THIS WEEK,” Oct. 1958. “One out of every 30 U.S.A. youngsters were arrested last year for violating the law. That statistic alone should shock every person into wanting to help stamp out juvenile delinquency. What to do? So far there has been no clear cut answer even among professionals whose job it is to cope With the problem. Judges, social workers, police officers, all seem to be divided into two opposing camps, the ‘go easy’ vs. the ‘get tough’.”

This problem might be partially solved if in the first place parental delinquency were curbed. In many cases children violate the law because of parental example, or neglect, or indulgence. The Bible insists upon the responsibility of the parent toward the child in the manifestation of a proper attitude (Eph. 6:4), by a scriptural rearing (Prov. 22:6), and by spiritual instruction (2 Tim. 3:13). Since delinquency is the failure to perform one’s duty, many parents are very definitely delinquents.

* * *

Los Angeles: On Monday Oct. 20, over sixty representative brethren from assemblies in Southern California met for a dinner meeting at Schaber’s Cafeteria, after which Mr. James Gunn spoke of “A Helpful Criticism of our Assembly Relationships.”

The points discussed were as follows:

1. The poor quality of ministry in the assemblies today in comparison with former times.

2. The confusion between New Testament principles and contemporary practice.

3. The low standard of assembly ethics.

All agreed that the meeting was most instructive and helpful. It was felt that similar meetings should be held periodically when able ministers of the Word are in the area.

* * *

India: In the Hindu pantheon, the wife of Siva is known as Kali, the Dark Mother. Recently she reasserted herself near Delhi. A poor street sweeper shouting, “Hail Mother Kali,” cut his little son’s throat, and then carried his bleeding body to the temple where he sprinkled the warm blood upon the idol goddess. What a reminder of heathenism in its cruelty and wickedness! Here we see the “deep things of Satan,” the awful influences that imprison the human mind and soul. Only the light of the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ could liberate one so fettered by superstition.

Current Events

Vol 4:8 (Aug 1958)

Current Events

Paris, France: General De Gaulle has assumed the heavy responsibility of establishing a Republican Government capable of assuring the unity and independence of France. This gallant soldier, who strove to save his home land from the ravishes of invasion, now attempts to save it from the horrors of civil war.

“Heroes have arisen to meet and solve the problems of their own countries,” said a lunch-time acquaintance to a Christian, “All that the, world needs now is a superman to solve the international problems, and then we shall enjoy world peace.”

God has a Man, the Man Christ Jesus, Who will solve both the national and international problems, and Who will give to the world rest. “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.”

Budapest, Hungary: Communist Hungary has announced the execution of former Premier Imre Nagy and three other top men of the 1956 abortive revolution. “The wicked worketh a deceitful work.” Moreover, we read, “The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood.” In spite of the pride and callousness of these Stalin terrorists, we know that the expectation of the wicked is wrath, for what is sown must be reaped.

Ottawa, Canada: President Eisenhower, during his visit to this capital, addressed a joint session of Parliament in which he declared that the basic differences between

Canada and the United States, mostly economic, could be resolved, but warned that both faced military threat and political attacks; and, consequently, that neither should permit any disagreement to hide these dangers.

Strife between nations of similar ideals, aspirations, and forms of government can only weaken relationships; even so, strife among brethren. “It is an honour for a man to cease from strife,” but “where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

Washington, U. S. A: Congress closed its ranks behind President Eisenhower as American marines poured a-shore into Lebanon. British forces again march eastward, and parts of the mighty navies of the Western nations manoeuvre in “readiness status.”

The Near East becomes again the focal point of world interest. Eventually, it will attract the armed forces of all the world, “And He shall gather them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Lev. 16:16). There Christ as King of Kings shall smite them and overthrow them in order to establish His reign of peace and righteousness.

Victoria, British Columbia: The royal visit of Princess Margaret to this side of the Atlantic, is not only a delightful and heart-warming event, but it ought to stir Christians in this day of lawlessness to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.

Toronto, Canada: A convention of brethren from different parts of the United States and Canada gathered in this city. They discussed the disintegration and spiritual deterioration evident among the assemblies today. They felt that a more scriptural and

forceful ministry must be given to expose the two great weaknesses that have resulted in these conditions; namely, the failure on the part of some to differentiate between divine principles and contemporary practices, and the appauling proportions of evil speaking. It was determined that written corrective ministry against these sins would be channelled through “Food for the Flock.”

Current Events

Vol 4:9 (Sept 1958)

Current Events

Kerala State, India: Recently, there has been some political disturbance here. The Communists are now in power in this State, and it does seem as though they will not be ousted easily. They are diabolically shrewd. They openly speak of this State as the Yennan of India; Yennan being the first part of China to become Communist. Just what the future holds one cannot say, but with the middle east almost at boiling point and Russia taking such an interest in it, and the Mohammedan world, the sons of Esau, becoming more and more a power to reckon with, the time of the end would appear as not very far off. The eagles will gather there for the carcass, the oil, before very long. In the meantime, we may see much by way of economic development in that area, and maybe new cities being built or old ones being reconstructed. From the prophetic view, it is interesting.

* * *

Toronto, Ontario: Children are now allowed to attend horse racing in this Province, announced the managing director of the Ontario Jockey Club. They must be accompanied by a parent; moreover, they are prohibited from the betting area. The Greater New York Racing Association, which this year decided to allow children at its horse parks, yesterday amended its ruling by banning children under 16. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from

it," wrote Solomon long ago. This proverb is as true in the one direction as in the other; train a child in crime when the mind is impressionable, and it is difficult, even in later life, to reform him. Train him in any vice, be it gambling, drinking, or any other, and it is difficult for him to break off these shackles. How fundamental the exhortation Paul gave to the Ephesians, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

* * *

Washington, D.C.: The Pentagon-sponsored study of the problem of surrender by any nation in a nuclear war stirred a tempest that reverberated through a wild Senate session. The uproar led to a strong move in the Senate to bar funds for any research or planning on "When and how, or in what circumstances the government of the United States should surrender this country and its people to any foreign power."

We are more than thankful for such determination, and it is sincerely hoped that there never will come a time when the Free Nations of the World will surrender, even under atomic pressure to pride and ambition of an adverse form of government. The day will come in the purposes of God when the entire world will surrender; yea, the entire Universe. "Wherefore God also hath exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

* * *

Beirut, Lebanon: A new president has been peacefully elected. That General Chehab, a somewhat retiring soft-spoken soldier, heads this torn nation is considered by many as the greatest thing that could ever have happened to Lebanon. One U.N. observer calls the peace that reigns (loosely speaking) over the country as a one man peace. How grand it will be when the One Man, the Man Christ Jesus, gives peace to the whole world. “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.”

Current Events

Vol 4:10 (Oct 1958)

Current Events

Tokyo, Japan: Communist China's Premier Chou En-lai called upon the United States to resume ambassador level talks in an effort to defend peace. At the same time Red China increased its naval activities in the Formosa Strait. This strategy reminds one of the deceitful Joab: "When Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died" (2 Sam. 3:27).

We read of the Antichrist, that he will appear "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Deception, a highly developed art with some nations, will increase until it meets a just end through Him Who sits upon a white horse, the Blessed One called Faithful and True.

* * *

Utrecht, Netherlands: Moscow's Metropolitan Nickolai said he would recommend that the Russian Orthodox Church join the World Council of Churches. They had previously rejected such a union. It appears that the Russians are to send observers to future meetings of the World Council. The Metropolitan also stated that there were 22,000 Russian Orthodox Churches in his country.

The World Council represents some 165 religious denominations mostly Protestant.

There seems every evidence in the Word of God that Christendom eventually will be united, that divergence in philosophy and theology will not keep its various sections long apart.

Even although the Metropolitan Nikolai may be only another voice for Communism, religious leaders of the Western world probably will welcome this amalgamation, and consider it a triumph of their religious tolerance and diplomacy.

Such developments are indications of the end of this age. God in His Word pictures a united Christendom, a woman upon a nondescript beast which she at first controls. Of this figure of Christendom, God says, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” Rev. 17:1).

All believers should heed the Lord’s call, “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

* * *

Dayton, Ohio: Psychologists are interested to know what was the first word spoken by man. Linguists have studied the unique character of human speech. Some believe that man first imitated animal sounds, and that in the evolution of speech, man indicated different experiences by different sounds. Recently, some very wise men (?) concluded that the first word uttered by man was “mama”. They base their conclusion on the fact that “mama” is the most universal word for mother; it can be found in both ancient and modern cultures.

The Bible does not record the first word uttered by man, but it does prove that man, as he came from the hand of

his Creator, possessed the power of speech. His first God-given task was to name the animals.

The earliest words of Adam recorded are most significant; they were spoken after the creation of Eve. “And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh’.” The divine comment upon this is very important in this day of moral delinquency and divorce. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. The speech of modern man has sadly departed from this.

Current Events

Vol 4:11 (Nov 1958)

Current Events

Western Electronic News: It is estimated that of all people born since the time of Christ who have lived to adolescence, nearly one third are still alive. If the population increase of the last 10 years had started in the year 1 A.D., for every person alive today, there would be 1 million people instead. There are various estimates of the rate at which world population is increasing. Most agree that it is 100,000 to 150,000 per day. At this rate, between three quarter and 1 million people sit down to the world's breakfast table every Monday morning who were not there the week before. How do we feed and clothe these people? By what means do we arrange to obtain their shelter? This involves the need of vast amounts of energy.

If such facts are a challenge to those who provide for the temporal needs of the world's population, are they not even a greater challenge to the disciple of Christ to whom He has said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

* * *

Toronto, Canada: At the Canadian National Exhibition here the Gideons had a black Morocco leather book in which visitors are invited to write one Bible verse with their name and address below. The general Secretary of the Gideons International in Canada said that since there are 31,000 verses in the Bible, and the verses are written at the rate of between 400 to 500 a day, it will

take seven more Exhibitions to complete it. The Gideons hope that the writing of one verse by each Exhibition visitor will arouse in them a desire to read their own Bibles.

Paris, France: One of France's monthly periodicals published the results of interviews with travellers from Soviet Russia. These travellers were asked: First, "What do the Soviet leaders want?" They answered, "They are convinced that without risking a war they can doom the West by economic strangulation." Next: "How do they plan to do this?" They answered, "By the secret weapon, science."

How slow humans are to learn! Nebuchadnezzar thought he could rule the world, so did Alexander the Great, so did Napoleon, the Kaiser and Hitler. God has reserved that honour for the Man Christ Jesus, "For there shall be given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him."

* * *

Renewals

Those readers whose subscriptions expire with the December issue received expiry notices in their October issue. This action was taken by our printer in order to speed up renewals and to avoid the last minute rush which has taxed our facilities in former years. Unfortunately, some of our readers were given the impression that they were not being credited for their full year. We regret any misunderstanding and give assurance that copies will continue to be sent until the date shown on the mailing envelope.

The year is passing quickly, however, and we urge our readers to send renewals promptly so that they will not miss any issues of FOOD FOR THE FLOCK for 1959.

Why not subscribe for some of your friends, for an isolated missionary, or for some shut-in? The subscription rates are $2.00 per year or $5.00 for three years, payable by money order or cash.

Dare To Be A Shammah

Dare To Be A Shammah

Harold Barker

The article, “Dare to be a Shammah,” by Harold Barker was submitted by our esteemed, departed colleague F. W. Schwartz. In his letter he wrote, “Some of us probably need this ministry.”

“And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory.”

—2 Sam. 23:11, 12

Daniel stood alone, prayed alone, and suffered alone. Great is the company of those who have been emboldened by his example and encouraged by his faithfulness. How often, like a fresh ozone-laden breeze from the ocean, the stirring words have come as a heaven-born tonic to a flagging and discouraging soul:

“Dare to be a Daniel,

Dare to stand alone,

Dare to have a purpose firm,

Dare to make it known.”

But God has given us more examples of devoted zeal and unflinching fortitude than that of Daniel. Have we not in the brief story of Shammah a fine incentive to courage and faithfulness? It cost Daniel much to pray and suffer; did it cost Shammah less to stand and fight?

The circumstances were these. The Philistines seemed to be having it very much their own way in the land of Israel. The position was similar to that which existed in Belgium under German occupation. The inhabitants of the country toiled, and the invaders reaped the fruit of their labors. They were on this occasion gathered in force to seize a crop of lentiles — food for cattle in normal times, but now, no doubt, grown by the downtrodden Israelites for their own sustenance.

This was the opportunity for Shammah to stand forth as a man who had had enough of defeat! Others fled; he fought. Others took for granted that the yoke of Palestine oppression could not be thrown off; he determined to make a stand. A patch of lentiles may not have been much to fight for, it was part of the heritage of the sons of Israel, and the Philistines had no right to it. Shammah, trusting in the help of Israel's God, "stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord wrought a great victory."

Are there any among my readers whose life has been one long story of repeated defeat? You remember that earnest desires with which you started on your Christian course. How faithful and devoted you intended to be! How constant you were going to be in prayer; how watchful against temptation! What progress you were going to make! What victories you meant to win!

And the reality? Oh, how different from the bright anticipation! Failure seems to have dogged your footsteps almost from the start. Your fine intentions look now rather like a heap of ruins; your lofty plans have been dashed into fragments. The Philistines have found you an easy prey. Instead of singing the song of victory

the dirge of defeat has been your frequent wail, until at last you have almost come to acquiesce in it, and to accept defeat as if nothing else were to be hoped for this side of heaven. What is left of your life is but “a patch of lentiles,” a sorry remnant of days which glowed with great expectations.

But, my brother, have you forgotten GOD? Does He acquiese in your discomfiture? Is there nothing better for you than this? Cannot He bring brighter and better days? With a strong cry for help to Him, leap to your feet! Dare to be a Shammah! Stand in the midst of the patch of lentiles, sword in hand. Defend their remnant of your days from the defiling foot of the Philistine. Let the Lord of hosts work a great victory for you!

After the great fire which destroyed the larger part of Chicago, a man whose store had been burned down went to a the place where the foundations still stood, marked now only by a heap of smoking ruins. Among these he cleared a space; on this he placed a table. He then fixed up a board on which he had painted these words: “Everything gone —except wife, children, and energy. Business resumed as usual to-morrow morning.”

Am I addressing any reader who feels as he contemplates his life, since he became a Christian, that he is standing amid a pile of ruins? His testimony, his home-life (regarded from the standpoint of what a Christian should be), a failure; his heart filled with bitter reflections? I have no doubt that many who read these lines may be thus described.

Brother! sister! All is not lost. Something may yet be saved from the wreckage, if only “a patch of lentiles.” Christ stands ready to come to your aid, and the

remnant of your days may yet become the occasion for one of His great victories! One of Napoleon's greatest victories was won on a field where the battle had been well-nigh lost. His troops had again and again been driven back, and it was late in the afternoon when Napoleon himself arrived upon the scene. Looking at the sun, already sinking towards the western horizon, he said: "There is just time to recover the day." And giving his orders with characteristic energy, he turned defeat into victory.

Dear aged brother or sister! you feel perhaps that your sun is near to setting; life's little day will soon be ended, leaving behind it a record of failure. Stay! there is time to recover the field! Be a Shammah! Stand in the midst of the lentile patch of life that remains. Cry mightily to the Lord for aid, and let Him win one of His great victories in you. He will do it. The God of Shammah still lives. He who at Cana kept the best wine to the last can fill the closing days of His tried and wayworn saints with the brightest of cheer. The joy of the Lord shall be your strength. Satan, discomfited, will flee from you. And having proved the power of your Saviour, enabling you to triumph over the Philistine even in the midst of a mere patch of lentile, you shall pass into the serene calm of His presence, to go no more out. From the lentile-patch to the Father's house! Lord grant that it may be so with everyone of us that has tasted the bitterness of defeat!

Different—But How!

Different—But How!

No doubt there are many young people in the "Assemblies" today, recognizing that there is something unique about the function of the assemblies, have asked, perhaps only to themselves, why? Many of us, if not all, go through a period of time when we echo the words of the Nation of Israel when they said, in effect, "We don't want to be different; we would rather be like the other nations; therefore get us a king."

It is evident that it is not merely enough to be a Christian and attend any Evangelical Church. The world today needs men, women and young people of conviction. An assembly with ten members who are there by conviction are worth twenty assemblies full of people who are prepared merely to attend an Evangelical Church.

Consider some of the ways in which an assembly stands out in the world of Christianity, what features make it unique and what Scriptures support its individuality.

First, it is different because it has no pastor yet is not pastorless.

There are three significant words used in the New Testament which have a distinct bearing on this subject:

Presbuteros — translated elder. This is the word used in Titus 1:5 where Paul asks Titus to "ordain elders." The predominant thought in the use of this word is that of maturity.

Episkopos — translated bishop or overseer. This is the word used in Titus 1:7 for a bishop; he must be blameless. This word comes from two Greek words: epi — over, scopeo —to look or see. Thus, literally the word means to watch or see over. Hence, in Titus 1, the word translated elder equates the word translated bishop.

Poimeen is translated Pastor or shepherd and is used in Ephesians 4:11 (and some, pastors) where it refers to the gifts to the Church. Acts 20:28 reads, “Take heed to the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you (the elders) overseers, to feed the Church of God (or act as a pastor or shepherd to the Church of God.)” In this verse the work of pastoring is given to the overseers. In short, the three words refer to the same individuals. The first (elders) finds its source is spiritual maturity; the second (overseers), in spiritual perceptiveness; the third, (pastors) in spiritual understanding.

Wherever these individuals are referred to in the New Testament, even though it is to one church only the reference is made, they are always in the plural. For example, Paul writes in Philipians 1:1 to the Bishops and Deacons, (both plural). In 1 Timothy 5:17 Paul advises that the elders (plural) who rule well are to be counted worthy of double honour.

In summary, the work of an elder, (overseer, bishop) is urgently needed in our assemblies. However, in our concern and youthful ambition, let us never consider anything but New Testament pattern, precedent and principle.

If we allow one man, spiritual though he may be, to function alone as pastor (in the church sense), four basic problems are bound to arise and they all begin with “P.”

It passes over the truth of the priesthood of all Believers; it prohibits the exercise of gifts; it perpetuates dependence on man; it provides a head other than Christ.

Secondly the assembly is different because it has a Breaking of Bread Service every week.

The term “first day of the week” takes on a peculiar meaning in the New Testament. The first time it is used is in relation to the resurrection (Matt. 28:1). The next time is in the Book of Acts where we read that the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Again it is used where Paul exhorts the Christians to lay aside as the Lord has prospered them, and to present their offering on the first day of the week so that there would be no special offerings when he arrived (1 Cor. 16:2).

In the first we have the foundation of our gathering, in the second, the fact of our gathering and in the third, the fruits of our gathering.

In the New Testament the “Lord’s Supper” became the centre of the whole activity of the local church. In 1 Corinthians 10, there may be a key to help us understand the reason for this. There are three tables mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, namely: the Jewish table, the demon’s table, the Lord’s Table.

When a person sat at the Jew’s table it signified his identification with the Jewish system; likewise when he sat at the table of demon sit meant that he was identified with them. Hence, when a Christian partook of the Lord’s supper as he sat at the Lord’s table he was, in a sense, saying, “By this act I am showing that I am identified with Christ in His death, burial and

resurrection." This continued display of the fidelity of the early Church kept the fires of persecution burning and yet was the means of causing the Church to grow.

Today the greatest protection the assembly has against the inroads of Modernism is this simple feast.

Another comment may be made particularly to young men. Never let Christian service take precedence over the privilege of remembering the Lord Jesus. Service, important though it may be, is always secondary to worship in the Word of God. In the very shadow of the Cross the Lord Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of Me."

Thirdly, each assembly is an entity responsible only to the Lord Himself.

There is no organization which governs what we believe, how we are to function or to whom we must account. Each assembly is responsible to God for its own activities. The local church is, both in its doctrines, functions and activity, a miniature of the Church Universal. It cannot, because of this fact, in any way contradict the principles governing the Church Universal. The Universal Church is described in the New Testament as a Body and Christ is the Head. So it is with the local church; He is the Head and we are responsible to Him alone for our activities.

Acts 20:28 reminds us that the appointment of overseers is made by the Holy Ghost. Inferred in this appointment is the fact that elders are responsible to Him alone for their actions. Hebrews 13:17 states that the elders must give an account of their stewardship of the people of God. To whom? To a divisional synod? To a local diocese? No! They must give account at the Judgment Seat of

Christ to Him who stands in the midst of the churches, to Him who is the Alpha and Omega, to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Divine Imperatives --Part 1

Divine Imperatives

Part 1

S.O.M.

We are again favoured with another splendid study from the pen of S.O.M. In future issues of Focus we hope S.O.M. will complete the series he has begun in this issue, and to this end the editor has both requested and urged him to do so.

The officers who were sent to arrest the Lord Jesus were so impressed by His persuasive words and natural eloquence that, overawed, they were unable to execute their commission and returned without Him. They exclaimed, “Never man spoke like this Man!” How true! The Lord always spoke graciously, but with authority, and at times even imperatively. There are four very interesting imperatives which He used when speaking to His own: “Come unto Me,” “Believe Me,” “Abide in Me,” and “Follow Me.” These are both instructive and challenging.

In the first place, these imperatives indicate the frailty of our humanity. The Lord knows how incredulous we become and how independent we act, so He calls, “Come unto Me.”

We are prone to doubt; consequently, He commands, “Believe in Me.” We also become barren and weak, so He exhorts, “Abide in Me.” The leadership of men frequently leaves us completely confused; therefore, He entreats, saying, “Follow Me.”

In the second place, these imperatives indicate the sufficiency of Christ. If we doubt, He is the anchorage of faith; if our lives are fruitless, He supplies the nourishment and strength. Should we at times stray and lose our way, He is the Ensign on the hill, our rallying point. Inasmuch as we are inclined to be self-assertive and to meddle in the affairs of others, gently He rebukes us and presents Himself as a powerful magnet to draw us to Himself. He calls to us all, “Follow Me.”

Come unto Me (Matthew 11:25-30)

Here is a divine invitation to all who are suffering under severe circumstances. To understand it properly we must consider its general setting, its immediate context, and the details of this invitation.

The General Setting

Matthew’s Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom; in it the Lord Jesus is the King. The four Gospels give us a four-fold portrait of the Lord. In Matthew He is a Prince; in Mark, a slave; in Luke, a cultured gentleman; and in John, the Son of God.

In the first ten chapters of Matthew, Christ is presented as the King by His herald, John the Baptist. He in turn offers Himself as Messiah King to the Jews, and sets forth the laws of His kingdom.

In chapter 11 we see the attitude of the whole nation to His offer.

This attitude is demonstrated by the attitude of three principal cities: Ca pernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida. This first section of Matthew ends with these very solemn words: “But whosoever shall deny Me before

men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:33). As the nation rejected Christ, Christ rejected the nation. He turns from those who had rejected Him and appeals to all who are encumbered and dejected, and calls, "Come unto Me."

Its Immediate Context

The six verses (11:25-30) which form the immediate context are very significant. The Lord here is praying. His prayer with its note of thanksgiving is in response to a communication from the Father. The text says, "Jesus answered." What wonderful fellowship and understanding there must be within the Godhead! "… thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent," continued the Lord Jesus in His prayer.

Later, the Apostle Paul wrote, "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21). Men have attempted to know God by wisdom through philosophy and science. They have not learned that infinite Wisdom has hidden Himself from most of such research. A few of the wise of this world have found God, but they found Him by faith, not by wisdom.

"And hast revealed them unto babes," said the Lord Jesus, intimating that God gave revelations to the immature in the wisdom of the world, to the lowly, the inadequate and the humble. May God give us grace to be before Him as little children.

In the text the wise and prudent must have been the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the scribes and the priests; the babes were the Lord's own disciples. And the disciples received this wonderful revelation; first, by the will of the Father: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed

good in thy sight." Second, it came through the ministry of the Son: "And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

The Divine Invitation

In this gracious act, the Son, according to the context, is revealing the Father. Actually, it is God in Christ who speaks here — God manifested in flesh. Two or three questions and their answers may simplify these precious words.

Who may come? The belaboured and the heavily burdened. This description is frequently taken as picturing the sinner working, striving and struggling under a load of sin and guilt. There is no doubt that all such may find forgiveness, acceptance, and peace in Christ. But could it not also be a reference to the condition of some of the Lord's own? Are there not some of God's beloved people who are labouring and struggling to attain, say, sinless perfection or some higher spiritual state? Are there not some who are burdened with traditional legalism and its consequent discouragement? There were some in the early Church (Acts 15:10). To all in such a condition, the Lord Jesus says, "Come unto Me."

Why should they come? First, because of the gift of Christ: "I will give you rest." What a word to those who are floundering and are defeated in their own attempts to attain a higher spiritual level. In their coming to the Lord Jesus there is rest (Matthew 11:28), peace (John 14:27), and joy (John 16:22). Second, because of the example of Christ: "For (because) I am meek and lowly in heart." Here is a word portrait of Christ. He is meek; that is, He is gentle and tender. He is not harsh and

overbearing. What an example! Third, because of the teaching of Christ: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.” Nicodemus said to the Lord, “Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with Him” (John 3:2).

The Lord had suggested that the Father had reserved certain things for the babes. It is to them that the Lord said, “Learn of Me” (i.e. Learn from Me). He seems to be saying, “Come, study through Me in order to be informed and made to understand.

Later the world was forced to acknowledge that although these babes, who had been present at the time of His prayer, were unlearned and ignorant of the schools of men, they were a marvel. Well might the world take knowledge that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Two of the disciples, Peter and John, seem to taunt the so-called wisdom of this world by adding to the verb “to know” in their writings the prefix “full.” The world might have knowledge, but because of their association with the Lord, the disciples had full knowledge.

Finally, all who are belaboured and burdened down should come because of the yoke of Christ: “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Here is complete provision for the laboured and heavy laden. To work in a poorly fitted or adjusted yoke would be very distressing. It could pinch and chafe and make any task difficult. The Lord Jesus says to all, “My yoke is easy,” that is, it is kind and good; it does not irritate.

The burden drawn by a yoke that chafes and hurts can only become more weighty. The Lord says, “My burden is light,” that is, it is easy to carry.

A yoke is literally used to bind two animals together in order that they may work together. In the Word of God it is used symbolically in numerous and different ways, some harmful and some beneficial.

The Lord Jesus does not impose His yoke upon any, but He is willing to share it with many. When Christ and the believer are yoked together, the burdens of life become lighter for the Christian, and he discovers that the Lord Jesus bears the greater part of any load.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee” (Psalms 55:22). He will sustain, not the burden only but thee — thyself and the burden, too.

Doctrinal Preaching

Doctrinal Preaching

Selected

Doctrine may be defined as that body of revealed truths taught throughout the Word of God. It is the detailed expression of the beliefs of the Christian Church, the tenets of her faith. Doctrine is dogma, the authoritative declaration of the “faith once delivered to the saints.”

During the last century great emphasis was placed upon the doctrinal preaching of the Word of God. and it was this type of preaching that produced such a flow of spiritual vigour as was then experienced. There has been a departure from such teaching among Christians; consequently, spiritual vitality ebbs.

Professor Dr. James Orr wrote: “Everyone must be aware that there is at the present time a great prejudice against doctrine — or, as it is often called ‘dogma’ — in religion; a great distrust and dislike of clear and systematic thinking about divine things. Men prefer, one cannot help seeing, to live in a region of haze and indefiniteness in regard to these matters. They want their thinking to be fluid and indefinite — something that can change with the times, and with the new lights which they think are being constantly brought to bear upon it, continually taking on new forms, and leaving the old behind.”

Preaching impoverished by a lack of doctrine results in an appalling ignorance of the fundamentals, and in a foggy approach to many of the problems in the world and in the Church.

In order to meet the need of God's people with doctrinal messages, one, no matter how gifted of the Lord as a speaker, must apply himself diligently and intensely to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He must learn to compare passage with passage, to classify themes and topics, and to organize the material thus gathered. He must be willing, prayerfully and carefully to conduct for his own benefit, and for the benefit of others, a methodical effective study of the entire Bible.

The longing of many is for the return to the doctrinal ministry of the last century. There is a disappointment in the shallow, indefiniteness of present day preaching.

Due Reverence

When we come into the presence of God we should never lose our sense of awe at the wonderful privilege given to us His creatures, that we can approach Him with all guilt removed by His precious blood and raised up by His grace to stand in His holy presence with boldness and unafraid. Let us remember when we address the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer that though He is a Glorified Man, He never ceased to be God. He is infinitely higher than we are, more than the heavens are higher than the earth. There has developed a sad familiarity in evangelical circles as to their method of addressing the Godhead, especially the Lord.

In the Scriptures it is worth noting that no one, not even His enemies, ever addressed the Lord as “Jesus” while He was here on earth. It was always “Lord,” “Master,” “Rabbi,” or “Teacher” or other terms of respect. Still less should we address Him only by His human name now that He is in heaven. In His grace He refers to Himself as “Jesus” (Acts 9:5; Rev. 22:16) as a monarch will say “I, George,” or “I, Elizabeth,” but it is not for His subjects to address Him thus.

The Holy Spirit often refers to Him as Jesus when the context so requires it, but we are dealing here, not with talking about Him, but speaking with Him.

Editorial

MIF 5:4 (July-Aug 1973)

Editorial

Rest Awhile

After the martyrdom of John the Baptist, the Lord said to the distraught disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile” (Mk. 6:31). Never was there One so understanding! He realized perfectly the tension and dismay of their hearts. He knew their need of quietness where they could think, of a circumstance to give release from emotional strain. He knew their need of seclusion and tranquility to recuperate from shock and disappointment. He therefore led them into solitude. He Himself went with them.

Our Lord, as the Great Shepherd of the sheep has frequently arranged that His people be temporarily freed from the pressure of heavy responsibility, spared from the discord and tumult of life, relieved from the tensions of business, home and church.

After Luther’s experience at the Diet of Worms, kind friends waylaid him and hurried him to the safety and quietness of Wartburg Castle. There for ten months he was able to relax and regain strength and pose. What an unexpected divine provision!

Through the kindness of God, arrangements between management and labour are such today that men may enjoy a vacation, they may stop work and break the usual routine. They may seek a place for relaxation and change.

Christians might well seek such pleasurable experiences, but they should make sure that they have with them the One who accompanied the disciples during their period of rest. They should remember also to give the Word of God a prominent place in the vacation. It was during his ten months in Wartburg Castle that Luther translated the Holy Scriptures into German for the use of plain men and women.

From Observation one has become apprehensive about the places and ways in which some of God's people spend their vacation. David has a concept of God omniscience that we all should remember: 'Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways" (Psa. 139:2-3).

Editorial

MIF 5:5 (Sept-Oct 1973)

Editorial

Selected

An Act of God

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26:8.

We speak in the legal sense of an “act of God” as an accident or a calamity which could not be forseen or avoided. The bodily resurrection of the dead that Paul spoke to King Agrippa about is also an act of God; but it is neither an accident nor a calamity. It is the very basis of our faith—the cornerstone on which the Christian framework rests. The resurrection of Christ is one of the best documented facts in all history and has withstood for ages the attempts of men to disprove it.

How can there be any more doubt about God’s purpose or ability to complete the redemption of our physical bodies than there is about the redemption of our souls! He Who created and controls the universe would have no trouble rebuilding a worn-out or dismembered body into one without any physical limitations or shortcomings. He Who originally formed man out of the dust of the ground and made him a living soul would have no trouble in re-uniting the living soul with the resurrected body. Since God has promised to do this, we should have no trouble believing it.

As a Jew, King Agrippa should have known that the testimony of Job, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, and other

prophets points to a literal bodily resurrection in the last day. Paul repeatedly cites the actual resurrection of our Lord as evidence and promise that we too shall one day rise from among the dead with the same victory over death, hell and the grave that Christ won by His resurrection. Jesus told His disciples, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

Incredible? Only believe in the omnipotence of God Who declared it; then all other difficulties disappear.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth … John 5:28, 29a.

—A.F.W.

Editorial

MIF 1:1 (Jan-Feb 1969)

This is the first issue of your magazine under its new name, MINISTRY IN FOCUS, with its new cover and its new Associated-Editor, Mr. W. Ross Rainey.

These improvements are intended to bring to you significant and relevant ministry in better and more attractive style.

We have much excellent ministry in store for 1969, if the Lord tarry, progressively we attempt to make this more readable for we are deeply interested in your spiritual welfare.

A New Year Message

Selected

“Certainly I will be with Thee”

On the opening day of another New Year, we need the assurance that the Lord and Lover of our souls will be with us. We dare not face the future, with all it’s trials, troubles and temptations alone. We turn with confidence to the Holy Scriptures and read therein words of certainty: “Certainly I will be with thee” (Ex. 3:12). “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Ex. 33:14).

As we think upon the unknown and the untrodden future, let us take these words for our comfort, cheer and consolation. We may experience bitter conflict, our pathway may be cheerless with the powers of darkness and doubt arrayed in all their might. While the hand of the enemy is thus directed against us, we must not

forget that we have the thrice-blessed assurance of our Saviour God: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). These lovely words remind us of the lines:

“I will never leave thee, never forsake,

At THY Word Lord Jesus, we fresh courage take”

Well might we have fresh courage and in calm confidence take these concepts with us for the commencement of the year:

“The Lord He it is that doth go before thee.

He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.”

The trials of our pathway will soon be exchanged for the no more sorrow, the no more pain, and the no more tears of our heavenly home. What a change!

We do well then to seek the needed grace not to lose heart, even when the tears come to our eyes, and course down our cheeks. Try to find the needed comfort in the following lovely words:

“When the storm is raging round thee,

Call on ME in humble prayer,

I will fold MY arms about thee,

Guard thee with the tend’rest care;

In the trial, in the trial,

I will make thy pathway clear,

For I’ll never, never leave thee,

I will never thee forsake!

“When thy soul is dark and clouded,

Filled with doubt, and grief, and care,

Through the mist by which ‘tis shrouded,

I will make a light appear.

And the banner, and the banner

Of My love I will uprear,

For I’ll never, never leave thee,

I will never thee forsake!”

This New Year message was written during an illness by Stewart Lavery, Belfast, Ireland, who since has gone to be with the Lord.

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Editorial

MIF 5:6 (Nov-Dec 1973)

Editorial

“Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars … such things must needs be.” “The Lord … He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth (Mk. 13:7, Psa. 46:9).

How strangely contradictory these statements appear! How we wish that the latter were even now true. But in spite of the efforts of the United Nations, the former is very descriptive of our century.

The Middle East, the cradle of the human race, especially has been the centre of countless wars, ever since ancient times. Untold sufferings have arisen from the hatred and the strife among the nations, both ancient and modern who have lived or still live around the Fertile Crescent. Semetic and Sumarian people were frequently locked together in battle. Mahomedans slaughtered Christian, and professing Christians attacked and slew Mahomedans. Arabs and Jews perpetuate the same destruction of life and property. Wars with only faint rumours of peace predominate the news media until the heart sickens and cries out, O Lord, how long!

The rejection of the Prince of Peace has produced a grim harvest of death and desolation. Men have sown the whirlwind and of the whirlwind they have reaped destruction. “Whatsoever a man (or a nation) soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Christ will return to trample His foes beneath His feet and to establish Himself as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Then, and not until then, will He make wars to cease unto the end of the earth. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Editorial

MIF 5:3 (May-June 1973)

Editorial

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes on Me, though he have died, shall live; and everyone who lives and believes on Me shall never die.” —John 11:25, 26 (Darby translation)

In these words of comfort to Martha, Jesus states the divine principle that He is the source of life eternal, and that whoever is joined to Him by faith possess that eternal life which cannot be interrupted by death. He proceeds to bring Lazarus back from the grave as evidence that He had the power to bring from among the dead everyone who would believe on Him. In a few weeks hence He would show to a skeptical world that He had triumphed over death by rising from the tomb Himself. His resurrection is the answer to all the questions men are asking today about life, death, immortality, eternity, etc. We have access to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ now, and because of His victory over death we who live in Him have the blessed assurance of eternal life in His presence.

On the resurrection of Christ hangs the entire structure of Christian faith. Without it there is no victory over death, no forgiveness of sins, no eternal security, and no relevance to the Christian life. There is no salvation apart from faith in the risen Christ. Jesus said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Because we know He lives, and because we know He cannot lie or break a promise, we know that those who are living in Him now will go right

on living in spite of the cessation of physical existence which we call death.

This is the meaning of the words Jesus spoke to Martha and which He directed to all those about Him at that time, and to all who have believed in Him down through the ages. It is the real message of the ressurection.

Editorial —A Day of Miracles

MIF 5:2 (Mar-Apr 1973)

Editorial—

A Day of Miracles

Even before dawn one of the greatest of all miracles had occurred — the triumphant resurrection of the Lord. Soon after, the displaced stone, the folded grave clothes, the angelic visitors, and the empty tomb gave miraculous proof the body of Jesus was gone. But all these could not demonstrate that Jesus was alive again. A living, vibrant personality must re-appear to those who had known Him best before His crucifixion.

And so, on that resurrection day our Lord appeared miraculously on five occasions.

1. He appeared to one grief-stricken (John 20:11-17, Mark 16:9-11). Mary Magdalene, while it was still dark, searched for “the body of my Lord.” To her the risen Saviour first appeared, turning her grief to joy.

2. He appeared next to obedient ones (Mark 16:1-8, Matt. 28:1-10, Luke 23:55 to 24:11). As the other women hastened with the angelic message, “He… is risen!”, Jesus Himself met them. In that meeting they worshipped. From that meeting they went on, reassured and recommissioned.

3. He appeared later to a contrite backslider (Luke 24:33-35, 1 Cor. 15:5). Peter had earlier deserted and denied his Lord with shocking curses. Then, at Jesus’ glance, the realization of the awfulness of his actions had sent him away weeping bitter tears. Nothing is

known of that later private meeting on that resurrection Sunday. We can only marvel at the grace and love of the Lord in seeking out His crushed disciple.

4. Later He appeared to two confused and disappointed disciples (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-35). They had been so certain that Jesus was the Messiah and that Israel's redemption was at hand. Was Jesus not the Messiah? Was their understanding of prophecy wrong? Why stay at Jerusalem now? Then, on that journey of despair, Jesus met them, taught them, broke bread with them, and reversed both their despair and their journey.

5. Finally, the Lord appeared to the fearful and doubting apostles (Luke 24:33-43, John 20:19-25) gathered secretly, "for fear of the Jews." Suddenly, Jesus was right there! It could not really be true; it must be a spirit. But the wounds of the crucifixion finally settled every doubt, then they "were glad when they saw the Lord."

Our Lord's appearances that day brought to His sorely-tried disciples joy, belief, worship and new-found vigour.

And Jesus still appears today, not now to sight but to the eye of faith. Where there is grief, or contrition, or disappointment or fear, or any other problem, Jesus wants to "draw near" to bring the blessing and joy of a fresh encounter with Him.

—J.C.B.

Education

Education

Selected

Many young Christians imagine a conflict between spiritual values and scholastic standings. They wonder whether or not human achievement is detrimental to divine approval; whether or not present education is a deterrent to future approbation. This conflict revolves around three considerations. First, does academic training hinder a Christian in the development of his spiritual life? Second, does a high degree of spirituality require that he renounce forever a formal education? Third, is it possible for a Christian to enjoy the benefits of an education and yet to retain intimate fellowship with God?

Having stated the problem, it is proper at the beginning of this enquiry that the writer state his firm conviction, an education is not a hindrance to godliness; in fact, it is possible for a Christian to pursue special training and at the same time to deepen his communion with the Lord and His people.

While it is true that the direct results of academic work are only reaped in this life, and the compensations of living for the Lord are enjoyed throughout the future, it is equally true that proper systematic learning, even in secular subjects, better equips one for the holy service of the Lord Jesus. It can also, if properly used, stabilize convictions and deepen faith in God.

The Marks of Education

The marks of education are not those of personal pride, of assumed wisdom, of ignorant dogmatism, or of objectionable arrogance. The indications of mental development are seen in a gracious humility, a clear realization of personal limitations, a willingness to learn, and a patient tolerance toward others.

A servant of Christ arriving in a midwestern city for a special ministry meeting was met by two brethren from the local congregation of the saints. Academically speaking these two brethren were very far apart, the one was the professor of mathematics in the State University, the other had not more than finished common grammar school. The fellowship enjoyed between these two brethren was admirable. The doctor of science appreciated his brother because of his deep spirituality and successful service for the Lord; the unlettered brother esteemed most highly his erudite yet spiritual friend. The doctor's attitude was the product of much training and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The preaching brother's attitude was the result of many experiences in life and in the school of God. The happy dinner-hour spent with these two brethren is recalled with much pleasure and satisfaction.

The Means of Education

There are different methods by which one may acquire a liberal education. Someone has said that to know the Bible is to be well educated. There is a measure of truth in that statement, if the full import of the remark is understood. A relative statement made by another calls the Bible the true university. A good knowledge of the Bible embraces a certain knowledge of many of the

natural sciences, an understanding of the principles of logic, and a development of true philosophy. One can broaden his general knowledge by a diligent application to the study of the Holy Scriptures. There are many who have greatly increased their learning in this very way.

Of course the usual manner of gaining an education is to attend a recognized collegiate, college, university, technical institution or nursing school where teaching is in accord with an established curriculum. When it is possible to do so, this is the easiest, and at times the quickest method.

In speaking of learning, we must not ignore self-education. There are many who, although they never attended college, bear the marks of scholarship. They have read many books, studied deeply the subjects which they either needed or appreciated. Others have been tutored through correspondence courses. These means coupled with the experiences of life contribute much to erudition.

No man living ever has obtained a perfect education. The very fact that men have to specialize in certain subjects is a proof that the capacities of even the greatest minds are limited. Man is ever learning, but never reaching the full knowledge of the truth.

The Blessing of Education

A Christian professor of mathematics associated with a large research enterprise was asked by some friends what he actually did in his work. “Well,” said the mathematician, “I just make myself available.” His somewhat evasive reply intimated that he was ready to serve others. This apparently is the attitude of the highly

educated man. There are numberless examples of this in the Bible.

It is interesting to notice that the two most extensive writers in the Bible were scholastic men, Moses and Paul. It has been suggested by some that before God could use Moses he had to lead him into the wilderness in order that he forget all he had learned in Egypt, and that God sent Saul into Arabia to unlearn the teaching of Gamaliel. Such statements are both fanciful and exaggerative, and quite unfounded as far as the factual records are concerned. Moses never forgot court etiquette, thus he was capable to deal with Pharoah. Saul never forgot his schooling; consequently, he was able to address the philosophers of Mars' Hill.

To these illustrious scholars might be added the names of others, names like that of Daniel, the Prime Minister; Nicodemus, the religious political leader; Luke, the physician; and Zenas, the lawyer.

Through a number of these well trained men who made themselves available to the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord has given us much of the Bible.

The Dangers of Education

One of the best educated men in the primitive Church, the Apostle Paul, wrote, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1). Here is a grave peril, one to be strictly avoided. There is nothing more disgusting than a proud display of superior knowledge. Knowledge must be used with wisdom, and must be made the servant of prudence. Knowledge, generally speaking, produces effects in the extremes. It makes one either humble, for it teaches him how limited human mental

capacity is; or it makes one proud, for it increases self-importance. All should remember the verse that follows the one quoted, “If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”

There is the danger of education impairing faith. Acquired knowledge either leads us to God in perfect confidence or it directs us away from Him in unbelief.

A Christian studying dentistry encountered many difficulties. Lectures in biology and kindred subjects seemed to shake his faith in the Bible. One evening when he was feeling quite disturbed, he decided to discuss the matter with a Christian physician.

“When you were studying ancient history,” asked the doctor, “did you learn anything about Greek mythology?” “Oh! yes, certainly,” replied the young man. “Did you have to answer any questions on an examination relative to that subject?” again asked the doctor. Did you believe in the gods and goddesses of the ancient world, or did you accept that part of your schooling only as something your lecturer wanted you to know?” “I never believed that those gods and goddesses existed, but merely learned about them because it seemed that we should know the religious beliefs and practices of past centuries.”

“Well,” said the kind physician, “there are other subjects you must treat similarly. It is nice to know what others are thinking, but it is not necessary that you accept as inerrant truth everything that others think and speak.”

Everyone must learn to differentiate between a philosophy and a science, between a hypothesis and a fact. Truth can always endure investigation for it

remains absolute, but under investigation many theories disappear; they are discovered to be false.

The Consecration of Education

From earliest times there have been men who have consecrated to the Lord all that they possessed in regard to both natural and acquired talents.

Men like J. N. Darby, William Kelly, F. W. Grant, W. E. Vine, C. F. Hogg, and many others have sanctified their advanced training to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Through it they have explored the Word of God, translated it, expounded and explained it in a measure impossible to the untrained mind.

Godly medical men have renounced forever a lucrative position in the home-land, and because of their years of specialized training in medicine and surgery, have reached thousands with the gospel as they have ministered to their bodily needs. The medical missionary it to be respected not only for his education but for his spirituality that led him to sacrifice his all for the Lord Jesus.

What has been said about the medical doctor can also be said about nurses and school teachers who have offered themselves, their ability, and their training to the work of the Lord.

We must not think that education is useful only on the foreign mission field. There are many educated men who while serving commerce and industry are a great blessing to the Church of God, and to the assemblies of God’s people.

Education when once acquired may be placed upon the altar for Christ and there, offered, under His Lordship, can become a great blessing to many.

S. O. M.

Failure – Faithfulness

Failure – Faithfulness

Selected

The year ends! The year begins! Here at this juncture we look back in retrospection; we look forward in anticipation. Our review of the past generally results in regrets; our preview of the future, in resolutions. Our pilgrimage through the years that go and come provide the evidences of our failures, but they also provide the proofs of God's faithfulness. This contrast between the human and the divine prompted the Apostle Paul to write, "… all men have not faith. But God is faithful" (2 Thess. 3:2-3).

The quick rocking of the chair betrayed the agitated mood of the elderly woman who sat in it. Her shoulders were bowed with the burdens of the years. Her facial contortions told of the grief and loneliness of her widowhood, and the involuntary sigh disclosed her present perplexity.

Although she had sent for me, I had some misgivings of being any help to her. She knew much of the Word of God and certain passages had been a comfort and support to her during former times of adversity. In her present dilemma she had turned to the worldly-wise. They had sympathized as with one whom the world had treated ill.

Her words seemed to spill from her lips, the one falling over the other, as she rehearsed the trials of the decades which lay behind, and as she related the most recent.

There is good therapy in listening. What else was possible under the circumstances? Eventually she did stop talking and sat still and glum, staring into space.

“O Lord, is there balm in Gilead? If there is, provide it now,” I prayed. “May I read from the Word of God?”

Her silence, I accepted as consent and read from Psalm 103. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”

“Have there been no divine benefits during this past year?” I ventured. Her face relaxed as if this were a new thought, but she offered no answer.

“Was your vacation with your friends not pleasant?” She nodded an assent. Several more questions were asked. All required and received and affirmative. We then averred that we really had to thank God for the past.

In the centre of the Psalm we read, “The mercy of the Lord is from, everlasting to everlasting.” Remarks were made to the effect that God would not change; time did not influence Him; what He had been, He would be.

Pent-up feelings burst, a stifled sob drew my eyes from the page to the tear-stained face. Again the words tumbled over each other.

“The past is gone,” impetuously she stated, and the future is not yet; it is now, right, now, that bothers me. I have never been like this before; I cannot understand.”

Once more we turned to Psalm 103 and read of God’s contemporary attitude toward His people: “As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.”

A quietness seemed to fill the room. The uneasiness subsided. A calmness settled upon us a we bowed in prayer.

To such a Father with His faithfulness, sympathy, knowledge and keen memory we all should commit ourselves. Our pilgrimage becomes shorter as the years parade past. As ever and always, “He abideth faithful” (2 Tim. 2:13).

—S.O.M.

Fount of Living Waters

FFF 11:8 (Oct 1965)

Fount of Living Waters

Mini-Yo-We is TOPS!" The young enthusiast emphasized his exclamation as if he had tried all summer camps and had at last found the very best. While comparisons are most improper, we have to admit that we caught some of the boy's enthusiasm as we mingled with the campers during our recent visit. The happy hours spent with the Administrator, Robert Grant, and the Director, Frazer MacKenzie, the camp chaplains, the counsellors, junior and senior, and the many boys at South Camp and the Edgewoods section convinced us that summer camp work is one of the modern means God is using to save souls and mould lives.

The primary purpose of Mini-Yo-We is to glorify God in service among boys and girls. To win young souls to Christ demands expenditure and effort. It also requires wisdom to lead these simple believers into an intimate fellowship with the Lord, and into the building of stable Christian characters. To accomplish this primary objective a well planned enjoyable holiday for youngsters is provided in beautiful surroundings, in a spiritual atmosphere, under the careful and prayerful supervision of capable directors and counsellors.

In 1947 a Committee for the Extension of Sunday School Work formed in the city of Toronto, Canada. This committee investigated the possibility of summer camp ministry, and finally, for ten days, rented Fair Haven Camp Grounds near Beaverton. In this first venture 50

boys and 50 girls enjoyed their vacations and God honoured the exercise of those who instituted the move. The results were so gratifying that a decision was made to purchase and develop a property for camp work among the assemblies.

When the present site was located the committee called a meeting in Central Hall, Toronto. The $16,000 necessary for the purchase and equipping of half the present property seemed prohibitive. Objections and obstacles were discouraging to even the more exercised and aggressive workers until an elder brother of much experience said, “Not only is the Lord with us, but business-wise it means that only 32 brethren have to pledge themselves to contribute $500 each.” As we looked over the large investment represented now and thought of the accomplishments of the intervening years, $16,000 seemed a very small sum. The Lord who met the need at the beginning, is just the same now.

“Uncle Bob, please come to the office.” The voice of Mrs. Copeland sounded over the public address system, in response to our request she called for brother Grant. While we waited, we found that staff members are known during camp by nick-names and abbreviations: “Uncle Bob,” “Rivers,” “A. G.” “Meadow,” etc. This is but one of the many ways the noble group of Christian workers makes itself all things to all boys and girls that they might win some.

The warmth and sincerity of Uncle Bob’s welcome set us at ease to wander through the camp in order that we see for ourselves what was being done.

Boys were everywhere: running, wrestling, shouting, playing. As we walked towards the lake, a whistle

sounded and over the public address system hymns were being played, it was Bible study hour. There could be no better place to start our survey than in a Bible study so we followed some of the boys to the portable hall in which their classes were held. It was not really a Bible study that morning, it was an examination on the life of Joseph. Thirty boys bowed over the mimeograph sheet to fill in the answers, true or false.

From there we moved to another group in the Crafts Building and listened while 25 boys received a lesson from the life of Paul.

Bible studies over, we visited the First-Aid infirmary. The Registered Nurse on duty described the facilities and answered our questions. A little girl, quickly appeared. We noticed several girls around the camp, the children of staff members. “I have a bee sting on my back,” she asserted. Carefully the little jersey was adjusted to the burning spot. “Looks more like a mosquito bite to me,” said the nurse. “Well, it hurts” replied the little one. Medication brought such instant relief that we wondered whether the effect was physical or psychological.

It was now lunch time, the test of order and discipline in any camp. We joined the ranks of boys as they stood according to their cabins, orderly awaiting word from the Assistant-Director to enter the dining room; this they did with alacrity as the names of their cabins were called.

The meal prepared under the supervision of Dietitian Mrs. Robert Grant, was just what hungry boys would need both in quantity and quality.

After lunch, while others went to their cabins for a necessary siesta, we followed about 20 young converts to the portable hall and listened to excellent counsel by one of the chaplains. During the week he intended to cover some essential subjects: assurance, the Bible, prayer, witnessing, and the two natures. We heard him speak on the Word of God in the Christian's life. As we walked away, we prayed, "Lord, may Thy Word ever be to these young fellows the authority, guide and strength of their character and testimony."

A conducted tour through Edge-woods, a section of Mini-Yo-We adjacent to South Camp where we had been, only deepened our admiration for the work. The ages at Edge-woods are higher than those at South Camp, all the boys there are 14 or over. There were 32 at the time of our visit, more than half of whom were unsaved; consequently, there was much prayer for these teen-agers in all the counsellors' prayer meetings.

The new building under construction that we visited is for South Camp; it will increase facilities and make it possible to enlarge the younger groups. Hopes are high that it may be ready for next season.

About 4 p.m. we caught our breath and our hearts pounded as the siren wailed out over the entire camp; trouble had occured. Boys, counsellors, chaplains, everybody was running to the water front. What tragedy had struck Mini-Yo-We? Three forgetful boys failed to return their tags to the safety rack after they had finished swimming. What a relief to all when it was obvious that only tags had to be recovered! God has preserved this camp from serious accident throughout the years; our hearts are truly grateful to Him.

Free time at camp is precious time; some of the boys do their memory work then, some seek individual help from their counsellors, some write home. These minutes of nonscheduled activities in some cases have been crucial; they have been the periods of decisions, decisions for Christ.

As the close of boys' camp was only two days away, the staff prepared a Mother Goose Banquet for them. What a splendid meal, each course whetted the appetite! The meal was accompanied by enough child's play to provoke merriment. Little faces from broken families and poor environments shone with happiness as they rarely do.

Camp Mini-Yo-We operates for several important reasons on Eastern Standard Time, dusk therefore settled an hour earlier for us. "Listen," said Uncle Bob. We stepped outside the lodge. Below us all the boys were standing at attention around the flag pole, and as the flag of Canada was slowly lowered, they sang together, "God, save the Queen." Good citizenship and national loyalty are thus impressed upon young hearts.

After the lowering of the flag the boys returned to the lodge for a program of relaxation and change in which, so it seemed to us, every one participated. The program was planned not only as an entertainment but for the use of natural talents. What a delight to see such cordiality, team work, and consideration among boys! Their example would have been good for some men.

The evening ended a little later than usual, so the boys were quickly dismissed with words of caution by the Director. They made their ways along lighted paths to their cabins, where alone with the Lord and their

counsellors they closed the day with a quiet time of devotion and prayer. Weary limbs and happy hearts were soon tucked away in sleeping bags or under blankets.

Our visit showed us that an extensive curriculum has been developed at Mini-Yo-We. For the campers there are both physical and spiritual benefits. There are sports, camp-craft, swimming, boating, treking, but also prayer meetings, Bible studies, devotions, Sunday service, etc. all with an evangelical emphasis.

Over and above the plans for the campers, there is special training for young men. There is a class for C.I. T's (Counsellors in training). To enter this course one must be a Christian, 16 years of age and ready to receive Bible teaching, instruction in counselling, and ready to apply oneself to camp activities, water safety measures, and sports. To be a junior counsellor one must be 17 years old and have attained certain special qualifications. A senior counsellor must be 18. All such young men are given definite training for Christian leadership.

There are, today, men in full time service for the Lord, men giving leadership in assemblies, who first developed their spiritual gifts and moral qualities under this training. The plan for the future is to continue and even intensify this diversified training.

A cup of tea and a sandwich in the company of the staff closed our pleasant visit. As we nosed the car down the dark side roads to the highway and turned south and homeward, although conscious of the hum of night tractor-trailer traffic that rumbled northward, our minds were full of a new appreciation of the work being done by zealous brethren and sisters who sacrifice their

summers to touch young consciences and fashion young lives for the glory of God.

Further Comments on Church Letter

Further Comments on Church Letter

Selected

2. How Is an Assembly Formed?

We have noted three figures of an assembly in 1 Corinthians 3, namely God's husbandry, God's building and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Here it is suggested that the interest of the triune God is seen; for the Father plants (Matt. 15:13) and the Son builds (Matt. 16:18). But in the context of the expressions it is seen that while the power is divine, it is exercised through human instruments. So Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Paul laid the foundation, others built on it, but the foundation was Jesus Christ (V. 10-11). The entry of the Holy Spirit, constituting the building a temple — a shrine, a holy place — was His own sovereign act; no human power could force Him in, or debar Him from entering. It is suggested that all these three considerations, and no others, are necessary in the formation of an assembly.

The foundation is Christ. It is evident that the laying of the foundation was in the preaching of the gospel. "So we preach, and so ye believe," said Paul (1 Cor. 15:11). The first two chapters of the Epistle tell us what Paul preached in Corinth, and why. The historical account is in Acts 18. When he came to Corinth, he testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ (v. 5). Passing from the unbelieving Jews to the Gentiles, the effect of his preaching was that Crispus believed on the Lord with all

his house, and many others believed and were baptized (v. 8). Thus was the foundation laid.

Paul planted. The sowing of the good seed of the Word of God produced “seedlings” — people were born anew, begotten of God, became possessors of eternal life. What was to be done with them? Were they to be left to struggle for existence among rocks and thorns, where the wild beasts of the forest should trample them? One of God’s first recorded acts was to plant a garden, for which provision was made that it should be dressed and kept (Gen. 2:8-15). The heavenly Gardener is still interested in His plants; so He has for them a “husbandry” — a cultivated field, where the soil is tilled and kept free from weeds, where the grubs left by those beautiful butterflies are carefully eradicated. In short, His plants are planted; they are brought together and tended for their good and His enjoyment. Combining both figures, Paul laid the foundation and set the plants, and that was all that human hands could do.

Paul remained at Corinth for three and a half years, but in all that time there is no suggestion that he sent to Jerusalem, or anywhere else, seeking approval for the saints in Corinth to assemble, or that the Corinthian assembly should be “recognized” by other assemblies or disciples. There is no hint of any such action ever being taken in the formation of assemblies in the Book of Acts. This was not an official action, but the normal and expected result of the preaching of the Word. In the early days of Paul’s ministry, churches were found in all Judea and Gallilee and Samaria (Acts 9:31) but none was inaugurated ceremonially.

Apollos watered. This does not mean that he prayed. He came to Corinth after Paul had left, and carried on the teaching which had been begun by Paul (Acts 18:27 - 19:1). The effect of the Word of God is likened to rain (Deut. 32:2; Isa. 55:1011). It is certain that Apollos watered where Paul had planted; if by some means the plants had been able to remove themselves elsewhere, the quality of the water would be just as good, but these plants would miss out on the refreshment given.

The third feature of the Corinthian assembly was the presence of the Holy Spirit. He came; and despite all their failure and sin, He came to stay. He is divine, and we are human. We do not see Him come, and if He went, we should not see Him go. It is not for us to say that He has not come, or that He is not there.

Indications of His presence ought to be seen, but there is only One who can say concerning the state of an assembly unerringly and with authority, “I know” (Rev. 2-3).

When does an assembly cease?

The New Testament contains no record of the termination of an assembly, or of a situation arising in which an assembly was, or ought to have been, “excommunicated” by other assemblies. It also contains no instructions regarding the “winding up” of an assembly, or of other disciplinary action to be taken by other assemblies against a failing assembly. What little is said about the treatment of defaulting assemblies is in Revelation 2-3, where the strong implication is that the Lord reserves to Himself the right to take action. These two chapters should be carefully read just now, especially the messages to Ephesus, Pergamos,

Thyatiria, Sardis, and Laodicea, so that the comment following may be checked against the Word itself. Please note:—

1. In each case there is a call to repentance; the Lord who sees and assesses the evil present is desirous that it should be dealt with by the failing saints themselves, so that intervention may be averted.

2. In each case except that of Laodicea there is good mentioned by the Lord; and this is said first, before a word of censure is spoken, Anointed eyes will look for and usually find something commendable in an assembly or in a saint of God, even where there is much need for betterment in other respects. Even to Laodicea the Lord offers counsel, speaks of His willingness to supply, of His love (compare Rev. 3:19 with Heb. 12:5-11) and of His desire for fellowship with them.

3. Each is still in His eyes a church.

4. Remedial action necessary is to be applied within the church, not by agencies outside the assembly concerned. In the event that disciplinary action is needed, it will be taken by the Lord Himself, and directed towards transgressing individuals within the assembly (ch. 2:16 and 22) or the assembly itself (ch. 3:3). In the extreme case that the assembly ceases (ch. 2:5; 3:16), it is again the Lord Himself, and no other, who takes action.

5. The assembly ceases when the candlestick is removed out of its place (ch. 2:5). Observers in other churches are not invited, much less obliged to determine whether the light is shining, or to what extent it has become dim. The church is not the lamp, but the lampstand; while this remains, the church continues. If I fail to discern the

light, it may be that my eyes are at fault; and if the Lord gives any of His servants priestly service regarding a soiled wick or a flickering light, it will be in the direction of trimming the wick, not of extinguishing the light (Ex. 37:23). The Lord did not say, I will put out the light, but I will remove the support of the light. As long as He leaves the candlestick in its place, there in His eyes is the Assembly.

Adverting to figures of an assembly seen in 1 Corinthians 3, if cracks appear in the building, if a brick is dislodged here and there, or white ants are found in some of the timbers is it therefore no longer a building? If weeds appear in the garden, or snails do their deadly work, or the flowers droop because the under-gardeners withhold the water, is it therefore no longer a garden? If in the household (1 Tim. 3:15) some of the children are often disobedient, come late to meals, leave their rooms untidy, is it therefore not a household? And, most important, by what right can I assert with positiveness that the Holy Spirit has withdrawn from His shrine? Even the temple in Jerusalem, with all the enormities committed there, the Lord Jesus called “My Father’s house” (John 2:16).

Ought there to be cracks in the building, drooping plants in the garden, disorder in the household? That is another question. Such a condition could never please the Lord, nor should it satisfy His servants. But if we view the situation with hostility, saying, “I wouldn’t go near that place”; or with futility, saying “What’s the use?” — surely we are helping to turn disgrace into disaster. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be

tempted” (Gal. 6:1). May not the principle apply beyond the faulty individual.

Garden Suggestions

Garden Suggestions

These suggestions for the garden of the heart and life were given to brother Henry Fletcher by an aged sister in New York. The humour and the arrangement of the p's, let-us, squash, and turn-up, may enforce these practical features of true piety upon our minds.

First: Plant Five Rows of P's

Patience: "Be patient unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:6). Politeness: "Be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Pet. 3:8).

Peaceable: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Perseverance: "Continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine (Acts 2:42).

Prayer: "By prayer and supplication … let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

Plant Close Beside These Three Rows of Squash

Squash gossip. Squash criticism. Squash dissension.

Then Plant Five Rows of Let-Us

Let us be faithful (Gal. 6:9), let us have grace (Heb. 12:28), let us hold fast (Heb. 10:23), let us consider one another (Heb. 10:24), and let us love one another (1 John 4:7).

Next to These Plant Three Good Rows of Turn-Up

Turn up at all meetings of the assembly, including the prayer meeting. Turn up with a word to praise the Lord. Turn up with a word of encouragement and blessing to others.

Start planting at once, and watch your garden grow.

God Sings

God Sings

Selected

God Sings! — That is a marvelous statement!

God Sings! When a Soul is Converted! — That transcends imagination!

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is MIGHTY; He will SAVE, He will REJOICE OVER THEE WITH JOY; He will rest in His love, He will JOY OVER THEE WITH SINGING!!” (Zeph. 3:17). Even the Hallelujah Chorus sung by the hosts of heaven could never compare to the melody of our God SINGING! Imagination cannot conceive of music like that! In Hebrews 2:12, the Lord Jesus says, “I will SING praise unto thee!” What glory! What melody! Once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament it speaks of our God SINGING! Did you notice that in Luke 15:10 it does not say the angels of God rejoice over one sinner that repents? It says, “there is JOY in the PRESENCE of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Who is in the presence of the angels of God? Of course, God Himself! How does He express His joy? The prophet Zephaniah says, through the Holy Spirit, “He will JOY over thee with SINGING!” Doesn’t that put a new light on soul winning? Every time a soul is led to repentance there is melody in Heaven — not by angels nor by any created being, but by God Himself! GOD SINGS! Just to meditate on that thrills the soul! But GOD SINGS WHEN ONE SINNER REPENTETH — Ah, that beggars description!

E. S. H.

Graham Swales

Graham Swales

Selected

April 28, 1911 — December 11, 1983

“A Brother Beloved”

For over twenty years our esteemed brother served on the Board of Food for the Flock Inc. His true exercise towards the distribution of the printed word, to build up the Lord’s people, has been most appreciated and along with his quiet godly counsel will long be remembered by all.

Graham was born on April 28, 1911, in Midland, Ontario, the youngest child of William Edward and Harriet Swales.

Graham was born again as a 13-year old boy on May 4, 1924, under the ministry of Mr. John Silvester and Mr. George Shivas. The verse that led him to the Lord was Isaiah 53:5. He became actively involved in serving the Lord through delivering tracts, teaching Sunday School, organizing children’s meetings, preaching the Gospel and ministering the Word of God.

Graham endeared himself to the Lord’s people during his Christian life by his thorough presentation of the Word of God, his love for people and his sense of humour.

Graham’s family remember him affectionately as a husband, brother, father and grandfather who provided for their spiritual and temporal welfare with love, fervour and loyalty.

Graham is survived by his wife Vera; sister Muriel Swales; children Edward, Elizabeth, and Robert; grandchildren Bill, Derek, Jim and Sandra Swales; Cathy, Carolyn and Lisa Joyce; Jennifer and Jonathan Swales.

The funeral service was conducted at the Bramalea Bible Chapel on Wednesday, December 14, 1983. Dr. James Naismith ministered and Mr. Robert Saynor conducted the committal service.

The following poem was found on the flyleaf of a New Testament which belonged to Graham:

Out of this life I shall never take

Things of silver and gold I make;

All that I cherish and hoard away

After I leave — on this earth must stay;

THOUGH I CALL IT MINE AND BOAST ITS WORTH I MUST GIVE IT UP WHEN I LEAVE THIS EARTH All that I gather — all that I keep—

I must give it up when I fall asleep;

And I often wonder what I shall own

In that other life when I pass alone.

WILL THE GREAT JUDGE SAY WHEN THE TASK IS THROUGH THAT MY SPIRIT HAS GATHERED SOME RICHES TOO?

Or shall at last it be mine to find

All that I worked for is left behind!

Grievances

Grievances

Selected

Have you never had a grievance —a real, substantial grievance? Were you never wronged in pocket or reputation? Were you never wounded in the house of your friends? Has no Christian brother ever treated you unjustly or unkindly? Will they neither admit it, confess it, or repair it? Well now, you have a grievance: a fair, legitimate, honest grievance. You have solid ground for complaint. Now what do you do with your grievance? Do you nurse it? Do you brood over it? Do you press it close to your bosom to keep it warm? Do you listen to its cries and complaints? And do you feed it that it may thrive and grow and get stronger and stronger?

Be honest with yourself, and see how matters really stand between the Lord and your soul. Do you not find that this overgrown child which you so carefully nurse, which is scarcely ever out of your arms and never out of your mind, is secretly draining away the life of your soul? Where is your patience, your forbearance, your broken contrite heart, your submission to the will of God, your brotherly love, your meekness and quietness, your forgiving spirit, your Godly fear of displeasing the Lord by hating your brother, your obedience to the Gospel precepts?

You have been wronged, grievously wronged; well, all the more reason why you should show the Christian spirit by forgiving those who have wronged you. Will you never forgive? Will you go down to the grave in your

unforgiving spirit? Will you nurse your child till, like a spoilt child, he becomes your master, and ends in robbing you of all you possess worth having? Do you not see how lean you are getting? Do you not find how barren your soul is, what little access you have to God in prayer, what little enjoyment of His presence and smiles of His face? But why all this darkness? Is there not a cause? Do not these increase the more you brood over your wrongs? And should not this lead you to fear lest you be holding an enemy of God in your bosom?

Could you see your real case, you would find that you are nursing enmity, pride and self-righteousness; that you are walking contrary to the precepts of the Gospel; and that you are acting against the mind and example of Christ who forgave His murderers.

Happiness Or Holiness?

MIF 14:3 (May-June 1982)

Happiness Or Holiness?

Selected

For a generation or so it seems that Christians have placed an inordinate emphasis on happiness as the primary goal of life. It's true that God doesn't intend for His people to be like the cat which got into the vinegar and became a "sour puss." After all, didn't Nehemiah tell us, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10)? And wasn't it the Apostle Paul himself who wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4)? Yes, but remember these men of God were not on a happiness kick nor was it their goal to avoid hardship and suffering. On the contrary, they wrote of joy and rejoicing out of a context of manifold trials, yet these very trials became steppingstones to knowing and experiencing divine joy.

There is a vast difference between worldly happiness and heavenly joy. The former is outward and dependent on favorable happenings; the latter is from within and is produced by the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23). If we would know true happiness or joy, then holiness of character and conduct must be our goal.

It was Peter who wrote, "but as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life. Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). By position Christians are forever holy (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 10:10), but it is our practice that Peter has in mind. Literally he says (and it is a command), "Become ye

holy.” Practical holiness is a process in the life of the believer, and it is realized and demonstrated through obedience to God’s Word. As a result of loving and obeying His revealed will, divine joy will follow. In other words, fulfillment of our duty, no matter what the cost, is the secret of experiencing genuine happiness. In an applicable context, Christ said to His disciples, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17).

A nameless author was right on target when he wrote:

“I hope someone soon declares a moratorium on books about sex, love, husbands, wives, perfect happiness, total fulfillment and the like. The consequence of this material is that millions of Christians are chasing unrealizable will-o’-the-wisps and paying insufficient attention to Bible study, sound doctrine and personal witnessing. One who pursues happiness as such can never be happy. One who buys a book on the subject is defeated in advance. The reason is that happiness can only come through duty fulfilled, responsibilities met, promises kept. We ought not to ask, ‘How can I be happy?’ but rather, ‘What is my duty?’”

—W. Ross Rainey

Hebrews 11 (Unknown)

(The composer of this outline is unknown) I. FAITH LOOKS AHEAD TO A HOPE OR EXPECTATION NOT YET REALIZED (v.1) A. Abel’s offering (v.4) looked ahead to Calvary and the forgiveness of sins. B. Enoch’s walk (v.5) looked ahead to the pleasures that God had stored up for him C. Noah’s preparation (v.7) looked ahead to a terrible day of ju...(The composer of this outline is unknown)

I. FAITH LOOKS AHEAD TO A HOPE OR EXPECTATION NOT YET REALIZED (v.1) A. Abel’s offering (v.4) looked ahead to Calvary and the forgiveness of sins. B. Enoch’s walk (v.5) looked ahead to the pleasures that God had stored up for him C. Noah’s preparation (v.7) looked ahead to a terrible day of judgment D. Abraham’s calling (v.8) looked ahead to an inheritance not yet received E. Moses’ choice (v.26) looked ahead to riches that were greater than Egypt II. FAITH IS CONVICTION WITHOUT SIGHT (v.1)

A. Abel saw no outward evidence that his offering was better than Cain’s (v.4) B. Enoch did not receive material rewards for his pleasing testimony to God (v.5) C. Noah did not see rain until seven days after the animals entered the ark (Gen.7:4) D. Abraham could not see the land of his inheritance when he left Mesopotamia (v.8) E. Moses sought to deliver his people without seeing how God would use him (Acts 7:23) III. FAITH CAUSES TEMPORARY LOSS (12:1,2)

A. Abel was killed by his brother (Gen. 4:8)

B. Enoch lived 365 years (Gen. 5:23); the average age of decease of his five predecessors was 917 years. C. Noah lost all his earthly possessions when the flood came (Gen. 7:23) D. Abraham was a pilgrim and lived in tents (v.9)

E. Moses turned his back on the Egyptian palace and royal life (v.24) IV. FAITH IS ALWAYS REWARDED (12:2)

A. Abel being dead still speaks (v.4) - he was rewarded with a lasting testimony B. Enoch did not see death but was translated (v.5)

C. Noah and his family were the only survivors of a great flood (Gen. 7:23) D. Abraham waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (v.10) E. Moses looked to the reward (v.26)

V. FAITH ALWAYS LEAVES AN EXAMPLE TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW (1 TIM. 4:12; 2 TIM. 1:5) A. Abel left the example of the sacrifice of faith. He offered a substitute. (1 Pet. 1:18-20) B. Enoch left the example of the walk of faith. His walk pleased God not self. C. Noah left the example of the work of faith. He prepared the ark. D. Abraham left the example of the life of faith.

E. Moses left the example of the choice of faith.

Helpful Notes

MIF 14:5 (Sept-Oct 1982)

Helpful Notes

Selected

NEVER give the least quarter to persons who deny the inspiration of the Bible or any fundamental doctrine. No quarter to the enemy. No surrender of the truth. To all such be firm; to leaders, unyielding; to followers, compassionate (Jude 22, 23).

The great element of success is enthusiasm, but in divine matters it must be enthusiasm created in the soul by the Holy Ghost. He it is who on earth directs all for the glory of Christ. He it is who fixes the affections on Christ, and who burns in upon the soul — eternal realities. Those are the men who turn the world upside down.

CULTIVATE largeness of heart and breadth of thought, such as will overlap ecclesiastical barriers, dwelling upon all that is morally good and excellent wherever found; yet on no account abnegate your scriptural position, nor in the least degree compromise the claims and truth of God.

OUR sins are forgotten (Heb. 10:17). Our tears are bottled (Ps. 56:8). Our words are recorded (Mal. 3:16). Our hairs are numbered (Luke 12:7). Our need is known (Matt. 6:32). Israel's God is ours. His infinite care and omnipotent strength are enough for life's journey.

ONE loving act — the outcome of pure affection to Christ, and the simple desire to please him — is worth

all the talk of all the clever, clear-headed doctrinal people. Combine the practical side of Christianity (James 1) with the doctrinal (Rom. 8), and you produce a man who serves his generation.

—Walter Scott

Henry Fletcher

Henry Fletcher

“A Prince Among His Brethren”

(Gen. 49:26 Margin)

Through faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus a man becomes a child of God, but only through spiritual maturity and deep experiences with the Lord does he merit the rare, biblical title, “a man of God.”

I first met Henry Fletcher at Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, in 1923, and he impressed me then as being a man of God. Later we lived and worked together, and had the joy of beginning the assembly at Valencia. This close relationship confirmed my earlier impressions. Now after 45 years I still so regard him.

Henry was a unique combination of quietness and resoluteness, of stability and tolerance, of piety and practical Christianity. He will be remembered more by his warm sympathetic ministry rather than by some extraordinary ability or some spectacular accomplishment.

Brother Fletcher was born at Hamilton, Canada, in 1895. His mother was a devout Christian so from his earliest days he was taught the Word of God. Her work was later supplemented by that of the teachers in the McNab Street assembly Sunday School which Henry attended. There is no doubt but that his conversion to the Lord when 13 years old was in large part due to her constant intercession. Furthermore, through her motherly influence, she kindled in his heart a keen

interest in the ways of the Lord. On more than one occasion we have heard Henry pay tribute to his mother, and thank God for her surveillance over his young life.

Through the reading of his Bible, Henry learned that he should obey the Lord and be baptized by immersion; having complied with this, he was received into the assembly on McNab Street, Hamilton. There he spent eight happy years: teaching a Sunday School class, distributing gospel literature in small towns and villages, participating in open-air services, and assuming what responsibilities he could as well as enjoying the many privileges of the assembly. It was in this manner that he received his early training for the years of pioneering and pastoral ministry that lay ahead.

In very forthright language Henry tells of those critical experiences through which he recognized the call of God, and of how he responded.

“From my conversion, through reading magazines and books about missionaries and their work, and through hearing some of them give accounts of the Lord’s work in regions beyond, there was quickened in my soul a strong desire to make the gospel known. Along with this came a sense of the importance of systematic giving of my income to the Lord. I soon learned to lay aside a definite percentage of my wages as the Lord’s portion. From this contributions were made to the assembly offerings, and gifts were sent to different servants of Christ as fellowship with them in their work. Through these direct contacts a deeper exercise in regard to the need of the world was stimulated in my heart.

“A point in life was eventually reached when in my bedroom before the Lord a complete surrender was

made. Although I felt poor, weak and worthless in myself, I was ready for any service that He might indicate.

“Mature and experienced brethren to whom I told my exercise were most understanding and sympathetic, and encouraged me to pursue my plans before the Lord. Finally, a meeting was arranged and I presented my exercise before all the elders of the assembly. After I had explained God’s dealings with me, their unanimous decision was that if I felt so led of the Lord to leave the “nets” and go forth for His name’s sake, they would not discourage me. Ultimately, in 1916 I ventured forth in complete dependance upon the Lord to supply all my need.

“I resigned from my position in the bank at the end of the month and by the 15th of the next month accompanied Mr. and Mrs. William Williams on their return to Venezuela. I had been much interested in Venezuela for I knew of the labours of such brethren as Mitchell, Crane, Adams, Johnston, and others.”

Some four years later Miss Agnes Renwick of Galt, Ontario, Henry’s fiancée, went to Venezuela and there they were married. Together they shared the trials and the triumphs of missionary experiences; they sowed together and reaped together; together they will receive the reward given by the Master.

During the summer of 1923 I moved into the city of Valencia, Venezuela, and there sought to present the gospel publicly and from house to house. What a joy it was to learn some months later that Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, recently returned from their first furlough, had decided to take up residence in Valencia! They came and

rented a house large enough to serve as a home and a chapel. I soon moved from my small primitive quarters to live with them.

God blessed the efforts we made; souls were saved and the work in general expanded. Two episodes concerned with the development remain permanently fixed in memory; they reveal the true character of this man of God.

The young believers wanted to obey the Lord in baptism: we therefore decided that the time had come to form the assembly. This growth and the stability of the work became the topic of conversation whenever Henry, Agnes and I were together by ourselves. During these conversations we agreed that in order to avoid anything untoward at the celebration of the Lord's supper, we ought to brief particularly the men as to form and order.

On the Saturday of the baptism, Henry came to me and said, "We believe in the leading of the Holy Spirit, don't we? Well, to-morrow morning we shall have the opportunity to prove whether He really does. Would you agree that nothing relative to procedure be said to the converts?" It seemed incautious, but finally we agreed.

The first celebration of the Lord's Supper in Valencia never will be forgotten; it was most orderly and worshipful. The guidance of the Holy Spirit was obvious. The only unusual feature was that at the close there was no bread and no wine left; the zealous young believers had taken the words of the Lord literally; they ate and drank; they did not take merely a crumb, nor did they only moisten their lips.

The new assembly hall was almost ready for the opening, but there were no gospel texts on display. A

painter had been hired to paint verses in scrolls on the walls; the scrolls were excellent but the lettering, a complete failure. What could we do? The matter seemed urgent. One morning I told Henry that while I could not produce ornate letters like a sign-writer, I could paint texts on the scrolls in block letters of a draftsman. “Try,” said Henry. After hours of painstaking work a text was finished and won unanimous approval.

For days I stood on a ladder literally drawing each letter, then filling the outline with paint. An attack of malaria slowed the progress, and as my temperature increased, it was only with effort that the texts were finished in time for the opening, an opening I could not attend, being in bed with the fever.

Well do I remember the solicitude of brother Henry. Frequently he came to enquire as to how I felt, to express his gratitude, and to encourage me in the task. Those texts remained for many years a testimony in the gospel.

Henry Fletcher, as these anecdotes indicate, was a man with firm confidence in God and with an affectionate concern for his brethren.

Almost simultaneously with these achievements, the blessing of a baby boy filled the hearts of Henry and Agnes with delight. Their son, now Dr. Renwick Fletcher, Toronto, Canada, was born just before the hall at Valencia was finished.

After some years in Valencia during which he sought to teach the Christians and consolidate the work, brother Fletcher felt constrained to go to Puerto Rico. He with his wife and little son arrived there in 1930. Here he repeated the process of pioneering: preaching the

gospel, teaching the Christians, forming a local church, raising new buildings, and engaging in all that was conducive to the establishing of a permanent testimony for God.

Because of ill health, the Fletchers in 1941 were forced to leave Puerto Rico. For a number of personal reasons they decided to take up residence in Toronto, Canada. For the last twenty-five and more years brother Fletcher has moved out from his home and ministered the Word of God throughout Canada and the United States.

In 1960 the Lord called Agnes Fletcher home to be with Himself; her work was finished; her pilgrimage ended. Her passing was a great loss to Henry, but he was given grace to fulfil his own ministry.

One evening in 1963, Henry and I unintentionally met on a train enroute to New York; Henry was going to minister at a conference of the Spanish-speaking assemblies there, and I was going to a conference in New Jersey. Henry always maintained a deep interest in Latin-American Christians. As we chatted together, he told me of his intention to remarry and that he was engaged to a lovely lady, Miss Alvina Velde, who would be a help to him in his ministry. The Lord was pleased to grant them five happy useful years together, and while Alvina mourns her great loss, she treasures sacred memories of the joyous hours spent with her husband in the service of the Master.

After several months in ill health, Henry Fletcher was promoted to higher service; he departed to be with Christ on Friday, May 17, 1968.

Many came to the memorial services in Toronto on the Monday evening following. At this service Ormer G. C.

Sprunt paid tribute to our esteemed brother and reviewed his service for the Lord. Ernest B. Sprunt spoke words of comfort and inspiration in which he likened Henry Fletcher to Barnabas (Acts 11:19-26). On Tuesday morning our brother's remains were laid to rest in the city of his birth, Hamilton, Ontario; there to await the glorious resurrection morning:

"Until we meet again before His throne,

Clothed in the spotless robe He gives His own,

Until we know even as we are known

Good night! Good night! Good night!"

His Brother’s Keeper

His Brother’s Keeper

Selected

The rhectorical question asked by Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” expresses the attitude of many in this modern world toward even their fellow-believers. The disinterest and carelessness so prevalent among members of the Body of Christ belie their intimate relationship.

What should be, perhaps once was: “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). Preoccupation with the affairs of this life, personal preferences, and ecclesiastical estrangements all have sadly influenced the mutual esteem and love that ought to exist among Christians, and have produced in their stead an aloofness and coolness unbecoming disciples of the Lord.

Two students attending the same lectures and writing the same tests indicate that there are exceptions to this general lamentable condition.

Both were eligible for a class award, but both could not be the winner and this they must have known. On the day of the dead-line when all test papers had to be submitted, the elder of the two phoned his friend and enquired as to whether or not he had submitted his paper.

“This is the last day,” he said, “in which we may submit our papers. Mine is in, What about yours?”

“Mine is not,” replied the younger. “I have completed it, but I cannot get off work to either take it or mail it.”

“I have time to take it. I shall pick it up at your home and have it in the hands of the lecturer by noon,” explained the other.

Through his forethought and concern that test paper was marked and graded before the dead-line hour. Little did he know then that his gracious and unselfish gesture was to cost him the coveted award. When all the papers were graded, the one that he kindly had delivered for his brother resulted in his loss. His young Christian friend, through that final paper, had attained a slightly higher grade and won the award.

We appreciate and admire the earnest regard of the elder for the younger. Moreover, we should follow his example, imitating his commendable conduct.

Perhaps, in the experience of the two students we may discover the reason for the lack of love, fellowship and mutual consideration. Christian relationship involves not only a willingness to help another but a willingness to sacrifice for another. To be my brother’s keeper may be a costly matter, an expenditure of time, effort and money; and, occasionally, even the compensations of approval.

Well might we apply to our Christian relations the exhortation of the Apostle Peter, “Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22). The adverb “fervently” used by Peter suggests that in our love for fellow-believers we are to stretch our

efforts to accomplish this object. Let us stretch a point or two as by love we serve one another.

S.O.M.

His Worthy Name

His Worthy Name

Selected

Henry Palmieri of Mechanicsville, New York, has sent this selection from the writings of Arthur W. Pink. He considers it quite relevant to the Editorial in the last number.

(James 2:7)

“YOURS IN THE NAME OF JESUS” How many who owe their all, both for time and eternity, to the peerless One, refer thus to Him who was “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). It is “Jesus” this, and “Jesus” that. But is it becoming for worms of the dust, for sinners, even sinners saved by grace, to thus speak of Him? Jesus is the Lord of Glory, and surely it is due the dignity and majesty of His person that this be recognized and owned, even in our references to Him in common speech. Those who despise and reject the Saviour speak of Him as “The Carpenter,” “The Nazarene,” as “Jesus.” But should those who have been given an “understanding, that we may know Him that is true” (1 John 5:20), ignore His Lordship? In a word, can we who have been redeemed by His precious blood do less than confess Him as the Lord Jesus Christ?

In John 13:13 we find Him saying, “Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.” Surely this is enough for the believer. If our blessed Redeemer declares we “say well” when we call Him “Master and Lord,” can we afford to speak of Him in terms on which His approval is not stamped? Never once do we find any

of the apostles addressing Him as “Jesus” while He was with them on earth. When He exhorted them to make request for an increase of laborers, He bade them “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest” (Mt. 9:38). When He sent forth the disciples to secure the ass on which He was to ride into Jerusalem. He ordered them to say, “The Lord hath need of him” (Lk. 19:31). And again, when He required the use of the upper room, it was, “The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples” (Mt. 26:18).

It may be objected to what we have contended for above that the Gospel narratives commonly refer to our Lord simply as “Jesus.” It was Jesus who was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. It was Jesus who was moved with compassion as He beheld the sufferings and sorrows of humanity. It was Jesus who cleansed the leper, healed the sick, and raised the dead. This is true, and the explanation is not far to seek. IT WAS THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD WHO, through the pens of the evangelists, thus refers to Him, and this makes all the difference.

Let me illustrate. What would be thought of one of the subjects of King George the fifth referring to the reigning monarch of Great Britain and saying, “I saw George pass through the ciity this morning?” If then it would be entirely incongruous for one of his subjects to speak thus of the King of England, how much more is it to refer to the King of Kings simply as “Jesus?” But now, King George’s wife could refer to and speak of her husband as “George” with perfect propriety. Thus it is that the Holy Spirit in the Gospel narrative refers to our Lord by His personal name.

Once more, Jesus was the Name of our Lord in humiliation. Said the angel to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21), and in order to save His people from their sins He had to die the death of the cross. But it is to be noted that when Peter addressed the Jews on the day of Pentecost, he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST (Acts 2:36). Hence it is that the Saviour is referred to as Christ, Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Lord Jesus Christ, and never simply as Jesus except when reference is made (either direct, by way of implication, or in contrast) to His humiliation and suffering.

Our modern hymns are largely responsible for the dishonor that is now so generally cast upon "That Worthy Name." And we cannot but raise our voice in loud protest against much of the trash (for that is the correct term) that today masquerades under the name of hymns and religious songs. It is sad and shocking to find professing Christians singing, "A little talk with Jesus makes it right." Fancy saying, "A little talk with God makes it right!" And yet Jesus was and is God blessed forever (Rom. 9:5). Such unseemly FAMILIARITY as "a little talk" with "The mighty God" is horrible.

"There's not a friend like THE LOWLY JESUS" is utterly erroneous, and nigh akin to blasphemy. There is no lowly Jesus today, except the one created by the imagination and sentimentality of the moderns. Instead of being lowly, the Lord Jesus Christ is seated "On the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Heb. 1:3), from whence He will shortly descend in flaming fire to take vengeance on

them that know not God and obey not His Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Above we have said that the apostles never once addressed our Lord simply as "Jesus." Mark now, HOW THEY DID refer to the Blessed One. "And Peter answered Him, and said, LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water" (Mt. 14:28). "Then came Peter to Him, and said Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" (Matt. 18:21). "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, LORD, IS IT I? (Mt. 26:22). "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, LORD, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them?" (Luke 9:54). "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, THE LORD is risen indeed" (Lk. 24:33, 34). "Thomas said unto Him, LORD, we know not whither Thou goest" (John 14:5). "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is THE LORD" (John 21:17).

In marked contrast with the manner in which the apostles referred to and spoke of their Lord, note how others, particularly HIS ENEMIES referred to Him. "And THE MULTITUDE said, This is JESUS the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21:11). "And hearing THE MULTITUDE pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that JESUS OF Nazareth passeth by" (Lk. 18:36, 37). "And there was in their synagogue a man with AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT: and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou JESUS of Nazareth"? (Mk. 1:23, 24). "And when he was gone out into the porch, another MAID saw him and said unto

them that were there, This fellow was also with JESUS OF NAZARETH (Mt. 26:71).

Christian reader, Will you refer to and speak of the Son of God as did His ENEMIES and the DEMONS, namely, as “Jesus,” or will you call Him “Master and Lord” as did the apostles, concerning whom He said, “ye say well?” Let us ask God to deliver us from this flippant, careless, irreverent manner of confessing His Son. Let us own our Saviour as “Lord” during the time of His rejection by the world. Let us remember His words, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all should honor the Son, EVEN AS THEY HONOR THE FATHER,” (John 5:22, 23). Let us remember it is written, “For by THY WORDS thou shalt be justified, and by THY WORDS thou shalt be condemned” (Mt. 12:37).

Selected — Henry Palmieri

From A. W. P.

How Do You Name Your Lord?

How Do You Name Your Lord?

Selected

This excerpt, submitted by F. W. Schwartz, is from a book by Sir Robert Anderson, For His Name's Sake — A Plea for Reverence. It is hoped that God's people will be led to greater care in the manner in which they treat the holy name of their Lord.

" … Prevailing habits of speech about our Saviour and Lord are derived, not from the sacred page nor from the example of the early saints, but from the apostate Church which practically denies His Lordship, and in great measure His Messiahship too. The four Gospels will be searched in vain to find a single instance where, in the days of His humiliation, His own disciples addressed Him or spoke of Him as Christians do so habitually today.

"Turn, for example, to the closing chapters of St. John. There, as elsewhere in the Gospels, He is mentioned in the narrative by His personal Name, for it is GOD who has written the story of His life; but never once is He spoken of thus by the disciples. Though Mary supposed Him dead and lost to her forever, her lament was, "They have taken away MY LORD, and I know not where they have laid Him." "MASTER" was the word which rose at once to her lips when He declared Himself to her. That she had seen THE LORD was her testimony to the disciples. "MY LORD and my God" was the cry of Thomas when doubts gave way to faith. So also was it "when He showed Himself again to the disciples at the

sea of Tiberius." "That disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter" — not "it is Jesus," as so many would say today, but "it is THE LORD."

"Ye call Me MASTER AND LORD, and ye say well," was His word to them; and is not this enough for any heart that cares for Him? And most of us all in days like these, when there are many antichrists, and Romanism and infidelity in their most subtle forms combine to deny His glory, does it not become those who know Him ever to proclaim Him Lord, and by reverent words to make their speech a constant protest against the irreverence that abounds on every side…?

"If Christians ever named their Lord with the realization that He is listening, they would never fail to manifest their consciousness not as the result of effort or training, but naturally and of course … With the world He is no more than a religious institution whose name represents the solemnities of their faith. With the Christian He ought to be a PRESENT LIVING LORD! But is it so…?

"Hallowed be Thy Name" is the prayer of our lips, but in practice that name is … hackneyed and degraded till men come to connect it with the jingle of the coin upon the counter."

"…Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever…" (Heb. 1:8). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence of all them that are about Him." (Psalm 89:7).

How Shall We Order the Child

How Shall We Order the Child

S.O.M.

Scripture reading-: Judges 13.

The Sunday School teacher for a short time once in the week is the custodian of the little children committed to his care. The special purpose of his work is the sowing of gospel seeds in their young hearts. In this chapter, we have the earnest prayer of the custodian of a very particular child. This prayer, therefore, may prove of great value to all who have a care for young souls and lives.

Let us notice:

By Whom Prayer Was Made:

Manoah was of the tribe of Dan, and he lived in the town of Zorah. The signification of these three names Manoah, Zorah, and Dan, may give us a picture of not only what this man was, but what every Sunday School teacher ought to be.

Zorah means a nest of hornets. In this name you can almost hear the hum and feel the sting of the hornets, Z-O-R-A-H. It reminds us of the sting of sin from which all have suffered. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

Manoah signifies “rest.” This reminds us of the words of our blessed Lord Jesus as He turned from the religious self-righteous people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum to the poor and sinful, saying, “Come unto

Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

The idea conveyed by the name Dan suggests the thought of judging. This is something that all Christians need to practise—judging, not others, but themselves. It is not only essential that Sunday School teachers should be saved and enjoying rest in Christ, but it also is necessary that they examine themselves before the Lord, reckoning themselves dead indeed unto sin. All should know in a measure at least the blessedness of Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Success in any department of Christian service lies in the constant recognition of these great spiritual truths.

To Whom Prayer Was Made:

We have in this chapter what is called a theophany, a temporary appearance of God during Old Testament times in some visible form. In answer to the question of Manoah the heavenly Visitor said, "Why askest thou thus after My name, seeing it is secret (marginal reading, wonderful)?" Wonderful! Is not this one of the titles of our Lord Jesus? "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Here in Judges 13, we see Him to be as good as His name, for again we read in the margin, "The Lord Who worketh wondrously" (V. 19, margin).

"They say He is wonderful; they say He is wonderful,

The sun and the moon and the stars above

All say, He is wonderful.

“I know He is wonderful; I know He is wonderful.

He saves, and He keeps, and He satisfies.

I know He is wonderful.”

This is the One to Whom Manoah made his request, and this is the very One to Whom we also may pray. “O Thou that hearest prayer unto Thee shall all flesh come.” “Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).

The Prayer:

This short but earnest prayer of the man who felt the grave responsibility of caring for and teaching this child, embraces, among other things:

The child: Manoah prayed about the child that was entrusted to him. Do we pray for the children entrusted to us? Do we pray for that boy who annoys? Do you pray for that girl who is so mischievous? Do you pray for them individually? Be sure and pray for them when they are sick and when they are in trouble. Pray for their souls, for their salvation. PRAY, Pray, pray.

The teacher: He prayed, “How shall we?” Yes, we need to pray for the children, but we need also to pray for ourselves, the teachers, for the child’s needs are our needs. What encouragement we have in the Word of God. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and up-braideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas. 1:5).

The instruction: “How shall we order the child?” The word rendered “order” in this passage is quite comprehensive. It sometimes means to charge, to

fashion or form, to judge, to measure, etc. We might fill in this great request thus: How shall we charge his mind, form his character, judge his conduct, and measure his progress? Manoah needed everything; moreover, he felt his deep need, and presented it to the Lord. There are times when you feel your need in your class to be very very great, but you can make it known to the Lord, and out of His infinite supply He can meet it. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13). He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.

Why The Prayer Was Made:

First, because of the decline in morals: “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord” (V. 1). In the opening part of this chapter, we see the dreadful degeneracy in the nation. They had turned their back upon God, and had plunged into idolatry once more. It was in a scene of idolatry, sin, and iniquity that Manoah prayed for help for the child. We do live in days of moral decline. In religious life there is modernism to combat; in international life there is communism to face. In social life things are very demoralized, and in many families the children are throwing off parental restraint. Thousands of young boys and girls each year forsake their homes to live as prodigals in the larger centres of this continent.

In second place, because of spiritual life: “No razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God” (V. 5). One cannot but notice, in the reading of this chapter, that God puts the spiritual life of young Samson before everything else. The birth of the child was not the

goal to be attained. There was his life afterwards, Godward and manward, to be governed. In Sunday School work when we have won a soul to Christ, our work is not ended, for in most cases the teacher is the first one to whom the young soul will go with its difficulties and problems. Consequently, the teacher, better than any others, is in a position to help mould the young Christian's character and testimony. May the Lord make each teacher who reads this paper, not only a soul-winner, but also a guide and guardiar of Christian youth.

Thirdly, because of future possibilities: "He shall begin to deliver Israel" (V. 5). What possibilities lie latent in a child!

An aged servant of the Lord who was very much discouraged went early one evening into the vestry to pray before the night service. While he was there alone, one of the deacons came to inform him that the congregation requested his resignation at once. "Because," said the deacon, "there has been no result to your preaching during the last year. The only convert is just a little boy."

At the close of the service that night the aged preacher went again into the vestry to weep and to pray. His work was fruitless, his service done, his preaching days were over. Into the silence of that holy scene a little boy walked, and reverently waited until the aged gentleman a-rose from his knees. "Sir," said he, "Do you think that if I study hard, and try to do the will of God, that when I grow up, I can be a missionary?" That boy did live for God, and that one convert of that year studied hard, went to Africa, won souls to Christ, and glorified God in a long and fruitful life. That boy was Robert Moffat.

The Lord alone knows the mighty powers for good that are hidden in the immature lives and hearts of the children in our Sunday School classes. Let us win them for Christ; let us lead them on in the ways that are pleasing to the Lord. In the coming day, we shall rejoice together with them over service accomplished in and through them.

I Have Learned To Be Content

(From the Journals of David Brainerd)

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. (Phil. 4:11).

By the gracious training of God, David Brainerd became a living example of the above verse. Born in 1718, he gave himself to be a missionary to the North American Indians. He took the good news of the Gospel of Christ to the Indians living in western Massachusetts and later to tribes living along the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers. His work required long rides on horseback. He suffered many privations and died in 1747 at the age of 29. His journals were not written for the purpose of publication, but they were published and have proved to be an inspiration to many through the intervening years. Let us look at just three excerpts from his journals to illustrate how well he learned to be content with whatever state God chose to place him.

1. FOOD. Written on the Lord's Day: I had no bread, nor could I get any. I am forced to go or send ten or fifteen miles for the bread I eat; and sometimes it is mouldy and sour before I eat it, if I get any considerable quantity. And then again I have none for some days together, for want of an opportunity to send for it, and cannot find my horse in the woods to go myself; and this was my case now; but through divine goodness I had some Indian meal, of which I made little cakes, and fried them. Yet I felt contented with my circumstances, and sweetly resigned to God. In prayer I enjoyed great freedom; and blessed God as much for my present circumstances, as if

I had been a king; and thought that I found a disposition to be contented in my circumstances. Blessed be God.

2. SHELTER. An autumn day in October. We went on our way into the wilderness, and found the most difficult and dangerous travelling, by far, that ever any of us had seen. We had scarce anything else but lofty mountains, deep valleys, and hideous rocks, to make our way through. However, I felt some sweetness in divine things, part of the day, and had my mind intensely engaged in meditation on a divine subject. Near night my beast on which I rode, hung one of her legs in the rocks, and fell down under me; but through divine goodness, I was not hurt. However, she broke her leg; and being in such a hideous place, and near thirty miles from any house, I saw nothing that could be done to preserve her life and so was obliged to kill her, and to prosecute my journey on foot. This accident made me admire the divine goodness to me, that my bones were not broken, and the multitude of them filled with strong pain. Just at dark, we kindled a fire, cut up a few bushes, and made a shelter over our heads, to save us from the frost, which was very hard that night; and committing ourselves to God by prayer, we lay down on the ground, and slept quietly. Thus I have frequently been exposed, and sometimes lain out the whole night; but God has hitherto preserved me; and blessed be His name. Such fatigues and hardships as these serve to wean me from the earth, and, I trust, will make heaven the sweeter.

3. HEALTH. In the hot days of summer (no air conditioning). I was taken exceedingly ill, and brought to the gates of death by the breaking of small ulcers in my lungs, as my physicians supposed. In this extremely weak state, I continued for several weeks, and was

frequently reduced so low, as to be utterly speechless, and not able so much as to whisper a word. At various times this season my friends gathered round my bed to see me breathe my last, which they expected every moment, as I myself also did. The third day of my illness, and constantly afterwards, for four or five weeks together, I enjoyed as much serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, as perhaps I ever did in my life. I think that my mind never penetrated with so much ease and freedom into divine things, as at this time.

Learning contentment in whatever state that God put him, David Brainerd also learned to let go of his earthly roots, as expressed in this poem that he wrote in his journal on April 26, 1742.

Farewell, vain world, my soul can bid adieu;

Your Savior taught me to abandon you.

Your charms may gratify a sensual mind,

But cannot please a soul for God designed.

Forbear to entice, cease then my soul to call;

‘Tis fixed through grace - my God shall be my all.

While He thus lets me Heavenly glories view,

Your beauties fade; my heart’s no room for you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth, nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Benjamin A. Bradford

1904-1977

The editor is grateful to Brother George Walker of N. Miami, Fla., for sending this written tribute to our beloved brother, Mr. Benjamin Bradford, as well as for the splendid photo.

As cited in the March-April issue of Focus, Brother Bradford had expressed a desire to resign from the Board of Food for the Flock, Inc. because of failing health. At our last annual meeting on November 20, 1976 in Toronto, Canada, we unanimously chose not to accept our brother's resignation and instead made him a lifetime member of the Board of Trustees.

Brother Bradford became a member of Food for the Flock, Inc. a few years after the magazine was started, his faithful service over the years being much appreciated. The editor first recalls meeting him at our annual meeting in 1969, and in the several years I was privileged to know him, he was always an encouragement and blessing to me personally.

All the members of the Board join the editor in conveying our loving sympathy to Mrs. Reba Bradford, assuring her of our continued prayers.

"The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7).

"…a prince and a great man has fallen…"

Benjamin A. Bradford of Miami, Florida (son of the late Benjamin Bradford, Evangelist), was called into the presence of the Lord on March 16, 1977. “Benny,” as he was so fondly known to his hundreds of friends, was born in New York on July 22, 1904, and came to Miami, Florida in 1925. At special meetings conducted by his father and the late John Rankin, Ben was led to Christ and proved to be a real warrior for God’s truth until the Lord called him Home. He was a pillar in the Twenty-ninth Street Assembly and his place will not be an easy one to fill. He was ever faithful at all the meetings and known for his hospitality to scores of the Lord’s servants who stayed in his home.

As a business man, he was highly respected for his honesty and integrity and God blessed him above many in material things. So highly esteemed was he as a Christian gentleman in the business world, he was elected President of the Executives’ Association of Greater Miami, and upon his retirement he was given an honorary lifetime membership.

For many years Ben Bradford dreamed and planned for a Christian Community for older Christians, where they could spend the eventide of their lives with like-minded believers in the very delightful climate of Central Florida. Upon his retirement from business, he purchased a large piece of acreage in Frostproof, Florida, on a large lake called Lake Reedy. Both local and national governments were very slow in sanctioning all that our brother had in his mind, but when all the red tape was finally cut and the obstacles were removed, he built several homes which are now ready for occupancy. Two months before his Home-call, the Lord allowed Ben to see the birth of the Frostproof Christian Assembly,

and what a joy it was for him to gather with the Christians to remember the Lord!

Even though he was in failing health, he still continued to make plans for the future of the work, having set up a Board of Directors to continue what he had begun. At a Board of Directors' meeting held on February 12th, he turned the deed for the property over to the Frostproof Gospel Church, Inc. Frostproof is located in the very center of Florida, in the most beautiful lake district.

At the very large funeral attended by lawyers, doctors, bankers, and business men from various industries, all listened with rapt attention to the ministry of the Gospel. Ray Zander prayed tenderly and George Walker spoke on David's comment on learning of the death of Abner in 2 Samuel 3:38, "Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel." Little was said about the exploits of Abner, but David never forgot that it was Abner who brought David to Saul after the great victory when he slew Goliath. David would never forget the great victories Abner brought to the nation Israel, and referred to him as "a prince and a great man." Truly this could be said of Ben Bradford, who has now seen "the King in all His beauty" and entered into rest. His labors will be fully rewarded by the words of His Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

As faithful men carried the precious remains to await the trumpet sound, again a clear Gospel message was spoken in the cemetery by Ray Zander to the many who gathered. The funeral procession was two miles long and was escorted by motorcycle policemen from the Miami Police Department.

Prayer is requested for his dear wife, Reba, who still retains a great interest in the work her husband commenced in Frostproof, Florida.

Intercession

Intercession

During this despensation Christ’s work is mainly intercession. He calls us to take a subordinate part in the holy office, standing, like Phinehas between the living and the dead to stay the plague; like Elijah, between Heaven and Earth to unlock Heaven’s floodgates of blessing and command the fire and flood of God. Is this true? Then what can be more awful and august than such dignity and majesty of privilege! Ignatius welcomes the Numidian lion in the arena, saying, “I am grain of God; I must be ground between the teeth of lions to make bread for God’s people.” He felt in the hour of martyrdom the privilege of joining his dying Lord in a sacrifice that Bushnell would call “vicarious.”

Who will join the risen Lord in a service of intercession? The greatest difficulty in the way of practical conversion of men may not be in God’s eyes so much a barrier of ungodliness among the heathen as a barrier of unbelief among His own disciples.

The sixteenth century was great in painters, the seventeenth in philosophers, the eighteenth in writers, the nineteenth in preachers and inventors; God grant that the twentieth may be forever historically memorable as the century of intercessors.

— A. T. Pierson.

It's Desert, All Right

Our plane rose toward the morning sun as we left behind the narrow slice of green that hugs either side of the Nile River. Ahead of us lay the forbidding wastes of the Sinai Peninsula. As far as the eye could see, there was nothing but the bleached rock and pale blue of the eastern sky. I would fly over it in the comfort of my air-conditioned seat in a matter of minutes. Listen to some descriptions of this territory that was the ever-shifting home of the children of Israel for 40 long years.

J. R. Conder opens his book with the following description: "It seems hardly possible that man or beast can find a living in such a place. Yet, as David found pasture for those 'poor sheep in the wilderness,' so do the desert Arabs find food for their goats among the rocks. It is nonetheless a desert indeed, riven by narrow ravines leading to deep gorges, and rising between the stony gullies into narrow ridges of dark brown limestone, capped with gleaming white chalk, full of cone-like hillocks and fantastic peaks...Often have I thought that could the critic leave his comfortable study and dwell for a time in this desert...he would be able to understand what Hebrew poets, prophets, and historians have written."

J. Howard Kitchen adds this information: "The rainfall in the South (Negev) is little more than ten inches a year; the winds in summer are hot and laden with fine sand, and in winter are biting cold. The scant rainfall brings on herbage in the early spring, and a hasty crop can be secured (in the Beersheba district), unless sun and

sandstorm combine with the lack of rain to wither the crop before it is ripe."

H. V. Morton writes: "I have climbed many a high mountain in my life, but never before have I seen a view like that from Mount Sinai. Everywhere I looked, I saw range upon range of mountains lying far below...A storm at sea turned into stone is perhaps the only imagery that may convey some idea of the stupendous spectacle. Crests of mountains, sharply pointed; long ridges, like waves about to break; blunted masses of rock, like waves that have collapsed; enormous, sweeping, scooped-out valleys, like a backwash of water arrested in the moment of gathering itself to remount the heights; all these lay below, hungry, savage, and desolate."

Jealousy

Jealousy

Selected

There is nothing more hurtful to spirituality in a believer, or more destructive of his fruitfulness, than jealousy. Wherever this venom-snake is nursed in the bosom, spiritual vigour ceases, and zeal for God declines. Nearly all the sorrows, the heart-burnings, and the quarrels that exist among the servants of the Lord, have their root and their rise in jealousy. “Jealousy is cruel as the grave.” It knows no mercy; it heeds no tear. Yet this sin, in all its virulence, may exist in one who professes great spirituality. It may be hidden under a pretence of great zeal for God. It cannot be laid hands on, like drunkenness and theft, yet it cannot be altogether hid. It manifests itself in word and deed, in none more so than in those who profess to serve the Lord.

Jealousy may be known by the following marks. It cannot bear to see another more highly exalted than itself. It looks with a cold suspicious eye on the prosperity of another. It cannot bear to see God using another and setting it aside. It cannot rejoice and praise the Lord for sinners saved through other means. It cannot bear to hear of tens of thousands ascribed to David’s sword, and only thousands to its own. Like Saul of old, it raises the javelin to strike the man whom God is approving, to the wall. It deprecates his work, and secretly wishes to see both the work and the worker fall. It severs the bonds of Christian fellowship, and divides the servants of the One Master into coteries of spiritual Ishmaelites, each

striving to bring its neighbour to nought, and to carry off the palm of being his conqueror.

The Holy One of Israel will not be mocked. His eyes behold, and His eyelids try the hearts and the motives of men. He knows where this unholy viper hides its head, and He, the righteous Lord, will be avenged sooner or later upon it.

Beloved fellow believer, let us see to it, that this most hateful thing finds no quarter in us. The root of it is undoubtedly in our natural hearts, in common with every other form of evil. Since we are commanded to “mortify” and “abstain” from all complicity with it, we are responsible not to nurse it. We need not let it have its way. When jealousy would raise its head, there is help for us in God. Let us betake ourselves to God. It cannot bear the light; it cannot lift its head in His holy presence.

John Bunyan

John Bunyan

Selected

The author of Pilgrim's Progress was born in the year 1628, at Elstow, England. He was married in the year 1649. In his book, Grace Abounding, he states, "This woman and I came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both." In 1660 Bunyan as, "a common holder of several unlawful meetings," was confined to Bedford jail where he remained for twelve years.

Bunyan had an only daughter named Mary who had been born blind. An understanding jailor records a memorable visit to Bunyan by his wife, the blind daughter, and an infant son whom the mother carried. After a few gentle inquiries regarding his blind child, Bunyan briefly recounted the incidents of his arrest, then ended the conversation as follows:

"On the morning after, we went to Justice Compton of Elstow, but he refused to release me, though I had broken no law whatsoever; still I am content that, if my lying here will serve the cause of God, I will lie here till my flesh drops from my bones. Let it be as God will."

Bunyan's wife sympathetically replied, "True, Beloved, but we still will do our utmost; the house is so dull without thee. Thy little Mary sits pining for thy voice, and the other two are often crying for their father. It goes to my heart to see them craving for thee. And some, that I thought better of, will not pay thee what they owe thee. William Swinton, the sexton of St.

Cuthbert, owes thee a matter of five pounds, ye know; now he says that not a penny will he pay thee. Yield not, John, for we will beg from door to door 'before, for our sakes, thou shalt yield to do what ye feel to be wrong in the sight of God. I pray much that we may see thee again by our fireside, and I look through the pane; but I pray more that thou mightest stand fast, like David against the giant, that thou shalt one day too conquer. Think not of us, but be firm."

"Ay, that I will," said Bunyan, who had nestled the blind girl in his arms; "but what will my Mary do if her father has to die for the truth?"

"Do, Father? why, love thee all the more, and pray for them that shall kill thee, and come as quickly as I may to be with thee. But I should like to see thee as thou really art. When I feel thy warm breath upon my cheek, and rest in thine arms, I fear not, and want naught. Oh, Father, my mother taught me that thou art Christ's servant, and I am proud that those are called to suffer, while the great ones deny the Lord." "My little maiden, then, loves my Lord?" asked Bunyan, bending with tearful eye over the clear white face radiant with love.

"Ay, Father! I have loved Him a little for a long time, but I have loved Him, I cannot tell how much, since these dark days began. When mother and I sat trembling and wondering how thou wert faring away from home in this time of trouble, how I prayed for thee, and I felt that thy God was my God, and I would serve Him too."

"But it is not enough, Darling, to say that ye love Christ. What about thy sins?"

"Oh, Father, I have confessed them all, and repented of them, and I do accept Jesus as my Saviour. I feel more

certain every day that He has forgiven my sins. Is it not sweet to feel this, we are tied together by a bond that nothing can break?"

"Ay, it is, Dear One, and in thy love and the love of thy mother, I feel brave and strong. Ye help me not a little to stand without blenching in the time of trial."

The frequent references to his wife and children in Bunyan's writings reveal what deep love the man had for his family. It is striking that almost the opening paragraphs of Pilgrim's Progress bring us face to face with Mr. Worldy-Wiseman who asks Christian, "Hast thou a wife and children?" The same question is repeated in "Palace Beautiful."

Knowing the love Bunyan had for his family makes the more remarkable his words: "I will stay in this prison until my eyelids are grown over with moss before I will deny my faith in Christ;" they appear as letters of gold in pictures of silver.

While Bunyan was in prison, Mary died. It is to the perpetual infamy of Judge Wingate that he did not release Bunyan to attend the funeral for his little blind daughter. What a claim this syncophant Judge has to fame in his treatment of John Bunyan; a questionable honour, indeed, and one not many would care to share with him.

It was while lying in prison for those twelve years that the idea of Pilgrim's Progress came to the fertile mind of Bunyan. In his doggerel preface he explains:

"…yet I did not think

To show to all this world my pen and ink…

Neither did I but vacant seasons spend

In this scribble; nor did I intend

But to divert myself in doing this

From worser thoughts which make me do amiss.

Thus I set pen to paper with delight…

He tells then of showing his story to friends while he was still imprisoned, and of their different reactions:

“Well, when I had thus put mine ends together,

I showed them others, that I might see whether

They would condemn them or justify:

And some said, let them live; some, let them die;

Some said, John, print it; others said, not so:

Some said it might do good, others said, no.”

Finally, Pilgrim’s Progress, Part One, was taken from the prison to the printer, and ever since has been a successful seller. Before Bunyan died over 100,000 copies had been published in England alone. When we recall how few persons could read in England at that time, the seventeenth century, we are all the more impressed by the tremendous popularity of this spiritual allegory.

This touching incident in the life of John Bunyan was submitted by Richard Burson, Hutchinson, Kansas.

Lambs Of the Flock

Lambs Of the Flock

Selected

While walking along the street, I noticed a sign in the window of a city store, “Under New Management.” Of course, I had seen many such signs before, but on this occasion it arrested my thinking.

“Only a short while ago someone else was proprietor of that business,” I mused, “but perhaps he went bankrupt and had to sell out. At any rate, the present owner must so have wanted that establishment as to pay the price to have it for himself; now he has it.”

Say! young believer, our experience of becoming a Christian is something like that, isn’t it? Once we belonged to another than the Lord Jesus Christ; we were the property of Satan. When our fore-parents sinned in Eden’s garden they sold themselves to the Devil, and he became the god of this world, (2 Corinthians 4:4). In Isaiah 52:3, the Lord said of those to whom the gospel of peace was preached, “Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” We, too, of the family of Adam, through the fall became Satan’s; for the Scripture says, “There is no difference, for all have sinned,” but God sent His Son to buy us back for Himself.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, the Devil took Him up into a high mountain and, showing Him all the kingdoms of this world, said, “All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore

wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." (Luke 4:5-8). The Lord Jesus was not going to buy us with currency bearing the Devil's image and superscription, so He rejected the offer and routed the Devil, because He determined to redeem us with His own precious blood. (1 Peter 1:19).

Now we belong to Christ (Mark 9:41); we are the Lord's (Romans 14:8); He is our Master (Matt. 23:10); He is our Lord (John 13:14). We are under new management.

"Now I belong to Jesus,

Jesus belongs to me;

Not for the years of time alone,

But for eternity."

Isn't it wonderful to know that we really belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us on Golgotha and lives for us in the Glory? In John 17:10, He speaks of those who believe on Him as being "All Mine." We are all His, spirit, soul and body.

"Lord we are Thine; bought with Thy blood,

Once the poor, guilty slaves of sin,

Thou didst redeem us to our God

And mad'st Thy Spirit dwell within."

When an earthly property goes under new management there is a changing of its name; a taking down of old signs and a putting up of new signs. When we received Christ as our Saviour a new name was given us by the Lord; we were called Christians. In James 2:7 we read of some who blaspheme that worthy name by which we are called. The name Christian means "Christ's one." The

Lord also calls His own by other precious names, such as: believers (Acts 5:14), saints (1 Cor. 1:2), disciples (Acts 6:1), and brethren (Hebrews 2:12). These are all God-given, and we ought not to discard them for man-given names.

Now, about these old signs being taken down and new ones being put up, let us read in Galatians 5:19-21 about seventeen signs which advertised our old life when we belonged to Satan. These might be listed in four groupings: signs of immorality, signs of idolatry, signs of infamy, and signs of indulgence. What wicked advertisements! Our new Master wants all these old signs to be taken down and destroyed, and signs to be posted advertising that we are under new management.

What are these signs? Read Galatians 5:22-23. Here, more lovely than a rainbow, are nine declarations to indicate whose we are and whom we serve. The first three: love, joy and peace, are tokens of a change Godward. Instead of hating God, we now love Him who first loved us. We love to read His word, to obey it, and to tell it to others. Instead of the sorrows of sin and Satan, we now have the joy of salvation (Psa. 51:12), the joy of communion (1 John 1:3-4), the joy of consecration (John 15:11), the joy of evangelization (Philippians 1:18), and the joy of expectation (Romans 5:2). Instead of peril we have peace. Once we feared a sin-hating God, before whom we stood condemned already; now, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1). The peace of God also guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus in proportion to our bringing all our burdens and cares to our prayer-hearing God, (Philippians 4:6-7).

The second three: longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, are evidences of a changed attitude toward God's people. Longsuffering has to do with my attitude of heart toward my brother or sister in Christ, and is akin to the law of Christ, (Galatians 6:2). Gentleness has to do with my actions in dealing with my brethren, and is akin to the spirit of meekness, (Gal. 6:1). Goodness has to do with my acts, and is akin to bearing one another's burdens, (Gal. 6:2).

The last three: faith, meekness, temperance, are indications of a changed attitude toward the world. Faith, or faithfulness, is the fulfilling of the privilege and responsibility suggested in the words of Christ, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, (Mark 5:19); go out into the streets and lanes of the cities, into the highways and hedges, to bring in the lost ones for whom the Saviour died, (Luke 14:21-23); and, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, (Mark 16:15-16). May we be faithful to our fellowman!

Meekness is the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not, (1 Peter 2:19-22). It is a willingness to suffer for the sake of the gospel and not a returning of evil for evil. This is illustrated in Acts 5:40-42. The apostles, departing from the council after they had been beaten, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.

Temperance is the task of self-control, the curbing and mortifying of an evil nature within that would respond to the beck and blandishments of a wicked world. In 1 John 2:15 we read, "Love not the world, neither the things

that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
Temperance definitely will be my experience as I recognize that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ stands between me and this evil age (Gal. 6:14), and as I acknowledge Christ as Lord of my life; I will enjoy the blessedness of being under new management.

"Take the world but give me Jesus,

Let me see His constant smile;

Then throughout my pilgrim journey

Light will cheer me all the while."

May these, the evidences of change, the new signs, be seen in the lives of us all, to the praise of Him to Whom we belong, and to the glory of His Name.

Let’s Be Courageous

Let’s Be Courageous

Sister Phoebe

If ever we needed to rely on God’s Word and His promises it is today. In this world where all around us is sadness, grief, sickness, sorrow and fear, we need to go back to the Bible and claim all the riches within it for ourselves. In Joshua 1, God chose Joshua to lead the children of Israel. No doubt Joshua was full of fears, but God encouraged him to go on. In verse 5 He told Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” In verse 6 He said, “Be strong and of a good courage,” while in verse 7 He further exhorted,” Only be thou strong and very courageous.” Finally, in verse 9, God actually commanded Joshua, “Be strong and of a good Courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

As Christian women, we also need to follow this advice. Let’s claim God’s promises for ourselves. We are needed today to strengthen and encourage one another. We must stand firm in our faith, seeking to witness and tell others what we have in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. God has promised that He will be with us, so let’s live our lives believing this.

In Philippians 4:6 we are told not to worry about anything, and yet, all around us we see Christians worrying and upset. Why? Perhaps it is because we haven’t claimed all the promises for ourselves. Perhaps we don’t really believe God. Yet He tells us in Jeremiah

31:3 that “He has loved us with an everlasting love.” In 1 Peter 1:24 & 25 we read that “the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.” If we have Christ in our hearts, we are to trust Him for these promises. God did not intend for us to walk this earthly pathway alone. He wants to share in our lives … each day, moment by moment.

As women of God, let’s start our day, every day, with prayer and Bible reading. Let us live and walk close to our Lord, believing His Word. If we ask Him to help us to be strong and courageous, then in turn we will be able to help others. Let us worship first, then go forth to witness, serve, and fellowship with other believers. In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 we are told to carry on and not lose heart. “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” How? By getting into the Word of God; by reading and praying daily. All around us we see people relying on things that are tangible and material. All they have is this world; their treasure is in this world; when it is gone they have nothing. Our treasure is in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ and no one can take our treasure from us. Thus we are encouraged to go on for our Lord and be courageous women of God.

There may be more sorrow around us, more fears, threats of war and burdens to life than ever before; therefore, we are all the more needed in this world today. If we claim God’s promises as our own, then we must press on. And in so doing, let us remember that it is an honor to be called by Him into loving, working and serving others, and through it all —as we continue to pray and praise —we will experience the peace of God in our hearts (Philippians 4:7).

Liberty In Ministry

Liberty In Ministry

Henry Hitchman

We are indebted to our colleague Ormer G. C. Sprunt for submitting this article. It is taken from the writings of Henry Hitchman because it contains principles which need to be reviewed frequently.

Special gifts from the risen Head of the Church are needed and supplied by Him for public ministry of His Word, that the saints may be edified, exhorted, and comforted (1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:1-13). These gifts vary according to the service to be rendered in His Name. Evangelists are given to preach the gospel; pastors to shepherd the Lord's flock; teachers to unfold the Word to the saints for their nourishment and to produce maturity in their characters. These distinct gifts may exist alone in any one person, or may be combined according to the pleasure of the Lord who bestows them (Acts 21:8; 11:23-26). It is very important to know what gifts have been bestowed, and to use them as the Lord directs (Acts 8:26-40). The bestowment of these gifts may cause brethren to be entirely separated for the work of the Lord; such as evangelists, missionaries, teachers, etc.; or they may be possessed by brethren who continue to follow their earthly callings: professional, business, or working men (Acts 13:1-3).

These gifts may exist with education, or apart from it, as history fully proves. It was perceived that Peter and John were bold, though "unlearned and ignorant;" yet, filled with the Holy Ghost they did mighty deeds in the Name

of the Lord (Acts 4:13-14). Education has its advantage, but there is need of warning in regard to an educated ministry. This may lead to unscriptural institutions to train for it, and deprive uneducated men from exercising the gift given them by the divine Head of the Church. Intellectualism may take the place of the Holy Spirit. It produces a ministry as barren as illiteracy, and accompanied with far more disastrous results as may be seen in Christendom's systems of religion.

Because a brother has the gift of an evangelist, it does not necessarily follow that he can teach believers, or that he should take the platform at conferences. Many servants of Christ out in the work have less ability to edify than some who follow their daily callings. This does not prove that many of the Lord's servants have mistaken their calling (although this is quite possible), or that business men should give up their occupation: "To every man his work" (Mark 13:34).

When the Lord leads His people to arrange conferences or meetings for ministry, He can be counted upon to have in their midst those whom He has qualified to minister to edification. These distinct gifts are generally known among the saints, who have been helped by them on past occasions. If there is due waiting upon God, without hurry or restlessness of the flesh, these gifts will be raised up and become channels of ministry from the Head to the saints. They will thus be fed, refreshed, instructed, and matured for ministry themselves. Liberty in ministry is confined entirely to the spirit. He is not likely to select those who have no qualification for the particular work. It is well known that the majority of brethren in nearly every assembly do not possess gift for public ministry, and yet many persist in taking the

platform and wearing out the saints by profitless talk. By so doing they waste valuable time and money. These brethren seem to think that because they are not sisters they have the liberty to minister. They little know the sorrow they cause God's saints.

All should understand that the meetings are only open for ministry from those who have a distinct gift, and who enjoy the confidence of saints generally, and especially of the responsible brethren who convene the meetings.

A brother may have gift to edify a small local company of saints, but not sufficient to profit a large conference or gathering at all-day meetings. Through profitless ministry believers have often gone away not to converse upon the good things they have heard, but rather upon the wasted time.

In spite of our many failures God has met us in grace, and we would not be unmindful of His great goodness to His people in conferences and all-day meetings. Nothing short of conforming to the divine pattern, and to receiving from God His best should satisfy the hearts of believers, believers whose earnest desire is to be well-pleasing unto the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9-10).

Can the Scriptures provide anything for the saints when gathered for ministry, through an absolutely open platform where any brother may speak, a platform which gives room for much that is evidently not of God, or through a closed platform which would exclude valuable gifts given by the Head for ministry? Surely, as neither of these is according to the Word of God, a scriptural remedy ought to be found. Does it not lie in the recognition of the special gifts given for the direct purpose of ministry, and making room for the exercise of

the same? Such recognition would correct the abuse which exists in many places, arising out of the open platform being taken advantage of by misguided and self-willed brethren. At the same time it would avoid the necessity for a closed platform and for selected speakers, which frequently hinder the Spirit's liberty and mar the fellowship between assemblies of saints.

'Stand fast… by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:1-13).

Marriage —A Threesome

Marriage —A Threesome

Sister Phoebe

Why do Christian young people very often choose a life partner who is not a born again Christian? They deliberately go against God’s Word, yet still expect Him to bless their marriage. At times God, in His love and graciousness, does bless and often the unsaved partner comes to know the Lord after marriage. Unfortunately, however, if there is no interest in the Lord before marriage, there is usually less after marriage.

Be Not Unequally Yoked

In 2 Corinthians 6:14 we are told not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. If young people would just keep this in mind when first seeking a partner for life, it would solve many of their problems. If you are a sincere Christian and seek the Lord in other areas of your life, why not pray about a partner, too? Find someone who loves the Lord, as you do, and whose interests are the same as yours. Ask God to lead and direct you and give you the partner of His choice. If we honour the Lord in all areas of our Christian walk, I believe He will honour us also.

How often we have watched a young couple in love. They have eyes for no one but each other as they walk, talk and sit together. Before marriage they can’t seem to see enough of each other… they want to share everything and practically think alike. Everyone who knows them feels that “they are meant for each other.”

But often, after the honeymoon, they come down to earth and the day by day normal living finds some of the "bloom off the flower." If you are reading this, and the above fits, ask yourself "why?"

Often, when you talk to couples, they are quick to blame each other for their problems. I think this is probably one of the first things that is wrong … the immaturity of always blaming someone else and not stopping to think that possibly our actions have led to the other person's response. When you go into a marriage, don't ask what you are going to get out of it. Rather, ask what you are going to put into this partnership.

A good Christian marriage is not a "twosome" but a "threesome," both of you with Christ in the center. Start life together with a time of prayer and reading God's Word each day. Don't say you're too busy; make time for this. Get up fifteen minutes earlier or read and pray together after dinner. We take time to feed our physical body, so why not our spiritual? Spiritual food is as necessary as food for our physical body.

Learn to Listen

Another way to bind a marriage is by being a good listener … really listen and respond to what is being said. If you ask your husband or wife how the day went, then listen as he or she tells you some of the things that went on. You'll get to know your partner better if you listen and learn how things that happen affect him or her. Share everything, yes everything, even the silly little things that you may feel your loved one would not be interested in.

Be honest in your own feelings and don't put on a front. If you are sincere in your love for each other, don't hold things in. Don't be afraid to explain to your loved one whatever is troubling you. Keep your lines of communication open.

Making A Marriage Work

If couples would sit down once in a while and re-read the vows they took together, or better yet, if they would memorize Ephesians 5:21-33, they would have fewer problems. It would be easy to be subject to our own husbands, as unto the Lord, in everything, if our husbands would love and cherish us as "Christ loved the Church." I have yet to see an unhappy wife whose husband loves her as much as he loves himself, for no man ever really hates himself. How much happier our lives would be if we would love each other as we are told to do in the Word of God. These verses are not merely suggestions from the Lord, they are commands. If a man falls so deeply in love with a woman that he can't live without her and marries her, he is to continue to love her in spite of her faults, temperament and moods. I can hear someone say, "Yes, but you don't know what she is really like!" No, we don't, but ask yourself, "Is my wife the way she is because of how I am?" As a husband or wife, if you think there is nothing wrong with you, watch out, for that is your biggest problem. We all know troubles arise in a marriage, even in a good one, and it is easy to blame the other partner. Both husband and wife must contribute to a good marriage… like everything else in life, the more we put into it the more we will get in return. We must love each other and part of loving is giving, working, sharing and serving. Live

for Christ first, then for each other, and you will always get more out of life in the joy and happiness a good relationship brings.

Marriage is not for the childish, selfish, irresponsible, self-centered, spoiled person, often made this way by an overindulgent parent. Marriage is for those who want to give and share… not blind to our partner's or our own faults and weaknesses, but willing to try to live, love and understand each other. We can experience this only after first experiencing God's love in our own hearts and minds. He helps us to share our love with each other. Many of our young people want to have "sharing meetings," sharing with others what is on their hearts. Possibly we would have little need for this if our sharing and love for each other had been shown in our homes and with our children.

Love, share and strengthen each other in marriage. If you thought enough of each other to want to marry, you should be willing to work at a good, loving relationship in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Meet The Associate Editor

MIF 1:2 (Mar-Apr 1969)

Meet The Associate Editor

W. Ross Rainey is the son of George Rainey who has ministered among the assemblies in the United States and Canada for many years.

Ross was born at Brooklyn, New York, but spent many of his summers during boyhood in the Foxmead area, Ontario.

He was saved when only a boy, so from early life has had a keen interest in the work of the Lord. He is a graduate of Stetson University and of Dallas Theological Seminary.

In 1954 four assemblies joined in their commendation of Ross to the work of the Lord in its specific aspect. Throughout these intervening years our brother has engaged in a varied ministry among the assemblies. He also teaches on the visiting staff at Emmaus.

Ross and his wife enjoy the fellowship of the assembly at Hazelwood, Missouri. They have been blessed with three children, a daughter and two sons.

Please remember our brother before the Throne of Grace as he now assumes new responsibilities.

Methods

Methods

Selected

We have already intimated the value of word studies in the Holy Scriptures. This particular method of Bible searching is so highly productive that further suggestions ought to be made regarding its use. In our last article, we looked briefly at the interesting word used by the apostle Paul in Rom. 10:1, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” We looked up, in our English Greek Concordance the word “desire”. There is no space to repeat what has already been said upon this strong word, for we wish to look at the different occurences of the word, of which there are five. From a careful reading of these passages, it will be seen that the word is rendered into English by different expressions, for example, “to be well pleased,” “to be willing,” “to think good,” and “good will.” It actually means to approve, or to favour. The present English word that embraces all its meanings is the word preference. With this before us we have what we might call Paul’s preferences; his preference in trial (2 Cor. 12:1-10), his preference in evangelism (Rom. 10:1), his preference in pastoral work (1 Thess. 3:1-2), his preference in self-sacrifice (1 Thess. 2:8), and his preference in death (2 Cor. 5:1-8). These details are submitted merely to show what may be expected from time and thought expended on the study of words in the New Testament.

Let us now consider another method of Bible study, one altogether different from word study, for it deals with a

given portion of Holy Scripture, the analytical method. Analysis is the reduction of a portion of the Word of God into its many component themes and subjects. In this type of work there must be considerable preparatory effort. The passage to be studied must be read frequently until a sweet familiarity with it is developed; moreover, it ought to be prayed over in order that the work be done in complete reliance upon the Holy Spirit of God.

We shall select for our present purpose the short epistle of Third John. In reading this epistle of only one chapter over several times, we conclude that it revolves around three men, Gaius (Vv. 1-8), Diotrephes (Vv. 9-11), and Demetrius (Vv. 12-14). The epistle is now broken into three important parts. In carefully looking into each section we discover that Gaius was a pious man, Diotrephes a proud man, and Demetrius a pure man. Further examination of these three portions of the chapter reveals that there is one common bond that unites them, it is the thought expressed by the word, truth. Further study reveals that this word is used in at least five distinct ways: 1. the truth a sphere of fellowship (Vv. 1-2); 2. the truth a power for good (V.3); 3. the truth an expression of life (V. 3); 4. the truth a subject for defence (Vv. 5-8); 5. the truth a witness to character (V. 12). Having now discovered the bond which unites each part of the chapter, or as it is called sometimes, the key word, we apply this to the three persons, and find; the truth proclaimed by Gaius (Vv. 1-8); the truth profaned by Diotrephes (Vv. 9-11); and the truth sustained by Demetrius (Vv. 12-14).

Another form of analysis may also be conducted, for example, as an inventory of the gracious personality of

Gaius: 1. His godliness: “Thou walkest in the truth.” 2. His occupation: “Whatsoever thou doest.” 3. His faithfulness: “Thou doest faithfully. 4. His truthfulness: “The truth that is in thee.” 5. His generosity: “Witness to thy charity.” 6. His frankness: “Speak face to face.” 7. His attractiveness: “Well beloved,” (V. 1) and, “I trust that I shall shortly see thee,” (V. 14).

More careful analyses will reveal much of the varied ministry of the apostle John. He was an evangelist, for he speaks of “my children;” (V. 4) he was a pastor, for he is interested in their walk; (V. 4) and he was a teacher, for he had a clear and practical knowledge of the truth (V. 4).

This work can again be broken down, and a detailed examination made of the pastoral work of the apostle: 1. his love for the people of God (V. 1); 2. his prayer for the people of God (V. 2); 3. his joy in them (V. 3); 4. he commends them (Vv. 4-5); 5. he encourages them (Vv. 6-8); 6. he admonishes them (V. 11); 7. he communes with them (Vv. 13-14).

Lessons in contrasts may also be enjoyed: Notice the characteristics of true ministry for the saints, and false ministry imposed upon the saints. True ministry rests upon: 1. equality not superiority, “Brethren” (V. 5);2. submission not imposition, “For His name’s sake” (V. 5); 3. activity not ease, “They went forth” (V. 7); 4. reliance upon the Lord alone, not self-confidence, “Taking nothing of the Gentiles” (V. 7). False ministry results from: 1. Self-exaltation, “Loveth to have the pre-eminence” (V. 9); 2. self-assumption, “Receiveth us not” (V. 10); 3. self-gratification, “Prating against… and not content therewith” (V. 10).

These simple thoughts are submitted in the fear of the Lord in order to demonstrate what can be found and enjoyed in the constant careful analysis of the Word of God. All passages do not lend themselves to such an easy analysis; generally speaking time, prayer, and thought are all required for this method, but there are few, if any of the other methods of Bible study, that render such splendid and beneficial results.

More Comments on Church Letter

More Comments on Church Letter

Selected

We appreciate this pertinent correspondence from L.R.S. of Australia. This, the third part of his letter, is the end of his answer to the letter of enquiry reproduced in the July-August, 1969, number.

4. Who are the subjects of discipline?

The foregoing will indicate that the writer knows no Scripture which authorizes or suggests the excommunication of assemblies, or permits a declaration that a company of believers is “not an assembly, but only a meeting.” He believes that there is no such Scripture. But assemblies may be troubled, as was that at Corinth, by the conduct of individuals within them. The Corinthians were admonished by reference to Israel (1 Cor. 10). The first four verses tell of ties that bound them ALL together, and of experiences which they all shared. But verse 5 tells us that God was not pleased with MANY of them; and verses 7-10 tell us that SOME of them were idolators, some fornicators, some “tempted Christ,” some murmured. Israel was and is still Israel, but the transgressors were judged.

So it is in Revelation 2-3. In Pergamos there were some who held the doctrine of Balaam, some held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; that did not exclude the assembly from the number of the seven, but the Lord said He would deal with the transgressors. Things were seriously wrong in Thyatira, but there were some who

“had not this doctrine,” and the Lord said He would deal discriminatingly with the individuals there. The suggestion conveyed by these considerations is that individuals, not assemblies, are subjects of disciplinary action; and this is abundantly substantiated in the Epistles.

Evil against which action of one kind or another is enjoined in the Scriptures may be described as moral, doctrinal, heretical or social.

Moral: Evil of this kind is described in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; but only in 1 Corinthians 5:11 is it associated with a professing believer within an assembly. Instruction regarding it is plain; the sinner was to be “put away from among” them, the old leaven purged out.

Doctrinal: Passages descriptive of this kind of evil include Romans 16:17-18; Galatians 1:6-9; 5:7-10; Colossians 2:4-8; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 4:1-3; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:1-9; Titus 1:10-13; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:22-26; 4:1-3; 2 John 9-11; Jude 4-19. In all cases where action is called for, it is with respect to the teacher of evil doctrine himself. We quote, with abbreviations:

“Mark them - - - - - and avoid them.”

“If any preach - - - - - let him be accursed.”

“He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.”

“If any man - - - - - from such withdraw thyself.” (In connection with this verse, and the similar expression in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, it is distressing to hear it said sometimes vaingloriously by Christians that they have

withdrawn themselves from godly believers, to whom the descriptions in the passages could not possibly apply).

“From such turn away - - - - - these also resist the truth.”

“There are many - - - - - therefore rebuke them.”

“There shall be false teachers - - - - - whose judgment lingereth not.”

“If there come any - - - - - receive him not.”

Heretical. A “heretic” in New Testament meaning is not one who holds unorthodox beliefs, or does not conform to generally accepted practices. He is a sectarian person, a self-willed man who pushes his wrong ideas to the extent of dividing the saints. “Sects” and “heresy” are translations of the same word. In the language of Acts 20:30 the heretic “speaks perverse things to draw away disciples after” himself. Romans 16:17-18 applies to him. He “causes divisions contrary to the doctrine which we have learned,” and is to be avoided. His heretical leanings will no doubt be seen before the point of open rift comes; he is to be warned at this stage, and if necessary warned again. If, despite repeated warning, he persists in his work of disruption, he is to be “rejected” (Titus 3:10). He is acting against known truth, and is self-condemned (v. 11). The attitude enjoined is concerning leaders in division; we are not told to adopt it against those who in their simplicity are misled.

Social. Some are mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 who, although they are “brothers,” are to be “withdrawn from” because of their “disorderly walk.” The nature of the disorder is given in v. 11, and further comment is

made in vs. 7-15. Paul's "tradition" (v. 6) regarding such matters is fully set forth in other Scriptures. He "wrought" with Aquila and Priscilla at tent making (Acts 18:3). He laboured with his hands so as not to be chargeable to the saints (Acts 20:33-35; 2 Cor. 11:9). Yet he was emphatic that they who ministered in spiritual things should be partaker of the material things of those whom they served. See Galatians 6:6. It is evident that those spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 3 were serving neither God nor men, but were expecting "financial support" from the saints; this was not to be given, but rather the idlers were to be made to feel the wrongness of their position.

Those described in 2 Timothy 3:1-6 are guilty of worse social evil. They are of such a character that the believer is to "turn away" from them; they are obviously not in Christ.

There remains the case of elders who sin (1 Timothy 5:20 taken in its context). These are to be openly rebuked. In view of the first verse of the chapter much grace and wisdom would be demanded of those who are called upon to perform, so solemn and sad a duty.

The whole purport of all this is that disciplinary action, where necessary, is always against individuals. Nowhere in Scripture are men called upon to judge assemblies.

5. What are New Testament "rules"?

This word "rule" occurs in 2 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:16. It signifies a guideline, such as a plumbob, against which our practices and precepts are to be placed so that we may check their correctness. Our word "canon" is derived from it; that is

the rule by which the authenticity may be checked of writings which claim divine authority; similarly our word "cane" has the same derivation as signifying a straight rod against which deviatians from straightness may be detected.

The "rule" in Galatians 6 is the truth that the believer is not of the world (v. 14) or under law (v. 15) but in Christ. His Christian conduct is to be checked against this standard. The cross stands between me and the world, between me and the law's demands; if I live as a "new creature" (v. 15) then I conform to the rule. This is individual conduct; benediction is pronounced on those who conform, but nothing in this context is said against those who do not.

The "rule" in Philippians 3 is a straight line from the cross to the glory. In effect it is the same rule as in Galatians 6. How could it be otherwise? The very best that man in the flesh can be (Phil. 3:1-7) is a terribly unsafe rule (2 Cor. 10:12-13) but there is a standard of conduct befitting those who know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and who look for the Saviour from Heaven. The parenthic verses 18-19 tell us of those who are not governed by this rule; they are "enemies of the cross of Christ," and their "end is destruction" — words which cannot possibly apply to believers. The application is again to individuals' walk and conduct; there is nothing in the chapter to suggest that "church truth" is being taught here.

In our "doing justly" we are to "love mercy" (Mic. 6:8; a humble walk with God will help to ensure both attitudes. Each of us is responsible to follow the Lord, and not to be obsessed with the service of our fellow-saints (John

21:19-22). Certainly we are not called upon to adjudicate on the genuineness or otherwise of CHURCHES OF GOD, and the path of joy and peace is to leave their disposition where it belongs — with the Lord Himself, who knows all things.

L.R.S.

More News from China

More News from China

Selected

For a good many years members of a much esteemed Canadian missionary family operated a Christian Book Room in Shanghai, and engaged in missionary activities in that populous city. The family of Willis became well-known to Christian workers all over China as publishers in both English and Chinese of sound gospel literature.

At the time the Communists took over Shanghai, Miss Helen Willis was in charge. The Book Room was permitted to continue for a while after other “foreign” missionaries had been expelled from the country. This possibly was because the Book Room appeared, in part, a commercial enterprise. However, its activities were increasingly curtailed by the Communist authority who finally ordered that it be completely closed. Simultaneously, other work carried on by Miss Willis and certain Chinese helpers had to cease. A number of her Bible class members suffered imprisonment.

In April of this year, Miss Willis was brought to trial and charged with subversive dealings against the State. The Book Room was confiscated, and she herself sentenced to expulsion from China. Miss Willis, the last evangelical worker to leave the mainland of China, reached Hong Kong at the end of the month. As far as is known, no “Protestant” missionaries are left, but a few have made their way to Formosa and other Asian countries.

There are some who believe that in China today we are seeing a “blue print” of Communist plans for the total

subversion of Christianity and the eventual domination of the world.

Fiery trial is the daily lot of God's dear children in China. They are being refined in the crucible of suffering. Remarkable answers to prayer and precious experiences of the Lord's preservation with a real sense of His presence are spoken of. To most the only rift in a dark sky is the promise of His soon coming. Let us intensify our prayers for these sorely persecuted saints, asking that they may be filled with divine comfort and daily sustained by the Holy Spirit to continue in faithful testimony for God. Let us pray also for those who in weakness have fallen away under trial that they may be restored and given fresh courage to face whatever may come for their Lord's sake.

The first great world emperor, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, learned in a most humbling experience that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32.) God is still on the throne. However little the workings of His permissive will may be understood by us, we can rest assured that the events of the world are under control and are being made to fulfil the eternal purposes of His love.

* * *

News From China

Recently, further news has been received at this office concerning the movements of Miss Helen Willis. After leaving China, Miss Willis went to Sandahan, British North Borneo, to assist her brother Mr. G. C. Willis who has opened a Christian Book Room in that city. A

nephew of Miss Willis, Dr. G. C. Willis, has opened a Christian medical clinic in the same city. We commend the doctor and his family, and, of course, Miss Willis and her brother to the prayerful interest of the Lord's people.

Mother

Mother

Sister Phoebe

A Godly Example

As a mother have you ever stopped and asked yourself, “What kind of an example am I to my children?” We know that our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of living the Christian life, but how do we affect our children by the way we live?

In the Bible the Apostle Paul recalls with joy his fellowship with Timothy, his spiritual “son in the faith.” The apostle may have stayed in Timothy’s home during his extensive missionary journeys, and his love for this young man undoubtedly grew out of his respect and admiration for Timothy’s mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois. These two women had a strong and sincere faith in the Lord and a mutual love of Him. The Holy Spirit had revealed to them the true Messiah in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they had taught Timothy well. He had been taught to love God and to have love and respect for others. He had been trained well as a child, which training involved an in-depth knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and when Paul needed someone to take the place of John Mark, he thought of Timothy, his spiritual son.

When it was time for Timothy to leave home at Paul’s beckon, Eunice and Lois allowed him to go with no strings attached. Humanly speaking, he may have been the centre of their lives up until that time, but they were not selfish and full of self-pity. We don’t hear much about

Eunice and Lois other than about their sincere faith in the Lord. Possessing such faith brings about in our lives many other sterling qualities.

As Christian mothers we can do no greater thing than to have a home where real love is. And real love is never demonstrated merely by the material things we give our children, for real love neither spoils nor pampers. Rather, it trains, guides, strengthens, and teaches spiritual and moral values, yet still leaves one free to grow and develop. Real love is a giving love — the kind our Lord Jesus displayed toward us when He suffered, bled and died at Calvary. If Jesus Christ is the centre of your home, then real love is there, and nothing is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

We read in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.” What a wonderful promise this is. In view of it, let us faithfully love and train our children, teaching them the way of salvation. Then let us show them by loving example the way our Lord would have them live in this world.

We must daily commit them to our Lord for His guidance and protection. Then, as Christian mothers, we know we will be bringing up our children the way God wants us to. There is no greater privilege than being a mother, loving and caring for the family God has given to you. Then, too, what a joy it is as a grandparent to watch your children do the same for their children.

Norman L. MacNeil

Norman L. MacNeil

Norman L. MacNeil of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, was called into the presence of his Lord, after a brief illness on January 20, 1969.

Born November 17, 1885 in Black River, Kent County, New Brunswick, he was the fifth of ten children born to Angus and Elizabeth (Doige) MacNeil, who were among the first in that area to be saved under the ministry of assembly preaching brethren.

Though raised of godly parents and in a home where many of the early pioneer assembly workers were frequently entertained, it was not until after his service with the Canadian Army in World War I and at the age of 33 that he finally came to a saving knowledge of Christ. He came under conviction of sin through the preaching of W. N. Brennan and R. Milnes, and was converted while recovering from a near fatal attack of influenza during the great epidemic of 1918.

He was one of the founders of the Moncton assembly. For many years the Lord’s Supper had been held periodically in his parent’s home. But in 1919 with seven breaking bread together the work was officially begun — a work which today has grown to the largest assembly in Eastern Canada. He was appointed its correspondent, a position he held until the time of his death. A man of firm principles and powerful leadership gift, his spiritual influence was not limited to just his home assembly but was felt throughout the assemblies of the Maritime Provinces.

He was a regional official of the Canadian National Railway when, after 40 years of service, he retired in 1950. His first love, however, was always that of the spread of the gospel to which he gave much of his spare energy and time. For many years he assisted the efforts of those preachers who pioneered the early assembly work in the Atlantic Provinces by preaching in cottage meetings and school houses. A bilingualist who spoke fluent French, he worked almost singlehandedly in bringing the gospel to the local French community. His passion for men's souls and his zeal in the gospel never failed to the end.

In 1928 he married Margaret Brennan, the youngest daughter of his father in the faith. The home which they established during the four decades of their married life became a warm haven and example of Christian hospitality to countless numbers of the Lord's servants, servicemen of World War II, missionaries and others.

Food for the Flock Inc. has sustained a loss in the passing of this esteemed brother He was one of the early members of the Committee. He sought to spread its written ministry throughout the Maritime Provinces.

The admirable qualities of steadfastness and diligence which characterized him were a source of encouragement and strength to those best acquainted with him.

At the annual meeting last year, his place was empty and although Mrs. MacNeil wrote submitting his resignation because of ill health, no action was taken by the Committee.

His task here is finished. He rests from his labours. His work and example among the assemblies remain as an inspiration to his many friends and relatives.

The funeral on January 23 was attended by an overflow crowd of several hundred who came from near and far to pay tribute in death to a life consistently lived for the things of God. George Heidman, a nephew-in-law, brought the principal message. Fred Ward, an esteemed friend and fellow elder in the assembly and Rae Fox of Halifax also took part in the service. Interment was in Fairhaven Memorial Gardens.

In addition to his widow, Mr. MacNeil is survived by two daughters and two sons, Mrs. Rodney Fisk, Oakville, Ontario; Mrs. Ainsley Allen, Amherst, Nova Scotia; Kenneth, New York City; Gordon, Moncton; 16 grandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Isaac McMullen; one brother, William, both of Moncton.

Objective Teaching

Objective Teaching

Selected

To teach in a Sunday School is to instruct children in the Word of God, in the way of salvation, in the things which build Christian character, and in the moral standards which compare with Bible ethics.

It has been said that teaching is helping the mind to grow as well as to know.

Furthermore, to teach in a Sunday School is to awaken convictions, to guide instincts, and to satisfy heart-hunger. It is to lay a foundation upon which future years may build a strong superstructure.

Someone has asserted that it is not learning or technical skill that makes a teacher; it is the power of inward conviction, the knowledge that one has something real to teach. While this is true, it might be also stated that the more excellent teacher is the one possessing all three: learning, technical skill, and an inward conviction of a real message from God.

“Patterson Dubois, in his book on ‘The Natural Way in Moral Training’, under a biological conception of education, points to four kinds of nurture, viz, nurture by atmosphere, by light, by food, and by exercise.

Education by atmosphere is to nurture the feelings. Scholars’ feelings are to be educated. They can be by direction, deflection and counteraction. Education by light nurtures their vision. To educate is to make truth visible, apt, vivid, wholesome. Education by food gives

them material, for which they are hungry, to assimilate. Education by exercise is education by self-expression, and involves choice and will. There is no growth without exercise."—Schmauk.

Old Testament and the Student

Old Testament and the Student

Selected

The substance of the article was prepared and presented by request to Christian students gathered at Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio.

An invitation to minister the Word of God in an assembly brought with it the unusual request that at least one message be from the Old Testament. Some one among those Christians had an interest in that portion of the Bible. Christians believe in the structural oneness of the Word of God, and that both parts of it are given by inspiration of God; nevertheless, apart from some allegorical lessons gathered from the Old Testament, there is considerable ignorance as to its primary value.

Our present inquiry will lead us in three directions, namely: What is the Old Testament? What did it mean to Christ? What is its value today?

What is the Old Testament?

The Old Testament consists of the first 39 books of the Bible, and stands in one respect, separate from the closing 27 books which form the New Testament. The Roman Catholic Bible has certain additional books. These are called The Apocrapha. These are rejected by the Protestants in general because of internal evidence against their being inspired, and because they were not in the Jewish Canon.

The first section of the Bible was not always called the Old Testament. This name was given to it during the

early centuries of the Church era to distinguish the Jewish Scriptures from the Christian Scriptures, the New Testament.

The authors were men, for the most part highly endowed with both natural intellectual abilities and spiritual powers. They were men like the law-giver Moses, the military genius Joshua, the king David, the poet Isaiah and the prime minister Daniel.

Structurally, the Old Testament is composed of three important parts. We may think of these as the traditional, historical, and prophetical sections. The traditional section covers the Book of Genesis. The historical section begins with the maturity of Moses when he was able to write of incidents in his own times (Exodus chapter three). The prophetical section commences with Isaiah. In so speaking, the impression must not be given that the contents of the Book of Genesis rests solely upon tradition. The first book of the Old Testament was given as much by inspiration as any other.

The knowledge contained in the Book of Genesis was passed orally from father to son throughout the early generations of humanity; there was no written record of divine accuracy. Finally, through Moses, God gave the perfect record.

The general characteristics of the Old Testament might be summed up in two words, preparatory and messianic. The diligent reader of the Old Testament senses that revelation is limited in itself and goes on to read that complementary part of the Bible, the New Testament. There is much in the Old Testament that is messianic, but how incomplete is the picture there without the

fuller revelation of the Lord Jesus as given in the New Testament.

To summarize: the Old Testament consists of the first 39 books of the Bible. They were called the Old Testament to distinguish them as the Jewish Scriptures. All were given by inspiration of God. Moreover, they embrace a period of human history during which knowledge was transmitted in a traditional manner. These same books also give both historical and prophetical facts. The entire Old Testament is preparatory to the New and is messianic in its concepts.

What Did the Old Testament Mean to Christ?

Everyone is conversant with the fact that the Lord Jesus possessed a perfect knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. Only Christ could say, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” (Psa. 40:8).

In the days of His flesh, our Lord Jesus used this vast knowledge of the Word of God in many ways, for example:

He used them in His defence (Matt. 4:1-11): Each temptation by the devil of the perfect Man Christ Jesus was met by the ready power of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Lord rebuffed Satan by the saying, “It is written.” The threefold temptation by the devil was met by three quotations from the Book of Deuteronomy. This powerful defence of the Old Testament is available to all of God’s people.

He used them in His claims (John 5:39-47): In this passage the Lord presents three witnesses to substantiate His claims to Deity. These were: John the

Baptist, His Father God, and the Old Testament. He said, “Search the Scriptures.. they are they which testify of Me” (V. 39), and “Moses … wrote of Me” (V. 47).

He used them in teaching (Luke 24:13-35): Believers are generally acquainted with the story of the walk to Emmaus, and how the Lord Jesus joined the two disconsolate disciples, and how, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The Holy Spirit still reveals to the devout heart, Christ in all the Scriptures.

He used them in preaching (Luke 17:20-37): What words of warning were given to the unbelieving Pharisees when they demanded to know when the Kingdom of God should come! What lessons Christ drew from the destruction of Sodom, the salvation of Lot, and from the punishment of his wife!

These are but a few of the ways in which the Lord used the Old Testament.

What is the Value of the Old Testament Today?

This is a most comprehensive subject, and one that merits close attention. Only a few of many interesting angles can be considered.

Historical value: The genealogy of our Saviour given in both Matthew and Luke is a recapitulation of Old Testament history. The Old Testament reveals the ancestry of the Messiah; it unfolds the story of Messiah’s line from Adam through Seth, Noah, Abraham, David, etc. to Mary and Joseph. The Old Testament is the preparatory history of the Redeemer.

Instructural value: God, in Old Testament times, taught His ancient people, and through the lessons given to them, teaches us today. For example, the gravity of sin was taught by the fact that sin resulted in death. God said to Adam about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Moreover, God declared, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Furthermore, in His dealings with Israel, God taught them that the death resulting from sin could be endured by a substitute. God commanded, “If a soul shall sin … let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering (Lev. 4:2-3). The Lord also taught them that the substitute be without blemish (Ex. 12:5. Lev. 1:3:3:1; 4:3).

All these instructive pictures from the Old Testament taught the heinousness of sin, the possibility of a vicarious death for sin, and the absolute perfection of the substitute. These facts, in a broader application, are all developed doctrinally in the New Testament.

Prophetical value: The Old Testament is full of predictions of both the first and second advents of Christ. It contains both fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. Details are given us as to the birth of Christ (Mic. 5:2. Isa. 6:9; 7:14). His humiliation and death are announced (Isa. 53:1-12), and so also are His exaltation and glory (Isa. 52:13. Zech. 9:9-11).

The Day of the Lord in all its many aspects is prophesied with clarity and force (Isa. 34:8. Zeph. 2:2. Zech. 14:1-11).

To know the future as well as the past, the Christian must read the Old Testament.

Evangelical value: It is obvious to all soul-winners that many have been directed into the joys of God's salvation through the gospel in the Old Testament. Philip, in his leading the Ethiopian to the Saviour, provides us with a classic example. From the very passage the Ethiopian had been reading, which we know to have been Isaiah 53, Philip preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:26-40).

May we become so well acquainted with the way of salvation as presented in the Old Testament that we also may point sinners through it to Christ.

Ethical value: Our understanding of the importance of the Old Testament to Christian living today would be most incomplete if mention were not made of its ethical value.

The moral law, known as the ten commandments, is given in the Old Testament, and is nowhere revoked in the New. While the ten commandments were not given as a means of salvation, God intended that they make sin exceeding sinful; they do, nevertheless, provide an excellent standard of living.

The moral law from the Old Testament reveals the highest standard of the true principles of ethics. The failure manifested throughout the Old Testament in the practice of this standard provides us with warnings which ought to help us in the control of our behaviour.

The Old Testament shows that Abraham lied, Jacob deceived, Moses lost his temper, David committed adultery and murder, and that many of the Kings of Israel and Judah stooped to idolatry; it shows that they

failed to reach, in anywise, God's standard of ethics. Furthermore, the Old Testament shows that any deviation from God's standard of ethics results in punishment. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Abraham almost lost his wife and suffered a rebuke from Abimeleck, Jacob was disciplined by circumstances, Moses was shut out of Canaan, and David was punished by national and domestic tragedy.

Let us remember the words of Paul "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

God placed young Josiah upon the throne of Judah when there was sad spiritual and moral declension throughout the nation. Early in his life, the young king sought after God, and ordered that the temple be cleansed. While engaged in this, his servants found a copy of the books of the law, the Pentateuch. As this part of the Old Testament was read to the king, he was bowed in repentance before God, and immediately ordered necessary reforms among his subjects (2 Chron. 34).

Jeremiah, at a later date, wrote about the same Old Testament books, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16).

A deeper knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures will undoubtedly result in the reformation of our ways of living, and provide us with real spiritual delight and pleasure.

S. O. M.

One Another

One Another

Selected

The following lovely compilation of scripture passages concerning the unity of saints is reprinted from the June 1883 issue of the Barley Cake.

The expression, “one another,” is of frequent occurence in the New Testament, and implies a reciprocity resulting from a divine fellowship that should know neither selfishness nor pride, wherein would be fulfilled those sweet words spoken to us by the Holy Ghost, “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Philippians 2:1,2).

Most of the passages where the words occur are given in the following texts, which may be listed this way: (1)Those relating to love itself, (2) Those that relate to various precepts that flow out of our mutual relationship to God and to each other, and (3) Those relating to things we are not to do to one another.

First, let us look at the passages of Scripture that exhort us to love “one another”:

· Its authority. “A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another” (John 13:34).

· Its measure. “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

· Its witness to discipleship. “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

· Its characteristic. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (i.e. to love the unloved) (1 John 4:10, 11).

· Its results. “If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12). “Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

· Its obligation. “We ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). It is a debt we owe to God that never can be discharged (Romans 13:8).

· Its teacher. “Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9). It comes not from the natural heart.

· Its nature. “Love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22).

Secondly, these passages show the precepts that flow out of love in those who are “members of one another”:

· Serve one another by love (Galatians 5:13).

· Be forbearing one with another in love, with all lowliness and meekness (Ephesians 4:2).

· Forgive one another even as God in Christ has forgiven (Ephesians 4: 32).

· Be kind and tender-hearted to one another (Ephesians 4:32).

· Be subject one to another (1 Peter 5:5).

· Have compassion one of another. In Greek—Be sympathizing. (1 Peter 3:8).

· Pray for one another (James 5:16).

· Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

· Use hospitality one to another (1 Peter 4:9).

· Comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

· Have peace one with another (Mark 9:50).

· Follow what is good with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

· Wash the feet of one another (John 13:14).

· Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16); with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14).

· Have fellowship one with another (1 John 1:7).

· Receive one another as Christ hath received you to the glory of God (Romans 15:7).

· Exhort one another daily (Hebrews 3:13).

· Admonish one another (Romans 15:14).

· Prefer one another in honour (Romans 12:10).

· Esteem others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

· Edify one another by following things that make for peace (Romans 14:19).

· Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together (Hebrews 10:24).

· Minister to one another of the gift received as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Peter 4:10).

· Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21).

· Be of the same mind one to another. Be like-minded. (Romans 12:16).

· Care for one another as one member cares for another that there be no schism in the body (1 Corinthians 12: 25).

· Confess your faults one to another (James 5:16).

Lastly, here are passages showing what we are not to do to one another:

· Be not puffed up for one against another (1 Corinthians 4:6).

· Lie not one to another, for we are members of each other (Ephesians 4:25).

· Envy not one another (Galatians 5:26).

· Speak not evil one of another (James 4:11).

· Provoke not one another (Galatians 5:26).

· Judge not one another (Romans 14:13).

· Grudge not, or murmur not, one against another (James 5:9).

May He, who has made all believers one in Christ Jesus, write with His own Spirit on our hearts these precepts, that we may show forth His praises, “giving diligence to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” remembering that “there is one body, and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”

Open House

You see them every where. Signs informing people there will be an "Open House" today. The purpose of the open house is to invite potential buyers into the home to see it first hand.

The Scriptures put great weight upon an "open house." Included in the qualifications of those desiring to provide oversight to the local assembly we read "given to hospitality." They are to be characterized as those who are "lovers of hospitality." Those who have an "open house."

There are many accounts in Scripture in which saints have opened their home to strangers and saints. Most notably is the home in Bethany which was open to the Lord on numerous occasions. Lydia likewise opened her home to Paul and his company. (Acts 16:15, 40). The assembly met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla. (1 Cor. 16:19)

Is your home open to be used of the Lord, or do you keep this important asset solely for yourself?

Other Methods

Other Methods

Selected

Since we have discussed at some length the analytical method of Bible study, let us focus our attention upon other profitable methods, some simple and others complex.

The Topical:

Much help is to be gained by the tracing of a specific theme throughout the Scriptures. This form of study demands some mental as well as spiritual preparation. As an example, let us study the interesting topic of prayer. Before we commence we must decide which aspect of prayer we wish to examine, individual prayer or collective prayer, pastoral prayer or assembly prayer, personal prayer or objective prayer, the inward consequence or the outward results of prayer.

A very interesting digression into the method of word study could also be enjoyed using this theme, for it would be enlightening to investigate the different words used in this connection throughout the Scriptures, at least five expressions are found: prayer, supplication, intercession, petition, and request. Prayer, a general term, asks that God, who is supreme, through His power and wealth grant that which will meet human need. Supplication is a term indicative of the suppliant’s attitude of humility and earnestness before God. Intercession suggests an entreaty on behalf of another. Petitions solicit specific wishes, and the word, request,

denotes the spirit of submission and reverence, rather than earnestness, that should characterize man in God's presence.

Topical studies become very fascinating because topics frequently appear as links in chains. Let us again take the theme of prayer. As we investigate its signification in Holy Writ, we discover that it is linked with thanksgiving, and that thanksgiving suggests praise, and that praise expresses itself in worship.

Besides prayer the following topics are worthy of earnest reflection: faith, hope, love, the believer's walk, the Christian's home, Christian fellowship, spiritual guidance, etc. There is another method akin to this:

The Doctrinal Method:

Generally speaking a doctrine is more specifically an element of the Christian faith, it embraces the whole teaching of the Bible upon such subjects as God, His personality, trinity, Eternity, manifestation, etc.; the Lord Jesus, His Deity, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, second advent, and kingdom; the Holy Spirit, His Deity, personality, and work; man, his creation, ruin, redemption, final glorification or judgment; the Church, her origin, function, and destiny.

It is impossible to expend too much time in the careful study of Christian doctrine. To be well grounded in the faith, it is necessary to be acquainted with the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. Every Christian for his own spiritual pleasure and preservation should understand, in a measure, the meaning of salvation, redemption, reconciliation, atonement, sanctification, election, predestination, glorification, etc.

Biographic Studies:

These are delightful. Select some Bible character, either in the Old Testament or in the New, and search out every detail of his life, his ancestry, his birth, his home, his character, his accomplishments, his death. Some Old Testament characters are types of Christ, while others are types of the Christian. Of the former, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Jonah, David, or Solomon, are examples. Men like Abraham, Jacob, Samson, Nehemiah, etc., are excellent illustrations of what a Christian should be. The time spent in Biblical research will be amply rewarded, and the student's personal life greatly enriched.

A brief word ought to be written on

Typical Studies:

This is a more profound method of Bible scrutiny, and demands maturity of thought, and quite an extensive knowledge of the Word of God. Other methods are recommended for young believers, and this only for those who have already acquired some experience in other fields of Biblical research. The study of types will take the student into such subjects as: the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the Law of the Offerings, the Feasts of Jehovah, Israel's march from Egypt to Canaan.

There are types to be found among Old Testament characters, events, and ceremonies. This method is a most fruitful field, and yet a word of caution must be given; the student ever should be on his guard against a fertile imagination, and spurn every temptation to indulge in speculative interpretations. We now notice the difference existing among the following: types, symbols, similes, metaphors, and illustrations. Briefly, a

type is prefigurative, that is, it is a pattern given long ago of something we have today. A symbol is a visible sign of what already exists. A simile resembles certain qualities or features, a metaphor is a figure of speech which transfers the properties of one object to another. The illustration is the helpful example that by a picture makes clear the hidden meaning.

Our Great High Priest

Our Great High Priest

Selected

What consolation and cheer it is to the hearts of the people of God to know that in this scene of trial and difficulty we have a Great High Priest Who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities; for He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Since our Lord Jesus is both God and Man the believer is assured of His unchanging sympathy and constant compassion. As Priest His perfect humanity assures us of His sympathy and care; His Deity secures for us His unfailing presence and His unlimited power.

In our consideration of Him it is well to note that, first of all, the BASIS of His priestly work is His own sacrifice in death. In contrast to the priests of old who had to make an offering for their own sins, and that daily, He offered up Himself for our sins “once for all” (Heb. 7:27). He, the holy, guileless, undefiled One, offered one sacrifice for sins and is now “sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12, Darby). “Once in the end of the world (the consummation or crisis of the ages) hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). These passages express the sufficiency of His sacrifice and the greatness of His person. The priests, in times past, carried the blood of the victim into the holy place, thus typifying our blessed Lord entering into the presence of God by virtue of His own blood (Heb. 9:12).

The priestly work of the Saviour began with His resurrection from the dead. It is expressly stated that "if He were on earth, He should not be a priest" (Heb. 8:4). "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). Our Lord's priesthood did not depend upon genealogy like the Aaronic priesthood, but upon the mysterious combination of His Deity and His perfect humanity.

His APPOINTMENT to this high function was unique. In the case of Aaron the appointment to the priesthood honoured him, but in the case of our Lord Jesus in His priesthood, the Father glorified Him. Christ was called of God, or as the word really means, was saluted of God (Heb. 5:10). That Aaron was never so saluted is obvious from a reading of chapter 7, but in regard to Christ "the Lord sware with an oath," made a complete declaration which cannot under any circumstances be withdrawn, that a change has been made in the constitution, that constitutes Christ a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews links together Psalm 2 and Psalm 110, in both of which our Lord is seen, first as the Son of God, and then as the Melchisedec priest. These doctrinal facts form the very basis of the epistle, one section of which (chaps. 4:14-10:22) deals almost entirely with this great theme.

The CHARACTER of the High Priest is another point of great importance and reveals His fitness to carry on His priestly work for His own. "For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). This is a wonderful statement and speaks of the suitability of His person for this service. Godward, man-

ward, and selfward He has no compeer. He is the Chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One. We read, “He is separated from sinners” (R.V.), or placed beyond the reach of assault. This probably refers to His burial and resurrection. His ascension to God’s right hand is also noted for it states that He is made higher than the heavens. It is recorded earlier in the epistle that “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). There was nothing in Him to respond to the temptation of sin; in fact, it was impossible for Him to sin. Paul, the man of intellect writes, “He knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). Peter, the man of prompt action states, “He did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22); and John, the man of intimacy, declares, “In Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

“He has passed through the heavens,” and now we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16). His Name Jesus assures us of His sympathy and compassion. He passed this way before us as the Man Who knew the sorrows that led to prayers, strong crying, and tears (Heb. 5:7). What a Saviour we meet at the throne of grace! “He is able to succour them that are tempted (tried)” (Heb. 2:18). “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

In Melchisedec we see Christ as the King Priest, and as such He abides continually; there is no end to His priesthood, for He lives in the power of an endless life. Melchisedec has no recorded genealogy and this significant omission becomes the very ground on which the Holy Spirit presents to us the Deity of Christ. Christ

as viewed in His eternal Godhead is without father or mother, without genealogy, therefore, without the beginning of days or the end of life.

It is interesting that the meeting between Melchisedec and Abram, as recorded in Genesis 14, took place before the offer of goods was made by the king of Sodom. Abram received strength and courage in his weariness to resist this temptation. We likewise may find grace to help in every time of need, and experience the fact that we are saved by His life (Rom. 5:10). Christ will keep us from falling (1 Peter 1:4-5).

Today our Lord Jesus Christ is seen as the High Priest over the House of God, through Whom we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:21-22).

May His compassion, sympathy, and care become greater realities in our daily lives, and the assurance of His unfailing presence and unlimited power stimulate and strengthen our faith in Him.

Painting Fences

Two men, two fences, two reasons

What you learn from these two men could change your eternal destiny!

Bill was late for work, and in an attempt to get the driver in front of him to go faster, he kept flashing his lights and blowing his horn. Suddenly, the driver stopped and got out of his car to see what Bill wanted. Bill, extremely upset, ran towards him, pushing him down to the ground. The man broke his arm and had to be taken to a local hospital for emergency treatment. Charges were filed and Bill was found guilty of aggravated assault.

Bill was scheduled to be sentenced the following Monday, but he had an idea which he thought would help his case. On Saturday morning Bill went to the judge's horse farm with many gallons of paint. He began early in the morning to paint the long fence that ran around the property. He painted all day, only stopping in spots to trim the grass under the fence. Bill was sure his work would influence the judge come Monday morning.

Another man, Joe, often lived beyond his means, and got into debt which he could not pay. One day he was taken to court by one of his creditors. The judge demanded payment be made within a month or Joe would go to jail. Joe was not able to pay the debt and fully expected to go to jail; however, a friend heard of his problem and graciously paid his debt for him. He even told Joe that he did not have to pay back the money.

The next day Joe showed up at his friend's house with gallons of paint and began to paint the fence that ran around the backyard. His friend told him it was not necessary for him to paint the fence. Joe said he knew that, but he wanted to show his appreciation for what his friend had done for him. (Galatians 2:20)

Here are two men, painting two fences, but for two different reasons. One was doing it to influence the judge, the other to show his appreciation for what his friend had done for him.

These two men perfectly illustrate the difference between a religious person and a person who has trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. The religious person does what he does to influence the Judge, God, while the person who has trusted Christ as his personal Savior serves Christ out of appreciation for the fact that Christ died for his sins. He is not attempting to influence God's judgment upon his sins, as that has already taken place at the cross of Calvary. He now serves Christ out of love for Him! (2 Cor. 5:14)

Which fence are you painting? Are you attempting to influence God's judgment on your sins by your religious efforts and good deeds. It will not work, as "there is no respect of persons with God"(Romans 2:5), and you must pay for your sins, the penalty of which is death and eternal separation from God. (Romans 6:23)

Read the Gospel of John to see how you can know your sins forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ, and be freed from religion to serve Him out of love and appreciation.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."(Ephesians 2:8-9)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”(John 3:16)

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Points For Preachers

Points For Preachers

Selected

See that the depth of your communion with God is equal to your activity in service.

Preach the Gospel (Mark 16:16). Preach Christ as did Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:5). Preach the Word as did the persecuted disciples (Acts 8:4).

Do not preach yourself, or your success, or announce results and tabulate in round numbers how many converts you have gained.

Many evangelists are rude in their manners. Be courteous. A servant of Christ should be a living personification of practical Christianity.

Avoid mannerism. As few anecdotes and stories as possible. Preach the Word and not yourself.

On no account look to saints of God for money or hint at temporal needs. Look up and direct to Christ, whose servant you are. Do not court the rich nor despise the poor.

Do not be attracted by a passing popularity (Mark 1:37). Never be disheartened if rejected (Mark 5:17-21), but quietly pass on elsewhere.

Do not be over anxious as to immediate results. Patiently labour, reaping time is coming (2 Tim. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9).

Aim to produce solid results, not startling news. Avoid exaggeration in statement.

Deal with the conscience, and speak to the heart (Jn. 8:7; Isaiah 40:1, 2).

Avoid as far as possible the relation of personal experience. Subjective truth has its place, but as a rule that comes within the province of the teacher. Objective truth is more in the line of the preacher and it is that believed which can alone produce true state of soul.

Quote Scripture freely. Do be simple, earnest and clear in your statements of Gospel truth.

Baptize your work in prayer and solemnly remember that the Holy Spirit is your only power in service.

Do not prolong the meetings. Remember that people have bodies as well as souls and God thinks of both.

Do not hurry souls into a confession that they are saved. Peace with God is not to be gained by hasty confessions wrung from unwilling lips.

Prayer

Prayer

Selected

“O God, remember our much loved sister; go with her to the hospital; heal her quickly, and bring her back to the work here where she is so much needed. In Jesus’ name we ask this. Amen.”

The prayer was simple and sincere; the supplicant most reverent. In response to his “Amen” there were several audible affirmations from other members of the group.

The group represented an extraordinary activity within the cold gray walls and iron-barred windows of a large government institution. Behind those walls men, who in ill mental health had committed deeds of violence, were held in custody and given appropriate psychiatric treatment and care.

Miss M- was engaged in teaching these unfortunate men the rudiments of a grade school education. A few of the men had little education, and all had required help. What an opportunity for those capable of studying! That their teacher was fully equipped for her assignment, none doubted, but some had discovered beyond this that, as a Christian, she was also well qualified to instruct them in the principles of divine grace. She was a modern Dorcas full of good works and alms; a Phoebe, a succourer of many; and a Priscilla who expounded to them the ways of God more perfectly.

Either directly, or through other Christians whom she had interested in these men, several had been definitely

led to the Lord Jesus. These had manifested such a change in their behaviour that they were permitted certain privileges, thus their presence at prayers.

Furthermore, through the influence of Miss M--- a weekly Bible Class had been commenced. For this particular work she had solicited the help of some capable Christian brethren. Before each Bible Class the converts and these visiting brethren met for prayer. On this particular evening they had learned of the serious illness of their beloved teacher. The fervency of their “Amens” indicated a deep concern. Their hearts were pleading with God to spare the one who had brought light into their gloomy lives, liberty even where confinement was necessary, and blessing where otherwise hearts would have been filled with resentment and despair.

As the living child breathes so the young convert intuitively prays. Profound reverence is his reaction to the knowledge of infinite holiness. Each experience in his life imposes its own measure of urgency, and awe is quickened in his spirit by a consciousness of God, and of his own personal unworthiness and weakness. All these qualities were in evidence that evening as well as during the anxious days that followed. These sentiments were blended that night into a strange yet holy medley.

Weeks later, just previous to another Bible Class, the group gathered for prayer. “Heavenly Father,” began one of the men, “we praise Thee that Miss M--- is with us tonight. We thank Thee for her recovery, and we earnestly pray that this may be completed in Thy will. We give Thee thanks in the name of Jesus Thy Son our

Saviour. Amen.” Many “Amens” again resounded through the room.

Like the converts in that institution may we learn to take everything to God in prayer.

—S.O.M.

Principles and Methods

Principles and Methods

Selected

We view with admiration God’s handiwork in Creation, the perfect systems of movement, the fixed laws of action, and the perpetual affinity in which all things exist. We also may be filled with wonder as we seek to understand God’s perfect Revelation, for His work of Inspiration is as marvellous as is His work of Creation. There are fixed laws in the latter just as there are in the former. It is, therefore, proper that the Bible student become well acquainted with these. There is no question but, that underlying the writing of the Bible, is a definite numerical structure, and many happy and profitable hours may be spent searching out the significance of Biblical numerics.

In former articles certain obvious rules have been noticed, but there are one or two that are not so obvious, which ought to be mentioned before we enter upon a discussion of the different methods of Bible study.

Many years ago, Benjamin Wills Newton wrote, “I find in Scripture a principle of interpretation which I believe, if conscientiously adopted, will serve as an unfailing guide as to the mind of God as contained therein. The first mention of a thing, the very first words of any subject of which the Holy Spirit is going to treat, are a keystone of the whole matter.” Thus today we speak of the law of FIRST MENTION. As an example let us take the prediction made to Satan in the presence of Adam and

Eve. In it, God has hidden, as in germ, the truth concerning His final triumph over evil, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel,” (Gen. 3:15). In this single statement we have before us the conflict of the ages, the miraculous birth of a deliverer, our Saviour; the sufferings of Christ, His heel bruised; the overthrowal of Satan, his head bruised; and the final triumph of the One, who, through suffering, was victorious.

Another very important rule has been called the law of FULL MENTION. God has not written the Bible like a volume on Systematic Theology. His truth, He has scattered like precious seed on every page of the Bible. This seed germinates and develops into the most beautiful fragrant blooms ready for our picking. Notwithstanding this fact, God frequently gives a full statement of truth in one continuous passage. For example, we read much about the resurrection throughout the whole Bible. Job mentions it, David makes reference to it, illustrations are to be found in both the Old and New Testaments, but when we reach 1 Corinthians 15, we find a full statement of this glorious doctrine, so full that it embraces both the resurrection of Christ and of His people.

There is one safe rule to follow in Bible study, that is, wherever possible, use both the law of first mention and the law of full mention.

Dr. A. T. Pierson also speaks of the law of ILLUSTRATIVE MENTION, and points out that God manifests once and for all His dealings with different types of sin. His examples are as follows: God’s attitude toward murder

is seen in His sentence upon Cain, His attitude to family impurity is seen at Sodom, His attitude to covetousness is seen in the case of Achan, and His attitude to deception is seen in the case of Jacob, paying for it after twenty years.

There are, beside these basic rules that have been given as guides, different methods of study. We have heard some speak of telescopic Bible study, and we know that they mean the securing of a broad comprehensive view of divine truth, a scanning of the horizon of Divine Revelation. Then again, we have heard some speak of the microscopic Bible study, and of course we know they mean a much more detailed examination of the Word of God, a closer scrutiny of each word and each phrase. There is profit in both of these suggestions. It is well to have a general knowledge of Holy Scripture, and at the same time to attain a certain amount of specific understanding of important passages in Holy Writ.

Let us, for the present, focus our attention upon a very useful method of Bible study called WORD STUDY. When we adopt this method we must be prepared to use an English Greek Concordance such as Dr. Strong's or Dr. Young's. Word study merely in the English can result in sad misunderstanding.

We shall assume that we are reading through the epistle to the Romans, and our attention is attracted by Paul's desire, "Brethren, my desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," (10:1). We immediately turn up this word "desire" in our English Greek Concordance, and in the Index Lexicon we find it occurs seven times in the New Testament. A careful examination of the different occurrences shows that the

expression is used only in relation to the Lord and the apostle Paul. We conclude, that he, who was the great enemy of the Church, in conversion had become the humble follower of the Lord to such a degree that in him there was a striking likeness to Christ.

At a later date, in the will of the Lord, we shall consider further the spiritual value of word studies in the Scriptures.

Questions

Questions

Selected

A number of replies have been received in response to Bill Brown's call for help in the January-February issue of "Focus." For readers unfamiliar with Bill Brown's letter, he is a keen new believer who finds himself in a quandary in deciding which church to "join." He has narrowed his choice down to two: a strong, thriving, active church, with a good Gospel-preaching and Bible-believing pastor, a good programme and a warm welcome; and another —a "Gospel Chapel"—where the members are devoted to Christ and stress a weekly "communion service" but whose numbers are not growing and the preaching sometimes poor.

It is not possible to fully reproduce all the letters received, but the following excerpts will indicate their general tenor:

One writer from Ontario asks: "Is not the whole question fictitious?" and expresses concern that "such strategy should appear" in such "a worthy paper as 'Ministry in Focus'." Since others may share his suspicions, it should be stated here that the question, submitted by a mature Christian, related to an actual incident of which he had knowledge— and which of course is frequently repeated in the experiences of God's people. The name of the person whose problem was submitted, and some of the details of his experiences were, of course, changed as we would not wish to identify the brother.

A Christian of 42 years' experience, from Illinois, suggests that, in his choice, Bill Brown should be guided by the emphasis placed on worship in the church, for "out of an attitude of devotion, service will naturally follow. The worship service will always be the high point in the devoted believer's experience." In such a "worship service," there should be "the opportunity for individual worship," recognizing "the priesthood of the individual believer," each one having "direct access to God, without interference or direction from a clergy." He deplores the situation in which "the pastor does all the preaching, most of the teaching and most of the praying. God tells us to provoke one another to love and to good works; I know of no place where this command is better carried out than at the worship meeting, where we, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, prompt each other to worship."

A brother from Ontario cautions Bill Brown against choosing the larger congregation because of its size. He cites an experience at a missionary conference where two-thirds of the missionaries present came from small congregations ("under one hundred members").

Another brother from Ontario advises Bill Brown to "join the active church of which he speaks! According to Scripture, there is no standing still in the Christian life"—for the local church as for the individual believer. He feels, therefore, that the group of believers who appear devoted to Christ, yet are not growing—a Scriptural impossibility, in his opinion—"is in a backslidden condition and it would be spiritual suicide for Bill Brown to join such a group." However, he adds, "had Bill been a mature Christian, the advice would have been reversed, as there is a possibility that he

would be able to stir up the folks in this ‘Chapel’ to their God-given task of ‘making disciples’.”

If you can give any counsel to those confronted with a similar problem to Bill Brown’s, or if you have any comments to make on the responses printed in the last issue of “Focus” or above—or if you have any other question you would like to see discussed in this column, please send your contribution to: Dr. James T. Naismith, 1121 Hilltop St., Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 5S6.

Question For Consideration:

The following question has been submitted by a brother from Ontario: In a recent publication, reference is made to the Lord’s “coming secretly for His own” and Matthew 24:41 is cited. “Does the whole context of this verse not deal with the Lord’s return to the earth? If this is not so, then verse 51 must teach not only a partial rapture but the possibility of a believer losing his salvation some day. God forbid!”

It is certainly true that many take the expression “the one shall be taken” to refer to those who are raptured at the coming of the Lord for His people; and “the other left” to those left for judgment. But is this the meaning of the passage? Your comments are invited.

Questions

Questions

Bill Brown’s predicament—expressed in the question page of the Jan-Feb 1974 issue of “Focus”—as he looked for a new spiritual home, has raised the question, faced by many, not necessarily in identical circumstances, “Which church should I join?” While it is not strictly scriptural to speak in terms of “joining a church,” we retain the expression because it is commonly used and well understood. Faced with a bewildering variety of “churches,” how is a Christian to decide which one to choose as a spiritual home? Among the many factors that influence this choice are: the nearness of the church, the social standing of the congregation, the warmth and friendliness of the welcome, the rhetoric of the preacher, and even the fact of having been saved there. However important each of these may seem, they should certainly not be of prime importance in determining my church affiliation as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He is my Lord and I am responsible to obey Him, rather than act according to my personal whims and fancies. As Builder and Head of the Church, He has given directions to His people—these directions are contained in His Word. Here, surely, is my sure guide, and I should place scriptural instruction above all considerations of personal convenience or enjoyment.

What then does the Bible teach? Here are a few important principles to which priority should be given in selecting “the right church”:

1. Every member of a New Testament church is a born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This evidently characterized the churches described in the Acts; and such passages as 1 Corinthians 1:2; 14:33 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 indicate the early churches were composed of “saints,” who acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord, and excluded unbelievers.

2. A scriptural church upholds “the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) and rejects evil (cf. 2 John 9,10). It will hold, teach and practise all the teaching of the Word of God, and, conversely will reject unscriptural teaching and practices. A believer will not seek communion where the Bible is not recognized as the inspired Word of God and where the deity and humanity, virgin birth and sinless life, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection, and the personal return of his Lord are called in question.

3. A scriptural church will not recognize any human “head,” but the Lord Jesus Christ will be acknowledged as Lord (1 Corinthians 1:9; 12:3, 5) and Head (Ephesians 1:22; 3:15, etc.). No man, however godly, gifted or influential, can usurp His place. Each church is responsible to the One who walks in the midst of the churches (see Revelation 2:1)—not to other persons or churches.

4. Since the Scriptures teach (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10) that every member has a “gift” distributed by the Spirit of God in His sovereign wisdom, a New Testament church will provide opportunities for the development and functioning of all the gifts for the mutual profit of all the members—not one person doing everything, but everyone doing his divinely given service.

5. The priesthood of every believer, as taught in 1 Peter 2:5,9, should be recognized in practice as well as in theory—by providing opportunity for holy priestly service of offering up to God “spiritual sacrifices”—of praise (Hebrews 13:15), possessions (Hebrews 13:16; Philippians 4:18) and persons (Romans 12:1); and for royal priestly service of showing forth to men, by life and lip, the excellencies and virtues of our glorious Lord.

6. Administration in the church is by elders and deacons —both of them always in the plural in the New Testament. Elders—also called bishops and overseers—are appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and recognized by the church (1 Thessalonians 5:12) to oversee and to shepherd the flock. Deacons are appointed by the church for specific service and, like elders, should be of high spiritual calibre (1 Timothy 3).

7. The ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s supper, both for believers only, have been commanded by the Lord and should be carried out in accordance with His instructions given in the Bible.

If I want to be in the spiritual home where the Lord would have me, I will look for these characteristics and seek fellowship with those who are endeavouring to obey the Lord. I shall not expect to discover a perfect church since each church is composed of imperfect human beings. If I did find one that was perfect, I would hesitate to join it for I would immediately mar its perfection, since I am far from perfect! One last point: since “it is more blessed to give than to receive,” I should be more concerned with what I give to the church than with what I get from it, and, by fulfilling my

responsibilities to the Lord and His people, I shall be “more blessed.”

Questions

Questions

Selected

Dear Dr. Naismith:

In regard to the question asked by one of your correspondents in the May-June number of Focus, numerous salient points must be taken into consideration.

His statement in full reads: “In a recent publication reference is made to the Lord’s coming secretly for His own and Matthew 24:41, is cited. Does not the whole context of this verse deal with the Lord’s return to earth? If this is not so, then verse 51 must teach not only a partial rapture but the possibility of a believer losing his salvation some day. God forbid!”

One does not wish to be dogmatic, but certain particulars require examination.

First: This statement, “One shall be taken, and the other left,” is made, according to the passage, in regard to the coming of the Son of Man. The Lord used this title of Himself frequently, not only because it implies His humanity but because it always has been God’s intention that a man be governor of the earth. Adam lost his kingship over the earth when he sinned. A usurper has this place today. He is called “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Nevertheless, God’s original purpose will be fulfilled. The prophet Daniel says, “Behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds

of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

This, of course, refers to the second stage of the Lord's return. He comes as the Morning Star for the Church, and then as the Sun of Righteousness to Israel. He comes as the Bridegroom for the Church, but as Son of Man to the whole earth. In this the second stage of His advent, He will be King of Kings in His glory and will establish His kingdom of justice and equity over the entire world.

Second: Attention should be given to the words of the Lord regarding "the days of Noe". Through the flood the majority were taken away in judgment, and only a few were left after the deluge to enter the renovated earth, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Third: The happenings in the days of Noah are used by the Lord to illustrate what will transpire when the Lord again punishes humanity. "Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isaiah 66: 15-16). The impenitent, the ungodly, will be taken away by judgment, and only a minority will be left to enter into the Millennium, Christ's reign of glory and righteousness for one thousand years.

Fourth: The parable that closes this chapter deals with profession in the days of the coming of the Son of Man, the seventieth week of Daniel. All in the parable profess to be servants: “By their fruits shall ye know them.” Some are faithful and wise in nature as well as in name, therefore, they will be recompensed when the Lord returns to establish His kingdom. Whereas, the evil ones, servants in name but not in nature, will perish in the outpouring of judgment.

S.O.M.

Reconstructionist Christianity

Reconstructionist

Christianity

A new movement is being added to evangelical circles. To a fully committed dispensationalist (this writer for two years had the late Dr. William Pettingill as his teacher), the philosophy of Dr. Rousas Rushdoony swings to the absolute opposite of how we understand God's plan for the present and the future. Here is post-millennialism back to town with some added features. The Levitical law should be imposed on society. This includes the abolition of democracy, no prisons; criminals to become slaves until they have made amends. Some fifteen calls for capital punishment — murder, rape, sodomy, etc. No usury, and a gold or silver currency. This should give an idea of what is on the agenda. One critic says, alarmed at their growth, "They haven't been taken seriously enough."

Recently Bill Moyer on TV gave an hour interviewing leading Reconstructionists. A further supportive of this trend is a pile of books and magazine articles. In some respects it presses Calvinism to its logical conclusions, a theocracy. In fact, the New England Puritans had much which Reconstructionists could admire. The Calvinistic thinker, Van Til, although not a follower has laid the groundwork for some of their philosophy. In turn, Dr. Francis Schaeffer's, A Christian Manifesto, relied on Rushdoony's social analysis, according to "Christianity Today."

These views merge nicely with religious conservatives who are deeply concerned over the moral breakdown so prevalent today in the home, church and state. They suggest as timely recoil from the articulate and riotous picketing of those who wish to emphasize their liberal persuasions. The Reconstructionists echo the feeling of every God-fearing heart for a better world. The movement we are considering says, “Don’t just go to church, be a divine activist in this present world. Furthermore, our solutions must be right because they are biblical. This is something with which you could become spiritually intoxicated. In many quarters this seems to be happening. Reconstructionists are strict inerrantists. However, they are hopelessly short on Calvin’s first point, total depravity.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, we are instructed to “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” Obviously, we do not circumcise our males on the eighth day after birth, or stone a sabbath breaker to death, because there has been a dispensational change. Read carefully our Lord’s prayer for His own now that He is leaving them. In contrast He prays not for the world (John 17:9) and further states, “the world doth not know thee” (v. 25).

The world in response to divine things has always been static and the only prayer left for a Christ-rejecting world is found in Psalm 2:8-9: “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” As to the Lord’s own, they are to be kept from the world’s evil and to be distinctly “not of it.” The present dispensation of grace is well defined throughout the New Testament. James, the moderator of the first church council, put God’s purpose for the

present age in a capsule, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take unto them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14).

Global

At first glance it looks like the world of mankind is becoming more and more fragmented. The many nations that have gained their independence since World War II are imbued with a spirit of nationalism.

No matter how poverty-striken they may be their first thought is to secure armaments, and well they might. Opposite to all of this is the global mentality that has always been with us and is sprouting old solutions in modern attire. The global ambition springs from the origin of man, “God hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell upon the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). To prevent man from gaining a complete monopoly in an unchecked development of his sinful self-will came God’s judgment at the town of Babel. Man now stricken with his many tongues, natural resources and climates have encountered obstacles that have frustrated his efforts to regain his unity. No effort has excelled that of Nebuchadnezzar as the prophet Daniel acknowledged when he addressed the king, “It is thou O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth” (Dan. 4:22). This was accomplished by conquest and “the golden image” (religion). It was short-lived by corruption of his successors.

We hear today that our children are being taught in our schools that they are citizens of planet earth. The “New Age” cult, symbolized by the rainbow seen in windows and on car bumpers, seeks world peace by a single

religion; opposition to it will be crushed. Dr. Rushdoony and his fellow Reconstructionists believe the church will ultimately triumph bringing in a Christian, Mosaic milennium. Communism prides itself on having the only solution to the world's problems and cannot perfectly work until it has brooked all opposition. Then there is talk of a universal currency. In the Middle Ages the church had a display of unity, but was never more corrupt. The present World Council of Churches by its enormous compromises is embarrassed by evangelicals who refuse its extended arms of tollerance. The 13th chapter of Revelation depicts a future unity that will doubtless satisfy the instinct for unity among the majority and will be accomplished by an economic monopoly — none can buy or sell who refuse to worship "the image of the beast". This Devil-inspired and man-engineered success invokes our Lord's return as a warrior to destroy this consummation of iniquity.

All the aspirants after world dominion have failed because of the persistence of sin. Some have been inspired by good intentions, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Others, like Napoleon and Hitler, have tried force and met their Waterloos and Stalingrads. God has purposed such an empire but reserved its accomplishment to His Son. "The seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Reflections

Reflections

Selected

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” — 2 Corinthians 11:28.

Am I to understand that Thou dost command me to examine myself, Lord; this vile, sinful self? Even though born from above, yet the fact is that the root of sin remains, and is proven present by the selfishness, jealousy, and pride which I find within. What an unpleasant task Thou hast exhorted me to perform: to examine myself, the deeds, the words, the thoughts, which have emanated from the vile person within! How can any blessing come from obedience to this commandment which I find in Thine all-seeing, all-embracing word? What saith it? “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.” Yea, rather, so let him not eat, for what is there within that is at all worthy of appearing at that most sacred table of Thine and partaking of those God-given emblems?

But stay, my soul, is it not for this that thy Lord died: to deliver thee from all the vileness and filth of sin and self? Do not the bread and wine remind thee of a sacrifice well able to cover all thy nakedness, and wash away all thy stain?

Yea, my Lord, I turn mine eyes from all my corruption, and look to Thee, the incorruptible and Holy One. I turn from all any pride, which has grieved me afresh, to Thee who art well able to clothe me with the humility of

Christ. I pause, while mourning over my failure, to admire Thee afresh, my Lord, in all Thy beauty and righteousness. I see in Thee the perfection I long for, and find nought apart from Thee.

Is not this hard-to-be-obeyed verse in Thine Holy Word a fresh proof to this soul of Thy glorious wisdom? For I appreciate so much the more the dear remembrance of Thyself when, after having examined myself and having found nothing in which I can glory, I can by contrast raise these eyes and this heart to Thee in all Thy beauty and sufficiency and glory.

So I go once again to Thy table, to bow in Thy presence and remember Thee; knowing that the sacrifice here shown forth is that which has hidden this self from view in the garments of Thine own righteousness and beauty. —I.B.

Revelation

Revelation

Selected

Young people are taught in High School and College to think; liberal education has this objective before it.

An honest boy thus taught eventually asks himself, how does God Whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. 6:16), God Who is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17), and Who dwells in light inaccessible, make Himself known? This is an intelligent question that demands a rational answer.

God was known to man before he fell into sin. With the entrance of sin came ignorance. Now man walks in darkness, for darkness has blinded his eyes (1 John 2:11). Moreover, “Men love darkness rather than light” (John 3:19).

That God, holy and glorious, graciously has made Himself known to man is obvious. He has revealed Himself, His will, and many of His purposes.

A child was lost at a very large flower show. The mother, hearing above the din and confusion of the crowd the crying and the sobbing, quickly hurried to her little girl. Stooping down beside her, with words and kisses she made her presence felt. At first, through her blinding tears the tiny tot could only see beside her the faint outline of a woman, but through the words of comfort and the kisses of love realized the nearness of her mother, whom she promptly saw when her tears were wiped away.

Similarly, God stoops down to man in his need and reveals Himself. This He does in various ways. He reveals Himself in nature, and this we call “General Revelation.” He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus, and this we call “Special Revelation.” He reveals Himself in the Bible, and this we call “Specific Revelation.”

General Revelation

As intimated, “General Revelation” implies that God has made Himself known in creation.

There are four Psalms, apparently all written by David, which declare the revelation of God through nature.

No man was better able to write on this subject than David. Through the days and nights spent on the hills of Bethlehem, and through the many experiences of an eventful life, he had received manifestations of God.

In astronomical wonders (Psalm 19): As a shepherd lad reclining on the moss watching his father’s sheep, David had scanned the astronomical wonders of the skies, and had written “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handy work …”

In nature (Psalm 104): David was a keen student of nature. He may have been, as we say, a self-made man; if so, he was well made, for his acquired knowledge was very broad. In this Psalm, he speaks in terms of geology, zoology, botany, navigation, and others of the natural sciences. Then he says, “O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches.”

In history (Psalm 8): David was conversant with the history of his own people, but he was also acquainted with history that was very ancient even in his day.

In this Psalm he mentions the historical creation of the heavens, the creation and historical position of original man. Furthermore, he speaks of God's intention for man in a place in history. As he reviews God's work in the universe, God's creation of man, and God's purpose of headship in man, he writes, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Who set Thy glary above the heavens."

In providence (Psalm 65): The closing part of this song written for the chief musician is a statement relative to the revelation of God in providence. He sends His rain and irrigates the earth; consequently, crops grow in the valley, and flocks roam the hill-side. Annually, the evidences recur of God's benevolence. Moreover, daily He provides the light and darkness, the outgoings of the morning and the evening.

David's examination of providence led him to assert, "By terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation; Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea."

Only through wilful ignorance could a student refuse to acknowledge the irrefutable proofs of God's wisdom, power, and glory as these appear in creation.

That this "General Revelation" of God is rendered ineffective by the depravity of man, we realize. The Apostle Paul boldly declares, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without

excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:19-22).

"General Revelation" is not the only manner in which God has made Himself known. No one, brilliant student or otherwise, considers it unreasonable that God reveal Himself to His creature. In fact, it is only logical that, since God has made man, He reveal Himself directly to man. "For in Him we live, and move and have our being … For we are His offspring" (Acts 17:28).

Special Revelation

An internationally famous engineer who had conceived the plans for one of the greatest bridges in the world, flew from his office in a distant city to the place of operations. There he mingled with the workmen, and talked with them over the blueprints. Those men met with that engineer of extraordinary skill; they talked with him, who previously to them was only a name.

God came down to earth, lived, taught, worked miracles, and made atonement for the sins of men, and then ascended back to heaven.

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). "He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16), and was born into a Jewish family. Christ said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the link between the invisible Deity and man. We read, "No man

hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" John 1:18).

The Apostle John, by inspiration, uses many titles of Christ. Among these are some which emphasize the fact that Christ is the "Special Revelation" of God.

Let us notice two of these:

The Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1 and 14). A word is a means of communication, a revelation of an idea, a thought. Christ is all that in regard to God.

The Alpha and Omega: Christ here represents Himself by the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. Again we might say, here is a means of communication. The alphabet is used to write the word that expresses the idea conceived in the thought. Surely, God reveals His very essence in Jesus Christ, "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:16).

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is the "Special Revelation" of Deity, but there is also another manner in which God has revealed Himself.

Specific Revelation

Throughout all portions of the Bible the Lord is constantly revealing Himself and His will in specific ways. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (1 Tim. 3:16). "Holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

We shall confine our remarks to this subject in the New Testament where we have a number of specific

revelations from God which manifest Him in will and character.

The gospel: The Apostle Paul said," I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

The mystery: That the great mystery mentioned in Ephesians chapter three constitutes the Church seems obvious from the meaning of verse ten. This great secret was given to Paul. He says, "By revelation He made known unto me the mystery… Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

The same Apostle claimed that he had received many revelations. Said he, "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2. Cor. 12:1).

There are many specific revelations in the Bible; in fact, the Holy Book in its entirety is a divine revelation.

In the early part of the Old Testament, God revealed Himself and His will in pictures; in the latter part, in prophecies; at the opening of the New Testament, in a Person; and in the Epistles, in practices. The Bible closes with the wonderful revelation of Jesus Christ in symbols.

"Who is the visitor? What type of person is he? enquired one friend of another.

"I have not previously met him," answered his friend, "but I feel as if I knew him. I have read two of his books."

Through reading these two books he had learned much about the visiting author. He had noticed in them his ability, his language, his process of thinking, his convictions and interests. Moreover, he had discovered that he was a physician, and that he was married and had a family. The two books in measure had revealed their author.

In like manner, the Holy Scriptures are a “Specific Revelation” of God to man.

S. O. M.

Robert McCrory

FFF 10:11 (Nov 1964)

Robert McCrory

On October 6, 1964, after having served his generation by the will of God, Robert McCrory, esteemed minister of the Word, fell asleep. He had returned to Ireland, the land of his birth and was residing with his niece, Mrs. D. C. Campbell in Banger, when he heard the call, “Come up hither.”

He was saved early in life and from the beginning of his Christian career manifested an interest in the work of the Lord, in and around Lurgan, the city of his birth and boyhood. Eventually he moved to Motherwell, Scotland, and enjoyed the fellowship of the saints in the Roman Road assembly. There as a young man he attended the Bible Class of the late John Reid who spent a number of years ministering the Gospel in Canada and the United. States, and who made Vancouver his home.

The Motherwell Assembly commended Robert McCrory to the work of the Lord, and forthwith he went to Spain. After a short time there, he returned to Ireland, and there engaged in evangelistic work until he immigrated to Canada in 1910.

His early service in this country was in the Maritime Provinces. He and Mr. John Dickson spent time together in Nova Scotia where God blessed their work to both saints and sinners.

Some time later he moved his residence to Hamilton, Ontario, and there maintained his home until 1961 when

after the death of Mrs. McCrory, he returned to Ireland. In Hamilton he fellowshipped with the assembly in McNab Street, and moved out over a large area preaching the Gospel. This he did at times in the open air, in tents, school houses, and in halls. In the earlier part of that period he was a co-worker of such brethren as John Dickson, T. D. W. Muir, W. J. McClure, and Chas. Ross. During the closing years of that period, he also laboured with younger men such as T. G. Wilkie, James Gunn, and others. His frequent words of encouragement will be recalled by some of these younger men with much pleasure.

He was a man of The Book and ever sought to expound its meaning. When conflicting influences would have divided the assemblies, he firmly attested to the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of church administration. His ministry at that time was a stay and a blessing to many. When amillenarian doctrine was being propagated among some of the assemblies distressing the minds of God’s people, his clear teaching on the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ preserved in many a heart the living hope of the soon return of the heavenly Bridegroom. One still recalls the force and the clarity with which he explained the seven parables of Matthew thirteen.

On Thursday, October 8, devout men carried him to his burial, and laid his remains away in certain hope of an imminent and glorious resurrection. Mr. David Kirk, also from Hamilton, Ontario, and Mr. Robert Wright, formerly of Japan, participated in the ministry during the ceremonies. Two brethren from the Holborn assembly led the saints in prayer.

Sacrificial Service

Sacrificial Service

Selected

“I have Jesus in my heart; He is with me all the time; I know that He will never leave me!”

The aged lady who spoke so enthusiastically to me had been led to Christ only two or three weeks before. The regret of having lived well over the three score years and ten without the Saviour was completely eclipsed by the joy that filled her heart, a joy that made radiant a face wrinkled by the passing of time.

One’s interest was deepened as she continued, “This is my old Bible; it was given to me many years ago, but I have not used it very much. I brought it out of the drawer and am now reading it every day.” As I took her treasure and thumbed through its yellow pages, I watched her shining countenance and realized that she who had been forgiven much, loved much, her new Master and Friend.

An assembly of Christians in New Jersey, U.S.A. in an area some twenty-five miles from her home, had arranged for nightly evangelistic services. In preparation for these the members had conducted nightly prayer meetings, and were ready for any detail that would add to the success of the crusade. Of course, her age and the long distance made her attendance apparently impossible.

“Omnipotence hath servants everywhere,” and some of these, not far from the elderly lady. A young Christian

couple in her immediate vicinity were inviting some of the neighbours to accompany them to the services; some had gone and had been saved. It seemed that with their own car, they were providing free transportation. Eventually they asked her, and she went. She heard the truth of the Gospel; believed it, and now rejoiced that Jesus was in her heart to stay.

How this young couple with two small children and other cares could attend every night, and how with such cordiality and pleasure they could transport so many, the neighbours did not know. Finally their secret was discovered. They had saved money for a winter vacation, but when the Gospel services were announced, they decided to forego the vacation and to dedicate this special little fund to the Lord. They used the money to engage a baby-sitter for the children and to purchase gasoline for the car. They sacrificed their savings to further the cause of Christ by taking unsaved neighbours to the meetings, and in this nothing daunted them through the dark cold evenings of the late winter. With hearts aglow with the love of Christ, they shuttled back and forth expending themselves for the benefits of others.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ their reward will be great; their investment will result in dividends of eternal value. In view of that day, like the Apostle Paul, they can say concerning several, “What is our hope, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.”

The abundant gratification they manifested as they listened to this clear testimony from one saved in the sunset of her life was an evident compensation that

others likewise may gain, gain through sacrificial service in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Seven Marks of a Healthy, Spiritual Assembly

MIF 16:6 (Nov-Dec 1984)

Seven Marks of a Healthy, Spiritual Assembly

Selected

1. Where Christ as the only Saviour and Lord is the centre of the gathering (Matt. 18:20).

2. Where the Holy Spirit is the sole President and Guide (1 Corinthians 12:4).

3. Where God is worshipped in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

4. Where the Priesthood of all believers is acknowledged (1 Peter 2:5).

5. Where a vigorous Gospel testimony is maintained (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

6. Where there is room for all the Word of God to be preached and practiced (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

7. Where the love of Christ and the power of the Spirit of God are manifested (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Shadows

MIF 19:5 (Sept-Oct 1987)

Shadows

Our lives are lived in the depths of shadows until the radiance of the face of Jesus Christ brings the fullness of Divine Light into our hearts and lives (John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6). There are shadows that leave us, as Christians, depressed and sorrowful, yet there are the blessed realities of Divine Shadows that touch the soul and lift us beyond the range of human needs into the refreshing strength of the face of Christ to fit us for the continued conflict of these last dark days prior to His return.

1. The Shadow of a Great Rock (Isaiah 32:2). Truly, here is a place of wondrous shelter from the burning heat of circumstances and difficulty. A place where the Saviour takes the burden of both the heat and distress of our times to prevent our souls from being burned out and barren of the joys of Christian experience.

2. The Shadow of His Wings (Psalm 63:7). Have you ever noticed that the wing feathers of birds are soft underneath and yet hard enough on top to withstand the harshness of the elements? This same blessed protection is ours as we rest in the trust that the Holy Spirit gives in the shadow of the continuing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The Shadow of His Presence (Song of Solomon 2:3). Here is the most treasured place of all! Fellowship with our risen Lord which truly refreshes and strengthens the

soul in the knowledge of His continued love and care in the unsearchable riches of His grace.

—John H. Jobbins,

Victoria, B.C.

Soul Winners

Soul winners are not soul winners because of what they know, but because of Whom they know, and how well they know Him, and how much they long for others to know Him.

Suffer Little Children

Suffer Little Children

During the winter of 1957 there was an increasing exercise on the part of two sisters in the Lord to bring the Gospel of God's saving grace to a number of children in the town of. Midland, Ontario, who were not in regular attendance at any Sunday School. This exercise grew, and coupled with much prayer resulted in the forming of a class of hobby crafts and Bible teaching, which came to be known as the "Sunshine Class."

Invitations were given by word of mouth from child to child, and the first meeting was held in September, 1958, in the home of one of these sisters, with an attendance of ten to fifteen children ranging in age from six to twelve years. It was decided that the most suitable time for this age group to meet would be directly after school hours Tuesday to avoid conflict with other established activities in the community such as free skating, gymnasium classes, etc.

At the beginning the two sisters who formed the class were its only teachers. A theme song was adopted which has proven to be very popular with the children; it is sung at the beginning of each class, to the tune of "Children Won't You Come to my Father's House?"

"You are welcome here, to our Sunshine Class

Where we learn God's Word."

At the close of the class the words are altered to be sung:

"Won't you come again, to the Sunshine Class

Where we learn God's Word?"

In addition to the hobbies and the Bible lessons, each child is given a typed Scripture memory verse to be learned for the following week. The Happy Birthday song has always been sung to any child whose birthday may be close. Along with the original, the second and the third verses were likewise used.

"Happy Birthday, yes two,

Only one will not do.

Born again means salvation,

How many have you?

"There's a Saviour for you,

And you need Him 'tis true.

Jesus died for your safety

And happiness too."

It was not long before the attendance increased so that it was necessary to add more helpers, especially for the sake of the hobbycraft which required more individual attention to each child. To mention only a few of the hobbies completed, these included painted molds, feltcraft, knitting, weaving, copper work, leathercraft, simple embroidery, ceramic tile work, plastic Christmas wreaths, etc. It was found that knitting and embroidering was perhaps too tedious for the children, as they would become discouraged at work that required any great length of time to complete. The rule has always been not to send work home with the children, and half an hour each week was found not sufficient time for this type of hobby. They generally prefer doing something on which they can see actual

progress. Very small children, unable to do hobbies, are given colouring books, jig saw, puzzles, or lessons in sewing on buttons, etc.

At the beginning of the class's history a "Silent Chair" was introduced. This method for assuring good attention was borrowed from a similar work in Montreal, and has always proven successful. Before the class begins, a chair is selected by one of the leaders as being the "Silent Chair." Whoever happens to sit on this chair, provided he or she has been quiet and has given good attention, receives a small reward at the close of the lesson, when the "Silent Chair" is announced. Only rarely in all the years has a child been denied the special award because of misbehaviour.

By the end of the second year the home was no longer adequate for the increase in the attendance. A memory lingers of the day when fifty children practically took over possession of the house, overflowing from the basement where special work tables, chairs, blackboards, etc., had been set up; overflowing into the kitchen, the dining room, and the living rooms. These sisters had asked the Lord for blessing and growth for the class; nevertheless, they were a little bit surprised when the Lord actually poured them out a blessing which the quarters they then had could no longer contain.

It happened that in 1960 permission was sought for the Sunshine Class to meet in the local Y.M.C.A. Mr. J. W. Smith, Executive Secretary, was only too happy to accommodate such a group, but the matter had to go before the Board of Directors for approval. Remembering that the Y.M. C.A. is a world-wide

fellowship of persons united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ for the purpose of developing Christian persons and a Christian Society, the, Directors gave their full approval that the Sunshine Class be accommodated. Excellent facilities were provided, commodious tables, working space for hobbies in a large basement room, and a smaller room adjacent to this in which rows of chairs were set up for the lesson part of the class.

All children of all ages were, and still are, welcome, and it is not necessary that they hold membership in the Y.M.C.A. The hobbies have always preceded the lesson, as this gives the early comers a chance to spend more time on hobbies, and the late corners do not interrupt the lesson. Furthermore, the children leave more quietly after the lesson.

The attendance records show that the class grew to higher than sixty, but levelled off to a steady attendance of between 35 and 40. It is estimated that approximately 300 children have gone through the class since its beginning. Though the object was to reach children who did not attend any Sunday School, the results reveal that those who attend are in both categories.

The Bible lessons are given in turn by the leaders, these rotate month about; that is, each teacher is responsible for four consecutive lessons. The group was favoured one year by the help of a Christian kindergarten teacher who not only brought new ideas to the hobby class, but who presented the Gospel to the children in an excellent manner. There is need for more such helpers in this work.

The schedule of the Y.M.C.A. includes the activities of the Sunshine Class. It is given publicity by the “Y” in both their printed program and their radio broadcast. The primary public school Principals have also been very generous and helpful by announcing the resumption of the class each Fall, over their P.A. systems. The starting date Is in October, and the classes continue through to the early part of the month of June. The children usually are afforded some special Christmas party, but Christmas 1962 was quite different, it was celebrated by a trip to Homes for Elderly Persons in the district, when bags of Christmas cheer (part of the hobbies) were distributed to the residents. In June a picnic is arranged and special prizes given for regular attendance and memory verses.

The finances are taken care of by a nominal charge of ten cents for each child which is accepted at the time of his enrolment each year. This small fee helps to defray craft expenses, but, of course, the major part of this is made up by the teachers themselves and by donations from other Christians.

Now in its fifth year, many children who began with the Sunshine Class are in High School, and although they are enveloped in other activities, and have left Sunshiners behind, they take the Word of God in their hearts; that Word that is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is encouraging to the sisters engaged in this work to know that many of these young people are true believers; their prayers follow them that they may prove themselves to be true witnesses for the Lord Jesus. May each child thus reached be throughout life a genuine disciple of the Blessed One who said, “Suffer the little children, and

forbid them not, to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

Suggested Christian Reading

Suggested Christian Reading

Christian Biography, General:

(See also Missionary Biography)

(C) Christian Leaders in the 18th Century; Ryle (432 pp., Thynne)

(C) Great Leaders of the Church; Moyer (Moody)

(B) Amazing Grace — Biography of John Newton; Donald Demarry (110 pp.), Light & Life Press, Winona Lake, Ind.

Memoirs of Robt. Murray McCheyne (606 pp., Oliphants)

Bush Aglow; Biogr. of D. L. Moody Personal Reminiscences of C. H. Spurgeon; Williams Henry Moorehouse, The English Evangelist C. T. Stubb; Norman Grubb Borden of Yale; Taylor (C) The Growth of a Soul; Early Life of Hudson Taylor (C) George Mueller of Bristol; A. T. Pierson (The “Official” Life)

W. E. Vine, his Life and Ministry; Ruoff

Biography of Harold St. John

The Spiritual Legacy of George Goodman (175 pp., P&I)

T. D. W. Muir, Reminiscences (GFP) Life of W. J. McClure (Gospel Folio Press)

Psychology, Biblical And Practical

(B) Principles of Mental Health for Christian Living; C. B. Eavey This Way to Happiness; Clyde N. Narramore (183 pp., Zon.)

Nervous Christians; L. Gilbert Little (Moody)

Letters, Poetry, Comfort:

(B) Cardiphonia; John Newton. Alternative Title: The Utterance of the Heart. (423 pp., Moody)

Letters of Samuel Rutherford (Moody)

(C) Poems of Annie Johnson Flint (Zon.) Hymns of Ter Steegen, Suso & Others; Bevan (LB)

Our Hymns and their Writers; Beattie (JR)

(C) The Mystery of Suffering; Jas. H. Brookes (Dunham)

Comforted of God; A. J. Pollock (LB) The Bow in the Cloud; J. R. Macduff. For the bereaved Night of Weeping; Horatius Bonar (128 pp., Moody)

Daily Devotional Readings:

Spurgeon’s Morning and Evening. Ed. by Fuller (C) The Continual Burnt Offering; Iron-side (370 pp., LB)

(B) Our Daily Homily; F. B. Meyer; 5 small vols. MM&S

Choice Gleanings Calendar. Yearly. (GFP)

Streams in the Desert. Springs in the Valley. Mrs. Cowan Section Six:

Sundry Questions And Difficulties Bible Difficulties:

(B) What Saith the Scriptures; C. F. Hogg (222 pp., P&I)

Answers to Correspondents; C. H. M. (183 pp., Bible Truth Publ.)

(C) Studies in Problem Texts; J. Sidlow Baxter (192 pp., MM&S)

Difficulties in the Bible; R. A. Torrey (Moody)

(B) Problems and Answers; Hoste & Rodgers (JR)

Questionable Beliefs And Practices:

(B) Heresies Exposed; ed. by Wm. C. Irvine (217 13P., LB)

Amusements:

Popular Amusements & the Christian Life. Sinks

Atheism:

Creed of Fools. Lockyer

Backsliding:

Backsliding & Restoration. W. T. P. Wolston

Suggested Christian Reading

Suggested Christian Reading

British Israelism:

What's Wrong with Anglo-Israelism; Talbot (Dunham)

Br. Israelism Briefly Tested by Scriptures; Pollock (JR)

Bullingerism:

Bullingerism Exposed; A. J. Pollock (LB)

Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth; Ironside (LB)

Christadelphianism:

Christadelphianism Astray from the Bible; A. J. Pollock (LB)

Christian Science:

(C) The Christian Science Myth; Martin & Klann (208 pp., Zon.)

Christian Science Briefly Tested By Scripture; A. J. Pollock (LB)

Cooneyites:

The Cooneyites, or Go. Preachers. Pamphlet (LB)

Dancing:

Carnival of Death, or The Modern Dance; Vom Bruck (Defenders)

"Divine Healing" And Tongues Movement:

(See Pentecostalism)

The Modern Tongues and Healing Movement; Carroll Stegall and Carl C. Harwood. Inside Facts. Western Bible Inst.

The Gift of Tongues; J. M. Davies.

(Scripture Lit. Press, Bangalore)

Is Healing in the Atonemnt; Ironside (LB)

Healing, What Saith the Scripture; J. M. Davies (Sc. Lit. Press)

Divorce:

Divorce, the Wreck of Marriage; John R. Rice. (Sword of the Lord)

Divorce and the Bible; D. L. Norbie (LB)

Evolution:

(See also under Bible and Science)

Did Man Just Happen; W. A. Criswell (121 pp., Zon.)

Theory of Evolution and Facts of Science, Rimmer

Evolution, A. J. Pollock (LB)

“Falling Away”:

Can a Christian Fall Away and be Lost? Hoste (Pamphlet)

Eternal Security of the Believer; Iron-side (Pamphlet, LB)

“Jehovah’s Witnesses”:

(B) Jehovah of the Watch Tower; Martin Klann (208 pp., Zon.)

Millenial Dawnism Tested by Scripture; Polock (LB)

Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave; Wm. J. Schnell

Modernism:

Modernism vs. the Bible; A. J. Pollock (LB)

(B) The Deadly Parallel; Geo. H. Dowknott

Mormonism:

Mormonism under the Searchlight; Biederworf

"Movies":

Movies and the Conscientious Christian; Paul S. Rees (Zon.)

What's Wrong with the Movies; John R. Rice (paper, Zon.)

Neo-Orthodoxy:

Neo-Orthodoxy, what it is … does. G. C. Ryrie (622 pp., Moody)

Oxford Group Movement:

("Moral Re-Armament")

The Oxford Group Movement; Iron-side (LB)

The Oxford Group Movement; A. J. Pollock (JR)

Partial Rapture:

(See also under Prophecy)

Does the Scripture Teach a Partial Rapture; C. Knapp (LB)

Who will go When the Lord Comes; Lewis & Rogers (Echoes of S.)

Pentecostalism:

Modern Pentecostalism; A. J. Pollock (LB)

Pentecost and To-day; J. M. Davies (In preparation)

Politics:

Consistent Christians Mingle in

Politics; E. V-W; (LB)

Punishment, Eternal:

Will a God of Love Punish any of His Creatures Forever; Alex Marshall (Pamphlet)

See also under Bible Doctrine; The Eternal State

Roman Catholicism:

Truth vs. Dogma; J. C. Macauley (125 pp., Moody)

(B) Roman Dogma and Scripture Truth; A. Stewart (122 pp., Interv.)

Two Babylons; Alex Hyslop (350 pp., LB). Pagan origins

Letters to a Roman Catholic Priest; Ironside (LB)

The Mass vs. the Lord’s Supper; Iron-side (LB)

Secret Societies:

Secret Societies: Can a Christian Belong to them and still Honor Christ: G. L. H. (Pamphlet, LB)

Reasons why a Christian Should Not be a Freemason; A. J. Pollock (Pamphlet, Central Bible Truth Depot)

Suggested Christian Reading

Suggested Christian Reading

Seventh Day Adventism:

Seventh-Day Adventism Briefly Tested by Scripture; Pollock Seventh Day Adventism; Booth (Pam-let, LB)

The Answer and the Reasons; E. B.

Jones, former missionary of the sect. (64 pp., Designed Products, Oak Park, Ill.)

Spiritism:

Why I am not a Spiritualist; Evans. Brief (Moody)

Modern Sp. Tested by Scripture; Pollock (Pamphlet, LB)

The Unequal Yoke:

The Unequal Yoke; C. H. Mackintosh. Pamphlet (LB)

“Unity”

What’s Wrong with the Unity School of Christianity; Louis T. Talbot (Dunham)

The Unity School of Christianity; Putnam (Moody)

VIrgin Birth, Denials Of The:

(See also Christ, His Person)

Why we Believe in the Virgin Birth; Jas. M. Gray (Brief)

Women, Their Sphere And Ministry:

Is it Scriptural for a Woman to Speak in the Church; C. Knapp (Pamphlet, LB)

(B) The Ministry of Women; Hogg, Vine, Lewis (Pamphlet, P&I)

Youth's Problems:

(B) Youth's Purity Problems; J. Wyrtzen (Pamphlet, Moody)

Section Seven

Evangelism And Missions

Preaching And Teaching Methods, Etc.:

Lectures to my Students; C. H. Spurgeon (443 pp., Zon.)

(B) The Preacher and His Preaching; A. P. Gibbs (441 pp., W.)

Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers; C. B. Eavey (Zon.)

(B) Principles of Expository Preaching; M. F. Unger (270 pp., Zon.)

(B) The Seven Laws of Teaching; Gregory (125 pp.)

(C) The Christian Teacher; Clarence F. Benson (288 PP., Moody)

(B) True Evangelism: L. S. Chafer (143 pp., MM&S)

(C) The Gospel we Preach; Geo. Goodman (96 pp., P&I)

Personal Evangelism:

(B) Personal Work; P. O. Ruoff (96 pp., IVP)

(C) Visitation Evangelism made Practical; Dean (93 pp., Zon.)

Taking Men Alive; Trumbull

Suggestion of the Month

Suggestion of the Month

Selected

Probably the best method for building up the attendance of any Sunday school is an aggressive, organized visitation campaign. This is likely the best method for maintaining attendance as well.

The attendance of one Sunday school was doubled within a couple of months simply through visitation. An announcement was first of all mailed out to the homes in the area, each envelope being personally addressed from a voter’s list. The announcement indicated that visitors would be calling around the district within the next few weeks.

Then, the district was divided into zones, with two or three persons assigned the responsibility for each zone. Visitors were instructed to take names, addresses, and ages of prospects who indicated a definite interest in attending Sunday school.

The reception of visitors was generally satisfactory, particularly where the parents connected the visit with the introductory letter, received some days before. Many of the children brought in through the campaign have continued coming to this particular school for a number of years.

The results of such a campaign cannot be taken for granted, however, for attendance is liable to decline gradually unless a determined effort is made to maintain close contact with each child and the home from which

he comes. While each individual teacher can do much with his own class, an appointed Sunday school visitor who is free from the responsibility of a class can call even on the first day a scholar is absent. A very favourable impression can be made upon parents through such prompt action.

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Prophecy — The Lord’s Coming, Etc.

(See also Daniel, Revelation)

(B) Things to Come; J. Dwight Pentecost (633 pp., Dunham)

Things which Must Shortly Come to Pass; A. J. Pollock (LB)

(B) Papers on the Lord’s Coming; C. H. Mackintosh (111 pp., LB)

(B) Coming Twice; H. P. Barker (159 pp., LB)

Touching the Coming of the Lord; Hogg & Vine (172 pp., OL)

(C) The Promise of His Coming; Hogg & Watson; (104 pp., P&L (C) Great Neglected Bible Prophecies; M. F. Unger (167 pp.)

(C) Seven Biblical Signs of the Times; L. S. Chafer (C) From Eternity to Eternity; Eric Sauer (Eerdmans)

(C) The Rapture Question; J. F. Walvoord (204 pp., Dunham)

The Kingdom in History & Prophecy; L. S. Chafer

World Crises and the Prophetic Scriptures; Wilbur M. Smith

Bible Types:

(See Also Bible Characters)

(C) Study of the Types; Ada R. Habershon (178 pp., Kregel)

(C) Typology of Scripture; Patrick Fair-bairn (900 pp., Zon.)

Egypt to Canaan; John Ritchie (JR)

(C) Lectures on the Tabernacle; Sam'l Ridout (LB)

Types & Shadows of Christ in the Tabernacle; J. F. Spink (LB)

(C) The Tabernacle — Studies in the Mosaic Institutions; W. G. Moorehead (246 pp., Kregel)

Solomon and his Temple; W. W. Fereday (96 pp., JR)

(C) The Feasts of Jehovah; His Appointments; A. Van Ryn (LB)

(C) Harvest Festivals; H. K. Downie 187 pp., LB)

(C) The Law of the Offerings; A. Jukes (215 pp., Nisbet)

(C) Lectures on the Levitical Offerings; H. A. Ironside (LB)

Bible Characters:

(B) Mark these Men; J. Sidlow Baxter (Zon.)

Abraham, or the Obedience of Faith; F. B. Meyer (B)
Abraham, the Friend of God, Hamilton Smith (125 pp., GFP)

David, Shepherd, Psalmist, King; F. B. Meyer

Life of David as Reflected in his Psalms; Alex MacLaren
(C) Staff & Sceptre; Christopher Knapp On David (LB)

Elijah and the Secret of his Power; F. B. Meyer (C) Elijah the Tishbite; F. W. Krummacher (C) Elisha; F. W. Krummacher (250 pp., Zon.)

(C) Gideon, Mighty Man of Valor; P. J. Pell (93 pp., GFP)

(C) John the Baptist & the Secret of His Burden; F. B. Meyer (C) Joseph, Beloved, Hated, Exalted; F. B. Meyer A Fruitful Bough. On Joseph. Christopher Knapp (LB)

Joseph, the Revealer of Secrets; Hamilton Smith (GFP)

Joshua and the Land of Promise; F. B. Meyer

Moses, the Servant of God; F. B. Meyer The Patriarchs; J. G. Bellett (LB)

(C) Life and Epistles of Paul; Coneybeare & Howson (2 vols.)

Paul, a Servant of Jesus Christ; F. B. Meyer

Paul — see also under Acts

Peter, Fisherman, Disciple, Apostle; F. B. Meyer

Epochs in the Life of Simon Peter; A. T. Robertson (360 pp)

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Section Five: Christian Life And Practice

Christian Life in General:

(B) He that is Spiritual; L. S. Chafer (C) Godly Self-Control; A. T. Pierson (133 pp., Prairie Book Room, Three Hills, Alberta)

Miscellaneous Writings; C. H. Mackintosh (6 vols., LB)

(C) The Secret of Guidance; F. B. Meyer (128 pp., Paper, Moody)

Leaves from the Tree of Life; Robt. McClurkin (W)

The Best is yet to Be; Geo. Henderson (LB). For the aging (B) Pilgrim's Progress; John Bunyan. Variety of editions A Spiritual Clinic; J. Oswald Sanders (160 pp., Moody)

The Ifs and Oughts of Ethics; DeBoer

The Problem of Right Conduct; Peter Green (296 pp., Longmans) Elbows off the Table; Faith Coxe Bailey. On Etiquette (Moody)

(B) A Handbook of Christian Etiquette; Mrs. W. B. Riley (Moody)

Consecration, Devotion, Holiness

(B) Sanctification, what is it? C.H.M. (Pamphlet, LB)

(B) Thoughts on Christian Sanctity; Moule (125 pp., Moody)

(C) Christian Devotedness; A. N. Groves (56 pp., Midwest Chr. Publ.)

The Practice of Christ's Presence; Fullerton (116 p.p, MM&S)

The Home, Marriage, Parents, Children:

Christian Romance and Marriage; Gertrude Nystrom (Moody)

The Way of a Man with a Maid; Oscar Lowry (Moody)

The Christian Home; Norman V. Williams (Moody)

How to Rear a Happy Christian Family (128 pp., Moody)

(B) Principles of Personality Building for Christian Parents; C. B. Eavey (325 PP., Zondervan)

How to Tell your Children about Sex; Narramore (97 pp., Zon.)

The Church and the Churches:

(B) New Testament Church Principles; A. G. Clarke. Pamphlet (JR)

(B) The Christian Assembly; Littleproud (200 pp., GFP)

(C) The Church and the Churches; W. E. Vine (120 pp., JR)

(C) Scriptural Principles; A. P. Gibbs (W)

(C) The Church; A Symposium; ed. by J. B. Watson (230 pp., P&I)

(C) Bishops, Priests & Deacons; Wm. Hoste (P&I)

(C) The Sin of Sectarianism; Andrew Stenhouse (118 pp., GFP)

Prayer, Worship, Praise

(B) Worship, The Christian's Highest Occupation; A. P. Gibbs (W)

(C) Praying Hyde; Basil Miller (Moody)

(B) Power Through Prayer; E. M. Bounds (125 pp., MM&S)

(C) Method in Prayer; W. Graham Scroggie (170 pp., MM&S)

How I Know God Answers Prayer; Rosalind Goforth (Zon.)

Hymns, their Use and Abuse; A. P. Gibbs (W)

Baptism, the Lord's Supper:

Thoughts on the Lord's Supper; C.H.M. (Pamphlet, LB)

(C) Baptism; Johannes Warns, tr. by G. H. Lang (352 pp., Paternoster)

Church History, Etc.:

(C) Church History; And. Miller (3 vols., P&I). Revised by Hoste (B) The Spreading Flame; F. F. Bruce (432 pp., Zon.)

(C) The Pilgrim Church; E. H. Broadbent (420 P&I)

History of the Reformation; Merle D'Aubignes

The Catacombs of Rome; Scott. MM&S or Everyman's Lby.

Foxe's Book of Martyrs (several editions — abridged preferred)

Suggestions for Christian Reading

FFF 9:11 (Nov 1963)

Suggestions for Christian Reading

Books are pouring from the presses today in greater numbers than ever before. Many of them (even some "best sellers") are pernicious trash and, to borrow an expression of Charles Kingsley's, "had better be buried forever in the dirt out of which they spring." Let none of us defile our minds by dabbling in such filth. As someone has put it: "Why nose around among rotten apples for a possible good bite when there are whole boxes of splendid red-cheeked fruit standing alongside?"

It is not the trashy material that creates difficulty for the Christian reader. He easily recognizes its true character and need only avoid it. But when he finds himself confronted by the super-abundance of supposedly good books so readily available today, he is often bewildered. Sooner or later he discovers that, even among books advertised as sound in the faith and highly useful, there are many of so little value that he cannot afford to spend time on them. They are of the kind Spurgeon had in mind when he commented: "Plenty of paper!" — "Literally good "A literary curiosity, nothing more,"—for nothing," — self-evident truisms …"

In recent years there has been a gratifying increase in the amount of really worth-while reading matter issuing from some presses. Included are some books on almost every subject of interest to Christian readers. Like the old masterpieces (some of which are again being made available) these can be of great value to the student of

the Bible. It is a matter for great regret that they are not more generally appreciated. God has placed in the Church a teaching ministry for which all of us should be truly grateful. To fail to profit by that ministry as it is available in printed form is a serious mistake and can only mean distinct loss.

It is to give a measure of help in the selection of Christian books that a list has been prepared, portions of which will appear from month to month in Food for the Flock. It is intended especially to assist the reader in his EARLY choices. It is not a perfect list — that would be impossible. It includes only books believed to be sound in doctrine and helpful in the presentation of the subjects they deal with. An occasional questionable statement will doubtless be found in some of them, but these do not detract from their general usefulness to the careful reader. It is to be expected that he will use his critical faculty. If he fails to do so, he will receive very little benefit from what he reads or from what he listens to.

It is not expected, of course that any one will read ALL the books listed here, or even a large portion of them, One needs only to look at the list to realize that, at least for the average person, that would be impossible. Why then so many books listed? In order that all may have a fairly wide range of choice. All have not the same abilities or the same tastes; therefore it takes variety to meet the needs of all.

—The Compilers

James Gunn

F. W. Schwartz

Peter J. Pell

T. Ernest Wilson

To Help in Making Selections

The following indications are given before some titles:

1. Suggested reading for beginners.

2. Suggested first choices (under various headings) for the general reader. From these items selections might be made for the foundation of a basic library.

3. Additional recommended items.

Items having no specific indications, such as above, will prove useful as the need for them seems to arise. They are not necessarily inferior to those specially marked — in some cases may even be more desirable at last for some readers.

Abbreviations Used to Identify Some Publishers

· LB - Loizeaux Bros., New York.

· P AND I - Pickering and Inglis, Glasgow.

· Moody - Moody Press, Chicago.

· Eerd - Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich.

· Zon - Zondervans, Grand Rapids, Mich.

· MM and S - Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London.

· OL - Oliphants, London.

· Fund - Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, Ohio.

· Rev. - Revell, New York.

· GFP - Gospel Folio Press, Grand Rapids, Mich.

· JR - John Ritchie, Ltd., Kilmarnock, Scotland.

· Stowe - Stowe Hill Bible and Tract Depot.

· BTP - Bible Truth Publishers, Oak Park, Ill,

· Hand S - Hodder and Stoughton.

· Ban - Banner of Truth Trust.

· IVP - Intervarsity Press

· W - Walterick Publishers, Kansas City, Kan.

There are also other sources of supply, as for example: Evangel Books Ltd. 25 Hobson Avenue, Toronto 16, Canada. Hull Publishing C. 314 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Canada.

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Concordances, Lexicons, Bible Language Studies, Etc.

(B) Cruden’s Concordance. Several editions. Choose one with easy-to-read type.

(C) Young’s Concordance. (Obtainable in India Paper)

(B) Strong’s Concordance. Exhaustive. This is our preference. Englishman’s Greek Conc., G. V. Wigram. Based on Greek (LB).

(C) Expository Dict. of N. T. Worls; W. E. Vine. Now in one volume. Greek Lexicons: Abbott-Smith; Thayer; Cremer. For Green students. Select according to need.

Word Pictures in the New Test.; A. T. Robertson; 5 vols.

Word Studies in the N. T., Vincent (4 vols. 2600 pp).

Word Studies under various titles; Kenneth S. Wuest — titles include Golden Nuggets, Bypaths, Treasures, Untranslatable Riches, Studies in the Vocabulary of the Gk. N. T., Great Truths to Live by, etc.

The Bible, Its Canon, Inspiration, Preservation, Etc.

(B) Many Infallible Proofs; A. T. Pierson (322 pp., MM&S) Thy Word is Truth; Edward J. Young (Eerd.)

(B) Theopneustia, the Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; L. Gaussen (310 pp., Moody).

(C) A System of Christian Evidences; L. S. Keyser.

How we Got our Bible; Griffith Thomas (128 pp., Moody).

(C) The Story of the Bible; a Popular Account of How It Came to us; Sir Frederick Kenyon (170 pp).

Biblical Interpretation And Methods Of Study

(A) How to Study the Bible; S. Ridout (270 pp. LB).

How to Master the English Bible; James M. Gray (Moody).

(B) Book Method of Bible Study; Evans. Study by Books. (Moody).

(A) Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth; Scofield. (LB).

(C) Science of Biblical Hermeneutics; Robin T. Chafer (92 pp., Bibliotheca Sacra, Dallas).

(C) Knowing the Scriptures; A. T. Pierson (317 pp., Zond.).

Commentaries On The Entire Bible Or Major Portions:

(B) Christian Worker's Commentary; Jas. M. Gray (Moody)

(C) The New Bible Commentary (1199 Columns)

(B) Commentary on the whole Bible; Jamieson, Fausset & Brown. The Bible Expositor; Three Vols., (P & I)

Matthew Henry's Commentary; 6 vols., about 1200 pp. ea. The Numerical Bible; F. W. Grant — several vols. (LB)

(C) The Bible Comemntary for English Readers; ed. by Dr. Chas. John Ellicott (8 Vols., 600 pp. ea., Dutton)

(C) MacLaren’s Expositions of Holy Scripture; 11 vols., 2000 expositions, about about 1200 pp. ea. vol. (P & I) The New Test. for English Readers; Henry Alford.

Treasury of the Old Testament; C. H. Spurgeon; 4 vols. (ZON) Treasury of the Old Testament; C. H. Spurgeon; 4 vols. (ZON)

Introductions To The Old Testament:

(C) The Unfolding Drama of Redemption; Scroggie, a Vols. (P & I)

(B) The Dawn of World Redemption; Eric Sauer. (Eerd.)

(B) The Fascination of Old Testament Story; Scroggie; (MM & S)

(C) Introductory Guide to the O. T., Merrill F. Unger (424 pp. Zon)

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

General Introductions to the Bible

(B) Let the Bible Speak; A. McD. Redwood (133 pp., OL)

Ruling Lines of Progressive Revelation, W. Graham Scroggie General Biblical Introduction; H. S. Miller (400 pp., Houghton, NY)

(C) The Scripture of Truth; Collett. Appears also as All About the Bible Explore the Book; J. Sidlow Baxter; 6 vol., (MM&S)

The Bible and Science

(B) Therefore Stand; Wilbur M. Smith; 614 pp. (Moody)

(B) The Universe, Plan or Accident; R. E. D. Clark, (190 pp. Paternoster Press)

The Genesis Flood; Whitcomb & Morris (518 pp., Baker)

The Flood; Alfred Rehwinkel (372 pp., Concordia Pub. House)

(C) God’s Masterpiece, Man’s Body; Art. I. Brown (352 pp., Fund.)

On Evolution — see under “Questionable Beliefs & Practices”

Bible History, Geography, Archaeology:

(B) An Introduction to Bible Archaeology; H. F. Vos (Moody)

(C) The Monuments & the Old Testament; Ira M. Price (Judson)

The Bible & Archaeology; Sir F. G. Kenyon (C) Archaeology of the Old Testament; M. F. Unger (Eerd.)

(C) A Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light; Miller (Rev.)

Bible Atlas; Hurlbutt (Rand McNally)

(B) Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible; Geo. E. Wright and Floyd V. Filson. Clear maps (C) The Dead Sea Scrolls; Merrill F. Unger (Zon.)

Bible Lands and Customs:

(B) The Land and the Book; Dr. Wm. M. Thompson; in 3 vols. or one. Often obtainable second hand Through the Lands of the Bible; H. C. Morton Section Three - Commentaries, Expositions, Etc.

Outline Studies or Summaries of the Books of the Bible

(B) Outline Studies in the O.T.; W. G. Moorehead (369 pp., Zon.)

(B) From Genesis to Revelation; Saml. Ridout (262 pp., LB)

(C) Living Messages of the Books of the Bible; Vols. on Old and New Tests. G. Campbell Morgan, MM&S (C) Synopsis of the Books of the Bible; J. N. Darby, 5 vols., 500 or so pp each (LB)

Commentaries on the Entire Bible or Major Portions:

(B) Christian Worker's Commentary; Jas. M. Gray (Moody)

(C) The New Bible Commentary (1199 Columns)

(B) Commentary on the Whole Bible; Jamieson, Fausset & Brown The Bible Expositor; Three vols., (P&D Matthew Henry's Commentary; 6 vols., about 1,200 pp. ea.

The Numerical Bible; F. W. Grant —several vols. (LB)

(C) The Bible Commentary for English Readers; ed. by Dr. Chas. John Ellicott (8 vols., 600 pp. ea., Dutton)

(C) MacLaren's Expositions of Holy Scripture; 11 vols., 2000 expositions, about 1200 pp. ea. vol. (P&D The New Test. for English Readers; Henry Alford Treasury of the Old Testament; C. H. Spurgeon; 4 vols. (ZON)

Introductions to the Old Testament

(C) The Unfolding Drama of Redemption; Scroggie, 3 vols. (P&I)

(B) The Dawn of World Redemption; Eric Sauer (Eerd).

(B) The Fascination of Old Testament Story; Scroggie; (MM&S)

(C) Introductory Guide to the O.T., Merrill E. Unger (424 pp., Zon)

Commentaries on Individual Old Testament Books

The Pentateuch:

(B) The Pentateuch, S. Ridout (LB)

(C) The Gospel in the Pentateuch; Lockyer (125 pp., Moody)

(C) Through the Pentateuch Chapter by Chapter; Griffith-Thomas; (191 pp., Eerd.)

Genesis:

(A) Notes on Genesis; C. H. Mackintosh (LB)

(B) An Outline of Genesis; C. A. Coates (261 pp., Stowe)

(B) Genesis, the Book of Beginnings; Griffith-Thomas (Eerd)

Genesis in Light of the N.T., Grant (188 pp., LB)

(C) Gleanings in Genesis; A. W. Pink

Exodus:

(A) Notes on Exodus; C. H. Mackintosh (LB)

(B) An Outline of Exodus; C. A. Coates (322 pp., Stowe)

(C) Studies in Exodus; Geo. Henderson; (128 pp., McCall-Barbour)

Some Lessons from the Book of Exodus; F. W. Grant; (133 pp., LB)

Leviticus:

(A) Notes on Leviticus; C. H. Mackintosh (LB)

(B) An Outline of Leviticus; C. A. Coates (304 pp., Stowe)

(C) Leviticus; And. A. Bonar (530 pp., Nisbet)

(C) Law of the Offerings; And. Jukes; on ch. 1 to 7 (215 pp.)

Numbers:

(A) Notes on Numbers; C. H. Mackintosh (LB)

(B) An Outline of Numbers; C. A. Coates; (410 pp., Stowe)

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Deuteronomy:

(A) Notes on Deuteronomy; C. H. Mackintosh (2 vols., LB)

(B) An Outline of Deuteronomy; C. A. Coates (392 pp., Stowe)

Joshua, Judges, Ruth

(B) An Outline of Josh., Jud., Ruth; C. A. Coates (215 pp., Stowe)

(C) Meditations on Joshua; Bossier The Lord's Host; F. G. Patterson (Morrish, LB)

The Land & Life of Rest (on Joshua) Scroggie

Victorious Living; Alan Redpath (Rev.) How to Overcome (on Judges), J. T. Mawson (LB)

(B) Lectures on Judges, S. Ridout (332 pp., LB)

Meditations on the Book of Judges; H. L. Rossier; Bible Truth Publishers, Oak Park, Ill.)

(B) Gleanings from the Book of Ruth; S. Ridout (80 pp., LB)

Ruth & the Song of Solomon; John Watt (LB)

Samuel, Kings, Chronicles:

(B) King Saul, the Man after the Flesh (On parts of Sam. & Kings); S. Ridout (LB)

(C) Samuel, God's Emergency Man; Fereday (94 pp., JR)

Life & Times of David; Mackintosh. (Paper, LB)

Life & Times of Samuel the Prophet; Christopher Knapp (LB)

(B) Bible Class Notes on 1 Samuel; Peter Pell (262 pp., GFP)

(C) Samuel the Prophet; F. B. Meyer

Kings of Israel & Judah; C. Knapp (LB)

Life & Times of Elijah; C. H. Mackintosh (LB)

(B) Elijah the Tishbite; W. W. Fereday (111 pp., JR)

(C) Delivering Grace (On Elisha) J. T. Mawson

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther:

(B) Notes on the Book of Ezra; Ironside (LB)

Victorious Christian Service (On Neh.) Alan Redpath (B) Notes on the Book of Esther; Ironside (Paper, LB)

JOB:

(B) The Book of Job; Sam. Ridout; (264 PP., LB)

Job; Wm. Kelly

Job; Ironsides (LB)

From Tragedy to Triumph; H. L. Ellison (127 pp., Eerd.)

Psalms:

(B) Psalms; W. Graham Scroggie (4 vols., P&I)

Notes on the Psalms; G. Campbell Morgan (287 pp., Rev.)

Psalms; Bible Readings; F. B. Meyer (184 pp., Zon.)

(C) The Treasury of David; C. H. Spurgeon. Comes abridged or complete — the latter probably second hand
(C) Analytical Studies in the Psalms; Art. G. Clarke (372 pp., JR)

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon:

(B) Notes on the Book of Proverbs; Iron-side (485 pp., LB)

Exposition of Proverbs; Chas. R. Bridges; (640 pP., Zon.)

(B) Old Groans and New Songs (on Eccl.) F. C. Jennings (143 pp., LB)

Ecclesiastes; Charles Bridges; (326 pp., Ban.)

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Men; (on Eccl.) Elliott

An Outline of the Song of Songs; C. A. Coates (218 pp., Stowe)

Exposition of the Song of Songs; J. B. Jackson (150 pp., LB)

(B) Meditations on the Song of Solomon; Miller (BTP)

Isaiah:

Exposition of Isaiah; Wm. Kelly (460 pp., Hammond)

(B) Isaiah; W. E. Vine (224 pp., OL)

(B) Studies in Isaiah; F. C. Jennings (784 pp., LB)

Studies in the Prophet Isaiah; Campbell Morgan (OL)

Jeremiah And Lamentations:

Notes on Jeremiah; Ironside (LB)

(B) The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah; E. H. Broadbent (284 pp., P&I)

Ezekiel:

(C) Ezekiel, the Man and His Message; Ellison (144 pp., Eerd.)

(B) Ezekiel the Prophet; Gaebelein Ezekiel; Wm. Kelly

Daniel:

(B) The Prophet Daniel; A. C. Gaebelein (228 PP.)

Notes on Daniel; Wm. Kelly (270 pp., LB)

(C) The Coming Prince (On the "70 Weeks" of ch. 9); Sir Robert Anderson (H&S)

(C) Bible Class Notes on Daniel; Peter J. Pell (GFP)

The Minor Prophets:

(B) Outline of the. Minor Prophets; C. A. Coates (164 pp., Stowe)

The Minor Prophets; G. Campbell Morgan (157 pp., P&I)

(B) The Minor Prophets; Ironside (LB)

The Twelve Minor Prophets; Karl F. Keil; 2 vols., (515 and 475 PP., in Keil and Delitsch Commentary)

(C) The Gospel in Hosea; J. Denham Smith

Hosea, the Heart & Holiness of God; G. C. Morgan (156 pp., Rev.)

(C) Joel, an Exposition; A. C. Gaebelein Jonah and Baalam; W. W. Fereday (JR)

The Prophet Jonah; Hugh Martin (Ban.)

Jonah; Harry Rimmer (B) The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah; David Baron (554 pp., MM&S)

The Prophet of Hope; F. B. Meyer (128 pp., MM&S)

(B) Studies in Malachi; G. Campbell Morgan (114 pp., MM&S)

Malachi, the State of Things at the End; Dennett

Men Spake from God; H. L. Ellison (160 pp., Eerd.)

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Between The Testaments:

The Four Hundred Silent Years; Ironside (LB)

(B) From the Exile to the Advent; Wm. Fairweather (210 pp.)

Introductions To The New Testament:

(C) Introduction to the New Testament; H. C. Thiessen (350 pp., Eerd)

Living Messages of the Books of the Bible; G. Campbell Morgan; New Testament Volume (P&I)

(B) The Triumph of the Crucified; Eric Sauer (C) The Progress of Doctrine in the N. T.; T. D. Bernard (260 pp., Eerd)

(C) Outline Studies in the N. T., Acts to Eph., W. G. Moorehead. Baker Commentaries On Separate New Testament Books:

The Gospels:

(See also Christ, His Life, Parable and Miracles; and Studies regarding Christ under “Bible Doctrines”)

(B) The Four Gospels; Sam. Ridout (C) Guide to the Gospels; W. Graham Scroggie (660 pp., P&I) (494 pp., LB)

(C) Expository Thoughts on the Gospels; Ryle (4 vol., Baker)

The Gospels; Kenneth S. Wuest (320 pp., Eerd)

(C) A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ. A. T. Robertson.

The Characteristic Differences of the Four Gospels; Jukes

Matthew:

(C) Lectures on Matthew; W. Kelly (519 pp., LB)

Notes on Matthew; Ironside (407 pp., LB)

(C) The Divine King, Helen H. Shaw (64 pp., GFPP)

The Gospel Ace, to Matthew; G. Campbell Morgan (H&S)

(B) The Gospel of Matthew; A. C. Gaebelein; 2 vols., 625 pp.

Some Chapters on the Sermon on the Mount; Hogg, Watson (P&I)

Mark:

(B) An analysis of the Gospel of Mark: Harold St. John (P&I)

The Gospel Acording to Mark; G. C. Morgan (350 pp., OL)

(C) Mark; Wm. Kelly

Evangelical Commentary on Mark; Dr. Ralph Earle (Zon)

(B) Addresses on the Gospel of Mark; Ironside (LB)

Luke:

(B) Outline Studies in Luke; Griffith-Thomas (406 pp., Eerd.)

Meditations on Luke; A. Van Ryn (278 pp., LB)

Exposition of the Gospel of Luke; Wm. Kelly

The Gospel Ace. to: Luke; G. Campbell Morgan (248 pp., OL)

(C) An Outline of Luke's Gospel; C. A. Coates (314 pp., Stowe)

John:

(B) Behold My Glory; St. John (60 pp., Paternoster Press)

The Apostle John; Griffith-Thomas (372 pp., P&I)

(B) The Gospel Acc. to John; Campbell Morgan (MM&S)

John; Wm. Kelly (C) Meditations in John; A. Van Ryn (205 pp., LB)

Exposition of the Gospel of John; A. W. Pink, 3 vols (Zon)

(B) Commentary on the Gospel of John; 2 vols., F. Godet, 1100 pp.

(B) The Central Teaching of Jesus Christ; on chapters 13 to 17; T. D. Bernard (400 pp., McMillan)

His Last Words; Geo. Henderson, on John 13-17 (McCall - Barbour)

St. John; Bp. B. F. Westcott (414 pp., Eerd)

ACTS:

(See Also Bible Characters, Paul)

The Acts of the Holy Spirit; A. T. Pierson (142 pp., P&D
(B) Introduction to the Study of Acts: Stifler The Acts of the Apostles; C. W. Carter & R. Earle (Zon.)

Outline Studies in Acts; W H. Griffith-Thomas (Eerd.)

The Acts of the Apostles; E. M. Blaiklock (Tyndale Press)

The World Outlook of the Bible; Graham Scroggie (P&p (C) The Acts; Chas. R. Erdman (B) Acts of the Apostles; R. B. Rackham (524 pp., Zon.)

(C) The Book of Acts; F. F. Bruce

Harmony of the Acts and Pauline Epistles; Clark

Romans

(B) An Outline of Romans; C. A. Coates (245 pp., Stowe)

The Epistle to the Romans; W. E. Vine (224 pp., OL)

(C) The Epistle to the Romans; Moule (437 pp., P&D (B) A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans; Chas Hodge (700 pp.) Salvation and Behaviour; Scroggie (154 pp., P&D Notes on the Ep. to the Romans; W. Kelly (284 pp., Morrish)

(A) Lectures on Romans; Ironside (LB)

The Ep. to the Romans; Jas. M. Stifler (254 pp., Moody)

(C) Bible Class Notes on Romans; Peter J. Pell (200 pp., GFP)

(B) Romans Verse by Verse; W. R. Newell (577 pp., Moody)

Romans; F. Godet (2 vols., T&T Clark)

1 And 2 Corinthians

(B) First Corinthians; W. E. Vine (OL)

Exposition of 1 Corinthians; Hodge (Eerd.)

Exposition of 2 Corinthians; Hodge (Eerd)

The Second Ep. to the Corinthians; Moule (192 pp., P&I)

(C) The Charter of the Church; on 1 Cor., J. R. Caldwell, 2 vols., (P&L. Probably out of print.

1 Corinthians; F. Godet (2 vols., T&T Clark)

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Galatians:

(C) Lectures on the Ep. to the Galatians; W. Kelly (198 pp., Morrish)

(C) The Cross and the Spirit; Moule (59 PP., P&I)

(B) The Ep. of Paul to the Galatians, Hogg & Vine (350 pp., P&I)

Galatians, The Charter of Christian Liberty; Merrill C. Tenney Galatians; Wm. Kelly Galatians in the Greek Testament; Kenneth S. Wuest

Ephesians

(B) Ephesian Studies; Moule (340 pp., P&I)

Lectures on Ephesians; Wm. Kelly (283 pp., Morrish)

Ephesians; Ironsides (LB)

St. Paul’s Letter To The Ephesians; J. B. Lightfoot (260 Pp.,). On The Greek Text (B) Ephesians, the Glories of His Grace; A. Van Ryn (165 pp., LB)

(C) Commentary on the Ep. to the Eph. and Col., Simpson & Bruce (Eerd.)

(B) Commentary on the Ep. to the Eph., Chas. Hodge

Eph., Col., in the Gk. Testament; Kenneth S. Wuest (Moody)

Philippians:

(B) Philippians Studies; Moule (265 pp., P&D (C) Philippians and Colossians; W. E. Vine (200 pp., OL)

(C) Lectures on Philippians & Colossians; Wm. Kelly

Joy Way (on Phpns.); Guy H. King (Christian Lit. Crusade)

(C) Philippians, Notes on; Ironside (LB)

(C) His in Joyous Experience; Norman B. Harrison

St. Paul's Ep. to the Philippians; J. B. Lightfoot (Zon.)

Philippians in the Gk. New Testament; Wuest (Moody)

COLOSSIANS:

(See Also Under Eph. And Phpns.)

(C) Christ Pre-Eininent; Studies in Col., W. H. G Thomas (Moody)

(B) Oneness with Christ; Expository Studies on Colossians; W. R. Nicholson (284 pp., Kregel)

Crossing the Border (on Col.) Guy H. King (C) Colossians and Philemon; Moule (318 pp., P&I)

Lectures on Colossians; Ironside (LB)

1 And 2 Thessalonians:

The Ep. to the Thessalonians; Wm. Kelly (228 pp., Hammond)

(B) The Ep. to the Thessalonians; Hogg & Vine (307 pp., P&I)

(C) The Thessalonian Epistles; John F. Walvoord (Dunham)

1 And 2 Timothy:

(B) An Exposition of the Two Ep. to Tim., Wm. Kelly (348 pp)

Second Timothy; Moule (In Devot. Commentary) 180 pp., Baker (C) To My Son; Guy H. King — on 1 Tim. (MM&S)

(C) A Leader Led; Guy HI King — on 2 Tim. (MM&S)

The Pastoral Ep. in the Gk. Testament; Wuest (Moody)

Titus:

(See Also Under Hebrews And Philemon)

Philemon:

(See Also Under Colossians)

Titus And Philemon; Ironside (LB)

(B) Exposition of Titus and Philemon; Wm. Kelly (B) Philemon, a Note to a Friend; W. G. Scroggie (Hulbert)

(C) Hebrews and Titus; Ironside (192 pp., LB)

Hebrews:

(B) Epistle to the Hebrews; 2 vols., Saphir (890 pp., LB)

(C) Messages from the Ep. to the Hebrews; Moule (H&S)

(C) Lectures on the Ep. to the Hebrews; Ridout (LB)

Let Us Go On; Griffith-Thomas (186 pp., Zon)

The Ep. to the Hebrews; a Study Manual; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.. (108 pp., paper, Baker)

(C) The Ep. to the Hebrews; W. E. Vine (186 pp., OL)

The Triumph of Faith; G. Campbell Morgan (128 pp., P&D (B) In the Arena of Faith; Eric Sauer (On Heb. 11)

Hebrews in the Gk. N. T., Wuest (Moody)

The Ep. to the Hebrews; B. F. Westcott (504 pp., MacMillan). For students

James:

(C) Exposition of James; Wm. Kelly James; Ironside (LB)

(C) A Belief that Behaves; Guy H. King (130 pp., NEVUS)

The General Epistle of James; Tasker (144 pp., Eerd)

(B) James; C. A. Coates (see under Ruth)

Peter, John, Jude (Epistles):

(C) The Apostle Peter; Griffith-Thomas (B) The Life & Letters of St. Peter; English (271 pp., Our hope)

(B) The General Epistles; Chas. R. Erdman First Peter in the Gk. N.T.; Kenneth Wuest (Moody)

In These Last Days (Studies in 2 Pet.) 1, 2, 3 John and Jude; Kenneth Wuest (Moody)

Faith is the Victory (On 1 John); Blaiklock (Paternoster)

The Epistles of John; A. Van Ryn (181 pp., LB)

I John; Wm Kelly

II and III John; Wm. Kelly (C) The Fellowship (on I John); Guy H. King (127 pp.„ MM&S)

(B) Addresses on the Epistles of John; Ironside (LB)

(B) The Epistle Of Jude; W. Kelly

The Epistle of Jude; Thos. Manton (Geneva Ser. of Commentaries)

Expostition of the Ep. of Jude; Ironside (LB)

The Epistle of John; Westcott (378 pp., Macmillan). For students

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Suggestions For Christian Reading

Revelation:

(B) Exposition of the Revelation; Walter Scott (456 pp., P&I)

(C) Visions of St. John the Divine; Wm. Hoste (JR)

Lectures on the Book of Revelation; Wm. Kelly (540 pp., Morrish)

(C) An Outline of Revelation; C. A. Coates (250 PP., Stowe)

Lectures on the Revelation; Ironside (366 PP., LB)

(C) The Prophetic History of the Church; F. W. Grant; on Rev. I and II (183 pp., LB)

The Letters of our Lord; G. Campbell Morgan (110 pp., P&P. On Rev. II and III Section Four:

Bible Doctrines And Sundry Topics

Bible Doctrines In General:

(B) Major Bible Themes; L. S. Chafer (305 pp., Dunham)

(B) Studies in Bible Doctrine; Wm. Hoste (287 pp., P&I)

Gospel Facts and Doctrines; C. F. Hogg (100 Pp., PM)

(C) The Faith; A Symposium. ed. by F. A. Tatford (359 pp., P&I)

The Great Doctrines of she Bible; Wm. Evans (275 pp., Mooay)

(C) The Gospel and Its Ministry; Sir R. Anderson (213 pp., Kregel)

(C) Systematic Theology; L. S. Chafer. Several Vols.

God — The Trinity:

(B) The Trinity; Edw. Henry Bickersteth (7 chapters, Kregel)

Christ — His Person:

The Glory of Christ; Owen (285 pp., Moody)

The Crowned Christ; F. W. Grant (LB)

(B) The Lord of Glory; B. B. Warfield (330 pp., Zon.)

The Master; F. A. Tatford (124 pp., LB) Our Matchless Lord; J. B. Watson (P&I)

(C) The Lord from Heaven; Sir R. Anderson (118 pp., Baker)

The Son of God; J. G. Bellett (147 PP., LB)

(B) The Divinity of our Lord; H. P. Liddon (abridged by Bloore) LB Christ Incomparable; J. O. Sanders (Chr. Literature Crusade)

The Eternal Sonship; W. Hoste (P&I)

Our Lord Jesus Christ; a plant of Renown; L. Sheldrake (W)

Christ — His Work:

(B) Six Miracles of Calvary; Wm. R. Nicholson (Moody)

(C) The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ; Stalker (300 pp., Zon.)

The Uplifted Cnrist; A. P. Gibbs (W)

(B) The Suffering Saviour; F. W. Krummacher (444 pp., Moody)

The Sufferings & Glories of Messiah; John Brown (Zon.)

The Death of Christ; Jas. Denny (Rev. by Tasker; 220 pp.)

The Atonement; R. W. Dale (550 pp (B) The Grandeur of Golgotha; Neil;VI Fraser (128 pp., LB)

Christ — His Life:

(B) Life of Christ; Jas. Stalker (167 pp.. Revell)

The Crises of the Christ; Campbell Morgan (C) The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah; Edersheim (2 vols.)

Jesus the Messsiah (Abridgement of the above)

The Life & Times of the Lord Jesus Christ; Lange (4 vols.)

(B) The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus; J. G. Bellett (79 pp., LB)

(B) Did Jesus Rise; Jas. H. Brookes

Christ is Alive; G. R. Beasley-Murray (200 pp.)

Christ — The Central Theme Of The Scriptures:

Christ the Key to Scripture; Scroggie (65 pp., P&I)

(C) Christ in all the Scriptures; A. M. Hodgkin (249 PP., P&I)

(B) Christianity is Christ; Griffith-Thomas (144 pp., Moody)

(C) Rays of Messiah’s Glory; David Baron (274 pp., Zon.)

The Holy Spirit:

(B) The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit; S. Ridout (224 pp., LB)

(C) Lectures on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Kelly (Moorish)

(C) Person & Work of the Holy Spirit; Rene Pache (Moody)

Sin, Salvation, Assurance, Etc.

(B) Wells of Salvation; James M. Davies (Ritchie)

(C) The Gospel of the Bible; Vine

The Eternal Security of the Believer; Ironside (LB)

Forgiveness in Three Aspects;Geo. Cutting (Pamphlet, LB)

Law And Grace:

(B) The Reign of Grace; Abram Booth (291 PP., Eerd.)

(C) The Message of Sinai; F. A. Tatford (86 pp., Victory Press)

Sanctification, Holiness:

(B) Holiness, the False & the True; Ironside (140 pp., LB)

(C) Holiness; J. C. Ryle (333 PP., Jas. Clarke & Co.)

Satan, Demons, Etc.

(B) Satan, His Person, Work, Place, Destiny; Jennings (254 pp., LB)

(C) Satan; L. S. Chafer

Biblical Demonology; M. F. Unger (245 PP., Scripture Press)

The Eternal State:

(B) Man & The Future State; abridgement of F. W. Grant's Facts & Theories of a Future State by Bloore (LB)

(C) Papers on Eternal Punishment; F. W. Grant (Brief, LB)

Parables And Miracles:

(B) The Study of the Parables; Ada R. Habershon (392 pp., Kregel)

(B) The Study of the Miracles; Ada R. Habershon (395 pp., Kregel)

(C) Notes on the Parables; Trench (C) Notes on the Miracles; Trench The Great Physician; G. Campbell Morgan (400 PP., MM&S)

The Lord's Miracles & Parables; Fereday (125 pp., JR)

Swallow That Gossip

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Prov. 18:13 Is passing judgment upon others ever the duty of a Christian?

Never, if it is prejudgment. If you come up with a verdict before hearing all the facts of a case, then face it, you are prejudiced. If you only investigate one side of the question, you are guilty of prejudiced investigation, which is twisting the truth. Folly and shame are your rewards. If you have shown haste and prejudice in judgment, regardless of who you are or what position you occupy in the church, you should humble yourself, confess it as sin, and repent.

This has to do with gossip. Hold that juicy news you know about. Swallow it. In many cases, silence is golden. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19). If you swallow it, you help keep it from spreading. And perhaps even better than swallowing it would be to spit it out! In other words, you may even need to rebuke the person who spread it to you!

This has to do with counseling. Don't start talking until you have heard a person out. Give him an opportunity to share, then answer: Jumping to conclusions is poor sport in conversation. It usually terminates the talk: Hasty chatter is foolish and humiliating. A ready wit is for play and fun, but do business with solid judgment and wisdom. Do not pass judgment until you are fully informed.

This has to do with criticizing, especially to third parties. Instead of settling a problem by going to the other person, we make phone calls, write letters and emails, and try to enlist the support and help of others. Forming a coalition may be good politics, but it is not a Biblical procedure. If you are informed and asked to get involved in a problem, remember: "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17). Therefore, be especially suspicious of anyone who comes and tells you their side or one side of a conflict, seeking your judgment or involvement. Such people usually tell you what they want you to know, which is probably only half the matter or maybe a good deal less. Exercise extreme care. A harsh, intolerant fleshly mind is in no position to act as critic. Such a person cuts others down to raise himself up, or to taste vengeance. Unfortunately, that may be exactly what he has on his agenda when he comes and tells you about the other person! Instead of getting involved, you could remind the person of Proverbs 19:11, the option of passing over an offense instead of prosecuting it, and of Matthew 18:15, the Biblical way to deal with personal offenses. This does not include gossiping, telling others - seeking their counsel and/or involvement. It is unrighteous to spread rumors and defame another person.

In the Old Testament, if someone was falsely accused, and it was discovered, then the penalty for the alleged crime was to be carried out on the false accusor. This certainly should serve as a deterrant to loose tongues.

Study the book of Proverbs and what it has to say about the tongue. You will find that there are scores of verses which indicate that a man's unguarded talk betrays the

real man. Remember: hasty conclusions and a biased spirit reveal a warped, twisted and superficial heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34).

"There is nothing which most people pay less attention to than their words. They go through a day, speaking and talking without thought or reflection, and seem to fancy that if they do what is right, it matters little what they say." Give yourself the little three-way test before speaking about someone:

1. Is it true?

2. Is it kind?

3. Is it necessary?

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving

Selected

“An acknowledging and confessing with gladness, the benefits and mercies, which God bestows either upon ourselves or others”.

—Alexander Cruden

The theme of thanksgiving runs right through the Bible. In Nehemiah’s day, at the dedication of the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, two companies were appointed whose sole task was to thank and praise the Lord. When the Ark of the Lord was brought back from Obed-edom, Levites were appointed by David to thank the Lord continually after the Ark had been put into the tent. David’s Psalms were full of thanksgiving, for instance, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name” (Psa. 100:4).

The life of Christ was one of thanksgiving. Surely that life is an example to us. He even gave thanks for the bread and wine, a symbol of His broken body and His blood shed.

Paul, in Colossians 3:15 exhorts, “Be ye thankful,” and in Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things.” His epistles are full of instances of thanksgiving and he exhorts the Christians to make their requests known to God with thanksgiving.

The Christian knowing what he has been saved from and saved unto, should certainly be characterized by a spirit

of thankfulness. It pays in every way to be a Christian, even in this life, and for this we should be thankful.

After unbelief, unthankfulness is possibly the greatest sin. We read in Romans 1 concerning the heathen, “Neither were they thankful.” Therefore they were blinded and God gave them up to their own uncleanness and lusts. Paul, in writing Timothy, includes the unthankful with blasphemers and unholy. Yet, in spite of this, the Bible says: “He is kind unto the unthankful.” He makes His sun to shine on the righteous and unrighteous and He makes His rain fall upon the just and unjust. It is therefore the goodness of God that leads to repentance.

We live in an unthankful age which takes everything for granted. We do not appreciate what God has given us till He takes it away. The writer, for many years, was a close friend of a cripple who was bedridden for over thirty years. This brother in the Lord often mentioned that health is only fully appreciated after it is lost.

The story is told of the little boy from the country who went to visit his cousins in the city. He was a Christian, but his city cousins had no thought of God. When they sat down to eat, the little boy quietly gave thanks to the Lord for the food. His sophisticated uncle laughed at him and said they didn’t do that at their house. The little country boy replied: “Well, that’s just like my dog, he starts right in too.”

Not only should we give God thanks daily for food, shelter and clothing, the necessities of life, but we should also thank Him for health and strength and sound minds. Most of all, however, we should thank Him for the gift of His Son and all spiritual blessings which

we have in Him. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift! We might all test our hearts and ask ourselves when we truly thanked the Lord for all our blessings.

Thankfulness has an effect on others. Pepita, the little Gypsy girl, after she was converted was so thankful that just before she died, she called the artist for whom she had been posing and told him of her salvation. The artist, who at the time had been painting a picture of Christ, was converted through the words of Pepita. His painting of Christ being crucified had such an effect on Count Zinzendorf that he, too, came to Christ. He founded the Moravian Brethren and through the efforts of the Moravian Brethren John Wesley was converted. Through the preaching of Wesley the English-speaking world was changed and the whole course of history was altered. All of this because of the thankfulness of one little girl.

Are you and I thankful?

The Atheism of Today

The Atheism of Today

The ingenious but atheistic leaders of today who labor so hard to rid themselves and the world of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, are really under obligation to offer something better in exchange. To assert that “the gospel is behind the age” without supplying a gospel that is abreast of the age is not the way to lead Christians away from the comfort of the religion that has proved itself to be of enduring satisfaction and always helpful in time of need.

Modern atheism, “Christian atheism,” is soliciting sympathy everywhere through many forms of propaganda. But what is there in atheism to seduce us from our allegiance to the Son of God? Atheism, communism, rationalism — all really speak one language: “This world is all in all to us. There is no Heaven. Man is self-sufficient. There is no God. Let’s be content with life here — all beyond is no concern of ours.”

The modern atheist has nothing new to offer mankind. He has his stream of tradition, running down like a narrow thread from the earliest times, if that is any consolation to him. There were atheists in Palestine when the Psalmist wrote the famous words, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” There were atheists in Greece when Plato wrote to one of them, “You and your friends are not the first who have held this notion. There have always been people more or less sick with this disease.” There were atheists in the sixteenth century when Bacon wrote the words, “I had

rather believe all the ancient fables than that this universal frame is without a Mind." There were atheists in the eighteenth century, when France inscribed upon her cemetery gates, "Death is an eternal sleep," and enthroned a harlot as personified Reason on the desecrated altar of God. And there are atheists now, inheritors of the traditions of their fathers. What could be more foolish than to embrace their system of negations, and thus feed "on ashes" (Isaiah 44:20).

But beware! The atheism of today assumes a respectful, even deferential tone toward the faith it seeks to destroy. It often has an air of modesty about it, and eagerly repudiates the idea of uprooting the foundations of morality. It exhibits a more Christian-like method of attack than was shown in former generations.

But assume whatever outward form it may, and clothe it in whatever garb is popular, atheism always has failed, and always will fail, to commend itself to the inner longings of mankind. The fatal weakness of the atheistic cause is this: It is a system of negations. The fatal want it always betrays is the want of harmony with the whole nature of man. Man's soul craves for certainty and satisfaction. He was made by God, and therefore has need of God, and a resistless instinct of nature urges him to feel after and to seek for God. Man was made to worship and adore; and consciously or unconsciously, he is impelled to carry out the end and purpose of his being. Man may try as he will to suppress and stifle the voice that God has implanted within him, but that voice must and will be sooner or later heard.

Blessed is the man who desires to know God, whose eyes can see His handiwork in the natural world, and

whose ears can hear His voice, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” And having heard, happy is he who walks in God’s way — the way of everlasting life.

Guest Editorial, by Ernest Lloyd (From AVERY JOURNAL)

The Athlete

The Athlete

Selected

There were annual sports days in Greece during the times of the Apostle Paul, days for testing and rewarding physical strength and prowess. Attainment to a high standard of bodily fitness was eminently important to the ancients, particularly because of the type of warfare in which they engaged. It enabled them in hand to hand combat to make sudden and unexpected attacks, or to engage in rapid retreats.

Apparently, this yearly event in Greece rotated among four different centres. Games were celebrated at Neman, at Delphi, at Olympia, and at Corinth. The Apostle in his many references to gymnastic exercises probably had in mind the Isthmian games held near Corinth. Because of his labours there, it is plausible to believe that he was conversant with those practices.

The exercises performed on those occasions, so we are told, consisted of leaping, running, throwing the discus or quoit, boxing, and wrestling. Sometimes there also were horse and chariot races, but the emphasis was placed upon human endeavours.

Paul, generally speaking, refers only to two of these activities in his illustrations, running and boxing.

He may have known some of those excellent specimens of health, vigour, and physical fitness who were contestants in the games; at least, he must have seen some of them and appreciated the results of their long

months of rigorous training and discipline, for he says, “Bodily exercise profiteth little (for a little while)” Tim. 4:8. The effects of such training upon the frame and the condition of the body are not to be despised. Systematic exercise increases the strength and improves the health.

The individual who engages in gymnastic exercises within proper limits is more useful to others, more reliable in an emergency. The soldier, the policeman, the fireman, and the life-guard are examples of physical training and its usefulness. These men are not only thus trained to protect the rights and the properties of others, but to save life itself.

“A fit body is a fine boon,” is an old saying and a true one.

Since the body belongs to the Lord any exercise should be undertaken to improve its state for Him. Let us constantly remind ourselves of two important Scriptures: “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Horn. 12:1).

There are mental as well as physical benefits to be gained in such performances. This feature of the competitive game is given but scant consideration by many, but they are of vital importance in life. In the gymnasium one learns not only to be a good winner, but also a good loser. To lose graciously is a greater triumph than to win successfully. In the game one learns that he cannot always be first. Without any resentment, a young girl, when asked about her own success, said, “No, I did

not get a prize; we cannot all be winners." Some of God's people who manifest the overbearing attitude of being always right and always first could have learned better had they played more in competitive games when they were younger.

There are also spiritual lessons to be learned from Paul's references to the Corinthian games which are much more important than the helpful results upon mind and body. It is true that the Apostle states, "Bodily exercise profiteth little (for a little while)," but to this he adds, "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

Let us seek by the grace of our Lord Jesus to learn some of these lessons.

The Runner

In certain passages of the New Testament both Christian life and testimony are compared to the race, the Christian being the runner.

The stadium: The Apostle Paul asks the question, "Know ye not that they which run in a race (in a stadium) run all?" The allusion here is to the course, the running ground, or the place where boxers contend. There seems to be the suggestion that there are also spectators at the stadium who are witnessing the race in which everyone listed runs (See Eph. 3:10).

The preparation: This period is intimated in the sentence, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." For some months before the actual contest the contestants imposed upon themselves a strict dietary discipline as well as a rigorous physical

training. Paul's spiritual application undoubtedly is that for Christian life and testimony there is a definite need of self-denial and endurance.

The identification: There is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews which treats of the believer's life of faith in God and likens it similarly to a race. In this passage the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus, is pictured as the Champion Who had run successfully, and the exhortation is given, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). With the example of Christ who ran so well in spite of obstacles before Him, the believer is stimulated to greater endeavour in Christian life and testimony.

The race: There are several points here to be considered. First, the runner must carry no unnecessary weight. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hed. 12:1). Second, there must be constant unrelenting effort, "Every man that striveth for the mastery (1 Cor. 9:25)," that is, every one that agonizes to succeed. This suggests the straining of every muscle for a concerted effort. Third, the mind must be set upon winning, upon gaining the mastery. "One receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Cor. 9:24-25).

The execution of Christian life and testimony demands continual expenditure of physical and spiritual exertion.

The reward: As Paul recalled the strenuous struggle put forth by the young Greeks in the annual games, he wrote, "One receiveth the prize." "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:24-25). Of himself, he wrote, "I press toward the

mark (the goal) for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

The Boxer

While in the race we have illustrated certain principles applicable to the Christian's life and testimony, in the boxer we likewise have illustrated certain principles applicable to spiritual sanctification and victory.

The words, "So fight I," suggest the pugilist in the Grecean games. The fighting or boxing enjoined by Paul here is against oneself, not against others.

Shadow-boxing: "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Before the actual contest there was a play with the fists or weapons, a striking out at an imaginary opponent, called a mock-battle. It was a mere show of bravado. Paul, in this figure, informs us that true sanctification, the considering of self as crucified with Christ, is not play, not a sham-battle, but a stern reality.

Boxing: Paul now uses a very strong word to intimate how we must deal with self, "I keep under my body." I weary my body by rendering it black and blue. Paul used spiritual means to reduce his corrupt and carnal nature into subjection. He sought to subdue natural tendencies and passions until he had the mastery over them.

Disapproval: These daily bouts with self went on in the life of Paul because of the fear he might be castaway or disapproved. This difficult word denotes that which will not stand the test. Paul did not want to be disqualified in his running by the divine Umpire.

The Team

In writing to the Philippians, Paul again uses the athlete as a background for his exhortation, and thus suggests a unity and fellowship in Christian service.

There are certain expressions used by the Apostle which intimate the united effort of a team against some opposition. For example; we read, “Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Pil. 1:27). Again, we read, “Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel” (Phil. 4:3). In writing to the Romans, he uses similar language, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Rom. 15:30).

There is a great need of teamwork in our service for the blessed Master. Believers, in their service for Christ, would be much more successful if there was more accord of thought, more concentration of effort, and more co-operation in their work.

S. O. M.

* * *

“There are four emblems near the Queen’s castle at Balmoral: a tree by the water, lilies of the valley, a vine in process of pruning, and waving palms. The four together represent the four stages of Christian life. First, growing through truth; second, blossoming into beauty; third, undergoing chastisement; and fourth, enjoying final triumph.”

“Our life is like the dial of a clock. The hands are God’s hands passing over and over again. The short hand is

the hand of discipline, the long hand the hand of mercy. Slowly and surely the hand of discipline must pass, and God sneaks at each stroke; but over and over the hand of mercy showers sixty-fold of blessing for each stroke of discipline or trial. Both hands are fastened to the one secure spot, the great unchanging heart of the God of love." —Pierson.

The Book Corner

The Book Corner

The Prophet of the Watchtower: Dr. Fredk. A. Tatford; Prophetic Witness Publishing House, 2 Upper-ton Gardens, Eastbourne, Sussex BN21 2AH, England.

Dr. Tatford has given us several excellent expositions of the Minor Prophet. These are in the “Twentieth Century Series.” He has indicated their application to our times of lawlessness, strife and immorality.

In The Prophet of the Watchtower, his exposition of the Prophecy of Habakkuk, he shows answers to some very perplexing problems: the sin and departure of a divinely chosen people, the chastisement upon this people, the unholy instrument by which the Lord inflicted this discipline, God’s righteousness in both punishing sin and yet preserving His people. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

There are seven short chapters in the small volume. The first is introductory. Chapters two and three cover chapter one of Habakkuk; chapters four and five, chapter two; chapters six and seven, chapter three.

Dr. Tatford does his research work thoroughly. His background material is invaluable.

In the U.S.A. and Canada this hook may be secured from Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey.

The Book Corner

The Book Corner

Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom: Samuel Fisk; Loizeaux Brothers Inc., 1238 Corlies Avenue, Neptune, New Jersey.

The author does not seek to harmonize Divine Sovereignty and Human Free Will; he clearly states both and speaks of “seeing both sides.” For example, in chapter four, he quotes from others and makes some personal observations regarding the idea that God in His sovereignty imposed certain limits upon Himself and that man has perfect freedom to act only within those limits. In this, the divine act and the human act of faith react jointly.

This book is composed of two sections: Part one presents these two conceptions in considerable detail. Part two, an examination of particular Scriptures that treat these conceptions but which suggest difficulties.

The volume evinces extensive research and personal study. Mr. Fisk quotes profusely from the works of other devout, scholarly, spiritual authors.

A statement in chapter five seems to be characteristic of this work; “He avoids the errors of Armenianism on the one hand, and those of hyper-Calvinism on the other.”

This reviewer would agree with the assertion that predestination is related to the purposes of God for His redeemed; notwithstanding, he would take exception to the emphasis that election is generally related to

service. This appears as an attempt to oversimplify the problems this doctrine presents.

Anyone studying Divine Sovereignty certainly should read and thoroughly peruse this carefully-compiled work.

Price: $3.95. Loizeaux Brothers Inc., Neptune, New Jersey, and at most Christian Book Stores.

—J.G.

The Book Corner

The Book Corner

Prophet Who Deserted: Dr. Fredk A. Tatford; Prophetic Witness Publishing House, Upperton House, The Avenue, Eastbourne, Sussex, England BN21 3YB This study of the autobiography of Jonah is one in the series on the Minor Prophets by Dr. Tatford. It is characterized by his usual excellent research into background material.

He accepts the supernatural element in the book and gives a literal exposition of its content. He has little sympathy with those who malign and criticize the prophet and his work.

Some perhaps may be dissatisfied with the Doctor's explanation of the "three days and three night-," but his appendix covering the matter of a physical resurrection is exceptionally good. It alone justifies the purchasing of the book.

There are six chapters in the small volume:

Chapter one introduces us to Jonah and his life before the experience recorded in the book and his unusual commission.

Chapter two deals with the divine discipline of the prophet and his remarkable preservation in the sea.

Chapter three delineates Jonah's experience in the great fish.

Chapter four records the prophet's significant prayer.

Chapter five indicates the response and obedience of Jonah to his being recommissioned.

Chapter six pictures the weary and resentful prophet being further taught of God.

The bibliography at the end opens a vast field of reference to the Bible student.

Highly recommended. This small volume may be purchased through Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1238 Conies Avenue, Neptune, New Jersey, U.S.A.

The Checkerboard of Life

The Checkerboard of Life

Selected

My wife asserts that the game of checkers requires forethought, and that to be successful, moves must be progressive, complementing each other. Life is just like that, especially the Christian's life in which God makes the moves.

"Westy," as we called him, graduated with me in Chemistry. He was an average student with a warm personality. Unfortunately he could not secure employment in his own field. Employment was scarce in those days when Canada was drifting through the "20's" toward the years of depression.

Years later Westy and I renewed our acquaintance. What a pleasure to recognize him behind the wicket as I stepped forward to purchase a ticket! Unable to find a position in Chemistry, he entered the services of a large railroad as ticket agent. From then through many years he arranged my reservations and routes. I too had left Chemistry and had entered the Christian ministry, and was engaged in considerable itinerant work.

Our mutual joy and interest did not rise from Westy's helpful arrangements and my need of these, but from the strong bond of Christian brotherhood. Although the nicknames of school days stuck, these frequently gave place to the rich spiritual appelation, brother.

It was an extraordinary move that placed my chum behind a ticket wicket, but that was only one, another

made him manager; still another elevated him to an executive position. By these unforeseen divine movements my companion was diverted from Chemistry and directed to railroading in which he was a success and in which he found pleasure.

In checkers the inanimate disc is impassive and, of course, irrational. In Christian life the believer in this respect remains passive, subject to divine movements. In order to be really successful and to experience the peace of Christ in his heart, he must yield to the sovereign will of God. “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him” Rom. 8:28. RSV).

S.O.M.

The Christian Priesthood

The Christian Priesthood

Selected

At the time of the writing of his first epistle, Peter was an old man far removed both by time and distance from the early scenes of his experiences with the Master. He sits in a room away in the city of Babylon, and dictates his letter to Silvanus.

It is probable that in thought he was standing beyond the influence of Jerusalem, under the shadow of the shrine to the idol Pan in the city of Caesarea Philippi, listening to those questions: “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? … Whom do ye say that I am?” And those never to be forgotten words probably rung again with joy in his ears and heart: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood (My bodily appearance) hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. Thou art Peter (Petros, a stone), and upon this rock (Petra, a rock: thy confession of Me) I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:13-18).

There is no doubt about it, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of Man and Son of God, claimed to be the one and only foundation of the Christian Church. Peter well understood His meannig, so he writes a detailed description of the operations going on during this present dispensation in the raising of this mighty spiritual building or temple, the Church of the Living God (1 Pet. 2:4-9).

Among all these details may be noticed the foundation of the temple, its superstructure, and the priesthood that functions within it.

The Foundation of the Temple

In this connection there are two expressions used regarding our Lord Jesus Christ. First, He is the Corner Stone (1 Pet. 2:6). In Ephesians 2:20 we have another description of the foundation of the Christian Church, its chronological foundation. In the order of time, the New Testament apostles and prophets were first in the Church. They formed its chronological foundation, and the one Key Stone which united all the others was Jesus Christ Himself; He was the Chief Corner Stone.

Second, He is also the Cornice Stone (1 Pet. 2:7). Peter says, “The same is made the Head of the Corner.” As the cornice appears near the top of the building and forms, as a crown, its chief ornament, even so Christ is the Head, the Top, or the Cornice Stone of the Corner. He is therefore the Foundation Stone of prominence and the Top Stone of Pre-eminence, the Alpha and the Omega for all the history of the Church, and the Beginning and the Ending of all Church doctrine.

The Superstructure of the Temple

Our consideration directs our attention first to the material which went into this superstructure.

Its quality: The material is stated to be that of living stones. These stones, like the stones of Solomon’s magnificent temple, were taken from nature’s quarry, from nature’s connections and surroundings, and brought to Christ, “To whom coming, as unto a Living Stone.” They thus became living stones, for to these

dead ones, life was imparted by the Living Stone. They were quickened out of death into life.

Its appearance: “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” Just before this statement, we read concerning Christ that He is a stone, elect, precious. Oh, how precious Christ is! What beauty is to be seen in Him! Well might the bride in the Song of Solomon say, “Yea, He is altogether lovely.”

Another rendering of this statement reads, “Unto you therefore which believe in this preciousness.” Christ has imparted to the believer His own beauty. The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us. In Christ we have life and in Christ we have a beauty not our own, and as such we are living stones in the great invisible building, the universal Church.

In second place our attention is directed to the progress. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.” Living stones, taken by the power of the Gospel, are being constantly built into this spiritual temple, which will finally be composed of every believer from Pentecost to the rapture of the Church.

There are two distinct views of this spiritual building here. The first one, that at which we have been looking, presents to us the building in construction during the present age. To complete the picture, and to develop the teaching before us, the Holy Spirit adds one or two touches which present the temple as if fininished, ready for a priesthood to function within its precincts. For example, Christ is the Corner Stone of the foundation and also the Top Stone of the Corner.

Of course, we understand that part of the Church is in Heaven and part on earth; it, therefore, will not be seen

in its entirety until both of these groups are united in the power and glory of resurrection.

The inferred picture of a complete building suggests to us that it is in this great universal Church, this mighty spiritual building, that the priesthood of all believers is to function.

The Priesthood in the Temple

There are two aspects in the Christian priesthood: “Ye … are … an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (ver. 5). “Ye are … a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (ver. 9). From these two Scriptures we learn that believers are an holy priesthood and also a royal priesthood. They are holy priests in consecration and character and royal priests in dignity and glory.

With these two aspects of the Christian priesthood, we have two distinct functions; the holy priesthood is for one purpose, the royal for another.

The holy priesthood: The functions of this aspect of the Christian priesthood are to offer up spiritual sacrifices, aceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The picture here is that of a temple in which the Christian is a priest offering up sacrifices of praise upon an altar, the Lord Jesus (Heb. 13:10). The spiritual sacrifice, like the burnt offering, is entirely for God. It is the act of worship which is acceptable to Him. We have an altar, even the Lord Jesus, and it is by or through Him that our worship ascends to God. Every believer is an holy priest to worship before the Lord.

The royal priesthood: The function of this aspect of the priesthood of all believers is to “shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

The verb “to shew forth” indicates a public declaration; it means to tell forth. The word “praises” might better be rendered excellencies or virtues; they refer to the personal excellent qualities of Him who called out of darkness into His marvellous light, that is God through Christ. The Christian is viewed as a royal priest to bear testimony to the personal virtues and excellencies of God manifest in Christ Jesus.

The functions of the Christian priesthood are to worship and to witness. It is very easy to understand that God here speaks of every member of His Church. He calls them an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a purchased people.

One of the mysteries of Christendom is how a certain few men of each succeeding generation arrogate themselves these functions which are, in the truest scriptural sense, the privileges of every believer in Christ; and how a certain class of men can assume to themselves the position and title of priest to the exclusion of others in the Body of Christ.

There is no distinction of class in the Christian priesthood. Christendom does make a distinction of class, and divides the people into clergy and laity. From whence does this distinction come? By what final and infallible authority is it made? The truth of the matter is that every genuinely saved soul can claim membership in the divine clergy, lot, or selection. The scriptural view of God’s clergy (See Ephesians 1:11 where “clereos” is

the root of the word rendered “inheritance”) is not exclusive, but all comprehensive, embracing every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no mention in the New Testament of the class distinction which has crept into Christendom, save it be inferred in that wonderful book of symbols, The Revelation. In Revelation 2:6, the Lord commends the church at Ephesus by saying, “Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.” Does this name refer to some early sect that sought to sow error among the early churches? A search of the annals of Church history fails to reveal the existence of any such separate sect. The word itself gives its own interpretation. “Nikao” means to get the upper hand, and “Laos,” the laity or the people. The word singles out those who assume ascendency over the people, the clergy in contrast to the laity. The Lord says, concerning this distinction among His people, “Which thing I hate.”

While it is unscriptural to make any distinction of class among the saints, we must bear in mind that there is a distinction of gift among saints. Ephesians 4:8-1a states, “When He (the Lord Jesus) ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men…. He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” All have not the same gift, in this matter there is a distinction. On the authority of Scripture it is asserted that these distinctive gifts were to be used by the Christian priesthood to show forth His divine excellencies without the assumption to any distinctive class.

Thank God for every gathering of Christians where all are ready to worship as holy priests, where all are ready

to witness as royal priests! Yes, thank God for Christians who meet without class distinction, and who allow the distinctive gifts from the Risen Head of the Chruch to function!

In many villages, towns, and cities all over the world there are such gatherings, saints meeting according to the New Testament principles which govern Church character, behaviour, and administration. In these gatherings the saints gather upon the ground of the sacrifice of Christ, around His blessed presence, owning His supreme Lordship, and claiming His promise: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

S. O. M.

The Coming of Christ (Unknown)

Person The Lord Himself "I will come again" (John 14:3) "For the Lord himself" (1 Thess. 4:16) "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22:12,20) Promise " I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3) Purpose "that where I am, there ye may be also."(John 14:3) "I will that they alsoÉbe with me where I am." (John 17:24) Plan "In a moment, in the twinkling of an...

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Purpose "that where I am, there ye may be also."(John 14:3)

"I will that they alsoÉbe with me where I am." (John 17:24)

Plan "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed." (1 Cor. 15:52)

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

Prayer "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev.22:20)

W.C.H.

The Coming Of The Day Of God

MIF 10:2 (Mar-April 1978)

The Coming Of The Day Of God

The hope of Christ's coming is today all but dead among evangelicals: I do not mean that Bible Christians have given up the doctrine of the second advent. The ultimate triumph of Christ is accepted as one of the unshakeable doctrines of Holy Scripture. Yet the return of Christ as a blessed hope is all but dead among us. The truth touching the second advent, where it is presented today, is for the most part academic or political. The joyful, personal element is altogether missing. Where are they who "Yearn for the sign, O Christ, of Thy fulfilling, Faint for the flaming of Thine advent feet"?

The longing to see Christ that burned in the breasts of those first Christians seems to have burned itself out. It is precisely the "yearning" and the "fainting" for the return of Christ that has distinguished the personal hope from the theological one. Mere acquaintance with correct doctrines is a poor substitute for Christ, and familiarity with New Testament eschatology will never take the place of a love-inflamed desire to look on His face.

If the tender yearning is gone from the advent hope today there must be a reason for it … one of these is that Christians are so comfortable in this world that they have little desire to leave it. We all want to reserve the hope of heaven as a kind of insurance against the day of death, but as long as we are healthy and comfortable, why change a familiar good for something about which

we know very little actually? So reasons the carnal mind.

History reveals that times of suffering for the Church has also been times of looking upward. Tribulation has always sobered God’s people and encouraged them to look for and yearn after the return of their Lord.

—A. W. Tozer

The Cross of Christ Today

The Cross of Christ Today

S.O.M.

The initials S. 0. M. have occasionally appeared in Focus, in the past. Behind them are both a person and a message. Though a few people know who the individual is and what the initials stand for, as editor, I have been asked not to disclose the person’s identity. Though your curiosity may be stirred, don’t miss the important message of this excellent article.

“Would you believe it!” he exclaimed. “I was so interested in the spectacular ruins around me that I missed seeing that cross.”

It would appear that today many of God’s beloved people are so occupied with the affairs of this life, and with the chaos in world conditions, that they miss the cross; they fail to recognize the true meaning of the cross in their own experience.

The cross in the New Testament is used in a threefold manner. There is the literal cross, the cross of wood the Lord Jesus was made to carry, the cruel gibbet on which He died.

A friend, describing his visit to Rome, told of how deeply he was impressed by the ruins of its ancient buildings, very especially by those of the Colosseum where so many Christians were martyred during the reigns of the pagan emperors.

“Did you see the cross that stands in the Colosseum?” he was asked.

“There is no cross in the Colosseum!” he quickly answered, somewhat puzzled by the question.

“I have read,” replied his friend, “that centuries ago Christians, as a token of victory, placed a cross on the floor of the arena where the blood of so many fellow-believers had been shed. That cross in time disappeared. I have also read that in 1927, the Italian government ordered that another cross be permanently erected on the same spot.”

“No,” said the traveller who but recently had returned from Europe, “I did not see one; there is no cross there now. Let’s look at my slides of the Colosseum; I am sure that there is none there.”

As they viewed the slides, on the edge of one of them, the cross appeared; it had been almost missed in the taking of the picture.

Certain religious organizations make much of the literal cross. They reproduce it in wood, metal and stone. They even claim to have preserved some splinters from it, but God in His Word pays little attention to the actual wooden cross. Who made it, we do not know. What became of it, is not revealed. We only know that according to the Word of God, it served its purpose and passed from sight.

There is also what might be called the figurative cross. Said the Lord Jesus, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). The cross here stands for daily trial and testing which result from the persecution of the world. It comprehends whatever burden we bear for Christ: a cross of persecution and affliction, a cross of privation and loneliness and misunderstanding borne for

Christ's sake. This cross is the figure of patient suffering for and with Christ.

Then there is the symbolic cross which some call the doctrinal cross. This aspect of the cross in the New Testament is the emblem of the death of our Lord and of every truth expressed by His death. It is the representation of the atonement accomplished by Christ at Calvary. It is in this sense that the Apostle Paul uses the word "cross" in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he asserts, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

The Cross And The Resurrection

In any consideration of the cross today, the cross must be viewed from the perspective of the ascension rather than from the incarnation. This is how the early Christians saw the cross. They understood it from beyond the resurrection.

We need to remind ourselves that the early Church had the Epistles before it had the four Gospels. Chronologically the Epistles were written before the Gospels. All of Paul's epistles were written and available to the Church by A.D. 65; whereas, the Synoptic Gospels probably were not written until after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Mark being the earliest one. The Gospel of John may be dated between A.D. 80 and the end of the first Christian century.

From these facts we understand that the early Church received the doctrine of the cross before it was given the historical details of the crucifixion of our Lord. We must therefore ever view the cross from the perspective of the occupied throne.

The Meaning Of The Cross Today

Does the meaning of the cross of Christ change? Can it mean something different now from what it did in the past? Shall it mean something different in the future?

The cross in the past: John by the Holy Spirit writes of Christ as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). The verb to slay is also used of one of the seven heads of the first beast of Revelation 13. We read that one of its heads was wounded to death. The verb is comparable to our English word assassination, and means death imposed by another. The same verb may also mean a sacrificial death; it does so in the case of our Lord Jesus.

In the divine councils of the past, the cross of Christ meant a death by the hand of an enemy, a violent death, a sacrificial death.

The cross in the future: In chapter five of the Revelation, John carries us into the indefinite future. He writes of Christ as a Lamb that had been slain (5:6). Here he uses the same verb as he did in chapter 13. Christ is here seen in the future bearing the marks of death imposed by others, as premeditated murder. The cross never changes its meaning. What it meant in the councils of the past, it will mean in the consumation of the future.

The cross throughout time: In Acts five Peter uses another verb, but it too implies a violent death: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew (abused and killed) and hanged on a tree.” There seems to be an allusion here to the stoning and the hanging of the insubordinate son in Deuteronomy 21. In Acts 6:52, Stephen charges the nation of Israel with the death of Christ, saying, “The Just One, of whom ye have been

now the betrayers and murderers.” The same concept of the cross is ever maintained.

Perhaps there are times when we could wish that the offence of the cross might cease, and that it might become easier to be a Christian.

Although Issac Watts, the founder of English hymnology, wrote some 600 hymns there are three which have been chosen as his very best. May the sentiments of one of these classics find an echo in our hearts, an expression in our lives.

When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the Prince of Glory died,

My richest gain I count but loss,

And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast

Save in the cross of Christ, my God;

All the vain things that charm me most

I sacrifice them to his blood.

Amen! Amen! Amen!

The Crowned Christ

The Crowned Christ

Selected

An interesting story appears in Zechariah chapter six. It is about a remnant from Judah that had returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon. In their return they sought a recovery of their former position as a city and a re-establishment of their former recognition as the people of God.

One day friends and brethren from Babylon arrived on a visit to see the progress being made in the work of recovery under Joshua the priest and Zechariah the prophet. These men, Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah brought with them a present of silver and gold. A divine command was given that they take this silver and gold and make crowns, and that they set these crowns upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest. They therefore made and placed the crowns upon the head of God’s anointed one.

Many centuries later other crowns were made and placed upon the head of the Lord’s anointed One, our blessed Lord Jesus. In derision man made a crown of thorns and placed it upon His brow; in His ascension God crowned Him with glory and honour. Eventually, in sovereignty and victory He will be crowned with many diadems. Thank God for the crowned Christ!

The Crowns of Christ

A few of these may be suggested; as for example:

The crown of thorns (Jno. 19:1-3): There are three symbols of the curse of God; two are mentioned in Genesis 3, the serpent (V. 14) and the thorns (V. 17-18). The third is mentioned in Deuteronomy 21:22-23, the tree. These remind us of the cause of the curse, Satan; the sorrow of the curse, thorns; and the penalty of the curse, the tree. All three are linked to Christ in His death. The Lord Himself said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (Jno. 3:14). “The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head” (Jno. 19:1-3). “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13).

The crowns of glory and of honour. The second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives a fairly detailed statement of the doctrine of the incarnation of our Holy Lord. In it there are seven reasons for Christ’s being made flesh: first, Christ had to become incarnate to govern the earth (Vs. 6-8); second, to make atonement (V. 9); third, to become Captain, Prince, of our salvation (V. 10); fourth, to be like unto His brethren, so that they become all of one (nature, family), and He not ashamed to call them brethren (Vs. 11-13). In the fifth place, Christ became incarnate to defeat the devil (V. 14); in sixth place, in order that He save the spiritual seed of Abraham (V. 16); and in seventh place, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God (V. 17).

Yes, He who in His incarnation was made lower than the angels is now made higher than the heavens. “We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.”

The many Crowns (Rev. 19:11-16): What a scene is here depicted by the pen of John! The identity of the rider on the white horse cannot be mistaken for four volumes have been written on His life. Anyone acquainted with those volumes readily recognizes the person.

One volume written by a man named John Mark pictures this rider as the Perfect Servant of Jehovah, and Mark pictures Him as loyal and diligent. In this scene described by John, He is called “faithful and true.” He, for this rider is no One less than our Lord Jesus, was faithful to God and true to the task given Him.

In another volume written by the scholarly Luke, the Lord Jesus is seen in His perfect manhood, intelligent and understanding to an extraordinary extent. This is possibly why John says He has a name that no man knows but He Himself.

The third volume of the four was written by a former fisherman; in fact, this fisherman, John by name, has written other articles as well. In the first he calls the Lord Jesus “the Word;” in the second, “the Word of Life;” and now here in the last of his writings, John calls Him “the Word of God.”

The last of these four volumes was written by a custom officer by name Matthew, and he presents the Lord Jesus as the King, the King in rejection. John here pictures Him as Sovereign, the mighty Victor, and calls Him the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

During His humiliation the people cried concerning the Lord Jesus, “This is that Prophet which should come into the world,” and they sought to make Him a king, but a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, so they crowned that Prophet with thorns.

Christ the merciful and faithful High Priest has passed through the heavens, and by faith we see Jesus like Joshua the priest in Zechariah's day crowned in glory.

In a scene of the future Christ appears as the Marshall of the greatest army ever to be seen on earth, albeit mobilized in Heaven. In all His majesty and glory, He destroys all His enemies and reigns supreme as King of kings upon whose brow are many crowns.

S.O.M.

The Daily Reading of God’s Word

MIF 9:2 (Mar-Apr 2977)

The Daily Reading of God’s Word

F.B. Meyer

It has always seemed to me that the true way to know the Bible is to read it through. It is only so that we can follow the unveiling of the divine purpose, from the Dawn of Genesis to the Perfect Day of the divine writings of John. It is only so that we can obtain a connected view of the wide scope of Revelation. To read in different, unconnected passages, now of Poetry, now of History, now of Doctrine, prevents the mind from getting proper focus. We are apt by that method to concentrate on a few familiar passages, instead of listening to all that God has spoken to men’s hearts. There is, probably, nothing more vital to an accurate knowledge of the Bible than the good old practice of reading it thoughtfully and steadily through…

But let it always be remembered that the profoundest knowledge of the Word comes from the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to unlock and unfold its sacred mysteries. Ask Him to reveal the glories of our Lord in every chapter. Ask Him to enable you to “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.” Ask Him, finally, to enable you to become not a forgetful hearer or reader, but a doer of the Word. See to it that your reading is combined with the faith that claims of God the fulfillment, in your own experience, of all He has promised. No prayer, therefore, is more salutary, as you open your Bible, morning by morning, than the familiar

old words of the psalmist: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

The Ephesian Epistle

The Ephesian Epistle

Selected

Findlay has descriptively called r this letter, “The general Epistle of Paul to Ephesus and its daughter churches”. Apparently this Epistle was written to a group of churches among which Ephesus was the most notable. The names of the different churches to which copies were sent were probably inserted and likely Paul refers to one of these in Col. 4:16, “The Epistle from Laodicea”.

Ephesus, which had been a leader in idolatry and superstition, by the grace of God was to become one of the foremost examples of the power of God through the gospel (Acts 19). The gospel found the Ephesians in the lowest depths of heathen darkness and spiritual bondage, but it raised the believers in that city to the sweetest intimacy in Christ and to the highest heights of imparted glory. From darkness they had been brought to light and from death they had been brought to life.

Ephesus was the centre of much oral ministry from Paul, for here he spent more than two years (Acts 19) preaching publicly and from house to house. Timothy also laboured and ministered here (1 Tim. 1:3). Tradition suggests that the Apostle John likewise lived here and that, if not in the city proper, in its district, the Epistles of John may have been written. Ephesus was the objective of much written ministry.

It is solemn to learn from Scripture that this church, so favoured by God, left its first love (Rev. 2:4) and proved

disloyal to its spiritual father, “All they of Asia be turned away from me,” (2 Tim. 1:15). (Ephesusis included in this Asia Minor.) Before the end of apostolic days this richly endowed assembly manifested a lack of love to Christ and a lack of loyalty to the cause of Christ.

Let us consider the relationship of this Epistle to some of the others, and thereby learn by comparison and contrast the general tenor of its teachings.

The Epistle to the Galatians might be called the Epistle of the Cross, for seven times the Apostle Paul directly refers to the death of Christ on the cross. He is endeavouring to bring the Galatian saints back under the shadow and influence of the Crucifixion. The Epistle to the Romans is the Epistle of the Empty Tomb: it opens with the resurrection of Christ (1:4); it closes with the resurrection of Christ (14:9), and between these two references there are many others. Now, the Epistle we are studying may readily be called the Epistle of the Heavens (see 1:9-13). In Galatians the crucifixion of Christ is prominent; in Romans the resurrection of Christ, and in Ephesians the ascension of Christ. In all these the believer is identified with Christ. He is “crucified with Christ” in Galatians, “planted in the likeness of His resurrection” in Romans, and “raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” in Ephesians.

While we see a development in the doctrine of Christ as we compare these three Epistles, and likewise a precious sequence to the experience of a believing soul, we must not fail to notice the contrast which exists; first, between Galatians and Ephesians. In the former, Paul, the defender of the gospel, enters into conflict with

those who pervert it, and here we notice the strife and tumult of this conflict; whereas in Ephesians we sense the quietness of the sanctuary, the tranquility of the precincts of the Lord. The errors of those who corrupt the gospel provoke the one, while the benign influence of the presence of the Lord inspires the other. Second, the contrast between Romans and Ephesians appears when we notice that in the former man is foremost, ruined man in his sin, redeemed man purified, and finally, man glorified rendering glory to God. In Ephesians God is first and foremost, the Triune God, for the Holy Trinity is seen in every chapter, and in some more than once.

It is well that we compare our Epistle with what might be called its sister Epistle — Colossians. In Ephesians one of the major themes is the believer in Christ; but in Colossians we see that Christ is in the believer. Another point of comparison ought to be noticed. In Ephesians we have teaching relative to the Church, the Bride, the Body, and the organic oneness of all who are in the Church. In Colossians the Head of the Church is before us. Consequently, we see in Colossians that we are complete (filled full) in Christ (2:10), while in Ephesians, the Church, composed of all believers in the era, is the fullness of Him Who filleth all in all (1:23).

Ephesians likewise should be viewed as one of the great Church Epistles, and read in conjunction with the Epistles to the Corinthians, for while Ephesians gives to us the teaching of the Universal Church, Corinthians governs the matter of the local churches.

A very simple analysis of the Epistle may thus be formed:

1. The Will of God: Chapter 1.

2. The Workmanship of God: Chapter 2.

3. The Wonder (Mystery) of God: Chapter 3.

4. The Walk worthy of God: Chapter 4-6:10.

5. The Warrior of God: Chapter 6:13-24.

As has been suggested, the Holy Trinity is very prominent in Ephesians. Another simple analysis has been offered presenting the work of God thus:

1. The Work of God the Father: Chapter 1.

2. The Work of God the Son: Chapter 2.

3. The Mystery (parenthetic): Chapter 3.

4. The Work of God the Spirit: Chapter 4-6.

While this is very general, it does reveal some of the salient points of the Epistle.

—S. O. M.

* * *

God sometimes shuts the door and shuts us in,

That He may speak perchance through grief or pain;

And softly, heart to heart, above the din,

May tell some precious thought to us again.

* * *

“Some Christians are so resolved to make love paramount that they forget the sacredness of revealed truth. ‘Let us drown our doctrinal differences,’ they urge, ‘in the ocean of brotherly love!’ Others are equally mistaken in their pursuit of truth at the expense of love. So dogged is their zeal for God’s Word that they become

harsh and bitter and unloving. Love becomes sentimental if it is not strengthened by truth, and truth becomes hard if not softened by love.” — Scott.

The Epistle to the Galatians

The Epistle to the Galatians

Selected

This Epistle was written by the spiritual father of these churches, the Apostle Paul, about the year A.D. 59. The churches had been founded by him during his first visit to their province in the year A.D. 52. The record of this visit is to be found in Acts chapter 16. He revisited them, according to Acts 18:23, about A. D. 54.

The purpose of the Apostle was to defend his own apostleship and to expose the error of legalism as it was being taught among the saints by Judaizers.

The Epistle falls into three parts, namely: The introduction (chapters 1 and 2), the disputation (chapters 3 and 4,), and the exhortations (chapters 5 and 6).

The Introduction

There is a sad omission in this introduction, Paul does not express thanksgiving for their faith as he does in writing to other churches (1:1-5).

The Reason For Writing This Epistle (1:6-10).

Their turning so soon (between A.D. 52 and A.D. 59) to another (“heteros”) Gospel of a different kind which was not another (“allos”) of the same kind. Paul’s use of these two Greek words is very interesting. By them he reveals that the Galatians had turned to a so-called gospel which was not in truth a Gospel at all.

Paul's Defence Of His Call And His Teaching (1:11-21).

He relates his own conversion from Judaism to Christianity (1:1-14). He states his commission was from God and not of men, and refers to his retreat into Arabia (1:15-24).

He narrates his visit to Jerusalem and what transpired at that time (2:1-6).

He declares that he was then recognized as the Apostle to the Gentiles (the uncircumcision) (2:7-10).

He rebukes Peter for his inconsistency (2:11-21).

He vindicates the truth of justification by faith alone (2:16).

The Disputation

This discussion covers three important subjects, namely: Christian liberty in contrast to Judaic bondage, the dispensation of law in contrast to the dispensation of grace, the principle of faith in contrast to the principle of works.

He shows the folly of trying to perfect by the flesh (through law keeping) that which had been begun by the Holy Spirit (3:1-5).

He emphasizes that justification by faith is shown in the Old Testament Scriptures, as for example Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by his faith," The law can only bring condemnation.

He teaches that the Abrahamic covenant was based on promises and was received by faith. All the faithful are inheritors of Abraham's blessing (3:14-18).

He demonstrates the true nature and purpose of the law (3:19-24). Believers are no longer children under the law, but they are sons by faith in Christ Jesus.

He asserts that all class distinction is lost in Christ, and that there, “in Him,” absolute equality exists (3:2529).

He uses the analogy of the difference between children and heirs in general (4:1-11). Children (infants —4:1-3) are not different from servants, but sons are heirs (4:5-7). If so why should believers of the Church era return in servitude to the law?

He appeals to their former devotion to imitate him (4:12-20).

He illustrates the immutability of the promise as against the abrogation of the law from the history of Isaac and Ishmael (4:21-21).

The Exhortations

At the close of this section of the Epistle, Paul is seen as the example of his own teaching and of the exhortations that he bases upon his teaching.

Stand firm in the liberty preached in the Gospel of divine grace, and beware of false teachers (5:1-12).

Love and thus fulfil the law of Christ (5:13-26).

Act in the power of the Holy Spirit and thus hinder the works of the flesh. In this subsection the Apostle gives a warning: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time

past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He also gives an exhortation: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

He closes the Epistle with the benediction: "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

The Esteem of Spiritual Gifts

The Esteem of Spiritual Gifts

Selected

The Holy Spirit of God who deals so fully both with spiritual ministry and its ministers reveals the proper attitude of the assembly toward these, the gifts from the Risen Head of the Church.

Since, generally speaking, the service of the bishops (elders) is the care of the saints in spiritual matters (1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 5:2), it is readily assumed that the church at Corinth was divided not over gifts which visited them temporarily but over gifts within their own permanent numbers.

Churches can be saved from such grief only in the measure that each believer learns the proper attitude to all gifted men.

How wonderfully rich the church at Corinth was! The source of all her wealth is seen in Paul's statement, "All are your's; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:22-23). Through her relationship to Christ, Corinth shared His riches, in Him she possessed all things; she came behind in no gift (1 Cor. 1:8).

While the saints of God are to rejoice in the capable men the Lord endows, they are not to do so if these men were the source of their spiritual wealth. All must remember that the vessels in which the gifts appear are only human. While elders are worthy of double honour, it is the honour due to those who acknowledge that they are only instruments used by the Lord.

At Corinth the saints had misjudged some leaders while they had eulogized others and made them heads of parties. In all this they were puffed up. What a contrast there was between the child (Corinth) and the spiritual father (Paul)! Speaking of himself and the other apostles, he says, “I think God has set forth us the apostle last.” The treasure had been placed in the earthen vessel that the excellency of the power might be of God.

There are two things in which we should train ourselves — to be slow in taking offense and to be slower in giving it.

The Fruit of Old Age

The Fruit of Old Age

Selected

There is another side to this rocking chair business. Many an aged saint has gone a long way in a rocking chair: to the Lord’s needy people, to workers at home, to distant mission fields, and then to the throne of grace. And from that throne such have brought back multiplied blessings for those and for that for which he or she has interceded.

Also, to those physically active, retirement at sixty-five, made feasible by various government and industrial old age plans, can launch a spiritual believer on the most productive phase of his life. He does not need secular employment to keep him busy. The experience gained in meeting the exigencies of life in the church, in business, and in the home, coupled with a working knowledge of the Word, should make him invaluable to the work of the Lord in his local church, or, if that is well cared for by other shepherds, to some other company or companies of believers.

Those with teaching and preaching gifts can help isolated small churches, some of which are rarely visited. Those with a pastoral ability will find a real blessing through those whose hearts were touched and encouraged in many of these gatherings. Some brethren on retirement have moved to cities where they could be used of the Lord in building up little churches. And in this work they may succeed where younger, inexperienced workers would fail. The internal problems

which have retarded growth in some small churches need the remedies of the Word applied by hands made tender and skilled by years and experience.

“They shall bring forth fruit in old age” (Psalm 92:14). And in doing so they probably will prolong their days and with the Apostle Paul finish their course with joy.

The Future of Your Child

The Future of Your Child

Gordon Mitchell

In this Atomic Age, there has been a definite awakening in many circles as to the value of Bible Study among the children in the British Empire and the United States. This conviction is not only found in Christian circles and shared by ministers, Sunday School superintendents and teachers, but this feeling has reached the Parliaments of the British Empire. Here are some of the facts.

General John Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, has stated, what the United States needs is not a greater Air Force, a greater Navy, or a greater Army, but the crying need of the United States is a system of Sunday Schools from coast to coast, equal in number to those of the day schools.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking to the British Parliament, stated that it is from Christian tradition that our nation has drawn its standard of life for long centuries. Then he went on to outline to Parliament the need of Christian education in schools. Following his address, the House of Lords debated for two days the question of Christian education in schools; there had been a similar debate in the House of Commons.

Some educators have stated that many people regard the present chaotic condition of the world to be a result of the dismissal of Christian ethics in the educational systems of Germany and other countries. This is unquestionably true and, if our land is to be preserved

from this awful thing, the children of our nation must be taught the fundamentals of the Scriptures.

Juvenile Court

There are a number of outstanding facts which have come to light relative to the value of Bible teaching to children. The following are a few examples:

In a certain Police Court, 4,000 boys were examined and it was discovered that only three were members of Sunday Schools when the clime was committed.

In another Court of 8,000 cases, less than 3% had ever had any Religious Education in home, school or church.

Statistics show that Canadian Sunday School attendance is decreasing, this is likewise true in the U.S.A. and it would appear that, with the decrease of Sunday School attendance, goes the increase of juvenile crime.

Our daily papers view with alarm the increase in juvenile delinquency. If our boys and girls are to be kept out of the Police Court, they must be kept in Sunday School. Surely these statistics indicate the value of Sunday School work in the making of good citizens.

Eternal Matters

However, there is something even more valuable than producing law-abiding citizens and that is the preparation of souls for Eternity, and, as a natural outcome of this preparation, such will be law-abiding citizens. Here again the Sunday School shines forth. Investigations have shown that 75% of all conversions take place before 20 years of age. There are seven times as many conversions at 16 years of age, as at 26 years. Professor Athern investigated 6,194 people from 26

States of America and found the peak of conversion to be at thirteen years of age. Furthermore, it has been proven that those who trust Christ in their childhood are more consistent throughout their Christian life, than adults who come to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a personal Saviour, in adulthood. Perhaps these facts are surprising, but let us remember the value that the Lord Himself placed upon child life, for He said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" and, on another occasion, He stated to an adult audience: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Will Any Sunday School Do?

In Canada, we are greatly favoured in having a large number of Sunday Schools, but it would seem, we regret to say, that some are more concerned in interesting the children than teaching them the truths of the Bible. May we suggest to you, as a parent, that you inquire as to whether the teacher to whom your child is entrusted is a true Christian, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, may we suggest that you inquire as to what is being taught your child, and insist that he be instructed in the principles of the Bible in all clearness.

Efficiency

It is striking to note that, in ten years of Day School training, the child receives approximately 12,000 hours of teaching, whereas, in the same period, in Sunday School, the child receives only 170 hours of actual Bible Study. For this reason, some schools have adopted the use of Scholars' Manuals and papers with a number of

interesting Bible outlines to be worked on each day of the week, and thus the child's Bible knowledge is being daily increased. If your child is attending a Sunday School, where such a system is used, may we suggest that you encourage him in this work.

There are also many places, now, where mid-week children's meetings are being held, with a view to the promotion of Bible Study by the children. There is no one who can be of greater help in this work than the parent, and we would urge you to co-operate to the fullest extent in helping those who give unstintingly of their time in the teaching of your child.

Example

Surely thoughtful parents, in the light of these facts, will not only encourage their children to go to Sunday School regularly, but will also set them an example by attending the Gospel services themselves. In this way only will the spiritual heritage of our race be passed on to the rising generation.

The Grace To Say No

The Grace To Say No

L. Nelson Bell

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Many of the troubles and sorrows found in the world today are due to someone's inability to say "no." The Christian religion is a positive affirmation of faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, and for that reason a true believer can never be accused of following a negative religion. Still, just as there are positive and negative poles to a magnet, so too there are positive and negative aspects to being a Christian.

The positive side has to do with faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His Will. The negative calls for a rejecting of the blandishments and devices of Satan, which can only end in misery and defeat.

We are living in a permissive society, in a time when much that is evil goes unchallenged. It is not easy to go against current modes and to stand up and say no when one is convinced that something is contrary to the holy will of God. But exactly that is necessary.

The Bible offers many examples of men who were able to say no at a crucial time in their lives. Abraham said no to the natural desire to stay in his own home and with his own people when God had called him to go out, not

knowing where he was going. He said no to the natural impulse to spare his son, Isaac, “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. 11:19).

Moses said no to the impulse to stay in the affluence and security of Pharaoh’s household, “choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin” (Heb. 11:25).

Joseph said no when tempted by a beautiful woman who offered her body and her companionship to a lonely young man. His response was, “How … can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9).

Daniel said no when confronted with a preferment that included turning from a Spartan way of life to eating food from the king’s table. With strong conviction he “resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s rich food or with the wine which he drank” (Dan. 1:8).

Daniel’s three companions said no to the temptation to save their lives by bowing before the image Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They answered with the challenging affirmation, “We have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O King. But if not, be it known to you, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up” (Dan. 3:16-18).

Later Daniel again said no, confronted this time with the temptation to buy safety at the cost of compromise by obeying the king’s decree against public worship. We read that “when Daniel knew that the document had

been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open towards Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before God, as he had done previously (Dan. 6:10).

Our Lord tells us, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself (say no to self) and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24)—and that is not easy! All of us face the seemingly overwhelming temptation to trim our sails in these days of permissive living. When temptation comes, it is so much easier to compromise a little to avoid criticism or even reprisals.

The pressures of this world are so pervasive and persistent that Paul warns against letting the “world around you squeeze you into its own mold” (Rom. 12:2, Phillips). The soul that succumbs to the pressures of the world, the flesh, and the devil is in a desperate state.

One problem today is that many parents have failed to say no to their children. The welfare of those children demanded a firm attitude in moral and spiritual matters that the parents were unprepared to exercise.

We are often inclined to forget that the Ten Commandments contain both “You shalls” and “You shall nots.” We often fail in both directions. In a day when “anything goes,” it is necessary for Christians to swim against the tide by saying no to evil and yes to what is good.

Parents must say no to their children at times, being careful not to “over-correct” them, but remembering the neglected truth that “foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).

Young people must learn the meaning of the injunction, “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent” (Prov. 1:10). In this day of mobs and demonstrations, they should heed the warning, “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil” (Exod. 23:2).

Living in the shadow of God’s moral balances, we must learn not only the danger of compromise but also the blessing that comes from saying no to temptation. This is no one time decision, of course, we must keep making it all through life. However, as the old hymn says, “Each victory will help you some other to win.”

God does not call Christians to live as hermits in a sin-dominated social order. But He offers the means whereby they can act as salt in a putrefying society and lights in the midst of spiritual darkness. This requires the positive witness of a committed spirit and the equally positive witness of an unswerving rejection of any compromise with evil.

By what criteria shall we decide? How can we be confident that we are within the will of God in a particular circumstance? The answer must be found in the revelation God has given us in His written Word. I believe that there is no contingency of modern life that is not dealt with in the Bible and that the Christian who seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit will know the course of action he should take if only he will wait for God to speak in His perfect timing.

Many years ago I came face to face with the claims of science and modern scholarship. I had to decide, either to accept the “assured findings” of men that went counter to the clearly stated truths of God’s Word, or to believe God’s revelation of truth regardless. A yes to

faith and a no to unbelief brought peace of heart and later vindication of the decision. The same decision confronts each succeeding generation.

The grace to say no must be exercised with the assurance that God has not left His children to grope in the darkness. Rather, He has made plain a way of life that is alien to this world but just as real as the air we breathe and the food that sustains our bodies.

The grace to say no is one that must be cultivated, not with a hard, unyielding stubbornness but with the joy of knowing that God is a personal God, that He is deeply concerned with every detail of our lives, and that He will surely open up the way He wants us to take.

The Great Commission

The Great Commission

Selected

There is always a keen sense of anticipation as the time approaches in which we are to meet a much beloved friend from whom we have been absent for a while. We sometimes visualize our meeting; we picture his appearance, and mentally predict his enthusiasm. With some such eager feeling, the disciples of the Lord may have gone their way to a mountain in Galilee which Jesus had appointed. Definitely they must have looked forward to this manifestation of Christ in resurrection life. We can easily imagine Christ as a rejected king, gathering with His cabinet in this secret mountain rendezvous.

It was at this meeting that the Lord gave to His disciples, and through them to the Church, the Great Commission.

The teacher in the young people's Bible Class at this point asked, "What is the Great Commission?" "The story of the cross," answered one young chap. "The instructions Paul received for his service," answered another. "The details as to how one ought to baptize," interjected a third.

"It is necessary," concluded the teacher of these young believers, "that we investigate what is meant by the Great Commission, so we shall study together the portion found in Matt. 28:16-20.

Christ had been rejected by the world, and had been executed as a malefactor, but here He declares His sovereign dominion, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth.” In Him was vested supreme authority, and with this He commanded His disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

It becomes very obvious to each one in the class as we read this decree of Christ, that there are three parts to the Great Commission. First, there is the making of disciples; second, there is the act of accepting the ordinance of baptism as the outward pledge of discipleship; and, finally, there is the instructing of new disciples in the things that Christ has commanded.

The fulfilment of this Great Commission is accomplished by the special gifts with which Christ, as her Head, has endowed the Christian Church. Through the work of the evangelist, disciples are made, through the work of the shepherd the ordinance is performed, and through the teacher the instruction is given.

Let us consider the work of the evangelist, for we are all more acquainted with it. This is stated so concisely in the parallel passage of Mark 16:15-16, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” The true evangelist has a parish, “Go ye into all the world;” he has a message, “And preach the gospel;” and, he, also, has an objective, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

It is to this message of the evangelist that we should pay particular attention. The Apostle Paul has given it so briefly and yet so fully, “Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

In this remarkable statement of the gospel, we have first of all, expiation for sin, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” From the very beginning of God’s ways with man, He had made it clear that the result of sin is death, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death is passed upon all men for that all have sinned.”

Adam knew this for we read, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Every Israelite knew it, for God had sent a message to their nation saying, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.”

This great fact was deeply impressed upon the heart of the entire nation of Israel, for each time a man became conscious of having committed sin, he had to bring his sacrifice, a lamb or a goat, and, through the priest, offer it in death. His sin resulted in the death of the lamb. The countless sacrifices upon Jewish altars emphasized this fact; sin results in death.

There was another lesson in all these sacrifices, it was this; death for sin might be substitutionary, another

could die for the guilty. Praise God! “Christ died for our sins.” Our sins merited their penalty, death, but Christ became our substitute, and died our death for us. As the lamb died for the guilty Israelite, even so, Christ died for the sinner. “For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” What peace this knowledge imparts to the young believer!

In his statement of the gospel, the Apostle Paul also makes mention of the burial of Christ. It was the custom when criminals were executed by means of crucifixion, to dig a hole behind the cross, and to cast into this hole their remains. There is no doubt but that such preparation was made for Christ, but, instead, God saw to it that He had a rich man’s burial. He Who was slain as a criminal was buried as a king. Wicked men were allowed to number Him with the transgressors in death, but not in His burial. Christ died unto sin once, and in death He bore the sinners’ penalty. He satisfied the claims of divine righteousness, and silenced the demands of infinite holiness; consequently, God would not permit wicked men to further maltreat Him. “Thy made His grave with the wicked,” but Pilate gave His friends, Joseph and Nicodemus, permission, and they took the body of Jesus and laid it in a tomb in a garden. The power of His enemies was broken. His friends brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, but this was not needed, embalming spices were unnecessary for that holy body could not corrupt. Prophetically, the Spirit of Christ in the Psalmist had said, “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” The manner of the burial of Christ and the miraculous incorruptibility of His body prove that

the sin question had been settled. Now in Him we have redemption even the forgiveness of sin.

The final fact of Paul's statement of the gospel is, "Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures". We read elsewhere that, "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." The death of Christ made expiation for our sins; the burial of Christ indicates that all the claims of divine justice have been met, and His resurrection declares that God is just and the justifier of the ungodly.

The gospel message which we of this class bear to the world is, in very truth, a message of good news, worthy to be received by all.

May we, in consideration of these facts, bow and ascribe to Him that is of power to stablish us according to the gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began … To Him, God only wise, glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

S. O. M.

The Imperfect Fence

Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect. Matthew 5:48 A wealthy farmer responded to the witness of a Christian employee by saying, "I'll admit I'm not perfect. I get pretty angry sometimes. I swear a little, and sometimes tell a lie; but I don't cheat people, and I give liberally to good causes. I figure I'm better than the average individual, with enough good points to offset my weaknesses. This should get me into Heaven."

That evening when the hired hand who had tried to testify to his boss came in from building a fence, the employer said, "Well, Jack, is the fence all tight and strong?" The man replied, "I can't say that it's perfect, but it ought to do. Some parts are a little weak, but others are extra firm. There are a few gaps in it, but I made up for them by doubling the rails on each side of the openings. Perhaps it's not entirely satisfactory, but considering everything, it strikes a good average." The farmer exploded, "Why you might as well not have built the fence at all. If there is even one weak spot, the cattle will find it and go through. It must be perfect or it's worthless." "I used to think so," came the reply, "but I've heard you talking so much about averaging matters with the Lord, it seemed to me we might try the same logic with the cattle."

I'm sure you get the message. Man cannot build a "fence of sinless righteousness." Anyone who would try to earn Heaven by works would have to be perfect in order to meet God's requirements. Since no one can measure up

to His standard, everyone needs forgiveness by grace through faith in Christ!"

The Incarnation of the Word

The Incarnation of the Word

Selected

“As I said, it was no worldly discovery which was committed to them, nor is it a human invention which they claim to preserve with such care; nor have they been entrusted with the administration of mysteries devised by man. No, it was in truth God Himself, the all-ruling, all-creating, invisible God who Himself from Heaven established among man the truth, and the holy and incomprehensible word (teaching), and fixed in their hearts, not, as one might guess, by sending to men some subordinate, some messenger or ruler, one of those who administered the affairs of earth or of those entrusted with the management in Heaven; but He sent the very Artificer and Craftsman of the universe, by whom He created the Heavens, by whom He shut the sea within its bounds; whose secret designs all the elements faithfully observe, from whom the sun has received the measures of its daily courses to observe, whom the moon obeys when He bids her shine by night, whom the stars obey as they follow the course of the moon; by whom all things have been disposed and defined and subjected … He it was whom He sent to them … Well, did He send Him, as a man might suppose, to rule as tyrant, to inspire terror and astonishment? No, He did not. No, He sent Him in gentleness and mildness; as a king sending his royal son, He sent Him as God: but He sent Him as to men, as saving them; as persuading, not exercising force (for force is no attribute of God). He sent Him a summoning men, not prosecuting them; as

loving, not judging. He will send Him as judge; and “who shall stand at His appearing?”

… What man had any knowledge at all of the character of God, before Christ came? Or do you accept the empty nonsense, taken by plausible philosophers, some of whom said that God was fire (giving the name of God to their future destruction!), others said He was water, others some other of the elements created by God … No man has seen Him or recognized Him; but God reveals Himself; and He reveals Himself through faith, by which alone it is granted to see God. For God the Master and Creator of the universe … was shown to be not only loving to men but also long-suffering. Yes, such He was and is and will be: kind, and good, and free from anger, and true; and He alone is good. And when He had conceived a great and unutterable scheme He communicated it only to His Son. Well then, all the time that He kept and guarded His wise counsel in a mystery He seemed to have no care or thought for us.

But when He revealed it through His only Son, and made clear what He had prepared from the beginning, He offered us all things at once — to partake of His benefits, and to see and understand things which none of us would ever have expected.”

Copied from the Epistle to Diognetus. This letter is one of the most precious remains of Christian antiquity. It is an anonymous Greek letter written to an inquiring heathen. The elegance of its style and the sincere nobility of its thoughts, particularly in the setting forth of redemption, cannot be denied. Bishop Lightfoot says that it is the noblest of early Christian writings.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Selected

The New Testament teaches that there are four special judgments which have to do with God’s prophetic program: the judgment of sin at the cross (Rom. 8:3), the Judgment Seat of Christ for the Christian (Rom. 14:10), the judgment of the nations just prior to the Millennium (Matt. 25:31-46), and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Judgment is God’s strange work; nevertheless, His righteous character requires it; righteousness demands equity; holiness demands purity.

In the study of the doctrine covering the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not adverse to holiness to ask when, where, why, and how should there be such a judgment.

The Time

Since it is to take place in the Day of Christ, for such are the implications in a number of Scriptures (2 Cor. 1:14. Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16), it must take place after the rapture and before, one would assume, the marriage of the Lamb.

The Greek word parousia that is used in regard to the coming of Christ means the presence of, the presence of a person. It does not intimate an event only but a condition that results from an event. Christ’s return for His Church will be the event that will place her in His presence, His parousia.

The Judge

The Lord Himself will be the Judge: “To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). His lordship, therefore His judgeship over man does not end with man’s death (Rom. 7:1). His lordship over His own is not limited to this life only.

Attention has been drawn to the difference between the marginal reading of Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. In the first we read of the Judgment Seat of God; in the second, of the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is of God in its character; it is of Christ because God has committed all judgment into the hands of His Son. (Jno. 5:22).

The Judged

This is the judgment of Christians. Each believer must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ: “We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat” (Rom. 14:10). “Every one shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). “We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). “We must all be manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ” (J.N.D.).

The Place

That there will be an appraisal of the life of each Christian is clear; this will be before a judgment seat, a bema. The Greek word bema used in this connection was a raised platform, a tribune, for an officiating judge (Acts 18:12-17), for an army commander when he disciplined or addressed his troops. It was also used at Grecian games for the president or umpire when he

rewarded the contestants. It would seem that this Judgment Seat will be set up in the air.

The Manner

There are three major passages that deal with the Judgment Seat of Christ, each with a particular point of emphasis:

Our attitude (Rom. 14:4-13, 1 Cor. 4:3-5): The Lord will make manifest the attitude of one brother toward another.

Our service (1 Cor. 3:12-15): In the early part of First Corinthians Paul deals with the matter of ministry in the local church. First, with the ministry of the gospel (1:17-2:5); second, with a ministry of teaching (2:6-16); now, in chapter three he speaks of the minister himself; it is he who gains or loses a reward at the examination of his ministry. His ministry may be worthy or worthless, indestructible or destructible. According to his service in the church will be his recompense.

Our conduct (2 Cor. 5:9-11): The things done in the body will all be examined by the Lord; our behaviour, pleasing or wrong will be exposed.

S.O.M.

The Last Witness of the Resurrection

MIF 17:2 (Mar-Apr 1985)

The Last Witness of the Resurrection

Selected

Text: “And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8).

In listing those who had seen the Lord Jesus after He was raised from the dead, about 513 in all, Paul writes, “And last of all, He was seen of me also.”

Saul of Tarsus sincerely disbelieved the foundation fact of Christianity —Jesus Christ risen from the dead. He doubtless accepted the false report concocted by the chief priests and elders and announced by the soldiers who guarded the tomb: “His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.” Saul regarded Christ as an imposter and a blasphemer, who had sought to deceive the people. He doubtless reasoned: “How could such an evil person rise from the dead?” He led the opposition to Christianity, and sought to exterminate all who named the name of Jesus. Thus he was indeed the chief of sinners.

Going to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests to arrest in the synagogues any who had embraced Christianity, whether men or women, and to bring them bound to Jerusalem, a miracle happened. I quote his words to King Agrippa, “At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me.” He saw the risen Christ.

One glimpse of the glorified Son of Man dispelled all his doubts. Years later he wrote, evidently with this incident in mind: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” One view of the risen and glorified Christ was more convincing than a library of books on Christian evidences. He could have said with the poet:

“Thou art the Life within me,

Lord Jesus, King of kings;

Thou art Thyself the answer

To all my questionings.”

—George M. Landis

The Meaning, or Message, of the Sign

The Meaning, or

Message, of the Sign

Selected

Faith in His power (cf. John 4:49). The fundamental meaning of the incident lies in its contribution to the understanding of the development of faith in a believer. And the first stage of it is faith in the power of God in Christ.

The ability to perform miracles, however, is not a sufficient base upon which to reset confidence in God (cf. Matt. 24:24), but so far as it goes it represents a genuine stage of faith.

Campbell Morgan has some interesting things to say in connection with this. He writes, “In this sign then we have first of all a revelation of absolute power. We use the word supernatural. I am not objecting to it, if it be rightly apprehended. As a matter of fact, however, what we call supernatural, is only super-understandable. All this was perfectly natural to One who like Jesus, lived in unbroken fellowship with God, so that God could operate through Him, as He could not through others.”1 Faith in His word (cf. John 4:50). The second step in the development of the faith of the nobleman is seen in his response to the work of our Lord that he should go home and find his son healed. “He went his way,” John said, after he had believed the word spoken to him by the Lord. Cf. 5:24; 20:29.

Faith in Him (cf. 4:53). The final stage in the faith of the nobleman is reached, when he is met by his servants as he returned to Capernaum and is told, “Thy son liveth” (cf. v. 51). He asked them the hour of the son’s improvement, and they replied, “Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him” (v. 52).

John adds, “So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and he himself believed, and his whole house” (v. 53). The faith in the power of the Lord has become an absolute faith in Him, stronger than the faith that Nicodemus had, which was a faith in His miracle-working power (cf. 3:2). One is reminded of the faith of the Samaritans (cf. 4:41-42). Cf. 14:40-11.

Conclusion

As we ponder the account of the miracle, we note these things. In the first place, a faith in His power did bring the nobleman’s son to safety (cf. Luke 17:6). And it is a great comfort to reflect in the midst of our trials that He has the power to do anything that He wills, for many of our trials do require for a satisfactory solution a measure of what seems to us to be supernatural power.

One day Mr. Wesley was sitting by an open window looking out over the bright and beautiful fields in the summer-time. Soon a little bird, flitting about in the sunshine attracted his attention. At that moment a hawk came swooping down towards the little bird, and the poor thing, very much frightened, was darting here and there, trying to find some place of refuge. But there was no hiding place, until it saw an open window. Immediately it flew in extreme terror towards the window, and with beating heart and quivering wing

found refuge in Mr. Wesley's bosom. He sheltered it from the threatening danger and saved it from death by the hawk.

Wesley at the time was suffering from some severe trials, and he was himself feeling the need of a refuge from them. It is said that he, after saving the trembling little bird, took up his pen and wrote the sweet hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly."

What an encouragement to fly to Him in our trials and troubles!

In the second place, faith in His word brings assurance (cf. 5:24). One should notice the word "yesterday" in the words of the servants who told the nobleman about the time of the healing of the son. There is some doubt about the exact time signified by the expression "at the seventh hour" (cf. v. 52), but it is clear that the nobleman remained for a time where he was, after learning that the son was going to get well. Many feel that seven o'clock was our seven in the evening. If so, then he remained overnight, before making his way back home.2 Others believe that seven o'clock was our one o'clock in the afternoon. If then the use of the term "yesterday" seems a bit strange, but the Jews reckoned the passing from one day to another as occurring at sundown, so this may be the better way to understand the time reference here. At any rate, the nobleman seems to have remained for awhile where he was, perhaps because of his confidence in the power of the Lord to heal with a word. If so, it illustrates the assurance to which faith in Jesus' word had brought him.

Finally, faith in Him brings satisfaction (cf. 14:1; 1 Pet. 1:8; Rom. 15:13). He not Only has received the salvation of God but has given testimony to the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he has been the instrumentality for the sweeping of his whole house into the kingdom of God (cf. v. 53).

John Calvin makes the point that this final step of faith of the nobleman, when he believed the word that his son would live, his faith was not of a different sort. “But now,” Calvin writes, “he begins to believe in a different way, in that having embraced Christ’s teaching, he professed openly that he was one of His disciples. Thus he now not only believes his son will be cured by Christ’s blessing, but he acknowledges Christ to be the Son of God and takes his stand on the side of the Gospel. He has his whole family for company, who witnessed the miracle. Nor can it be doubted that he did his utmost to bring others with him into Christianity.”3 May that be our response, too.

1 Morgan, pp. 85-86.

2 cf. Westcott, p. 79; Godet, II, 138; Morris, pp. 291-92.

3 Calvin, I, 115.

The Old Paths

The Old Paths

Selected

This article, which appeared nearly 20 years ago in Scripture Truth, is a warning to some who misinterpret and misapply the Word of God. Moreover, it is a call to return to first love and first principles.

“Thus saith Jehovah: stand in the ways and see, and ask for the ancient paths, which is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls. But they said: We will not walk therein.” (Jer. 6:16. New Translation)

The above passage should be read along with Matthew 11:29, and Rev. 2:4. To get its bearing on Israel it is needful to know not only the immediate context, but to be acquainted with the moral condition as described both in these chapters and in the closing chapters of 2 Kings. It was a time of dark apostasy, and morals were low. The degradation during the reign of Manasseh followed by the short time of Amon had brought the people of Judah and Jerusalem to a state of rebellion, corruption, and God-defiance that eventually brought upon them that judgment from God known as “the seventy years’ captivity.”

It was one of the most important moments in the history of the world, for then “the times of the Gentiled” began. God makes the evil of men to serve Him. This was the time when the sword of government was put into the hands of the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, the time when the glory cloud, symbol of Jehovah’s

presence, departed from Israel to Heaven. Ephraim, the ten tribes, had been taken captive by the Assyrian, and Judah, instead of taking heed, fell into the same practices and got lower and lower till they became steeped in the abominable rites of the Gentiles around them, and hope of general recovery there was none.

Josiah came to the throne a child of eight years, and under the care of Hilkiah and the godly remnant, grew up in the fear of God. A revival began which led to the cleansing of the Temple. In the midst of this work, the Book of the Law was found which gave great impetus to the work of recovery, and outwardly the work of the Lord seemed to prosper. In spite of all this, the general condition was so bad that judgment had to fall.

It was at this time that Jeremiah was called, and through him the voice of the Lord was heard and the veil lifted which gives a glimpse of the frightful condition of the people. Ecclesiastically, socially, morally the case was hopeless. Every kind of shameful moral impurity marked the people, priests, prophets, and elders. Men were offering to false gods and their women were baking cakes to the Queen of Heaven. They were foolish (5:21), deceitful (5:27), sottish (4:22), hopeless (3:25), rebellious (4:17), treacherous (3:7), and impudent (Ezek. 2:4). This was the state of things that Jeremiah and the remnant had to meet and these are some of the words he had to say to them. Remember too, that they had their religion. How like Christendom today! They boasted of the ark of the covenant. They had done so in Samuel’s day and lost it to the Philistines, a circumstance of which they are reminded in chapter 7; they were now to lose it forever (Jer. 3:16). The Temple too was their lying boast, but they had made it a den of

thieves. In spite of their wicked and licentious ways, they boasted in the law, saying, “We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us” (8:8), and in spite of their descent to the awful corruption of the ancient cults, they still boasted in the burnt offerings.

What a transcript of all this is seen in Christendom with her much greater light and responsibility today! Have we not defiance in the godless cults of the day, in their blasphemous opposition to God, in the lying pen of the scribe (Jer. 8:8 margin), and in the modernist; the awful descent to mental reservation in the pulpit; the godless trampling upon holy things by the people where the very name of Jeremiah is made a by-word for pessimism. It is needless to dwell on this, but see 2 Tim. 3:1-5. It remained for “the time of the Gentiles” to produce in Christendom the darkest state of things that God ever permitted upon the earth. Infatuation always precedes judgment, and it is at the door.

It was during this time that Jeremiah, in his second address to the people, used the text at the head of this paper, “Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths.” Has the gravity of the situation dawned upon us? Are we not in danger of taking this gracious appeal out of its place and applying it to what is merely external? Is there not distinct evidence on our part of seeking a correct ecclesiastical position without the inner moral condition which Jehovah pleads about with His people? Still more solemn, is there not a danger of missing the whole force of the divine plaint and confining it to a mere detail, however solemn that detail may be? The old paths are clearly before us in Jer. 2:2-3, “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine

espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

What a tremendous moral difference in these words from the condition of the people detailed in these chapters. What of the true-hearted remnant at this time? There were Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Huldah the prophetess, Shaphan the scribe, Ahikam, and Baruch. These were not divided. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were all busy in the prophet's office at this time. It was no part of these to exhort each other to return to the old paths. What then? They were weeping (13:17), and saying, "Seek, not great things for thyself" (Jer. 45:5). But what of Jehovah God? His heart is laid bare in its pleadings here as nowhere else in Scripture. Like a husband deserted by a faithless wife, He pleads for them to return, and as a father frantic with grief at the lawlessness of his children He calls upon them to obey.

What then is the bearing of Jer. 6:16, by analogy on saints today? The passage is so constantly used for mere ecclesiastical purposes that we are in danger of not only losing its force, but of perverting the solemn language of God to Christendom at this moment. Is it not clear to us, that to limit such a passage to external order is to lose the whole plaint of Jehovah, to miss the pathos of the message, and to show ourselves incapable of that holy refinement that springs from the true knowledge of God? Let us, then, get beyond the ecclesiastical failure to the cause. The old paths and the good way mean much more than talking of divine principles or of assuming to be standing for the truth. The men standing: for the truth in the Book of Jeremiah were living: it.

What then are the ancient paths? Holiness to the Lord (Jer. 2:3). “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown, Israel was holiness unto Jehovah the first-fruit of His increase.” Have we not an echo of this for saints today in the words of Rev. 2:4, “I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.” Instead then of attempting to form a testimony for the Lord by artificial means, let us, like the brethren of the early part of the last century, listen to the voice of the Lord. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7). Both this passage and Jer. 2:2-3, should be read along with Matthew 11:30, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” It is simple and easy to see that without all controversy, the way to overcome is to imbibe the spirit of Christ.

God’s principles never change, and by putting these texts together we can see how the individual can overcome in an evil day, and be in all the light of the dispensation walking quietly in the fear of God with those like-minded (2 Tim. 2:22); and, in the absence of all pretension to judicial administration, be well-pleasing to the Lord.

The Only Hope

MIF 10:5 (Sept-Oct 1978)

The Only Hope

Selected

Our Lord’s second advent will be as historic as was His first; He will actually come into the midst of human history on some date in the human calendar, which no man knows, and which no man is intended to know; in the actuality of this coming He will be at once as positively a Person as in His first advent, and as mysterious also.

We base that conviction, first, upon His own plain statement; secondly, upon the clear apostolic teaching of the New Testament; and finally, upon the naturalness of it, indeed, the necessity of it, in view of His first advent. Whereas grace had its epiphany, its outshining, in the lowliness of His first marvellous coming and life, so glory must have its epiphany, its outshining, in the majesty of that coming, which He described as being “in the glory of His Father with His angels.” We believe the age in which we live is bounded by these advents, because our Lord declared that it would be consummated by His coming. More than ever today, hope centred in earthly thrones or governments, in human diplomacies, in leagues of nations is seen to be futile. The only hope which maketh not ashamed is that which believes that when God has “overturned, overturned, overturned,” He shall come.

—G. Campbell Morgan

The Opportunities of Youth

The Opportunities of Youth

Selected

At Perga the apostle Paul suffered from an experience that left a deep impression upon his mind and heart, the true depths of which may be learned by the reading of Acts 15:36-41. It was an experience that determined Paul’s course of action at a later date, and resulted in a sad breach of fellowship between himself and the man with whom he had laboured so fruitfully, Barnabas. This experience is simply stated, “And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” The result of John Mark’s action at this time was very extensive.

It is readily conceded that youth is the season of greatest opportunity, and while it is not true that opportunity never knocks twice, it is true that opportunity never knocks with greater zest than when knocking on the heart door of youth. Opportunity is a favour not to be greeted as one would a passing neighbour, but rather to be lovingly embraced as an intimate friend.

Opportunity knocked one day on the heart door of young John Mark. His uncle Barnabas had been serving the Lord in company with Paul the Apostle, and because of this there came to him the privilege to join them in their missionary work, and to go with them into Galatia. There are three chapters in the history of the early days of this young man which require careful consideration; the opportunity he accepted, the objection he adopted, and the offence he allowed.

The Opportunity He Accepted (Acts 13:5):

"They had also John to their minister." It would be difficult to fully evaluate the importance of this great privilege granted John Mark. It was an occasion in which there was every possibility:

First, to deepen particular knowledge of the Word of God. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Jeremiah also said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). The Word of God is of vital importance to the Christian. No greater opportunity could ever have come to John Mark than to have been with the Apostle Paul whose special ministry, through Inspiration, was to complete the Word of God (Col. 1:25). Paul, through Divine revelation, completed the doctrines of Holy Scripture. John could have acquired a great knowledge of the Bible, particularly as it bears upon Church life and testimony.

Second, to diligently participate in service for Christ. It is true that he was with these two brethren in the lesser capacity of an attendant, but was that in itself not a wonderful opportunity to serve the Lord? He entered with them upon an effort in pioneer work which was to stretch into a period of some three years, and which was to result in the spread of the gospel throughout the Province of Galatia. It was also to climax in the founding of four apostolic churches. In that time, three years, and in that variety of activities: gospel preaching, ministry of the Word, establishing of churches, there was much room for an ever increasing service for Christ.

Third, to develop personal experience in the work of the Lord. Experience is a wonderful teacher, and all theory needs to be supplemented by practice. What wonderful experiences Paul and Barnabas had during this, their first missionary tour! There were trials and triumphs, miracles and malignity, the palace of the proconsul and the persecution of the populace. There was a Timothy to meet and a Gauis with whom to get acquainted. What experiences indeed!

Fourth, to delightfully practise fellowship with the brethren. There was Christian fellowship with the two servants of Christ, and there was church fellowship with the young assemblies.

What a wonderful opportunity came to John! By it he could have deepened his own spiritual life, expanded his usefulness and sphere in the ways of God, and laid up for himself a recompense in Glory. These would more than have compensated for any sacrifice he might have made.

The Objection He Adopted (Acts 13:13):

“John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” How gracious of God, and how considerate of Luke to treat with such delicate silence so affecting a scene as the one depicted in this terse statement. There have been many conjectures made as to what John’s reasons were; these probably could have been based on:

First, cowardice: The trials of the way could have been too adverse. The temptation to seek an easier path could have induced him to leave the path of duty, and, had John returned to the shelter and fellowship of the more congenial atmosphere at Antioch this might be the more

plausible explanation. He might have gone back to Antioch and possibly have saved his face before the brethren at Jerusalem, instead he did not return to Antioch; he returned home to Jerusalem.

This therefore could lead to the conclusion that his second reason for leaving was possibly based upon Prejudice: John Mark was brought up in Jerusalem where James was so important a figure, and his relationship with Peter was most intimate (1 Peter 5:13). It could have been prejudice against Paul's broader vision, and his teaching relative to the Body of Christ. Paul's attitude and teaching may have created a conflict with the more exclusive conception of John. Which ever was the true reason, the result was sad in every way. Let us give heed to the sad aftermath.

The Offence Allowed (Acts 15:37-41):

"They departed asunder one from the other." The extensive consequence of John Mark's action can only be appraised as we view it in the manner it affected all three persons involved.

John Mark: Much has been made of the two references by Paul to this younger brother in latter years. Both of these should be carefully investigated in order to ascertain their full import. The first is found in Colossians 4:10 where Mark is in company with Paul and is called a fellow-worker unto the Kingdom of God, but the remark concerning his reception at Colosse, should he visit there, is thought provoking. It is evident that special instruction had been sent by which assembly action was to be governed. Fourteen years had passed since John had left Perga for Jerusalem. Is there here a refinement and a reserve which veils misspent years, a

love that covers and yet would endeavour to restore confidence? It appears so. Paul's second reference is found in 2 Timothy 4:11, here we have the highest word of commendation. "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." He has now the appreciation and confidence of the Apostle, but twenty years have elapsed since he forsook the opportunity of serving with Paul. It is always difficult to regain confidence when this has once been forfeited.

Barnabas: We never read of Barnabas sharing any of the further labours of Paul. Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus. A comparison with Acts 4:36 will reveal that Barnabas actually returned home. It is true that Paul mentions him once (1 Cor. 9:6) some six years later, but we never definitely read of their being together in service again. There is a grave silence over the movements of Barnabas in early Church history. The man who was such a comfort at Jerusalem, and who had been so useful in Antioch, and so extremely kind to Paul vanishes from public view because of the unwarranted action of John Mark.

Paul: From what has already been stated some conception of the personality of Paul has been obtained. He was sensitive, and felt keenly what happened at Paphos; nevertheless, he was forgiving and did not hold any grudge against either Barnabas or John. He was sympathetic and considerate, and was ever ready to help recover a loss sustained even by foolish action; notwithstanding, he was firm and of a strong character. When a man made a wrong decision, and rejected a God given opportunity, and when these affected the work of God, he remained unmoveable. His attitude to the offender was an intelligent sympathy; he regretted that

a mistake had been made, but he was spiritually minded enough to see that the work of God did not suffer.

He that knows nothing knows enough if he knows how to hold his tongue.

—Italian Proverb

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Conversion is a deep work, a heart work. It goes throughout the man, throughout the mind, throughout the members, throughout the entire life.

S.O.M.

The Other War

With all the attention given to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq by the media, there still remain unanswered questions. The largest questions for many Christians are, "How is the Gospel progressing?" and "How are the congregations of Christians faring?" Of course, these questions are far from the thoughts of network newsmen.

We know practically nothing about believers in Iraq and Kuwait, although it is said there are some ten assemblies of believers in Kuwait (mainly composed of workers from India). Of these three Middle East countries, we know the most concerning the work of God in Saudi Arabia.

A

Snatch of History: Probably the first missionaries to what is now Saudi Arabia were those converted on the day of Pentecost (citizens of Crete and Arabia heard Peter preach, Act 2:11) and the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:17-18) spent three years there. But if Paul did much evangelism at that time, there is no record. It is likely that the Gospel did reach down into the peninsula. There was a Christian community at Hirah at the end of the fourth century and possibly others at different centers.

The first missionary of modern times to Saudi Arabia (as distinct from the other states of the peninsula) was James Cantine in 1889, followed in 1890 by Samuel M. Zwemer. They spent a period in language study in Beirut and then proceeded to Arabia. Zwemer gave sixty years

of his life to the work and was known throughout the Muslim world as "the apostle to Islam." J. H. Kane says of him:

"Zwemer was a rare combination of the pious and the practical, the saint and the scholar. He was a world traveler, a prolific writer, a dynamic speaker, a brilliant scholar, and a great personal worker. He knew more about Islam and the Christian approach thereto than any other man in the first half of the twentieth century. He founded and for many years edited Muslim World, a scholarly journal devoted to the Christian mission in the Muslim world."1 After World War I, the nomadic Arab tribes in what is now Saudi Arabia came under the control of a strong puritanical Muslim state. All religions other than Islam are denied the right to hold meetings or to propagate their faith. Jews and non-Muslims are not permitted to enter the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Today, Saudi Arabia is the exemplar of an Islamic state. Islam rules the judicial and governmental system and every sphere of life. Only one percent of the population are even considered to be nominally Christian. These are predominantly expatriates, and there are few known national believers.

The

Saudi's unbending policies were felt by two Canadian nurses who went there to work. The one nurse was informed that even a personal Bible would not be allowed, so she had hers rebound with another book's cover to escape confiscation. The second nurse made the mistake of innocently bowing her head to give thanks in the hospital cafeteria and within twenty-four hours she was being packed up and sent back to Canada.

Until now the two greatest opportunities for reaching Saudis has been through radio beamed into the peninsula and through students and business people going abroad where the Gospel is freely heard. Consider, then, the unprecedented opportunity seen in Saudi Arabia by the huge influx of foreign troops. There appears to be a small, but genuine Christian element among the servicemen. Since August of 1990, grave warnings were issued to troops about evangelizing Saudis, and for a time it was rumored that Bibles would not be allowed in. If there was such a ban on Bibles, it has been lifted. Chaplaincy departments are shipping large quantities of Bibles, New Testaments, Bible study materials, tracts, devotional guides and song books for personal use by servicemen. The Gideons International and Christian Business Men's chapters have energetically supplied Bibles. Private funding channeled through various agencies is enabling Dickinson Press of Grand Rapids, MI to publish the Operation Desert Storm Camouflage Edition of the Bible. The Bibles have a no-glare, desert-camouflage cover, and are distributed to soldiers free of charge by the military chaplains in Saudi Arabia. At least four hundred thousand of these Bibles and New Testaments have been produced by Dickinson's alone since last August.2 "It seems like everyone is so receptive to the Lord right now with this crisis going on," reports a spokesperson for the International Bible Society. "Hearts are open and ears are alert and testimonies are strong."

The heightened spiritual interest among the soldiers is spurred on by at least two factors: (1) the austere rules imposed by the Saudis; "lewdness and drunkenness are forbidden"; (2) the real possibility of facing an early

death. The movement of the Spirit of God among the troops is evident. One Christian soldier from Michigan wrote home saying that there had been 57 conversions in his division. Another evangelical chaplain reported 153 had professed to be saved. On one occasion twenty people identified with Christ in baptism. How many of these are "foxhole conversions," eternity will tell. The Gulf War will bring disruption which could facilitate the spread of the Gospel. Operation Desert Storm may yet cause the wrath of man to praise the Lord. The wind blows where it wills, so we should pray that the sovereign Spirit will cause the Gospel to blow back the dark veil across the hearts of the Saudi citizenry in this hour.

1 That the World May Know, Volume I: The Restless Middle East. Edited by Dr. Fredk. A. Tatford, p. 307.

2The

Grand Rapids Press, January 26, 1991.

The Peace of God

The Peace of God

Selected

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

As our Lord prepared to take earthly leave of His disciples, He left them a priceless legacy — His own peace. He knew there would be no lasting peace for them in the world, that is, none that could match the inner serenity that He was inviting them to share as His parting gift to them. His peace would preserve them from fear and banish worldly cares from their hearts.

There is little peace among men and nations today. But there is an inner personal tranquility which Christ offers to all who are willing to put their trust in His finished work on their behalf. The basis of this peace is the atoning death He endured on the Cross to reconcile sinful men to His Father God. Inner conflicts and worldly troubles which work to keep us in a state of anxiety and fear can be relieved by submission to his mercy and authority, making available a peace which can fill man’s deepest spiritual need.

We often seek the peace of the world by our own efforts and good deeds, trying to appease the old nature, but this kind of peace has no substance and fails miserably when real testing comes. We need to learn that the only lasting peace is that which comes from seeing the hand of God in all of our afflictions and troubles, and submitting to His will for us. Peace lies not in getting

everything we desire, but in letting God work in our hearts to keep us satisfied with what we have (Phil. 4:11).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isa. 26:3).

—Arthur F. Wilder

The Plough Boy

The Plough Boy

Selected

The Word of God is living and powerful. It is capable of distinguishing between the otherwise indivisible. It was not given through the particular efforts of men, but holy men of God wrote it under the complete influence of the Spirit of God. The Bible is the revelation of God to man that has been preserved from errors or inaccuracies by divine inspiration. How we thank God for the many human instruments He used in producing the Sacred Autographs!

We are also deeply grateful to the Lord for the scholarly men He employed to translate the Scripture for us. One of these men who laboured and sacrificed his all to produce the Holy Bible in English was William Tyndale.

Mr. Edward Armstrong, who possesses a number of valuable and exceptionally rare copies of very old Bibles, gives us the following account of his research into the life and service of William Tyndale, research which began in 1948 at Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

William Tyndale was a graduate of Cambridge University, England. Without doubt while there he was influenced by the writings of the renowned Dutch scholar Erasmus who had at some time earlier taught at Cambridge. After graduating, young Tyndale became a monk. He entered the society of the Observant Friars of Greenwich, England. Unfortunately his great God-given abilities in languages were buried for several years in a

cloister. At the close of these years, he was highly recommended to be in the Bishop's Palace in London, but God ruled otherwise.

In making reference to the year he spent in London, Tyndale writes: "I understood at the last, not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's Palace to translate the New Testament, but also there was no place to do it in England, as experience doth now openly declare." Tyndale then went forth into exile, bidding a last farewell to his native land. He was content to surrender his English heritage in order to give his fellow-country men the Holy Scriptures. In the hands of God he was the instrument used to translate the New Testament and part of the Old Testament for the first time out of the original languages into English.

"We arrived at Brussels safely," writes Mr. Armstrong, "and found it to be a very busy place; this is due in part to the many diversified activities of NATO and the Common Market, the European Community of Nations.

"On the Lord's Day we went to the Assembly at Rue Van Dyke; this Assembly is quite large. The entire service was in French. We made out all right through the help of an English speaking brother who kindly interpreted for us. After the meeting we took the tram to Vilvoorde, 15 miles from Brussels. Our chief purpose there was to see the place where William Tyndale gave up his life for the Word of God on October 6, 1538.

"In Vilvoorde there is a monument erected to his memory by Christians in England. It is very well cared for by sympathetic friends in this Flemish town. We also visited the place where the castle stood in which William Tyndale was imprisoned for 18 months before being

strangled. His body was burned. What indignities! To one degree or another all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. The servant is not greater than his Lord. “If the world hate you,” said the Lord Jesus, “ye know it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

“While in Brussels we were told of a highly reputed Historian, Professor VerHeyden, Laurate of the Belgium Royal Academy, who could help us in our research. This Professor kindly granted us an interview. We were taken back again to Vilvoorde by the Director of the Belgium Gospel Mission who acted as our interpreter. The Professor’s studies were all in Dutch; they were related mostly to the Ana Baptists and the Dutch Protestant Reformation. We had a very pleasant evening with him. Before we left he gave us two interesting books of which he is the author. He also gave us the name of a German Professor who has done considerable research on William Tyndale. Some English friends are in touch with him now, and we hope to get more information through him.

“From Brussels we went to Antwerpt to visit the Plantin Musuem. Plantin was one of the greatest printers of his time; it is recorded that he had no less than 16 and possibly 22 presses. These of course would be nothing like our modern power presses.

“Plantin conceived the idea of a ‘scientific and reliable’ edition of the text of the Bible, and finally produced it. This colossal composition was the ‘Bible Regias,’ a polyglot in five languages: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldaie. The printing began in 1568 and was completed in 1572. To the actual text were added certain detailed and precious appendices, such as:

Hebrew, Chaldaie, Syrian, Greek grammars and vocabularies, as well as studies in weights, measures and customs. There was also considerable help given in connection with the habits of the ancient Hebrews.

“The entire work consisted of eight large folios. This was Plantin’s masterpiece, and is considered to be the world’s most important work by any one printer.

“It is known that some of Tyndale’s translations were printed on these old presses which are now preserved in Antwerp, the city where he spent so much of his time.

“From Antwerp we took a very modern train to Amsterdam for our flight by plane to Glasgow via Newcastle. It was a delight to hurry across country to Little Sodbury and there to meet with Christians for the Annual Memorial Service on the anniversary of William Tyndale’s martyrdom. There we visited once again the room in the Manor House where this courageous and noble Christian martyr said to the great Prelate of England in 1521, ‘If God spares my life, I will cause the boy who drives the plough to know more of the Word of God than you do.’ This was no vain dream; it was a sound prediction which has become literally true.”

The Lord Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

The Prayer of Faith

The Prayer of Faith

Selected

James 5:13-30

We come now to the last portion of the book of James. There seemed to be a number of subjects yet in the mind of James that he had not touched on in his Epistle so in these last few verses he considers them together rather briefly. Among these subjects are: the healing of the sick, the anointing of oil, the prayer of faith, the confession of sins, and the restoration of an erring brother. There are a variety of opinions on some of these subjects; we do not intend to go into detail but to briefly point out the salient facts without entering into controversy.

Affliction

This portion begins with the words, “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms.” The word translated “affliction” literally, according to Arndt & Gingerich’s Lexicon, means “suffering misfortune.” This suffering misfortune is not suffering from inward disease, but comes from an outward source, pressure from a hostile world. The statement is put in the form of a question, but we know that the original text had no punctuation marks at all. The quotation marks were put in centuries later by some man. It seems unlikely that James asked the question for information, because he knew that many of his brethren were suffering affliction,. His purpose in the first

chapter was to encourage those who were suffering affliction. James is, rather, giving instructions to those who are afflicted to pray.

The Greek uses several words for prayer, and all of them are translated into English by the word “prayer.” This particular word that James uses here is restricted entirely to sacred uses; it is prayer made to God. Many people seemingly never think of prayer until some misfortune strikes them. God must resort to some strange circumstances sometimes to revive some of His children. They forget so easily until the pressure of misfortune drives them to prayer. It is better to be in the habit of prayer before misfortune strikes, then prayer will not seem strange.

“Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms.” The meaning of the word translated “merry” includes in it “the well-being of the soul, of life principle, or of mind.” This can be true in spite of affliction from a hostile world. There are Christians who are inwardly joyful while bearing affliction from the outside world. This joy cannot be touched by circumstances of life.

Is Any Sick?

The 14th verse reads, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church.” The question mark is also used in this verse, and again James is not asking the question for information; there is sickness among Christians as well as there is among non-Christians. James is using this method to give instructions to those who are sick. They are to call for the elders of the church. It is the duty of the elders to visit the sick, but this sickness may not have been reported. So in case

that the elders are not informed, the one who is sick should call for the elders to come to them.

The Annointing with Oil

When the elders come to the sick one, they are “to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” There are many differing opinions about the anointing with oil, but we shall refrain from entering into controversy with anyone, and only confine ourselves to what we feel is the correct interpretation of the passage. We are convinced that this is not a religious ordinance enjoined upon the church. Our reason for this conviction is the meaning of the Greek word used here for “anoint.” The word is “aleiphoo,” and this is the secular or wordly word for “anoint.” The Greek has another word for “anoint,” which is “chrioo,” and this word is used in a sacred sense. The word Christ comes from the root of this Greek word. “Chrioo” is the word used when God anointed His Son; it is used of David when he was anointed as king; it is used when the prophets were anointed by God; and it is the word used for Christians when they are anointed with the Holy Spirit. But James does not use the word “chrioo,” he uses the word “aleiphoo.” The word “aleiphoo” means “to rub, to oil, or to massage.” Perhaps a quotation from the book THE PATIENCE OF HOPE, page 123, by Spiros Zodhiates, a native Greek, would be helpful in understanding the word. He says, “Perhaps a bit of etymology and history of the word “aliephoo,” “to oil,” would be helpful in more fully understanding what James meant by it in this difficult verse. It comes from the root “lipos,” which means “grease.” It is therefore

the verb which means to apply oil to something. In ancient times, for instance, people rubbed their bodies with oil after a bath. Also the Athletes of Greece used to have their bodies rubbed with oil to prepare them for the gymnastic events they were to enter. Therefore, metaphorically the verb meant “to stimulate to encourage through the application of oil.”

The word that James uses, therefore, rules out the fact that he is referring to a sacrament or rite with religious significance. He refers to the common practice of massaging the body with olive oil for the relief of physical suffering. It is still a common practice among the Greeks to massage the body with olive oil to relieve suffering, and those who have had their bodies so massaged report that the relief it affords is almost unbelievable.

It is the writer’s firm conviction that the anointing that James refers to is the rubbing or massaging the body with oil, not just a few drops, for medicinal purposes according to the custom of the day. While, no doubt, the sick one referred to was beyond the restorative power of oil, it was still to be applied in the name of the Lord for what relief it could give. The elders were to pray over him the prayer of faith, and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. It is the prayer of faith that has the emphasis, not the anointing of oil. It is said that at one time J. N. Darby and J. G. Bellett carried a small bottle of oil with them, and often when they prayed for the sick, they anointed them with a few drops of oil. They had seen remarkable results and their fame spread abroad more than they liked, so they discontinued the use of oil and only prayed for the sick. They found the results without the oil as remarkable as

with the oil. They found that it was not the application of oil but the prayer of faith that heals the sick.

The Pre-Incarnate Glories of Christ

The Pre-Incarnate Glories of Christ

Selected

Text: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1)

In studying the lives of great men, biographers generally begin with the birth of their subjects. But when we consider the career of the Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot properly start with the manger scene in Bethlehem, or with the prenatal announcements of the angel Gabriel. Unfortunately, too many writers do begin there and present the Blessed One as though He were but a man whose existence started in the Judean stable. Such is a grave mistake fraught with dishonour to Christ and with disaster to the souls of men. If He is nothing more than man, though the best of men, His own words condemn Him as either self-deceived or as an imposter. Certainly, either the victim of fancy or the perpetrator of fraud cannot be the Saviour of sinners, or righteousness would become a byword and holiness a dream.

In any attempt to study the manifold glories of Jesus Christ, God’s beloved Son, we must begin to consider Him before He came into this world, before He took upon Him His human form. To this end, therefore, let us gaze with the Psalmist upon the indescribable splendour of the ivory palaces, His eternal dwelling place; let us fill our nostrils with the sweet fragrance of the myrrh, the aloes, the cassia which eminates from the glorious garments of His divine character.

In His great intercessory prayer, our Lord said: “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was.” It is to this glory we should look, His eternal glory, not of the Eternity which lies behind.

The Return and Judgment Seat of Christ

The Return and Judgment Seat of Christ

Selected

Throughout the Bible the Spirit of God indicates certain periods in the history of mankind. In doing this He occasionally employs terms which must be understood in their own context because some of them are used figuratively. The word “world,” meaning age, appears many times, so also do the words “time,” “day,” and “hour.” This study deals particularly with the word “day,” used metaphorically. In some instances modifiers are used which limit its application. There are four such distinctive days: Man’s Day, the Day of Christ, the Day of the Lord and the Day of God. To discover the respective place of each in the complete plan of God in redemption, it is necessary to carefully examine each one in the light of divine revelation.

The Four Distinctive Days

Man’s Day (1 Cor. 4:3, marginal reading): This is a significant designation for the present period, a period of great achievement on the part of man. While technologically man has accomplished much, some of the other biblical expressions relative to this same period denote that morally he has not improved. Man’s Day is also called: “This darkness” (Eph. 6:12, marginal reading), “The night” (Rom. 13:12), “The present evil age” (Gal. 1:4), “The course” (lit. the age) of this world (Eph. 2:2). Notwithstanding the black picture these

appellations paint of this period, it is also called, “The day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2), and “The acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:19), for from the nations in their darkness and evil God is gathering out to Himself a people for His name (Acts 15:14).

Man’s Day had begun when Paul wrote to the Corinthians; it will probably continue for a short time after the Church has been removed from earth. Logically we might consider Man’s Day to have commenced with the rejection and crucifixion of Christ and continuing through the time of the Anti-Christ, who will be the climax of human self-assertion.

The Day of the Lord: In Scripture there seems to be a transitional passage from Man’s Day into the Day of the Lord, and from the Day of the Lord into the Day of God. Man’s Day reaches its climax in the Man of Sin, the Anti-Christ, and yet the manifestation of this wicked one could also be a feature of the Day of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:2-4). Again the last act of the Day of the Lord, the dissolution of the heavens and the earth appears also to usher in the Day of God (2 Pet. 3:10-14).

The Day of the Lord is referred to in both the Old and New Testaments (Joel 3:14, Obad. 15, Zeph. 1:7, Zech. 14:1, Acts 2:20, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Thess. 2:2, 2 Pet. 3:10). It is called the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:11, Mal. 4:5), the Day of the Lord’s anger (Zeph. 2:1-3), the Day of Vengeance (Isa. 61:3; 63:4; 34:8), and the Day of Recompense (Isa. 34:8).

The day of the Lord will begin when the gospel dispensation as we know it ends, and the Church is removed (Isa. 61:2), and will end with the dissolution of the heavens and the earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13). It will

therefore include the seventieth week of Daniel, the millennial reign of Christ, and the final human-satanic revolt against God.

During the present period man seeks to govern all on earth. The Day of the Lord will take place here in the same sphere, but with this difference, the will of God will then be sovereign; God will be supreme in Christ.

That future period, the Day of the Lord, is said to be "great and terrible." "Great" suggests its magnitude and eminence; "terrible," the awesomeness that will produce apprehension in the heart of men. It will be the Day of the Lord's anger for in it He will manifest His anger against human sin and wickedness.

Another appellation for this period is, "The Day of Vengeance." This describes the result of divine anger, God will avenge Himself of man's arrogance and opposition. "The Day of Recompense" expresses the fact that eventually man must reap the harvest he has sown (Gal. 6:7), and be recompensed for all the evil he has committed.

The Day of God: The Day of God is mentioned only once in Scripture. This reference is found in 2 Peter 3:12, and is explained in 1 Corinthians 15:28. The event that ends the Day of the Lord, the dissolution of the material universe, ushers in the Eternal State, the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Believers, according to 2 Peter 3:12, K.J.V. are urged to accelerate the coming of the Day of God by holy living. This exhortation is difficult to understand, for how may man, even redeemed man, hurry the purposes of the Divine Sovereign? It may probably mean that believers

should manifest by holy living and godliness a real longing for the coming of the Day of God.

The words, “Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,” may be more accurately translated, “On account of which,” that is, on account of the coming of the Day of God the present order must be removed in order that the eternal day break.

According to 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 our Lord Jesus as King of the Kingdom must reign until every foe is vanquished, even death the last enemy. “When all things shall be subdued under Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” Eternal Supremacy will not belong to the Father exclusively, but to God in all His Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Day of Christ: The designations Man’s Day and the Day of the Lord always bear a relationship to earth, the former to the present, the latter to the future. The Day of Christ is altogether otherwise, it always bears a relationship to Heaven, and involves the New Testament Church only.

From a comparison of Scriptures (1 Cor. 3:13, 1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 1:14, Phil. 1:6-10; 2:16), it appears that the Day of Christ begins with the rapture of the Church and ends with Christ’s descent back to earth in glory with His Bride, and is characterized by the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage of the Lamb.

The Saviour Comes

The whole world was rolling down the ages in darkness to its doom. Did the hosts that populate the regions of unsullied light peer over the battlements of heaven and mark with sadness its downward course? Did these glorious beings shudder as from that dark world arose groans and curses, sobs and cries, ribald laughter, horrible blasphemy, shouts and yells of licensed massacre from multitudinous battlefields? Any help? Any hope? None! none! for who can stay a world that has cut itself loose from its God and has bidden an eternal defiance to its Creator?

And yet, it seems as they ponder over that insoluble enigma, the Eternal King rises from His throne and, laying aside the mantled splendor of deity, steps from star to star until He reaches the door of our dark world. As befits His dignity, there shines a light, unearthly in its brilliance, from the band of heaven's glorious torch-bearers; there sounds a blare of trumpets from the heralds of the court of glory, the music of the spheres made audible for once! But for some sleepy shepherds, startled from their midnight watch on the slopes of Bethlehem's pastures, the light that had ne'er shone on hill and dale before had shined forth unobserved, the cadences that ne'er had floated over the homes and haunts of men before had sounded in vain as far as this world was concerned. And when that door which separates this world of sense and sin from that world of spirit and glory had swung back for once in all its history inwards, the Lord of Glory entered as a little Child swaddled in the poor linen of a toiler's home and

cradled in a manger! And this was how the Lord of the Universe came to the dark world He had loved and lost awhile, which He yet loved with a love stronger than death, and, loving, sought amid the night of time until He found it.

The scene changes!

It is no longer midnight. 'Tis high noon. It is no longer the open courtyard of the Inn of Bethlehem; it is the road that, winding down the slopes of Olivet, climbs to the great gate of the city, the Holy City -- Jerusalem. It is no longer a solitary silence broken by the champing of cattle and the faint, low cry of one in pain. It is the meeting of two crowds -- the one bearing in its front a young Man in the prime of life riding on a colt and strewing the road with garments and greenery; the other pouring forth from the city's portal, lining the way, and mingling their voices in the great cry of "Hosanna! O Save!" Listen how the two crowds unite in using the words penned many centuries before by the Psalmist (Ps. 118:26): "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Time on tiptoe all down the ages had been shouting, "He is coming!" "He is coming!" has been the testimony of prophet, priest, and king. "He is on the way!" murmurs each gush of steaming blood that flows from every sacrifice. Trumpets caught up the whisper and pealed the glad tidings forth until the listening air, learning the lesson, repeated it in each wave of sound that broke on the encircling, everlasting hills.

And now the whole city is moved, for old men and children, young men and maidens, are streaming forth from court and alley, from terraced slope and darksome bazaar, and meeting the multitudes form the

surrounding villages and hamlets, join their voices in a mighty shout, "Hosanna in the highest!"

We have seen

Him come to the door of the world; now we see Him come to the gate of the capital. Again, if men's ears had been trained to catch the strains of heavenly music, they would have heard the Glory Song, the sweet antiphon of the skies: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

D. Anderson-Berry, M.D.

The Simplicity of Providence

The Simplicity of Providence

W. H. G. Thomas.

As we read the story of Joseph and concentrate attention first of all on the narrative as ordinary history, we see nothing whatever but the obvious, the natural, the simple and the straightforward. A famine caused a family to leave home and sojourn in a strange land. They came there under perfectly usual circumstances, and never expected to remain longer than the years of special need. Everything is quite clear and straightforward, with no circumstance left unexplained; and yet with it all we can see, as we review the story, that God in His providence was taking hold of these everyday events, and weaving them into His own divine pattern for Israel. How true this is to life is at once clear to us all. The smallest experiences of our everyday life may form part of a mighty and far-reaching Providence. We pay a visit, intending to stay a week, and then we are led to take up our abode in that place, with all the course of our life entirely altered from that day forward. Or it may be that into the even tenor of our life comes a letter with a simple request which has very far-reaching effects, changing not one life but several. It is all perfectly simple and yet perfectly divine; and though, as we review our pathway in the retrospect, we can see nothing in detail that has been marvellous or out of the way, yet the sum-total of everything stands out as an astonishing example of the providence of God. Let us cultivate the habit of investing every detail of life with significance. and try to learn the precise lessons that

God desires to teach us. Let us refuse to limit God and His providence to the great occasions of life. and let us believe that nothing can come across our pathway unless it is in some way or other part of His loving and wise will concerning us.

The Story Behind …“Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me”

The Story Behind …

“Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me”

Text — Edward Hopper, 1822-1888

Music — John E. Gould, 1922-1875

Thou wilt show me the path of life: In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. —Psalm 16:11 Just as our Lord often taught profound spiritual truths with earthly associations, so many of our fine hymns have been written with symbolic imagery that makes them more understandable as we sing. This hymn was written especially for sailors in language they knew well — charts, compasses, and the absolute need for a competent pilot to guide their crafts over the tempestuous seas.

Edward Hopper was born in New York City on February 17, 1818. His father was a merchant and his mother a descendant of the Huguenots, the persecuted French Protestants. In 1870, he began the most fruitful phase of his ministry when he became pastor of a church in New York harbour known as the “Church of Sea and Land.” Here he ministered most effectively for the remaining years of his life to the many sailors who made their way to and from their ships.

It was while ministering at his sailor’s mission that Edward Hopper wrote this hymn text especially for the spiritual needs of these sea-faring men. He wrote it

anonymously, as he did all of his works, and for some time no one ever knew that the pastor of the sailors was also the author of the sailor's favorite hymn. Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me has been included in nearly every evangelical hymnal published until the present time. Through the years it has been a hymn that is especially meaningful to young people sincerely concerned about knowing God's will for their lives.

At the age of seventy-two, Edward Hopper's prayer expressed in the third stanza of his immortal hymn had its complete fulfillment when he died in 1888. He was found sitting in his study chair, pencil in hand, writing a new poem on the subject of heaven.

How important it is, dear Christian friend, that you and I learn the lesson of this hymn — that of placing our implicit confidence in the Pilot of our souls as He guides us through the tempestuous seas of life. And though there may be the storms and waves that at times almost seem to swamp us, we can be certain that our Lord is still in control and will lead us safely to our heavenly home.

1. Jesus, Saviour, pilot me over life's tempestuous sea;

Unknown waves before me roll, hiding rock and treach'rous shoal; Chart and compass come from Thee— Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

2. As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild; Boisterous waves obey Thy will when Thou say'st to them, "Be still." Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea, Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

3. When at last I near the shore, and the fearful breakers roar Twixt me and the peaceful rest —then,

while leaning on Thy breast, May I hear Thee say to me, “Fear not — I will pilot thee.”

The Incomparable Christ

More than 1900 years ago a Man was born contrary to the laws of nature. This man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which he lived; that was during His childhood when He was in exile in Egypt.

He possessed neither wealth nor influence, his relatives were inconspicuous, and had neither training nor formal education.

In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature; He walked upon the billows as if pavements, and hushed the sea to sleep.

He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services.

He never wrote a book, and yet all the libraries in the world could not hold the books that have been written about Him.

He never wrote a song and yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the song writers combined.

He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students.

He never marshalled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader had more volunteers who have under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot being fired.

He never practiced psychiatry, and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.

Once every week the wheels of commerce cease their turning and multitudes wend their way to worshipping assemblies to pay homage and respect to Him.

The names of the proud statemen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more.

Though time has spread more than 1900 years between the people of his generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He lives. Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold him.

He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints and feared by demons as the risen, personal Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

At this season The Incomparable Christ is still standing at many a heart's door, seeking admission. His words says: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

Also, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest gift ever given to the world. He can be yours. IS HE?

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

—Anonymous

The Story Behind...

The Story Behind…

Selected

“Blest be the Tie That Binds”

Around this hymn lies the story of John Fawcett (1740-1817) and a company of Baptists in the valley of Yorkshire, England, by the Calder River in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Calder was lovelier then than it is now, for the tide of mill buildings, steam engines, and the use of the river’s waters for driving the mills had not marred its beauty. Fawcett was born of poor parents in Lidget Green, Yorkshire, and was converted to Christ at the age of 16 through the preaching of George Whitefield. At the age of 26 he was ordained as a Baptist minister and accepted an invitation to pastor a small and improverished congregation at Wainsgate in Northern England.

One day in 1772 a wagon stood outside the house of the Baptist minister, loaded up with his and his wife’s goods and chattels. All the village knew that the young preacher, now 32, had received an important “call” to a London church and was about to take the long road south away from his native hills and moors and the people who loved him. He had accepted the invitation, had preached his final sermon, and had now come to the moment of the last farewell. Many of his congregation stood by the wagon in tears. The sight of so many tearful people, and all the sad good-byes, proved too much for Fawcett and his wife. He went back to the house and gave orders to unload the wagon. He and his wife had

decided to stay among their beloved people and turn their back on the great London church he had been asked to minister to under the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Five years later his people built a splendid new chapel in Hebden Bridge and Fawcett stayed among them for the rest of his life, refusing an invitation in 1793 to be President of the Bristol Baptist Academy. This was the spirit of the man who wrote this tender hymn of affection, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

The music of the hymn was composed by Hans G. Naegeli, who was born on May 26, 1773, near Zurich, Switzerland.

Blest be the tie that binds

Our hearts in Christian love!

The fellowship of kindred minds

Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne

We pour our ardent prayers;

Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,

Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,

Our mutual burdens bear;

And often for each other flows

The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part

It gives us inward pain;

But we shall still be joined in heart,

And hope to meet again.

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

O for a thousand tongues to sing,

My great Redeemer’s praise,

The glories of my God and King,

The triumphs of His grace.

My gracious Master and my God,

Assist me to proclaim,

To spread through all the earth abroad,

The honors of His name.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,

He sets the prisoner free;

His blood can make the foulest clean;

His blood availed for me.

The words of this great hymn (it has additional stanzas) were written by Charles Wesley (1707-1788), while the music was composed by Carl G. Glaser.

In order to commemorate the first anniversary of his “spiritual birth” in a fitting manner, Charles Wesley wrote this hymn of 18 stanzas on May 21, 1739, under the title: “For the Anniversary Day of One’s Conversion.”

In 1740 he published it in Hymns and Sacred Poems, a collection compiled by his brother John and himself. In the original the hymn began with the words, “Glory to God, and praise, and love.”

A cento (that's a literary or musical work made up of passages from other compositions), beginning with the seventh stanza of the original "O for a thousand tongues to sing," was made by R. Conyers and published in his A Collection of Psalms and Hymns from Various Authors: for the Use of Serious and Devout Christians of Every Denomination, London, 1767.

In an arrangement published by John Wesley in the Wesleyan Hymnbook (1780) he, too, began the hymn with the seventh stanza and used a new second line, "My dear Redeemer's praise."

The new title is supposed to go back to Boehler, a Moravian missionary, who said to Wesley: "If I had a thousand tongues, I would praise Him with them all."

It is just as likely to be traceable to the German hymn "O dass ich tausend Zungen Haette: (O that I had a thousand tongues) by Johann Mentzer (1658-1734), which was a great favorite of Moravian as well as other German Protestant congregations.

The Story Behind...Blessed Assurance

The Story Behind…

Blessed Assurance

Selected

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight!

Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;

Angels descending bring from above

Echoes of mercy, whispers of Love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,

I in my Saviour am happy and blest;

Watching and waiting, looking above,

Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Chorus

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Saviour all the day long;

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Saviour all the day long.

“My friend, Mrs. Knapp, composed a melody, and played it over to me two or three times on the piano,” wrote Fanny Crosby. “She then asked me what it said, and I

immediately replied ‘Blessed Assurance.’” Within a few minutes Fanny Crosby had written the complete poem, just as it stands today, and the song was first published in 1873.

Mrs. Knapp’s maiden name was Phoebe Palmer. She was born in New York City on March 8, 1839. Her father was the noted Methodist evangelist, Dr. Walter C. Palmer. She attained a widespread reputation as a writer of music and verse, specializing in writing for children. At the age of sixteen she married Joseph Fairchild Knapp, a prominent Sunday School worker. A successful businessman, he became quite wealthy and organized the famous Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

When Mr. Knapp died, he left his wife an income of fifty thousand dollars a year, the most of which she spent for religious and charitable activities. In her New York City home she had a beautiful pipe organ which at that time was the largest such instrument ever to be installed in a private home. She published more than five hundred of her own gospel song compositions, but “Blessed Assurance” is the only one which has survived. She died in Maine on July 10, 1908.

The Story Behind...In The Sweet By And By

The Story Behind…

In The Sweet By And By

This gospel song, famed for its chorus,

In the sweet by and by

We shall meet on that beautiful shore, is a genuine product of the Midwest United States. It jumped into life as the result of an impromptu conversation between Samuel Fillmore Bennett (1836-1898) and his musician friend, Joseph P. Webster (1819-1875) in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, in the years of the gospel song makers in the mid-nineteenth century.

Webster came into Bennett's office one day looking depressed. When Bennett asked him what was the matter, he replied that "I will be all right by and by." That phrase leaped into life for Bennett. "The sweet by and by," he mused. "That would make a good hymn." Then and there he started to write the verse:

There's a land that is fairer than day,

And by faith we can see it afar;

For the Father waits over the way,

To prepare us a dwelling-place there.

Webster caught his friend's enthusiasm, hummed out a melody, and bringing in a friend with his violin the three men soon were singing the song.

The two additional stanzas are:

We shall sing on that beautiful shore

The melodious songs of the blest,

And our spirits shall sorrow no more,

Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

To our bountiful Father above,

We will offer our tribute of praise,

For the glorious gift of His love,

And the blessings that hallow our days.

The Salvation Army has popularized the hymn and it is often sung at Army funeral services.

The Story Behind...Let the Lower Lights be Burning

The Story Behind…

Let the Lower Lights be Burning

Selected

At one of D.L. Moody’s meetings in America he related the story of a shipwreck on a dark and tempestuous night, when not even a star was visible. A ship was approaching the harbor of Cleveland, with a pilot on board. The captain, noticing only one light as they drew near — that from the lighthouse —asked the pilot if he was quite sure that it was Cleveland harbor, as other lights should have been burning at the harbor mouth. The pilot replied that he was quite sure, whereupon the captain enquired:

“Where are the lower lights?” “Gone out, sir,” replied the pilot.

“Can you make the harbor, then?” asked the captain, to which the pilot answered:

“We must, sir, or perish.”

Bravely the old man steered the vessel upon her course toward safety. But alas! In the darkness of the harbor mouth he missed the channel, the ship struck upon many rocks, and in the stormy waters many lives were lost.

Then Moody made his appeal to his audience: “Brothers, the Master will take care of the great lighthouse! Let us keep the lower lights burning!”

Among Moody's hearers that evening was Mr. Philip P. Bliss, the well-known hymn writer, and the striking story at once suggested to him one of his most popular hymns:

Brightly beams our Father's mercy

From His lighthouse evermore,

But to us He gives the keeping

Of the lights along the shore.

Chorus:

Let the lower lights be burning!

Send a gleam across the wave!

Some poor fainting, struggling seaman

You may rescue, you may save.

The Story Behind...Nearer, My God, To Thee

The Story Behind…

Nearer, My God, To Thee

Few hymns have been sung in more tragic circumstances than this one on the night of April 14, 1912, on board the sinking Titanic. The great ship, at that time the greatest in the world, was on its maiden voyage to New York with a happy, expectant company of over two thousand people including many famous ones. Shortly before midnight, on the third day on the Atlantic, as the evening parties on the ship were breaking up, the ship shuddered from stem to stern. The lights, however, still blazed, the band played, and while the passengers turned to one another with anxious looks none of them doubted that all was well.

The alarms rang through the ship, and within a few minutes passengers were standing on deck with their life-belts knowing that the ship had struck an iceberg, and that the sea was pouring into a vast rent down below.

The supply of life-belts and lifeboats proved inadequate, and while the great ship listed heavily towards her doom alternate waves of fear and calm spread through the passengers lining the decks. It was then that the band played the tune of Nearer, My God, to Thee, and the passengers, all of whom were looking death in the face, sang E’en though it be a cross That raiseth me, Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee.

In three hours the Titanic went down into the icy Atlantic, and only 711 lives were saved.

Sarah Flower Adams was a young woman of 43 when she died in 1848, and her home was at Harlow in the English county of Essex. Her hymns are more widely used in America than elsewhere, particularly amongst Unitarians.

Nearer, My God, to Thee is based on Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:12) in which the ladder, set up on earth, reaches to heaven, a vision which the writer deftly weaves into her hymn:

There let the way appear,

Steps unto heaven;

All that Thou sendest me

In mercy given:

Angels to beckon me

Nearer, My God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts

Bright with Thy praise,

Out of my stony griefs

Bethel I'll raise;

So by my woes to be

Nearer, My God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee!

The Story Behind...Rock of Ages

The Story Behind…

Rock of Ages

Selected

Author—August M. Toplady, 1740-1778

Composer—Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872

Tune Name — Toplady

This hymn has traditionally been ranked as one of the most popular hymns ever written. It is certainly one of the best known in the English language. It has been described as a “hymn that meets the spiritual needs of all sorts and conditions of men from the derelict snatched from the gutter by the Salvation Army to Prime Minister Gladstone, at whose funeral it echoed through the dim spaces of Westminister Abbey.”

Whereas most hymns have been written out of some deep personal need or experience, this hymn evidently was born out of a spirit of heated controversy. August Toplady was converted to Christ as a young boy of sixteen years of age while visiting in Ireland. Of his conversion, Toplady has written:

“Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought right with God in an obscure part of Ireland, midst a handful of people met together in a barn, and by the ministry of one who could hardly spell his own name. Surely it was the Lord’s doing and is marvelous.”

Augustus Montague Toplady was born at Farnham, England, on November 4, 1740, the son of a Major Richard Toplady. who died in the service while his son was in infancy. Later young Toplady graduated from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and was ordained in 1762 to the ministry of the Anglican Church. His various pastorates included the French Calvinist Chapel at Leichester Fields, London, where he was known as a powerful and zealous evangelical preacher. Because of his frail constitution, he died of overwork at the early age of thirty-eight.

The tune for Toplady's text was composed in 1830 by a well-known American church musician, Thomas Hastings. Hastings was the first musician of sacred music to dedicate his life to the task of elevating and improving the music of the churches in this country. Despite the fact that he was an Albino and afflicted with an eye problem, Hastings wrote no less than 50 volumes of church music, including 1,000 hymn tunes and more than 600 original hymn texts.

God in his providence has chosen to preserve this hymn for the past 200 years so that congregations of believers can sing this hymn with spiritual profit and blessing.

1. Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.

2. Could my tears forever flow, Could my zeal no languour know, These for sin could not atone —Thou must save, and Thou alone: In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.

3. While I draw this fleeing breath, When my eyes shall close in death, When I rise to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.

The Story Behind...Silent Night Holy Night

The Story Behind…

Silent Night Holy Night

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

Silent night, holy night,

All is calm, all is bright,

Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.

Holy Infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace,

Sleep in heavenly peace.

So far as is known, the author and the composer of this beautiful and popular Christmas carol wrote the music and words for this song only, and none other. It was on Christmas Eve in 1818 that this song made its first appearance. It was the custom in the little Austrian village of Obernof to present, annually, the Christmas story as depicted by roving groups of amateur actors. Father Joseph Mohr was invited to the presentation of the play and was deeply touched by the sincerity of the presentation. After the play, he sat and pondered the wonders of God’s great creation. It was a beautiful silent night.

The next day Father Mohr presented the words of “Silent Night” to his friend, Franz Gruber, as a Christmas present. That same evening Mr. Gruber wrote the music with which everyone is now familiar, and he

with others sang it to guitar accompaniment, since the organ in the local church was broken.

The song was immediately taken up by the itinerant minstrels throughout South Germany and Austria and was evidently introduced into the hymnody of the United States by Charles L. Hutchinson, who used it first in his Sunday School Hymnal in 1871.

Mohr was born in Salzburg, Austria, on Dec. 11, 1792, and died on Dec. 4, 1848. He was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1815 and spent all of his life serving churches near his birthplace.

Franz Gruber, an Austrian, was born at Hochburg, Nov. 25, 1787, and lived all of his life near Salzburg, as did Mohr. He was a school master in the village of Arnsdorf and served as parish organist. He died on June 7, 1863.

It would seem that both the words and the music of this beautiful Christmas carol were spontaneously inspired during the Christmas festivities in 1818.

Legend tells us that it was an organ fixer who was responsible for the spreading of its popularity, for he sang it for two famous concert singers who it is believed added it to their collections of native mountain songs and started it on its way around the world.

The Story Behind...The Light of the World is Jesus

The Story Behind....

The Light of the World is Jesus

Selected

The popular “singing Pilgrim,” as Philip Bliss was called, was well known on both sides of the Atlantic, for Ira D. Sankey sang his appealing songs into the hearts of the people.

The great revival held in England and Scotland by Moody and Sankey in 1873 owed much of its success to the pleasing hymns and tunes introduced there for the first time. Many of these were composed by Bliss, and somehow, people who heard them could not shake them off.

Philip Paul Bliss was only 38 years old when he lost his life in a train accident while on his way to join Sankey in Chicago. He died trying to save his wife from a burning railway car.

To Bliss, the writing of music and song bearing a Gospel message would so fill his heart with joy that the feeling ran into the melody—and thence into hearts.

Philip Bliss was born in the vast region of northern Pennsylvania, and the very wildness and softness of nature spoke to his inmost being.

“The Light of the World is Jesus” was written for a revival meeting and was sung by Ira D. Sankey. It proved to be a favorite and still is.

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Chorus
Come to the Light, ‘tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me,
Once I was blind, but now I can see:
The Light of the world is Jesus.
No darkness have we who in Jesus abide,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
We walk in the Light when we follow our Guide,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Ye dwellers in darkness with sin-blinded eyes,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Go wash at His bidding and light will arise,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
No need of the sunlight in heaven, we’re told,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
The Lamb is the Light in the City of Gold,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

The Story Behind…“Christ Arose”

The Story Behind…

“Christ Arose”

Selected

Low in the grave He lay—Jesus my Saviour!

Waiting the coming day —Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,

With a mighty triumph o’er His foes;

He arose a Victor from the dark domain,

And He lives forever with His saints to reign.,

He arose! He arose!

Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed—Jesus my Saviour!

Vainly they seal the dead—Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep his prey—Jesus my Saviour!

He tore the bars away—Jesus my Lord!

Both the words and music of this hymn were written by Robert Lowry, author of “Shall We Gather at the River?” and “Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight?” He also composed many hymn tunes, including “One More Day’s Work for Jesus,” “All the Way My Saviour Leads Me,” “We’re Marching to Zion,” and “Saviour, Thy Dying Love.”

Robert Lowry was born in 1826. A graduate of Bucknell University, and an honored Baptist pastor in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, in 1868 he

succeeded William B. Bradbury as editor of Sunday School hymn books for Bigelow and Main Company.

Strange to say, Dr. Lowry deprecated much mention of his hymns and tunes, though he could not deny their success. An active Christian from 17 years of age, through his early pulpit service, his professorship in belles-lettres at Bucknell, and the long pastorate in Plainfiled, New Jersey, closed by death in 1899, he considered preaching to be his supreme function as it certainly was his first love. Music to him was a “side issue,” an “efflorescence,” and writing a hymn ranked far below preparing and delivering a sermon. Yet almost a century later his hymns remain a potent force in many gospel meetings.

The Story Behind…“God Be With You Till We Meet Again”

The Story Behind…

“God Be With You Till We

Meet Again”

God be with you till we meet again,

By His counsels guide, uphold you;

With His sheep securely fold you;

God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet

Till we meet at Jesus’ feet;

Till we meet, till we meet,

God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,

‘Neath His wings protecting hide you,

Daily manna still provide you,

God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,

Keep love’s banner floating o’er you,

Smite death’s threatening wave before you,

God be with you till we meet again.

We all say the familiar, “goodbye,” so often that we may not realize we are using a shortened form of the phrase, “God be with you.” Dr. J.E. Rankin, then a pastor in

Washington, D.C., thought it too bad that we should lose the really beautiful meaning underlying the simple words. His melodious song, “God Be with You,” was wrought out of this idea to form a Christian benediction hymn.

When Dr. Rankin had finished the poem he sent it to Mr. W.G. Tomer, a composer whose melodies had already pleased him. The music Mr. Tomer composed for “God Be with You” is an excellent setting for the words, and contributes greatly to the hymn’s popularity. It is like some of the Negro spirituals in that one phrase of melody is repeated, and enlarged upon, come back to several times. The tune is subdues at first, suggestive of the sadness of farewell, yet in the refrain it breaks into strains that have the uplift of bright hope.

The hymn was first sung in Dr. Rankin’s own church. the First Congregational Church of Washington, D.C., and very soon became the favorite closing hymn of young people in the Christian Endeavor Society. It has been translated into many other languages, and sung by Christian Endeavor Societies all over the world. Writing concerning this use of the hymn, Dr. Rankin said: “It has had no sweeter recognition than that given it by its adoption by the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor. Long, long, may they sing it!”

A few years before his death, when the late President Theodore Roosevelt was making a farewell visit in Memphis, Tenn., a great audience of three thousand people sang in his honor the well-loved strain, “God be with you till we meet again.”

Dr. Rankin was a man of unusual gifts. After serving as a pastor for many years, he became president of Howard

University, Washington, D.C., an institution founded to help in the higher education of blacks. Not many of our hymns have been written by college presidents!

No happier farewell can be made than by the simple benediction, “God be with you till we meet again.” When Mr. Tomer. the composer of the beautiful melody died, “God Be With You” was sung at his funeral as a memorial by the chorus of his church, the Methodist Church of Phillipsburg, N.J.

The Story Behind…“I Will Sing The Wondrous Story”

The Story Behind…

“I Will Sing The Wondrous Story”

Selected

I will sing the wondrous story

Of the Christ who died for me,

How he left His home in glory

For the cross of Calvary.

I was lost but Jesus found me,

Found the sheep that went astray,

Threw His loving arms around me,

Drew me back into His way…

Chorus

Yes, I’ll sing the wondrous story

Of the Christ who died for me,

Sing it with the saints in glory,

Gathered by the crystal sea.

The words of this frequently sung hymn were written by F. H. Rowley and the music by Peter B. Bilhorn. “I was minister of the First Baptist Church of North Adams, Massachusetts, in 1886,” wrote Rowley. “The church and community were experiencing a period of unusual interest in religious matters, and I was assisted by a remarkable young singer by the name of Peter Bilhorn.

One night after the close of the service he said, ‘Why don’t you write a hymn for me to set to music?’ During the night these verses came to me. The original poem began, ‘Can’t you sing the wondrous story?’ but when the song was first published by Sankey in 1887 the phrase was changed to “I will sing …”

Bilhorn was born in Illinois in 1861, shortly after his father was killed in the Civil War. He was converted at twenty under D. L. Moody’s preaching, acquiring musical training, and launched a career in evangelism which was to make him world famous. “Sweet Peace, the Gift of God’s Love” is another of his many compositions. He died in Los Angeles on December 13, 1936.

Feeling the need of a portable organ for use in street meetings, jail services, and similar gospel endeavours, Bilhorn designed a small folding organ, weighing sixteen pounds, and started its manufacture in 1887. His Bilhorn Brothers Organ Company grew and is still thriving, carried on by two nephews. Bilhorn organs have won gold medals at six World Expositions, and are currently in use on battleships, in army camps, in rescue missions and hospitals, and on far-flung mission fields.

The Story Behind…“Jesus Loves Me”

The Story Behind …

“Jesus Loves Me”

The hymn most closely associated with children is, of course, “Jesus Loves Me.” It was written in 1859 by Susan and Anna Warner, who were daughters of a New York lawyer. The two young women were very talented writers and in 1859 published a novel entitled, Say and Seal. It became a best seller. However, even the very best of novels remain popular for only a limited time, and Say and Seal eventually went the way of all the rest. But, as long as “Jesus Loves Me” is still sung by children, it will never be entirely forgotten. The poem, which is now an all-time favorite hymn, first appeared within the pages of the Warner girls’ novel.

In Say and Seal, two of the characters, Faith Derrick and John Endecott Linden, are greatly concerned for a very sick little fellow named Johnny Fax. Johnny’s condition becomes critical and he asks Mr. Linden, who was also the Sunday School teacher, to take him up in his strong arms and comfort him. Mr. Linden readily does so, and picking up the feverish and very sick little boy, walks slowly back and forth across the room trying to console him.

Suddenly Johnny pleads, “Sing.”

As Faith listens, she hears John Linden sing a beautiful song which neither she nor Johnny have ever heard before:

Jesus loves me, this I know,

For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to Him belong,

They are weak, but He is strong.

With this he sought to comfort the final moments of the dying lad. Indeed, a few hours later, little Johnny Fax went to be with the Lord, the One who loved him so much.

The lines of the poem came to the attention of the famous composer, William Bradbury, and in 1861 he set them to music and added the chorus:

Yes, Jesus loves me,

Yes, Jesus loves me,

Yes, Jesus loves me,

The Bible tells me so.

The Story Behind…“Joy To The World”

The Story Behind…

“Joy To The World”

Joy to the World! the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King;

Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room,

And Heav’n and nature sing,

And Heav’n and nature sing,

And Heav’n, and Heav’n and nature sing.

Joy is the keynote of this Christmas carol. This great song is traditional today in many Christmas festivities. In only a few instances have the words and music been so thoroughly joined together, yet the music is part of Handel’s great “Messiah,” penned many years after Watts wrote the words.

The story behind “Joy To The World” is a fitting tribute to the providence of God. In 1719 little Isaac Watts (he was only five feet tall) was living on the Abney Estate, near London. There he wrote these words based on the ninety-eighth Psalm. Watts was born poor in health. At the age of forty-five he had come to live on the Abney Estate for a week’s rest. He died there in 1748: his “rest” had lasted for thirty-six years.

George Frederick Handel was a robust German and a master of the keyboard and opera. He had desired to make music his career as a young man, and contrary to his father’s wishes that he study law, he ended up playing the church organ and later went into the theater.

Handel realized at age fifty-six that he had not contributed much to the culture of this world. He sought his God in prayer and in 1741 he worked continuously for twenty-three days and nights writing his immortal The Messiah, a masterpiece that is still the basis for numerous compositions penned today.

In 1836 Lowell Mason, a choir director and composer in Boston, rearranged a section of The Messiah to fit the words of “Joy to the World.” This is another example of the working of God in mysterious ways to join words and music to bless hearts of countless millions.

The Story Behind…“Just As I Am”

The Story Behind …

“Just As I Am”

If there is one hymn that is sung more often than any other while the preacher is inviting people to “come forward” it is, “Just As I Am.”

Probably more persons have accepted Christ with strains of that old hymn ringing in their ears than any other gospel song.

Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliott, who wrote that song, was an invalid living in England. One day Dr. Malan, a house guest from Geneva, broached the subject of personal salvation and asked Miss Elliott whether she ever had come to the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as her personal Saviour.

The young woman resented the question and quickly changed the subject. But it set her to thinking.

Later she said to Dr. Malan, “You spoke of coming to Jesus, but how? I am not fit to come.”

He replied, “Come just as you are.” She did so; and later, in her room, she wrote the lines of her hymn. One verse says:

Just as I am, poor wretched, blind;

Sight, riches, healing of the mind,

Yea, all I need in Thee to find;

O Lamb of God, I come.

Sometime afterward she related her experience to a friend and showed him what she had written. Somehow the lines got into print, and eventually people began singing them to a tune composed by a New Englander, William B. Bradbury. Today the hymn is translated into many languages, and people of every color, every age, and every station in life have knelt before God and made it their prayer of penitence.

Some hesitate to come as they are. They think they're not fit to come. They want to dress up first. They think they have to get rid of their bad habits, or make restitution, or do something else before they can come. That's like a drowning man who can't swim but who keeps struggling in a vain attempt to save himself. The lifeguard can't save him until he quiets down.

You can't save yourself. God does not ask you to. All He asks, if you are not saved, is that you let Him do it. Just confess your need of salvation and repent of your sins, and then trust in His saving power. Never mind your bad habits or misdeeds. He will help you solve those problems later. It will be easier than you expect, for you will be a new person once you are saved.

Come now, and don't delay. You need not wait another minute, as the hymn says:

Just as I am, and waiting not,

To rid my soul of one dark blot,

To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot.

O Lamb of God, I come.

The Story Behind…“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

The Story Behind…

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Sometime in the early part of the 18th century an unknown French hymnist penned the words and music for “O Come, All Ye Faithful.” The hymn first appeared in a collection by John Francis Wade, priest of a private chapel, in 1751. At that time it was in Latin.

Since that time over 40 different English translations have been made. The one most popular today is that of Oakley (1802-1880) which was made in 1841. Dr. Oakley was born in Shrewsbury, England, on September 5, 1802. He was educated privately at Oxford becoming a Fellow at Balliol College and taking orders in the Church of England. Later he went into the Roman Catholic Church and for many years was canon of the diocese of Westminster.

Nothing is known of the composer of the tune, “Adeste Fideles” or “Portugese Hymn.” For sometime it was supposed to have been written by one of two men, a father and son both named John Reading. The elder was an English organist who died in 1792. The son was a well-known organist and choirmaster. It appears, however, that these men simply picked up the tune from the Duke of Leeds, a director of the Concert of Ancient Music about the year 1785. The Duke had first heard the hymn performed at the Portugese Chapel, and assuming it to be of Portugese origin, he introduced it as, “The Portugese Hymn.”

O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

O come, let us adore Him.

O come, let us adore Him.

O come, let us adore Him.

Christ the Lord.

The Story Behind…“When I Survey The Wondrous Cross”

The Story Behind…

“When I Survey The

The Wondrous Cross”

When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the Prince of Glory died,

My richest gain I count but loss,

And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were a present far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my soul, my life, my all.

This classic hymn of Isaac Watts has often been called the greatest hymn in the English language. Another contemporary of Isaac Watts said of it, “There may be a few others equally great, but there is none greater.” All one needs to do to realize the truth of this statement is to sing this majestic hymn. Isaac Watts based this hymn on the Scriptural reference of Galatians 6:14. “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The original title was “Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ.” Later the title was changed to “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

Watt’s lifelong ambition, according to his own words, was to be a servant to churches and a helper of

Christians. Dr. Watts won and held the hearts of a large share of the English speaking world over a long period of years, despite the fact that as a child he was never strong, and despite the fact also that he was forced to resign a pastorate because of poor health. For the latter thirty years of his life, he was more or less an invalid, but devoted himself in comfortable and happy surroundings to the writing of many of the beautiful hymns, still popular today. It was an age of great hymn writers. Watts was a contemporary of Doddridge, the Wesleys, Newton and Cowper.

The majestic phrases of this deeply solemn hymn are as moving today as when Watts penned them in 1707. The hymn has been set to more than one tune, but perhaps the most popular is that of Edward Miller, who wrote his music in 1790, some forty-two years after Watts' death.

The Story Behind…“When the Roll is Called Up Yonder”

The Story Behind…

“When the Roll is Called Up Yonder”

The president of a certain Young People’s Society once chanced to meet a girl of fourteen, poorly dressed and a drunkard’s daughter, whom he invited to join the Society and to attend Sunday School. She did this, and attended for a time, but one evening at a dedication meeting, when the Society’s roll of members was called, and each member responded with a text, there was no response from this girl.

Remarking on her absence, the president, Mr. J. M. Black, spoke of the sadness of anyone being absent when the names were called of those written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and then added the prayer, “O God, when my own name is called up yonder, may I be there to respond!”

Wanting something suitable to sing on this occasion, Mr. Black searched the hymn book, but could find nothing, and after the meeting was ended, on his way home he still kept wishing for such a hymn.

On reaching home the words of the first stanza of a new hymn came to his mind in full.

Within fifteen minutes the two following verses were also written down, and then Mr. Black turned to the piano. “I played the music,” he said, “just as it is found today in the hymn books, note for note, and I have never dared to change a single word or note of the song.”

The three stanzas of this well-known and frequently sung hymn are:

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks, eternal bright and fair;

When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise, And the glory of His resurrection share;

When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yonder. I'll be there.

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;

Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

REFRAIN

When the roll is called up yonder,

When the roll is called up yonder,

When the roll is called up yonder,

I'll be there.

The Stranger

A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in our family. Mom taught me to love the Word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversations. He could hold our whole family spellbound for hours each evening.

He was like a friend to the whole family. He took Dad, my brother, and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind, but sometimes Mom would quietly get up - while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places - go to her room, read her Bible, and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave. You see, my Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions. But this stranger never felt an obligation to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house - not from us, from our friends, or from adults. Our longtime visitor, however, used occasional four letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his

home - not even for cooking. But the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often. He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that the stranger influenced my early concepts of the man/woman relationship.

As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time, he opposed the values of parents, yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave. More than thirty years have passed since the stranger moved in with us, but if I were to walk into my parent's home today, I would still see him sitting there waiting for someone to listen to his stories and watch him draw his pictures.

His name?.....

We always just called him.....TV.

The Strength of God’s Grace

MIF 13:6 (Nov-Dec 1981)

The Strength of God’s Grace

Selected

“And He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness…” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In this simple yet profound statement God reveals to us through the Apostle Paul something of the magnitude of His grace. Whatever Paul’s infirmity was, it was part of God’s plan for him; and God gave him the grace not only to endure it, but to glory in it.

God’s sovereign grace is bestowed on us in three ways. First, we are saved by His grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Then under grace, the Holy Spirit, who indwells us from the day of salvation, intercedes to help us live a decent and orderly life in a world of spiritual opposition and chaos (1 John 3:24). Third, our lives are controlled, sustained, and kept eternally secure by God’s grace. We can no more maintain a right standing with God and live a victorious Christian life in our own strength than we can be redeemed without putting our faith in Christ and His finished work on Calvary.

It is no accident that grace and peace are always mentioned in that order in the epistles. There can be no peace in the human heart without first knowing the grace of God from whom all blessings flow in undiminished strength and unlimited quantity. Let us never take the grace of God for granted, but as freely as

it is bestowed on us, let us show love and mercy to others, thus fulfilling the law of Christ by helping to bear their burdens. Let us be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

God always moves and speaks to us through our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the flow of grace is no exception. John tells us that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). His throne is the one and only source of grace. So when we need a measure of grace to strengthen, comfort and guide us, we have only to approach that throne with courage and confidence. “Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

—Arthur F. Wilder

The Sunday School

The Sunday School

C. H. M.

This article consists of a letter on the general subject of the Sunday School, written many years ago by that diligent servant of the Lord, well-known even now by his writings over the initials C. H. M.

Submitted by T. G. Wilkie.

Dear Friend:

We are truly thankful to hear that you have commenced the Sunday School, and we count it a real privilege to be allowed to comply with your request for a word of counsel as to the mode of running it.

The longer we live, the more highly we prize the blessed work of Sunday School teaching. We look upon it as most interesting and delightful; and we believe that every Assembly of Christians, gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus, should support such work by their sympathy and prayers.

Some, we are sorry to say, exhibit much lukewarmness in reference thereto, and others seem to disapprove of such work altogether. They look upon it as an interference with the duty devolving upon Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, we own, would be a grave objection, were it well-founded; but it is not so, for the Sunday School is not designed to interfere with, but to assist, or to supply the total lack of, parental teaching and training. There are thousands of dear children

thronging the alleys, lanes, and courtyards of all our large cities and towns who either have no parents, or else parents utterly unable or unwilling to instruct them. It is on these the Sunday School teacher fixes his benevolent eye. No doubt he is glad to see all sorts filling the seats. It is impossible to tell where and when the fruit of a Sunday School teacher's work may turn up. It may be on the burning sands of Africa, or amid the frozen regions of the North; it may be now, or it may be years after the workman has gone to his eternal rest. But let it be when or where it may, the fruit will assuredly be found when the seed has been sown in faith and watered by prayer.

It may be that the Sunday School pupil will grow up a wicked youth — a wicked man; he may seem to have forgotten everything good, holy and true — to have worn out, by his sinful practices, every sacred impression; and yet, notwithstanding all, some precious clause of Holy Scripture, or some sweet hymn, remains buried in the depths of memory, beneath a mass of folly and profanity; and this Scripture or this hymn may come to mind, in some quiet moment, or it may be on a death bed, and be used of the Holy Ghost, for a quickening and saving of the soul. Who can attempt to define the importance of getting hold of the mind while it is young, fresh, and plastic, and of seeking to impress it with heavenly things?

But we may be asked, "Where, in the New Testament, have we any warrant for the special work undertaken by the teacher or the superintendent of a Sunday School?" We reply, "It is only one way of preaching the Gospel to the unconverted, or of expounding the Holy Scriptures to the children of God." Properly speaking, the Sunday

School is a profoundly interesting branch of evangelistic labour, and we need hardly say, we have ample authority in the pages of the New Testament for this.

But, alas, there are too many amongst us who have no heart for any branch of Gospel service, whether amongst the young or old, and not only do they neglect it themselves, but throw cold water on those who are seeking to do the blessed work. And as it sometimes happens that those who raise objections to Sunday Schools and stated Gospel preachings seem to be persons of intelligence, their words are all the more likely to weigh with young Christians.

But to you, dear friend, we say, “Let nothing discourage you in the work you have undertaken. It is a good work, and go on with it regardless of all objectors. We are told to be ready for every good work, and not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.”

Now a word as to the mode of working a Sunday School. You must remember it is an individual service to the Lord. No doubt it is most important to have full fellowship in your work with your fellow labourers, and with all your brethren; but the work of a superintendent or a teacher must be carried on in direct responsibility to the Lord, and according to the measure of grace imparted by Him. Most assuredly the Assembly, if in a spiritual, healthy condition, will have fullest fellowship with the Sunday School, as well as with the entire range of Gospel work for the Lord.

You will find, if we mistake not, that in order to work a Sunday School effectively, you must have a good superintendent — a person of energy, order, and rule.

The old proverb, “What is everybody’s business is nobody’s business,” is specially applicable here.

We have seen several Sunday Schools come to the ground from not being properly worked. Persons take up the work for a time, and then drop it. This will never do. The superintendent, the teachers, and the visitors must enter upon their blessed work, not by fits and starts, but with calm determination and spiritual energy; and having entered upon their blessed work, they must carry it on with real purpose of heart. It will not do for the superintendent to leave his school, or the teacher to leave his class to chance, under the plea of leaving it to the Lord. We believe the Lord expects him to be at his post, or to find a proper substitute in case of illness or any other unavoidable cause of absence.

It is of the utmost importance that every branch of Sunday School work should be undertaken and carried on with freshness, heart-zeal, and energy, and thorough personal devotedness. And, inasmuch as these can only be had at the Divine Treasury, all who are engaged in the service should meet together for prayer and conference.

Nothing can be more deplorable than to see a Sunday School falling into decay through lack of diligence and perseverance on the part of those who have taken it up. No doubt there are many hindrances; and the work itself is very uphill and very discouraging; but, oh! if our words have any weight, we would say with heartfelt emphasis to all who are engaged in this most precious service, “Let nothing damp your ardour, or hinder your work.”

The Transmission of Knowledge

The Transmission of Knowledge

Selected

The transmission of life is an intriguing subject that engages the minds of biologists and medical men. The transmission of power is another great study that engages the time and the talent of physicists and engineers. The transmission of knowledge is the great duty of the educator and this is the subject that interests us as Sunday School teachers, for our duty is the transmission of Biblical and spiritual knowledge.

As there are different principles in the transmission of energy, so there are different principles in the transmission of knowledge. We can transmit electrical energy from the dynamo to the motor by wires. We can transmit the power of gasoline to the wheels of a car by means of a motor, a shaft, and gears. We can transmit the power of the steam-engine to the factory by means of pulleys and belts. In the transmission of knowledge there, likewise, are employed different principles.

We cannot call the Bible a book of science, but it is certainly scientific and contains the sound principles of Psychology and Pedagogy.

In the four portions we are going to consider, there are four significant expressions used by the Holy Spirit of God in giving instruction to the people of Israel in regard to the transmission of knowledge to their children.

I. “And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover.” (Ex. 12:26-27).

“That ye shall say:” The verb “to say” used here means to say out publicly or to report. It is used in Gen. 1:3, “And God said, Let there be light.” It seems to imply a public word of authority and suggests that in the instruction of little ones there must be a voice of authority and dignity. They said of the Lord Jesus that He spake as one having authority and not as the scribes. In the character, manner, and message of every Sunday School teacher, there should be sufficient authority and dignity to silently enforce kindly discipline, and to make his influence felt for good.

The message we have for our children is heavenly in its character, and should, therefore, be spoken with heavenly authority and dignity. The language we use should be the simplest, and yet the finest and the most dignified. We should not stoop, in our classes, to undignified familiarities or to the use of cheap slangish expressions. Speak and act with authority and create an atmosphere of respect in your class.

II. “And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt” (Ex. 13:8).

“Thou shalt shew thy son:” This verb “to shew” means to expound. The work of the teacher of children is to expound the things of God to the child. This may appear as something very difficult. We think of an exponent of the Word of God as a talented man, but let us view this matter in a very simple way. Let us think of the minds of

our scholars as little cameras; because to expound is to expose the Word of God. In the taking of a photograph, four things are necessary: the object, the lens of the camera, the shutter, and the sensitized film. The shutter on the camera is simply a metallic curtain between the object and the film. The click of the shutter means that the curtain has been removed for an instant from between these two, allowing the light from the object to pass through the lens and to leave its impression upon the film. This is called exposure. What a teacher must do is remove the curtain of ignorance from between the subject that be is teaching and the scholars's mind. He is to permit the light to enter and illuminate the mind. This is the very figure that is used in 2 Cor. 4:3-4, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

It is for us to remove, if possible by example and teaching, the blindness of satanic influence and gross ignorance.

III. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deut. 4: 9).

"But teach them thy sons:" "To teach" in this case means to cause to understand. It has to do with the idea of perception. In teaching there are two things to consider: first, the child must be made to understand; then, in turn, he must be allowed to state what he has understood. These two things may be stated thus: impression and expression.

We endeavour to make impressions on the mind of the child so that he will be able to express these impressions to us. Some would seek to change this order and to allow the child, first, to express himself freely in any way at all, and then hope, later, to make proper impression upon his mind. The idea being to permit the child to freely express himself on any subject that may interest him and then attempt to draw lessons of moral and spiritual worth from what he has said.

One may run into difficulties with this method and find himself greatly embarrassed before his entire class. The story has been told about a brother who specialized in children's work. Occasionally, he would have the children bring any object they wished as long as that object was mentioned in the Scriptures. From each object he received, he spoke a short message impromptu. One evening a boy brought a weiner. The brother was sure that no mention ever had been made in the Bible of the weiner; therefore, he could not speak any message from it. The boy was very insistent that a Biblical reference could be found, and when the speaker finally asked what the verse might be, the lad quoted John 4:32, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." How embarrassed the speaker would be, and how triumphant the mischievous boy! It would take unusual gift and grace to recover the balance of a meeting after such a humorous speech, much of the solemnity of the message and application of the Word would be forgotten.

The old principles of teaching are safest in the Sunday School. Let every one seek to impress the children with the truth, and then determine how much has been understood. Allow the scholar to tell in his own language what he has been taught. We have all heard little

children retelling a Bible story which has impressed them deeply. Every detail is so vivid before their minds, and one has no trouble in knowing how much or how little had been imbibed.

IV. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:7).

“Thou shalt talk of them:” The verb “to talk” here means to converse together. It is a matter of talking things over. Experience in Sunday School and in Bible classes have proved the excellence of conversational teaching. It would be well if a period of each session in our schools was given over to this, and the children, under the guidance of their teacher, were permitted to discuss the lesson.

From these four Scriptures, we have suggested four principles to be used in the transmission of biblical knowledge in the Sunday School: first there should be an atmosphere of authority, dignity, and respect; in second place, there should be light, an exposition for the eye of the soul; in third place, there should be food for thought, the mind should be deeply impressed and thus nourished; and finally, there should be mental exercise, for this deepens the impression and develops the truth in the child.

S. O. M.

* * *

God is in every to-morrow,

Therefore I live for to-day,

Certain of finding at sunrise,
Guidance and help for the way;
Strength for each moment of weakness,
Hope for each throbbing of pain,
Comfort for all of my sorrow,
Sunshine and joy after rain.

The Truth Cannot be Exiled!

One day the Regent Morton summons Andrew Melville, one of the earliest heralds of the Scottish Reformation, and denounced his writings. "There will never be quietness in this country," he said, "till half a dozen of you are hanged or banished from the country." Melville replied, "Sir, threaten your courtiers in that fashion. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. The earth is the Lord’s; my fatherland is wherever well-doing is. I have been ready to give my life when it was not half as well worn, at the pleasure of my God. I lived out of your country ten years as well as in it. Yet God be glorified, it will not lie in your power to hang nor exile His truth!

The Two Tables

The Two Tables

Selected

In 1 Corinthians 10:21 we have the plain statement that “Ye cannot partake of the Lord’s table, and the table of demons.” It does not say “Ye may not;” it is an impossible thing to do. This may sound strange, but it is God’s truth and nothing can alter it.

To understand this we need to study the context, and in doing so certain things become evident; we must distinguish between the Lord’s table and, the Lord’s supper. At the former the child of God should sit and feast in spirit at all times: the latter is an occasion when we show this unitedly and visibly.

Another thing becomes clear; the writer has the subject of temptation in mind and the chapter deals with the fact that the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and cared for by God; yet with most of them He was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Five definite sins are mentioned. First they lusted after evil things, a sin that can be committed with ease by any one of us. Then they held a feast to the Lord and in doing so they introduced a golden calf, perhaps thinking of the calf whose blood was shed to bring them into covenant relationship with God: but a golden calf was a prime object of Egyptian worship, so their festival became idolatry and not a feast to the Lord at all. These things were written in order to teach us lessons, becoming both an example and a warning, and one wonders at times if such things happen today, and

whether the Lord's supper may be such a mixture that it may have nothing in it for God. Indeed verse ten appears to give a warning against speaking against God's appointed elders, a thing which is little regarded today, but a serious sin in the sight of God.

Therefore He next gives the warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," because danger is not far from each one of us, and temptations become strong. Yet God immediately reminds us that He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear and made a way for us to escape. Then Paul brings before us the statement concerning the cup which we bless and the bread which we break, which is the communion of the blood and body of Christ of which we are partakers; and, as if to illustrate the point in view, he says, "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" Why did the priest eat of the sacrifice? Obviously to gain strength to serve God in the tabernacle, and thus we can feast our soul on Christ in order to gain strength to resist temptation.

Hence the difficulty which might arise, as to why we cannot feast at both tables at once, becomes clear, because when we feast our soul on Christ and His suffering on our behalf, we react against all that Satan has for us, so that we cannot eat of the two tables at the same time.

We may sit in the assembly and eat and drink of the Lord's supper, and yet if we have been feeding our soul at the table of demons during the week, we shall certainly not find ourselves feasting at the Lord's table; indeed we shall be very nearly placing ourselves in the

position of those who eat and drink unworthily. (1 Cor. 11:27).

Is this the reason why, so often, hymn singing is prominent, while thanksgiving is in the background? or why so many are silent when they should be praising? as if it were a mournful feast instead of a joy? May God forbid! His table is enough: we need no other for our spiritual well being; and the more we habitually feed there, the more we shall overflow with thanksgiving when we are together for the God-ordained ordinance of the Supper.

The Virgin Birth Of Christ

The Virgin Birth Of Christ

Selected

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ and His Deity are inextricably bound together. Linked in Scripture with His identification as Immanuel (meaning God with us) and as the unique Son of God is the declaration of His virgin birth. Either both of these facts are true or neither of them is true. If Jesus was not virgin-born, the Bible errs. If its accounts of Christ’s birth are false, He is not the Saviour. No other conclusion can be drawn.

The Old Testament Predicts Christ’s Virgin Birth

In one of the earliest chapters of the Bible a prophecy is made concerning the virgin birth of the Redeemer. In the Garden of Eden the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because thou halt done this (tempting Eve)… I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:14-15). Observe that the seed referred to is not that of the male, which would be the normal biological process, but the seed of the woman, “her seed.”

Seven centuries prior to the nativity of our Lord the same Isaiah who predicted He would be born of a virgin affirmed His Deity when he wrote, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called

Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Father of the Ages, The Prince of Peace" (9:6). The Old Testament foretells the virgin birth of Christ and His Deity.

The New Testament Announces Christ's Virgin Birth

The very first chapter of the New Testament records the genealogy of Jesus through Abraham and David. Again and again it is stated that So-and-so begot So-and-so. There follows the account of the conception and birth of Mary's Child, beginning, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise…" (Matthew 1:18). "Now" is translated from the Greek word de which here might better be rendered "but" or "on the other hand." "Abraham begot Isaac…Isaac begot Jacob…Jacob begot Joseph… On the other hand the birth of Jesus Christ was in this way." The evangelist goes on to tell how the Angel Gabriel told Joseph, Mary's fiance, that she would give birth to a Son who would be conceived by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, and that this Jesus would save His people from their sins. Matthew states that this was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

Luke's account of the annunciation records that Gabriel, speaking to Mary about Jesus' birth, told her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The Apostle Paul placed his seal on Christ's virgin birth when he wrote, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman…" (Galatians 4:4). The New Testament affirms that Christ was virgin-born.

The Importance of Christ's Virgin Birth

If Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, then He entered the world by the same process as other men and women and therefore inherited from His parents a sinful nature. In such a circumstance He Himself would have needed a saviour. But He was born in a miraculous way. There was no sin in Him. He Himself never sinned but was completely spotless before God and men. (See e.g., John 8:28, 46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19). Bear in mind that, in order for Christ to be mankind's Redeemer, it was necessary that He, the eternal Son of God, should take on human form. Only as a man could He die for other men. Perfect in His Deity, Christ Jesus was also perfect in His humanity. For this to be so, His birth had to be supernatural, as indeed it was.

From every consideration — the revelation of the Scriptures, the sinlessness and perfection of Christ's Person, and logic itself — there can be no explanation about His birth other than that which is declared concerning Him: Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

This is the One who was born to die. He came to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He was able to die for you and me to redeem us from our sins. Make Christmas a day of committal to Him in every conceivable way.

— E. Schuyler English in The Pilgrim

The Water Of Life

MIF 12:4 (July-Aug 1980)

The Water Of Life

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13-14).

Water — 330 million cubic miles of it cover 71 percent of the earth’s surface. Yet for centuries people in arid lands have perished for lack of this life-sustaining element. And thousands are daily passing into a Christless eternity because they have not taken the water of spiritual life that our Saviour offers so freely and abundantly.

The Lord Jesus Christ in talking to the woman at the well of Sychar, said that all who drink of that water shall keep on thirsting. The water from the well symbolizes fame, wealth, worldly pleasures, and the like, for which many thirst but are never satisfied. Therefore, their supply needs to be constantly replenished. But then Christ told her of the water He offers, the living water which can quench the spiritual thirst of a longing soul so that he or she will never thirst again.

In John 7:37 we find one of our Lord’s many invitations, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” He equates thirst with a spiritual need, and whoever acknowledges a need for pardon and forgiveness finds his need met with living water.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled,” said Christ (Matt. 5:6). In order to be filled we need only do two things: COME and DRINK. The invitation is for those who have sought satisfaction in worldly pursuits and have been disappointed because they thirsted for the wrong kind of water. For those whose souls are thirsting for living water and are willing to drink, our Lord’s invitation is clear: “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). To accept this invitation is to know the blessing that Jesus Christ alone can give to those who put their trust in Him.

—Arthur F. Wilder

Thoughtfulness

Daily Bread 1971

In our self-centered world little or no thought is given to others. Sadly, this often carries over into the local assembly. Many saints seem to float along in their own little world, often occupied solely with their own difficulties or interests, giving little thought to those around them.

The apostle Paul addresses this in Philippians 2:4, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." This is, of course, not in a covetous way, but in a thoughtful way, considering others and their burdens and trials.

It has been said, "Man will go to any length so as not to have to think." We need to "think" more, and look beyond our own little world, where me, myself, and I are usually the focal point.

Three Bridges To Cross

Three Bridges To Cross

Selected

There are three bridges that science has not yet crossed. First, the bridge that leads from nothing to something. When did nothing —vacancy — first become something? Science is silent on that point. Second; when did matter show the first pulse of life; when did inorganic become organic? Science cannot help us there. And third, when did mere animal existence rise first into moral consciousness? Science cannot help us there. Revelation only can help us there. “All things were made by Him” — thus nothing became something. “In Him was life” — thus life had its origin. “And the life was the light of men” — thus began moral consciousness in man. That revelation crosses all three bridges. So here John set before us in words clear and memorable the Divine dignity of Him with whom he had been accustomed to walk for three never-to-be-forgotten years in the days of His flesh.

In John 12 he tells us (referring back to Isaiah’s marvelous vision of Jehovah) — “I saw the Lord high and lifted up,” john refers back to that vision and then adds. “These things spake Isaiah when he saw His glory (i.e., Christ’s) and spake of Him. “To John, the Christ with whom he had companied and the Jehovah of Isaiah’s vision were one and the same.

When we return from the Gospel to the book of the Revelation we are shown an innumerable multitude gathered around the Throne in Heaven. There are all the

creatures and angelic orders, all the redeemed from the nations, the four and twenty elders seated about the throne and clothed in white, and the four many-eyed ones in attendance on the throne.

In the beginning of his gospel, John tells us that on the first public appearance of Christ he was bidden to "Behold the Lamb of God." Where now shall John find the Lamb of God? Shall he look amongst the company of the redeemed? They will say, "He is not here; look higher!" If he approached those four and twenty enthroned ones in radiant garments and asked; "Where is the Lamb of God?" they will say, "He is not among us; look higher!" And if he asks one of those four many-eyed living ones, he will also say, "He is not here; look higher!" Until at last, in the midst of the throne, the only One standing, whereas all around are bowed prostrate in worship — standing in the midst of the throne of God is the Lamb of God. "I am Jehovah, and My glory I will not give to another" (Isa. 42:8); yet the glory of universal dominion and worship that is due to God only are also accorded to the Lamb of God!

—J. B. Watson

TV Or Not TV

TV Or Not TV

Selected

Statisticians tell us that 98 percent of all homes in America have at least one TV set, while 85 percent have only one bathtub. On the basis of these figures, one wit has drawn the conclusion that more brains are washed than bodies. To which might be added that it is a pity viewers' brains are not washed nearly as profitably and helpfully as water washes the body.

We are told that by the time a child is 18, he or she has spent 11,000 hours in school and 15,000 hours watching television, which includes 350,000 commercials and 18,000 murders. In the average United States home a TV set is on six hours and 18 minutes each day. Adult women watch the tube an average of 30 hours and 14 minutes per week; young people 22 hours and 36 minutes per week; and children 25 hours and 38 minutes per week.

Perhaps in some localities there are other factors to consider, but if this editor were to pick the greatest single factor contributing to the decline of Sunday evening attendance in our local assemblies over the last 20 or 25 years, I would unhesitantly indict TV. As a case in point, I have had occasion to observe the impact for ill that Sunday afternoon football and the climatic "Super Bowl" (or is it better called the "Super Bore?) have had on Sunday evening attendance in a local assembly.

Not only is there decline in attendance at Sunday evening services these days, but an increasing number

assemblies over the land are abandoning the Sunday evening service altogether. In some instances everything is being packed into Sunday morning with the Breaking of Bread, Sunday School, and the Family Bible Hour (or its equivalent) following one upon another. By all means, such changes can be profitable, provided they meet the local need and the elders have genuinely sought the Lord's guidance.

Some say that the energy crisis is forcing them to cancel the Sunday evening service, and this may well be so in a few areas, but perhaps more often the energy crisis is of another kind — namely, LAZINESS! If this is a legitimate problem, why not form a few car pools? This would in turn provide an added dimension of fellowship for some on Sunday evenings.

As for controlling our TV viewing, it might be well to apply the following guidelines to every program we watch, particularly in the area of deciding the doubtful:

1. Will it glorify the Lord?

2. Does it tend to enslave?

3. Will it strengthen me against temptation

4. Is it edifying?

5. Would I want to be watching it when Christ comes?

6. Is what I am watching a form of wholesome and legitimate relaxation, or is it a diabolical waste of time?

7. Will it be a stumbling block to someone else?

8. Is it keeping me from some spiritual responsibility?

If the elders of a local assembly have agreed that there should be a Sunday evening meeting, then it is the

privileged responsibility of every member of that local fellowship to be there unless there is a legitimate reason for being absent. Down through the centuries assembly absenteeism has evidently been a problem, as it is to the present time. This is why, way back in the first century, the Spirit of God gave believers the exhortation of Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” To disobey this exhortation is a violation of the clear will of God and, therefore, sin. Selah.

Tychicus

Tychicus

Selected

During Paul’s stay in the city of Ephesus, he enjoyed the intimate fellowship and help of a number of loyal and devout brethren, and when he was forced to leave the city, several of them became his companions in his labours and travels, among these was Tychicus, in all probability a citizen of Ephesus, (Acts 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:12).

This remarkable man’s name appears five times on the honour roll of Holy Scripture. The ambition of most men generally leads to their seeking recognition by this world, but this brother is seen only in contact with the things of a higher and a more enduring world. At first he is mentioned as a companion of Paul in his travels, but later he is seen as a messenger for Paul during his imprisonment. It has been suggested that he probably carried the Ephesian and the Colossian Epistles to their destinations, and possibly the second epistle to Timothy. Here we have an example of strong attachment through deep friendship; the loyalty of Tychicus was not only during Paul’s liberty but also during his bondage. Conditions did not affect the profound affection that linked these two men of God; Tychicus was not as some, merely a friend of circumstance. In the references that God the Holy Spirit has made to him, there is sufficient said about him to teach us many lessons of divine value.

Spiritual Relationship:

To the saints at Ephesus Paul speaks in the most commendable manner of his companion, Tychicus; he calls him a beloved brother. Paul by nature was a Jew of no mean standing, a self-righteous pharisee, while Tychicus appears to have been a Gentile. What bond could possibly hold together two men of such different racial characteristics and such divergent religious practices? Nothing but the cross of Christ, for there the middle wall of partition had been removed (Eph. 2:14). Wherever these two men travelled, they were the living evidence of the fact that an objective faith in Christ unites us in the one Body, the Church; they were a testimony to the certainty that Christ is our peace, and that He has made in Himself one new man.

In both the Ephesian and the Colossian epistles he is called “a beloved brother,” but inasmuch as the definite article is used by the Apostle here, “The beloved brother,” this singles him out as, that much loved and esteemed brother. Here we have a hint of the genial disposition of Tychicus. He was such that all loved him, his very character drew forth their affection.

Spiritual Service:

In the same passages (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), Paul tells the saints that Tychicus is “a faithful minister.” The word “minister here must not be limited to the lesser ministry of attending to temporal things, for Epaphras, the great evangelist and founder of the Colossian assembly, is also referred to by the same term (diaconos, deacon). An under-worker appears to be an implied meaning here, and therefore suggests, one who works under Christ as his Divine Master. Tychicus had his eye ever upon his

Lord, an ear open for His voice, a heart submissive to His will, and a desire to help in His cause. In all this he was faithful. As a minister he received duties and services from his Master, even Christ, and in faithfulness he performed these duties.

The passage in the Colossian epistle reveals something of his work. In chapter 4:8 he was sent to enquire into the state of the saints, and then to comfort them. It would appear that Tychicus was the answer to the prayer of the Apostle in chapter 2:2. This spiritual man was one who could act as a channel of comfort to the people of God. The word “to comfort” employed in these passages has a threefold meaning which embraces the thoughts of strengthening, encouraging, and comforting. To be such a comfort to the people of God demands that one minister the Word of God according to the Divine standard, “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3). To edify is to strengthen; to exhort is to encourage, and to comfort is to console the Lord’s beloved people. Ministry of such quality stands out in contrast to that which irritates the saints, and to that which produces unnecessary discussion and dissension among them.

Spiritual Fellowship:

No higher recommendation could be given by a servant of Christ to his brother than that which Paul here gave to Tychicus, “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant” (Col. 4:7). While the expression “a faithful minister,” reveals the attitude of Tychicus to Christ as his Master, the phrase “a fellowservant,” manifests his attitude toward Paul. He had a partnership

in the service of the Apostle. This means much, for as such he must have fellowhsip in Paul's thoughts, travels, trials, and in his joys, no matter what these might be. How can two walk together except they be agreed. No more impressive relationship is to be seen than that of two sincere and earnest servants of Christ who have become one not only in Christ, but one for Christ.

Spiritual Courage:

Bearing in mind that Tychicus was from Ephesus in Asia, do we not see his valour as we compare the weakness of his fellowtownsmen during Paul's last trial. After the Apostle's preliminary hearing before Nero, he wrote to Timothy, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1:15). How refreshing to see perfect loyalty inspite of general failure. Tychicus of Asia alone had remained faithful and steadfast to the dear aged Apostle.

It would appear from the evidence of 2 Tim. 4:19 and 1 Cor. 16:8, that Timothy was present at Ephesus. Paul longed to see him. Who would face the difficulties of the way and carry the letter from Paul to Timothy? Who would relieve Timothy of his many duties, permitting the journey to and the time at Rome? The answer is found in the beloved brother, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus." He is still the courageous faithful minister and fellowservant, still the messenger of the imprisoned Apostle, carrying inspired letters which by his care were preserved through those long weary journeys. It was through men like Tychicus that the Holy Scriptures were in many cases preserved and forwarded to us.

Tychicus for more than ten years had laboured with Paul, now he takes his last farewell, for in a short time

Paul, at the Three Fountains beyond Rome will lay down his life for his blessed Lord. Tychicus likewise rests from his strenuous labours, but he being dead yet speaketh.

Union and Unity

Union and Unity

The interesting expression “knit together” occurs twice in the Epistle to the Colossians, and these occurences picture two separate pictures of God’s people; the first, the phalanx as formed by the ancient Macedonian army; the second, the human body.

It is not difficult to envisage these, and this we shall do, but in an inverted order, the body first and then the phalanx.

The body suggests an organic union, the phalanx an operative unity. The body suggests a union in Christ; the phalanx, a unity for Christ. The body emphasizes the union of life in Christ; the phalanx, the unity of love through Christ.

The Spirit of God uses the picture of the body correctively to rectify what was wrong at Colosse, and He uses the picture of the phalanx defensively to protect the saints from further danger.

At Colosse there were those who were not holding Christ as Head of the Church. These were attempting to beguile God’s people; therefore, Paul shows the importance of acknowledging the Headship of Christ. As the head is necessary to the body, even so is Christ to the Church.

Paul mentions Christ as Head, and then mentions the Body in all its parts knit together. He explains that sustenance flows from Christ the Head into all parts of the Body, the Church, through all the joints and unions

of the many several parts. Finally, he states that it is in this way that the Body grows.

The head is the centre of the entire nerve system of the human body. Through the sensory nerves the head knows exactly what is going on in any part of the body; through the motory nerve system it directs the movements of any member. In like manner, the Church is dependent upon Christ her Head for comfort, blessing, growth, and guidance.

Unmoveable

Unmoveable

Adapted by Henry Palmieri

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

"The verb ginomai," says W. E. Vine, rendered "be ye" means "become ye"; that is, "prove yourselves to be." This indicates that up to this time their spiritual state had presented a contrast to what is now enjoined upon them.

The Greek word, hedraics, stedfast, literally means to be firmly seated, and is used to imply a fixed purpose of heart, a fixed purpose against allurements to evil. The Greek word, amelakinetos, unmoveable, suggests adherence to the faith against forces that would turn one aside from it, from allegiance to Christ.

The work of the Lord is to be distinguished from work for the Lord. The Lord's work is that which He gives us to do. Much may be done for Him which we imagine to be service rendered to Him, but which is not conformed to His will and therefore is not His work in reality. The motive may be sincere, and the activity constant, but we need to be sure that what is done is according to the Scripture of truth for only such work is given by Him.

If the Lord has given you a work to do, Satan will do everything in his power to hinder it. He may present other things more enticing, such as making money and

getting rich. He may assault you with slander, torment you with abuse, and set you to work defending your character. (This is the pride we must all watch out for). Remember, of all the prides, such as pride of race, and of face, the pride of grace is the worst. He may employ pious persons to lie about you, editors to assail you, and excellent men to slander you. You will have all the scribes and pharisees combined against you, the Sanhedrin judging you, and Judas standing by ready to sell you to your enemies for thirty pieces of silver. If you are doing the Lord's work, can you expect anything else? Did He not say: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Mt. 10:36)? And "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake" (Mt. 10:22)? Can you not see that all these things are Satan's means to hinder your work, that he is really not fighting against you but against God? (Acts 5:39).

Go on about your work. If you stop to kick at every dog that barks at your heels, you will not make much progress. If you are doing the Lord's work, no one can stop it, but Satan will use every possible means to hinder. He may come as a roaring lion to scare you, or as an angel of light to entice you. Be stedfast, unmoveable. Let us be like the great Apostle who could say, "None of these things move me" (Acts 20:24).

Reputation is what men think of you. Character is what God knows you to be. He never told you to defend either. If you seek to defend yourself, Satan will have accomplished his purpose. Keep on with your work, God will take care of your (His) interests.

You may be assaulted, slandered, wronged, insulted, wounded and rejected. You may be abused by foes,

forsaken by friends, despised and rejected of men, as your Lord was, but He set His face stedfastly to go up to Jerusalem. Let the sceptics howl and rage but “Keep on becoming steadfast, unshaken” (A.T.R.). Though all the powers of darkness be arrayed against you; in vain the enemy doth oppose. If you try to appease the wrath of man or to please him, you will be pleasing Satan. “If I yet pleased men, I should not be the bond-servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10, T. New.).

Be sure you are in the will of the Lord as revealed in His Word and then go straight forward, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, till you finish the work He gave you to do. Then you will hear Him say; “Well done thou good and faithful bond-servant” (Mt. 25:21, T. New). Those who seem to be your best friends may prove to be your worst enemies. (Jer. 17:5). They will often seek to turn you aside from God’s way to their’s. Listen to the voice of God, not man. “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” Let the Lord Jesus Christ be your object, forgetting the things that are behind, —and on both sides (Phil. 3:13,14).

Christians, in your sev’ral stations

Dutiful to all relations,

Give to each his proper due.

Let not their unkind behaviour

Make you disobey your Saviour;

His command’s the rule for you.

Adapted — Henry Palmieri

Warning, It's Coming!

A Gospel Tract

Mr. Truman lived five miles from Mount Saint Helens on the edge of Spirit Lake. Experts expected the mountain to explode at any time and repeatedly informed those living in the area of the great danger. Despite the many warnings, Mr. Truman stayed. Perhaps he felt it would never happen, or if it did happen, it would not be as destructive as predicted.

On Sunday, May 18, 1980, it happened. An unbelievable explosion took place, blowing away the top 1,300 feet of the mountain. 400 million tons of ash were thrown into the earth's atmosphere. Trees which towered 150 feet high were blown over like match sticks as far away as 17 miles. Over 200 square miles were devastated. A massive mud slide pushed water out of the lake, causing a 200-foot high wall of water to crash down through the valley below.

Extremely hot gas, ash, and rock traveled at the speed of 200 miles per hour, destroying everything in its path. Automobiles miles away were buried, with occupants suffocated by ash. Two photographers who were as far away as eight miles from the blast were killed. Yakima, a city 85 miles from the blast had midnight blackness at 9:30 in the morning due to the pillar of ash which was over 10 miles high.

And yes, Harry Truman was killed and his home destroyed. In fact, neither he, nor his home were ever found again. For whatever reason, he just would not listen and ignored all the warnings.

Let me ask you a question, "Are you ignoring God's warning to you?' The Bible repeatedly warns us of coming judgment. Like Mr. Truman, many just do not want it to happen. Noah warned the people of his day that judgment was coming, and they laughed at him. They thought he was just an old fool. Listen to what Jesus Christ said about Noah's day, and how He likens it to when He will come back as the Son of Man to judge the earth.

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26-27)

Just like with Mount Saint Helens, warnings were sent out, but the people ignored them. Then suddenly, without notice, the judgment came. This will be true when Christ comes again in judgment.

Now not only will Christ judge the earth, but everyone who has rejected Him as their Savior, will face Him as their Judge. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27).

Are you putting off preparing for that day? Do you think it will not affect you, and that somehow you will be okay? Like Mr. Truman, it would be very foolish on your part to ignore the coming judgment. It will come, and it will come suddenly. Why not be prepared?

Why not open your Bible and see how you can be saved from God's righteous judgment. Like. the ark, God has provided a way of escape from judgment for those who respond to His warnings.

The following few verses from the Bible are printed here to get you started. After reading them we suggest you read the Gospel of John.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Luke 19:10 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved....." John 10:9 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25 "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...." Acts 16:30-31 'For by grace are ye saved through faith - and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

What Do You Think About Death?

What Do You Think About Death?

Dr. Bob Bremner

…A Christian doctor’s perspective on death.

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My first contact with death was at age four. I had a little sister 14 months old. As though it were yesterday, I can still recall her holding a doll in one arm, a pillow in the other and toddling around the house. She died and my last memory of her was seeing her lifeless form lying in a cheap casket in my grandparents’ parlor. There were little circular pieces of cardboard over her eyes (the way it used to be done).

That made an indelible impression on me — one which likely later influenced my going into medicine. I was a member of a family unit that had just lost its only little girl because of infantile diarrhea and dehydration. And every member of the family felt the impact of DEATH!

Some time ago I was called to the emergency room of the hospital to see a lady who had been brought in by ambulance. She was dead when I arrived. According to her medical history she had most likely died of a coronary thrombosis. I knew neither her nor her relatives, so was not involved intimately with them in their loss. But she was someone’s daughter, sister, wife or mother. Deaths like this happen all of the time, so often that it is easy to become calloused. I examined her body. It was still warm, but had no circulation. What was she like? In what ways would her relatives and friends

miss her? Her watch was still running. Her life had run out, but time was going on. Time was undaunted by the death of a loved one, a wife or mother.

What is death? “It is the permanent ending of all life in a person, plant or animal”, according to the dictionary. But there is much discussion about the definition of death, especially in the past few years since organ transplants are now available. When is the person dead, but the heart, kidneys and other organs not dead? The practical and legal implications of this are great.

Although we may not know in every case exactly when to say that a person is dead, we do know that a very few minutes of cardiac arrest or total circulatory collapse leads to irreversible damage to the vital structures: the brain, heart, kidneys, etc. A certain amount of deprivation of circulation to the brain will make it so that it can perhaps still maintain the life functions of metabolism, but it will never be able to think. However, it is not dead. A little more deprivation, however, would have destroyed its ability to maintain respiratory and circulatory functions.

Much of our confusion about the precise time of death has been brought about by our scientific advancement of the past few years. This was not even an issue 20 years ago. The exact minute that the blood stopped flowing was rarely ever of legal or scientific consequence.

When Does Life Begin?

Of course, there is increasing confusion at the opposite end of the spectrum of life, although that is not the subject of this article. When does life begin? Is it when the egg and the sperm unite? Is it at six months

gestation, as the Supreme Court recently declared? Is it when the baby takes its first breath? The answer to that question goes much beyond any court. Until very recently any destructive procedure to a fertilized egg was classified as abortion, which was a criminal act punishable as murder. But the definition of the beginning of life has now become relative, with a destroying of the fetus no longer classified as criminal. So this end of the spectrum has become hazy.

Euthanasia has been variously described, but usually has meant an active participation in mercifully hastening the death of someone who is in misery, in colloquial jargon called “mercy killing”. Some have extended it to getting rid of any older people who are unproductive or undesirable. But it has been generally understood to include an active participation. More recently the term “passive euthanasia” has been popularized. Included in that term is the act of withdrawing resuscitative procedures already begun. In other words, if a person has suffered such a deterioration of his life-sustaining mechanisms (heart, brain, respiratory, circulatory centers, etc.) that he can’t exist without artificial resuscitative measures, he is categorized as being the subject of passive euthanasia when the artificial supports, tubes and machines are removed.

So, the changes in definitions and absolutes have tended to confuse and make relative many things at both ends of the spectrum of life. And this confusion is superimposed on an already emotionally laden experience.

Joseph Bayly, in The View From A Hearse, demonstrates so well his warmth, empathy and understanding in the following passage:

“One of my early memories is of being led into my grandmother’s room in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to give her a final kiss. She was dying, I had been told, ‘so be quiet and behave’. That scene impresses me today with its Old Testament quality. Grandma, an imposing person, was conscious, slightly raised on a bolster, her white hair braided and carefully arranged on the quilt she had made as a young woman. The bed, a four-poster, was the one in which she had slept for fifty years, in which her four children had been conceived and born. The wide-boarded floor creaked its familiar creak, the kerosene lamp flickered on the massive bureau, a bouquet of sweet peas from Grandma’s garden made the room faintly fragrant. The old lady was surrounded by her children and grandchildren. In a few hours she died.

“Forty years later my children were with their grandfather when he had his last heart attack. We gave him oxygen, called the doctor and then the ambulance came. The men put Grandpa on a stretcher, carried him out of the house and that was the last his grandchildren saw of him. Children are excluded from hospitals. In the intensive care unit of the hospital, my wife and I were with him until visiting hours were over. The mechanics of survival — tubes, needles, oxygen system, electronic pacemaker — were in him. Grandpa died alone, at night, after visiting hours. His grandsons had no chance to give him a final kiss, to feel the pressure of his hand on their heads. In this generation death has moved out of the home to the hospital. Doctors and nurses have replaced the family. A dying father has become a

terminal patient. If the end seems imminent and the family members are present, they are usually hustled out of the room. Why? To shield them from death's shock, to give medical personnel a free hand if any extreme measures are necessary and perhaps to avoid a traumatic experience for other patients if a surviving relative should go to pieces. All of this makes sense. And it creates problems."

In her book, On Death and Dying, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says, "Paradoxical as it may sound, while society has contributed to our denial of death, religion has lost many of its believers in a life after death, i.e. immortality." And she is merely making an accurate observation, not advancing a cause.

Dr. Kubler-Ross has probably done more to codify and clarify what happens to the emotions of a dying patient and the relatives, than anyone, in her work with the terminally ill. She categorizes patient reactions as: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

She has found the above five stages to be typical and to occur generally in that order. I certainly concur. Realizing this, one can understand the attitude of the dying patient better.

Facing Up To Death

Similar stages are often seen in relatives. Only a short time ago I had just finished speaking at a conference in Chicago, when a lady who has reason to believe that she has terminal cancer came to me asking how she could help her husband get through stage one in his denial of

her condition. She is confident that he has been told, but he won't admit it to her.

Many relatives do not want the patient to know the seriousness of the disease. Does the doctor obey the relative and withhold the information from the patient? Does the insecure or anxious relative have a right to insist that Mom's life be prolonged another few days with intravenous fluids at any cost? What about the patient or relative who wants the course of suffering shortened by active euthanasia? When are resuscitative measures to be stopped?

And how about the medical personnel involved? How does a doctor or nurse deal with their own attitudes toward death? How can they empathize without becoming so emotionally involved that they can't render good care? How truthful should they be? Must we always have the dying patient in the hospital? Is there no longer any place for death in the home with its familiar surroundings? Or is that really so desirable? Medical people are just that—people—and they have certain insecurities, fears and guilts of their own. They frequently avoid the patient to the point where the patient's total emotional needs are not met.

With these comments on death, brief though they may be, let us now direct our thinking to the linkage of earthly life with life after death. The previous quote from Dr. Kubler-Ross, a Jewish psychiatrist, said, "… religion has lost many of its believers in a life after death, i.e. immortality." She had made a scientific study and observation of dying patients and relatives. But I would like to go from this scientific approach to a very

practical approach and an application that everyone should at least consider.

If one is absolutely confident that there is nothing beyond the grave, that there is no life after death, he will adopt some philosophy relative to that fact. But, if one has tried to build a “faith in no-faith”, tried to prove to himself that there is nothing further, but doesn’t feel at all confident in that conclusion, there will be much anxiety. Since, naturally, neither the believer in immortality nor the believer in no immortality have had the experience of death, they both are having faith in something. The non-believer is having faith that this is the end, death will claim its own, and the world will go on as if one had never lived. It is just a matter of events and time.

Blaise Pascal (1623-62) said, “Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of man.” And man goes on fearing. Renowned philosophers have come to such conclusions as: “There is no way out of the human dilemma”, “Suicide is the only logical choice” and other similar conclusions.

Is There Life After Death?

If there is no life after death, I would have to agree. I have known many thinking men who have not only arrived at such a conclusion, but have committed suicide. The head of our psychiatry unit in medical school, the head of a nearby psychiatry unit and one of my close colleagues each committed suicide.

Believers in various religions have different attitudes to death. After many years as a believer in Jesus Christ, and having watched many people die, I would like to state the Christian view of death and of life.

Jesus Christ, who changed this world more than any man who ever lived, said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”. That sounds like a very narrow and dogmatic proclamation. When He used the definite article “the”, rather than “a”, He narrowed the field and broadened His claims. For us to make such a fantastic claim would immediately brand us as madmen. But He backed up His life and claims with the resurrection.

In Romans 3:23 and 6:23 Paul says that we are all sinners, and because of that we face the natural result separation from God eternally. Jesus made such statements as, “I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly…,” “He who believes in the Son has eternal life…” and “he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” These claims are just the opposite to the fatalistic attitude of non-existence after death. They deserve investigation. But how does one obtain this eternal life? How does one come to this state of believing?

The familiar picture, based on Revelation 3:20, shows Jesus standing at the door of man’s heart asking for admission. He is knocking on a door which has the only handle on the inside. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” Jesus Christ promises to come in and give everlasting life.

I did this and it has given peace, purpose and, I am confident, eternal life. I have seen Christians die, assuring me very calmly that the future looked bright. Their confidence was unshaken. If Jesus Christ does give eternal life, isn't that the way it should be? This is not a scientific study, and I have never seen anyone return from the dead; but I am impressed with the claims of Christ, the abundant life He gives on earth, the claims for eternal life and with the calm way Christians die.

With Paul, I can say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he can keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). That confidence gives me strength to help the dying person or relative, regardless of age, social strata, or personal faith, and to let them know that Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead, can give eternal life… victory over death… if they will personally invite Him into their heart and life, giving their allegiance to Him for the moments or days remaining.

You Can See Beyond The Grave

I, as a physician, have the privilege of sharing my experience and convictions with any one, and they with me. I should not, and must not, ignore or discriminate against a patient who is not inclined to consider the feasibility of eternal life. If there should be any one thing characteristic of the Christian, it should be love. Jesus said, "… by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35). And what more important time to love and show real concern than at the hour of another's death? "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Yes, the Christian is a human, with normal fears and anxieties, who will and should demonstrate emotion at the loss of a loved one. He is not superhuman. But he is able to see beyond the grave to a life in the future. And the presence of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life makes him eternal, giving him confidence during the stress of the loss and giving him a love beyond his own strength to share with others in their loss.

What Is God Like?

What Is God Like?

Selected

· GOD IS PERSONAL- He possesses all the qualities of personality—intelligence, emotions, and self-determining will—in their ultimate and infinitely wonderful forms (Isaiah 46:10; Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16). Though immeasurably greater than we are, He can relate to us and we can relate to Him with our minds, hearts, and wills (Deuteronomy 6:5).

· God Is Eternal—His inestimable value is seen in the mind boggling fact that He is from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2). Unlike any other being He never had a beginning and He will never have an end. He is, for every generation of worshipers, the Ever-living One.

· God Is Spirit—Jesus taught us that God cannot be contained or limited by physical places, forms, or buildings (John 4:24). As Spirit, He does not exist in a body that can be seen or touched. Therefore, He must not be reduced to a physical image of any kind.

· God Is All-Knowing—He is unlimited in His knowledge (Psalm 147:4, 5; Matthew 10:29, 30; Romans 11:33). He knows everything there is to know about us, our world and the universe. His knowledge is not hindered by locked doors, darkness, or distant places.

· God Is All Powerful—He can do anything that He chooses to do (Genesis 18:14; Psalm 115:3; Matthew 19:26). No good thing is beyond His ability to do. No

army, government, or civilizations can frustrate His purposes.

· God Is Everywhere-Present—There is no hiding or escaping—no way to avoid the all-powerful One. No locked room or secret meeting place can keep Him out. No matter where you go in the universe, God is there (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7, 8; Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Acts 17:27, 28).

· God Is Sovereign—regardless of the apparent turmoil, confusion, or chaos in our world, the God we worship is One who does all things according to His own will and purpose (Isaiah 46:10, 11; Daniel 4:35; Eph. 1:11). He is, has been, and always will be in control of all of history. Nothing can escape His ever-present hand.

· God Is Unchanging—In His character, in His purpose, in His ability, God never changes (James 1:17). He has never been nor ever will be less good, less loving, less true, or less powerful. The God that Abraham praised and relied on is the same God we worship.

What Would Jesus Say to a Suicide Bomber - Anonymous

On the afternoon of March 5, 2003, Mahmoud Humdan

Kwasma stepped on to bus #37 in Haifa, Israel, and detonated explosives strapped to his body. Fifteen Israelis, including Abigail Litle, a believer in Yeshua haMashiach (the Lord Jesus Christ) were killed. What would Jesus say to the suicide bomber?

Jesus might say, “There was a certain suicide bomber who was clothed with an explosive belt and full of hatred. But there was also a thirteen-year-old girl named Abigail, full of life and love for people, both Israelis and Arabs. Desiring to see peace between these people, she joined the Children Teaching Children program at the Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva (Matt. 5:9). Moreover, she had the answer to peace in the Middle East. The real Road Map to Peace was narrow because it only went through Me, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6, 7; Matt. 7:13,14; Rom. 5:1). For I have said, ‘I Am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’ (John 14:6) and ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life’” (John 3:16).

“So it was that the young girl died in a horrific explosion, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The suicide bomber also died when he blew himself up. And being in torments in Hades (Hell)

L (II Pet. 3:9), he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Abigail ‘safe in the arms of Jesus.’

Then he cried and said, ‘Father Ibrahim, the one who is buried in my hometown of Hebron, have mercy on me. This is not Paradise and there were not 70 virgins waiting for me when I got here! Send Abigail that she may dip the tip of her finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’”

“But Abraham said, ‘Mahmoud, remember that in your lifetime you rejected my Seed, the Lord Jesus (Gal. 3:16). On the other hand, when I believed that God would send a Redeemer, it was accounted to me for righteousness; so also Abigail, when she trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior, God declared her righteous as well’” (Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:6-9; Phil. 3:3-9; Rom. 4:1-5).

“Abraham went on to say, ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’”

“Then Mahmoud said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send Abigail to my father’s house that she may testify to my mother, lest she also come to this place of torment. [My father and two brothers are in jail]. My mother is telling everybody, “Do not treat those who have died for the path of Allah as dead, but rather as living with Allah and being fed by his hand.” That is not so, she has been deceived, for I am thirsty, in torment, and alone!’”

“Abraham said to him, ‘They have Musa and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And Mahmoud said, ‘No, father Ibrahim; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent (change their minds).’ But he said to

him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead. In fact, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, in love, died on Calvary’s Cross to pay for all your sins and bodily rose from the dead, yet you were not persuaded, and did not put your trust in Him’.”

Any similarities to the account in Luke 16:19-31 is purely intentional.

-Anonymous-

When I Survey The Wondrous Cross

Isaac Watts was born in 1674, the first of nine children. His father, a well–educated deacon in the dissenting Congregational Church of Southampton, England, was imprisoned for being a dissenter.

Watts had a bright and inquiring mind. By the age of twelve he had studied four languages in addition to English. He spoke very easily in rhyme, to the point of being an irritation to his father, who threatened him with a spanking if he continued. When Watts continued, his father carried out his threat, after which Issac responded, "O father, do some pity take, and I will no more verses make."

At the age of 15 he complained to his father about the dull and uninspired singing by the congregation. (What might he think today?) His father challenged him to write something better. He preceded to write one new hymn per week for the next two years. Most of them from the Psalms, including "Jesus Shall Reign," and "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Later he began to write hymns based on Biblical facts and doctrine. In 1707, at the age of thirty-three, he wrote, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Watts ultimately composed over 600 hymns.

Have you surveyed the cross lately?

When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Lord of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the cross of Christ, my God;

All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down;

Did e’er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns composed so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were an off’ring far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my heart, my life, my all.

Who Did Jesus Come to Save?

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.... 1 Timothy 1:15

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Mark 2:17 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6 What did Jesus do to save them?

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

1 Corinthians 15:3

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Peter 2:24 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.... 1 Peter 3:18 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:28

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Timothy 2:6 But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Hebrews 9:26 How can they be saved?

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.... Acts 3:19 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts 16:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:31 Have you ever repented of your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

Why Worthwhile?

MIF 15:5 (Sept-Oct 1983)

Why Worthwhile?

Selected

Reasons Why We Should Study Truth

Concerning The Second Coming Of Our Lord

1. It is a pre-eminent doctrine of the New Testament, referred to no less than three hundred times; which is an emphasis laid on no other single doctrine except it be that of our redemption through the sacrificial death of Christ.

2. It is used by the Holy Spirit as the incentive to practically every Christian virtue or grace named in the New Testament.

3. It is the key to the understanding of the whole Bible, especially the prophets and the psalms.

4. It illuminates as nothing else is able to do the dark and perilous times in which we are now living.

5. It feeds and satisfies as does no other doctrine the love of the regenerated heart for the Person of our Lord and Saviour, whom we desire to look upon, when we shall be like Him:

6. It is associated with the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection and glorifying of our bodies, and our entrance upon those rewards of grace which He hath promised to them that love Him.

7. It is not only the hope of the Church, but the only relief to the world from the dominance of sin, because it will establish the Kingdom of God on the earth, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

8. It is the time of Christ's manifestation to all men, the overthrow of His enemies, and the final triumph of His holy cause.

Every one of these eight facts is capable of abundant substantiation in Holy Scripture, and they lay upon Christians everywhere an obligation to be intelligent in this truth, the seriousness of which cannot be estimated.

—James M. Gray

Will it Make a Monkey out of You?

Many scientists and professors speak of “evolution” as if it were scientific fact. This is far from the truth. They tell us that the universe is the result of a “big bang,” but they never explain where the explosive materials came from! When they tell us such things they are no longer speaking as scientists, but as philosophers. They “believe” this is how things came into existence, but they cannot prove it by scientific means, since science is based on that which is observable and repeatable.

Is it reasonable to believe that the orderly universe is the result of a chaotic event such as a “big bang”? Would we believe that the Webster Dictionary is the result of an explosion at a printing plant? Would we believe a complex watch is the result of an explosion at a watch factory? Of course not! Why then would we believe that an orderly universe is the result of a “big bang”?

Where in nature does a lower order of life produce a higher one? Science itself teaches us that things in this universe deteriorate with time, not improve. Why then would we believe that an ape evolved into a man?

The fossil chain, which men say proves evolution, has huge gaps in it. These gaps are filled with man’s “assumptions,” which are far from scientific fact. In other words it takes “faith” to believe in evolution! One has to believe a report about that which he cannot see or prove scientifically—this is faith!

Is the theory of evolution worthy of such faith? A number of scientists are starting to say that evolution is not worthy of such faith. It is simply not believable.

Why then do men believe in evolution. The answer is simple—it discredits the Bible and eliminates God! With God eliminated man is only responsible to himself. He is free to live as he pleases, and there is no penalty for his sin. The Bible responds to this thinking when it says, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” (Psalm 53:1)

The Bible tells us that God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1) This too requires faith, but the Bible is a firm foundation for our faith. It has been one hundred percent accurate in its many predictions. It was written by over 40 authors, most of whom did not know each other, and yet it forms one unified story. It has sold more copies than any book in history. It has changed more lives than any book in history! It is believable!

The truth is that man is responsible to his Creator, and that man has failed in this responsibility. The Bible says, “All have sinned.” It also tells us that the penalty for sin is death and eternal separation from God.

However, the Bible also contains good news. It tells us that God, Who cannot and will not overlook our sins, has sent His Son into this world to pay the penalty of our sins. Since Christ was without sin He could die in our place. If we acknowledge our sin against God, and accept the provision He has made through His Son’s death on the cross, He will forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

Who will you believe? An infinite God or finite man? Don’t let evolution make a monkey out of you! Your eternal destiny is at stake!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Read the Gospel of John to see how you can be saved from your sins and have eternal life.

Wonderful Counsellor

MIF 8:6 (Nov-Dec 1976)

Wonderful Counsellor

Selected

The office which our precious Lord Jesus sustains is “Counsellor” (Isaiah 9:6). Now there are numberless things before us continually in our earthly pilgrimage regarding which we need “counsel,” we need advice; and then under these circumstances we should go to our Lord Jesus Christ and say to Him: “My Lord, my precious Saviour, I am ignorant; now what am I to do? Thou art my Counsellor; now show me clearly and distinctly how to act under these circumstances.” And what will be the result? We shall be taught.

But our danger is to think ourselves wise to say “I have lived many years and know how to act; I am a man of experience.” This is the very way to make mistakes, to be left to ourselves; but, feeling our ignorance, what we have to do is to own that we are little ignorant children and to ask the Lord to teach us. When the Apostle John was asked a question by one of the elders, he said, “Sir, thou knowest,” in other words, “I do not know,” and as soon as he acknowledged his ignorance he was taught.

And thus it will be with regard to ourselves directly there is found in us a heart of humility so that we come asking of God that He would tell us, we shall find what it is to have a Counsellor in Heaven.

You need never to take a step in the dark. If you do, you are sure to make a mistake. Wait, Wait, WAIT till you

have light. Remind the Lord Jesus that as He is Counsellor to the Church of God that He will be in your particular case Counsellor and Guide, and will direct you. And if you patiently wait, believingly, expectantly wait, you will find that the waiting is not in vain and that the Lord will prove Himself a Counsellor both wise and good.

— George Muller

Worldliness

Worldliness

Selected

The following extract from Neander's Church History may be of help to those who find that pleasures of the world are robbing them of their joy in Christ.

"A condemnation was passed on all the public exhibitions of that period — on the pantomines, the dramas, the chariot and foot races and the various amusements of the circus and theatre. Such was the prevailing and passionate fondness of the Romans at that time for theatrical entertainments, that a man was at once looked upon as a Christian simply if he absented himself wholly from the theatre. Theatrical spectacles were considered as an appendage of idolatry, by virtue of their origin from heathen rites, and of their connection with many of the pagan festivals. Among the pomps of idolatry or devil worship which the Christians, when enrolled in the ranks of Christian soldiers, were obliged to renounce by their baptismal vow, these spectacles were particularly included. Moreover, much occurred in them which was revolting to the moral feelings and decency of Christians; and, even if this were not the case, still the spending of whole hours on mere nonsense, the unholy spirit which reigned in these assemblies, the wild uproar of the congregated multitude, seemed unsuited to the holy seriousness of the Christian's priestly character. The Christians did, in truth, consider themselves as priests, consecrated for their whole life to God, as temples of the Holy Spirit; whatever, therefore, was alien to that Spirit, for whose

indwelling they were to keep their hearts always ready, must be avoided. ‘God has commanded,’ says Tertullian, ‘that the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit essentially tender and gentle, should be tended with tranquility and gentleness, with quiet and peace; that it should not be disturbed by passion, fury, anger, and emotions of violent grief.’ How can such a Spirit consist with the spectacles? For no spectacle passes off without some violent agitation of the passions. No one who goes to the play thinks of anything else than to see and be seen. Is it possible, while listening to the declamation of the actor, to think on the sentence of a prophet, or in the midst of the song of an eunuch mediate of a psalm? If every kind of immodesty is abominable, how can we allow ourselves to listen to that which, inasmuch as we know that every idle and unprofitable word is condemned by our Lord, we dare not speak?”

The above is quoted from Neander’s Church History, Volume 1, pages 365-366, and Is submitted by Donald B. Moffatt.

Youth And The Risen Christ

Youth And The Risen Christ

Selected

It was yet dark on that memorable first day of the week when Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre and found the stone rolled away. The dawn brought enough light for Peter and John to see the order of the grave clothes inside the empty tomb, but there was no sunshine penetrating the gloomy hearts of the weeping women, or those of the despairing disciples who mourned the loss of their Lover and Leader. Praise God! That day did not miss, however, the resplendent sunrise of the glorious truth, The Lord is risen indeed! “Then were the disciples glad,” says John, “when they saw the Lord.” (John 20:20).

The resurrection became the theme of the early heralds of the gospel. A careful reading of the Book of the Acts will reveal the frequency with which they preached of Jesus and the resurrection. Paul, likewise, in his definition of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3) states, “That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

The resurrection is the irrefutable testimony that Jesus is all that He claimed to be, and not a mere impostor, as His enemies had suggested He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead His own as well as that of others (Rom. 1:3). Little wonder, therefore, that the early apostles laid such

stress on this glorious fact. It was the foundation of their faith and the basis of their argument.

To a young believer today, what does the resurrection mean? Beyond being a well-established historical fact, has it any real importance to us?

First of all, it is the proof that our sins have been put away by His sacrificial death. Romans 4:25 tells us that He was delivered for our offences, and that He was raised again for our justification. Having learned from the Word of God that our sins were laid upon Jesus, the dying Lamb of Calvary, we see Him now, by faith, in the presence of God the Father, where sin can never enter. His exalted position is evidence that He finished the work by which the stain of guilt has been blotted out forever, and that we are made, in the sight of God, as though we had never sinned. A simple definition of what it is to be justified has been given as, “just-if-I’d never sinned, but this, while blessedly true, is nevertheless very weak. Justification not only pictures the sinner as if he had never sinned, but as if he had always been perfectly righteous, even as Christ is perfectly righteous. Young believer, you are complete in Him, and therefore have a perfect standing before God.

The resurrection of Christ, moreover, assures us of having a High Priest in heaven, Who ever liveth to make intercession for us, as Hebrews 7:25 states.

He, as such, can have compassion on the ignorant and upon them that are out of the way (Heb. 5:2), for He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15) He is able also to save us to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25), as He ministers mercy and grace to help in every time of need (Heb. 4:16).

In third place, let us consider the solemn statement of the Holy Spirit, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). Our Lord Jesus is the absolute Master of the believer in both spheres. Among men the relationship between master and servant ends with death, but in the purposes of God, Christ is Lord and Master in both time and Eternity, consequently, “We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10). Reflection upon these weighty words emphasizes the fact that the believer is the steward of all that has been entrusted to him: time, talent, and means; and, more over, that he must eventually give a full account of his stewardship. Oh, that Christians, young and old alike, would live in view of the Judgment Seat of their holy Lord!

The ascension of the Risen Christ is the pledge of the promise of His return, and His resurrection the pattern of the arising of those that sleep in Jesus. To His own He declared, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go… I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). To the dazed disciples, gazing up into heaven, this message of hope and joy came from two men in white, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Yes, even those in the grave will be raised by His mighty power. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thess. 4:14). “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). We, therefore, comfort one another with

these thoughts. The young Christian mother who lost her baby recently; the lad who laid aside the precious remains of his spiritually minded father, and the broken-hearted bride-to-be who followed her lover to the grave, and laid him there in certain hope of a glorious resurrection, may all be consoled by the fact that the resurrection of Christ assures us of His final triumph over death and the grave.

To summarize, the resurrection is the receipt which shows that our debt of sin is paid; that we have the assurance of salvation, and that before God we stand in all the perfections of Christ’s righteousness.

“But Now Is Christ Risen From The Dead” (1 Cor. 15:20)

MIF 14:2 (Mar-Apr 1982)

“But Now Is Christ Risen From The Dead”

(1 Cor. 15:20)

The whole system of Christianity rests upon the fact that “Christ is risen from the dead”; for “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: ye are yet in your sins.” The divinity of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection, since He was “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It would not be unreasonable to doubt His Deity if He had not risen. Moreover, Christ’s sovereignty depends upon His resurrection, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Again, our justification, that choice blessing of the covenant, is linked with Christ’s triumphant victory over death and the grave; for “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Nay, more, our very regeneration is connected with His resurrection, for we are “Begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And most certainly our ultimate resurrection rests here, for “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” If Christ be not risen, then shall we not rise; but if He be risen then they who are asleep in Christ have not

perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. Thus, the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the believer's blessings, from his regeneration onwards to his eternal glory, and binds them together. How important then will this glorious fact be in his estimation, and how will he rejoice that beyond a doubt it is established, that "now is Christ risen from the dead."

The promise is fulfill'd,

Redemption's work is done,

Justice with mercy's reconciled,

For God has raised His Son.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“Continue In Prayer” (Col. 4:2)

MIF 12:1 (Jan-Feb 1980)

“Continue In Prayer” (Col. 4:2)

Selected

It is interesting to remark how large a portion of Sacred Writ is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We scarcely open the Bible before we read, “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord”; and just as we are about to close the volume, the “Amen” of earnest supplication meets our ear. Instances are plentiful. Here we find a wrestling Jacob — there a Daniel who prayed three times a day — and a David who with all his heart called upon his God. On the mountain we see Elias; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands, and myraids of promises. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer? We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities, that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray. Dost thou want nothing? Then, I fear thou dost not know thy poverty. Hast thou no mercy to ask of God? Then, may the Lord’s mercy show thee thy misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honour of a Christian. If thou be a child of God, thou wilt seek thy

Father’s face, and live in thy Father’s love. Pray that this year thou mayest be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ, and enter oftener into the banqueting-house of His love. Pray that thou mayest be an example and a blessing unto others, and that thou mayest live more to the glory of thy Master. The motto for this year must be, “Continue in prayer.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“Delight Yourself Also In The Lord” (Psalm 37:4)

MIF 11:4 (July-Aug 1979)

“Delight Yourself Also In The Lord”

(Psalm 37:4)

The teaching of these words must seem very surprising to those who are strangers to vital godliness, but to the sincere believer it is only the inculcation of a recognized truth. The life of the believer is here described as a delight in God, and we are thus certified of the great fact that true religion overflows with happiness and joy. Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon religion as a joyful thing; to them it is service, duty, or necessity, but never pleasure or delight. If they attend to religion at all it is either that they may gain thereby, or else because they dare not do otherwise. The thought of delight in religion is so strange to most men, that no two words in their language stand further apart than holiness and delight.

But believers who know Christ, understand that delight and faith are so blessedly united, that the gates of hell cannot prevail to separate them.

They who love God with all their hearts, find that His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. Such joys, such brimful delights, such overflowing blessedness, do the saints discover in their Lord, that so far from serving Him from custom, they would follow Him though all the world cast out His name as evil. We fear not God because of compulsion; our faith

is no chain, our profession is no bondage, we are not dragged to holiness, nor driven to duty. No, our piety is our pleasure, our hope is our happiness, our duty is our delight.

Delight and true religion are as allied as root and flower; as indivisible as truth and certainty; they are, in fact, two precious jewels glittering side by side in a setting of gold.

'Tis when we taste Thy love

Our joys divinely grow,

Unspeakable like those above,

And heaven begins below.

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

“It Is Well With My Soul”

“It Is Well With My Soul”

Selected

Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888)

Interesting circumstances surround the writing of this well-loved hymn, “It Is Well with My Soul.” Its author, H. G. Spafford, a well-to-do Christian lawyer in Chicago had but a short time previously undergone some severe trials in life. Not long after the loss of his only son, the great fire in Chicago swept away his heavy investments on the shore of Lake Michigan. He then decided to have a break, and planned a European tour for himself, his wife, and their four daughters. This was in the fall of 1873. Last minute business matters detained him from accompanying his wife and girls on board the Ville de Havre, but he intended to follow them a few days later. The Ville de Havre, the largest ship afloat at that time was about two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic when at two o’clock on the morning of November 22nd, 1873, she collided with an English sailing vessel. The Ville de Havre foundered rapidly, going down inside half an hour. But before it did so, Mrs. Spafford knelt in prayer with her four children asking God that they might be saved or made ready to die, if it were His will. The four children perished but Mrs. Spafford was among the 28 survivors picked up by another sailing ship. Nine days later she landed in Cardiff and immediately cabled to her husband, “SAVED ALONE,” a meaningful message which he later had framed and hung in his office. Mr. Spafford took the first available boat to join his bereaved wife in England. In deep heart sorrow he

crossed the Atlantic, and as he imagined himself passing over the children's watery grave, he wrote the words of the hymn, When peace, like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows, like sea-billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

At that time, D.L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey were holding meetings in Edinburgh. When they received the news, they made their way south to meet with the sorrowing parents and try to offer them some comfort. They found Mr. and Mrs. Spafford completely at peace, sustained by God Himself and able to say, "It is well, God's will be done." It was back in the Spafford home in Chicago some months later that Mr. Sankey first saw the verses of this hymn and remarked, "These words are inspired. It is a hymn that millions will be singing for their inspiration and comfort." God later gave to the Spaffords three other children — a boy who died when three years old, and two girls, Bertha and Grace. In 1881, along with the two girls, Mr. and Mrs. Spafford moved to Jerusalem and, with some Christian friends, set up the American colony for the care of the sick and the destitute.

One of the first boys to be received into that home was Jacob Eliahu, a 12 year-old Spanish Jew. Jacob was an orphan. Some time later, he was adopted into the Spafford home and given the name of Jacob Spafford. Two years prior to his coming to the Spafford home, Jacob had made an interesting discovery. While playing at the pool of Siloam in Old Jerusalem, he and another boy dared each other to go into the dark tunnel through which the water entered the pool. As they advanced further and further along the dark underground

channel, they were suddenly startled by the noise of gushing water. Thus frightened, they turned back and made for the entrance. In doing so, Jacob slipped, and in trying to regain his poise discovered with the palm of his outstretched hand an inscribed stone slab on the wall of the underground channel. This stone was the now-famous Siloam inscription telling of the excavation of the famous underground water channel by King Hezekiah in 700 B.C. It is the oldest piece of Hebrew writing known today.

At that time, Jerusalem was about to be beseiged by King Sennacherib, the ruthless Assyrian; and the only water supply to the city, the Gihon spring, was outside the city wall. In order to bring the waters of the Gihon spring inside the besieged city, King Hezekiah engineered the excavation of this underground tunnel. The quarry men, working with all haste from both ends, hewed their way through the solid rock until they met in the middle, and water flowed inside the city. The Siloam inscription stone found by our young friend Jacob 2,500 years later told the story of the hewing of the water channel and in particular the dramatic meeting of the quarry men working from both ends.

Jacob's interesting discovery in the year 1880 speaks to us of a city under siege. Without, the enemy, may batter at her gates or pour scorn and taunts upon her inhabitants, yet within, "all is well." In like manner, H. G. Spafford (Jacob's father by adoption) in his hymn pictures the soul of the believer under siege. Though the storm be ever so fierce and the assault of the enemy ever so furious, yet within faith sits serene and calm — the contemplation of Calvary's full redemption and its

glorious consummation of the rapture enabling her to sing, “It is well, it is well with my soul.”

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows, like sea-billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin — oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—

My sin — not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to His cross; and I bear it no more;

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live;

If Jordan above me should roll,

No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life,

Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, ‘tis for Thee, for thy coming we wait,

The sky, not the grave, is our goal;

Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!

Blessed hope! blessed rest of my soul!

(The foregoing hymn story, written by Mr. Jack Strahan of Enniskillen, Ireland, was reprinted from Assembly Testimony magazine (July-Aug., 1983 issue). Note especially the last two stanzas of “It Is Well with My Soul”; they are not found in contemporary hymnals.)

“Pray Without Ceasing”

“Pray Without Ceasing”

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

This Scripture does not mean that we have to sit all day with folded hands and closed eyes in an attitude of formal prayer. It has reference rather to our whole attitude in life. It means keeping our lines constantly in touch with Heaven. It is to recognize that all of life is sacred and that we must live in an atmosphere that is charged with the spirit of devotion and prayer. It means to be conscious at all times of God’s presence and power and to silently commune with Him.

Sir Thomas Browne, a Christian physician who lived several hundred years ago, left in his journal this inspiring account of how he cultivated this practice of habitual prayer. “I have resolved,” he said, “to pray more and pray always, to pray in all places where quietness inviteth, in the house, on the highway, and on the street; and to know no street or passage in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten God. I purpose to take occasion of praying upon the sight of any church which I may pass, that God may be worshipped there in spirit, and that souls may be saved there; to pray daily for my sick patients and for the patients of other physicians; at my entrance to any home to say: ‘May the peace of God abide here’; after hearing a sermon, to pray for a blessing on God’s truth, and upon the messenger; upon the sight of a beautiful person to bless God for His creatures, to pray for the beauty of such an one’s soul, that God may enrich her with inward graces, and that the outward and inward

may correspond; upon the sight of a deformed person, to pray God to give him wholeness of soul, and by and by, to give him the beauty of resurrection."

If you constantly forget even the limited obligations of formal prayer, you may be quite certain that you are grossly negligent in regard to the matter of a "prayerful attitude" required by the Scripture.

(Editor's Note: The foregoing brief article was enclosed in a letter from one of my chief encouragers in the work of the Lord, Mrs. Dena Mortland of Watchung, N.J. Mrs. Mortland culled it out of a magazine some 30 or 40 years ago, having esteemed it an inspiring annotation. Frankly, it is the finest commentary I have ever read on 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and thought our readers would be blessed — and perhaps inspired — by it. The initials H.G.B. were at the bottom of the article, but I have no knowledge of the person they represent.)

“Praying In The Holy Spirit” (Jude 20)

MIF 11:5 (Sept-Oct 1979)

“Praying In The Holy Spirit”

(Jude 20)

Mark the grand characteristic of true prayer — “In the Holy Spirit.” The seed of acceptable devotion must come from heaven’s storehouse. Only the prayer which comes from God can go to God. We must shoot the Lord’s arrow back to Him. That desire which He writes upon our heart will move His heart and bring down a blessing, but the desires of the flesh have no power with Him.

Praying in the Holy Spirit is praying in fervency. Cold prayers ask the Lord not to hear them. Those who do not plead with fervency plead not at all. As well speak of lukewarm fire as of lukewarm prayer — it is essential that it be red hot. It is praying perseveringly, The true suppliant gathers force as he proceeds, and grows more fervent when God delays to answer. The longer the gate is closed, the more vehemently does he use the knocker, and the longer the angel lingers the more resolved is he that he will never let him go without the blessing. Beautiful in God’s sight is tearful, agonizing, unconquerable importunity. It means praying humbly, for the Holy Spirit never puffs us up with pride. It is His office to convince of sin, and so to bow us down in contrition and brokenness of spirit. We shall never sing Gloria in excelsis except we pray to God De jprofundis: out of the depths must we cry, or we shall never behold glory in the highest. It is loving prayer. Prayer should be perfumed with love, saturated with love — love to our

fellow saints, and love to Christ. Moreover, it must be a prayer full of faith. A man prevails only as he believes. The Holy Spirit is the author of faith, and strengthens it, so that we may pray believing God's promise. Oh that this blessed combination of excellent graces, priceless and sweet as the spices of the merchant, might be fragrant within us because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts! Most blessed Comforter, exert Your mighty power within us, helping our infirmities in prayer.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“The Evening And The Morning …” (Gen. 1:5)

MIF 13:4 (July-Aug 1981)

“The Evening And The Morning …”

(Gen. 1:5)

Was it so even in the beginning? Did light and darkness divide the realm of time in the first day? Then little wonder is it if I have also changes in my circumstances from the sunshine of prosperity to the midnight of adversity. It will not always be the blaze of noon even in my soul concerns; I must expect at seasons to mourn the absence of my former joys, and seek my Beloved in the night. Nor am I alone in this, for all the Lord’s beloved ones have had to sing the mingled song of judgment and of mercy, of trial and deliverance, of mourning and of delight. It is one of the arrangements of Divine providence that day and night shall not cease either in the spiritual or natural creation till we reach the land of which it is written, “there is no night there.” What our heavenly Father ordains is wise and good.

What, then, my soul, is it best for thee to do? Learn first to be content with this divine order, and be willing, with Job, to receive evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. Study next, to make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice. Praise the Lord for the sun of joy when it rises, and for the gloom of evening as it falls. There is beauty both in sunrise and sunset, sing of it, and glorify the Lord. Like the nightingale, pour forth thy notes. Believe that the night is as useful as the day. The dews of grace fall heavily in the night of sorrow. The

stars of promise shine forth gloriously amid the darkness of grief. Continue thy service under all changes. If in the day thy watchword be labour, at night exchange it for watch. Every hour has its duty, do thou continue in thy calling as the Lord's servant until He shall suddenly appear in His glory. My soul, thine evening of old age and death is drawing near, dread it not, for it is part of the day; and the Lord has said, "I will cover him all the day long."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“The Power of His Resurrection”

MIF 16:2 (Mar-Apr 1984)

“The Power of His Resurrection”

(Philippians 3:10)

The doctrine of the risen Saviour is exceedingly precious. The resurrection is the cornerstone of the entire building of Christianity. It is the key-stone of the arch of our salvation. It would take a volume to set forth all the streams of living water which flow from this one sacred source, the resurrection of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but to know that He has risen, and to have fellowship with Him as such — communing with the risen Saviour by possessing a risen life — seeing Him leave the tomb by leaving the tomb of worldliness ourselves, this is even still more precious. The doctrine is the basis of the experience, but as the flower is more lovely than the root, so is the experience of fellowship with the risen Saviour more lovely than the doctrine itself. I would have you believe that Christ rose from the dead so as to sing of it, and derive all the consolation which it is possible for you to extract from this well-ascertained and well-witnessed fact; but I beseech you, rest not contented even there. Though you cannot, like the disciples, see him visibly, yet I bid you aspire to see Christ Jesus by the eye of faith; and though, like Mary Magdalene, you may not “touch” Him, yet may you be privileged to converse with Him, and to know that He is risen, you yourselves being risen in Him to newness of life. To know a crucified Saviour as having crucified all my sins, is a high degree of knowledge; but to know a risen Saviour as having justified me, and to realize that

He has bestowed upon me new life, having given to me to be a new creature through His own newness of life, this is a noble style of experience: short of it, none ought to rest satisfied. May you both “know Him, and the power of His resurrection.” Why should souls who are quickened with Jesus, wear the grave-clothes of worldliness and unbelief? Rise, for the Lord is risen.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“This Do in Remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:24)

MIF 15:3 (May-June 1983)

“This Do in Remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:24)

Selected

It seems then, that Christians may forget Christ! There could be no need for this loving exhortation, if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous. Nor is this a bare supposition: it is, alas! too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb, and loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should forget that gracious Saviour; but, if startling to the ear, it is, alas! too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the crime. Forget Him who never forgets us! Forget Him who poured His blood forth for our sins! Forget Him who loved us even to the death! Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault with all of us, that we suffer Him to be as a wayfaring man tarrying but for a night. He whom we should make the abiding tenant of our memories is but a visitor therein. The cross where one would think that memory would linger, an unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder, is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness. Does not your conscience say that this is true? Do you not find yourselves forgetful of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart, and you are unmindful of Him upon whom your affection ought to be

set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should fix your eye steadily upon the cross. It is the incessant turmoil of the world, the constant attraction of earthly things which takes away the soul from Christ. While memory too well preserves a poisonous weed, it suffereth the rose of Sharon to wither. Let us charge ourselves to bind a heavenly forget-me-not about out hearts for Jesus our Beloved, and whatever else we let slip, let us hold fast to Him.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“Thou Shalt Call His Name Jesus” (Matt 1:21)

MIF 12:6 (Nov-Dec 1980)

“Thou Shalt Call His Name Jesus”

(Matt 1:21)

Selected

When a person is dear, everything connected with him becomes dear for his sake. Thus, so precious is the person of the Lord Jesus in the estimation of all true believers, that everything about Him they consider to be inestimable beyond all price. “All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,” said David, as if the very vestments of the Saviour were so sweetened by His person that he could not but love them. Certain it is, that there is not a spot where that hallowed foot hath trodden - there is not a word which those blessed lips have uttered - nor a thought which His loving Word has revealed - which is not to us precious beyond all price. And this is true of the names of Christ - they are all sweet in the believer’s ear. Whether He be called the Husband of the Church, her Bridegroom, her Friend; whether He be styled the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world - the King, the Prophet, or the Priest - every title of our Master - Shiloh, Emmanuel, Wonderful, the Mighty Counsellor - every name is like the honeycomb dropping with honey, and lucious are the drops that distil from it. But if there be one name sweeter than another in the believer’s ear, it is the name of Jesus. Jesus! the life of all our joys. If there be one name more charming, more precious than another, it is

this name. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. It is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity: a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.

“Jesus, I love Thy charming name,

’Tis music to mine ear.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon

“We Will Be Glad And Rejoice In Thee”

MIF 14:1 (Jan-Feb 1982)

“We Will Be Glad And Rejoice In Thee”

Selected (Canticles 1:4)

We will be glad and rejoice in Thee. We will not open the gates of the year to the dolorous notes of the sackbut, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy, and the high sounding cymbals of gladness. “Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation.” We, the called and faithful and chosen, we will drive away your griefs, and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles, we who have the sweetening tree to cast into Marah’s bitter pool, with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which Thou dwellest, will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. We WILL, we are resolved about it, Jesus must have the crown of our heart’s delight; we will not dishonour our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies, let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. We will BE GLAD AND REJOICE: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be camphire and spikenard, calamus and cinnamon, even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? We will be glad and rejoice IN THEE. That

last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, ay, and every drop of their fulness in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, Thou art the present portion of Thy people, favour us this year with such a sense of Thy preciousness, that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in Thee.

—Charles H. Spurgeon