

Articles by James Gunn

James Gunn

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A Ministry of Prayer

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James Gunn

James 5:13-20

Even in a cursory reading of this paragraph, one can understand why in the early Church, James, the Lord's brother, was given the nickname "Camel Knees." It is said that James himself was such a man of prayer that he had worn calluses upon his knees. It is probable that very few since his day could bear that same nickname. We all need to remind ourselves of Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

Frequently attention is called, in a very simple manner, to the various aspects of prayer found in this passage. A reference is made to individual prayer (v. 15), to collective prayer (v. 14), to confident prayer (v. 15), to reciprocal prayer (v. 16), to fervent prayer (v. 16), to effectual prayer (v. 16), to earnest prayer (v. 17), and to repeated prayer (v. 18).

Incredible as it may seem the references in this passage to anointing with oil, to confession and to forgiveness are the basis upon which the Church of Rome rests her superstition of "Extreme Unction." This unscriptural act is reserved for the dying. It is supposed to prepare for death and to aid them in death. It is called "extreme" because it is the last of three different sacramental anointings: one at baptism, another at confirmation and the third at death.

Rome claims that this was practiced by our Lord and cites Mark 6:13. This spurious doctrine cannot relate to the words of Mark. Obviously the practise to which Mark makes reference was not used in death but in life and healing.

Prayer and Praise

Emotional extremes are suggested by James. He speaks of some who are in adversity while others may be rejoicing. In the time of trial and affliction one should pray. The word used here emphasizes “prayer to God.” It involves a direct appeal to the Lord as in Hebrews 4:16.

Those who have reason to rejoice in their circumstances must not forget God; they are to sing. A psalm is a sacred song sung to a musical accompaniment, probably a stringed instrument.

Assistance and Prayer

Sickness here may be one of two kinds: first, natural sickness, the weakness of the body; second, disciplinary sickness because of sin. In either case the patient may call for help, call for the elders over the assembly to which he belongs; they in turn will call upon the Lord.

The word “anointing” used here means to anoint for the purpose of health, the purpose of refreshment after bathing and for the purpose of embalming (Mark 16:1). This word does not allude to a ceremonial anointing as we have in the Old Testament in regard to priests, kings and prophets. There is another word in the Greek language that is used for sacred and symbolic anointing. It is from that word that we derive the title “Christ,” the Anointed One (Heb. 1:9). It should be noticed that while no efficacy is attached to the anointing with oil prayer

does give help: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

In the case of Epaphroditus we have a startling example of this very practise (Phil. 2:25-30). The affliction for which Paul prayed three times that it might be removed was a disciplinary restraint imposed upon the apostle by the Lord; to use the language of Paul, "Lest I should be exalted above measure (2 Cor. 12:7).

As suggested, a sickness may be disciplinary, but if, as intimated, confession is made healing of both body and soul follows. In this regard, we read, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The righteous man prays for his brother who has failed in doing that which is right. The action of the righteous man is in perfect accord with Paul's thinking in Galatians 6:1.

Confession of sin must first of all be to the Lord. All sin is an act of rebellion against God: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (guilt), and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness(defilement)" (1 John 1:9). James in his practical view of life insists that we should confess our faults to one another. The idea in sin here is a failing in duty or a missing of that which is right and proper that is hurtful to a fellow-believer. Obviously the word "fault" used here is an act that hurts another. Confession of such an act should be made to the person who has been injured. In the Levitical economy restitution to the party offended had to accompany the confession before the Lord; only then was remission of sin assured (Lev. 5:5, Num. 5:7).

Here again we are confronted by the perversion of the Church of Rome. She bases her doctrine of “auricular confession” upon the words of James. “Auricular confession” is the disclosure of one sins to a priest of Rome in order to obtain from him absolution. Every Roman Catholic is supposed to go to confession at least once a year. How much sin has resulted from this unbiblical system, only the Lord Himself knows! That there is no foundation for this procedure in any part of the New Testament is evident to all who read the Word of God.

The Illustration

The Spirit of God now shows how prayer and its results may be a very blessed experience in which all may engage. We are naturally inclined to think of important prophets of the Old Testament as being so different from us. We think of them as having a higher, holier and stronger nature than we; we think of them sometimes as more demi-gods than men. It is gratifying to know that there is no distinction between them and us, we are all men of “like passions.” Since this is true we may all speak directly to our God, knowing that He hears us.

Elijah knew that God was going to send rain upon the earth (1 Kings 18:1); nevertheless, he went up to the top of Mount Carmel, and cast himself down to the earth seven times and put his face between his knees (1 Kings 18:42-46). The picture is one of a believer in the agony of prayer. As for example, in the case of the Apostle Paul (Col. 1:29-2:2). James says, “He prayed again and the heavens gave rain.” Elijah as a supplicant was in perfect accord with the will of God. We pray first because the Lord has instructed us that we should pray. But, then,

“this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to His will he heareth us, and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desired of Him” (1 John 5:13-14). The ultimate in prayer is that the believer be brought into perfect accord with the will of God.

Backsliding and Recovery

Jude closes his epistle with a warning: “Beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (Jude 17). James in like manner cautions his readers, lest some of them be seduced and turned from the truth. The “truth” here involves the entire Word of God, especially the New Testament in which sound doctrine is clearly taught.

It should be noticed that this paragraph is not dealing with a wilful sin but with a seduction which leads astray. Hymenaeus and Philetus would be an example. Paul says concerning them, “Who concerning the truth have erred” (2 Tim. 2:17-18). These unfortunate brethren had wandered away.

Thank God! Although one may stray, there are others who seek his restoration. Paul’s thinking was similar to that of James. Paul wrote, “If any 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).

The importance of a restorative ministry is emphasized. One who converts the sinful accomplishes much. The whole context indicates that the erring one, although called a sinner, is a child of God. Sinful acts in the family of God do occasionally result in death. We have the

cases of Ananias and his wife Sapphira (Acts 5). There is also the case of the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:30). The Lord does at times take home to Heaven a disobedient child. He removes him: by death; He takes him prematurely away from the area of testimony.

Whether James means that conversion, or as we might understand it, restoration, covers a multitude of sins before God or before man is difficult to decide. Peter asserts that "love shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). This exercise of love is obviously before men. Perhaps we should consider the statement of James in the same light. Love seeks the erring one and by his recovery his testimony before the world is saved.

Of course, if we accept it as a recovery from sin before the Lord Jesus, then we should accept the statement as a figurative way of speaking about a full pardon. "My little children," writes John, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2).

A Tribute To The Late Ormer G. C. Sprunt

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Ormer G. C. Sprunt

James Gunn

How pleased we all were that the original sponsor of Food for the Flock, Ormer G. C. Sprunt, was with us at the Annual Meeting (Nov. 6, 1977). He was then anticipating January 5, 1978, his ninetieth birthday. Since Canadian Thanksgiving, November 11, 1954, he had not missed an Annual Meeting of the Corporation. In fact, the early meetings were held in his own home.

A premonition settled upon some of us; we felt that he was present for the last time. As we sought to honour him and do the necessary business in deference of him, he said little but frequently smiled in appreciation. Obviously he was pleased that in spite of many difficulties, the magazine now called Focus, was making an excellent contribution to the assembly life and testimony of God's people.

Seventy years is a long time in the life of any man. It is approximately that amount of time since I first met brother Sprunt. He and Mrs. Sprunt were at a Sunday School picnic of the Swanick Avenue Assembly, Toronto, Ontario, about 1909. They carried in their arms their son Ted, now living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. How was I, merely a little boy, to know then that in after years we were to serve the Lord together in the field of Christian literature.

A few years previous to the Sunday School picnic, actually in 1907, Ormer Sprunt was invited by friends to attend an evangelistic service in the old, original Swanick Avenue Gospel Hall (the Danforth Assembly of today). Although morally doing the best he could, under the preaching of the Word of God he realized his sinnership before God and accepted Christ as his Saviour.

From the very beginning of his Christian career, he manifested a keen interest in spiritual activities and developments. He sought to practice what he read in the Holy Scriptures. His Christian life of over 70 years is an example before younger believers. Would to God that he might raise up others of the same moral stamina and consistent testimony.

In April 1908 he was married to Luella Guest, a member of the small Swanick Assembly. His interests in spiritual matters were also her interests. Together they sought to honour the Lord in the home that they had established, a very hospitable home. In later years it was for many of the Lord's servants, in their itinerant ministry, a home away from home. In this regard Mr. and Mrs. Sprunt were succourers of myself also.

When they moved to the west side of Toronto, brother Sprunt became the superintendent of first, the Central Sunday School, and eventually of the Brock Sunday School. During more recent years there were with him in Bethany Lodge some who had been scholars in his Sunday School Class. On numerous happy occasions it was delightful to listen to the good humoured banter between the former teacher and scholar.

In the middle of the 1940's our beloved colleague owned and managed a Christian Book Store in the City of Toronto, Canada. It was during those years that we began to work closely together in the writing and publishing of evangelistic tracts and booklets. It was also about that time that he felt that there should be non-partisan literature for distribution among Christians. With this in mind, he invited the present writer to become the editor of a monthly magazine. Almost ten years elapsed before the first copy of Food for the Flock appeared among the Lord's people. Then, as now the publication was dedicated to the encouraging of faith in the Word of God, to the providing of practical teaching on all aspects of the Christian life, to the expounding of the Word of God in order to stimulate a deeper searching of the Holy Scriptures, and of course to the motivating of a closer walk with God.

Brother Sprunt had a mind and heart open for the Word of God. He enjoyed when it was ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, as an elder among the saints, he helped in making wise arrangements for the Toronto Conference, west side. He personally attended more than 70 of these annual conferences.

During the more recent years which were spent at Bethany Lodge, he managed from its inception the small Book Shop. This little outlet was operated by the Lodge, but with his experience there was no one so capable as he to stock it with genuinely good Biblical literature of all kinds: books, cards, tracts, etc.

As Christmas 1977 approached he stated that he was going to withdraw from the shop. This he did just after the New Year. Perhaps he felt that the call up yonder

was near, but for almost three months he had to wait. As the weeks passed, his extreme physical weakness kept him in bed most of the time and deprived us of his warm fellowship. With him "the spirit indeed was willing but the flesh was weak." He had always been active. His mind remained alert and this made it the more difficult for his friends to watch him gradually becoming daily weaker. On one occasion as we greeted him, he replied, "Yes, I am still here, but I wish that I were up there."

Enid, his only daughter (Mrs. Harry Hafner, Philadelphia) came and stayed with him for several days. How he enjoyed her company. He even seemed to perk up during those days that she was present, but in spite of this his strength constantly decreased. On March 19, 1978, the summons for which he had been waiting and longing came and he passed "into the light" of the Divine Presence.

The funeral was conducted in Rexdale Assembly Hall. Mr. A. M. S. Gooding, Kilmarnock, Scotland, a personal friend of Mr. Sprunt, on a visit to Canada, shared the services with Mr. Ross Philips. The committal at the grave side was directed by George Heidman, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

A poem by his son Ernest, a much beloved minister of the Word for many years, who predeceased his father, seems very appropriate here:

* * *

This Is Not Death

This is not death!

For pilgrim through a stranger land,

Who leaves the burning desert's sand,

To dwell within his promised land,
This is not death, but life!
This is not death!
For one whose journey now is o'er,
Who steps at last on Heaven's shore,
To be at home for evermore,
This is not death, but life!
This is not death!
For by our God's own matchless grace
A loved one now is in that place
Where he beholds the Saviour's face,
This is not death, but life!
This is not death!
Then let us dry each falling tear,
And banish every doubt and fear;
Our Lord's return is very near!
Then no more death, but life!

According to the Sisters

According to the Sisters

James Gunn

Scripture Reading: Romans 16:1-16

Here is a delightfully refreshing study by our Associate Editor, Mr. James Gunn, on the women mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Romans 16.

There are three chapters of recorded commendations in the Bible which at least illustratively foreshadow the Judgment Seat of Christ: Nehemiah 3, Romans 16 and Hebrews 11. It is not that there is no disapproval in these chapters. Think of this one statement, "Their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord" (Neh. 3:5). Notwithstanding, there is no penalty imposed. In Nehemiah the commendations are for physical toil expended in the work of God, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In Romans the commendations are for moral qualities in Christian personality, and in Hebrews the commendations are for spiritual attainments through faith in God.

Similarly, at the Judgment Seat of Christ everyone shall receive his own due praise of God. Since we shall all appear before the Judgment Seat, how should we then live? The answer to this question might be according to some sisters, friends of the Apostle Paul. The apostolic commendations of these sisters are found in Roman 16:1-16. All told there are 27 names mentioned in this passage. Of these, nine are in the feminine.

In looking over these names it will be noticed that some are Jewish and some are Gentile. What a pleasant testimony to the oneness of the Body of Christ! The middle wall of partition certainly has been removed: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28).

Let us consider these nine feminine names and see how they lived and served.

Pheobe is the first sister mentioned. For those who are fond of alliteration, Paul, in that very style of writing, gives much information concerning this gracious lady. She was a sister, a servant and a succourer of many. As a sister she was related within the whole family of God.

Believers through the redemptive work of Christ have been brought into an eternal relationship to God and to a perpetual relationship with fellow Christians. What a rich blessing!

As a servant, Phoebe was a deaconness of the church where she permanently fellowshipped. Humbly she would serve under the elders overseeing the sheep of Christ's pasture.

A succourer is a guardian, a protector. How this godly lady cared for the discouraged, the weak and the poor of the people of God! Well might the apostle commend her for such a useful life spent for the Lord and His beloved people.

Priscilla is warmly commended for her devotion, not particularly for her service. The name Priscilla is the diminutive of Prisca. Paul was naturally a very affectionate man; he did not hesitate to use endearing

terms. Here he intimates the delightful and intimate fellowship enjoyed with Priscilla, her husband and himself. The clause, "Who have for my life laid down their necks," implies that they were willing to bare their necks for the executioner's axe; they were willing to be martyred for the Lord and His servant. Paul could not omit a reference to such consecration.

Mary, or better Marium, for she probably was a Jewess, is named for her generosity in Christian service. Paul says, "She bestowed much labour upon us." The word "labour" means to toil until one is weary and faint. Mary's work was characterized with more than enough; she went the extra mile in the performance of her duties.

The euphony of the next two feminine names in verse 12, Tryphena and Tryphosa, makes the reference to them very attractive. In fact, it suggests identical twins. Twins look alike, act alike, usually dress alike and apparently think alike.

What better symbol could possibly be found for co-operation? Here is a quality that every saint of God should develop. This spiritual trait should always be in evidence, particularly in assembly matters.

One finds it difficult to make any comment upon "the beloved Persis." The adjective "beloved " is used rather sparingly throughout the New Testament. Luke is called by Paul "the beloved physician." Here, then, is a sister who is equally worthy of such a title. She maintains the same reputation. The implication apparently is that she was very affable, courteous and magnetic. She was an amiable and approachable personality.

We all know certain imposing personalities from which we shrink; personalities we find it difficult to respect. Oh, for more personalities like “the beloved Persis.” They are much needed in the church today.

One of the warmest commendations in the honour role goes to the unnamed sister of verse 13. She is identified as the mother of Rufus. Do we have here the widow of Simon the Cyrenian who carried the heavy cross for the Lord Jesus? It could easily be. For Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21).

The Apostle Paul never mentions his own Jewish father and mother. It would seem as if he were a meshumed person, one disowned by a Jewish family because of his Christian faith. If he had thus lost his natural mother, the Lord directed the maternal instincts of this godly widow. She readily extended love, understanding, care and counsel to the servant of the Lord who must have felt loneliness at times. What a true eulogy in Paul’s words: “Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine!”

Two other sisters have a place on this honour list: “Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister.” There is nothing stated as to what these two ladies were or what they had particularly accomplished. They filled a very ordinary place in life. Just the usual routine of a wife and a sister. Both moved among the same group of believers, probably one of four churches in the city of Rome. The majority of Christian women pursue this same course; they play a very similar role. Notwithstanding how mediocre their path in life might be, these sisters were held in the same high esteem;

they were extended the same warm salutation from the appreciative Apostle.

“Not a day passes over the earth but men and women of note do great deeds, speak great words, and suffer noble sorrows. Of these obscure heroes, philosophers, and martyrs the greater part will never be known till that hour when many that were great shall be small, and the small great.”

—Charles Reade

Inasmuch as “none of us liveth unto himself,” and “all must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ,” let both our character and our conduct be produced by the Divine Spirit. Let our lives be according to the example of these beloved sisters who lived in the apostolic days.

Apostasy

Apostasy

James Gunn

A recent article in a current assembly magazine suggests that Christians who meet in a building architecturally attractive for which they use the descriptive appellation “chapel” are participating in the general apostasy of Christendom. Furthermore, the same article intimates that there are assemblies (“Those who should know better, but evidently do not”) which, because they now possess better and more attractive halls, no longer preach the clear Gospel of divine grace. Instead of preaching regeneration, they preach messages which are merely a “moral uplift for a while... religious ideals, fitting into the world’s concept of what religion should produce.”

These solemn insinuations provoke deep and serious reflections. The honest mind confronted by such grave statements must make some enquiries. It must examine what place an assembly-owned public building had in the apostolic days; it must discover through the Word of God what apostasy is and whether or not true Christians can become apostates; and, likewise, it must settle whether such assertions are justified by factual evidence and if they are made in the commendable mood of mind alluded to by Peter, “Finally brethren, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous (1 Pet. 3:8).

Days of apostasy have gripped the religious world about us; there is a general denial of the faith once delivered

unto the saints (Jude 3). It is obvious that if the founders of most of the Protestant denominations found in Christendom were to return and preach as once they did, they would not be acceptable to the governing bodies of their respective organizations. They would, without doubt, be made welcome by individual Christians who despite conditions remain in these systems.

To all true Christians the Word of God is plain, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17).

A period of sad declension has come upon the testimony and administration of the assemblies of God. There has been a leaving of first love, a forsaking of early loyalties, a loss of primitive power, and also a departure from the scriptural witness to the oneness of the Body of Christ. Conditions among assemblies call for confession of sin and an adherence to New Testament principles of simplicity toward Christ. Thank God for every brother who raises his voice against the tendencies of the flesh.

Notwithstanding the influence of Laodiceanism that is among us, fleshly zeal for tradition, as every other fomentation of the flesh, must be reckoned dead (Rom. 6:11) lest we lift a carnal hand to steady the ark of the testimony which God alone, in the final analysis of things, can sustain; and lest we suffer for our unholy act the stern discipline of the Lord.

Buildings

In the inspired history of apostolic churches, we fail to find any allusion whatever to an assembly-owned

building. The churches in the different localities met in the homes of believers. Paul sent greetings to Priscilla and Aquila at Rome, and to the church that was in their house (Rom. 16:5). The same Apostle addressed a short letter to Philemon, and to the church in his house (Phil. 1-2). Similarly, he sent salutations to the brethren which were in Laodicea and Nymphas, and to the church in his house (Col. 4:15).

It seemed to be the common practice in apostolic days to meet in church capacity at the home of a local brother. Such practice sustained the blessed simplicity which should characterize a New Testament church. It contributed to the informality, brotherly fellowship, and spiritual warmth of those early gatherings.

A review of the history of church buildings and ecclesiastical architecture might not prove profitable. Nevertheless, one does not need to draw much upon the imagination to conjecture that when local churches of post-apostolic times began to erect edifices, some of the devout Christians would decide that their brethren had forsaken "the old paths." The new building would be accepted by some well-meaning believers as an indication of departure. Something new had been introduced; something that had not formerly existed, consequently, it would be considered wrong.

Our thinking must be characterized by realism in this matter, and if it is, we must accept that a building used exclusively for the convenience of a local church, whether rented or owned, is only a part of special commodities which the saints have purchased for their own comfort. Such a building is not a part of the plan and purpose of God for any church.

The Lord has not been pleased to legislate in regard to special buildings, their architecture, location, or name.

Since an assembly-owned hall or chapel is only the product of man's organizational tendencies, it is a grave question with some as to whether or not the raising of a building can actually and technically be called the "work of the Lord." Furthermore, in the light of this, there are those who believe that in the weekly offering of the assembly, nothing is contributed to the work of the Lord until the rental of all modern conveniences used by the church has been paid.

As with families so with assemblies, there are some who can afford more conveniences than others.

Consequently, a small and humble building is not necessarily the proof of great spirituality, nor is a more ornate building the sign of apostasy.

Apostasy

The original classical use of the word "apostasy" which means "a falling away," indicates a political defection. The word was so used by the translators of the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. Genesis 14:4 was rendered by them, "Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they apostatized." 2 Chronicles 13:6 was similarly rendered, "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, ... is risen up, and hath apostatized against his lord."

One must differentiate among error, heresy, and apostasy. Doctrinal error may be the result of ignorance. The disciples met by Paul at Ephesus were in error through their ignorance of the person and work of the

Holy Spirit. Instruction by Paul corrected them (Acts 19:1-7).

Heresy is the result of falling into the snare of the devil. Hymenaeus and Alexander, concerning the faith had made shipwreck. Paul, therefore, delivered them to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme, for they were true believers (2 Tim. 1:19-20). In this connection, the Apostle says of the servant of the Lord that he must not strive; but "be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves (set themselves in opposition); if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Through submission to spiritual instruction there may be restoration from doctrinal evil and even heresy.

Apostasy is the act of one who merely professes to have embraced Christianity, one who knowingly and deliberately rejects revealed truth regarding the Deity of Christ (1 John 4:1-3) and redemption through His atoning death (Phil. 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:1).

The Apostle Paul gives us a description of the apostasy of these last days. It is characterized by a secession from the faith, the body of revealed truth; a heeding to deceptive spirits and doctrines of demons; a hypocritical perversion of facts; a searing of the conscience; a forbidding to marry; an abstinence from certain foods; a form of godliness with an open denial of its power (1 Tim. 4:1-4).

From such apostasy there is no recovery: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the

truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29). Apostasy is probably the "sin unto death" in John's epistle (1 John 5:16-17).

To compare in anyway, directly or indirectly, a company of believers who, in spite of much weakness seeks to witness for Christ, to apostasy, or to suggest that there is "an element of apostasy" about them is a flagrant discourtesy to be met at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Social Gospel

We realize from what we hear that there is a social gospel being preached throughout Christendom, and many thereby are being deceived. Although we may disagree with methods used in some of the assemblies of God's people, we attest that assemblies small and great of every description preach the Gospel of Redemption.

A very eminent leader among Fundamentalists who is accustomed to the conflict with modernism, on meeting at a luncheon five brethren from different assemblies, said as he greeted them, "Brethren, when I learned that you were here, inwardly I said, Thank God! Here are men who come from a group that is doctrinally sound."

In making statements concerning brethren and assemblies with which we may differ, there is the need

to remember the exhortations: "Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). "Speak not evil one of another. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law" (Jas. 4:11). We must constantly remind ourselves of the word, "Grudge (complain) not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (Jas. 5:9).

Critical Times

Critical Times

James Gunn

The predicament in which Israel found herself at the border of Egypt (Ex. 14) frequently has been used to illustrate the crises which arise in the lives of Christian persons. It may be used well in that connection; nevertheless, it more accurately illustrates those crises which appear in the history of God's people as a body or a company.

There were many crises in Israel's history: the political crisis when Pharaoh would have re-enslaved them; later, a spiritual crisis at Sinai where they fell into idolatry; a national one at Kadesh Barnea where they refused to enter Canaan; and a military crisis at Ai where, after the victory at Jericho, they were sorely defeated.

These may crises which arose in Israel's history may illustrate those which have arisen throughout the history of the Church. The seven letters to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2 and 3) occasionally are used to remind us of critical times and of divine deliverances during them. In Ephesus we see the crisis of cold orthodoxy; in Smyrna, of pagan persecution; in Pergamos, of worldly patronage; in Thyatira, papacy; in Sardis, spiritual dearth; in Philadelphia, spiritual opportunity; and in Laodicea, the blight of materialism.

There have been grave epochs in the history of the movement with which we, by the grace of God, are associated. Early in its history there was the crisis of Exclusivism, and a little later that of Needed Truthism.

The teaching of the New Testament principles of Church truth reached this continent during the nineteenth century. Today, thank God, assemblies have been formed from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans.

Shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century a crisis of divisions swept over the entire continent separating assemblies, parting relatives, breaking hearts, and destroying the assemblies' testimony to the oneness of the Body of Christ. Recently it has been felt by many spiritual brethren that even a graver crisis confronts the assemblies of God today, the crisis of disintegration. It appears as if, under the impact of satanic hate, assemblies are failing. Carnal men lord over God's heritage, partyism strongly entrenches itself, spiritual power wanes, ecclesiastical pride grows, animosity engenders strife, and God's people are torn by inward fears and outward conflicts.

Among assemblies there are those who emphasize a questionable tradition more than the Word of God, teachers who would form circles of communion very similar to the confederation of churches in denominationalism. Others, in order to counterbalance such movements, teach a freedom uncontrolled by the Word of God. In all this the majority of God's people are unwittingly entangled like Israel of old.

It reliably is known that some of God's people have withdrawn from their former assemblies because of a failure there to impose church discipline upon sin. Others have withdrawn because of the domination of a modern Diotrephes, and still others because of a sanctimonious bigotry that cripples spiritual activities.

Thus the evil work that fragmentizes the assemblies goes on, and in large part through the personal interest of ambitious men. Assemblies, once large, are today depleted; testimonies, once vigorous and productive, are marred and impotent.

The Dilemma

Israel's position illustrates the spiritual dilemma in which many Christians find themselves. Before Israel rolled the Red Sea, behind them came Pharaoh, on either side were mountain heights topped with garrisoned cities. For them there was no human escape; they did not know what to do.

Let us notice the threefold attitude manifested during their predicament: the attitude of the people, the attitude of Moses, and the attitude of God. The attitude of Israel is seen in their words which suggested that they would be better to go back, the attitude of Moses is seen in his advice, "Stand still," and the attitude of God, in His command, "Go forward."

Go Back

Such was the attitude of the people; to them all seemed lost. Within their minds defeat had been accomplished already, so a return to their former estate was the only logical move.

With the many problems, perplexities, and conflicts among the churches of the saints, some have gone back, and others are ready to go back to former associations in the religious world. Discouragement has produced a feeling of defeat, and they see nothing but the collapse of assembly testimony.

Questions and letters which have appeared recently in the “Forum” of Food for the Flock substantiate this statement. These letters are a forceful rebuke to all who assume responsibility among the assemblies of God’s people. May this rebuke arouse some before further irreparable loss is suffered.

For Israel to have gone back would have meant unconditional surrender to all the demands of cruel Pharaoh and a slavery worse than before.

For Christians to return to a position and a condition from which God’s Word has called them, would mean to lose their spiritual liberty and the enjoyment of their God-given rights as His children.

Surely a word of warning is needed to elder brethren, for great will be the Lord’s displeasure at the scattering of His flock, and the marring of His spiritual temple: “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:17).

Stand Still

There was nothing else that Israel could do except remain where she was, but the advice of Moses entailed more than just to stand; it implied the manner in which they were to stand. Moses’ advice actually meant to stand at ease, to relax. To stand relaxed under such circumstances indicated the acceptance of two facts.

First, human impotency: Israel could do absolutely nothing, and this they acknowledged in standing still. It is salutary in the life of an individual as well as in the testimony of an assembly when there is an acknowledgment of creature debility, when the full force

of the words of the Lord Jesus are felt, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Second, divine omnipotency: Israel's deliverance from this crisis, and others in her existence, was wholly dependent upon the power of God and her reliance upon that power.

In an attempt to arrest the present day deterioration in assembly testimony, some brethren, very sincere in their own convictions, advocate a fellowship so close as to reject fellow believers from other assemblies who are, if not more, at least equally sincere, equally holy, and equally devoted to the Lord. On the other hand there are brethren, also sincere in their own convictions, who insist upon a fellowship more liberal, a fellowship generous in its love and broad in its embrace, through which sometimes certain principles are rendered inoperative.

It is not difficult for a diligent observer to detect that in both of these views there is a failure to accept the absolute authority of the Word of God, especially that Word revealed in the Pauline Epistles in which there is no picture of the Church in fixed sections or parties. The exponents of these two views are altogether too critical the one of the other. In that they have expressed their convictions, they have rendered a service to all; but in that they express their convictions as though they were the only scriptural, divine ones, they have fallen into grievous error.

Surely the time has come for all to acknowledge human impotency and to stand still and quietly rely upon divine omnipotency. God will never leave Himself without a testimony, and that He intends there be in this

dispensation a Church testimony is the burden of the New Testament epistles. Man must learn that only God can and will maintain His testimony. This He will do through human instruments which in themselves are nothing, instruments who in their weakness rely only upon the Lord.

There can be no recovery of lost fellowship, no revival of spiritual power, peace, and joy until all brethren acknowledge failure, confess sin, renounce all human expediency, and turn in simple faith to God and to the Word of His grace. The Lord's people must cultivate a sensitivity to the touch of our living Lord.

Go Forward

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." Watery weights crashed at their feet as if ready to destroy them. Geological heights towered insurmountably beside them, and military forces closed upon them from the rear. How could they "go forward?" Let us examine the means by which Israel under such circumstances did move onward.

Faith: Only through implicit faith in the Word of God could they step out. Every step in fact was an act of faith. As they through faith in the divine command moved forward, barriers gradually withdrew until eventually all obstructions disappeared and they stood a free victorious people on the other side of the Red Sea.

In assembly relationships the barriers of prejudice, of tradition, and of extreme views have created in many hearts the feeling of frustration. Under the force of this some would forsake the path of simplicity toward Christ

and go back. Faith in God's inerrant Word would have us go forward.

Obedience: Obedience does not ask for an explanation, nor does it even anticipate a clarification. Obedience only acts, and accepts the results. This Israel did, and the results were wonderful. They rejoiced in the liberty wherewith God had made them free, and were never again so fully entangled with Egypt's yoke of bondage.

God's Word is plain. It calls us to a path of separation from the world: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:14-16). It likewise insists upon our identification with Christ: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:1-4). Similarly, it teaches us the blessedness of assembly unity and fellowship: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same

judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10-11).

Obedience does not ask how, but acts promptly and implicitly in faith.

Submission: Something new characterized Israel when she crossed the Red Sea in obedience to the command of God. They "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2). God gave to them a divinely appointed leader, Moses. Him they followed through the sea, in the singing of their triumphal song, and for forty years in the wilderness. Their attitude toward him was generally one of submission. Those who rose against him were called rebels and as such were disciplined by God (Num. 16).

The Christian has a leader, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the Lordship of Christ in his letters to the saints at Corinth, and teaches that submission to Christ as Lord is expected in all church matters. Christ's authority among the saints is supreme. In the churches of the saints all activities are to be accomplished "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" and not because of custom or policy.

The pathway before God's people is one of faith in God, obedience to His Word, and submission to Christ as Lord. Anything different, whether it be traditional or popular, partisan or expedient, must be rejected. 'Simplicity of faith in God, sincerity of obedience in His Word, and singleness of submission to Christ are the spiritual essentials by which assemblies "go forward."

Ebenezer

Ebenezer

James Gunn

“Ebenezer” is a great word to take with us into the New Year. You will both enjoy and be encouraged by this article from the pen of our associate editor, Mr. James Gunn.

There were three Bible texts which for many years hung in my father’s home: “Thou remainest” (Heb. 1:11), “That in all things He might have the preminence” (Col. 1:18), and “Ebenezer, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12). These are an indication of the Christian atmosphere in which I was raised. Needless to say, these three texts will never be forgotten by me. I can visualize them as they hung in their respective places. The Ebenezer text hung in the hallway; the other two, hand painted and real works of art, hung on either side of the fireplace. It is the one that hung in the hallway to which I would call attention: “Ebenezer, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

Ever since the days of Abraham, Israel had been raising pillars, altars and markers to commemorate events in history. Jacob’s stones identified Bethel, and a stone marked the spot where the covenant was made between Jacob and Laban.

Mount Moriah was the marker which indicated where Abraham had offered up Isaac, the place where he set up the testimony to Jehovahjireh. Samuel, following this historic practice, put up the stone “Ebenezer” as a memorial to God’s timely help.

Defeat and Victory

At this same geographic spot, before it was called Ebenezer, Israel had suffered an ignominious defeat. It was there that they had lost the holy ark to the Philistines (1 Sam. 5:1). Because of that defeat, the aged priest Eli was stricken and died, and in the defeat his two sons were killed. On hearing this news, the wife of one of the sons died after naming her new-born baby "Ichabod," meaning, the glory is departed.

The feeling of gloom, depression and despair remained upon Israel for twenty years, and we read: "All the house of Israel lamented before the Lord" (1 Sam. 7:2).

Samuel records the great change that eventually came over the nation, the mighty and unexpected victory that God brought to His troubled people. Well might one ask, "How did all this come about?"

The Consciousness of Need

There is no doubt that the prophet sensed the weakness of the people. Nevertheless, he realized that in some measure, at least, they were seeking after God.

Consequently, he promised saying, "I will pray for you unto the Lord" (1 Sam. 7:5). How like our blessed Lord in heaven: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25).

Immediately Samuel gathered Israel together to Mizpah, meaning a watch-tower, a true prelude to Ebenezer.

There the people performed a simple ceremony that was the very symbol of their weakness and need: "They drew water and poured it out before the Lord" (1 Sam. 7:6).

The wise woman of Tekoa said to David, "We must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which

cannot be gathered up again" (2 Sam. 14:14). How frail humanity is, especially under attack! Obviously the need was great.

Water spilled on the ground is the symbol of total helplessness; it is irrecoverable. The withering of the grass and flowers, the shadow that declineth, the vapor and the moisture which so quickly evaporate, all indicate how transient human strength and competence are. This is constantly demonstrated in the numerous changes which are daily seen in the world system.

The Appeal For Help

Midst such circumstance the appeal for help was strong: "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us" (1 Sam. 7:8). Here is a definite consciousness of weakness, frailty and inadequacy. Israel was driven to make an appeal for divine assistance and deliverance.

The Source of Help

"Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him" (1 Sam. 7:9). The Apostle John asserts: "If we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:15). The consciousness of helplessness and the sincere call for help provided the very assurance that help would be provided.

"Samuel then took a suckling lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering unto the Lord" (1 Sam. 7:9). Of Israel's future remnant it is said: "They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). Even so was it here.

What precious pictures of the work of Christ for His beloved people are found here. He is a Great High Priest forever and His priestly service is always available. His priesthood is unalterable, immutable and constant. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). His intercession rests upon His accomplishments at Calvary. Christ died that we might live, and He ever lives to make intercession for us.

The Sufficiency of Divine Help

"The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and routed them, and they were smitten before Israel" (1 Sam. 7:10). As Israel stood on the shores of the Red Sea and saw her former slave-masters overthrown, she said, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Ex. 15:6). Even so was it here in Samuel's day.

It is interesting to notice that God's answer to Israel's appeal for help was by natural means — a thunderstorm. God frequently does this. He used a natural calamity to elevate Joseph to become prime minister of Egypt. He still uses natural means in the hands of His people to support His testimony and service, and to give furtherance to His cause and triumph over evil.

Alexander the Great called the mountain where he defeated Darius the Mead, the "Hill of Conquest." It was a name that appealed to his ego, being a memorial to his ability, sagacity and stratagem.

Samuel inscribed upon the great stone the words, "Ebenezer, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." He did

not boast of human valor, but of the divine power and grace which were extended to meet the need of God's people.

The Stone of Help reminds us of a victory in Israel's earlier history. Amalek attacked the nation as it moved along in the wilderness, but it is recorded: "Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword" (Ex. 17:13-17). Then the results are added: "Moses built an altar, and called it Jehovah-nissi (the Lord is my banner)." May we follow this example and see to it that we ever give all praise and glory unto the Lord.

Essential Rudiments

Essential Rudiments

James Gunn

In any field of study and endeavour the researcher, at the very beginning, must make himself fully acquainted with the known rudiments of the matter he is to investigate. In the intensive study of God's word we must definitely accept without question certain basic elements. Some of these we shall review briefly.

The Miracle Of The Bible

To explain humanly the miracle of the Bible is utterly impossible, God is its only explanation.

An official organ is one of the first prerequisites of any organization. This book places in a permanent form the terms under which the Corporation operates, its Charter, its by-laws, its objects, and purposes.

Consequently in this manner a fixed and detailed record of the constitution of the Corporation is preserved. The statements in this book are all prepared systematically, legibly, and intentionally. The Church of God, so comprehensive, extensive, and enduring, has a Book, the Bible, in which her constitution appears along with every principle necessary for her administration, yet it was never the intention of the Church to produce such a book. We never read of the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, writing a formal letter much less a book. Not one of its many authors produced his section of the Bible with the purpose of setting forth an official Church document. The production of the Bible is a miracle, for

holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they wrote all unconscious of the full purpose of God to give the Bible. The preservation of the Bible is an equally great miracle. The existence of the Bible can be explained only in the existence of God. The Bible is a perpetual miracle.

The Inspiration Of The Bible

Much has been written on the interesting subject of the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but there are a few points that we ought to consider. First, Divine inspiration is true only in the original manuscripts, and not in translations. We are most thankful to God for the devoted men who have given us the English Bible, but the work of translation is not infallible. Second, we must differentiate between revelation and inspiration.

Revelation embraces the unfolding of the mind of God to man, but inspiration is the preservation of that Divine revelation for others. God spoke to men by revelation, and men delivered that message to others, and by means of inspiration God has given that same message a perpetual application.

Inspiration may be viewed under two aspects, the temporary and the permanent. All that the Holy men of God, who were the human authors of the Bible, said and wrote has not been preserved for us. That God spoke to them specifically for certain occasions, and that they communicated correctly the particular message of the Lord is beyond question, but such limited ministry was temporary. This aspect of inspiration is readily illustrated by the New Testament prophet. When God led men to write His message, and when He preserved

their writings throughout the ages, inspiration became permanent, and remains with us for all time.

There is another matter we should understand in regard to the fact of inspiration, all that is thus Divinely preserved for us in the Bible, is not necessarily Divinely revealed; for example, the actual words of Satan have been kept by inspiration, but they were not given to Satan by Divine revelation. The words of Job's friends were not given them by divine revelation, but they have been preserved by Divine inspiration. Examples could be multiplied but these are sufficient to elucidate the point.

The Divine Unity Of Scripture

That our Bible is divided into sections and subdivided into chapters and verses is a very great convenience, but these facts can be quite misleading, and the student must ever keep in mind the Divine Oneness of the Bible. This blessed Book is organically related in every part. We are very apt to think of the two Testaments as being separate, but this is not the case. They are one. First, because of AUTHORSHIP, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," (2 Tim. 3:16). In his second letter, the apostle Peter classifies the writings of the New Testament as Scripture along with those of the Old Testament, (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Second, because of their MAJOR THEME. The Old Testament has been referred to as the history of Israel, while the New Testament has been presented as the history of the Church. This is but partly correct, a more correct approach to the Bible would be to consider it as a revelation of Christ, Christ in Israel and Christ in the Church. To those who walked

to Emmaus, we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," (Luke 24:27). Third, because THEY ARE COMPLEMENTARY the one to the other. It has been well said that the New Testament lies hidden in the Old, while the Old Testament is interpreted by the New. In the New Testament we have doctrine taught by the Holy Spirit, while in the Old Testament, we have illustrations furnished for this doctrine.

The absolute oneness of Scripture is very evident in a consideration of the closing verses of Revelation as being complementary to the opening chapters of Genesis. In the former we have paradise lost, and in the latter, paradise regained.

The Progress Of Doctrine

It must be obvious to every sincere mind that the Divine revelation that is preserved for us by Divine inspiration has been given to man progressively. "The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little," (Isa. 28:13). The full revelation of the Church was purposely hidden until the proper season, it came as a climax to all that had gone before. The apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians, "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by His Spirit," (Eph. 3:3-4).

Eternity

MIF 19:3 (May-June 1987)

Eternity

James Gunn

A thoughtful young woman, seriously minded, wrote on a card:

To think of summers yet to come

That I am not to see!

To think a weed is yet to bloom

From dust that I shall be.

A Christian friend, finding the card, picked it up, read it, and wrote:

To think, when Heaven and earth are fled,

And skies and seas are o'er,

When all that can die shall be dead.

That I shall die no more!

Oh, thus shall then my portion be,

Where I shall spend Eternity.

—James Gunn in *Facts of the Christian Faith* —p. 143)

Follow Me

Follow Me

James Gunn

Several years ago our beloved associate editor, the late Mr. James Gunn, wrote a brief series of articles for the magazine. For some reason this particular article was not published. Its theme is especially fitting as a New Year's command from our Lord Himself. We urge upon you a careful and thoughtful reading of this particular study.

Scripture Reading: John 21

John's Gospel reaches a culmination at the end of 20:31. Chapter 21 is a purposeful epilogue by John, an epilogue that we cannot do without, for it teaches the need of divine direction in the Christian life.

There are three remarkable scenes in this chapter, all bearing upon this subject: the group of seven who went fishing, the dialogue between Jesus and Peter, and the last scene of Jesus, John and Peter.

The Fishermen

Here we may contrast natural leadership in man with divine leadership under the Lord Jesus.

Natural leadership is composed of initiative, courage, knowledge, understanding of others, powers of communication, magnetism, etc. That Peter possessed these qualities is evident. He was a leader among men.

This was recognized by the Lord, for each time a list of the Lord's disciples appears in the Gospels, Peter's

name heads the list. We are therefore not surprised that when he said, "I go a fishing," that the other six responded, "We also go with thee."

What Peter and those who followed him did was legitimate and proper; they needed physical sustenance.

This narrative teaches that it is possible to do what may be said as necessary and discover that all our efforts are futile. We should remember that lawful business is not sinful; notwithstanding, it should be sanctified to God and directed by Him.

The consequence of following a natural leader was that these disciples toiled all night and caught nothing.

Divine leadership is fully demonstrated here:

1. The command was by an apparent stranger: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find." At that time they did not know that it was the Lord, but the evidence of knowledge and authority merited compliance.
2. What compensations they received! Divine presence and guidance were now recognized. The results were the proof of divine intervention. The reward of obedience was a generous one.
3. It should be noticed that the result of following the Lord's advice was really beyond their capacity. They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Their capacity must have been strengthened and enlarged. How unlike the experience recorded in Luke 5:6. There when told to let down the nets (plural), Peter let down but one net only, and that net broke. Disobedience always results in loss.

Peter

In the New Testament only twice do we read of a fire of coals, and both are in the experience of Peter. The first was near the palace of the high priest; the second on the shores of Tiberias. To Peter the first fire of coals must have been the symbol of frailty and cowardice, denial and sin. Henceforth, the second fire of coals must have been to Peter the symbol of grace and forgiveness, and of his reinstatement among the disciples, the place he had forfeited by sin.

The Lord, so to speak, had to take Peter right back to where he had failed before He could recover him and recommission him for service.

In the dialogue by that fireside a threefold denial on the part of Peter resulted in a threefold challenge which demanded a threefold response.

“Lovest thou Me?”

“Love to Christ,” wrote F. B. Meyer, “reconciles the cultured scholar to a life of menial tasks among savages. It impels the refined and noble lady to reach the dying prostitute in the hovel, and it urges the honoured gentleman to search out the physical derelict in the clammy cellar. Love will bear all, believe all, hope all, and endure all to win sinners to Christ.”

The three challenges are met by a threefold avowal of affection to Christ. Peter no longer boasted. He does not use the Greek word for a spontaneous, noble, pure love, but he readily uses one for fondness and attachment.

This threefold response resulted in a threefold commission. This commission and its assignments meant a very busy and detailed life for Peter.

“Feed My lambs.” This involved the supplying of spiritual food for the young in Christ.

“Feed My sheep.” This meant the shepherding of the whole flock of Christ’s pasture.

“Feed My sheep.” This last charge is probably the most difficult of all; it indicates care for the older ones of the flock, the more mature, the more difficult.

The Lord, having given Peter the assignments that were to occupy him throughout life, then proceeded to tell him of his death, the death by which he would glorify God. The Lord thus gave to Peter a preview of his entire life of service from the breakfast fire on the shores of Galilee to the day when he would die upon a cross.

Near the end of his life, as an old man in the small town of Babylon in Egypt, Peter committed to younger men the very commission that he had received from the Lord.

As a shepherd he was to follow the Chief Shepherd all the long way that stretched before him.

John

It was in these circumstances that Peter turned and saw John, and raised the question, “What shall this man do?”

The reply from the Lord, “Follow Me,” was a rebuke to Peter, but it was also an assurance to him of perfect guidance, companionship, and fellowship throughout the years.

The call, “Follow Me,” seemed to suggest that Peter was not to allow any plans which the Lord might have for another to divert his attention from Christ.

It has not pleased the Lord to give to all His people a preview of life. Life is unfolded day by day through circumstances and experiences, but the future is kept unknown. The Lord Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24).

As Peter's apparent interest in John could have diverted his following Christ, even so when our interests are upon another object, we may stray from the path of fellowship with Christ and service for Christ. He says, "Follow Me."

John Mark was temporarily diverted, probably through prejudice against Paul.

Demas wandered away through love for the world.

Many today are deviating from intimacy with Christ because of economic success and materialism.

May we often hear His voice in spite of the turmoil and strife of life: "Follow Me." "Follow Me."

To follow the Lord Jesus Christ means that He is ever going before me and that He is ever the very centre of my life.

Goodness And Mercy

Goodness And Mercy

James Gunn

Jim shivered because of the heavy mist that hung thickly over the whole area. Furthermore, he was quite ill as he lay there on the mountain side. He knew that dawn was breaking, and that soon the sun would raise the temperature and scatter the fog. How he longed for that warmth and comfort!

He had tied his horse to a tree at the side of the path, and weary and sick had thrown himself on a patch of moss where he lay gazing down the slopes that stretched far below into the valley.

Could it be that God had forgotten to be gracious? He wondered. The years which he had spent in missionary service seemed to parade through his mind. He recalled his arrival in the tropics, the struggles to acclimate himself, the spiritual concern for the salvation of the lost that urged him on, and his participation in the work in different towns and cities. He tried to forget the bouts with malaria that had depleted his strength, the hardships that curtailed his activities, and the irresistible fatigue that from time to time possessed him.

The conviction and enthusiasm which had impelled him to join others in a new effort high in the Caribbean hills stirred again within, but for only a few minutes. The disappointments, frustrations and illness of the past months swamped him. His feet, infected by jiggers, burned and itched; and his whole body was sore and

red, the result of sleeping in a vermin contaminated house.

The cleanliness and comfort of his father's home thousands of miles away loomed large in his thinking, and a spasm of nostalgia broke his resistance; he buried his head in his arms and, although he brushed away the tears with his hand, he could not restrain them. There was nothing around him but filth, disease and ignorance. God must have forgotten the lonely, destitute, exhausted figure that lay that morning on the Caribbean slopes, at least so he thought.

More by habit than through devotion, Jim palled his small Bible from his pocket, and opened it at random. His eyes fell first on Psalm 136 so he began to read, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." If such is the case, reasoned Jim, why am I so ill, so troubled? He did not feel at all thankful; in fact, his mind was rebellious.

Again he started to read, "Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, for His mercy endureth forever." How can this be? he questioned with a heart cold and unresponsive. He could not relate divine mercy with his circumstances.

Once more he set about to read the Psalm and wondered why each verse ended in the clause, "His mercy endureth forever." He knew that God gave Pharaoh a double dream for the sake of emphasis. Was the repetition in the Psalm for that same purpose? Was God emphasizing something? Perhaps! Could be! Yes, He was! Through the resistance, coldness, and even the fatigue, the message was penetrating. God's mercy did endure forever. Jim knew that this was true although under the circumstances he had to say with another

Psalmist, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known” (Psa. 77:19).

More than forty years have passed since that bitter experience on the mountain side; but today Jim can testify and say, “Oh, give thanks unto the Lord,... who remembered us in our low estate; for His mercy endureth forever.” With retrospect and with anticipation he can say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psa. 23:6).

Growing Pains

FFF 14:9 (Nov 1968)

Growing Pains

James Gunn

If man is gradually improving, and as you contend, eventually will reach perfection, how is it that there is so much hatred, spite and belligerency among men today? Why are there murders, riots and wars? How can you, by the philosophy of moral evolution, explain the increase in the rate of crime, divorce and insanity?"

The panelist was sincere; she wanted to understand. She frankly had confronted herself with these moral and social problems, but had not discovered a satisfactory solution.

"Well," replied the Professor at the Christian-Jewish congress, "these are but growing pains. In terms of evolution man is only an infant. Geologically speaking, he has been on earth a very short time. This earth probably is millions of years old; in contrast, man's time here is short, but if he continues to evolve, and does not have an accident with the atomic bomb by which he could destroy himself, in a few more millenniums he will attain perfection. His progress is always onward and upward."

What a vain hope! What intellectual nonsense! How contrary to the records of human history! How adverse to contemporary observation! How contradictory to the Word of God! The Bible teaches the reality of evil; its

message is one of human depravity, infinite holiness and, yet, of gracious redemption.

Since the earliest days of their national history, the Jewish people have been made aware of the basis of all evil. On the annual day of atonement (Lev. 16) their high priest confessed upon the head of the scape goat "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgression in all their sins." These same three words: transgressions, iniquities and sins, were still in use among them toward the end of the history of the united kingdom. David wrote, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psa. 32:1-2). These descriptive words reveal the true character of sin.

The word sin in both Hebrew and Greek means missing the mark; consequently, a coming short of the moral standard set up by God. The Bible says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22).

Transgression actually means to go beyond, to violate a prohibition. This Eve did in Eden's garden (1 Tim. 2:14). Iniquity is the complete disregard of all authority and order; it is lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3-9. 1 Tim 1:9-10).

Numerous words are also employed by the Spirit of God in the Holy Scripture to delineate the result of sin in any of these aspects: evil, wickedness, guilt, unrighteousness, errors, blasphemy, lawlessness, perversity, crime, rebellion, etc.

God is infinitely holy and hates sin and all its nefarious effects. Holiness is involved in sovereignty; sovereignty is sustained by law, and law is enforced by penalty. God therefore in holiness will punish all sin. In grace He has

planned that this penalty may be suffered vicariously; in fact, He has provided a capable substitute to endure the punishment of human guilt. The benefits of this provision are extended only to those who face the wrongs and errors of life as these are explained in the terms used in the Bible; iniquity, transgression and sin; not in the terms of a perverted philosophy, "growing pains."

Modern thinking, in so many different spheres, fails to be realistic. Strange to say, many are more ready to accept the fantasies of modern thought, although it may mean their destruction, rather than accept the realism of Holy Scripture.

A conducted tour through a hospital for the mentally ill left a very deep impression upon the visitor. When back in the office, he had a number of serious questions to ask.

"Doctor," he enquired, "how is it that this and many similar institutions are filled to their utmost capacity?"

The Psychiatrist, a man of extensive experience, replied, "Simply because people refuse to face reality."

The doctor then extended his explanation by adding that there are thousands who prefer to live in a fantasy, a sort of dream-land, rather than face the realities of life. An imaginary existence in ease, affluence and success gives them a temporary and false feeling of comfort. When finally faced by realities, they crack.

The Apostle Paul seems to describe certain modern philosophers in his letter to Timothy, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). They refuse to accept the

guilt of human wickedness, and allow a fertile imagination to wrongly convince them in these matters; they accept eternal verities as deceptions, and deceptions as positive realities.

Guy Cesar

FFF 13:1 (Jan 1967)

Guy Cesar

James Gunn

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

“Where is Caledonia, and who is the brother that is holding meetings there with Henry Fletcher?” I asked this of my host, Albert Marks, because in the prayer meeting one of the elders, Mr. Duncan, had prayed so earnestly for the meetings, and by name had prayed for the two preachers.

“Oh, that is Guy Cesar,” replied my host, “one of the more spiritual of our younger brethren.”

Much has happened since those meetings in Caledonia away back in 1928. Very much indeed!

Guy Cesar, the spiritual younger brother, although in business has been activity engaged in different aspects of the work of the Lord. He has maintained a good testimony among his contemporaries, preached the gospel in many places, shepherded the sheep of Christ’s pasture, served on the Board of Elim Homes, and on the Board of Food for the Flock Inc. and until his health began to deteriorate about two years ago, expended himself unstintingly for others and for the glory of the Lord.

Guy was born in the City of Hamilton, Ontario, in 1887, but as a child moved with his parents to a farm in Ancaster where he remained until he was 17 years of age. In later life he recalled how, even in adolescence,

he was concerned about sin and the matter of personal guilt.

Feeling the need of further education and specialized training he left the farm for the Business College in the City. This provided a certain intellectual satisfaction, but gave no peace of conscience for the Lord through circumstances continued to speak about spiritual matters. His serious reflections about his personal status before the Lord so perturbed him that he sought counsel from the minister of the denomination he was then attending. This resulted in no assurance whatsoever. Notwithstanding, the God who had troubled him was ready to direct him. In the same denomination there was a devout Bible Class Leader and a group with him who loved the Lord Jesus, witnessing faithfully for the Saviour Through the influence of these happy Christians Guy was led in 1904 to put his trust in Christ for salvation. From his conversion he applied himself to the study of the Word of God, and what is equally necessary, obedience. Eventually, because of unscriptural practices, he retired from that denomination and joined the Philpott Tabernacle. There he was baptized and learned more of the ways of the Lord.

Brother James Adams of the Mc-Nab Street assembly, with whom he worked at the Westinghouse Corporation, was a blessing in his life. In 1916 he was introduced by brother Adams to the assembly. There he learned the ways of the Lord more perfectly, and there he fellowshiped for the rest of his life, acting as correspondent during the final twenty years.

In early Christian experiences our brother had his own personal problems: physical illness, sore bereavement,

and the scarcity of employment. These in his mature life made him the more sympathetic toward others.

In March 1934, Mr. and Mrs. Cesar were married and established the warm hospitable home which many of the Lord's own have enjoyed, a home where Christ was honoured, His Word revered, and His saints blessed. In the process of time brother Cesar purchased a small business of moving vans and trucks. Under him this developed into the large organization so widely known as Cesar's Moving and Storage. Of the days of small things, brother Robert Crawford writes: "When Mr. Cesar went into the moving business, their residence was an upstairs apartment over the trucks and stored goods. When George Gould and I were going to McNab assembly for five weeks of gospel meetings, the Cesars offered to entertain us. This they arranged by moving their own bed and dresser into the living room in order that the preachers have every possible facility right at their hand.

"During those weeks the Lord worked and brother Cesar was one of those burdened in prayer for souls. I have never forgotten his faithfulness in this regard. From that the beginning of hospitality many of the Lord's servants have partaken of the kindness and comfort of the Cesar's homes and apartments. The friendship and fellowship begun those years ago between the Cesar's and myself have been real and true."

The years following the purchase of the business were full of hard work, but not so full as to be a detriment to Guy's testimony and his interest in the work of the Lord.

Brother Cesar believed in tithing. Underneath the safe in his office was a tin box into which he placed his

weekly tithe, and from which it was distributed as the Lord led. Burglars broke into the office one night, and but for divine help our brother would not have escaped. These men blew open the safe. In doing so they found the little box, but so intent were they in the search for money that they picked it up and put it on the window-sill. The police investigating, on seeing the tin box made enquiry. Guy explained that it held the Lord's portion and that it had not even been opened.

"The Lord certainly was with you last night, Mr. Cesar," asserted the officer. How true! "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

So well-known was Guy's witnessing for Christ that an elderly gentleman came into his office one day. "I understand," said he, "that you are a true believer."

This gentleman was the father of a clergyman, but in spite of his search for peace, he had not found it. During that visit, and subsequent ones, our brother directed him to the Scriptures and to the Saviour. Through the business man, the father of the clergyman found "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Brother Cesar performed a ministry of visitation that few have done. On one occasion, he flew to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota to be with a brother there for serious surgery. This type of ministry received even more of his attention after his retirement from business. On discovering in the hospital a former superior from the Westinghouse, Guy made frequent visits to his private ward. This gentleman had been saved after brother Cesar had left the employment of the large Corporation. In spite of age and infirmity these two

enjoyed much together through their common life in Christ.

For many years brethren were deeply interested in an assembly magazine that would not be the voice of one man nor the expression of the policy of any party; brother Cesar was one of that number. In the Fall of 1954, several such brethren met under the chairmanship of Robert McClurkin at the Cesar's residence; it was there, at the home of Guy Cesar, that Food for the Flock was born. Throughout the years he has been a staunch supporter and a wise Director. Furthermore, occasionally, he has contributed articles. At the last annual meeting, "his seat was empty and he was missed."

From time to time during the last two years, there had been indications that physically Guy was not well. Visits to his physician did not confirm any particular diagnosis, so in spite of wanning health, he pressed forward. It was hoped that a motor trip to the west coast might restore some of the former elasticity, but God had purposed otherwise.

It seemed so befitting that on their return trip home, Mr. and Mrs. Cesar should spend a few days on Manitoulin Island, where well over thirty years ago in company with Arthur Crocker, Guy conducted a series of evangelistic services. Here among old acquaintances and new friends, he spent his last happy active weekend in Christian service.

Examination by the doctors resulted in immediate surgery for a condition that had been developing over a prolonged period. Although he survived the operation, he never regained strength. For eleven weeks he

lingered in the hospital, but most of the time in a coma. On November 1, 1966, the Lord released him from the body of humiliation, and he “fell asleep in Jesus.”

From far and near, the saints of God, the direct beneficiaries of his well spent-life, mourned his passing, and business acquaintances did him honour. At the December monthly meeting of the Mover’s Association in the Hamilton area, the Chairman called for a two minute silence in respect and honour for the man who, to quote the Chairman’s words, “Put the new look into the moving business of the city.”

Brethren tied to him in the bonds of Christian love and services, conducted the funeral services, and devout men carried him to his burial. They laid his remains to rest in the Woodlawn cemetery, Hamilton, reassured that all believers are more than conquerors, even over death, through Him that loved them.

He Abideth Faithful

He Abideth Faithful

James Gunn

“We have asked the oldest Christian at the conference to conclude this session with prayer,” announced the Chairman. “When he comes to the platform, he may tell you his age.”

The gentleman who made his way to the front of the large auditorium and eventually stood in the rostrum did not look so very old; he was well-groomed, mentally alert, and radiant in his personality.

“I was ninety-one on my last birthday,” he said, “and before I pray, let me tell you a story.”

The congregation edged forward; no one wanted to miss a single word.

“I travelled alone to this conference,” continued the aged speaker, “On my arrival I looked around the bus station for an available telephone. The first booth I entered was too dark, I could not see to read the Directory. Not far away a lady and gentleman were sitting in their car. When they saw me enter a second booth, they guessed my predicament so the lady came over and offered to help.

“Our conversation resulted in their taking me to their home, serving me a light lunch, finding the phone number of my friends. They then added kindness to kindnesses; they drove me in their car to the home of my friends.

“Let me testify to the sure fulfilment of the Lord’s promise, ‘Even to your old age I am He; and even to gray hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you’ (Isa. 46:4. N.S.B.).”

Before the elderly gentleman had even prayed, in their hearts “all the people said, Amen.”

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

James Gunn

John S. Robertson

It was Cecil Rhodes who said, "Reading makes a full man and writing makes an accurate man." To this another assertion has been added, "Thinking makes a cautious man." These form a very meaningful triad.

John S. Robertson developed such particular qualities to a marked extent. He was full of matter, spiritual matter that results from fellowship with God and the diligent study of His Word. There was an accuracy about his thinking and writing which indicated that he not only knew how to communicate well, but that his research on any subject had been done thoroughly. Yes, John was also a cautious man. He was not easily influenced. His convictions were generally based upon his own examination of Scripture. Once he arrived at a sound conclusion, it became his with deep conviction.

The readers of Ministry in Focus, and its predecessor, Food for the Flock, have enjoyed for many years the articles written by brother Robertson. The variety of the subjects with which he favored us indicated the scope of his interests and the extent of his ability. His volume, In His Name, which traces the history of the origin of some of the so-called "open assemblies" in Toronto, Canada, has also been deeply appreciated.

It is befitting that his career in writing should end with a series of dialogues between "Grandpa" and his grandson

“John” entitled “What Is God Like?” Not only have children been blessed by the simple yet forceful arguments and explanations, but Sunday School teachers and workers among the young have found in these papers a wealth of informative expositions which have proved useful in their important work.

John S. Robertson was born at Bo’ness, Scotland, October 19, 1906. When he was quite young his father’s family immigrated to Canada and settled in Stratford, Ontario. It was there that John attended public school, high school and normal school, making preparation for the teaching profession. He furthered his education at Queen’s University and also at the University of Toronto. John held degrees both in the arts and in pedagogy.

At the age of 16, John accepted Christ as his Saviour during an evangelistic campaign conducted by Mr. Sam McEweon. From the time of his conversion until his “Home Call” early this year, his interest and zeal in the Lord’s service were unremitting.

In 1923 our beloved brother left Stratford for Toronto. In Toronto he taught at Harbord Street Collegiate for many years, and throughout all those years he fellowshipped in Central Gospel Hall. On July 7, 1934, John married Miss Hillary Cleland, also of Central. As the years passed, and he acquired spiritual experience, his activities were expanded. He became Sun-School Superintendent and eventually became one of the elders in that local assembly. His loyalty remained true even after he moved to Vancouver.

During World War 2 John served as an officer in the Canadian Army. Major John S. Robertson retired from

the armed forces in 1945 to give himself more than ever before to the ways of God and of peace.

Frequently a picture arises in one's mind of the first meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc. That gathering was originally sponsored by brother O.G.C. Sprunt and was called to explore the possibility of starting a magazine of a wholly expository intent and content. It was decided to publish such a monthly; consequently, Food for the Flock 'came into existence.

John S. Robertson was the first Secretary of the Board. He helped guide the organization through the growing pains of its early days. He was so reliable; his work was always done meticulously and promptly. In his departure to be with Christ he has joined a number of the strong and steady men who were with us in the early days. How we miss them! They now rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

We are thankful to the Lord that He has raised up others who have assumed the responsibilities. These follow the faith and the example of those who have gone before.

Near the end of 1968 John and Hillary moved to Vancouver. They took up residence close to their son, Dr. Gordon Robertson. All were in happy fellowship at the Granville Gospel Chapel. Though far away, John nevertheless maintained his relationship with us, contributing to our ministry. Weakness in body did not halt his activities for the Lord. In spite of a grave heart condition, he kept busy. He bore a wonderful Christian testimony before everyone during his last stay in the hospital. He spoke constantly of the Lord and at times quoted lengthy passages of the Bible he knew so well and had used so often.

On April 12, 1975, our beloved brother and fellow laborer passed into the presence of his Lord, and on Tuesday, April 15, 1975, his body was laid to rest in Ocean View Burial Park to await a glorious and triumphant resurrection.

A note from a friend in Vancouver reads: "For the few years he was in Granville Chapel, we enjoyed his fellowship very much. It was always good to hear him engage in worship at the Lord's Supper. He will be greatly missed by the many friends he had made since coming here."

—James Gunn

Mrs. A. Luella Sprunt

Mrs. Ormer Sprunt, the beloved wife of O.G.C. Sprunt who is the original sponsor and a co-founder of Food for the Flock, Inc., was called to higher service May 31st. She passed home to be with the Lord early that morning in her 87th year.

Mrs. Sprunt had known the Lord for over 75 years and had throughout her life been associated with the assemblies of God's people, among whom she was highly and affectionately regarded.

Her son, Ernest B. Sprunt of St. Catharines, Ontario, an honored servant of the Lord, predeceased her on August 22, 1973. She is survived by her husband, a daughter Enid (Mrs. Harry Hafner) of Philadelphia, Penna., a son Edmund of Winnipeg, Man., and nine grandchildren, six of whom served as pall bearers. Mrs. Sprunt is also survived by two brothers, Ernest F. and Dr. Edmund T. Guest.

Brother Sprunt deeply mourns the loss of his devoted wife; they had been married 67 years.

Their many friend's will best remember Mrs. Sprunt as associated with her husband in their service unto the Lord in the handling of Christian literature through the Christian Book Room, 853 Bloor Street, W., Toronto, Canada.

Brethren James Gunn and Ross Phillips spoke words of comfort, counsel and hope at the large funeral.

There was a sense of real triumph as the congregation sang three of Mrs. Sprunt's favorite hymns.

Pray for our beloved brother in his sorrow, as well as for the other members of the family.

— James Gunn

Interpretation

Interpretation

James Gunn

Having now examined several necessary elements in the study of The Holy Bible, we prepare ourselves for what is the main objective of Bible study, the interpretation of Holy Scripture, whether this be for our own profit and enjoyment or for the help of others through us.

Interpretation may be considered in two parts; first, the diligent inquiry into the true meaning of the Word of God, and secondly, the explaining to others the actual meaning that results from this inquiry.

That there are dangers into which students sometimes fall must surely be obvious and, for the safety of all, some of these might well be mentioned.

Application For Interpretation:

This danger is frequently, but not exclusively, met with among persons of a very practical mind. We do not state this in any critical manner, nor do we ignore the fact that genuine Christianity is extremely practical. The Holy Spirit reveals His own method of teaching through the particular structure of many of the epistles. He states doctrine first and then emphasizes duty. There is the possibility of emphasizing duty at the expense of doctrine, or to make a practical application of Scripture without first of all discovering its primary meaning. For example, sometimes the promises, precepts and predictions which belong to Israel in the Old Testament are directly applied to the Church. Thank God for the

Church in both of its aspects, the universal and local, but if in our thinking we enrich the Church at the expense of Israel, we wrest the Scripture to our own confusion. What literally belongs to Israel must be considered in that connection and what belongs to the Church must be examined in that relationship. In this regard, we must study to shew ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, (2 Tim. 2:15).

A threefold effort is involved in the work of interpretation; we must interpret literally, according to the strict meaning of each word, phrase, clause and paragraph; we must interpret consistently, for the right interpretation of the Scripture is not merely the placing upon Scripture the meaning that may please the student but, rather, every interpretation must conform to the general teaching of the entire Bible, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20). We must interpret doctrinally; the interpretation of any Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or in the New, must be in the light of the revealed doctrine of the New Testament.

Allegorizing instead of Interpreting: This has also been called spiritualizing. Students of an imaginative mind must ever be on their guard against this danger. There are those who believe that the great Augustine was the originator of such an illogical and destructive method of interpretation. By this system Scripture can be given any sense that is the product of a fertile mind. One or two examples may elucidate the point. A brother who had been delivered from Romanism, publicly read the words of Christ, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19). "Brethren," he said, in his

comments, "This is our task, to pull down the temple of Romanism and afterward the Lord Jesus will raise up His true temple, the Church." What an assignment he gave to his audience! Another brother, after reading from Acts 28:3, stated that this gathering of the bundle of sticks by Paul was typical of the Lord gathering His people together in local church fellowship. How ridiculous! The sticks were gathered together alright, but to be burned. Thank God, such is not the final disposition of God's beloved people. The attentive student of the Scripture will shun that which is fanciful.

Speculation Beyond Interpretation:

Here we have another unfortunate mistake into which some have unconsciously slipped. To spiritualize suggests a failing to acquire a strictly literal understanding of the text, but to speculate is to add to what has been clearly written, it is a going beyond actual interpretation. It is the danger of the dogmatic mind. During the early months of World War II an effort was made by some to encourage and comfort the saints but, alas, much that was said was based upon speculation. Some in their zeal assured God's people that Italy would never join with Germany and fight against Britain because, they affirmed, Italy belonged to the Old Roman Empire, and Germany did not. In their judgment Italy and Britain finally must be one, and both alike separated from Germany. Well, whatever the final scenes may be as revealed in the prophetic Word, it is now patent that much of what was said was speculation, a reading into the Scriptures something that God had not intended.

The careful researcher must learn to approach his problem without partiality toward any particular system of thought and without prejudice against any method of investigation. In other words, he must engage in his work with a perfectly open mind, ever searching for ultimate values. Those who would search into the deep things of God, explore the hidden treasures of God's Holy Word, do well to maintain a similar attitude.

It has been said that there is but one interpretation of Scripture but many applications of Scripture. In general this is true although in certain specific instances this may need to be modified. To this helpful rule we might add a few suggestions. Let us set up this standard before us: one interpretation, any Spirit-directed application, scanty allegorizing, and silenced speculation.

Interpretation Guides

Interpretation Guides

James Gunn

“How can I except some man should guide me?” replied the Ethiopian to Philip’s question, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The illustrious Chancellor had every reason to praise God for the guidance given him by the Evangelist Philip on the occasion of his conversion and baptism. Since that early day many believers have been thankful for the help and the instruction provided by others.

Spiritually minded men throughout the centuries not only have sought to guide their fellow-Christians in the study of the Holy Scriptures, but they have discovered through their own efforts certain principles, the use of which gives direction in Biblical studies. Let us consider some of these:

The Control Of The Holy Spirit:

We have already emphasized the importance of reliance upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, but so great is the importance of this point we must notice it again. It is the Holy Spirit Who inspired the Bible; it is, therefore, He Who interprets it. Since He, the Divine Author, also indwells the believer, there ever is available the necessary illumination. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” (2 Pet. 1:21). “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you,” (1 John 2:27). “When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide

you into all truth," (John 16:13). Let us ever depend upon the Spirit of God for the interpretation of the Word of God.

The Rules Of Grammar:

Every one cannot be an accomplished grammarian; yet, since many of the rules of grammar are exceedingly simple, and these simple rules provide a key to understanding, every Bible student should apply them. Let us notice how essential are:

THE MEANING OF WORDS. There are but few large words in the Bible, for the Bible was written for the common people. Notwithstanding its blessed simplicity, there are words the meanings of which are difficult to some. It is good practice always to keep a good English Dictionary at hand. Unfortunately, the dictionary is not consulted as frequently as it should be.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORDS. With words we build sentences, and with sentences we build paragraphs. Occasionally our attention is drawn to the fact that in the Greek language there was no punctuation. Now while this is true, we are thankful to God for spiritual men who were so well acquainted with both Greek and English that they translated the New Testament out of the one into the other, inserting the punctuation where it is necessary. That some mistakes were made in this work is conceded, but since these are few, it is imperative that we read our English translations according to their punctuation. Much of the sense of Scripture is lost by failing to notice the clear structure of a sentence.

THE USAGE OF WORDS: Here we enter a slightly more difficult field, for words by usage sometimes lose one meaning and take on another; for example, the word "let" in 2 Thess. 2:7. When the King James Version was translated, it meant "to hinder," but in our day, it has the sense of "to permit." The Bible student should secure an English Greek Concordance, such as Strong's or Young's, in order to discover the usage of important words throughout the Bible.

The Law Of Context:

It becomes very obvious that, if we interpret the Word of God under the guidance of the Spirit of God, we interpret it according to its context. The whole tenor of the book in which a statement is found may lend a suggestion to its meaning, so also may the immediate background. The statements of Scripture are not of isolated meanings. The entire Bible is carefully and intricately bound together into one homogeneous and harmonious whole.

Let the word "faith" illustrate for us the law of context. As we shall notice, its meaning differs according to the immediate background. In Gal. 1:23 the doctrine of the gospel is suggested by the word, "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." In Rom. 3:3 apparently the word means faithful, "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" In Heb. 11:1, it means trust or confidence, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

In order to impress upon our minds that the context definitely governs the actual meaning of words and statements, let us use another example, the thought of

salvation, expressed both in the noun and verb forms. In Heb. 2:3, salvation embraces in a most comprehensive manner the glorious blessings offered in the gospel. In Eph. 2:8, salvation indicates the personal enjoyment of present deliverance from spiritual death. In Rom. 5:9, this wonderful thought appears in a future aspect, declaring that those now justified will be saved from the wrath that will descend upon the world after the rapture of the Church. In Pet. 3:21, salvation is for the believer; through identification with the Risen Christ he is saved from the corruption of the world. One more reference will suffice to show that we must interpret Scripture according to the context. In Jas. 5:15, to be saved apparently means to be healed.

The Law Of Comparison:

We have space enough this month to consider another very important rule in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the law of comparison. This rule is equal in importance to that of the law of context. In 1 Cor. 2:13, we read about the comparing of spiritual things with spiritual. This statement has been explained as the fitting of spiritual language to spiritual truths, and without doubt it contains such a thought; nevertheless, there lies in it the suggestion that one passage in the Spiritual Word, the Bible, should be compared with another passage. We shall endeavour to demonstrate that such comparisons are most profitable, and that time spent in this exercise produces gratifying results.

Let us compare a passage in the Old Testament with the same passage as it is quoted in the New Testament. In Eph. 4:8, we have a quotation from Psalms 68:18. A comparison of these two is most interesting and

enlightening. Psalm 68 is a processional song written probably by David for the occasion of the bringing of the Ark to Zion, 2 Sam. 6. The Psalm recounts the exploits of God over Israel's foes in the wilderness and in the land. Those that subdued Israel into captivity and slavery are now captives themselves, the captives of an exalted and enthroned Lord. This exalted Lord on the other hand distributes the spoils of war among those who often had been rebellious in the wilderness. These facts illuminate the teaching of Eph. 4. They reveal the triumph of Christ over the captor, Satan, and the glory of Christ in resurrection and ascension, as well as the grace of Christ in bestowing, as the spoils of Calvary, gifts upon men.

In a similar manner comparisons may be made when an Old Testament passage is quoted several times in the New Testament as; for example, the statement by the prophet Habakkuk, "The just shall live by his faith." This word is found in the epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. The comparison here shows that in each epistle we have a development of the subject of justification; in Romans, we are justified by blood; in Galatians, we are justified by grace; while in Hebrews, we are justified by faith.

It becomes imperative with students of the Word that they also learn to compare passages that are similar in the different epistles. Frequently passages that appear strikingly parallel, when carefully compared exhibit certain vivid contrasts as; for example, the two passages, Phil. 2:9-11, and Col. 1:20-22.

It is felt that the diligent application of these principles in our study of the Divine Word will help us to understand what God intends in His Inspired Revelation.

The Law Of Contrast:

This rule may be considered of less value than the former rules, notwithstanding, it has its place among the principles of interpretation. In the writings of the apostle John many contrasts are encountered; darkness and light (1 John 1:5-6), hatred and love (1 John 2:9-11), righteousness and sin (1 John 3:7-8), flesh and Spirit (John 3:6), The usefulness of the law of contrast is seen when John 3:36 is carefully examined. It is generally accepted that the clause, "He that believeth not the Son," means unbelief, but closer scrutiny shows that to believe not forms a perfect contrast with to believe, it is a positive refusal to believe. Mere unbelief may result purely from ignorance, but disbelieve is as much an act of the will enlightened by knowledge as is belief. Surely here, by the law of contrast, we see the responsibility of man to the claims of the Saviour, and the dreadful solemnity of a positive rejection of His demands.

In the will of the Lord we shall look into other principles of interpretation, and also intimate certain clearly defined methods of Bible study.

Manuals and Time

Manuals and Time

James Gunn

“Reading maketh a full man; writing maketh an accurate man; and, thinking maketh a cautious man.” Such was the adaptation of a well known maxim made by a Christian to his son. Although impressed the youth felt that in its three parts it carried a suggestion of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Later, under the mellowing influence of experience, these rules became to him the methods of knowledge, proficiency, and sagacity.

In the study of the Scriptures these rules are invaluable. We learn to read prayerfully, to write exactly, and to think deeply. Actually we read first, then think, and finally we preserve our thoughts in writing.

Manuals:

For Bible study two books are necessary, the Bible and a note book, and for the sake of convenience two note-books may be suggested, one for temporary jottings, and, maybe, a loose-leaf one for more permanent work. As we read the Word of God we find precious things. Perchance in one chapter we read the name and the activity of a person, or we discover a certain theme, such as “prayer,” or “faith,” or, it may be, we find revealed a certain attitude to man on the part of God. These things which attract our attention we note in our scribbler. Later, in reading elsewhere, we may find the same person named, but engaged in another activity. This we note comparing it with our former entry. At a

still later date, we encounter the same person again. Immediately we turn to our scribbler and compare what we have discovered with our former findings. To illustrate; let us assume that we are reading through the epistle to the Colossians. First, we raise our hearts in brief prayer; then, we open our Bibles and notebooks. We do not read many verses until we see the name, "Epaphras," and we note it in our book under Colossians Chapter One. At the same time we notice what Paul calls him, "a fellowservant," and "a faithful minister." We also add that Paul declares that the Colossians had learned the grace of God through this brother. Sometime later, we are studying chapter four, and once more we see the name, "Epaphras." This time he is engaged in prayer because of his anxiety over the saints at Colosse. This we enter in our book. It may be a considerable time before we reach the epistle to Philemon, but on doing so, once again we find this same brother, "Epaphras." In our scribbler we write that on this occasion he is in prison. With all this material about one man, we decide to condense and transfer it to our permanent records. We therefore put down the statements:

§ Epaphras: Col. 1:7: A preacher of the grace of God.

§ Col. 4:12: A shepherd anxious for the sheep.

§ Phil. 23: A prisoner of the Lord.

§ A little more effort will clarify each thought, thus;

§ Epaphras: An Evangelist of the gospel of Christ. (Col. 1:7).

§ A Pastor of the Church of Christ. (Col. 4:12).

§ A Sufferer for the testimony of Christ. (Phil. 23). Here in this brother, we have an example to follow, and plenty of material for further meditation.

Time:

An old cannon stands in Major's Hill Park, Ottawa, Canada. For more than a hundred years this veteran has been booming out the time signal exactly on the second of noon. Hundreds of persons check daily their watches by its thunderous roar, for correct time is priceless.

In Bible study time is a mighty factor. It has been well said, "Use your time well, and you will have ample time to use."

The Making Of Time:

"I am waiting for the time when I shall be able to study my Bible more intensively," is the vain hope expressed by many. Why should we wait for time; time that never waits for us? We must make time. An inventory of each 24 hours will reveal shocking wastes of valuable time. The majority work 8 hours a day, and rest 8 hours in every 24, this leaves another 8 hours for the more personal affairs of life. In one week we are particularly responsible for 56 hours. How are we using these hours? Is it not possible to arrange these 56 hours to give at least 31/2 hours a week to the study of God's Word? 30 minutes a day is surely the minimum. By rising earlier, by taking less time for dressing, by curtailing the unsavoury gossip, by the judicious control of the Daily Press, by the elimination of unprofitable radio and television programs, by the forsaking of aimless pursuits, and by the re-arrangement of domestic duties,

minutes can be saved, and minutes mean hours. Let us make time for Bible study.

The Amount Of Time:

It would be improper to state how much time each should give in the day to this study. Some need more, because all minds do not acquire knowledge as quickly as do others. Each must determine how much, not how little, time he can use profitably. Then again, some work longer hours than do others, they spend more time travelling to and from their employment. Others have families of small children, and must assume time-consuming responsibilities. Each Christian must decide in God's presence the amount of time to use every day in the examination of the Scriptures.

The Appropriate Time:

Circumstance must determine the best period of the day which makes Bible study pleasant and fruitful. There are those who do not have to appear in their office too early in the morning; for them, Bible study might well be the first item of the day. Others who start work early in the morning find the evening more appropriate, and there are others who with a longer lunch-time can select a quiet period following their noon meal. The most suitable period of the day, like the amount of time to be used, must be decided in the presence of the Lord.

The Time Table:

In many cases, the lives of God's people would be greatly improved in quality and largely expanded in usefulness if they adopted a time table, but if the entire day cannot be methodically planned a study schedule should be prepared. This need not be elaborate, but it

should be fixed, and strictly adhered to. If it be possible to spend only 30 minutes a day, the time can be divided; for example, thus: 18 minutes for the careful reading of the passage; 4 minutes to observe the different paragraphs or sections, with their respective themes; 3 minutes for the entering of these in the day-book; and the 5 minutes that remain can be used to profit by reviewing this work, and the memorizing of the various themes found in each part of the reading. With these headings firmly established in the mind, meditation, during the remainder of the busy day, becomes a blessed possibility and a source of spiritual pleasure.

Materialism

Materialism

James Gunn

Out of his extensive experience in the service of Christ, Mr. James Gunn of Toronto, Canada, and our esteemed Associate Editor, shares some sobering thoughts on a subject which pertains to all of us.

“Materialism has a baneful influence on our spiritual life and church fellowship.” This was said so dogmatically and harshly that the import of the statement was at the first lost on me. Notwithstanding, it did stimulate considerable thinking in regard to the specific teaching of Holy Scripture. With the Word of God as the background, a little careful observation and one or two potent examples, the truth of the statement was finally confirmed.

Perhaps the apostolic words of caution were prophetic in some cases: “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim. 6:9).

Was the little note that had been given me a mistake? Perhaps! But this palatial house with its beautiful setting was the address at which it asked that I call.

Through the pulling of the brass knob, from within came the pleasing music of the chimes. In answer, the door was opened by a maid. In response to her smile, I explained that probably a mistake had been made, and extending the note to her I told her how it had been

given to me by an usher at a Christian convention in the city, given probably in error.

"Of course," she replied, "I know nothing about the note, I shall call my mistress."

The face of the lady who returned with the maid seemed strangely familiar to me. We must have had a previous acquaintanceship, somewhere, somehow, at some time. My bewilderment increased, when, addressing me she said, "I am so pleased that you are here, James, George will be delighted. Do come in."

Who was George? What was her name?

Someone was coming down the hallway toward the room where we were seated. The shuffling seemed to indicate a person only partially recovered from a stroke. When at last he stood in the open doorway, I was astonished to see a former Sunday School teacher. As a little boy, a full 45 years before, I had been a member of his class. He was a magnetic personality and a good teacher. As boys we all liked him.

"We have other company this afternoon," he said. "Let us go into the solarium; we shall be alone there. I do want to talk to you."

When we were comfortably seated amidst the tropical beauty and the sweet fragrance of growing plants and flowers, he related to me his actual life story, a story of material prosperity and of spiritual decadence.

"Your name appeared in the evening paper as a speaker at the Christian Easter convention," he began. "That news penetrated my already stricken conscience like an arrow. An inner voice seemed to say, that former little boy is now a servant of the Lord Jesus, ministering God's

Word to His people, but in contrast you have long since lost your Christian joy and testimony.”

His voice broke and he cried; yes, and in his weakened condition he sobbed out his remorse and repentance. For a little while all else was quiet except for our weeping. There was nothing that I could do but weep along with him.

“I got into the oil industry almost at its beginning,” he continued, “and I have made it. You can see that for yourself, but, James, I would give it all up to be the happy Christian that I was in those early days, when as a little child you sat in my Sunday School class. I have been out of fellowship with the Lord for many years.”

There were more tears of regret as he confessed, “They were miserable years. You have to fight your way to the top. To advance you have to surpass others, even at times gain mastery over them. Once you have succumbed to the temptations of materialism, covetousness increases and you become proud and arrogant, and needless to say, the indwelling Spirit is deeply grieved.”

In a pensive mood we sat silent for a short time.

“Help me, do help me, back into fellowship with the Lord and into the fellowship of other believers. Oh, that I could enjoy church fellowship once more and again participate in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.” These words came as a cry from the depths of his heart.

By this time we both were exhausted, but for direction and comfort we turned to the Holy Scriptures: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just

to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrightousness ... My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 1:8-2:1). We then prayed together. The remembrance of that penitential confessional prayer will ever remain; indelibly it is written on my heart.

All possible help was sought, and arrangements were made, but such was his physical condition that before he could again join with the saints gathered in the church, the Lord took his wayward, yet forgiven child home.

"The love of money is the root of all evil," avers the apostolic admonition. "Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). Frequently attention has been drawn to the fact that it is not money in itself that is the root of evil, but the love of it. There are some wealthy Christians which do not particularly love it; they simply hold it in trust, and from their means they have contributed generously to the work of the Lord. Nevertheless, to all such, Paul commanded Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17).

Others go on coveting after the goods of this world. Alas, they deviate from the truth and bring upon themselves pain, sorrow and anguish: "Supposing that gain is godliness ... but godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:5-6).

Memory, A Faculty Or Failure

Memory, A Faculty Or Failure

James Gunn

Memory is that divine endowment by which man possesses the ability to retain ideas in the mind; it is the faculty by which when required, the retained ideas are recalled in practically the same language and the same imagery as when first received. The functions of memory are actually three; first, it receives the impression; in the second place, it retains that impression; and, finally, either through circumstance or at will, the impression is recalled.

In response to his teacher's request that he define memory for the class, the little boy declared that it was the thing you forget with. In this he was very much mistaken.

Memory has been illustrated by the Records Office, in which there are many drawers containing many files into which documents are placed for safe keeping.

How helpful a well developed and amply equipped memory can be in the study of all studies, that of the Bible. It will be profitable to ascertain some of the methods the Lord uses to deeply impress His truth upon our memories; and, then, to determine some of the means He uses to help us recall His truth.

Receiving The Impression:

Throughout the Word of God, a number of different methods are employed to transmit divine conceptions to the receptive mind of man.

(a) CLARITY OF EXPRESSION: The preacher of Ecclesiastes reveals the very rules through which God has given us His revelation. He writes, "Because the preacher was wise ... he sought out, and set in order many proverbs...; He sought to find out acceptable words (Ecc. 12:9-10)." There are two things here which impress memory; first, things were set in order, that is, things set in proper sequence: secondly, acceptable words were sought out, words within the vocabulary and appreciation of the hearers. In Solomon's principles of teaching there are two essentials by which facts are fixed upon memory --sequence and simplicity.

(b). ILLUSTRATION OF MEANING: The parables of our Blessed Lord Jesus reveal the great wealth of illustrative material He used. How deeply these have affected human thinking. The question, "Who is my neighbour?" is answered in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which illustrated neighborliness in its most perfect form. The assertion, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," is confirmed by the parable of the prodigal son. Who could ever forget such illustrations or their meanings?

(c). REPETITION OF STATEMENT: After the resurrection of Christ we read, "They remembered His words, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again (Luke 24:7-8)." Why did they remember these words? Because Christ had repeated them in their hearing on several occasions (Matt. 16:21; 17: 9-12; 17:22; 20:17-19; John 12:23-33). Repetition deepens impression upon the mind.

(d). ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS: How often we read the expression, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto." The Lord Jesus constantly associated spiritual concepts with common processes. The sowing of the word of the kingdom is associated with the sowing of seed in a field. The appearance of professors in Christendom is associated with the presence of tares in a field of grain (Matt. 13). The chief butler recalled his dream as soon as he heard about the dream of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:9). One idea is recalled because of its intimate association with a similar idea.

(e). CONNECTION THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCE: The rule of the association of ideas is used purposely; whereas, the connection through circumstance may not be used intentionally, but result from the common happenings of life. To remember a circumstance, enables the mind to recall some fact closely connected with it. Two or three examples will elucidate the point. The crowing of the cock, reminded Peter of the Lord's prediction of his denial (Matt. 26:74-75). The circumstance of the Holy Spirit's coming upon Cornelius, brought to Peter's mind the fact that the Lord had spoken of the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 11:15-16). Peter, as an old man, recalled, the exact words of the Father; "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" because of the striking impression made upon his mind on the Mount of Transfiguration. (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

These rules may be practiced in every day living, so as to develop our mental powers for Bible study. On being introduced to a stranger, repeat his name inwardly to yourself several times, if necessary spell it to yourself, and thus learn to deeply impress your memory. For the

new fact that you wish to remember, form an association with some other fact you long have known, and use the circumstances of life as the filing clerks of memory.

Recalling The Impression:

“It is very provoking,” said a brother in a Bible study class, “A preacher was here sometime ago, and explained that verse to us, but I cannot recall what his explanation was. I remember it was very good, but what he said has slipped from my memory.” This brother’s difficulty, too frequently has been our own. All would like to recall what memory holds of the good things of God, but how can we do so?

There are three simple rules:

(a). THE IMPULSE OF THE SPIRIT: Said the Lord Jesus to His disciples, “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.” God intended that certain who heard those words, preserve their actual impressions of the life of the Lord Jesus. Christ lived a life in which He revealed His essential Deity as well as His perfect humanity. The record of that life has been preserved, but between the inspired record made later, and the earlier revelation, years passed by; in the case of Matthew, twenty-five; in that of Peter, assuming that he dictated the Gospel of Mark, thirty-five; and in that of John, fifty-five years. The link between the scenes of the life of Christ, and the dates when those scenes were chronicled is the Holy Spirit.

(b) THE IMPETUS OF SELF EFFORT: The Lord holds man responsible to recall the past. This is brought before us in the epistle to the first of the seven Churches

in Asia, Ephesus. He says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen," (Rev. 2:5). The history of this church appears in three stages; its formation (Acts 19) about A.D. 55-56; its consolidation (The epistle to the Ephesians) through A.D. 62; and its degeneration (Rev. 2:1-7) evinced by A.D. 96. There was much to remember during nearly forty years, much in the closing thirty years of that period, the years of decline, and the Lord commands that through self-effort they recall their former glory, as well as the pathway of weakness and failure they had pursued. The effort required to recall mental impression is in direct proportion to the amount of effort we exercise to deepen that impression when it is first received. The deeper we make the impression the easier will it be to recall, whether this be through the Spirit's promptings, self-effort, or the ministry of the Word of God.

(c). THE IMPACT OF MINISTRY: The apostle Peter realized his responsibility as a servant of Christ to put the saints always in remembrance of the truth of God (2 Pet. 1:12-15). This he endeavoured to do; first, by his oral ministry, for he says, "I think it is meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;" and, secondly, by his written ministry, "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Ministry in either form is a means by which truths already learned are recalled for immediate use.

My Teacher

My Teacher

James Gunn

Fifty-five years in anticipation is a long time, but in retrospect it seems but as yesterday. What pictures they produce in the imagination!

I can see him yet although more than five decades separate us from those early impressions. A man of medium height with dark wavy hair, slow and deliberate of speech, spiritually devoted, yet kind and considerate of little children, my Sunday School teacher, Mr. George Hall.

If time could only roll backward, how eagerly now would I listen to his message, learn the memory work assigned, and properly behave. The respect in which we held him then has deepened with the passing of the years until now we revere his memory.

Honours of different types have been given throughout the years but none has excelled the honour of being called to conduct the funeral services of my esteemed former teacher. To preach the sermon and present his example to the congregation was an esteemed privilege. To stand with the mourners and mourn with them, and to meet with the many at the grave-side who, like myself, felt the poorer for his passing, are cherished memories.

The Sunday School in East Toronto of which he was both superintendent and teacher was small; there was only one class. It would have been difficult to have convinced

Mr. Hall of the virtue of the so-called graded lesson; his one lesson had to be adaptable to all grades, all grades in the one class. While the majority of the twelve or fourteen children who encircled him on a Sunday afternoon ranged from eight to ten years, there were some younger and a couple older. I sometimes wonder where they all are. From information gathered here and there, a number of them are Christians living for God in some divinely appointed sphere. How much the lessons taught by Mr. Hall contributed to this only the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal. Some have been very successful in life but the most are honest working folk; some have already passed into Eternity.

The building in which our Sunday School met (How vividly I recall its appearance!) had served more than one generation in more than one capacity. It had been a parish hall, a municipal hall, and a day school; but in the years of which I am thinking, it was called simply, "The Gospel Hall." There was only one large room and the vestibule, no anterooms and no basement. Later a room was built on the rear, and in this room the Bible Class was conducted. From the street level seven or eight steps led up to the entrance. Age had not been kind to the structure; the elements had taken their toll. In spite of several coats of paint and the strict cleanliness of the place, it looked shabby. The greatest attraction to the Swanwich Avenue Gospel Hall of 1910 was the warm hearts within.

Occasionally the severe inclement weather of winter would influence the attendance at the Sunday School, but usually we trudged through the snow along Gerrard Street to Kimberly and up Kimberly, around the corner on Swanwick to the Hall. We kicked the snow from our

rubbers as we climbed the steps to the entrance, and there our teacher awaited to welcome us. He had earlier opened the drafts on the old Quebec heater, and the glowing brickettes shining through the little mica door in the front added cheer to the literal warmth it produced.

The opening exercises were very simple. With childish enthusiasm we sang as Mr. Hall led us in suitable hymns: "Jesus loves me this I know," "Into a tent where a gypsy boy lay," "There's a Friend for little children," and "When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus," etc.

There was no black-board, no flannel-board, no object, no model, helpful though these may be, he needed none of them. His tools were few but effective. He had a little red register, a well-used Bible, and the indwelling Spirit of God. He drew his message from the Holy Book and relied upon the Holy Spirit to help him teach it.

After the opening hymns and prayer, our teacher would pick up the register, take his pencil in hand, listen to our memory work, and mark the points merited in that little red book that recorded the deeds done in the class. This register was the instrument that decided our reward at the annual children's treat. That little book had the power to produce on that great occasion either shame or joy.

I have on my desk to-night another little book held by the same fingers as held that thin red one; in it appears the same hand-writing. The difference between them is this, what I have to-night is a little black book. It is the one he carried in his pocket and jotted down the thoughts and ideas which occurred to him as he

meditated on the Scriptures of Truth. In this tiny book there are also some loose notes, among these the poem that appears this month on the back cover of Food for the Flock. Also among these there is another lengthy note, it looks like the content of a letter written to someone in order to comfort and encourage. I would not like you to read some of the pages from the little red book, but I have decided to share with you some of the notes from the little black book:

Some things that will never fail for the Lord's people.

The Lord's presence: "The Lord thy God, He it is that doth go before thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31:6). Notice the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:25), and the two who walked to Emmaus downcast and discouraged (Luke 24:13-32).

The Lord's faithfulness (reliability or trustworthiness): "My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail (Psa. 89:33). Notice God's word to Israel, "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13), and His promise to us in the New Testament, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

The Lord's compassion (His mercy or pity): His compassions fail not (Lam. 3:22). The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting (Psa. 103:4, 8, 11, 17).

The Lord's care: "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail" (1 Kings 17:14). Notice also, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19).

The Lord's promises: "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Jos. 21:45). Notice also, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). "If I go away, I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

To the above I can add a hearty, "Amen!" having proved the truth of God's word and faithfulness. See also Psalm 119: 67, 71, and 75.

With love in Christ, Your friend, Geo. E. Hall

It is Sunday School teachers of Christian simplicity and godly sincerity like Mr. George Hall who mould the lives of the young, and direct them in paths of blessing and success. May the Lord raise up in our own day and generation such men, men who aspired to nothing yet accomplished much, men who walked in separation from evil yet benefited many.

New Powers Of Concentration

New Powers Of Concentration

James Gunn

"I do not believe in the invisible and the intangible; seeing is believing with me." The statement was made by a professed materialist to a Christian physician. "Do you believe in a human brain?" queried the doctor. "Well, yes, I do," replied the materialist. "Have you ever seen one?" "No, doctor, to be honest, I have not, but I assume you have." "You are correct, I have seen more than one, the brain is definitely tangible, and in many cases has been made visible." "Let me ask you, have you ever seen the human mind?" asked the medical man. "No, I have not." "Has anyone ever seen the mind?" "I suppose not." "Then tell me, now," pressed the doctor, "is there such a thing as mind, is it real, does it perform any important function, does anything depend upon it?" "Doctor, you certainly have sprung the trap; the mind is a wonderful reality, and mighty essential in human life."

Thank God for the human mind, as fearfully and wonderfully made as the human body. How feeble are the attempts of men to explore the profound depths of its powers of perception, reason, judgment, and memory.

When the animal for the burnt-offering was cut into its four pieces, and was placed upon the brazen altar in the court of the Tabernacle to be offered before the Lord, the head was one of those pieces. As those who are anxious to learn more of the things of God, we must lay our head, our intellect, upon the altar for Christ. Of His own we thus give Him, for, inasmuch as He has blessed

us with mental powers, we use these mental powers to bless Him. He has made known His mind to us in the Bible, so we use our mind in order to know more of Him through the Bible. Let us consider a few of the operations of the mind that prove helpful in Bible study.

OBSERVATION: In the reading of the Word of God., we should ever have this simple rule before us, "Observe the obvious." In other words, we must focus our attention upon the Scriptures, so as to see the thing that is evident. As an illustration of this, we shall think together of the apostles, Paul and James. Throughout Paul's history and ministry, it is easily detected that he naturally loved people. His labours were in the large cities, and the majority of his illustrations were drawn from human haunts and activities: buildings, temples, stadiums, athletes, soldiers, rulers, etc. With James, his relations with other people were entirely different, he travelled little beyond Jerusalem, and practically all his illustrations were drawn from nature: "The grass withereth," "The Father of lights." (the Father of the heavenly illuminaries) a "fountain of water," tamed and wild beasts, birds, wind, fire, etc. A patient developing of such precious things as are obvious to any reader, will provide food for mind, strength for soul, and refreshment for the spirit.

CONCENTRATION: The statement that man thinks pictorially, is generally true. Sensory impulses produce mental images. These images pass through the mind in astonishing numbers and at high velocity; concentration, therefore, becomes the result of a dual effort. First, an effort must be made to deal with internal interference. This is accomplished by isolating the one mental picture we wish to maintain, by the elimination of all other

images. For example, we wish to think of the life of the Apostle Paul, but there comes into our minds all we ever knew of the life of Julius Ceasar, Queen Victoria, Abraham Lincoln. The effort must be made to refuse such distractions and banish from the mind every divergent thought, forcing all attention upon the life of Paul. In second place, we must deal with external disturbances. The determination must be created, and the power exercised, to ignore the movements, the noises, the people, and the conditions, which surround us, so that, freed from every extraneous object and irrelevant subject, we may occupy our reasoning powers with the matter we wish to investigate; as in the example, the life of Paul.

REFLECTION: A common explanation of reflection is, that effort of the mind whereby we think attentively upon some matter several times. This explanation needs some amplification. Reflection actually is, not only the repeated thinking over of a certain matter, but a frequent thinking over of the same subject from different angles, and through several distinct approaches. As for example; we wish to think in a worshipful attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our minds, the very suggestion of His precious name and title makes us think of His blessed person. Thoughts upon His person results upon a mental consideration of His pre-existence; this in turn leads us to the incarnation of Christ. As we ponder thus the fact of His birth; we are prompted to view the mystery of His personality, and to search out the profound wonder of how Deity and humanity could become so organically one. Through this, another mental suggestion, we are lead into still a different channel; the eternal existence in glory of this

amazing combination of the two natures in Christ. In this entire mental process, we have been reflecting upon Christ, we have turned backward upon Him every new ray of light discovered. What a healthy spiritual exercise such mental exertion must be. It might well result in praise, adoration, and appreciation ascending to God from our hearts.

MEDITATION: Contemplation and meditation are occasionally considered as synonymous terms. There may exist this distinction; contemplation is the act of considering a subject by means of mental imagery; whereas, meditation is the act of pondering over a matter in the light of reason and logic. Of this we are sure, meditation is the thinking over of a matter with a definite purpose in view. Meditation is to the mind and spirit what assimilation is to the body. "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food," said Job. (Job 23:12) Assimilation is the absorption of nourishment by the body; meditation is the mental effort through which our souls absorb spiritual nutrition. Alas! Alas! meditation is almost a lost art among the people of God. They have mistakenly associated it almost completely with the sombre days of mysticism in the Church's history.

Let us, by the grace of God, and with true purpose of heart, improve our mental processes for effective Bible study. In the routine of the day, let us practise the effort of concentration. If we develop it in the matters of the home, office, or factory, it will become easier when we study our Bibles. In times of concentration, let us engage in serious reflection, involving in the progression skillful meditation in order that we may grow up into Christ.

Pastors Wanted

Pastors Wanted

James Gunn

“Uncle Bert wants to talk with you.” The two men to whom the message was directed walked, deep in thought, toward the car in which the aged Christian sat. For some time they had known of a definite deterioration in his physical condition. That he had sent for them rather than had come to them seemed ominous. In the short distance to the car, silently both made a quick mental review and appraisal of his years of Christian service, years during which he as an elder had helped build and guide the assembly.

“Brethren,” he began; his voice was firm and his aspect one of peaceful resignation; “the doctor has given me only about six more weeks to live. I shall probably return to the hospital a little later.”

The information was not unexpected, but they were pleased that he had given it to them himself. There was little that needed to be said. Uncle Bert, as he was affectionately called, had been active in his duties, diligent in his stewardship, and generous in his hospitality, but this was not the occasion for eulogy. They knew that he would be missed for he had endeared himself to many. The years since his retirement from secular work had been devoted to the service of God and His beloved people; consequently, the two men could only pray that some one might readily assume the responsibilities their esteemed elder now laid down.

The days passed quietly. They kept in touch with his family, and followed his condition from occasional reports. Toward the end of the second week another message called them to the bedside of their dying brother. He was pale and very weak, but he reached out and took each by a hand; then addressed himself to the younger.

“My day of service is over, but the work of the Lord must go on. Will you take my place? Will you care for the people of God?”

“Yes,” replied the more inexperienced brother, “I shall certainly try.”

Still holding their hands in his, he prayed for the assembly, for its testimony and its spiritual progress, but more especially, he prayed for the man whom he believed the Lord had fitted to continue those duties which had been his throughout the years.

A similar scene from ancient times fills the imagination. Peter, conscious of imminent martyrdom, from a room away in Babylon wrote to younger men: “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:2-4-N.S.B.).

Throughout the annals of history spiritual men have served their own generations as elders, have fallen asleep in Jesus, and have left others to perpetuate a pastoral ministry in the Church. Replacements are immediately necessary. Do you have the qualifications and ability? Are you able to teach the Word of God

privately or publicly? Is your character strong and irreproachable? Is your domestic life exemplary? Has Christian maturity developed in you a spiritual and sympathetic understanding of the adversities encountered by the sheep of Christ's pasture? If your replies are in the affirmative, please answer in the presence of God Uncle Bert's two questions; "Will you take my place?" "Will you care for the people of God?"

Peacemakers and Fractionaries

Peacemakers and Fractionaries

James Gunn

Continued studies in the Epistle of James

Scripture Reading: James 3:17-4:10

James throughout his Epistle, in his teaching of practical Christian behavior, continues to use contrasts and to raise questions. Here he contrasts the spiritual peacemaker with the carnal fractionary.

The entire portion (3:17-4:10) indicates a community of Christians. Behind the unfavourable exposure of carnality and unrest, James suggests that there should be among the Lord's people peace, impartiality, unity, love, consideration and prayer. Alas, this was not so.

It seems incredible that the author of this letter to Jewish believers of the dispersion should have to describe some of the early Hebrew churches as being characterized by antagonism, factionism, rivalry and hypocrisy. How quickly after Pentecost deterioration sets in.

As has been noticed, this Epistle was probably the earliest of all New Testament writings, being distributed among those first churches in apparently A.D. 45; that is, within 15 years of the ascension of Christ to the Father's right hand (Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 1:3). It seems clear that James was presenting not only a cure for the condition he diagnosed but a preventative.

Wisdom from Above (3:17-18)

This wisdom in its quality is refined in its purity, peaceable in its results and available at all times. In its activity it is merciful and productive. In its essence it is true and genuine. Well might James conclude this short paragraph by intimating that the fruit of righteousness is cultivated by the peacemakers.

Such a positive delineation of wisdom should lead to a ready appropriation of this supreme gift. The believer is encouraged by the earlier advice of our author to ask this great blessing from the Lord: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (1:5-6).

There are few, if any, who do not feel a deficiency of heavenly wisdom. Each should humbly pray for it and then seek grace to use it in the different situations which develop in the home, the business and in the assembly.

Friendship from Below

The general understanding of the fourth chapter is that James is speaking allegorically, that the fightings, wars and battles, adulteries and friendships with the world are experiences of the individual and are spiritual rather than literal. This does not minimize the intensity of the charges. An inward conflict may be very devastating. Mental and spiritual strife have brought defeat and disaster into many a Christian's life.

Disloyalty to the Lord and spiritual infidelity brought ruin, defeat and captivity to God's ancient people Israel. The Apostle Paul asserts: "Now all these things

happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

The assertions of James concerning the world are very terse: "The friendship of world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (4:4).

The apostle John gives us more details relevant to the relationship of the Christian and the world: "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world." Then he follows with that which has been called "the avenue of moral action." "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

Grace Rules Within

Irrespective of their moral condition, God loves His people and in their weakness makes full provision for them; "He giveth more grace." He "giveth grace unto the humble." God is ever the God of Recovery. James maps the pathway back into fellowship with God and His beloved people. First, the employment of the Word of God. Through His Word the Lord reveals the wickedness of the human heart: "The spirit (the fallen nature) that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy" (4:5). Many, many centuries ago, God said, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:2).

The Word of God is quick (living), and powerful (energetic, active), and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor (a critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb.

4:12). It is surely not without purpose that the Word of God acts upon our moral nature.

Second, there must be a submission to the Lord: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." This is the only way to divine exaltation.

Third, we must also "resist the devil, and he will flee." He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." We must resist him and remain firm in the faith. He also appears at times as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). It would appear that he uses this approach more frequently today than ever at any time. Subtly he perverts Christian doctrine and thereby deceives many. This is the only way in which may be explained the phenomenal growth of modern cults.

Finally, there must be a purging of the entire personality: hands, heart and mind of all known sin: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous" (1 John 1:9).

It has been said that if the Apostle John had been a painter, he would not have used any shades of gray; he only would have used pure white and jet black. There never was any compromise with John. The very same may be said of James.

Some men are so diplomatic and clever that they can make what seems to them to be a very suitable compromise between alternatives. No Christian can afford to make a compromise between God and the world. "To be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God."

Social Drinking

Social Drinking

James Gunn

From the pen of our associate editor, Mr. James Gunn, come some practical, needful and solemn comments on a vital matter which affects many professing Christians today.

During the conversational Bible study thoughts moved at a ready pace down the chapter; a brief yet spirited discussion followed each new concept that appeared.

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine oft infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23), read out the class leader. From this there arose some comments in regard to the medicinal value of wine and its abuse, and these reflections resulted in a warning against social drinking.

The brother who spoke these words of caution added, “Thank God there is no one present to whom these ideas ever had any direct bearing.”

As the class dismissed, a middle-aged brother and sister said quietly to one of the elders, “Yes, to us they did have a direct bearing.” The brother had been an alcoholic.

In the short private conversation the brother continued, “I remember my first drink, and years later, my last drink. I also remember the difficult times I gave my wife.”

“Could you tell how those dreadful years began?” he was asked.

“Oh, yes! By just going with the boys for a glass.”

“Did they end abruptly?”

“Quite, for when God saved me, He not only gave the strength to resist temptation, but he placed in my heart and conscience a persuasive understanding that He had given me an entirely new moral beginning, and that by His grace henceforth I was responsible to keep my Christian life pure, both negatively and positively. These were the two factors which the Lord used to end my years of drinking.”

The Apostle Paul who had instructed Timothy in the use of wine exhorted him, “Keep thyself pure.” He also stipulated that an elder in a local church should not use wine.

In a country where water purification is at a minimum and probably not well known, wine is a necessity, but the apostle was not ignorant of its danger, so insisted upon caution.

This scene which occasionally arises in memory stimulates thanksgiving and praise to the Lord, but another related scene demonstrates the frailty of humanity and the power of temptation.

The funeral home was filled. Friends, neighbours and fellow-Christians had gathered in respect of the dead. The immediate relatives sat in the family alcove at the front of the chapel.

How under the circumstances was one going to minister comfort and assurance to those who sorrowed?

The brother in the casket was well known to most in the audience. He had possessed an excellent singing voice, and years before had “raised the tune” as the saints

joined in hymns of truth, praise and worship, but he had died an alcoholic, excommunicated from the church and his Christian testimony lost.

The occasion seemed to activate memory so that a necessary conversation of years before returned in minute detail. That was a sad experience, for we were obliged to advise him that his secret sin had been discovered and that he himself should confess his hidden indulgence to the elders of the assembly.

His personal, private acknowledgement of guilt was sincere; there was proof of regret and repentance. Sorrowfully he related how it all had begun. He had accepted an invitation to a banquet of business and professional men.

There among business associates and friends, rather than be considered odd, he drank his cocktail.

How quickly since then the appetite had developed! How demanding the temptation had become! How soon resistance had broken down!

In that cocktail there was a sting as deadly as the strike of a venomous snake in the grass.

In his Word the Lord has given ample warning concerning alcoholic beverages. We have the shocking example of Noah in his intoxication, and the consequent curse upon his descendants.

Solomon asserts, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). He further warns, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23:31-32).

A drunkard is to be expelled from the fellowship of the church (1 Cor. 5). He is to be disciplined in order that he be delivered from his folly and restored to the Lord.

The apostle exhorts, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess (riotousness)" (Eph. 5:18). The evil habit of drinking easily leads to dissolution. Bishop Moule writes, "The miserable exaltation of strong drink annuls the holy bonds of conscience with fatal ease and certainty."

There is a definite need to pray for brethren in Christ who are so frequently exposed to the temptations of the social, commercial and professional worlds. May God give them the spiritual fortitude to resist the enticement of the cocktail custom, and the moral courage to witness for Christ even by their very abstinence.

Spiritual Development (Colossians 1:9-14)

Spiritual Development (Colossians 1:9-14)

James Gunn

The following article by Mr. James Gunn was taken from a booklet he wrote some 50 years ago entitled, "The Christian's Ambition." I have had my copy of this booklet for many, many years. It contains a series of addresses given by Mr. Gunn to young people in Chicago when he himself was still a fairly young man. The booklet, published by Gospel Folio Press, bears no date.

—The Editor

As we read the letters of the apostle Paul we feel that we are really watching him in his labours for the Master. We see him on the old Roman roads as he journeys from place to place with the gospel, we watch him and listen to him as he takes his seat in the synagogue and reads the Scriptures and reasons with the Jews. We sit among the philosophers of old on Mars Hill and hear him as he directs minds and hearts to the Unknown God. And in chapter one of his Colossians epistle we step within the prison door at Rome, and behold a man with chains on arms and legs kneeling upon the pavement bowed in prayer. Let us listen to his prayer, for in it we have the desire of his heart for the Colossians. He prays for their spiritual progress. He hopes that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Let us look at this subject under several headings:

1. The Measure of Spiritual Growth

This may be seen in the repetition of the little word “all.” “Filled with all wisdom”; “worthy unto all pleasing”; “strengthened with all might”; “unto all patience.” He desired to find in them a full measure of these Christian graces. It was for full development and perfect maturity that Paul prayed; no partial growth did he wish to see.

In spite of the fact Paul knew that on earth he himself could not reach this, he endeavoured to attain to the state of the resurrection by fellowship with Christ: “That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3:10-11). He rebuked the Hebrews for their spiritual immaturity, “Ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb. 5:11-12), and also the Corinthians, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are carnal” (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Immaturity in the physical body is a sad thing, and immaturity of mind is a sadder thing, but I think to God the saddest thing of all is spiritual immaturity. God’s desire for us all is full growth.

2. The Means of Spiritual Growth

In the language of the apostle here there can be seen a twofold request: First, "That ye might be filled." Second, "That ye might walk." It will be noticed that, the first is unseen while the second is seen; one is private and the other is public; one is the cause and the other is the effect. It is the first of these that really shows the true means of spiritual growth. Let us notice three factors in the acquisition and the operation of the divine will in the Christian. "Being filled with the knowledge of His will." That is apprehending the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. "In all wisdom." I judge this means that I must not only know the will of the Lord, but that I must also know its connection to my life and particular circumstance. It is a question of knowing His will and also where it fits. Then we read "spiritual understanding." Now this may mean the applying of God's will to my life and ways. These three can be illustrated by Solomon's workmen engaged on the construction of the temple. First, they had to quarry the stones they possessed by taking them out from among all the others. Now that is like the acquisition of knowledge. Second, they were measured for a particular place in the temple, and cut and shaped until they met the specifications, to make sure that they would fit into these places. Last of all, the stones were taken to the temple, and placed in the position where they belonged; they were applied to the building. The second of these reminds us of wisdom and the last one of understanding. As the people of God, to grow in grace, we must through knowledge acquire the will of God, and through wisdom determine just where it fits into our daily life, and then through understanding we must apply it there.

In writing to the Romans the apostle Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). So, then, one learns the will of God not only by the reading of His word, but also by the renunciation of the world.

3. The Manifestation of Spiritual Growth

"That ye may walk worthy of the Lord." Our spiritual growth is manifested in our walk. The manner of my life is the effect of my knowledge of the will of God.

To what extent am I to walk worthy of the Lord? "Unto all pleasing." Dr. Moule renders this expression, "Unto every anticipation of His will." This may be illustrated thus: A child dutifully does what his father asks him, and thus pleases him; but then the child on some occasions anticipates father's wish and goes and does some things without being asked; it thereby pleases the father to a much greater extent.

In how many ways is this progressive walk of the child of God to be seen?

1. In service: "Being fruitful in every good work."
2. In knowledge: "Increasing in the knowledge of God."
3. In experience: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." Strength is required in the every day experiences of life, and it will be given by God unto all patience amidst surrounding circumstances. Patience struggles but endures; longsuffering endures without struggling and joyfulness endures and glorifies in suffering. These are only to be seen in those that have grown in grace and in the

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as in the apostle Paul who wrote, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation" (Rom. 5:3).

4. In gratitude: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Every day the Christian's heart should be filled with gratitude to God. It will be noticed that by inverting the order of things in verses 12 and 14 we have an ascent from lower to higher plains: Forgiveness of sins; redemption through his blood; translation into the kingdom of His dear Son; and participation in the inheritance of the saints in light. No wonder we should be thankful to our God.

May we henceforth be no more children, but may we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and may this spiritual development be seen in our walk before God, our brethren, and the world.

Study With Purpose And Pleasure

Study With Purpose And Pleasure

James Gunn

“The hour was late, and the only light shining in the little home was in the dining-room; the Christian husband, bent over his Bible and books, was at the end of the long table. Frequently, he was to be seen in this same posture, for like the Psalmist he could say, “O how love I thy law: it is my meditation all the day.”

In another part of the same town, in a well appointed library, sat another student; he, too, read the Bible, but, alas, subjected it to a textual criticism. He also spent much of his time reading the philosophies, and preparing lectures on social advancement. Theologically, he was very modern in his views.

These two men illustrate the spiritual man who discerns all, and the natural man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. (1 Cor. 2:14-15)

The Bible student, if he would understand the “Things of the Spirit of God” must be a genuine Christian, one who is born of God, and anointed by His Spirit.

Through the impartation of divine life, the soul becomes a partaker of the divine nature; it, therefore, becomes necessary that this nature be sustained, and that proper habits be developed which will result in the building of a strong spiritual character. Strict attention must be given to the daily custom of prayer and Bible reading.

In order that a desire to study the Bible more intensively be deepened in the soul, and that helpful habits for so doing be developed, we shall discuss certain purposes, qualities, conditions, helps, and methods, conducive to this objective. Let us commence with the purposes.

Naturally, many reasons will occur to the mind why we should carefully study the Bible; for example: it is of great historical value, it describes briefly, but majestically, creation in all aspects; it traces the descent of man from Adam, and the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. Moreover, it is of value in the realm of literature, being the great classic in all languages. In the matter of jurisprudence, the Bible might also be studied, for it has provided the foundation upon which most of our moral laws rest, and it reveals to us the meaning of justice. In this discussion on the purposes of studying the Holy Scriptures, we must become more personal, and consider the effects of Bible study upon us as individuals. The following suggestions, it is hoped, will stimulate a greater effort in this regard. We must study the Bible for:

SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT: The apostle Paul, during his last imprisonment felt lonely, for he wrote to Timothy, "This thou knowest that all they of Asia be turned away from me." (2 Tim. 1:15) Consequently, he longed for companionship so, he says, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." (2 Tim. 4:9) There were also other things that he needed in that Roman prison; therefore, he adds, and we might paraphrase his meaning: "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee," for I have need of some physical comfort and warmth in this damp place. "And the books," yes, those precious books, for I do

require a certain amount of mental diversion and relaxation. "But especially the parchments," those inspired epistles, above everything else bring them, for I seek more than all else true spiritual refreshment. I know their contents, but the very reading of them is like cold water to a parched throat, and they make the Lord's presence so real to me. "Bring the books, but especially the parchments."

When Hilkiah found the book of the law of the Lord, he gave it to Shaphan the scribe to read it before king Josiah, and such was the impression upon the king, that in repentance he rent his clothes. When Jeremiah heard the news he cried, "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) They refreshed the soul of the weeping prophet.

THE DEEPENING OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE LORD: What precious pictures of Christ are revealed to us in the Bible. Christ is constantly showing Himself through the lattice work of Holy Scripture. He manifests Himself in the types; He makes Himself real in the histories; He foreshadows Himself in the prophecies, and among all the characters in the Word of God, He is pre-eminent. To get better acquainted with our blessed Saviour, we must not only read the Bible, but study it, for therein is the Christ of God revealed.

Of the wonder of our salvation we read, "The angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:12) As the disciples, baffled by the mystery of the resurrection, stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; even so, the angels attempted to understand the wonder of the purposes of God in redemption. What an example they set before us. We

ought to search diligently into the word of God, in order to learn more of the blessings which accrue to us through the death and the resurrection of our Lord.

One of the means of developing personality is to identify oneself with a superior person. The New Testament emphasizes the need for the Christian to identify himself with Christ, not only in His death, but also in His life.

“He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.” In order to do this we must know the foot-steps of the Master, and to know these we must study the Bible.

THE ASCERTAINING OF THE WILL OF GOD: God has a very definite path of morality for the individual believer, a path of separation from evil, and of devotion to the Lord. He, in like manner, has a plan for His church in her pilgrimage and corporate testimony. He also speaks of that little group, the local church, as it attempts, in a miniature form, to witness for our rejected Lord.

Throughout the New Testament, God has made known His will as to the internal functions of the church, and as to her outward testimony. Any approach to Bible study would be most incomplete, if to know the will of God in all things present and future, for the Christian, and for the church, was not a major objective.

THE ACQUIRING OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE:

“Knowledge puffeth up,” the apostle Paul warns us. Let us ever keep these words of caution in mind. Biblical knowledge may be used to display personal pride; nevertheless, to be fully furnished and ready for every good work, a Christian must know his Bible. He must know where to find the gospel in its blessed simplicity, in order to point souls to Christ; he must know its teaching

relative to the church, in order to clarify his own ecclesiastical position; he must know its teaching on prophesy, to give a reason of the living hope of the church. The Christian is under obligation to the Lord, to himself, to the church, and to the world, to acquire a working knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

As it is essential that to be a Bible student one must be a Christian; even so, is it that to be a Christian demands that one be in some degree a Bible student.

* * *

CONTENTED LIVING

“There are nine requisites for contented living; health enough to make work a pleasure; wealth enough to support your needs; strength enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them; grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them; patience enough to wait until some good is accomplished; charity enough to see some good in your neighbour; love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others; faith enough to make real the things of God; hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.”

--Goethe.

Expedients are for the hour; principles for the ages.

--H. W. B.

The Capabilities Of The Inner Man

The Capabilities Of The Inner Man

James Gunn

“What are the qualifications necessary for registration in this College?” enquired the young man. In reply a high degree of academic attainment was submitted to him.

As sinners, we had nothing but our need, with which to commend ourselves to God; we never could have qualified for His salvation. How merciful and gracious of Him to accept us in His beloved Son. Thank God, we are now saved, and are definitely anxious to learn more perfectly the ways of the Lord. While we do not need any academic qualifications, it would be well if we were to approach our Bibles, with true purpose of heart, and certain well recognized spiritual qualifications.

CONVICTION OF MIND in the verbal inspiration of the Bible: Two young men who had majored in the same subject at school found themselves employed in an industrial laboratory. As they performed their routine and research duties, they discussed different topics as well as current events. On a certain occasion, said the one to the other, “I enjoy reading the Bible.” “What, you?” was the sharp reply. “Yes, me, for I believe the Bible to be the word of God,” asserted the first. “Not I,” was the rejoinder, “I am not sure that there is a God, but I feel convinced that if there be One, the Bible is not His. To me the Bible is a cunning production, a piece of classic literature.” “To me,” answered his associate, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

The conviction of the young chemist, must be our conviction, if we are to learn more from a closer perusal of the Word of God.

REVERENCE OF HEART and prayerfulness: God is to be had in reverence of all of them that are about Him. (Psa. 89:7). The Christian is to serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, ever remembering, that his God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:28-29). The two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, perished in the consuming flame; because, irreverently, they handled the holy things entrusted to them. We call the Word of God the Holy Bible, and holy it is. Let us ever thus revere it, and read it. We always must use the Holy Bible with profound respect because of its divine origin, because of its supreme sublimity, because of its impeccable perfection, because of its irrefutable truth, and because of the importance of its message. To always raise the heart in submissive and brief prayer, as we commence to read the Bible, is a helpful custom all should adopt.

DEPENDANCE OF INTELLECT upon the Holy Spirit: Even a limited understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as presented in the writings of the apostle John, will convince all, that as we study the Word of God, it is necessary to rely for illumination upon Him. In his first epistle, John speaks of the reception of the Spirit, and of His residence in our hearts: “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but the same anointing teacheth you of all things.” (1John 2:27). By a comparison of Scripture we know definitely, that this

statement cannot mean, that God does not use men as a channel of teaching for, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-12). We, consequently, conclude that this statement by John indicates, we need not that any man be to us a source of teaching.

In the Gospel of John, we have three references to the operation of the Holy Spirit within the early disciples. Let us ponder well each reference. First, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance." (John 14:26). Through this activity of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were able to recall the details, and to write the life of Christ in the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, long after the scenes had passed. Second, "He shall teach you all things." (John 14:26). Reference here must be to the new teachings which form a major part of the New Testament epistles. In the third portion, we read, "He will shew you things to come." (John 16:13). Here the intimation is to prophecy, the permanent form of which we have particularly in the book, The Revelation. The implications are, that the Holy Spirit of God is the channel of revelation, the means of inspiration, and the power of illumination. We are obliged therefore, to look to, and to depend upon, Him, the Divine Interpreter. He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. (John 16:14). God reveals them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1Cor. 2:10).

HUMILITY OF SPIRIT before the Lord, and before men: There are some who are possessed of a certain natural religion that produces a spurious humility, of these we

read, that they engage in things which have a shew of wisdom and a shew of humility. (Col. 2:23). May the Lord deliver us from such pharisaical hypocrisy, and may we always, in lowliness of mind, refusing to rely upon fleshly wisdom, approach our joyous periods of Bible study, knowing that, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life." (Prov. 22:4) The Lord Jesus is the classic example; of Him we read, "He made Himself of no reputation." Moreover, He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart."

SUBMISSION OF WILL to practise what is learned: It is said, for the encouragement of those who wish to extend their vocabulary, that if a new word is used five times it becomes their very own. If we want to impress our minds deeply with some new theory, we attempt to see that theory in practice. In the things of God, we learn by doing. "If any man shall do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John 7:17): There are three words which we generally look upon as being synonyms, and yet it is well that we differentiate among them. There is knowledge, the abstract fact we acquire; wisdom the sagacity in the application of the fact; and understanding, the actual application of the acquired knowledge in a wise manner. We must not only acquire a degree of Biblical knowledge, but in humbleness of mind, we ever ought to be ready, understandingly, to act that knowledge out in wisdom.

Let us earnestly pray that these spiritual qualifications may be developed in us so, that with real competency and proper inward pose, we may learn, and that our lives may be enriched, and our service controlled, and our blessed Lord Jesus glorified.

The Child

The Child

James Gunn

“The Age of Innocence” by Reynolds is considered the most loved picture in the world. It is beautiful. The little child is depicted in sweet simplicity without any self-consciousness, and in the charm that arises from childish ignorance. She is the type of little girl that every one loves. Disintegrated and miserable must be the personality that is not attracted by the artless abandon, the prevailing confidence, of a child.

To love a tiny child is to be, in this regard, Christ-like, for He said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14).

The latent qualities of childhood attract, for they are the essence of moral beauty. These qualities we should evaluate and seek to understand.

The Qualities Of Childhood

The singleness of heart in early years is not found in adult development. The young expect every one else to be just as they, transparent. Nevertheless, they quickly detect insincerity. They recognize truth in matters within their own limited knowledge, promptly sense ulterior motives, and vigorously resist the trickery of pretence.

The Christian must meet the high demands of the child’s standards of sincerity. He must be prepared to face the critical appraisal of the youngest, and present himself to the detective child with godly transparency through

which genuine love, spiritual concern, and sympathy will be manifested.

The normal child is not only sincere, but is sensitive. The infant has a consciousness of its mother before it has a knowledge of her. No one has told him who his mother is, nor introduced her to him, yet he senses her presence and cries for her touch. Her expressions of love, her kindnesses, her loving concern for his comfort has impressed him so that he grows more conscious of her every day. Names repeated in his hearing leave an impression, and in ordinary things the more he hears, sees, and feels, the more deep become the impressions. An extraordinary sight may impress the child so deeply that he will never forget its sensation of pleasure. Then again, a strikingly distasteful occurrence will leave for a long time its annoyance.

Since impression upon the child's mind is deepened by repetition, the parent and teacher must be patient.

The depth of impression may be ascertained by the visible reaction. When the attitude of the teacher is one of genuine love and sympathetic understanding, the little one will react with appreciation and affection.

Attitude is not the only power that leaves its mark upon the young; behaviour may be even a stronger force. The distinctive features of adult behaviour: its patience or impatience, its control or intemperance, its morals or indiscretions, its calmness or restlessness, its perseverance or instability deeply affect the mind of the small child.

The youngest boy and girl are given to imitation; whatever they see of good or bad they will act out in their own behaviour.

Teachers as well as parents must be not only transparent in character, but calm and self controlled in behaviour.

Little folk establish heroes in their minds. They love their teacher because he is understanding, or affectionate, or generous, and they hope to be like their hero-teacher.

Adaptability is a quality of childhood. Adults find it difficult to adapt themselves to new surroundings or to quick changes, not so the child; he quickly adapts himself to any congenial circumstance. With dexterity he suits himself to changes, to people, and to places.

The Importance Of Childhood

Let it be remembered, the man of to-morrow is the boy of to-day, and the foundation of character laid now must bear the edifice of the future. The seeds of truth sown in his heart may produce the flowers of truth in his adult life. Furthermore, the spiritual good imparted to him by the words and example of his teacher may result in his spiritual awakening and development.

“Yes,” said a servant of Christ, “we have seen fruit in ministry, one and a half lives have been saved.” “I suppose you mean a man and a boy,” replied the enquirer. “No, I mean a boy and a man,” was the retort.

The importance of the child may be seen in several relationships, for example:

To the nation: The mightiest nations are only the aggregations of individuals. It is the loyalty, the bravery, the wisdom of individuals that make nations great. The loyal citizen, brave soldier, and wise statesman of the present were children who had to learn courage,

fortitude, and fidelity. The future of to-morrow's great nations rests upon the moral and spiritual development of its children. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

To the family: The presence of a baby in the family has reformed parents, stopped divorce proceedings, healed separations, and spread love, virtue, and self-denial. A child in the home is frequently the avenue through which the gospel enters the family circle.

A little girl who had been absent from home several Sunday afternoons suddenly died. A young man called to sympathize with the parents. He told them that the little one had come to his Sunday School, and in childish simplicity had accepted the Saviour. He assured them that she was now "Safe in the arms of Jesus." In this way they first heard the gospel. Eventually the father and mother were brought to the Lord, and later the other members of the family.

To the Lord: The statement of Christ, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" impresses us with the intrinsic value of one life. No doubt the Saviour had this in mind when He took the little children into His arms to bless them. The importance of child-like simplicity is seen in that the Lord used their simple faith as an example for adults.

In the scheme of redemption, the soul of a child is of equal value to that of an adult. Our Lord gave His life a ransom for children, He blessed them, singled out their faith as an example, and taught the intrinsic worth of their souls. Yes, every child is important to the Lord.

To the assembly: Many assemblies feel that it is difficult to reach unconverted adults, and that their general

evangelism is not productive enough to maintain a comparative strength of numbers. All who honestly face this problem realize that the Sunday School with its specific evangelism provides the occasion to win souls to Christ, and to add saints to assembly fellowship. The Sunday School is the greatest contributing factor in the perpetuation of local testimonies. Assemblies have ceased to exist because no effort was expended upon the children of the district.

The Moulding Of Childhood

A Sunday School teacher who has a child under his care only one hour of the week is not the sole influence that bears upon the spiritual life of that child. Unfortunately there are many and that one hour is the only beneficial influence they know. When the short time a child is in Sunday School is contrasted with the long period during the week in which he is exposed to detrimental influences, the teacher should put forth every effort to make that one short hour a mighty power in the life of each child in his class.

The teacher should solicit the help of the parents whether saved or not. Usually the evidence of genuine interest is all that is needed to secure co-operation. Never underestimate the great value of parental help and example. Seek these in all class work.

Certain features of the Sunday School affect children.

The influence of the divine presence: Children are susceptible to an atmosphere of reverence, and sense the awe of God's presence. They sometimes do not pay attention, and do not learn the Bible lesson well;

nevertheless, a constant leading of the little one into the presence of the Lord eventually proves beneficial.

The manifestation of divine power: The Lord sometimes saves a scholar in Sunday School, and the others see the energy of the Spirit of God in operation. Young lives have felt the pressure of the conversion of a class-mate to such an extent that they likewise have accepted the Saviour.

The experience of conversion: There is no other power of such importance as genuine conversion to God. In Sunday School souls have been saved, and young lives moulded that they have become vessels of honour in the Master's hand.

The salvation of each child entrusted to him should be the objective of every teacher. So important is each child, so important each minute spent with each child, that he should never face this service morally unfit or spiritually and mentally unprepared.

While no recompense may be promised on earth, it may be that both parent and scholar will arise some day to extend their thanksgiving and blessing.

* * *

Love is God's essence; power but His attribute; therefore, is His love greater than His power.

* * *

God's might to direct me,
God's power to protect me,
God's wisdom for learning,
God's eye for discerning,

God's ear for my hearing,

God's Word for my clearing.

—The earliest Christian hymn written in Gaelic.

* * *

Christ was moved with compassion. Some people profess compassion but it does not move them; they still live an armchair life. Compassion moved Christ from the glory of heaven to the gloom of earth, from Judea to Samaria from Galilee to the Cross.

The Church Local

The Church Local

James Gunn

The studious reader of the Bible will admit there is only one Church of Christ manifested through a perusal of the New Testament. He also will acknowledge that this Church is presented in Scripture under two aspects, the universal and the local. The universal aspect of the Church is the mighty assembly of all who, in this dispensation, are born of God (1 Cor. 10:32; Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:9; Matt. 16:13-20). The local aspect is the assembly of God's people in a geographic place (2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Matt. 18:15-18). A study of the teaching of the Holy Spirit relative to these two aspects reveals that, while there are certain characteristics which are common to both, there are others which belong exclusively to the local church. This distinction becomes more obvious as we examine particularities in the statements of Christ and His apostles. Let us consider some of these:

THE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER: The character of a local church is seen first, in the meaning, "called out," of the Greek word, "ekklesia." The church is composed of persons who have been called from the wickedness and doom of the world. In second place, its character is seen in the use of the two appellations, "Church of God," and "Church of Christ." As previously pointed out, these titles are used of both the universal and the local churches, emphasizing that there is a similarity between them; that the local is a facsimile of the universal, a miniature of the mighty whole. In its character a local

church should be an expression of the holiness and oneness of the Church.

THE SIMPLE FORM: The simplicity expected in an assembly of saints is revealed throughout the New Testament. It is simple in its membership, a membership composed only of saints (1 Cor. 1:2). "For where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20). Large crowds are not necessary to ensure the presence and blessing of the Lord. It is simple in its place of meeting. Paul intimates that, in the early days of Christianity, the assemblies gathered neither in conservative halls nor in ornate chapels, but, rather, in Christian homes, "The church in thy house" (Philm. 2). "The church which is in His house" (Col. 4:15). It is simple also in its operation. At Philippi there were saints, bishops, and deacons (Phil. 1:1). The saints made up the major part of the church; the bishops, or elders, attended to the spiritual life of all; the deacons, or ministers, cared for temporal affairs. The question might be raised how sincere and holy persons are gathered and sustained in so simple a form. The answer to any such question is found in THE SECRET DIRECTOR. It is well to notice the use of the passive voice in Matt. 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered (not, where two or three gather) together in My name." The gatherer is not named, but this silence accords with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is He Who prompts their hearts, and leads the saints to meet in the Saviour's name. Men may gather others around themselves, around policies, or creeds, to build up denominations, divisions, and parties, but the Holy Spirit, sometimes directly or indirectly, gathers the saints only in the name of the Lord.

THE SIGNIFICANT CENTRE: Said the Lord Jesus, "Where two or three are gathered together in (unto or into) My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). The phrase, "In My name," suggests several things: First, the absence of the Lord Jesus. This statement was made by Christ in anticipation of His triumph at Calvary, His ascension to glory, and the formation of His Church at Pentecost. It implies that we are to meet in the name of our absent Lord. Second, it suggests the authority by which we are to meet. Since the Lord Jesus was leaving His own in a hostile world, He authorized them to use His name in conducting their gatherings. In third place, it suggests our identification with Christ in fellowship, for His name stands for His person and character. The Lord Jesus has returned to heaven, but by His authority we may identify ourselves with Him in separation from the degenerate world.

THE SACRED PRESENCE: "There am I in the midst of them," said the Lord Jesus. As noted, our beloved Lord Jesus is bodily absent from His own. "After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).

Nevertheless, He has promised to be present with His people. This promise He made twice in the Gospel according to Matthew, once to individuals, and once to a collective body of saints. In chapter 28 He gave the apostles the great commission as evangelists, pastors, and teachers, "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." Then He promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). In chapter 18:20, the

Church in its simplest form is the present accomplishment of the great commission, and again He promises, "There am I in the midst of them." Blessed, indeed, the Christians who, in their assemblies, enjoy the consciousness of His presence with its accompanying lordship and authority, for this results in THE SPIRITUAL UNITY. The prerogative of the Holy Spirit is to gather together in His name. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment... as the dew of Hermon (Psa. 133). This harmony of souls is as fragrant before God as the holy anointing oil, and as fertile as the slopes of Hermon in the world.

The church of God at Corinth is a contrast to this. Chloe, the visiting sister, saw there the evidence of carnality (1 Cor. 1:12-13). To the precious words of the Master, "Gathered together in My name," let us add the words of the apostle to the Church, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10). We must consider another feature of the church local, THE STATELY INDEPENDENCE. The word of the Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name" (Matt. 18:20), suggests the possibility of there being numerous churches in as many places, and each a complete unit meeting in His name, and claiming His Divine Presence. In spite of differences in size, each church, in its constitution, is strictly independent of all others.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, assumes the independence of each church when he states, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth... with all

(churches) that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2).

We have become so accustomed to the prophetic interpretation of the letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3), that in great measure we have lost the picture of first century assembly constitution, life, and testimony. These seven churches actually existed in apostolic and post-apostolic times. Each is represented by a complete lampstand, not a branch on a lampstand wholly responsible to the Risen Christ Who is in the midst of all. It is impossible to form groups of these churches, or to classify them under some distinctive appellation. Each in constitution, responsibility, condition, and degeneracy, is independent of all others. Nevertheless, we must maintain a balance of truth and examine carefully THE SALUTARY

INTERDEPENDENCE: While each assembly constitutionally is complete and responsible wholly to the Lord, it is the divine intention that among all there be an intimate fellowship, a pleasant interdependence. This association is well attested by the New Testament. Let us note a few convincing facts. First, the same divine instruction is sent to all irrespective of place or time, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2). An example of this interchange of instruction is given at the close of the Colossian epistle, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (4:16). Second, this interdependence among assemblies is noticeable in the helpful influence

they exert the one upon the other. The apostle Paul commends the church of the Thessalonians saying, "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 2:14). Third, God's blessing is the same upon all His assemblies, for we read, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Fourth, the churches are to salute, therefore, acknowledge each other. Writing to the saints at Rome, Paul says, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16). Finally, the churches of Christ are to receive the one from the other, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7). From the closing chapter of the Roman epistle, it is clear that there were at least three different groups of believers gathering in Rome (Vv. 5, 14, 15). Possibly relationships had become strained; consequently, they were exhorted to receive one another.

In Scripture there is no support for a federation of churches, nor a confederation of assemblies; nevertheless, it is the purpose of the Lord that, although each assembly is individually responsible to Him, and exists independently, no church is to stand in isolation from other churches of God in the world. Each independent church is possessed of THE SOLE AUTHORITY. It has been stated that the epistle to the Ephesians is the epistle of the universal Church, and the epistles to the Corinthians are they of the local church. In the light of this, it is well to remember that the epistles to the Corinthians are they of the lordship of Christ. The title "Lord" is found many times in both letters. It is important every one understand that the

authority of the Church is purely delegated, and is given by the Risen Lord, not that one church may act in an arbitrary manner over other churches, but that each properly administer her own matters. This authority in the church local is seen: First, in ministry, corrective or instructive, "Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (His authority) - (1 Cor. 1:10). In second place, in administration, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye be gathered together... to deliver such an one unto Satan" (1 Cor. 5:5). The work and authority of the under shepherd is received from the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4), the service of overseeing brethren from the One to whom they must give account of their stewardship (Heb. 13:17).

The authority of the Risen Head is invested in the churches, and when His authority, and not the capricious rule of men, is exercised, heaven ratifies the action of the assemblies on earth (Matt. 18:14-20).

Finally, let us examine

THE SUBSTANTIAL TESTIMONY. The testimony of the churches of God reaches in two directions: The first, toward the world, their gospel testimony. Writing to the Thessalonians Paul declares, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (1 Thess. 1:8). The ordinances are a testimony to the world. It is when the churches keep the appointments of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:2) that the unlearned are convinced and worshipping will report that God is truly in the midst of His people (1 Cor. 14:25). While baptism is connected with conversion, and the Lord's supper with church fellowship; both,

nevertheless, witness to the world. Of the latter we read, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew (proclaim) the Lord’s death till He come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

The second direction in which the churches witness is toward the angels. In Paul’s exposition of Divine Headship he says, “For this cause ought the woman to have power (a sign of authority) on her head because of the angels” (1 Cor. 10:10). Angelic principalities learn by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

What an honour to belong to a local assembly of God! May grace be given to be loyal in all the responsibilities which we share. It has been said, “He helps best the Church militant who best helps his church local.

The Church Universal

The Church Universal

James Gunn

The Lord Jesus had led His disciples into the north, far away from the forceful influence of Judaism, and standing under the shadow of an idol's shrine, in Caesarea Philippi, He declared to them His divine intention to bring into being, by a mighty achievement, something entirely new in the world, His Church. Said He, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock, (Peter's confession of Christ) I will build My Church," (Matt. 16:13-20).

Throughout all the ages that preceded the advent of Christ, God acknowledged only two major racial divisions in humanity, the Israelites and the Gentiles; but after Calvary and Pentecost, God speaks of three groups among men, Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God (2 Cor. 10:32).

To us who live in the period of time frequently called The Church Dispensation, the facts and the features of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be of great interest and importance. Let us think of the Church as

A Former Mystery

A mystery in the New Testament sense indicates a sacred secret. Let us read the apostle Paul's explanation of how, in past dispensations, the doctrine of the Church was hidden; "If ye have heard the dispensation (stewardship) of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; How that by revelation He made known unto

me the mystery, (Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel," (Eph. 3:2-6).

The mystery that is here connected with the Church is, that through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles are made fellowheirs of Christ, fellowmembers of the body of Christ, and fellowpartakers of the promise in Christ. These are the features which characterize this present age, but which were not known throughout former times.

It should be understood that, although there is no specific mention of the doctrine of the Church in the Old Testament, we now discover therein types and foreshadowings of her position and constitution. Eve (Gen. 2:21-25) typifies the Church in the relationship to Christ of life and love. Rebekah (Gen. 24) foreshadows the Church as the Bride of Christ being brought to Him through the guidance of the Divine Spirit, and Asenath (Gen. 41:45) illustrates the Church called out from among the nations, and united to our glorified Lord who once was rejected. This Church so carefully veiled in the Old Testament Scriptures had

A Definite Beginning

In the minds of some there is considerable confusion regarding the birth of the Church. There are those who contend that she has existed since Adam, and there are others who teach that she is the natural outgrowth of Judaism. The whole tenor of New Testament teaching

makes clear that the Church is something distinct in the world, something which began some two thousand years ago, and something concerning which prophecy is positive. From the Scriptures it is possible to ascertain the beginning of the Church. Let us notice four salient and important points. First, it was future when Christ announced it. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church," (Matt. 16:18). Second, it could not have begun until after Calvary. Said the Lord Jesus, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (Peter's confession of the humanity, "Son of Man", the Deity of Christ, "Son of the Living God") I will build My Church." The Church rests upon the foundation, Christ in His person and work. The apostle Paul declares, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. 3:11); "Jesus", the Saviour; "Christ", the exalted One. Again, the same apostle writes, "Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone," (Eph. 2:20). The Church could not have existed until after the advent, death, and resurrection of Christ. Third, it could not have begun until Pentecost. This becomes very obvious when the ministry of the Holy Divine Spirit is taken into consideration. This operation is expounded to us at great length in the epistle to the Ephesians, where we read, "In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," (Eph. 2:21-22). It was on the Day of Pentecost that by one Spirit all were baptized into one body, and the Church was born. Since we have been following the imagery of a building, we might say the great edifice arose since Pentecost. Fourth, it could not begin until the apostles of Christ were in existence and preaching the truth of God, for we read, "And are built

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone," (Eph. 2:20). Our blessed Lord Jesus is the doctrinal foundation of the Church, and here the apostles, along with the New Testament prophets, are pictured as its chronological foundation. The apostles entered it first, the prophets followed, and thus portion after portion is progressively added to the mystical building. Now this wonderful Church which began at Pentecost has

A Specific Constitution

The Church is a spiritual body consisting only of those persons who, throughout this present dispensation, have been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. 2:1). Moreover, the Church is composed only of persons born of God (1 John 5:1-2) from among both Jews and Gentiles. These in Christ have been racially reconciled the one to the other, and both alike reconciled to God, "For He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," (Eph. 2:14-16). The language of Holy Scripture is beautiful and explicit; the Church is "one new man", "one body"; consequently, she must be a living organism pulsating with divine life. Such is the organic union between every part, that each has within it the very life of the Head, even Christ.

This precious equality of life results in the oneness of all in Christ, "For as many of you as have been baptized (immersed) into Christ have put on Christ, There is neither Jew nor Greek, (no racial distinction) there is neither bond nor free, (no social distinction) there is neither male nor female; (no natural distinction) for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," (Gal. 4: 27-28). In the epistle to the Colossians another statement is added, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision (no religious distinction)," and then the apostle declares, "Christ is all and in all," (Col. 3:11). This Church which formerly was a mystery, but began at Pentecost, and is a living organism bears

Two Intimate Relationships

The first of these is to Her Head, Christ: She is the one flock of which Christ is the Shepherd (John 10:16). She is the body of which Christ is the Head (1 Cor. 12:12). She is the bride of which Christ is the Bridegroom (Eph. 5:21-32). She is the priesthood of which He is the Great High Priest (1 Pet. 2:5-9; Heb. 3:1). She is the household over which, as a Son, Christ is supreme (Heb. 3:5-6). She is the building of which Christ is both the Corner Stone and the Cornice Stone (1 Pet. 2:6-7). She is the new creation of which Christ is the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 5:17). Such then is the vital union between Christ and His Church. The second relationship she bears is to all her members. In spite of any difference of function which may exist among them, they together are one whole. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also in Christ," (1 Cor. 12:12). "That there should be no schism in the body; but that

the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it," (1 Cor. 12:25-26). Bunyan has described this as "A common ground of communion which no differences of external rites could efface." We must now consider another characteristic of the Church,

Her Clear Distinctiveness

This distinctiveness reaches out into three directions: First, she is distinct from the world. Augustine, and many since his day, held that good and bad alike were permitted in the Church. His misconception arose from a wrong application of the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30). In explaining the parable to His own the Lord Jesus said, "The field is the world," and not the Church. The relationship of the Church to the world is positively stated in the high-priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus (John 17), "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," (vv. 15-16).

In second place, the Church is distinct from the kingdom. That she is in the kingdom is true, but she is not the kingdom. The Kingdom of the Heavens suggests that sovereignty of the heavens, and embraces all of earth that professes to be subject to the rule of heaven. The kingdom in its present mystical state embraces the whole of Christendom. The Church is not Christendom although she is found within it.

Finally, the Church is distinct from Israel as the following contrasts will show: Israel descended from Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3); the Church began at Pentecost

(Acts 2). Israel is an earthly people (Gen. 13:14-18; Hos. 2:23); the Church is a heavenly people (Phil. 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:11). Israel was promised a geographic country (Ex. 3:8); the Church a heavenly city (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 12:22). Israel is viewed as the wife of Jehovah (Ezek. 16; Hos. 2:1-17); the Church is viewed as the Bride of Christ to be married in heaven (Eph. 5:22-27; Rev. 19:7-10). Israel is but one nation (Gen. 12-2); the Church is composed of persons out of all nations (Acts 15:14). Israel has in Christ her Messiah (John 1:49); the Church has in Christ Her Saviour, Lord, Head, and Bridegroom (Eph. 5:23-27). Israel required a family priesthood through which to worship (Ex. 30:30); The Church is herself a holy and a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:2-9) to worship and to witness. To Israel Christ will return as her King in power and great glory (Jer. 23:5-6); to the Church Christ will come again as Bridegroom (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

There is one more major feature of the Church we must notice,

Her Predicted Destiny

The future of the Church is glorious. This glory will be first of all physical. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," (Phil. 3:20-21). It will also be spiritual for Christ gave Himself, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. 5:26-27). Again, her glory will be regal, "We shall also reign with Him," (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:8-10). Finally, her glory will be divine, "Come hither, I

will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife... Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious;" (Rev. 21:9-11). In all Her splendour of divine glory, the Church, the Lamb's wife, as His consort will reign with Him in perfect righteousness administering justice over angels (1 Cor. 6:3), and over the whole world (1 Cor. 6:2). Such then is the destiny of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May our hearts be bowed in adoration and praise as we examine the mighty accomplishments of grace, and, as we contemplate our glorious future, may we sanctify ourselves by His Word, and walk closer to our Lord in the path of separation from the world.

The Incarnation

The Incarnation

James Gunn

In The First Epistle Of John

Repeated warnings have been given against the assumption to a superior knowledge that denies the incarnation of our Holy Lord. These warnings must again be raised in this period of multiple cultic movement. Modern heresies are but the ancient errors revived, revived for the purpose originally intended, the dishonour of our Lord Jesus.

There were, and there are, those who assert that such is the frailty and limitation of humanity that Deity could not be contained in such a weak vessel; therefore, they deny the perfect humanity of Christ. There were, and there are, others who argue conversely, and affirm that since God is so omnipotent, majestic, and eternal, Deity could not be restricted by humanity; God being so transcendent could not submit to confinement within a human body, and they deny the Deity of Christ. Such heresies were prevalent in the times of the Apostle John. His First Epistle, in great measure, is a refutation of their blasphemous contentions.

It is very interesting to notice the different verbs used by John when, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he made allusion to this mysterious historical event. They are: "to manifest," "to come," "to send," and "to be."

Any consideration of the character of the incarnation in the light of the first three of these verbs must accept

what they definitely imply, the preexistence of the Lord Jesus. Before one can be made manifest, he must be; before one can come, he must exist; before one can be sent, he must be associated with the sender.

In his Gospel the Apostle John records some of the astonishing claims of the Lord Jesus in this very matter. These personal contentions of the Lord certainly had been accepted by John; consequently they controlled his thinking. "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me" (John 8:42). In a more lengthy passage; namely, John 8:52-56, Abraham becomes the example of one who has kept the sayings of Christ and has not died. The implication in verse 56 is not that Abraham saw Christ's day by faith, but that he, although physically dead, because of this keeping of the words of the Lord, lived, and as a living spectator saw Christ manifested through the incarnation. Abraham will never die eternally; there was a time when he did not exist, but there eventually came a time when he was made (V. 58), but before even then, said Christ, "I am." The verb "to be" which expresses the being of the Lord indicates that He ever lives in one continuous present.

Christ a Manifestation of God

The language used by John to picture this greatest event in all history does so in the stages of human experience. His language indicates that the Word of Life had been made manifest, had been brought to the light, from distant obscurity into the brightness of personal intimacy.

John visualized the Lord as coming near to men until He was clearly manifested. The Lord was first seen as being heard as at a distance and unseen; then, as if passing by, caused some to glance at Him; later, as if coming near enough to arouse an interest in some who intently look upon Him; and finally, as if He were so near that He could be handled. John had looked upon the Effulgence of the Divine Glory, the Express Image of Deity, and that in a form that could be heard, seen, and handled. "Great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

The verb "to manifest" is not only used in connection with the first advent of Christ, but also in regard to the second (1 John 3:1-3). Respecting the first, we read that Christ the Son of God was manifested to the apostles for a twofold purpose: "He was manifested to take away our sins" (V. 5), and "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (V. 8).

When Christ is again made visible to mankind, John asserts that all believers will be made manifest with Him, for they shall be like Him in glory. The Apostle Paul declares, "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). What a triumphant event!

Christ a Reality in the World

The test by which spirits are to be examined is the test of the incarnation: "Herein know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (Chapter 4:2-3).

Three very important points of doctrine are stated in this confession. "To come" presupposes a movement out from in order to arrive at a certain place or condition. Such logic leads to the conclusion that the Lord Jesus, as stated earlier, had an eternal existence with the Father. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

This apostolic confession does not say, "Jesus Christ come into flesh," implying, as some claim, that Christ the Eternal descended into the Man Jesus and remained in Him for some years, but withdrew before the crucifixion. This satanic delusion appeared very early in the history of the Church, and still permeates Christendom.

Moreover, the spirit of God through John does not say, "Jesus Christ came in flesh," producing the impression that He who came in flesh did not remain in that form, but that He left humanity and ascended back to Heaven in spirit only. The language employed subscribes to the fact that Christ is come in flesh; that is, He came in a human body and ever remains in that human body, albeit a glorified body (Phil. 3:21).

The contention of the ancient and godly Athanasias needs again to be restated and affirmed by Christian testimony everywhere: "Jesus Christ is truly God and truly Man—co-substantial (co-essential) with the Father according to Manhood... Begotten before all ages according to the Godhead, and in these latter days for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary ... according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly,

inseparably; the distinction of the two natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence.”

Christ the Representative of the Father

Of our blessed Lord Jesus, we read, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7).

It was as His Perfect Servant that the Father sent His Son into the world. Matthew records the parable of the nobleman who planted a vineyard and rented it to a company of husbandmen. In order to receive the portion which was his by arrangement, the nobleman eventually sent his son. The husbandmen said among themselves, “This is the heir, come let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance” (Matt. 21:33-41).

There is both a contrast and a comparison here. According to this Epistle by John, the Father sent the Son to give not to get, but the Son whom He sent was likewise slain. “God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him,” asserts John. Furthermore, he affirms, “God, ... sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” and “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (4:9, 10, 14). It is in this sense that the Lord Jesus is the Divine Apostle, God’s Sent One (Heb. 3:1). Our blessed Lord who came voluntarily in flesh, came in obedience to the Father in order that men be redeemed. Bethlehem was a prerequisite to Calvary.

Christ a Unique Personage

In dealing with the dreadful influence of many antichrists, the Apostle discloses the sources from which they derive their propaganda. The first source is Jewish: "He that denieth that Jesus is the Christ, he is antichrist" (Chapter 2:22). A rejection of Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, is common among Jews. Thank God for all of Hebrew origin who have embraced by faith the Lord Jesus as Saviour, Lord, and Messiah! The second source is that of Gentile philosophy. Paul met it at Colosse through his Epistle to that church; John confronts it now at Ephesus. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." This statement alone refutes the premise upon which Unitarian doctrine rests (Chapter 2:23).

In chapter 5:5-6, the Apostle raises and answers another question: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water, but by water and blood" (Vv. 5-6).

The name "Jesus" and the appellation "Son of God" used so wisely here by John, reveal the unique personality of our Saviour. He is Jesus, for this is the name of Him who is come in the flesh; He is the perfect Man in all the virtues of unfallen, sinless humanity. He is the Son of God in all the fulness of the divine attributes.

Three witnesses are called upon to give testimony to the unique personality of Christ. First, the "water" through which He entered at His baptism upon His public ministry, a ministry of both oracles and miracles. Second, the "blood". In His death, He overcame him who had the power of death, Satan (Heb. 2:14). The

death of Christ, yes, and even the manner of His death, affirm His claims to be the Son of God. His death was as great a miracle as was His life. Third, the "Spirit." Through the power of the Holy Spirit the Church was born at Pentecost, and through His indwelling she is sustained. These three testify to the unique personality of our Lord Jesus: the "water," His miraculous life; the "blood," His miraculous and triumphant death; the "Spirit," in and through the Church, His miraculous and glorious accomplishments. Only One who is absolutely unique could execute all that is contained in this threefold testimony.

The New Commandment

FFF 11:9 (Nov 1965)

The New Commandment

James Gunn

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-2: 31-38

On the slopes of Sinai the elders of Israel sat down in the presence of God to enjoy a divinely prepared table. We read, "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel He laid not His hand (to do them hurt): Also they saw God, and did eat and drink" (Ex. 24:9-11).

Such was the picture at the time of the giving of the ten commandments: a table spread, the Lord Himself the host, and the elders, the pillars of His people, gathered around Him. How soon those very men broke the ten commandments that they had received!

Another table is spread, the Lord Himself is again the Host, and the pillars of the Church about to be built are gathered around Him. They see and listen to God, not now in a Theophany but in physical form, incarnate. They see Him who had given to Israel the ten commandments, and they hear Him say, "A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Luther said that faith is as light, its rays are ever straight and unbending, fixed upon its object; but love is

as heat, it diffuses influence until all available space is equally filled.

Another has said that love is as the moon, if it is not increasing, it is decreasing.

Think of the strange heterogeneous group to which the new commandment was first given. There was impetuous Peter; contemplative John; guileless Nathanael; reserved Andrew; doubting Thomas; curious Judas, not Iscariot, who asked, "Lord how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22); practical Philip who said, "Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8); business like Matthew; James and John the sons of thunder, whose quick tempers and fiery dispositions were as a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder.

Among this group there was plenty of room for differences and disagreements. The Lord chose the best possible setting for the giving of the new commandment; He sought to instil into their hearts the great virtue of love.

To live is to do more than breathe, it is to act; even so, to love is to do more than talk, it likewise is to act. A Christian prayed, "O Lord, teach me how to love out of a pure heart fervently." In John 13, the Lord Jesus answers that prayer.

On another occasion the Lord spoke of love as the summation of the entire law (Matt. 22:37-40). Here He speaks of it as a new commandment. a commandment made by repetition and amplification. The Lord not only commands to love but indicates who to love, how to love, and why to love.

Let us examine carefully the words of the Master in regard to the example, standard, motive, and objective of love as these were presented by Him to His disciples.

The Example

An example is a pattern by which persons model their behaviour. There is no pattern so perfect as the Lord Jesus. It would be well if His people modelled their behaviour in accord with His in all things. He is the perfect pattern in suffering (1 Pet. 2:21), in gracious forgiveness (Col. 3:13), of divine affection (John 13:34).

Some years ago in the early newspapers there was published a picture of Prince Charles of England. During an inspection of a detachment of the armed forces, he followed his father, the Duke of Edinburgh. He adopted the same gait, held his arms in the same manner, cocked his head at the same angle; in fact, so copied were the movements of his father that he looked like the Duke of Edinburgh in miniature. May we so follow the example of Christ that those who watch us may see Christ in our behaviour.

The Standard

“Jesus ... having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

The words, “His own,” are used in a triple sense by John. In chapter one he writes of Jesus, “He came unto His own (things), but His own (the Jewish people) received Him not” (John 1:11). In that connection the reference is to His own racial group; here in chapter 13, it is to His own through redemption.

To His own disciples, His by redemption and calling, Christ was going to show the completeness of His love by laying down His life for them. Knox in his translation expressed it, "He gave them the utter-most proof of His love." Christ had loved them before He had called them, now He was going to demonstrate how much.

The Motive

"A new commandment I give unto you." The actual motivation in every Christian attitude and all Christian service is that of pleasing the Lord by obedience. Obedience is the yielding of one's will to that of another. Obedience to Christ should be perfectly natural for the believer; the spiritual man will do this by intuition.

Love because of Christ will extend beyond the limits of sectarianism in all its forms. It will be the cause of mutual assistance among Christians (Gal. 5:13), the controlling factor of all church arrangements (1 Cor. 16:16), the proper attitude toward others (Rom. 12:9-10), the consideration that will hide the faults of others (1 Pet. 4:8), and it will make one generous (1 John 3:16-17).

True love is vast in its extent. A Boy Scout out with his group among the Rocky Mountains, called back to his Scout Master, "I see the Pacific." "How wide is it?" Shouted the Master in reply. "About ten miles," yelled the boy. "You have not yet seen the Pacific," re-echoed the answer from the Scout Master.

The narrowness, exclusiveness, and selectivity of personal preference and natural fondness must not be confused with the inexplorable vastness of divine, true love.

The Objective

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

It is customary in the world to wear identification marks. The Gideons are known by the button they wear in the lapel of their jackets, so also the Christian Business Men. One of the most distinguishing marks of a disciple of the Lord Jesus is his love toward all fellow-believers.

The New International Version

MIF 11:3 (May-June 1979)

The New International Version

The use for some time of a copy of the New International Version of the Bible has provided both real pleasure and much profit. The language flows quite nicely and is so easily understood. Consequently, one does not hesitate to believe that it is suitable for reading on the platform and in the pulpit. It certainly has a hearing appeal that some of the other modern versions do not have.

The clarity and the explicitness used by the translators make certain passages more meaningful than other translations. For example, the “fellowship offering” (Lev. 7:11) is more understandable than the “peace offering.”

The breaking of the chapter into significant paragraphs is helpful in Bible study. Furthermore, one appreciates the short, concise titles indicating the content of each particular paragraph.

The value of the New International Version may be somewhat low in the minds of some believers until it becomes better known. In some of the texts which we frequently memorize from the Authorized Version, there is very little change. This is noticeable, for instance John 3:16.

Whether or not the New International Version will ever replace the Authorized Version is debatable, but it is certainly worthy of a prominent place in every Christian circle.

The New International Version of the Bible is published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In Canada it is distributed by Home Evangel Books Limited, 565 Gordon Baker Road, Willowdale, Ontario, M2H 2W2.

—James Gunn.

The Virgin Birth and Inspiration

MIF 15:6 (Nov-Dec 1983)

The Virgin Birth and Inspiration

Any denial of the virgin birth of Christ is a denial of the veracity, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible. The belief that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16) demands that we give it credence not only in divine revelation but in accurate preservation of all historical records. The Holy Scriptures are God-breathed whether we accept this as in-breathing or out-breathing (inspiration or expiration); the source of the Bible is in God Himself. If one narrative be proved fictitious or even faulty, then the whole may be considered errant and fallible. Faith in the inspiration of the Bible involves the acceptance of it in whole and in parts as having been transmitted by God to man and preserved in its writing by a power beyond that of man.

God is the source, but He has used holy men as His mouthpiece. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Word of God was not given by any personal or particular explanation, nor by the determination of anyone; the holy men who gave us the Book were impelled in their ministry by the Divine Spirit. Through these men God performed the miracle of inspiration; He used holy men, but fallible men, to write an infallible volume, the Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

The Bible is God's witness to us of His presence working throughout human history. The record of the virgin birth

given by Matthew and Luke are the revelation of God's great work among men, for men.

—From the pen of the late James Gunn in his book,

CHRIST: THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD (see "The Book Corner" for a review of this choice volume)

This Permissive Society

This Permissive Society

James Gunn

In this dialogue-type article our associate editor lends some helpful background and instruction on the subject of homosexuality in the light of God's Word.

"In this permissive society, anything goes!"

What a pity to see such a young and vigorous personality so disturbed, and to a certain extent embittered by what he had encountered in his search for learning. He had been brought up according to a high degree of morality, and although he attended no particular church, he did live by the absolutes of a traditional society. This, therefore, is what he expected to find in other students, at least in the majority of them.

"When not in our books studying, our crowd talks too much about sex and how to get rich, how to get rich quickly and easily. I sometimes wonder where all this started, and I am afraid of its final outcome."

"Personally," was my reply, "I am convinced that the Bible has much to say in regard to both sex and material wealth."

"You believe the Bible, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," I acknowledged. "Does the Bible really say anything about such moralities?"

He was so earnest that he went on, "Sex is such a power, and it appears in many forms. I have read in the

news that it is used in the business world to get sales, and to get promotions.”

“Yes, the Bible condemns fornication, adultery, pre-marital sex, extramarital sex, even the non-marital indulgence. It also condemns homosexuality.”

“Does the Bible literally mention homosexuality? I thought that this was something new?” he questioned.

“Let us see what the Word of God has to say about this dreadful, unnatural sin.”

The Origin

“The Christian is occasionally asked,” I explained, “What is God going to do with the heathen? That actually is not the grave question; the real problem arises out of what the heathen (mankind) did with God. In the Bible the origin of heathenism is clearly indicated.

“‘Because 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, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

“‘For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature (Lesbianism, sapphism).

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly (homosexuality), and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do these things which are not convenient.’

“Three times it is asserted that God gave them up (Rom. 1:21-32). Heathenism is the result of divine abandonment. As mankind abandoned God, God abandoned men, and the result is heathenism. Among the many characteristics of heathenism, lesbianism and homosexuality are prominent.”

The Characteristics

“‘Men burn in their lust one toward another ... working that which is unseemly.’ While in our society today, homosexuality is to a minor degree accepted as a way of life, not long ago it was considered an illness or a crime. As an illness we were told, it required the help of both medicine and psychiatry. When considered a crime, it could result in imprisonment.

“This act is so unnatural that it has to be learned. Dr. F A. Tatford, in his article on homosexuality in the September 1979 issue of The Harvester, quotes J. White who writes from a psychiatrist’s point of view: ‘Homosexual behaviour is not in any sense inevitable to someone who engages in it. It may be understandable. But no homosexual has the right to say, I am not responsible for what I do because my homosexual nature makes me do it. E. Wahl says bluntly that homosexuality is a learned disorder and not genetically inherited.’”

The History

“You spoke of homosexuality as being comparatively new. That idea may come from the fact that this practice was legally banded and only in recent years has that restriction been removed. Today we are more aware of this practice than formerly, in great measure also due to the publicity given it by the news media.

“Actually homosexuality spans the centuries. You probably have heard the name Sodomy. In the days of Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people, his nephew Lot moved into Sodom: this city was extremely evil and divinely condemned to extinction.

“In order to rescue Lot from imminent destruction God sent two angels in human form to his home. The degraded men of Sodom attempted to rape these holy beings; they attempted to practise their evil Sodomy, or homosexuality. The Lord immediately punished the men of Sodom and in a few hours destroyed the two great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.”

“I just do not know what to say,” exclaimed my student friend, “I do not like talking about such things, but this has been an eye-opener to me. I admit that the whole matter makes me feel very apprehensive. But thank you anyway. I am glad to have had this little talk together.”

May God place His restraining hand upon human evil. May He preserve the youth of today from the liberties and indulgences so prevalent in the world.

Thomas Goodall Wilkie

FFF 11:5 (May 1965)

Thomas Goodall Wilkie

James Gunn

A great man, I take it, is a man so inspired and permeated with the idea of God and the Christly spirit as to be too magnanimous for vengeance, and too unselfish to seek his own ends." These words, written long ago by David Thomas, are very applicable to Thomas Goodall Wilkie who passed home to be with Christ, March 13, 1965. A true concept of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Scriptures ever were expressed by him during his long and fruitful Christian career. His warm and affectionate attitude toward others, and his ethical and sacrificial living also left deep impressions on those who knew him.

In the passing of brother Wilkie, "a great man is fallen in Israel." Recollections of his ardent and forceful preaching of the gospel of grace in the open air, in tents, rented buildings, Gospel Halls, and in larger gatherings at conferences in Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Detroit, and in other places, still stirs the heart. There are many souls throughout Canada and the United States who directly or indirectly attribute their conversion to his ministry. Furthermore, his gracious words of exhortation to God's people frequently rekindled the fire of zeal and devotion in hearts that had become cold and in lives that had become barren.

These qualities along with certain natural talents won for him the esteem of all other members of Food for the Flock. In his relation to this periodical the words of

Jonathan to David are true: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty." Little did any realize at the last Annual Meeting of the Corporaation, when Tom sat in his place and participated in the proceedings, that some would not see him again.

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1889, he immigrated to Canada in 1910, and at first settled in Toronto where he found employment with the Toronto Street Railway. It was while on his daily run as a conductor of a trolley car that his attention was arrested by a gospel text on a large bill board. Each time he passed it, he read, "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."

Eventually he moved to Hamilton. Years later in driving down a street once very familiar to him, he exclaimed, "See that house! See that window!" Each in the car looked. "In that room," continued Tom, "God saved me away back in 1912." A friend in the car said, "Off with your hats, gentlemen, let us salute that sacred spot."

Through the influence of a brother with whom he worked, an appreciation of the simplicity toward Christ was stimulated in his mind, and his way was directed to the assembly on McNab Street in the city of his adoption.

The warmth of Christian fellowship, the ministry of the Word of God, the intensive study in the conversational Bible class, the free exercise and development of spiritual gifts, and the ready acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ satisfied the longings of his heart more than any previous Christian experience. Not only did the biblical functioning of the assembly satisfy him,

but through it he grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Even in those formative years it seemed obvious to some that the Lord was indicating, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me."

By 1919 the elders of the McNab assembly were fully convinced that God had really called brother Wilkie to His service. They, therefore, like the brethren of old at Antioch, prayed, laid their hands on him, and released him, and he being sent by the Holy Spirit departed into the great harvest field.

He joined Leonard Sheldrake that summer in tent work at Watford, Ontario, where at the end of the season they founded the assembly there. He then associated with Robert McCrory for a while. In 1921 he joined Albert Joyce in a protracted effort at Grand Bend. The year following, these brethren had the pleasure of founding the assembly in that area. So it was that he commenced a ministry of well over forty years in which from house to house and publicly, orally and by the printed page, he spread the message of redeeming love. His activities stretched from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia, and whether alone or in company with other servants of the Lord, he never missed an opportunity to witness for Christ.

The convictions which he had derived from the study of the Word of God were deepened by these experiences as was his spiritual intuition so that he could be firm and yet tolerant.

Tom extended his hand, he in blue overalls had just scrambled out of the excavation in which they were building the basement walls of the Gospel Hall in Grand Bend, Ontario, and I took it. With that handshake on that

chilly October day in 1922, began a friendship, at first casual but deepening with time, the end of which leaves me with a keen sense of loss.

The founding of the assembly in Grand Bend and the building of the hall there was a pivotal point in Tom's life. It was the fitting conclusion to an early period and an inauguration into a fuller and much more extensive ministry.

As two rivulets increase in volume as they meander through the fields and the valleys until they converge and then merge into one grand river which irrigates the lands it passes, refreshes the towns about it, and carries its cargoes to residents along its banks, so God at times unites two lives that are a blessing to all they touch. It was just that way in the marriage of Tom Wilkie and Jean Vance (September 21, 1923). God has not only made them a blessing to many, but He has likewise blessed them. He gave them a daughter, Mrs. Ruth Wilding, Vancouver; and two sons, Frank of Vancouver and Allan of Toronto. These, their wives and families, with their mother mourn because of their loss, but they sorrow not as those that have no hope.

A man's true moral stature is reflected in the attitude of little children; their confidence, respect, and love indicate his height; their fear and distrust, his smallness.

In an initial work in a non-assembly town, although there had been considerable advertising and house to house visitation, the attendance at the meetings had been very poor. "We must win the children," said Tom one day, "then we shall gain the adults." A note to the former Christian Book Room, Bloor Street West, Toronto, quickly brought a quantity of Scripture

medallions. That afternoon he and his companion stood opposite the public school. As the children came out, they spied the pretty gold-coloured medallions shining in the sunlight as Tom tossed them from one hand to the other. A crowd of curious boys and girls surrounded him, calling, "What are they Mister?" "Are you giving them away, Sir?" Etc. Etc.

"Every child who attends the meeting to-night receives one free," said Tom.

That night the hall was full. If the medals brought the little folk, Tom's attitude and interest in them brought them back again and again. To the very end of his service he always had an interest in and a love for children. Through the children in that town, the adults were brought to the meetings and all during that winter and through the following summer they heard the gospel of God's grace with the result that souls were won for the Lord Jesus.

"Where is hell anyway?" A man from the back of the tent shouted one night when Tom was solemnly warning the careless. "Should you drop dead where you are, Sir, you would be there immediately," shot back the answer from the platform. The heckler, as if stunned, remained and sat silent throughout the service. What a sense of awe pervaded the tent that night!

"Yes, I would like to talk with one of the preachers," said a displaced person from Europe at evangelistic services in Ontario, "but I want to talk with one who knows about sin and the world, not a goody goody who has never done anything wrong." Tom sat down and talked with the troubled man, and, although there were difficulties because of language, he told and retold the gospel. It

seemed that Tom was always ready, in season and out of season. The more desperate the case, the more ready he seemed.

Visitation was one aspect of the Lord's work for which Tom was well qualified. His presence in the sick room or ward was a cheer to many.

On one occasion in a hospital he visited a young chap suffering very severe pain. Repeatedly under a spasm he would groan and mutter, "Oh, nobody ever had to suffer like this." Quietly Tom would say, "Just One, just One!" Again there would be the groan, and again the same complaint, "Nobody ever had to suffer like this." Once again our brother quietly would comment, "Just One, just One!"

The repetition finally penetrated the poor lad's mind, and he exclaimed, "You are right, Mr. Wilkie, Jesus did, and he did it for me!"

It was like the branch cast into the bitter waters of Marah, for a sweet peace seemed to come over the sufferer.

In the summer of 1961, he underwent radical surgery, and although as strength permitted he continued his ministry, it was obvious that his active career was now much curtailed. On several occasions at conferences where he was invited to preach the gospel, the old fervour would revive and he would herald forth Heaven's evangel with power. But physical energy was failing.

"How is brother Wilkie?" Enquired a Christian in Barrie. "He is not so well," was the reply. "We had hoped that he might be well enough to fulfil his promise and come

for the opening of the new hall in Waverley, but a letter the other day says that he is worse; his sight is impaired, and he is suffering pain. He is not coming."

"I'm sorry. I shall never forget those meetings in the old hall at Waverley fourteen years ago," replied the enquirer. "For nine weeks the services were conducted, and he preached with power each night. I was saved at those meetings; thank God!"

Many of his spiritual children showed a similar interest in his condition.

Through the months that followed, this beloved servant of Christ gradually weakened until Saturday, March 13, when, at his home in Forest, Ontario, he, having so well served his generation by the will of God, fell asleep in Jesus.

On Tuesday March 16, loved ones, neighbours, friends, elder brethren, fellow-workers, and spiritual children gathered in the Gospel Hall at Forest to pay their respects. Brethren William Pell and James Blackwood ministered the gospel and words of comfort. Devout men then carried our beloved brother to his burial, Robert McClurkin conducting the committal service.

The closing hymn with its message of comfort, hope, and assurance was a befitting benediction to a life devoted to the Lord and His beloved people.

Jesus is coming! sing the glad word!

Coming for those He redeemed by His blood,

Coming to reign as the glorified Lord!

Jesus is coming again!

Jesus is coming, is coming again!

Jesus is coming again.

Shout the glad tiding o'er mountain and plain,

Jesus is coming again!

Jesus is coming! His saints to release;

Coming to give to the warring earth peace

Sinning and sighing and sorrow shall cease

Jesus is coming again!

World Dominion And Peace

World Dominion And Peace

James Gunn

The variegated illumination, the sparkling decorations and the Christmas music created a gala atmosphere in the midtown restaurant. The crowd, augmented by many shoppers, was unusually large, and seemed to be in a very festive mood.

George selected his lunch, picked up his tray and scanned the dining room for a possible seat. A small table for two in a front corner was the only one unoccupied. As he made his way past groups of merry diners and tray-laden waitresses, he wondered how many of them thought much of the event they were preparing to celebrate. He questioned how many understood the significance and importance of the Saviour's birth.

While he was saying grace, a stranger had approached; he now asked if he might be allowed to use the other chair at the table. He was a visitor to New York, he said, and did not wish to lose the time waiting for an unoccupied table.

George's immediate response was an exclamation of pleasure. And although the men discovered in a few preliminary remarks that they were executives of competitive companies, this did not hinder an intense and interesting conversation about world affairs.

"The world is in a dreadful mess," said the visitor. On the international horizon things obviously are going

from bad to worse. When I was younger, Christmas was a challenge and most attempted to live at peace with a feeling of goodwill toward others. Now with bloody wars being fought in Asia and Africa, with labor strikes and racial riots here at home, and with a constant increase in crime and violence, this is just not true. Christmas seems a farce; its ceremonies and festivities alike are mockeries."

These sobering observations resulted in silence for several moments. Finally George said, "I agree, something is far wrong in the world. Of course, these conditions were predicted in the Bible long ago. In fact, through the reading of the Bible, I gather that there is no hope for any improvement."

"I believe and revere the Bible," replied the visitor to New York, "but as a Roman Catholic, I feel that a person must be trained in theology before he can understand and interpret it properly. Notwithstanding, I admit there seems little hope for the world that we know."

"I understand," he continued, "that the ultimate purpose of the Common Market of Europe, the Treaty of Rome, is to have a super-executive over the nations of Europe who will co-ordinate the policies and activities of these independent states. If this idea could be extended to include the entire world, we might achieve peace and prosperity."

"Have you anyone to suggest," enquired George, "whom you feel might be capable of such an important and prominent position?"

"Well, yes, I feel that the Pope would be the logical person."

“With all due respect for the Pope” said George, “and please do not be offended, I have to disagree.”

“Then, do you have any suggestion?” enquired the visitor.

“I believe that the One of whom it was written, ‘Peace on earth and good will toward men,’ Jesus Christ alone could give to this poor old world peace, justice and equity.”

“Yes, O yes! I agree,” impulsively exclaimed the other, “but such is impossible.”

“This is not at all impossible,” asserted George. “The Bible predicts the return of Christ to earth for this very purpose. The Word of God prophesys that event and the glorious consequences of that event.” Here George took out his pocket Bible and read: “He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic. 4:3) “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end” (Isa. 9:7). “With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: ... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:4-9). “And there shall be given to Him (Jesus Christ) 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” (Dan. 7:14).

Here the reading stopped and the visitor, very deeply moved, ejaculated, “Astonishing! Astonishing!”

For a few minutes the two men sat in silence looking at each other. Together they then arose to leave. As they gripped each the other's hand, George saw tears in the eyes of his new friend, Through the tears there broke a smile as he fervently averred, "Then, yes then, we shall have peace on earth and goodwill toward men. Thank you so much, so very much! Good bye!"