From the Editor's Notebook: Editorials

W. Ross Rainey

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The Annual Meeting, 1976

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc. for 1975 was held on November 1st in Toronto. Many matters were discussed, not the least of them the rising costs involved in continuing to publish Ministry in Focus magazine. In spite of this, and other problems, it is our unanimous and united decision to “press on” (no pun is meant), and this, in continued dependence upon our Lord for His wisdom and guidance. Contemplating 1976, we look to Him to enable us to maintain a high standard of doctrinal, expository, devotional and practical articles bearing on the contemporary needs of His people, to improve the magazine’s format wherever possible, and to increase its circulation.

No changes were made within the structure of the Board, the responsibility of publication being voluntarily shared by the following officers:

President: Russell Took

First Vice-president: Sydney H. Green

Second Vice-president: Dr. James T. Naismith

Secretary: Miss Lillian Telfer. Treasurer: Harry Masters
Editor: W. Ross Rainey Associate Editor: James Gunn
The following statement of purpose was adopted:

MINISTRY IN FOCUS IS A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO ENCOURAGING SOUND BIBLE STUDY, TO

PROVIDING PRACTICAL TEACHING ON CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS, AND TO CHALLENGE CHRISTIANS TO A GREATER DEVOTION TO OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST.

All matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan 48170, U.S.A. All business correspondence should be directed to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9C 4V3.

A Word of Apology

We regret that the past several issues of MINISTRY IN FOCUS have been received so late by our reader family. We sincerely apologize for this and at the same time assure you that we are doing all we can to try and correct the problem. Also, like myriads of others, we have been inconvenienced by the Canadian mail strike which was finally settled last December 1st. In view of these and other problems which we face, we kindly ask your prayers and patience as we seek to cope with these matters, all with a view to ultimately achieving our goal of getting the magazine into your hands on time.

The Autumn Time of Life

Believe it or not, about sixty per cent of the earth's four billion inhabitants are twenty-five years of age or under. Consequently, ours is a day and age wherein a lopsided emphasis has been placed on youth. In other words, young people are in the driver's seat whether you like it or not. Often old people, or senior citizens (if you prefer), are either neglected or shoved aside. To try and keep a proper balance it's only right that we occasionally provide in Focus ministry expressly

directed to those who find themselves in the autumn time of life. This is what we have done in this issue, and we heartily commend Dr. Fredk. A. Tatford's article, "Growing Old," to this segment of our readers. In fact, all who read it, younger and older alike, will be blessed by its positive and refreshing message. We appreciate Dr. Tatford's kind permission to publish it in Focus. It first appeared in the Prophetic Witness magazine, edited by Dr. Tatford, and copies of it in booklet form may be obtained at a nominal cost from the Prophetic Witness Publishing House, Upperton House, The Avenue, Eastbourne, Sussex, England BN21 3YB While thinking about this subject I would like to share with you some thoughts from Walter Scott, author of the classic work, Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Over sixty years ago he wrote a brief article entitled, "The Lord's Beloved Aged People." Here it is.

"We have a growing reverence for the aged (or so it was in Mr. Scott's day, ed.). It ever was and is a characteristic of Jewish religious life to honour the aged. It is a touching and beautiful sight to view one in the sunset of life waiting at the brink of the river for the parting of the waves. The heart yet brave; the love of early days as passionate if more matured; the purpose of the soul unchanged, and the calm unshaken confidence —the growth of many years—reflected on the patient, if withered and suffering countenance. How chastened! How mellowed! How useful the ripe experience!

"One danger to which the Lord's aged people are peculiarly subject, is to rest on their oars, and seek to pass the evening of their days in a 'Home of Rest,' assuming that their work is done. That was not the spirit of brave old Caleb, who when 85 years old said, 'As yet I

am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me'—forty years previously—'as my strength was then even so is my strength now for war, both to go out, and to come in' (Josh. 14:11). Caleb was not tired of the conflict. He drew his spiritual strength from God: the source of his courage was in God Himself!

"The physical vigour of youth may give way, but there is a power outside the domain of nature, 'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint' (Isa. 40:31). O beloved aged pilgrims, our rest is on the other side of the river; our home is on high. Throw off the indolence which with age and infirmity creeps over the soul, and nerve yourselves to battle on, to serve till He come. A few more struggles and then eternal rest! Your active ministry in pulpit or platform is over, perhaps. But has your service ceased? There yet remains the more spiritual work of intercession with God for the Church and World. Work on your knees—work which brings you face to face with God Himself. The sanctuary is your sphere of service and that is better than the public work of younger days. Then, too, there is the exquisite beauty of Christ reproduced in your aged days—His love, His grace, His tenderness, His voice, His touch, His gentleness, His holiness. O God, bless Thine aged pilgrim people! Say not, 'My long life's work is done.'

"One of the most eloquent of Scottish divines whose burning words once fell on our ears, the late Dr. Guthrie, thus wrote: 'They say I am growing old because my hair is silvered, and there are crows'-feet on my forehead, and my step is not as firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The knees are weak; but

the knees are not me. The brow is wrinkled; but the brow is not me. This is the house I live in. But I am young—younger than I ever was before.'

"For ourselves, and for all beloved aged pilgrims, we long and pray for spiritual vigour. Where, of course, there is a collapse of the physical powers, one can only wait in patience the joyful summons 'Come Home!' Press on with increasing desire. The manna is needed equally for your closing hours as for the springtide of earlier days. Feed on Christ, ye fathers and mothers in Israel!

The Annual Meeting, 1977

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

The 1976 Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc. was held on November 20th in Toronto, Canada. As always, many matters were discussed, among them the rising costs involved in continuing to publish and post Ministry in Focus magazine. Nevertheless, the members present were optimistically unanimous in the decision to continue publishing Focus, and this, in steadfast dependence upon our Lord for His wisdom and guidance. Throughout 1977 we look to Him to enable us to faithfully fulfill our statement of purpose — namely, that MINISTRY IN FOCUS IS A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO ENCOURAGING SOUND BIBLE STUDY, TO PROVIDING PRACTICAL TEACHING ON CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS, AND TO CHALLENGING CHRISTIANS TO A GREATER DEVOTION TO OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST.

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All matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan 48170 U.S.A. All business correspondence should be directed to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9C 4V3. Bible study questions should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 1121 Hilltop Street, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 5S6.

Last year we stated in this column our desire before the Lord to, among other things, increase Focus magazine's circulation. Happily and thankfully, we have been able to achieve this, largely through the kindness of Loizeaux Brothers, Inc. As our readers know from our last issue, Loizeaux Brothers ceased publication of Help & Food magazine with the summer 1976 issue after ninety-three years' ministry. One of the options given to their readers was to fill out their subscriptions with copies of Ministry in Focus. According to the latest word received from Miss Marie D. Loizeaux, over 300 of their subscribers had elected to take Focus. As a committee member of Loizeaux Brothers, the editor wishes to express on behalf of all the Food for the Flock members our sincere gratitude for their gracious gesture toward Focus magazine. And to all former Help & Food readers we extend a warm and hearty welcome to the Focus reader family.

A further decision made at the Annual Meeting is to continue the center Bible study section which our associate editor, Mr. James Gunn, has authored these past few years. Once his series on "The Bible" has run out, Brother Gunn will begin a new expository series on

a New Testament book which will be announced in a future issue of Focus.

We might add that some are making good use of the current series on “The Bible.” As a case in point, one of the Lord’s servants in Mexico is translating the studies into Spanish and using them among believers in that country.

A Word of Appreciation

Although not among the original group of brethren who started Food for the Flock magazine (now Ministry in Focus), Mr. Benjamin Bradford of Miami, Florida, became a member of Food for the Flock, Inc. just a few years after the magazine was begun. Our esteemed brother, now an octogenarian (but not an octogeranium!), has been more or less “grounded” by his doctor and is no longer able to travel to Toronto for the yearly meeting, his presence being greatly missed. Nevertheless, we continue to greatly value the fellowship and prayers of our beloved brother, thanking God for his faithfulness and helpful service over the years.

In a letter Brother Bradford asked to resign from the Board, but it was the unanimous decision of the members to confer on him an Honorary Life Membership on the Board of Food for the Flock, Inc.

Thus, Brother Ben, as a little personal message from all of us, we’re simply not going to allow you to resign. And who knows but what some day we might have our Annual Meeting in Miami. This was, by the way, discussed! A-hem, in that case, though, January or

February would be a better time than November, wouldn't you agree?

Resurrection

As these lines are written, the stark deadness of winter prevails over the entire landscape, and to top it off it's snowing. What a grim, hopeless, destitute outlook it would be were it not for the glad prospect of spring when the present drab deadness will burst into verdant life.

To me, springtime is the most glorious season of the year; it is nature's parable on the blessed theme of resurrection. To God's people who presently find themselves midst the dead, decaying, ever-changing, hopeless scene of this groaning creation, spring should be a reminder that some day we shall receive a resurrected and glorified body like that of our Lord Jesus Christ, never again to be subject to those ills and evils which sin has brought into our experience as members of a fallen humanity — the First Adam's race. Thanks be unto God for the Last Adam, the Lord of Life and Glory, who someday soon is going to descend from heaven to the atmosphere above planet earth and "change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21).

F.E. Marsh has rightly said: "The resurrection of Christ is the heart of Christianity, which makes it pulsate with the life of God; it is the keystone to the arch of truth, which holds all the faith of the Gospel together; it is the foundation of the Church; it is the mainspring of Christian activity; it is the lever of power which shall

move the world; and it is the link that unites all believers" (500 Bible Readings, p. 210).

If Christ was not raised bodily from the grave, then, as the Apostle Paul reveals in 1 Corinthians 15, there are at least seven sad, stark facts to contemplate. If Christ did not rise from out of the dead, then:

1. Christ Himself is not risen (15:13).

2. Our preaching is in vain (15:14).

3. Our faith is in vain (15:14).

4. We are Liars (15:15-16).

5. We are yet in our sins (15:17).

6. Christians who have died are lost forever (15:18).

7. "We are of all men most miserable" (15:19).

However, in 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul exclaims triumphantly, "But now is Christ risen from the dead," and to this the believing and enlightened heart lends its "Hallelujah!" The apostle goes on to declare that all who are in Adam are doomed to death, but all who are in Christ are appointed to life. True believers are the harvest of which Christ is the "firstfruits." The word for "firstfruits" stems from the "Feast of Firstfruits" in Israel (see Leviticus 23:9-14), and suggests the twin idea of an earnest and a sample. The fact of the "firstfruits" is the promise of the harvest. Because Christ lives, we live; because He was raised, we shall be raised.

Maranatha!

The Annual Meeting, 1979

MIF 11:1 (Jan-Feb 1979)

From The Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

On November 4th, 1978, the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc., was held in Toronto. Of the many matters discussed, ways in which costs can be cut were high on the list. We are also in the process of consolidating our renewal of subscriptions with a view to handling all of them within the last two months or so of each year. This will make things considerably easier for Mrs. Harry Masters who, among other things, so graciously implements this important matter.

Like other similar publications, we continue to face the spiraling costs of printing and mailing in these inflationary times, this being the primary reason for our attempts to discreetly cut costs wherever possible. The single subscription price of six issues per year will remain at $4.00.

It was the unanimous decision of the committee to forge ahead for another year, and this, in dependence upon our faithful God for His continued supply of all needs, both spiritual and material, As our associate editor, Mr. James Gunn, pointed out, there never has been a year in the entire history of the magazine but what there were financial difficulties. Yet our Lord has always provided throughout 24 years of continuous publication.

For the current year no changes were made within the structure of the Board, the responsibility of publication being voluntarily shared by the following officers:

President: Russell Took

1st Vice-President: Sydney H. Green

2nd Vice-President: Dr. James T. Naismith

Secretary: Miss Lillian Telfer

Treasurer: Harry Masters

Editor: W. Ross Rainey

Associate Editor: James Gunn

We are delighted to announce that four new members have been welcomed and added to the committee. They are as follows:

Mr. William Burnett of Burlington, Ontario

Mr. Ray Fox of Halifax, N.S.

Mr. Douglas Telfer of Toronto, Ontario

Mr. Jay Walden of Minneapolis, Minnesota

Three of our four new committee members were with us for the meeting, Mr. Ray Fox having been unable to attend because of a previous commitment.

It was with a note of sadness that we began the 1978 Annual Meeting, Mr. James Gunn having called attention to the absence of our esteemed brother, Mr. Ormer G. C. Sprunt. Brother Sprunt was the original sponsor of Food for the Flock and had not missed an Annual Meeting of the Corporation (see the Sept-Oct. 1978 issue of Focus for “A Tribute to the Late Ormer Sprunt”).

From time to time the editor receives various criticisms relative to the magazine and these are always welcome when extended in a courteous manner. In fact, I have found some of them quite helpful and thought provoking (not just provoking!). But we also receive words of encouragement, and I have been urged to share one of these with you. Though written by a loved one now serving Christ in South Africa (I refer to Leslie S. Rainey, the editor's uncle), I knew nothing about them until they were read by one of our new members at the Annual Meeting. They are as follows:

"For years, whether at home or abroad with the Word of Life, there is one Book that has always been the stay and staff of my soul. It is the Bible. There is no book like the Bible. It lies close to my hand in all my work and witness. I never go anywhere without it and daily it proves to be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Thank God for a magazine like Focus that is dedicated to the faithful exposition of the Word of God. I recommend it to the whole household of faith as a means under God for growth, guidance and godliness. I am sure as you read Focus it will feed and fortify faith, and you will find something to encourage and edify in this sound and splendid publication."

Just a reminder that all matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan, 48170. All business correspondence should be directed to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9C 4V3. Any and all questions for "The Question Column" should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 1121 Hilltop Street, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 5S6.

New Year's Reminders

For the past year the editor has had two timely New Year's reminders under the glass which covers my study desk. One is from the pen of A. B. Simpson in the form of a brief poetic prayer:

Lord, I ask for a busy year,

Filled up with service true,

Doing with all Thy Spirit's might

All that I find to do.

The other pertinent reminder is from the "Choice Gleanings" Calendar, the anonymous comments and lines of poetry captioned by the words of Psalm 103:14: "For He knoweth our frame; He remembered that we are dust." Here they are:

"Our age, sex, temperament, time of life, circumstances, measure of intelligence, special needs, fears, hopes, desires, and possibilities are all known to Him. Since His compassions fail not; and His consolations are not small; we may gird up the loins of our minds and run the race which is set before us cheerfully and hopefully, looking off unto Jesus the Author and Completer of … faith."

I know not, but God knows; O blessed rest from fear!

All my unfolding days to

Him are plain and clear.

Each anxious, puzzled "Why?" from doubt and fear that grows Finds answer in this thought, I know not but He knows.

Obviously, there is no need to remove these practical reminders from under the glass since they are perennial

in their timely expressions of prayerful request and instructive counsel both for me and for all of God’s people. Thus I thought it would be good to share them with you.

As editor I would like to take this opportunity to prayerfully wish you all a truly joyous and prosperous New Year in the Lord, as well as to thank you for being a part of our reader family.

Maranatha

The Annual Meeting, 1982

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

On November 7, 1981, the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock Inc. was held in Toronto at Don Valley Bible Chapel. It was the unanimous decision of the committee to continue to publish the magazine for another year, and this, in continued dependence upon our Lord for all needs both spiritual and material.

However, a few changes were decided on and they are as follows:

1. The magazine title will be changed to our incorporated name, FOOD FOR THE FLOCK, using “Ministry in Focus” as a subtitle.

FOOD FOR THE FLOCK was, of course, the original title of the magazine from the beginning of its publication in January 1955 through December 1968. It was at the start of 1969, when the magazine was changed from a monthly to a bimonthly publication, that the title change was implemented. And, I might add, it was also at that time that this present editor became the associate editor.

2. In co-operation with our printer, it was left to the editor to choose a different outside front cover starting with the 1982 Jan.-Feb. issue. I hope it meets with your approval.

3. Effective, July 1, 1982, the yearly subscription price of the magazine will be raised to $6.00.

Presently it is costing us.91 cents to print each copy of the magazine, exclusive of postage. Occasional gifts from individuals and a few assemblies, plus the exchange on U.S. currency, have enabled us to meet our obligations. To all who have contributed we are sincerely grateful.

We regret any inconvenience to our subscribers regarding the expiration date of their subscription which appeared on the outside back cover over the past year. Our addressing system was undergoing transition, this being the reason for a discrepancy in the date shown.

The following is a list of the corporation members of Food for the Flock Inc., the list being divided into the categories of Directors, Officers and Operational:

Directors

Sydney H. Green, James Gunn, Harry Masters, W. Ross Rainey and Russ Took.

Officers

President — Russ Took

Vice-President — Sydney H. Green

2nd Vice-President — James T. Naismith

Treasurer — William Hamilton

Secretary & Assistant Treasurer — Lillian Telfer

Operational

Editor-in-Chief — W. Ross Rainey

Associate Editor — James Gunn

Question Column Editor — James T. Naismith

Administrative Chairman — Douglas Telfer

Vice-Chairman — William Burnett

Treasurer — William Hamilton

Business Mgr. — Joan Hamilton

Assistant Mgr. — Lillian Teller

Circulation Mgr. (Canada) — Russ Took

Circulation Mgr. (U.S.) — Jay Walden

Additional corporation members are: Joseph Cumming, Ray Fox and Graham Swales.

Just a reminder to our readers that all matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan 48170. All business correspondence should be directed to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 4V3. Questions for "The Question Column" should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 1121 Hilltop Street, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 5S6.

Also, if you are moving to a new address, it is a great help to us to have this information in advance of such change. Not only will it save us expense but it will enable you to receive your copies of the magazine without interruption.

Answered Prayer

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve; I was made weak, that I might learn to obey. I asked for health, that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity, that I might do better things. I asked for riches, that I might be happy; I was given poverty, that I might be wise. I asked for power, that I might have the

praise of men; I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God. I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I received nothing I asked for — everything I had hoped for. My prayers were answered and I am among all men most richly blessed.

—Author Unknown

Barrenness

“By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through” (Eccles. 10:18).

Cicero is said to have practiced speaking before friends every day for thirty years in order to perfect his elocution. Gibbon spent twenty-six years writing The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Noah Webster worked for thirty-six years to produce the first edition of his dictionary. To accomplish their desire such people counted no sacrifice too great.

Many of us are put to shame when we compare our exertions in the Lord’s work with the examples of these men. Much of our services in Christ’s name are performed halfheartedly at best. A Sunday School teacher may try to “get by” with only a few minutes of study and less prayer, and then wonders why his teaching seems to fall on barren ground. A missionary society officer persuades someone else to act as a substitute on an assigned task and, as a consequence, discovers how paltry is his church’s missionary giving. Many of us fail to pray as we ought — for praying is hard, hard work —and then we are perplexed that we do not hear answers to our petitions.

A good deal of spiritual barrenness may be traced to downright laziness; and this on the part of those who have been exhorted, “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord … for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:23-24).

—The late E. S. English in The Pilgrim

Correction

In the Nov.-Dec. 1981 issue of the magazine I incorrectly stated in connection with Mr. Carlton W. Truax’s article that he is lawyer. Actually, he is a journalist, and as such is editor/manager of the S. C. Insurance News Service in Columbia, South Carolina.

Unrecallable

Wasted hours cannot be recalled. You can stop the hands of a clock but you cannot prevent the passage of time. There may not be much of it left — the Lord may return at any moment or He may take you from this earth soon. Only what is done for Christ has eternal value. Let us make proper use of the time that remains.

—Selected

The Annual Meeting, 1983

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

On November 13, 1982, the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock Inc. was convened in Toronto. It was agreed unanimously that we should continue to publish the magazine for still another year, and this, in dependence upon our Lord for His continued supply of all needs.

The only thing overshadowing our meeting was the absence of our beloved brother and associate editor, Mr. James Gunn. It was the first time he had missed an Annual Meeting since the magazine was started in January 1955. Two weeks later he was called Home to be with Christ.

One new member was added to our committee: Mr. Donald K. Steele of Peterborourgh, Ontario, whose series on “The Young Man” has appeared in most of the issues of the magazine since the summer of 1981.

I would remind our readers that all matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan 48170. All business matters, including change-of-address notices, should be sent to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9C 4V3. Questions for “The Question Column” should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 66 Morgandale, Cresc., Scarborough, Ontario, M1W 1S3.

The following is an up-dated list of the committee members of Food for the Flock Inc. and their various functions:

Officers

President — Douglas R. Telfer

1st Vice-President — James T. Naismith

Treasurer — William Hamilton

Secretary — Lillian Telfer

2nd Vice-President — Joseph Cumming

Operational

Editor-in-Chief — W. Ross Rainey

Question Column Editor — James T. Naismith

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Vice-Chairman — William Burnett

Publication Committee — William Burnett (Chairman), Graham Swales, Joseph Cumming, Russ Took, James T. Naismith, Douglas R. Telfer, W. Ross Rainey Business Manager — Mrs. Joan Hamilton Assistant Business Manager — Lillian Telfer Circulation Mgr. (Canada) — Russ Took Circulation Mgr. (U.S.A.) —Jay Walden Additional committee members are: Ray Fox, Sydney Green and Donald K. Steele.

Journeying Through Jude (Part 5)

As previously indicated, there are three basic views held by evangelicals on the problematical text of Jude 6. Personally, and in spite of its difficulties, I am inclined toward the interpretation that Jude 6 refers to Genesis 6:1-4, and that “the sons of God” (Gen. 6:2) refer to

certain fallen angels who came down from heaven and lusted after “the daughters of men.”

An advocate of this view was the late Robert J. Little who, for many years, was the radio pastor of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. In answer to the question, “Who are ‘the sons of God’ and the ‘daughters of men’ referred to in Genesis 6:4-5?”, Mr. Little wrote:

“These verses say: ‘There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’

“Scholars differ in their views of the meaning of this text. It appears that the condition described resulted in the flood, and so was something far more serious than the sins common to man. But many consider that the ‘sons of God’ were the descendants of Seth, who were believers, and that the ‘daughters of men’ were the descendants of Cain, who were unconverted. It is considered that the mingling of believers with unbelievers would have led to the obliteration of a knowledge of the true God in the earth, because the ungodly women of Cain’s line corrupted the godly men of Seth’s line, resulting in an immoral mode of life.

“To me this seems artificial, although many scholars take that view. It seems strange that it was the men who were godly, and the women ungodly; that all of the house of Seth were believers and that none of the women of Cain’s line were believers. It seems strange,

too, that these men all chose ungodly wives, or at least in sufficient number and proportion to bring about the judgment of the flood. Also, the intermarriage of believers with unbelievers would not produce a race of giants, or necessarily ‘men of renown.’

“The other view adopted also has difficulties, so it is not a case of one view being perfectly clear, and the other manifestly false. If that were so, there would be no difference of view.

“It seems to me that the difficulties of the second view are more resolvable than those of the other. In this second view the ‘sons of God’ represent fallen angels who took upon them a human form. Of course it is at once argued that this is impossible, but we know that in some cases angels did take human form. We cannot know the circumstances, nor the limitations, but wherever angels appeared in human form it was always as men, and never as women. This would account for ‘the sons of God’ being all of one classification sexually, and would also indicate the contrast with ‘the daughters of men.’

“In the Old Testament believers were not called ‘sons of God’ except in one passage, and that is prophetical. However, angels are referred to as ‘sons of God’ in the Book of Job. In this case, the ‘daughters of men’ would not mean only descendants of Cain, but any woman of Adam’s race, of whatever particular family. If the bodies of these ‘men’ were exceptional, as seems probable, they would have been attractive to most women; and their offspring may well have been ‘giants,’ ‘men of renown.’

“This would have been a corruption of the human race, and stories about these ‘men of renown’ may have been the source from which came the mythological stories which abounded in later times. This corruption of humanity is thought by many to be referred to in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, where we read of a special group of fallen angels who ‘left their proper habitation,’ and are now kept in chains under darkness. This is not true of the ‘demons,’ who regularly roam the earth, according to the New Testament. There seem to be two distinct classes of fallen angels, one of which is free, the other bound. Such a mingling of different orders of creation might well have brought on the universal flood, and it may be significant that Noah was described in Genesis 6 as ‘perfect in his generations.’

“However, I do not think we should be dogmatic about it. Many Bible Scholars prefer the first view.”1 (To be continued, D.V.)

1 Robert J. Little, Here’s Your Answer, pp. 17-19. Reprinted by permission.

The Annual Meeting, 1984

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

Following my fourth year in a row to teach a course on 1 CORINTHIANS at Kawartha Lakes Bible School, I left Peterborough for Toronto early on the morning of November 12th to attend the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock Inc. With sincere gratitude to the Christians of Don Valley Bible Chapel in Willowdale, we used for the third consecutive year the lower level facilities of the chapel in which to hold our meeting and luncheon. Three of our committee members were unable to be with us (Sidney Green, Graham Swales and Jay Walden) and, of course, we rightly reminisced a little about our beloved brother, the late Mr. James Gunn, and the fact that almost a full year had passed since his promotion to Glory. Like the previous year, his presence and counsel were missed, but with King Solomon of old we could say, “The memory of the just is blessed” (Prov. 10:7a), or as the New International Version translates it, “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing.” And indeed it is.

Once again it was unanimously agreed to continue publishing “Food for the Flock” magazine another year, and this, in dependence upon our Lord to meet our needs, both spiritual and material. While our present financial situation is somewhat precarious (the Nov.-Dec. ‘83 issue was held up because of a lack of funds), our confidence and trust are in our faithful God to see us

through these days of economic crunch. We mention the foregoing with a view to enlisting your prayer fellowship.

From a practical standpoint, if a considerable number of our reader family would send a gift subscription to a friend or loved one, this would be a great encouragement to us and a key way to ensure the ongoing of this written avenue of ministry. It should be noted that no one, including the editor, receives any material remuneration for his or her services, although I would hasten to add that there are spiritual dividends upon which no price tag can be put. By God's grace the magazine has now entered its thirtieth year of continuous publication, while I have embarked on my tenth year as editor-in-chief.

Please remember that all matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Michigan 48170. All business matters, including change-of-address notices, should be sent to the Treasurer, Box 353, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 4V3. Questions for "The Question Column" should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 66 Morgandale Cresc., Scarborough, Ontario M1W 1S3.

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Directors

W. Ross Rainey

Douglas R. Telfer

James T. Naismith

William Hamilton

Officers

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Operational

Editor-in-Chief — W. Ross Rainey

Question Column Editor — James T. Naismith

Administrative Chairman — Douglas R. Telfer

Vice Chairman — William Burnett

Publication Committee — William Burnett (Chairman), Joseph Cumming, Russ Took, James T. Naismith, Douglas R. Telfer, W. Ross Rainey Business Mgr. — Mrs. Joan Hamilton Assist. Business Mgr. — Lillian Telfer Circulation Mgr. (Canada) — Russ Took Circulation Mgr. (U.S.A.) — Jay Walden Additional committee members are: Ray Fox, Sydney Green and Donald K. Steele.

Journeying Through Jude (Part 11)

To the parallels between the apostate teachers and the outstanding representatives of evil conduct drawn from the Old Testament and to his own vivid portrayal of these false teachers, Jude now adds the quotation of a prophecy ascribed to Enoch.

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all

their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him (vv. 14-15)

That Enoch was “the seventh from Adam” is borne out in the genealogical order of Genesis 5:4-20, but his prophecy is not recorded in the Old Testament. Apart from Jude, then, we would never have known that Enoch was a prophet. Jude probably took this prophecy from the pre-Christian work entitled, The Book of Enoch. This does not mean that this apocryphal book is in any sense inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus worthy of a place in the canon of Scripture. Rather, God saw fit to preserve Enoch’s prophecy and later Jude was led by the Spirit of God to incorporate it into his letter, confirming the fact that the patriarch’s ancient utterance was divinely inspired. In similar fashion Jude probably quoted from the apocryphal book, The Assumption of Moses, from which he may have taken the information about Michael contending with Satan over the body of Moses (see v. 9; still another example of this kind of quotation is found in Tit. 1:12, where the Apostle Paul quotes the Cretan poet Epimenides).

As to the testimony of Enoch, A. C. Gaebelein has commented: “The Holy Spirit introduces quite abruptly Enoch, the seventh from Adam. There is a deep spiritual significance in this. Enoch lived as an age was about to close. Before the evil days of Noah, had come, with universal violence, corruption and wickedness, Enoch walked with God and bore a prophetic testimony of what was to come in the future. He suffered on account of the testimony he bore to that generation. The ungodly spoke against him, but he kept on in his walk with God and in his testimony, till the day came when he was suddenly

removed from the earth. ‘By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God’ (Hebrews 11:5). Enoch represents prophetically the true church living at the close of the age, bearing witness to the coming of the Lord, and waiting in faith for the promised translation. The Spirit of God mentions Enoch for this purpose and for our encouragement.”1 It is noteworthy that the first prophecy given through a man and the last prophecy in the Bible both centre on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His judgment (vv. 14-15 with Rev. 22:20). All through the Word of God the Holy Spirit has drawn attention to this important aspect of truth, desiring that men and women know about it and take heed to it.

Concerning Enoch’s prophecy, Jude states that the Lord Jesus “came” with thousands upon thousands of His “saints” or literally, “holy ones.” In view of passages like Matthew 25:31 and Colossians 3:4, it would appear that both God’s holy angels and redeemed people will come with Christ at His second advent. In the former reference our Lord states, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne,” while the Apostle Paul states in the latter text, “When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”

Regarding this detail that Christ “came,” John F. MacArthur, Jr. has written, “The verb is a Greek past tense which we call a prophetic past or a future past. The past tense can sometimes be used to refer to a future event because when the Greeks needed to state something that was absolutely certain to happen and

could not be changed, they stated it as if it had already taken place."2 The fourfold repetition of "ungodly" in verse 15 fits in with Jude 4 and his description of these apostate teachers. Undoubtedly, Enoch's prophecy had a partial fulfillment in the flood, but a large fulfillment awaits the second advent of Christ to the earth when Christendom's cup of iniquity is full (see Zech. 14:5).

What is referred to here is something quite different from the happy expectation of the church (see John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Of this joyous event, generally referred to as the rapture, Enoch was a type in his translation to heaven, the translation of believers in this present age of grace being something that is possible at any moment and impossible at no moment.

The King James translation "to convince" is better rendered "to convict." What a terrible day of judgment awaits these ungodly apostates! The present day conditions, including the widespread apostasy of our day, indicate that their arraignment is not far off (see Luke 17:26 & 30). In a sense, Jude's letter is a commentary on the Lord Jesus Christ's parable of the tares growing among the wheat (Matt. 3:24-30). This mixed condition will continue throughout this age. Thus today God's people should take fresh courage, realizing that the end of the age is very near (Rom. 13:11-14). Midst the gloom and darkness of this world's sin and misery, Christ Himself — "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16) — shall soon appear in the atmosphere above the earth for His Church. Then He shall come with his saints and holy angels—myriads of them (Jude 14)—as "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2).

S. Maxwell Coder cites four notable facts which are emphasized in Enoch's prophecy. They are summarized as follows:

1. We know the Lord's coming is sure — "Behold, the Lord came"!

2. We know who will accompany the Lord — holy angels and the redeemed people of earth.

3. We know the purpose of His coming — to execute judgment upon all the ungodly.

4. We know the result of the Lord's coming — all the ungodly will be convicted of all their ungodly works which they have committed in an ungodly manner.3 1 A. C. Gaebelein, The Annotated Bible, The New Testament, IV, p. 182.

2 John F. MacArthur, Jr., Beware the Pretenders, p. 75.

3 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, pp. 89-93.

The Annual Meeting, 1985

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

On Saturday, October 27th, the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock Inc. was convened at Don Valley Bible Chapel. Three of our committee members were unable to be with us — William Burnett, Ray Fox and Sydney Green — and of these two requested to resign —namely, William Burnett and Sydney Green. With sincere regret we accepted the resignation of these two brethren, but not without wishing to express to them our genuine appreciation for their faithful years of service in connection with the magazine.

While it was our decision to continue to publish the magazine through 1985, we were unable to finalize other matters which came up for discussion. In view of this, a special meeting was arranged for February 1st, 1985, which will be held that evening in the home of Bill and Joan Hamilton in Mississauga, Ontario. The date for our next Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 26th, 1985, in the will of our Lord.

Since the 1984 Annual Meeting marked the 30th Anniversary of FOOD FOR THE FLOCK INC., a dinner was held for members and their wives on the evening of October 27th at the Don Valley Ramada Inn. We enjoyed a delicious dinner and a delightful time of warm Christian fellowship. Our Chairman, Mr. Douglas Telfer, commented that the Secretary, Miss Lillian Telfer, was

the longest surviving member, serving the committee approximately 27 years. In addition to expressing much appreciation for her service, Mr. Telfer read extracts from the original meeting of the founding committee of the magazine, as well as the details of incorporation.

Dr. James T. Naismith spoke briefly of his early days of association with the magazine, having commented on and read parts of the original letter of invitation he had received to join the committee. He also acknowledged that Mr. Sydney Green had been on the committee for a longer period than he.

The Editor then spoke of his early associations with brethren James Gunn and Sydney Green, which resulted in his coming on the committee as Associate Editor in 1969.

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Question Page Editor —James T. Naismith

Book Review Editor —Arthur F. Wilder

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Publication Committee —Harry Masters, Joseph Cumming, Russ Took, James T. Naismith, Douglas R. Telfer, W. Ross Rainey Business Manager —Mrs. Joan Hamilton Assistant Bus. Mgr. — Lillian Telfer Circulation Mgr. (Can.) —Russ Took Circulation Mgr. (U.S.)—J. G. “Jay” Walden Additional Members — Ray Fox, Don Steele, Ross Hastings We are happy to announce that Ross Hastings of Kingston, Ontario, accepted an invitation to join the committee at the October 1984 Annual Meeting.

A brief report on the February 1st, 1985, meeting will appear in the May-June issue of the magazine (D.V.)

Journeying Through Jude (Part 16)

A Blessed Benedition

Jude closes and crowns his brief letter with one of the great benedictions of Scripture:

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen (vv. 24-25).

In his opening comments on Jude's doxology, Michael Green has stated: "It is a dangerous thing to live for Christ in an atmosphere of false teaching and seductive morals. It is a hazardous thing to try to resue men for the gospel out of such environment. If you get too near the fire, it will burn you; if you get too near the garment spotted by the flesh, it will defile you. Is withdrawal the answer, then? No. Advance against the forces of evil, face the dangers involved, so long as you are strong in the Lord's might. Such is the thrust, and the context, of Jude's final verses."1 Two practical themes form the sum and substance of Jude's closing words. First:

The Saviour's Promise (v. 24). Our Lord's promise is twofold: on the one hand, He promises to preserve us in this hostile, earthly scene; while on the other hand, He promises in a coming day to present us absolutely perfect in heaven. In the midst of an increasingly evil world system, dominated by Satan and his cohorts and a growing apostasy, it is not unnatural for believers to become fearful. Some Christians even worry about losing their salvation, but such actually have no need to fear. The God who saved us is quite able to keep us right

on through to the glorious destiny of His house (John 14:2). We may sin and as a result lose the joy of our salvation, but He will always seek to draw us back to Himself and some day will enable us to stand before Him blameless, yea, absolutely perfect.

Christ's words in John 10:27-30 should be more than sufficient assurance that no true child of God can ever be lost again: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (see John 14:16; 17:11, 15; Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 4:30; 1 Pet. 1:5).

Robert Lee in his helpful introduction and analysis of all the books of the Bible asserts that the key words of Jude's letter are "keep" and "kept," mentioned five times (vv. 1, 6, 21, 24).2 While God's people have a practical responsibility to keep the faith (vv. 3-4) and to keep ourselves in the love of God (v. 21a), we are assured of our Lord's keeping power (vv. 1, 24). By way of contrast, Jude has reminded us that the angels who "kept not" the ways and truth of God are in turn kept or "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (v. 6).

In the light of all that has preceded in this short, incisive letter, especially in view of the dangers represented by false teachers, the soul is stirred to the realization of God's keeping power. One thing is certain, we cannot keep ourselves. Were it not for the keeping power of our

Saviour-God midst this increasingly evil and diabolical world, we would soon stumble.

The verbal form “from falling” literally means from stumbling (James 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:10). Xenophon, the Greek historian, essayist and military leader, used this word in reference to the sure-footedness of a horse that does not stumble.3 The infinitive “to present” means to set or to make stand. These two truths underscore the negative and positive sides of God’s keeping power, as well as directing us to the present and future divine activities on our behalf. “Faultless” means without blemish and is a word used in connection with animals used for sacrifice. “To keep you from stumbling” covers the course of the Christian in this world; “to present you faultless” refers to the sure position and experience of the Christian in the life to come.

One of the greatest and grandest sentences in all of God’s Word is: “He is able.” When we are made to feel our weakness in the midst of what seems to be impossible circumstances, it is well to recall and meditate upon His ability, thus turning our weakness over to Him and relying alone on His infinite power. Consider and appropriate the following glorious truths that:

“He is able to make us stand” (Rom. 14:4).

“He is able to make all grace abound” (2 Cor. 9:8).

“He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

“He is able to subdue” (Phil. 3:21).

“He is able to keep” (2 Tim. 1:12; Jude 24).

“He is able to succour” (Heb. 2:18).

“He is able to save” (Heb. 7:25).

Throughout my Christian life no promissory statement of Scripture has meant more to me than this brief, positive, strengthening declaration that “He is able.”

“Exceeding joy” actually means wild joy or exultation; it is the joy of victory and relief. It may refer to God the Father’s joy as well as our own (see Luke 15:5-6, 11ff.).

We come now to the second practical theme of Jude’s closing words, and that is:

The Saint’s Praise (v. 25). The text of verse 25 is uncertain. Some Greek manuscripts introduce after “Saviour” the words “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This phrase may be linked with “Saviour” or else with the ascription of praise that follows. Also, at the close of the verse, some texts read, “before all time, and now, and for evermore” (RV, ASV).

Here Jude is asserting the supremacy — past, present and future — of the one and only God and Saviour. Furthermore, keep in mind that Jude is stating glorious facts concerning “the only wise God”; he is not praying a prayer. These things — “glory and majesty, dominion and power” — always have, do now, and forever shall belong to God.

“Glory (doxa) refers to God’s manifestation of excellence, like the radiance of light (Luke 2:9; Acts 22:11; Rev. 15:8). “Majesty” (megalosune) speaks of His kingly majesty and thus of His royal estate, suggesting God’s omniscience upon His throne (1 Chron. 29:11; Heb. 1:3; 8: 1). “Dominion” (kratos) expresses His supremacy over all beings and things; it is His world and universe. He holds everyone and everything in His hand

(Psa. 103:19; Heb. 1:3), “dominion” suggesting His omnipresence. “Power” (exousia) declares His ability to realize the counsels of His own will (John 10: 18). In keeping with His character, God is able to do anything and everything He wants to do, thus suggesting His omnipotence. An interesting fact is that Hebrews 1:3 is the only other New Testament verse which includes the same four attributes of Jude 25.

“God our Saviour” is a truth that apostates deny (see 2 Pet. 2:1). At the close of this final verse there is hardly a more complete expression of eternity in all the Bible. In fact, it appears to be the most complete statement of eternity possible in human language, J. N. Darby having translated it as follows: “from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages.”

Jude’s final word is “Amen.” In Revelation 3:14 the Lord Jesus Christ is the “Amen.” In other words, He Himself is the confirmation of all that God the Father has promised.

Soon “the apostasy” (2 Thess. 2:3) shall be manifested, along with the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:8), and this, after the Church has been translated to heaven. Meanwhile, as John F. McArthur has aptly stated:

“Jude’s letter is a survival manual for Christians living in the midst of apostasy. Christians living in such an age should not be surprised by increasing apostasy. Through diligent study of God’s Word, through praying in the Spirit, and through hopefully watching for the Lord’s coming, Christians can confidently reach out to unbelievers with loving concern that they too may be saved.”4 1 Michael Green, The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, pp. 189-190.

2 Robert Lee, The Outlined Bible.

3 A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, VI, p. 195.

4 John F. MacArthur, Jr., Beware the Pretenders, p. 96.

A Biblical Challenge for Today, Part 1

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

A Special Note

On December 26th the editor left for almost a month’s ministry in the State of Kerala, India. In view of this, I thought it would be appropriate to reprint an article I wrote last year for the Gospel Missions of India “Newsletter.” Since my article is of considerable length, Part 2 will appear in the next issue, followed by a summary of the highlights of my trip.

A Biblical Challenge For Today (Part 1)

William Carey (1761-1834), missionary to India, has generally been acclaimed as “the Father of Modern Missions.” In 1793 he arrived in India. At first he was virtually destitute in Calcutta, but quickly mastered the language and soon went to work translating the Bible into Bengali, in addition to his business, evangelistic, and pastoral labors. He established schools and medical work and in 1800 moved to the Danish colony of Serampore, which was his base for the remaining 34 years of his many-sided missionary labors. In 1805 Carey, along with Joshua Marshman and William Word, drew up ‘The Serampore Covenant”—named for the location of their work. The terms of the covenant could well serve as an inspiration and challenge to present-day believers. While no Scriptures were given in the eleven points of the covenant, I have taken the liberty of adding pertinent texts, as well as commentary.

Beginning with the words “We agree,” their first point was:

1. To Set an Infinite Value on Men’s Souls

The Lord Jesus Christ taught: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Mark 8:36-37). Obviously, from these words one soul is worth more than the wealth of the whole world. As a warning to the Pharisees, Christ said further: ‘Take heed, and beware of coventousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

How much love do we really have for the souls of men and women, and Just what value do we place on them?

While ministering some time ago at Lakefield, Ontario, I read in the “Peterborough Examiner” newspaper (10/27/87) of an Australian prospector who has been “scratching away for years” with a pick and shovel and has found a vein of almost pure gold worth the equivalent of almost one million in Canadian dollars. Ray Hall, 62, struck gold near Tenant Creek, about 1,000 kilometers south of Darwin, in an area worked by Chinese goldminers in the last century. I am glad for Mr. Hall and his wife, and their legitimate find, especially after so many, many years of hard work, and wish them well. Yet, I wonder if it has ever occurred to either of them that the soul of each of them in God’s sight is worth more than the riches of the entire world.

The second point of the covenant was:

2. To Acquaint Ourselves With the Snares Which Hold the Mines of People

God's people need to be aware of what is taking place in the world today and at least be armed with some knowledge of Satan's wiles (Ephesians 6:11), and of false teachers and teachings which are increasing so rapidly in these "last days."

The Lord Jesus anticipated the rise of false religions, cults, heresies, and all pseudo-Christian systems in Matthew 13:2430 and 36-43. In these verses our Lord revealed the source of all false teachings—Satan (13:25, 28 & 39; see also Matthew 24:11; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 2:18). Satan's subtlety is also revealed (13:25; see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15), coupled with the confirmation of his measure of success (13:38), and the ultimate sequel to it all (13:28-30, 39-43).

The covenant's third point was:

3. To Abstain From Whatever Deepens India's Prejudice Against the Gospel

How vital it is that we who have believed the Gospel seek also to behave the Gospel! It was the Apostle Paul who said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake"(1 Corinthians 9:22b, 23a; see Romans 14:7-8, 22-15:3; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33).

It is extremely important for every missionary to be familiar with the culture of the country in which he or she is serving Christ, lest by some innocent mannerism or conduct we lend offence to the very people we are seeking to reach with the Gospel.

A case in point is Saudi Arabia. Although no missionaries, per se, are permitted to work in that nation, I understand that to sit in public, say on a platform, with one's legs crossed is an affront to the citizens of that land.

The fourth point was:

4. To Watch For Every Chance of Doing People Good

In Galatians 6:10 Paul exhorted, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"(see Ephesians 2:8-10). The Apostle Peter tells us that Christ has left us an example "that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21), while Dr. Luke summed up much of our Lord's life and ministry in the words from Peter's sermon in the house of Cornelius: "Who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Dr. Donald K. Campbell, the current President of Dallas Theological Seminary, has rightly said: "Christians have a measure of responsibility to all people to do good, when the occasions arise. When Jesus fed the 5,000, both saved and unsaved participated. So the benevolence of Christians should not be restricted, except that believers are to have the priority. As in a home, family needs are met first, then those of the neighbours.

"This passage then speaks clearly about Christian social responsibility, but it should be noted that it is addressed to individual believers. The church is not an agency for social work, though individual Christians are charged to minister in this way as they are able and have

opportunity (cf. Rom. 12:17- 21)" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament edition, p. 610).

Point five of the covenant was:

5. To Preach "Christ Crucified" as the Grand Means of Conversion

When the Apostle Paul went to Corinth he said, "For I have determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). This should also be our determination wherever we go (see John 1:29, 35 & 36; Acts 8:5, 35; 9:20).

Christ does not save men by His life,

Though that was holy, sinless, pure;

Nor even by His tender love,

Though that forever shall endure.

He does not save them by His words,

Though they shall never pass away;

Nor by His vast creative power,

That holds the elements in sway.

He does not save them by His works,

Though He was ever doing good;

The awful need was greater still,

It took His DEATH,

His CROSS,

His BLOOD!

—Author Unknown (To be continued, D. V.)

A Biblical Challenge For Today, Part 2

A Biblical Challenge For Today

Part 2

W. Ross Rainey

William Carey [1761-1834], missionary to India, has generally been acclaimed as “the Father of Modern Missions.” In 1793 he arrived in India. At first he was virtually destitute in Calcutta, but quickly mastered the language and soon went to work translating the Bible into Bengali, in addition to his business, evangelistic, and pastoral labors. He established schools and medical work and in 1800 moved to the Danish colony of Serampore, which was his base for the remaining 34 years of his many-sided missionary labors. In 1805 Carey, along with Joshua Marshman and William Word, drew up “The Serampore Covenant”—named for the location of their work. The terms of the covenant could well serve as an inspiration and challenge to present-day believers. While no Scriptures were given in connection with the eleven points of the covenant, I have taken the liberty of adding pertinent texts.

In Part 1 of our consideration of the eleven points of the covenant, we looked at the first live, the covenant beginning with the words “We agree”:

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

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

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

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

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

6. We come now to the sixth point of the covenant:

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

While we recognize that there are social distinctions among Christians, we are told in Galatians 3:28 that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” This text teaches us that spiritually we all have the same position and privileges in our Lord. This is something we need to keep continually before us, lest we fall into the snare of showing respect of persons to some believers over others [see James 2:1-13].

The motto of the Keswick Convention in Great Britain is: “All One in Christ Jesus.” In Acts 4:31-33 we have a classic and practical illustration of this blessed truth, noting that oneness in the early days of the church was as a direct result of prayers: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.”

The seventh part of the covenant was:

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

It is the sacred and privileged responsibility of gifted elders or overseers to teach, guide, and guard God's flock. In connection with this we are especially reminded of the Apostle Paul's specific charge to the Ephesian elders who, at his request, had gathered with him at Miletus. It is one of the most touching scenes in Scripture, Paul having warned and exhorted them as follows: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" [Acts 20:28-32].

Other important Scriptures bearing upon elders or under-shepherds of God's flock as to their character and responsibilities are 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

The covenant's eighth point was:

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

This point moves in the realm of Ephesians 4:11-16, along with such personal reminders of Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:14, "Neglect not the gift that is in

thee…," and 2 Timothy 1:6, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee…"

Every true believer has some spiritual gift or gifts from the Lord. What is a spiritual gift? Simply put, "a spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service." Every possible means should be utilized to encourage the saints, younger and older, to discover, develop and direct their gift or gifts, and this, for the glory of the Lord and the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Perhaps you are asking the question, "But how can I know my spiritual gift?" A few major keys to that end are as follows:

1. Dedicate your life totally to the Lord as a "living sacrifice" [Rom. 12:1-2].

2. Study the Scriptures that center on spiritual gifts [Rom. 12:38; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31: Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11].

3. Ask the Lord to show you what your spiritual gift is [James 1:5].

4. Involve yourself in as many different kinds of Christian service as you have opportunity.

5. Ask godly, older Christians what they may think your spiritual gift is [particularly elders in your local assembly who have known you for an extended period of time].

6. Weigh carefully your own reactions.

The ninth point of the covenant was:

9. To labor unceasingly in Biblical translation.

Most Christians will not be faced with this task as was William Carey and his friends in their day, or others like members of Wycliffe Bible Translators today. Nevertheless, in application, every child of God has a very crucial task of translation. Now and again the question arises, “Which is the best Bible translation?” A good answer is that the best translation of the Bible is a man or woman living a godly life in obedience to God’s Word.

Someone has written:

You are writing a Gospel, a chapter each day,

By the deeds that you do, by the words that you say;

Men read what you write, whether faithful or true—

Say, what is the Gospel, according to you?

The covenant’s tenth point was:

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

This is just another way of saying that we need always to immediately obey God’s Word as His Holy Spirit instructs us through the Scriptures [see John 13:17; Phil. 4:9; James 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:22; see also Josh. 1:8].

In connection with this the chorus of John H. Sammis’ classic hymn, “Trust and Obey,” is fitting:

Trust and obey, for there’s no other way

To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.

The eleventh and last point of the covenant was:

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

Here is an expression of true discipleship, reminding us of such passages as our Lord's words in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Are you truly Christ's disciple? Can we say and sing with the hymnist, James G. Small [1817- 1888], the following?

Naught that I have my own I call,

I hold it for the Giver:

My heart, my strength, my life, my all

Are His, and His forever.

For over 30 years the Salvation Army and William Booth in particular were subject to some of the most vile persecution Christians have suffered in modern times. But the general lived to see the day his army would be honored around the world. His own King Edward VII invited him to Buckingham Palace in 1904. All the persecution and trials of the previous decades must have seemed insignificant to Booth as he heard King Edward say, "You are doing a good work—a great work, General Booth."

When the king asked Booth to write in his autograph album, the old gentleman—now 75—bent forward, took the pen, and summed up his life work:

Your Majesty,

Some men's ambition is art,

Some men's ambition is fame,

Some men's ambition is gold,

My ambition is the souls of men.

Divorce and Remarriage, Part 1

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Divorce and Remarriage

Does the Lord’s exception in Matthew 19:9 and Matthew 5:32 “except for fornication” warrant the innocent person in a divorce to remarry?

If a Christian thus divorced marries a Christian equally irreproachable in character, would an assembly be warranted in refusing fellowship, or taking action in any way?

Answer by W. E. Vine and W. R. Lewis, Bath, England.

It is clear that the Divine intent was that marriage should be indissoluable save by death, but when sin came in, and considering that the original ideal had failed of its accomplishment, permission was given under the Law of divorce, owing to the hardness of men’s hearts, and for the avoidance of the corruption that is in the world through lust. The concession was not perfect, ideally, but practically necessary in view of moral conditions.

The Lord in answering the enquiry of the Pharisees whether divorce was permissible for every cause, cleared this solemn step from the trivialities that had become associated with it, and specified the one sin by which the institution of marriage itself was broken, as the only ground of divorce.

There may be grave reasons why a Christian should take advantage of this concession in order to remarry, and in

such a case fellowship at the Lord's Table should not be denied where he or she, as the innocent party, has had recourse to this legal action in order to become free. Seeing that no moral obliquity attaches to a person under such circumstances, any public services rendered previously would not necessarily terminate on that ground alone.

On the other hand, there may be to a soul in real fellowship with God a higher question as to whether it may not be more according to Scripture and to godliness to refuse to take advantage of this concession, and to endure patiently and humbly such an unspeakable trial for the Lord's sake, especially in a day like this when the tendency is all the other way. Higher interests than their own will, no doubt, prevail with those who occupy any prominence in an assembly and are looked upon as representative in any measure of its life and testimony. On the analogy of Leviticus 21:7, 14 and 1 Timothy 3:2, a high standard is required of those who walk before the saints as ensamples to the flock, and they will be ready, as far as in them lies, to forgo their right in order to preserve their spiritual place and influence. It is a serious thing anywhere, and especially in heathen lands, to close the door forever against the return of a repentant erring spouse. God himself has left the door open in the case of Israel (Jer. 3:1).

The plea that the obtaining of a divorce by the innocent party will enable the guilty one to form a regular union instead of an irregular one, has no force. Human law may legalize the fresh union, but it cannot sanctify it. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

A Statement by F. W. Grant. F. W. Grant in The Numerical Bible says: “The Lord peremptorily and on His own authority, restricts the allowance of it (divorce) to the that one ground which plainly destroys the very idea of marriage, and declares the putting away of one’s wife for any other cause to be making her commit adultery by another marriage.”

An Answer by C. F. Hogg and J. B. Watson. The two utterances of the Lord referred to are:

(1) “Everyone that putteth away his wife, save for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adultress: and whosoever marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery” (Matt. 5:32).

(2) Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery” (Matt. 19:9).

Both passages teach that the one and only sufficient ground for the annulment of a marriage is that sin, which by its very nature disrupts the union, because it breaks the solemn undertaking given to reserve the “vessel” wholly for the partner. The repeated exception “except for fornication” clearly shows that this sin is recognized by the Lord as the valid ground for divorce.

Both sayings forbid the marriage of persons who have been divorced on insufficient grounds, i.e., for some cause or other than the one specified. The reason for this prohibition is that whatever man’s law may say, the original union stills stands, and a new one would, therefore, be sinful. Where, however, the marriage has been dissolved for the legitimate cause named — fornication, the reason for forbidding remarriage no

longer exists. In other words, the excepting clause “except for fornication” limits the operation of the prohibition to those instances in which the divorce has been obtained for some other cause.

We judge, therefore, that the answer to the first part of the question is that the Lord’s words do not forbid the remarriage of the innocent party concerned in a divorce granted because of the sexual unfaithfulness of the other party.

This reply assumes “fornication” to bear the meaning of “sexual unfaithfulness,” without reference to the technical signification of the term in the English law, where it means the sexual sin of unmarried persons. That, in the New Testament the word carries this wider meaning, is plain, when all the occurrences are examined. (See e.g., 1 Cor. 5:1, where fornication is named as sin to which a wife is party.) Those who insist on the narrower meaning (i.e., unmarried unchastity) usually refer the sin to the woman, and to the unmarried days, linking their interpretation with Deuteronomy 22:13-21. As the penalty laid down in that passage for such sin was death, no question of divorce could arise. And as in the following verse (Deut. 22:22), sin of the same kind committed after the marriage met with the same penalty, it is clear that whether the sin were committed before or after marriage made no difference to its heinousness or to the sentence of the law against it.

Those who maintain that “fornication” in the two passages in Matthew means “pre-marital unchastity” must also show clearly why, if such sin is sufficient to make subsequent marriage null, the same sin committed

after marriage is insufficient to nullify the marriage bond.

As to the second part of the question: it follows that as such a marriage is not forbidden by the Word of the Lord, an assembly would not be warranted in treating the innocent person concerned as morally delinquent.

A Statement by J. N. Darby. J. N. Darby in his Letters, Vol,. 2. pages 155 and 156, and 229, says: “My meaning in saying the tie was broken was this, that God never allowed the Christian to break the tie; but when adultery was committed the one doing so had broken the tie, and the Lord allowed the other party to hold it to be broken and act on it by formal divorce — did not require it but allowed it. The legalization of it is submission to the powers that be, for common order, just as the divorce was in Jewish law.

“On the other hand, according to 1 Cor. 7, I cannot doubt that the Christian, deliberately deserted by the unchristian partner, was in every way free, free, that is, to marry; but it assumes deliberate forsaking by the one who went away. The Christian was never to do it, and if obliged to leave, to remain unmarried or return.

“Mark 10 does annul Matt. 19, a man putting away his wife is looked at as his act or will. If he puts away, he has broken a tie God formed, by his own will; then marrying another is adultery. By act of sin the tie was already broken, and judicial divorce allowed.

“Matthew 5 is to me equally clear with chapter 19, but I think the person should obtain a divorce, otherwise they remain legally married, and the new connection is concubinage. In any case forgiveness is allowed.

“The passage in Romans 7:2, does not apply. The word ‘married’ is not in the Greek at all. The woman is supposed to be in full connection with and under the authority of her husband, and then, ‘is to another man,’ that is, faithless to the existing bond.”

A Statement by William Kelly. In his Notes on Matthew, William Kelly says: “Though an earthly relationship, the light of Heaven is thrown upon it, the sanctity of marriage held up, and the possibility of allowing anything to interfere with its holiness entirely put down by Christ, save only where there was that which interrupted it in the sight of God, in which case the act of separation would be only a declaration of its being already broken.

“There is but one just cause for which it (marriage) may be dissolved; or rather, marriage must be dissolved morally in order to terminate as a matter of fact. In case of fornication, the tie is all gone before God; and the putting away merely proclaims before man what has already taken place in God’s sight.”

The Annual Meeting

On November 3rd, 1979, the Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc. was held in Toronto. All but one of our committee members were able to attend the meeting.

It was the unanimous decision of the committee to continue to publish Ministry in Focus for another year, the end of 1979 having marked 25 years of continuous publication under the good hand of our faithful Lord. For the current year no changes were made within the structure of the Board, the responsibility of publication being voluntarily shared by the following officers:

President — Russell Took

1st Vice-Pres — Sydney H. Green

2nd Vice-Pres — James T. Naismith

Secretary — Miss Lillian Telfer

Treasurer — Harry Masters

Editor — W. Ross Rainey

Associate Editor — James Gunn

Regretfully, the members of the committee felt that it was necessary to raise the subscription price from $4.00 to $5.00 per year. Even this substantial raise will not enable us to operate in the black apart from additional gifts through the Lord's people. And for such gifts, which are received from time to time, we are sincerely grateful. Also, through the kindness of one of our committee members, scores of subscriptions are sent free to missionaries in various parts of the world.

Again, we would make a plea to our readers that you notify us when you change your address. Over a year's time it is costly to both our business office and the editor because of the failure of subscribers to notify us of a move.

Also, it would greatly aid us if, through the business office, you renewed your subscription promptly.

Just a reminder that all matters of an editorial nature should be sent to the Editor, 9257 Caprice Drive, Plymouth, Mich. 48170. All business correspondence should be directed to the Treas., P.O. Box 353, Etobicoke, Ont. M9C 4V3. Questions for "The, Question Column" should be sent to Dr. James T. Naismith, 1121 Hilltop St., Peterborough, Ont. K9J 5S6.

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be of courage; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Cor. 16:13-14, NIV).

“Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thess. 5:25).

Divorce and Remarriage, Part 2

From The Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

Divorce And Remarriage

It goes without saying that divorce is one of the major problems in Western nations today. The latest verified statistic for the United States is that forty percent of all marriages now end in divorce. Not only is society deeply affected by this escalating scourge but the church as well. Compounding the problem of divorce is the question of remarriage.

Today we might think that back in the 1930’s the subject of divorce and remarriage was only of passing interest. Not so. In a 1935 issue of Light & Liberty magazine there appeared some interesting and helpful material on this subject which was reprinted from the March, 1930 issue of The Witness magazine. Believing that this material would be profitable to our readers, I have edited it for my column. The material will appear in two instalments, this being the first.

Even as far back as far as 1929 and 1930 questions had been sent to the editor of The Witness from America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other parts of the globe on the issue of divorce and remarriage — a pressing problem even then. As we would expect, there were divergent opinions on this sticky subject as there are today.

Some back then, although not a majority, forbade remarriage to either the so-called innocent or guilty party in a divorce, regardless of the circumstances.

Summing up the many inquiries, the question was worded as follows:

What should be the attitude of an assembly toward one of its members who has divorced his or her life partner and remarried? Both divorce and remarriage are allowed by the law of the land, but are they allowed by scripture to Christians? (Matt. 5:32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; 1 Cor. 7).

Mr. George Goodman answered as follows:

The Scriptures quoted make allowance for a divorced person to remarry, but only in the case of the guiltless person. To marry the one who has sinned and has been divorced on that ground is expressly forbidden in the words, “Whosoever marrieth her that is put away (not has put away her husband) doth commit adultery.”

But as to the guiltless party, the opposite appears from the words, “Except for fornication and shall marry” (Matt. 19:9). For here remarriage is contemplated, and it is not condemned in the excepted case, that is, where the marriage has been dissolved on the ground of the adultery of the other.

The Scriptures referred to do not rebut this. Mark 10:2-12 says nothing as to adultery, and therefore must be taken to refer to putting away for some other cause.

1 Corinthians 7 has no reference to divorce, but to the case of a believer not being able or willing to continue living with an unbeliever. In that case the marriage is not dissolved, and no other can be contracted.

Matthew 5:32. Here the words, “Saving for the cause of fornication” (which there means adultery since the relationship of husband and wife exists — “his wife”), makes it clear, that the woman, “her that is divorced,” has been guilty, and is the adultress. The passage can hardly be twisted to “she that has divorced,” for as shown above Matthew 19:3-9 does not contemplate the exception (one who has put away the partner for adultery), marrying again, and expressly clears that one of guilt.

The suggestion that “fornication” in Matthew 5:32 means before marriage is too uncertain to act upon. In such solemn matters the “thus saith Lord” must be clear and certain That the innocent party may remarry was the view held by Mr. George Goodman and the following Bible teachers:

L. W. G. Alexander, W. J. Grant, J. R. Caldwell, A. J. Holiday, F. C. Bland, George Adam, W. E. Vine, W. R. Lewis, C. F. Hogg, J. B. Watson, J. N. Darby, F. W. Grant, and William Kelly.

A Test case (a note from the editor of The Witness). A sort of test case occurred in England some years ago, when most accredited brethren then living considered the matter.

The woman left her husband, who was an elder and teacher, and went to live with another man. For some years the husband kept the house open for her to return, then obtained a divorce, and after a period of time married again. Our esteemed brethren, J. R. Caldwell, A. J. Holiday, F. C. Bland, and George Adam, as well a number of other well-known brethren, went carefully into the matter and gave their judgment that, as the

brother was in no sense a transgressor, there was no warrant for his refraining from ministering the Word, and that Matthew 19:9 warranted the divorce, leaving him free to remarry.

Throughout all his trying circumstances, and for more than twenty years after, he was known and esteemed as an elder and a minister of the Word.

Their considered and definite judgment was that the Saviour's one exception of Matthew 19:9 allowed the guiltless party to "put away" the guilty party by divorce, and to remarry. In this we feel sure most accredited Bible students concur.

Confirmation by L. W. G. Alexander and W. J. Grant. I am in perfect agreement with everything Mr. Goodman has written regarding the point in question. It is not new to me, for a good number of years ago an assembly in New Zealand wrote me about a couple they had put out of fellowship because the man had divorced his previous wife for adultery. The man's innocence was fully admitted.

Looking into the matter, then, I had no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that they had acted wrongly. However, I wrote Mr. W. J. Grant, putting the case before him, and telling him my mind. He admitted that at first he thought I was wrong but after further consideration he was in perfect agreement with my view. The assembly in question admitted their error and reinstated the innocent one.

L. W. G. Alexander's answer to the original twofold summary question. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that, normally, the marriage bond can only be broken by death. When death takes place the widowed

party is free to marry again. It is equally clear that there is one exception to this rule. In the event of either party committing adultery, the innocent party is permitted by God to put away the aforetime partner and, if desired, to marry again. The words “except for fornication” (Matt. 19:9), and marrying again being distinctly mentioned without condemnation prove this.

The context shows that the word “fornication” is employed in a comprehensive way including adultery. In the sight of God adultery dissolves the marriage bond and the adulterer or adulteress may be regarded as dead to the other party. It is surely unreasonable to suppose that God, while decreeing and declaring the disannulment of the marriage bond, would hold the innocent party bound in any way by a bond that He Himself has dissolved.

(To be continued)

May-June 1970

MIF 2:3 (May-June 1970)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

Some months ago a form letter arrived in the mail soliciting a contribution for work among Indians in a southwestern section of the United States. Enclosed was a somewhat crude silver-colored key chain; a gimmick to infuse the recipient with a sense of responsibility to forward a donation. Nevertheless, the words etched on the decorative piece opposite the ring end of the chain left a lasting impression —"HANDLE WITH PRAYER."

Daily we are reminded of the increasingly "perilous times" in which we live. What can we do? How can we help? These, and many other questions bombard our mind, yet in and of ourselves we are so weak and inadequate that the tendency is to feel that we can do nothing to help stem the tide of evil forces which are overrunning the world. But we can do something. Among other things, we can PRAY! Whatever problems, trials and sorrows we may encounter, whether they be someone else's or peculiarly our own, it would be well if at all times our immediate reaction would be to "HANDLE WITH PRAYER."

Though Sodom was doomed, Abraham "drew near" and prayed (Genesis 18:23-33): when Jonah found himself inside the great fish, conscious of God's discipline because of his own disobedience, he prayed (Jonah 2); Nehemiah, upon learning of the wretched plight of the remnant at Jerusalem and of the broken walls and

burned gates of the Holy City itself, wept, mourned, fasted and prayed (Neh. 1); when the Lord Jesus Christ faced the sufferings of Calvary in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed (Matthew 26:36-46): afflicted with his “thorn in the flesh,” the Apostle Paul prayed (2 Corinthians 12:1-10, see v. 8).

These are but a few of the many examples of various situations recorded in the Bible — all handled with prayer. In each instance God responded, as He always does, but sometimes His response to our asking is quite different from what we expected. Still, let us remember that even a denial is an answer (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9), and it remains for us to accept His choice as the best possible thing for us.

Whatever trial, perplexity, frustration, or sorrow you may face at this very moment, you can do nothing better than to get into God’s presence and handle it with prayer.

—W.R.R.

May-June 1971

MIF 3:3 (May-June 1971)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

On March 5th I attended an adult seminar on teen dynamics, sponsored by Detroit's "Voice of Christian Youth." The keynote address entitled, "What Are Our Teenagers Trying to Say?", was delivered by Mr. James H. Smith, Youth for Christ Int., Wichita, Kansas. Time and again Mr. Smith underscored the fact that the youth of our day have something to say to us, and the gist of what they are trying to say is this:

1. We've had lots of good advice, but bad example.

2. We will dare to be honest about our morals (i.e., we do publicly what you do privately).

3. We are not IBM cards; we are human beings. Therefore, please do not fold, mutilate, spindle, staple, or punch holes in us.

4. We are more interested in being than in having. In other words, it's not quantity but quality of life that we want.

5. Our music will tell you something about our feelings, for behind music there is almost always a philosophy (and their music tells us of such things as their alienation, loneliness, boredom, emptiness, futility, disillusionment, and questioning).

6. We will change the world for the better, or we'll know the reason why.

What does all this demand of us adults? It demands, among other things:

1. A new honesty (Let’s face it, we don’t have all the answers).

2. A new consistency in our lives.

3. That we’re happy to be adults. In other words, let’s not worship the youth syndrome.

4. That we remember we are vulnerable, i.e., we make mistakes and we need to own up to them.

5. That we be available to our young people whether in the home, church, or elsewhere.

6. That we accept young people as they are, where they are, and who they are; not as we wish they were, where we would like them to be, or what we think they ought to be.

As true Christians we know that CHRIST is the answer to both their needs and ours, but just how are we presenting and representing Him to youth?

Nov-Dec 1971

MIF 3:6 (Nov-Dec 1971)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

As early as 800 B.C. the Chinese — who were the first to discover gunpowder — were shooting powder-packed tubes on a stick into the air to amuse people. Thanks to modern man's swift and sophisticated advances in rocketry it has been possible for him to actually obtain and study moon rocks. In fact, the Apollo 15 astronauts brought back more than 170 pounds of moon rocks. Their electrically powered rover vehicle in which the lunar explorers travelled more than 17 miles between July 31st and August 2nd enabled them to gather samples in greater quantity than ever before and of such importance that the enthusiasm of scientists was unrestrained. One choice speciman was a fragment of crystalline rock that the astronauts believe may be from the earliest crust of the moon, dating back perhaps 4.6 billion years, and called by scientists the "genesis rock." The astronauts also collected bedrock from what they believe to be the uppermost layer of volcanic material that spread over the region billions of years ago to form a "lunar" sea. Still another unique speciman was a foot-long piece of what looked like black glass.

Exhilarated by the success of the 445 million dollar Appollo 15 project, Dr. John Wood of the Smithsonian Institution's astro-physical observatory said: "By the time the Apollo program ends, we'll have a pretty good

framework of the moon's evolution — perhaps better than that of earth."

These are days when man is intensely occupied with such things as rockets and moon rocks and, while we would not discount his amazing scientific achievements, how much better it would be for all men everywhere if they would occupy themselves with the "Rock of Ages." The Lord Jesus Christ alone holds the secrets of the universe and its creation for His is the Creator. To genuinely know "that Rock" (1 Cor. 10:4) is to know and understand more about the universe and its origin than all of earth's unbelieving scientists put together (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3).

Let us pray today that men who study and search out the heavens, confess Him as their Lord and Saviour. To have Him as the Cornerstone of our life to possess what is of infinitely more value than all the rocks on all the planets and satellites of the entire Universe.

Mar-Apr 1974

MIF 6:2 (Mar-Apr 1974)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

We are well into 1974 and perhaps by now the “clean slate” of an other New Year has been marred by sorrow, illness, failure, disappointment, business reverses, frustrations, or some deep need that is so burdensome and perplexing that there is even difficulty in praying about it (see Romans 8:26). Sooner or later, to one degree or another, these things become part of our life’s experience, and on occasion they may come crashing in on us two or three at a time, so as to almost overwhelm us.

In view of such things that may be directly affecting some of us presently, or at least indirectly through the lives of others who are near and dear to us, I would like to share with you from my personal reading something that recently proved a rich blessing to my spirit. It is a brief prayer from the pen of the nineteenth century preacher and author, Phillips Brooks, who, incidentally, wrote the well-known hymn, “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” It reads as follows:

“O Lord, by all thy dealings with us, whether of joy or pain, of light or darkness let us be brought to Thee. Let us value no treatment of Thy grace simply because it makes us happy or because it makes us sad, because it gives us or denies us what we want; but may all that Thou sendest us bring us to Thee (italics mine), that, knowing thy perfectness, we may be sure in every

darkness that Thou art still enlightening us, and in every enforced idleness that Thou art still using us; yea, in every death that Thou art still giving us life, as in His death Thou didst give life to Thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."

In view of this prayer, we do well to pause and ask ourselves at least two questions. First, do we really believe and accept the fact that our Lord sends these things into our lives according to His purpose? And second, do they bring us to Him?

July-Aug 1974

MIF 6:4 (July-Aug 1974)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

According to recent Gallup polls, American youth are “exceptionally religious” when compared with the youth of eleven other countries. Only 12% of the American youth had “no interest” in religion, as compared with 32% of the English, 41% of the Swedish, and 74% of the Japanese. Of American college educated youth 88% indicated interest, about the same as those less educated.

Global population has reached 3.8 billion and is expected to double within 35 years. Leading countries are Mainland China (800 million), India (600 million), Russia (250 million), and the U.S. (210 million).

The Gospel ship Logos has reached 10 million people with the gospel since its launching three years ago by Operation Mobilization. When the ship recently called at the Maldive Islands in the Indian Ocean, 750 people eagerly received copies of the Living New Testament. This is the first time the gospel has been taken to these islands. On Good Friday 200,000 Korean Christians witnessed to a million non-Christian friends. Each prayed for five people beforehand, and then contacted them personally with specially-prepared literature. Their goal was 100,000 new Christians on that day. Christ the Only Way evangelism program in the Philippine Islands has established 10,000 home Bible studies and 6,700 Christian fellowship groups in the last year.

These statistics, taken from Church Around the World, are cause for much thanksgiving, even if the thought of reaching the world's expanding population with the gospel staggers us. The important thing is that we shine where we are and avail ourselves of every God-given opportunity. We are grateful for today's unprecedented efforts of mass evangelism, yet there is no substitute for "one to one" evangelism (i.e. one Christian witnessing to one who is not a Christian). In other words, the key and crying need in reaching souls for Christ is for all true believers to involve themselves in personal evangelism. When did you last contact someone for Christ?

Nov-Dec 1974

MIF 6:6 (Nov-Dec 1974)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

For over twenty years a little booklet has been sent to me from one of my alma maters, John B. Stetson University in DeLand, Florida (Florida's oldest university, by the way). The title of the booklet is "Whatsoever Things," taken, of course, from Philippians 4:8. Published only from time to time, each issue generally contains interesting and instructive anecdotes, pithy quotes, and wise counsel in the form of a brief editorial which, as would be expected, focuses attention on the field of education.

The back page of the latest issue featured a short article entitled, "A Prayer As We Grow Older." Its author is unknown. Each petition of the prayer is filled with good advice for those who are getting on in years, although young people would do well to apply its contents where they can and keep the rest in mind for future reference. The prayer reads as follows:

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind from the recital of endless details - give me wings to get to the point. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not

bossy. I dare not ask for grace to enjoy the tales of others but help me to endure them with patience. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. Give me grace to tell them so.

Here's a prayer we can profitably take with us into the New Year. If need be, let's see to it that we pray it often, at the same time diligently seeking to answer it in our daily walk and talk.

—W. Ross Rainey

Jan-Feb 1975

MIF 7:1 (Jan-Feb 1975)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

The year 1974 will be remembered for a number of things such as toppled governments, Watergate, the Arab oil embargo and related energy problems, runaway inflation, wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, hurricane Fifi, and false prophets. All these things should remind us that this age is rapidly drawing to a close as the stage is set for the appearance of the Man of Sin and the coming Tribulation period.

From a deeply personal standpoint, one other thing that 1974 will be remembered for is the unexpected death of several Christian friends, whose exodus from this earthly scene, at least from our limited human perspective, seemed most untimely, again reminding us of the brevity, frailty, and uncertainty of life. One of these friends, now “with Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1:23), penned the following guidelines about six months before his Home Call to, as he said, “help me live in my times of trial”:

1. Learn to live with less concern for my limitations… which I can’t change (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

2. Learn to lean with more reality on the Living Lord and His Written Word (Proverbs 3:5-6).

3. Learn to look to the future with a more positive trust in the Promises of God (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Having been blessed by these thoughts, I wanted to share them with you at the beginning of this New Year. And if, throughout 1975, we keep before us guidelines such as these, it will be a better year for each of us, no matter what we may encounter along the way.

Mar-Apr 1976

MIF 8:2 (Mar-Apr 1976)

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Life is largely made up of the day by day routine of things. In other words, it is not the extraordinary but the ordinary which is our common experience, even as God’s redeemed people. Yet, even the ordinary or humdrum can be transformed into the extraordinary by the touch of our Lord’s presence and power in a life yielded to His control. Today, however, many professing Christians who are seeking some new “thrill” or “extraordinary experience,” such as speaking in tongues, have never really given much attention to basic Christian responsibilities. After all, it is the day by day, step by step, walk with God which, over the years, counts for the matters the most, notwithstanding those “mountain top” experiences which should be ours from time to time.

The Bible reveals a number of things which are the Christian’s daily responsibility, and among them are the following:

1. The Responsibility of Praise (Psalm 68:19 with Lamentations 3:22-23).

2. The Responsibility of Prayer (Psalm 86:3 and 88:9; see 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18 with Philippians 4:6-7 and Colossians 4:2, remembering the promise of James 5:16).

3. The Responsibility of Bible Reading (Acts 17:11; see Joshua 1:8).

4. The Responsibility of Witnessing (Jeremiah 7:25; Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 16:5).

5. The Responsibility of Discipleship (Luke 9:23; see 1 Corinthians 15:31).

6. The Responsibility of Exhortation (Hebrews 3:13).

7. The Responsibility of Watching (Proverbs 8:34; see Matthew 25:13; Luke 12:37).

An old English proverb reads: “Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.” Applying this, we may say: “Take care of the days (i.e., in relation to our daily spiritual responsibilities), and the years will take care of themselves,” our Lord having promised, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Do we long to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ? We should. But the business of spiritual growth is a process; Christ-likeness does not come about overnight. Rather, it is formed and developed by daily practice — the day by day carrying out of our spiritual responsibilities, such responsibilities being our joyous privileges as well.

Is There Life on Other Planets?

According to an October issue of The Jerusalem Post, Edgar Mitchell, who is one of the U.S. astronauts who walked on the moon in 1931 and was on an official visit to Israel, said he was absolutely convinced there was life on other planets. We assume that he meant creature life, life like man as we know him. But is there such life on other planets? Occasionally this question makes its way into the news, as it did on a December telecast in Detroit, inviting considerable discussion among scientists and laymen alike.

What are we to believe about creature life on other planets? Having himself raised the question, Dr. E. Schuyler English has answered it as follows:

Lacking definitive revelation from God on the subject, unless or until such intelligent creatures have been discovered on another planet, it can be no more than speculation to come to the conclusion that such beings exist.

Is there any intimation in Scripture concerning the existence of man-like beings on planets other than the earth?

1. What must be the nature of other-planet-beings, supposing that they do exist? They must be either (a) sinless beings, or (b) sinful beings.

(a) God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways His ways (Isaiah 55:8). God cannot be limited in what He does or how He does it. He is sovereign and omnipotent. It seems unlikely, however, that He would create creatures of intellect without giving them moral responsibility to do His will, or to reject it. Even among the angels, some rebelled and departed from their proper sphere (Jude 6). Thus, even if the initial other-planet-beings, comparable to Adam and Eve, did not transgress, in due course some would probably do so.

(b) If, supposing there are intelligent beings on other planets, they are capable of sinning and have committed sin, it is incredible that God, His nature being what it is, should be indifferent toward them and should not offer them a way of redemption. He is too holy to look with favor upon sin; the unredeemed sinner could not abide in His presence and must be condemned. How could atonement be made for sin apart from the sacrifice of

God Himself, through His Son? Without shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). Were there any other method of redemption than that of the cross of Christ, it is inconceivable that God would have given His only begotten Son in such a sacrifice.

2. Christ was offered once, and only once. It is clear from Scripture that our Lord never offered Himself in sacrifice prior to Calvary, nor has He done so since Calvary. “Nor yet that he (Christ) should offer Himself often … for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself… So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:25-28). “But this Man (Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool” (Hebrews 10:12-13). Thus redemption could be effected for other-planet-beings only if God, in His wisdom and power, should in some manner carry the Gospel message from earth to them.

Nothing is impossible with God. Yet it is our personal deduction, expressed without dogmatism, that intelligent life will not be found on other planets. One thing we know with certainty; the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power, created all things for His own pleasure, and they have been given to us, His redeemed people, richly to enjoy (Revelation 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:17).

(Editor’s note: Dr. English’s comments have been quoted by permission from The Pilgrim, a four-page paper with

occasional larger editions, which he has edited for over thirty years.)

Christ's Resurrection

F. E. Marsh said it: "The resurrection of Christ is the heart of Christianity: take this away and it is a lifeless thing. The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the arch of truth: it is connected with every truth of the Bible, and secures the whole. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the Church, and no power of hell can overthrow it, because it is preserved, and protected by Him, who is risen from the dead, and is alive for evermore. The resurrection of Christ is the mainspring of Christian activity; for, when He had accomplished His atoning work, the Father gave to Him all authority in heaven and on earth, so that He could send forth His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, promising to be with them to the end of the age, and this promise is experienced as we obey His commands. The resurrection of Christ is the lever to move the world: this the men of the world owned to their rulers, in their account of the stir amongst them, saying, 'These men that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.' The resurrection of Christ is God's answer to everyone that would condemn the believer, or bring any charge against him. The resurrection of Christ is the link which binds believers together. Since we are risen with Him, our association with Him unites us to each other. The resurrection of Christ is the life that secures us, for since He is risen He is the One who is the Endless Life; and because He lives we shall live also."

Jan-Feb 1977

MIF 9:1 (Jan-Feb 1977)

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Annual Meeting

In this issue we would ordinarily include a summary report of the 1976 Annual Meeting of Food for the Flock, Inc. held in Toronto, Canada. However, it was necessary to postpone our meeting from November 6th to November 20th, making it too late to meet the deadline for the Jan.-Feb. issue of Ministry in Focus. Consequently, a brief report of the meeting will appear in the Mar. - Apr. issue.

A Word of Appreciation

With the Summer 1976 issue of Help & Food magazine Loizeaux Bros., Inc. ceased publication of their spiritually edifying periodical which has been published since 1883. For any Christian magazine to provide for almost a century a steady supply of helpful and enriching written ministry represents a notable achievement. The editor of Ministry in Focus can personally attest to the blessing Help & Food magazine has been to me over the years I have received it. And it was with genuine regret that I learned some months ago of the definite decision to terminate its publication.

At any rate, we are sincerely grateful to Loizeaux Bros. for their kind and gracious gesture of allowing the readers of Help & Food an option to fill out their

subscriptions by receiving Ministry in Focus magazine. We heartily welcome each Help & Food subscriber, prayerfully hoping that you will find in Focus the kind of edifying spiritual food which will warrant your continuing with us as a permanent member of our reader family.

A New Column

Sometime after Help & Food magazine ceased publication the editor of Focus wrote to Mr. Edwin Fesche, who for many years has written a regular column in Help & Food entitled, “The Current Scene.” Upon my written invitation to him, Mr. Fesche has kindly consented to continue writing his interesting, incisive, insightful and instructive column for Focus magazine. With due respect to all other contributors to Help & Food, our brother’s column was almost invariably the first thing I read upon receiving each issue of the magazine. Beginning with this issue, “The Current Scene” will appear as a regular feature.

Mr. Fesche presently makes his home in Westminster, Maryland, having been commended to the Lord’s work in 1931. I first recall meeting our brother at Greenwood Hills, Penna., when in my late teens. Since then our paths have occasionally crossed, and this, more frequently in the last few years since we are both on the committee of Loizeaux Bros., Inc.

Telling Tablets

In an Associated Press release from Rome, Italy, there appeared in Toronto’s Globe and Mail on August 26, 1976, an account of thousands of clay tablets having

been found in Syria last year which are providing dramatic new information about Biblical times.

A team of Italian archeologists from Rome University unearthed the tablets and fragments of tablets some thirteen feet below the surface of an arid expanse of Tel Mardikh, south of Aleppo. There were 15,000 tablets in all. Because of them, ancient Syria is beginning to be recognized as a rival of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia in the history of civilization.

Prof. Giovanni Pettinato, 41, a language expert who has been reading the tablets, says they shed light on the history of the Jewish people.

The tablets cover 150 years, from 2400 to 2250 B.C. They place Ebla, a city until now only briefly mentioned in ancient Middle Eastern inscriptions, firmly on the map as the center of a vast civilized kingdom. For decades this kingdom dominated an area extending from the Red Sea north to what now is Turkey and east to Mesopotamia.

The Ebla empire had been lost to history until the Italian team, led by Prof. Paolo Matthiae, 36, dug out the tablets, many of them records from Ebla's royal palace.

David Noel Freedman, a University of Michigan Biblical archeologist who has worked with the Italians, described the importance of the tablets in these terms: "It is as if we had ignored that Rome existed and suddenly find out about it and the Roman empire."

The tablets reveal an unknown language, what the Italians have called Eblaite, akin to the Biblical Hebrew that was spoken more than 1,000 years later. As such,

they might contribute to an understanding of some of the controversial parts of the Bible.

Among the most precious tablets is one containing a vocabulary of Eblaite and Sumeric words, including an explanation in Eblaite of how the Sumeric words are pronounced. The Sumerians, a non-Semitic people who flourished in southern Mesopotamia about 3,000 B. C., are credited with having developed the cuneiform system of writing.

The influence of the cuneiform system is found in the writings of the great Semitic cultures that developed in the area, blending their cultures with the Sumerian culture.

Eighty per cent of the tablets are accounts of economic and commercial transactions. The others include international treaties, military reports, religious texts, descriptions of rites and sacrifices, and stories of creation and the great flood.

Prof. Pettinato said that scanning photographic copies of the tablets in his Rome office he read the names of Abraham, Ishmael, Israel, Esau and Saul hundreds of times. A dozen times he came across the name Daudum (David), he said. Finding the name of David in the tablets is significant because King David is the only one carrying the name in the Bible, he said. Until now, there had been no firm evidence that David had been used elsewhere in ancient times.

“The Ebla tablets establish the patriarchs and their names as historical realities,” Prof. Pettinato said. He stated that they seemed to show that many Hebrew ideas and words came from Ebla.

“We wondered why the Bible calls judges and rulers before the kings,” he said. “Now we know that in Ebla, the leaders of the conquered cities were called judges.”

Even the name Hebrew has something to do with Ebla. The tablets tell of a dynasty of six kings in Ebla. The one who spread his influence most widely is called King Ebruum or Ibrium.

“Here is the root of the word ‘Hebrew.’” Prof. Pettinato said.

The commercial accounts report that Ebla was exporting textiles, metals, marble and timber over a wide area. Among the importing points the tablets list the Biblical sites of Hazor, Megiddo, Gaza and also Urusalim (Jerusalem).

A La Siya, the ancient name of the island of Cyprus, is listed as an export point for copper.

The third millennium is the era of the pyramids. Most historians have maintained that Egypt and the kingdoms of Mesopotamia shared the conquests and the glory of that time, alternating in control of the vast area between them.

Now the Ebla tablets tell of a third power competing for domination of the many small states in Palestine and Eyria.

Jan-Feb 1978

MIF 10:1 (Jan-Feb 1978)

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

In the March-April issue of Focus we will have a brief report of the annual committee meeting held in Toronto, Canada, on November 5th, 1977.

We regret that many may be receiving their copy, or copies, of the magazine late. As a case in point, I did not receive my personal copy of the September-October issue until October 12th. Two years ago we laid out a schedule which we thought would solve this annoying problem, and for a while it did. I wrote to our printer about the matter and he assured me that everything has been carried out according to our agreed deadlines. The problem? The extreme slowness of the mails. Please bear with us until we can perhaps revamp our deadlines with a view to getting the magazine into your hands earlier.

Certainties for the New Year

Probably most of us have come across that little biography on time which reads:

When as a child I laughed and wept,

Time crept;

When as a youth I dreamt and talked,

Time walked;

When I became a full-grown man,

Time ran;

When older still I daily grew,

Time flew;

Soon shall I find in travelling on,

Time gone;

And face eternity begun,

Time done.

By the time you read these lines we will be well into 1978 and perhaps you've been wondering just what this New Year holds. Are there things that we as believers can really be sure of and count on? Indeed there are! And these things have their source in our faithful God who holds the future and knows perfectly every detail.

Several of these certainties have been expressed by Walter Scott in a brief article entitled, "What I Know," which appeared in his book (now long out of print and from which we have quoted in the past), Selections from Fifty Years' Written Ministry. It is as follows:

I know I have forgiveness of sins from Colossians 2:13.

I know I am justified from Acts 13:38-39.

I know I have peace with God as I read Romans 5:1.

I know I am saved as I peruse Ephesians 2:5-8.

I know I have everlasting life from John 5:24.

I know I cannot be lost as I read John 10:28-30.

I know I am fully blest from Ephesians 1:3.

I know I am now God's child from 1 John 3:1-2.

I know I am an heir of God from Romans 8:17.

There are many things I KNOW, but you had better search them out for yourself. You can search the title deeds, study the charter of blessing yourself. God has written all down so plainly in the Scriptures that you have only to read and believe; and if you cannot read, get someone to do it for you, but the believing you must do for yourself. Babes in Christ are blest as fully as fathers. All the foregoing blessings, and others too numerous to mention, are for all who simply believe in Christ. Are you a believer? Then you are forgiven, justified and saved. Now read the Word of God, especially the new Testament, and mark especially the little words “hath,” “have,” “are,” which show what every believer has and is.

Samson’s City

According to an article in The Jerusalem Post, the site of Samson’s city of Timnah, where he courted Delilah and slew a lion, has been uncovered by archaeologists working in collaboration with the Hebrew University’s Institute of Archaeology. The team recently concluded its first season of excavations at Tel Batash in the Sorek Valley.

The dig revealed a Canaanite city which evidently was destroyed by a tremendous fire, and on the ruins of the Canaanite city, remains of Philistine occupation were uncovered. Floors, ovens, silos, and typical Philistine pottery sherds were recovered. The occupation is probably to be identified with the Philistine city of Timnah, well-known in the Samson stories in the book of Judges.

From the tenth to the seventh centuries, the estimated period of the Israelite monarchy, a fortified city existed

on the site. A massive, four-meter wide city wall and the city gate were found during the excavations. The gate was a large complex some sixteen meters square. On both sides of the wide central passage, three piers created guard rooms. The gate was destroyed and reconstructed according to a modified plan toward the end of the Israelite period. A well protected ramp led to the city gate along the eastern slope of the tel.

The importance of this border city between Philistia and Judea is emphasized in the Biblical account of its capture by the Philistines during the reign of King Ahaz (see 2 Chronicles 28:18), and its mention in the account of Sennacherib's campaign through Philistia in 701 B.C.

Research on the site is to be continued and expanded during a projected six-year program.

Spiritualism, Sorcery and Witchcraft

In these days it is extremely important that God's people take to heart what the Bible teaches concerning the occult. With some additional editing, the following points were adapted originally from The British Evangelist, and then from Pulpit Helps:

1. God commanded Israel that those who practiced sorcery or witchcraft should be put to death (Exodus 22:18).

2. To seek to communicate with spirits or with the dead is to become defiled and unfit to appear before God to worship Him (Leviticus 19:31).

3. God cut off from among the Israelites all who turned to mediums for help (Leviticus 20:6).

4. Capital punishment by stoning was God's sentence on any man or woman who called up spirits (Leviticus 20:27).

5. Witchcraft, fortunetelling, crystal reading, necromancy, and palmistry are related to spiritism and are strongly condemned by God (Deuteronomy 18:10-11).

6. It was because of their black magic and related practices that God destroyed the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

7. Samuel's most effective was of impressing upon Saul the enormity of the sin of disobedience was by likening it to witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23).

8. When he was faithful to God, King Saul cleared all the spiritistic mediums out of the land (1 Samuel 28:3).

9. When King Saul later consulted a medium, it was only after sin had made communication with God impossible (1 Samuel 28:6-7).

10. Saul's loss of his crown and his untimely death were the direct judgment of God on him for his dealings in spiritism (1 Chronicles 10:13).

11. The list of the wicked King Manasseh's sins includes consulting with spirit-mediums, fortunetellers, and sorcerers (2 Chronicles 33:6).

12. One of the reasons God rejected Israel was because they practiced magic and communicated with evil spirits (Isaiah 2:6).

13. It is insulting to God to consult the dead when you can inquire of Him (Isaiah 2:6).

14. A fortuneteller may be demon possessed, like the young girl in Philippi out of whom Paul cast an unclean spirit in the name of Jesus (Acts 16:16-18).

15. True Christians, like those at Ephesus, have nothing to do with black magic and its related practices (Acts 19:9).

16. Sorcery is included in the works of the flesh listed in the Bible, and those who practice it cannot enter the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

17. Those who engage in sorcery will be shut out of heaven and banished forever from God (Revelation 21:8; 22:15).

18. The teachings of spiritism are doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

19. Demons are subject to God’s greater power and tremble before Him (James 2:19).

20. The increase in following after subversive doctrines inspired by demons is one of the predicted signs of “the latter times” and of the near approach of divine judgment (1 Timothy 4:1)

Sept-Oct 1989

From The Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The first issue of "Food for the Flock" was published in January 1955. In 1965 the June and July issues were combined for the first time. Then in the fall of 1968 the Committee members made the following decisions which became effective on January 1, 1969:

1. The magazine was to be issued bimonthly (a move to save both printing and mailing costs).

2. The number of pages in each issue was increased from 18 to 24 (this made the total amount of material basically the same as in the past).

3. The general format was to undergo a sweeping change.

4. The written ministry would be directed toward a more relevant and time-related emphasis.

Commencing with the Jan.-Feb. 1969 issue, the magazine was published under a new title: "Ministry in Focus." Unfortunately, many people acquainted with "Food for the Flock" thought that the latter had ceased publication. Thus in 1981 the Committee members, at the suggestion of Mr. James Gunn, reinstated the old name, using "Ministry in Focus" as a subtitle. Also, it was at the beginning of 1969 that I became associate editor. I continued in this capacity for five years, having become editor at the beginning of 1975.

In the very first issue the purpose of the magazine was stated as follows: "A monthly publication designed to

promote the careful study of the Scriptures, to edify and instruct the Church, to comfort and encourage the people of God, and above all, to bring glory to the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Many years later Mr. Gunn asked me to revise the foregoing statement, which I did in the following words: "FOOD FOR THE FLOCK is a publication dedicated to encouraging sound Bible study, to providing practical teaching on current issues and problems, and to challenging Christians to a greater devotion to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Mr. Gunn was the first editor of the magazine, having resigned from that responsibility at the close of 1974. Other members of the Executive Committee were Ernest B. Sprunt, John Robertson, Ormer G. Sprunt, and J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr. Those who served as Associate Editors were Robert McClurkin, David Leathem, and Thomas G. Wilke. The Advisory Committee was composed of Cecil Batstone, Guy Cesar, Aubrey Dellandrea, William Funston, David Kirk, John Martin, Norman MacNeil, Clark McClelland, Paul Plubell, Wylam Price, and Gordon Reager.

Many of these brethren who were linked with the magazine from its beginning have, of course, gone Home to be with Christ.

With much gratitude to our Lord, we send out this final issue of "Food for the Flock" which completes 35 years of continuous publication. From the human standpoint, I am saddened at the thought of still another avenue of timely and practical written ministry coming to an end. Nevertheless, I am cheered by the words of a kind friend who recently wrote concerning the magazine: "Only a coming day will reveal all of its far reaching effects."

My special thanks goes to Edwin Fesche who, since the beginning of 1977, has supplied me with a steady flow of insightful articles for his “Current Scene” column. I am also grateful to numerous other authors such as S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., James T. Naismith, Donald L. Norbie, Donald K. Steele, Gerald L. Stover, and Arthur F. Wilder for their numerous articles and book reviews, and to Jean Dougan for her inspirational poems. There are many other writers I have not mentioned by name, but to all of them I express my sincere thanks.

While some may disagree, there is no question in my own mind but what many of our assemblies are manifesting an increasing drift away from God’s Word and Scripturally based traditions. Much confusion reigns throughout Christendom as the world lurches toward one great apostate church. It’s been rightly said that “The world is churchy and the church is worldly.” Much of the wisdom and ways of the world have infiltrated the church, including the so-called “Brethren movement,” where to one degree or another bigness, centralization, clericalism, entertainment, expediency, lukewarmness, materialism, pseudo-intellectualism, and socializing (i.e., the kind devoid of any real spiritual profit) are in evidence. What was true in Amos’s day is well on the way to being repeated today: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11).

That we are in “the last days” (2 Tim. 3:1-5), and thus the Laodicean period of church history (see Rev. 3:14-19), can hardly be disputed. It is a day when, like the close of the book of Judges, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (21:25).

While all this may sound pessimistic, I recall the words of Adoniram Judson who, in the midst of severe trial, said: “The future is as bright as the promises of God.” I am also mindful of George Henderson’s (Henry Durbanville) book title, THE BEST IS YET TO BE. Of this we are totally confident. Meanwhile, we are engaged in an intensifying spiritual conflict, and we need to pray continually that our Lord will keep each one of us “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

I am reminded of the account of an unlettered but godly janitor who one day was talking with a learned Bible scholar about the difficulties of interpreting the book of Revelation. The janitor said to the scholar, “I don’t know much about the book of Revelation, but one thing I have learned from it is this - for the child of God everything is going to turn out all right.”

For 15 years it has been my happy privilege and responsibility to provide our reader family with a variety of spiritual food. That my task has been imperfectly done is known only too well to this editor, yet I have sought before our Lord to pursue my work in accord with the measure of ability He has given to me. We leave the evaluation and results of this ministry in His hands. And with heartfelt thanks we give to Him all the glory and praise.

MARANATHA!

God in Everything

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

God In Everything

Many years ago I received from a friend in St. Louis, Missouri, a hundred or so copies of an attractive four-page leaflet entitled, “God in Everything.” Who the author was I do not know, since only the initials “A.F.” appear on the cover and again at the close of his comments. I was both blessed and spiritually refreshed when I read this leaflet, and for a few years carefully gave copies away, often having enclosed one in my correspondence with Christian friends and acquaintances. I have just one copy left and would like to share its message with you. Its full title is, “Job 23:14, or God in Everything.” It reads as follows:

“In everything.” This we have proved is the secret of a happy life.

Nothing can come into the life of a child of God without His Father’s permission. Our text (i.e., Job 23:14) is one of many which makes this fact plain, “He performeth the thing that is appointed for me.”

What a change it makes in the life of those who believe it.

How differently we look upon the many things that tend to irritate us.

How we go through the many duties of the day always rejoicing.

How differently we act toward those who ill-treat and misrepresent us.

How gladly we submit to “overwork” when asked, and rest content “whatever lot we see.”

How willingly we answer all inquiries, no matter how busy we may be. How is it? Because “God is in everything.” He permits it ALL to be so.

It matters not what comes. “It’s all right.” All His appointment. All the VERY BEST.

Beloved, this is how He makes us into “the vessels of honour meet for His use.”

Dear child of God, whatever your feelings or circumstances may be, rest on His Word. “He performeth the thing that is appointed FOR YOU,” and “we know that ALL THINGS work together for good to them that love God.”

Could anything be sweeter. Think of it — the Almighty so looking after us, that He just performs the very thing that is appointed for us. Should there be any disappointments then? Surely never, when all are His appointments.

Believe it! Live on it!

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Lean hard! Lie still! Rest!

“So we learn to know Him better,

So we come to trust Him quite,

When in praise and peaceful patience

We just say, ‘Yes, Lord, all right!’ “

Expressive Words

What would you suggest as the seven most expressive words in the English language? Dr. Wilfred Funk, lexicographer and dictionary publisher, has listed his choice as follows:

1. The most revered word is “mother.”

2. The most beautiful is “love.”

3. The most tragic is “death.”

4. The warmest word is “friendship.”

5. The coldest is “no.”

6. The most bitter is “alone.”

7. The saddest word is “forgotten.”

Not all, of course, will agree with Dr. Funk’s selection. Yet all will surely agree that words are important and that “the pen is mightier than the sword.”

What about your words and mine? Are they always what they should be in the light of God’s Word? Daily we would do well to pray: “Let the words of my mouth … be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14). Paul’s exhortation, in Colossians 4:6, also comes to mind: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Let us above all center our thoughts on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose very words are “spirit…and life” (John 6:63), remembering that “all bore witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22). And keep in mind that it was He who said to the hard-hearted, unbelieving Pharisees

“that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36).

60 Years

It is with much pleasure that I commend a little book by August Van Ryn which has recently been published by Christian Missions Press of Waynesboro, Georgia. It is entitled, 60 Years in His Service. Our esteemed and beloved brother in Christ needs little or no introduction to the Lord’s people gathered to His name throughout the United States and Canada. One of the “highlights” of my own ministry, at least to me personally, was to have been a co-speaker with brother Van Ryn at a conference several years ago at Greenwood Hills, Pennsylvania.

As our brother states in the introduction to his brief book:

“The chief purpose in writing this sketch of my life as a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ is that it may furnish an encouragement, a challenge and a cheer to other servants of Christ. During my sixty years of experience in the ministry of God’s precious Word very many varied experiences have occurred and (I trust) valuable lessons learned, which can be of real value to other believers, whom the Lord has called to devote their lives to teach and/or, to preach the great truths of Scripture.

“Some of the experiences related herein give evidence of the tender care of and faithfulness to those whom He has sent forth in His field and vineyard. We feel much of this can be of real spiritual help and uplift to other preachers; especially to younger men whose lives still largely stretch before them (as far, of course, as we can

know), while mine is very near its end. I do believe this has not been in vain, but can benefit other dear servants of our blessed Lord. For us, praise God, the glory draws near."

Having recently read this little book of 64 pages, I can readily attest as a younger servant of Christ to having been genuinely encouraged and helped by its contents. And as we could expect, at least those of us who in any measure know brother Van Ryn personally, there are delightful touches of humor interspersed throughout the chapters of the book.

Copies of 60 Years in His Service are obtainable at.95 cents each from Christian Missions Press, Box 675, Waynesboro, Georgia 30830.

On Worship

William Temple said it: "Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose."

Abortion

MIF 7:5 (Sept-Oct 1975)

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Abortion

Is a Bible study magazine like Focus the place for an article on abortion? Several years ago I probably would have said no, but over the past two or three years dramatic and drastic changes have occurred in our society. As a case in point, my home State of Michigan, like other States, chose to legalize abortion. This was done on the basis of the United States Supreme Court's ruling, by a vote of 7 - 2 (Justice Byron White and William Rehnquist dissenting) that "every woman in the U.S. now has the same right to an abortion during the first six months of pregnancy as she does to any other minor surgery."

Have we as Christians taken seriously this matter of "abortion on demand"? What do you say, or what would you say, if someone asks you your convictions about this subject, and why you believe what you do?

Last summer I was asked by an anti-abortion organization called, "Lifespan," which is Roman Catholic oriented, to speak at a Sunday evening open air convocation at Kellogg Park in the heart of Plymouth, Michigan, and publicly share my convictions about abortion. With a measure of "fear and trembling" I accepted the invitation on the condition that I could speak with "no strings attached." My request was

graciously granted. I went to the park following our usual evening service at Lake Pointe Chapel, presented my convictions, and with much liberty also preached the Gospel of Christ as the only remedy for our sins and social ills, abortion included. This marked the first time I had ever been invited and challenged to publicly present my convictions about abortion. It proved a healthy discipline of both heart and mind to prepare for that responsibility, and looking back I esteem it as one of the memorable highlights of my 1974 summer ministry.

There comes a time when responsible Christians must take a stand on the sticky issues and problems besetting the society in which we live. Abortion is one of those issues and problems. With few exceptions, we believe (at least this editor does) that abortion is a violation of God's will, and that the wholesale practice of it will ultimately bring God's judgment both nationally and individually.

In this issue of Focus we have provided an excellent article on the subject, entitled, "Is Abortion Biblical?" The author, Dr. Hadden W. Robinson, is a gifted servant of Christ, whom I have known personally since 1951, and we are grateful for permission to use his article. We prayerfully hope you will give it a thoughtful and thorough reading. Its conclusions may not be quite as strong as some would like them to be. Nevertheless, we feel Dr. Robinson has handled this difficult subject sanely, sensibly and Scripturally, and above all, in the spirit of honesty, humility, and Christ-likeness.

1982 A.D.

By Christmas 1982 the nine planets of our solar system — Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus,

Neptune and Pluto — are scheduled to be in perfect alignment. Of this rare and unusual phenomenon, Newsweek Magazine reported: “As the planets move into alignment in 1982, their gravitational pull may cause huge storms on the sun. These storms could alter wind directions on earth, reducing the speed of the planet’s rotation and triggering serious earthquakes” (September 16, 1974).

Two astronomers, John Gribbin (Physical Sciences director of the British magazine, Nature) and Stephen Plagemann (researcher at NASA’s Goddard Space Center in Maryland), began in the late 1960’s to study the possible effect of the planetary alignment that is due some seven years from now. In fact, they have co-authored a book entitled, The Jupiter Effect, in which they present their scientific conclusions. This is what they expect:

1. Great increase in magnetic activity on the sun. Huge storms, sunspots and solar flares will occur.

2. The ionosphere may be seriously affected, with great changes occuring in the earth’s atmosphere.

3. Radio and television communications will be disrupted.

4. Weird lighting effects from northern lights will burst through the sky.

5. Wind directions will be changed.

6. Rainfall and temperature patterns will be greatly altered.

7. The earth’s rotation will be affected, changing the length of days.

They have noted that solar activity in the late 50's and 60's and in 1972 has already increased the number of earthquakes and slowed down the earth's rotation.

These two astronomers also warn that by 1982 "there will be many earthquakes, large and small… and a region where one of the greatest fault systems lies today — long overdue for a giant leap forward, and just waiting for the necessary kick — is California!"

These scientists explain that the nine planets of earth's solar system appear on one side of the sun every 179 years. However, the astronomical effect upon earth's environmental conditions and solar activity has always depended on the degree of their alignment. Much of what Gribbin and Plagemann are predicting for 1982 coincides in a startling manner with what the Bible says will take place on the earth during the Great Tribulation period. Interestingly enough, Newsweek referred to these astronomical projections as "apocalyptic".

Prior to the Lord Jesus Christ's Second Advent to Planet Earth, He Himself said that there will be signs in the heavens and on the earth great tribulation (see Luke 21:25-27; and Matthew 24:21, 29). Both the sun and moon will be strangely affected (see Isaiah 30:26; Joel 3:21; Matthew 24: 29; Revelation 16:8-9). The earth, too, will be plagued by terrible storms (see Ezekiel 38:22; Revelation 16:21), and by famine (see Joel 1:15-20; Matthew 24:7).

Please, we are not setting any date for Christ's Second Advent. Furthermore, nothing may come of Gribbin's and Plagemann's conclusions. No doubt there are many other respected scientists who totally disagree with these two astronomers and their expectations,

particularly since there are no historical records to indicate that anything unusual or cataclysmic has taken place in past centuries when, every 179 years, this phenomenon has occurred. Nevertheless, we believe with other Bible scholars and students that we are close to the end of this age, and that sooner or later the things predicted in God's Word concerning the Tribulation period will come to pass upon the earth. Even reputable scientists, who have no interest whatsoever in Bible prophecy, believe that something catastrophic will hit our planet before the end of this century. There is, of course, no need to conclude that God will use natural causes when He intervenes in His creation, although it seems quite possible that He may use them in carrying out His future purposes, particularly in the Tribulation period.

Granted, the Church is not bidden to look for signs, but the Saviour Himself (Philippians 3:20). However, we believe His coming to the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) will take place before the Tribulation period. This being the case, coupled with numerous indications that the Tribulation period may not be far off, let us who are "of the day" (1 Thessalonians 5:5, 8) look up. Our Lord's coming for His saints draws near.

Maranatha!

(Editor's note: Much of this information was taken from the April 1975 "Chapel of the Air Newsletter," the material having originally appeared in an issue of The Gospel Truth, published by the Southwest Radio Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

Deciding the Doubtful

MIF 8:3 (May-June 1976)

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Deciding the Doubtful

Christians, particularly young people, frequently ask if it's right to do a certain thing or go to a particular place of entertainment. The question, "Since I'm a little short on cash, is it right to rob a bank?" is clearly answered in the Bible (see Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28). There are, however, those problems of conduct which are not covered by some chapter and verse. As a result, it is often difficult to know what to decide in the area of doubtful things.

To begin with, four things should be kept in mind:

1. The Bible has either the definite answer to, or guiding principles for, every circumstance and problem in life.

2. While it is true that the Christian is "under grace" (Romans 6:14) — unquestionably the most exalted position of the ages—grace has its rules and the believer is "under…law to Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21). Nine of the Ten Commandments are reiterated in the New Testament, where they are greatly widened in their application. The letters of Paul, the great apostle of grace, are filled with restrictions, taboos, and prohibitions (e.g., Ephesians 4:17ff; Colossians 3:5-4:1; 1 Timothy 4:6-5:1; 2 Timothy 2:11-26). Grace, or liberty in Christ, is not license, although some have twisted it in

this way. Nevertheless, such a distorted view in no wise nullifies the motivating power of grace.

Charles C. Ryrie has aptly said: “Grace not only provides the motive but also the standard for conduct today. God has given clear instruction in His Word concerning the daily walk of the believer, and these teachings of grace, entirely separate from any other rule of life in the Scriptures, stand complete in themselves. Furthermore, these standards are the very highest in all of God’s Word, and although most Christians will admit this fact, there is sometimes ignorance of the specific criteria which God has set forth for the daily life under grace” (Our Hope, January 1953, p. 494).

3. There must be a willingness to do God’s will (John 7:17). The late Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to say: “Perhaps ninety per cent of knowing the will of God is to be willing to do His will before you know what it is.”

4. Prayerfully believe that the Lord will guide you (John 16:13; Psalm 25:9; 32:8; 48:14; Isaiah 58:11).

Someone, whose name was not given, has suggested that most questions about doubtful things can be settled by the application of one or more of the nine tests listed below:

1. The Personal Test: Will my doing it make me a better or worse Christian?

2. The Social Test: Will my doing it influence others to be stronger or weaker Christians?

3. The Practical Test: Will doing it likely bring desirable or undesirable results?

4. The Universal Test: Suppose everyone did it. What then?

5. The Scriptural Test:Is it clearly and expressly forbidden in the Word of God?

6. The Stewardship Test: Will doing it involve a waste of the talents God has invested in me?

7. The Family Test: Will doing it bring credit or dishonour to my family?

8. The Missionary Test: Will doing it likely help or hinder the progress of the Gospel message on earth?

9. The Common Sense Test: Is it good, plain, everyday, ordinary common sense?

Olympic Star Loses Medal

At the 12th Winter Olympic Games held earlier this year in Innsbruck, Austria, Mrs. Galina Kulakova, one of the Soviet Union's greatest all-time sports figures, lost a bronze medal on February 9th. Why? Because she took a forbidden medicine to combat the flu-like illness that swept through Athlete's Village. She was stripped of her bronze medal by the International Olympic Committee because a doping test showed traces of Ephedrine, a cold drug banned by the IOC.

Mrs. Kulakova, a triple gold medal winner at the 1972 Games in Sapporo, Japan,, and who holds the coveted Order of Lenin for her achievements, finished third in the women's five-kilometer cross-country race last February 7th. She, like dozens of other athletes, had a cold, and took the commonly used decongestant supplied by a friend in the middle of the night. And she did not submit it to the Russian team doctor.

Prince Alexandre de Merode of Belgium, president of the IOC's Medical Commission, was quite apologetic

about taking the medal away, acknowledging that Mrs. Kulakova acted in all innocence. “It was such a small amount, it seemed almost an injustice,” The Prince said. “However, if we are to have a Medical Commission and rules, we must enforce them.”

This incident reminded me of the Apostle Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 2:5; “If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules” (NASB). Little wonder, then, in an earlier letter midst details depicting athletic contention, Paul said: “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (NASB).

The apostle was not fearful of losing his salvation; that is something absolutely and eternally secure for every believer. Rather, he was concerned about being disqualified in the Christian race, and as a result failing to win the prize, and this, with the possibility of suffering loss at the judgment seat of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 with Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Are we, as Christians, concerned about contending in the arena of faith according to God’s rules and regulations in His Word? We should be, else we in turn may lose our reward and thus suffer loss at Christ’s

judgment seat in proportion to our disobedience and unfaithfulness in the present race set before us.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

In his book, Selections from our Fifty Years Written Ministry, Walter Scott wrote about the judgment seat of Christ as follows:

"There will be a vast amount of healthy work transacted at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The mistakes of time will there be rectified; wrong judgments reversed; misunderstandings corrected; ungenerous attempts to impute falsehood or evil where such did not exist exposed; and in short, persons, ways, words, motives, and acts will then appear in their true light and character. It will be a clearing-up moment, so that the Church and every member of the redeemed company will enter into the enjoyment of eternal blessing in the perfect knowledge that all has been fully brought out between the soul and Christ. Then in the eternal rest of God no cloud shall ever darken our sky; no unsettled question ever arise to dim the joy; no lurking suspicion ever cross the soul. Every difficulty and question between believers and God, and between brother and brother, must be righteously adjusted. False charges must be withdrawn in light of heaven, and every cloud and misunderstanding for ever removed. Wrong condemned, and right eternally vindicated! Personally, we have enjoyed the comfort and strength which manifestation before the Judgment Seat of Christ imparts to the soul, and that, too, amidst circumstances of trial, wrong, and unjust charge. Christ's vindication of every injured saint and servant is most sure. In

meantime, wait on God, be of good courage, and pass on in light of that coming day” (p. 58).

Reading the Bible

MIF 8:4 (Jul-Aug 1976)

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Reading the Bible

In the March 1976 issue of LeTourneau College’s four-page publication, Now, there appeared on the back page an excerpt from Rethinking Our Priorities, a recent book by J. Sidlow Baxter. In his comments, Baxter urges the habit of reading the Bible “copiously and continually,” pointing out that many who realize the importance of studying it do not likewise appreciate the value of reading it.

He cites the fact (which I was particularly interested to learn) that when Dr. Harry A. Ironside, former pastor of the Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, died at the age of 73, he was reading the Bible through for the seventy-third time. Dr. Ironside had personally told Baxter that in his early Christian life he had determined to read the Bible through once for every year of his life. He gradually caught up with the years already past, and thereafter kept his Bible reading equal with his years.

Baxter further noted G. Campbell Morgan, a prince among Bible expositors, who said that early in his ministry there was one period when for two full years he read nothing hut his daily mail and the four Gospels. Day after day, for two full years he read nothing but Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, over and over again, resulting in a transforming effect on his ministry.

Baxter mentions several “big values” in reading right through the Bible again and again. Among them are: (1) it gives one a vivid sense of the presence of God in history; (2) it begets a profound awareness of the divine sovereignty; and (3) it provides us with a comprehensive grasp of divine revelation.

On how to read the Bible, George Muller made the following suggestions:

1. Read the Scriptures through regularly.

2. Read with prayer..

3. Read with meditation.

4. Read with reference to yourself.

5. Read with faith.

6. Read in order to carry into practice.

Along the same line, the saintly and gifted F.B. Meyer gave this word of advice:

“Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter. If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it. If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it. If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it, and launch it as a feathered arrow from the how of your desire. If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you. If the truth is revealed in all its intrinsic splendor, entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate the hemisphere of your life.”

Anticipating the 1976 Bicentennial celebration of the United States, I decided that one of the best ways to personally observe this historic occasion would be to once again read right through the Bible in a year’s time. As always, it takes a measure of self-discipline to do this

midst life's daily tasks and responsibilities. Nevertheless, I can once again joyfully attest that the undertaking of this spiritual exercise has already brought a wealth of pleasure and blessing to my own soul.

If you have never read the Bible through in a year, why not try it? And I might further ask, Have you ever really read the Bible through in your lifetime?

Rules for Revolution

Earlier this year a Christian friend brought the following to my attention:

In May of 1919 at Dusseldorf, Germany, the Allied Forces obtained a copy of some of the "Communist Rules for Revolution." Nearly fifty years later, the Reds are still "following the rules."

As you read some of the rules from the list, stop after each item and think about the present-day situation where you live — all around our nation.

A. Corrupt the young; get them away from religion. Get them interested in sex. Make them superficial. Destroy their ruggedness.

B. Get control of all means of publication, and thereby:

1. Get people's minds off government by focusing their attention on athletics, sexy books and plays, and other trivialities.

2. Divide the people into hostile groups by constantly harping on controversial matters of no importance.

3. Destroy the people's faith in their leaders by holding the latter up to contempt, ridicule and obloquy.

4. Always preach true democracy, but seize power as fast and as ruthlessly as possible.

5. By encouraging government extravagance, destroy its credit and produce fear of inflation with rising prices and general discontent.

6. Foment unnecessary strikes in vital industries, encourage civil disorders, and foster a lenient and soft attitude on the part of government toward such disorders.

7. By specious argument cause the breakdown of the old moral virtues, honesty, sobriety, continence, faith in the pledged word, and ruggedness.

C. Bring about the registration of all firearms with a view to confiscating them and leaving the population helpless.

Stop and think — how many of these rules are being carried out in our nation today?

As a footnote to all this, last fall Malcolm Muggeridge, author and former editor of Punch, told a packed house at the University of Toronto that “western institutions are not working, personal relationships are not working —it’s uncannily and obviously just like the collapse of the Roman Empire.”

Mr. Muggeridge, ’72, said Rome didn’t crack up because of a lack of power or wealth, but because “the moral shape that lies behind all other shapes was breaking up. The truth is that unless men have a sense of moral order within themselves and in their universe, they will not be able to build any other kind of order, economic, political, or social.”

Muggeridge, who shook the British public by becoming a Christian in the late 1960's, blamed the media, particularly TV, for most, if not all, of what he looks upon as a slide towards Hell. "The corruption of our children is absolutely appalling," he said. "On TV they see the family ridiculed, marital fidelity ridiculed, and a crass materialism constantly being preached."

Certainly no thinking person could truthfully deny that atheistic Communism, along with other Satanic forces, has had a considerable impact and influence in our nation, and in other so-called "free nations" throughout the world, in, as Muggeridge indicated, man's slide towards Hell.

Illiteracy

In 1950, 44 percent of the world's population were illiterate. In 1970 the illiteracy rate was only 34 percent.

In spite of the percentage drop of illiteracy, there were more illiterates in 1970 than in 1950. In 1950 the illiterates numbered 700 million, while in 1970 they were 783 million.

Even the most optimistic projections estimate that by 2000 A.D. there will be no less than 650 million illiterates.

And did you know that since the inventing of the printing press, two billion Bibles have been printed, of which 85 percent have been in English? Only nine percent of the world speaks English. Selah.

Gold or God

When the late Roger Babson was asked by the president of the Argentine Republic why South America with her

tremendous resources—greater, perhaps, than those of North America— was so far behind, replied: “I think it may be because South America was peopled by Spaniards seeking gold. North America was peopled by Pilgrim Fathers seeking God.”

Now, however, North America has drifted far from the character and conduct manifested by the Pilgrim Fathers.

Let us be much in prayer these days for our nation and its leaders, as well as for other nations and leaders throughout the world (see 1 Timothy 2:1-6).

That I May Know Christ

MIF 11:2 (Mar-Apr 1979)

From the Editor's Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

That I May Know Christ

Suppose God appeared to you some night in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall give you?" What would you say to Him? This is exactly what He did one night with King Solomon at Gideon (1 Kings 3:3-5), and Solomon answered God as follows: "Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this thy great people?" (v. 9). In two words, what Solomon asked for was divine wisdom.

The great Apostle Paul was never given the opportunity that Solomon had, yet I believe he tells us in Philippians 3:10 what he wanted most in life. It was something wide open to him in his day, as it is to every true believer today, yet it is sadly evident that few Christians have made this their chief ambition or desire in life. And what is it? "That I may know Him (Christ), and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

Paul's supreme desire in life was to know experientially: Christ's Person ("that I may know Him"), Christ's power ("and the power of His resurrection"), and Christ's pathway ("and the fellowship of His sufferings"). The end result of this experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ is "being made conformable unto His death."

“Conformable” literally means “to make like form with” and is closely akin to the word translated “fashioned like unto” in 3:21. It is a word involving an inner experience which relates to the essential form and not to the outer fashion, The Greek word translated “being made conformable” is in the present tense, indicating that this inner experience is a process, yea, a life-long process. Furthermore, the word is in the passive voice, stressing that the process is in reality accomplished by another. In other words, it is God who works in us to conform us to His Son as we in turn are subject to His molding of us.

It seems to me that the key to this great text of Philippians 3:10 lies in the revelation and experiential reality of “the power of His resurrection.” Apart from the experience of our Lord’s resurrection power, we cannot know Him in personal salvation or in practical sanctification. As one who had been saved many years prior to writing Philippians, it was the apostle’s desire to come to know Christ better and better, this being made possible by knowing experientially Christ’s resurrection power, not simply as a fact but as a force in his daily life, having realized that therein lies the secret of daily victory over sin, self, and Satan.

The matter of knowing experientially Christ’s resurrection power in salvation is set forth in Romans 5:9: “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him”; whereas the words of 5:10 express knowing experientially His resurrection power in sanctification: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

It was F. E. Marsh who wrote:

"To know Christ as our Saviour, is to be saved by Him from sinning. To know Christ as our Sovereign, is to be ruled by Him. To know Christ as our Sanctifier, is to let Him manifest His own life through us. To know Christ as our Satisfier, is to delight only in Him. To know Christ as the One who died for us, is to die to sin with Him. To know Christ in His resurrection power, is to live to God by Him. To know Christ as our Cross-Bearer, is to take up our cross daily and to follow Him. Oh, to know HIM in the truest and fullest sense of the word!"

* * *

P. C.

Recently I took a piece of paper and, after much thought, wrote down the names of fifteen people who had most deeply influenced my life. P. C. was one of them. "Who was P. C.?" you ask. Well, he was one of my teachers during the five years I spent at the Stony Brook School on Long Island, New York.

PIERSON CURTIS was born in Japan of missionary parents in 1889. He attended a mission school in China and came to the United States at the age of sixteen to attend Mt. Herman School in Massachusetts. From there he went to Princeton University for his college education, and went on to teach in several preparatory schools before going to Stony Brook in 1924 where he taught for forty-four years. But "P. C." (as he was affectionately called by those who knew him) was more than an excellent teacher of English and other subjects. He was a man of God who poured out his life in training young men in the ways of the Lord and His Word. He

was also a tremendously versatile man who loved sailing and camping, and whose hobbies included not only the foregoing but painting, photography, writing poetry, and inventing and developing camping equipment as well.

To me personally, his initials stood not so much for Pierson Curtis as they did for Practical Christianity. I first met P. C. in the fall of 1941, having entered Stony Brook in the seventh grade. Unknown to me, he observed me closely through that year, then two months into the following school year he consulted with my parents and me, suggesting that I skip the eighth grade and enter the ninth. Some years later I was made to realize how our Lord had definitely guided P. C. in this move, even though at times the work load through the ninth grade in particular (and making up those two months!) was a rather heavy load for this then thirteen-year old boy.

One never-to-be-forgotten memory of P. C. was the day I plunked down a stack of books on a classroom desk. Somewhere in the middle was my Bible. P. C. came along, surveyed the stack momentarily, proceeded to shuffle the books, and placed my Bible on top. I don't recall his exact words, but they were something like this: "Ross, the Bible is the greatest Book in the world and it always belongs on top of all other books." To this day I find myself doing what P. C. did when I see a Bible under books, magazines, etc.

My last visit with P. C. was on a visit to Stony Brook in October 1964. I was having meetings at Sea Cliff, some thirty or so miles from the school, so took advantage of an open day to return to my alma mater. It was a memorable occasion, the highlight of the visit having

been a fifteen or twenty-minute private chat with P. C. He always had time to talk with his students and with his former students as well. I still recall much of what we chatted about, our conversation centering on books, his urging me to read a particular book by C. S. Lewis (P. C. had introduced me to C. S. Lewis in one of his English classes), a favorite teacher of mine who was no longer at the school, a classmate of mine who had authored several books (P. C., so I found out, had helped this young author by reading his manuscripts and making valuable suggestions), and then P. C. asked me a question which I am sure was closest to his heart. "Ross," he inquired, "would you say that your years at Stony Brook had a major influence in your life relative to going into the Lord's service?" My affirmative answer brought a look of genuine joy to the aged, weather-beaten countenance of this beloved teacher and man of God, who even then at 76 was still pouring his heart and soul into the service of teaching and helping others, which service was always carried on in a quiet, consistent, humble yet open manner.

Unknown to me at the time, this was to be our final visit together on planet earth. Last summer on June 28th, 1978, I received the news that P. C. had died at age 89. The following message had been sent to the school by his wife and daughter, Cynthia: "Abundant entrance for P. C. Big welcome on High. Grace abounding. One of Jesus' art treasures moved." In that same communique it was also stated: "One of Stony Brook's foundation makers has thus entered God's joy; and he was a joy for us in purity, simple depth, and in uncomplicated love, eager to serve."

Perhaps you are wondering why I have shared these personal details with you about P. C. I have done so simply to remind both you and me that the most important thing in life is not how much money we make, how high we rise on the world's tottery success ladder, or how much prestige and authority we may command, but how well we live, whether our life is long or short. P. C.'s long and fruitful life was poured out in sacrificial service for others, a life lived for Christ and His glory, a life that in particular deeply influenced hundreds of young people for God and good, and in them much of the practical Christianity which he so admirably personified lives on in this earthly scene.

In the light of all that I have shared with you about P. C., I find no more fitting close than the practical application of the words of Hebrews 13:7: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith" (NASB).

New Year's Resolutions

MIF 3:1 (Jan-Feb 1971)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

New Year’s Resolutions

It’s that time of the year when New Year’s resolutions are in full swing, or could it be that one or two you made are already on the sick list? Since many of us do try and take some serious self-inventory at the beginning of each year, it would be well to consider a few “I wills” or resolutions of the Psalmist in Psalm 116, though I am not suggesting that he made these at the start of a New Year. However, what he says is pertinent to our thoughts along this line, and this, in five different areas.

1. There is the resolution of prayer (vv. 2, 13, 17). The Psalmist makes much of calling on God (see also v. 4), and so should we! In 1971 we can do nothing better than resolve to pray more.

2. There is the resolution of testimony (v. 9). Let’s remember that “an ounce of walk is worth a ton of talk.”

3. There is the resolution of appropriation (v. 13). At best each of us knows only a tiny fraction of the truth that there is to know, so a whole year is before us wherein we may appropriate more of God’s revealed truth in Christ through His Word.

4. There is the resolution of performance (vv. 14, 18). Are we just doodling around or really doing the will of God for our lives?

5. Finally, there is the resolution of thanksgiving (v. 17). One of the characteristics of the "last days" is unthankfulness (2 Tim. 3:2). Thankfulness should be one of the hallmarks of every true believer in Christ, and as W. H. Griffith Thomas has said: "Thanksgiving will inevitably result in thanksliving."

By the way, did you read Psalm 116 and look up the specific verses? That would be a good resolution to make and carry out right now!

—W.R.R.

Answered Prayer

MIF 10:3 (May-June 1978)

From the Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

Answered Prayer

We are grateful to our Lord for His answer to our prayers regarding the need for a replacement typesetter and layout person. Midland Printers Co. Ltd. of Midland, Ontario, our printer from the inception of the magazine in 1955 (then called Food for the Flock), has agreed to take over the entire operation. While they will not do any art work, they will use existing headings and continue to print Focus magazine at not above the cost of what we have been paying for each issue.

As most of our readers probably know, we are unable to pay for the publishing and mailing expenses of Ministry in Focus through subscription moneys alone. Were it not for the gifts of interested and supportive friends, who share the conviction that this avenue of written ministry must continue, we would simply be unable, at least from the human standpoint, to go on.

Thus on behalf of the Board and committee members of the magazine, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to all who, by their prayers and gifts, have again stood with us in a time of testing.

Life’s Greatest Event

According to a brief article in the Prophetic Witness, Arthur Rubenstein, a Jew who is popularly acclaimed as

the world's leading concert pianist, recently visited Israel. In Jerusalem he was interviewed on television by Israel's former premier, Golda Meir. As they chatted together, she asked him the following question: "What has been the greatest event of your life?" She undoubtedly expected Rubenstein to refer to some moment of triumph in his outstanding musical career. The answer she actually received, which reportedly took her breath away and caused her to lean back in her chair with an expression of surprise, was this: "The greatest moment of my life was when I received Yahshua ha-Mashia (the Lord Jesus Christ) into my heart. That completely changed my life. I have experienced joy and peace ever since."

We have no way of verifying these statements, although their source is highly reputable. We sincerely hope that the distinguished Arthur Rubenstein is indeed a true believer in Christ. One thing, heaven will hold a great many surprises for us all. Some are going to be there whom we never dreamed would be. Take for example the Old Testament details centering on Lot, and then read 2 Peter 2:7 & 8. And some, whom we thought would be there, will not be. What a sobering thought!

In the light of these things, let us heed Peter's advice to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10).

How Much Is A Trillion?

A recent pictogram article in U.S. News & World Report asked, "How Much is a Trillion Dollars?" The gist of the article is an attempt to get across to readers just how much one trillion dollars really is, pointing out that the economy of the United States will produce goods and

services at the rate of two trillion dollars a year before 1978 is over.

The public debt of the United States is approaching one trillion dollars, and spending by Washington will top 500 billion — a half trillion — during the year that starts October 1st if President Carter's plans are carried out.

It's not easy to try and comprehend precisely how much one trillion really is, but here are some things to think about:

A shopper buying goods 24 hours a day, seven days a week, would have to spend $100,000 a minute for 10 years.

End to end, one trillion one-dollar bills would stretch four million miles beyond the sun which is 96,909,000 miles from the earth.

In bundles, one trillion one-dollar bills would fill a warehouse 47 feet high, 20 feet wide, and 8 miles long.

Stacked up, one trillion one-dollar coins would reach as high as 5,661,000 Empire State Buildings.

Who can really comprehend such a staggering figure of even one trillion, let alone ten or a hundred trillion? We find such an exercise rather overwhelming, yet this blessed thought occurred to me. Even after one trillion years in heaven, we shall, in the familiar language of John Newton's famous hymn, "Amazing Grace," have "no less days to sing God's praise, than when we'd first begun."

Disappointment

There isn't anyone reading these lines who has not at one time or another experienced disappointment.

Disappointment is one of Satan's greatest tools, and by it he will lead us down the road to discouragement, despair and defeat, that is, if we let him.

Perhaps you have recently experienced disappointment. If so, consider the following chronology of Abraham Lincoln's career:

1831Failed in business

1832 — Defeated for legislature

1833 — Again failed in business

1834 — Elected to legislature

1835 — Sweetheart died

1836 — Had nervous breakdown

1838 — Defeated for speaker

1840 — Defeated for elector

1843 — Defeated for Congress

1846 — Elected to Congress

1848 — Defeated for Congress

1855 — Defeated for Senate

1856 — Defeated for Vice-President

1858 — Defeated for Senate

1860 — ELECTED PRESIDENT

Said Lincoln: "I do the very best I know how — the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so."

Really, if we have the conviction that we are moving along in the stream of God's will marked out for our lives, then there should be no disappointment. After all,

are not His appointments infinitely better than anything we might choose for ourselves?

During a time of keen disappointment at the close of my first year at university, my beloved mother wrote to me and enclosed the following quotation (it was the first time I had read it): “Our disappointments are God’s appointments.”

We would do well in all circumstances to remember this choice bit of counsel, and if at any time we think we have it exceptionally tough, let’s try walking in Lincoln’s shoes for a while.

Living For Jesus Christ

The late Paul E. Little said it: “The only day you and I have to live for Jesus Christ is now — today. The Christian Life is not some great, successful exploit out in the future. It is merely an accumulation of days of living for Jesus Christ. Only what you and I put into today will determine the quality and content of our total Christian lives.”

Suffering Saints

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Suffering Saints

According to U.S. News & World Report, many of our Baptist brethren in Russia are being harassed and persecuted. It is estimated that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Russian Baptists have been imprisoned in labor camps. At least seven have been slain or died under mysterious circumstances in the last two years, while others have been tortured or beaten. Some have been confined in insane asylums. Parents who persisted in teaching religion to their children have had those children taken away by the state.

It is presumed that there are between 600,000 and 700,000 Baptists in the Soviet Union, most of whom live within the rigid rules for religion laid down by Communist authorities, and they experience relatively little interference. A minority group, however, thought to number between 100,000 and 200,000, has refused to accept official limitations on its religious activities. It is members of this group, known as the “Reformers,” who have been the victims of official persecution.

The most prominent case is that of Georgi Vins, one of the reform leaders, who is now serving his second long imprisonment — five years in a labor camp, to be followed by another five years of “internal exile” in Siberia. Sentenced in 1974, he is not due to be released until 1984.

The U.S. Congress a year ago adopted a resolution calling for the release of Vins “and all other Christians and other religious believers” imprisoned in Russia. A similar resolution that was circulated worldwide in 1976 had 600,000 signers.

Russian language documents reaching the West relate numerous examples of how the Communists try to suppress the Baptists’ practice of Christianity. For instance, in a report reaching the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism at England’s Keston College in 1976, a Baptist group charged that the death of a Reform Baptist preacher “was deliberate… a result of torture.”

A group of Ukranian Baptists charged in a 1975 complaint that 12 of their members had been sentenced to prison terms and that the murder of one of them, Ivan Biblenko, had been made to look like an auto accident.

The plight of Russian Baptists assumes special significance lately because President Jimmy Carter, himself a Baptist, is leading a worldwide crusade for human rights. He has, as we know, sharply criticized the Kremlin for its violation of those rights.

Thinking of these Baptist brethren in Russia, as well as countless other members of the body of Christ throughout the world who are suffering persecution, we should remember to pray for them. True, we do not know them by name and we have very few details regarding their precise circumstances and needs. Nevertheless, the Word of God teaches us that we have a responsibility to intercede for them at the throne of grace. And Hebrews 13:3 leaves no doubt as to this sacred responsibility: “Remember the prisoners, as

though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves are also in the body" (NASB).

Accent on Alcoholism

The next time you want to take your family out for a leisurely drive, remember the fact that 55 percent of all highway fatalities are caused by drunken drivers. Recalling this statistic might not just save gasoline, it might save lives.

We do not have the statistics for Canada, but did you know that:

1. In five years, over 125,000 Americans were killed in alcohol-related accidents (That's more than all the U.S. deaths in Korea and Vietnam combined!).

2. Among the United States' nine million alcoholics, nearly 500,000 are between 10 and 19 years of age.

3. 1.3 million Americans between 12 and 17 years of age have serious drinking problems.

4. One third of the nation's high school students get drunk at least once a month.

5. Three out of four high school students drink. That's twice as many as just four years ago!

6. Arrests of boys 18 and younger for intoxication have jumped 250 percent in the same period!

7. Four out of ten teen-agers involved with alcohol are females!

8. In one recent year alone some 35,000 persons were jailed for violent crimes involving alcohol.

Over the years the growing statistics on alcoholism have become to me personally more than just boldface facts printed on paper. My paternal grandfather, returning home from work, was killed by a drunken driver. Further, my closest friend of years past — just 32 — was killed by a driver under the influence of alcohol, that man also having been killed in the same accident.

Who can estimate the sorrow and misery caused by drink and drunkenness, let alone the cost in dollars? During the 16 years I lived in St. Louis, Missouri, I ministered frequently at the downtown rescue mission and witnessed firsthand the ravages of drink in the lives of derelict men who had lost virtually everything but their souls — and were on the brink of that! Nevertheless, numerous men were transformed by the grace of God in Christ, our Lord Jesus being the only One who is able to give full and final deliverance from the bondage of this awful scourge that has impoverished and ruined the lives of so many men and women.

The Bible has a great deal to say about drunkenness, although we acknowledge that total abstinence cannot be substantiated by the Word of God. However, in view of the kind of society in which we live and its burgeoning ills which are liquor-related, it behooves the true believer in Christ to abstain totally from all alcoholic beverages.

Would that our sin-sick society might heed the counsel of King Solomon of old, who wrote: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger over the wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine

when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. They struck me, but I did not become ill; they beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink" (Proverbs 23:29-35, NASB).

Signs of the Times

Of the many crises which face humanity today, not the least of them is drought, and this includes the United States. An article in the May 1977 Reader's Digest highlighted the serious conditions which prevailed last year in England and on the European continent because of drought. England has had a long history of abundant rain fall, yet received less than 14 inches of rain during the first six months of 1976. Even as these lines are written, the serious drought conditions in California are in the news almost daily, and in northern California drinking water is being sold in plastic gallon jugs.

Who among us will soon forget the unprecedented deep-freeze weather conditions of last winter when the frigid Arctic jetstream coursed hundreds of miles south, making us appreciate the arrival of spring as never before?

Are these climatic changes to be chalked up as freak, one-time happenings? According to the CIA's World Weather Forecast, no! In a century weather forecast covering the entire planet, and prepared for the CIA, the warning is that no nation on earth can afford to take lightly this ominous forecast. Its authors warn that the

consequences in political and economic upheaval and internation violence will be “almost beyond human comprehension.”

In His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13: Luke 21), the Lord Jesus Christ predicted that at the end of this age unparalleled tribulation would overtake the earth. As a beginning to this period He said, “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in various places” (Matthew 24:7). After further details our Lord went on to say, “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22).

As the stage is being set right before our eyes for the complete fulfillment of all these things, how gloriously wonderful it is to be the sons and daughters of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

For the Church the midnight hour is near; for the world the beginning of sorrows is almost upon it. Meanwhile, does our knowledge of God’s unfulfilled prophetic program motivate us now to do all we can to share the Gospel of Christ with the lost?

More on the Ebla Tablets

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

More on the Ebla Tablets

In 1964 Dr. Paolo Matthiae of the University of Rome began digging about 30 miles south of Aleppo on the site known as Tel-Mardikh. Four years later he uncovered the site’s ancient name when he found a statue identified by inscription as that of a king of Ebla.

The existence of this ancient kingdom named Ebla had been known to scholars from a few inscriptions elsewhere, but very little importance had been attached to it, although the size of the tel evidences that Ebla had been an important city in the ancient world.

In 1973 Dr. Matthiae found his first written tablets. There were 42 and the writing on them identified the period as that of Sargon, king of Akkad — ancient Babylonia — the first great emperor of the Near East (2300-2230 B.C.).

In 1975, in the outer rooms of ancient palace ruins, Dr. Matthiae, came upon some 15,000 neatly stacked clay tablets inscribed with writing. The task of deciphering the writing went to Dr. Giovanni Pettinato, an Assyriologist from the University of Rome. Most of the tablets concerned commercial transactions, including consignment of goods to “Sargon, king of Agade (Akkad).” The tablets, however, opened to view the cultural and political life of Ebla, revealing that it was not just another petty city-state and that, among other

things, they included a recounting of the Deluge akin to that recorded in the Bible and in Babylonian writings.

According to the Italian archaeologists, many Bible names were listed in the tablets, including references to. Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Jaffa, Gaza and Sinai. If these are proved valid, such references pre-date by 500 years the earliest reference to Jerusalem thus far known — in the Egyptian Execration Texts.

It was Dr. David Noel Freedman, current director of Jerusalem's Albright Institute for Archaeological Research, who spread the news of the Ebla finds in the United States beyond a narrow professional circle, claiming that the Biblical implications of the tablets may rank with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

According to The Jerusalem Post, the reaction of Israeli scholars to Ebla's alleged Biblical connection ranges from caution to outright skepticism. Several of them attended the first public presentation of the Italian archaeologists' findings at a convention of Assyriologists last July in Birmingham, England. Among them was Dr. Aharon Kempinsky, an archaeologist and teacher of ancient Near East history at Tel Aviv University. He said it will take two or three years before phonetic values can be assigned with any certainty to the Eblaite language. Until then he suggested that the scholarly world should refrain from accepting readings like "Ibrum" for Eber and "Ursalem" for Jerusalem.

As a further case in point, Dr. Pettinato claims that Jaffa is mentioned in the tablets, while Dr. Kempinsky says, "We know that Jaffa didn't exist until 500 years after the Ebla archive."

Nevertheless, Israeli scholars are genuinely excited about the Ebla finds and their impact on Near Eastern history. The fact that the Etlaites wrote in their own Canaanite tongue permits scholars to study what appears to be the oldest antecedent to Hebrew yet known — predating by a millennium the time of Moses. As one of Israel's leading Assyriologists, Prof. Hayim Tadmor of the Hebrew University, has said, "We see that ancient civilization was much more widespread than we presumed. We should have thought this way before, but we hardly dared to."

While the initial sensational reports about Ebla's historical link may prove exaggerated, the decipherment of the tablets will undoubtedly reveal an environment, however remote, which influenced the Hebrew civilization which emerged a millennium later. More than that, they will no doubt reveal that this part of the third millennial world (as that era of ancient history has been called), for so long consigned by scholars to the dark ages of antiquity because of a lack of evidence, was in reality a seat of high culture.

Over the next two or three years, unless our Lord returns before then, it will be most interesting to learn to what further extent the Word of God will once again have confirmed the findings of archaeologists, this time by means of the Ebla tablets.

Another Version

Since the editors of U.S. News & World Report rarely devote space to anything of a religious nature, it was something of a surprise to see an article entitled, "Another 'Readable' Bible, But Is It Any Better?"

The article concerned the Good News Bible, published by the American Bible Society. The New Testament was published a decade ago, 52 million copies having been sold. An initial press run of one million copies has been made on the completed Bible which, as stated in the article, “seems destined to maintain the Scriptures” reputation as the world’s best-selling book.

It was noted that in its use of language and research, many religion scholars believe the Good News Bible falls somewhere between its main competitors among recent versions. Like Kenneth Taylor’s, The Living Bible, it seeks to reach out to the millions of people who have trouble understanding the majestic but often archaic prose of the King James Version. While The Living Bible is primarily a paraphrase of traditional versions, the Good News Bible has behind it years of historical research and fresh study of ancient documents, including the Dead Sea Scrolls.

A spokesman for the American Bible Society has described it as “neither academic nor simplistic.” Many Protestant churches have thus far voiced qualified approval, not only for its text but for the 500 simple line drawings by Swiss artist Annie Vallotton.

Evangelical readers will undoubtedly be critical of the Good News Bible because it tends to choose translations suited to clarity and not necessarily the most precise one. Some authorities are finding it too interpretive, while others find the new version strongly paraphrased, though not to the extent found in The Living Bible. A Lutheran pastor and theologian in New York City sees the new version as relying heavily on paraphrase, and stated: “Paraphrase must offer interpretation. You have

to select from all possible interpretations and narrow it down to one that is not necessarily accurate." This practice, he said, "makes the Bible sound like 'Peanuts' or Agatha Christie, and you could be misleading people."

The article goes on to state that probably the strongest criticism will come from "traditionalists for whom the King James Version remains the standard-bearer for all Bibles." Nevertheless, it is still the belief of Biblical scholars that the King James Version still holds its place of honour in most American homes, but that it is losing ground in our increasingly secular society. As a result, an expanding place is seen for the Good News Bible and other modern-language versions.

It is noted that Roman Catholics have been slower than Protestants to seek additional translations to the seventeenth-century Douay version, although in 1966 the Jerusalem Bible—offspring of a French version—won much praise. Also, in 1970, a modern-language version was published as the New American Bible under auspices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

As for the nation's six million Jews, it was noted that the 1917 translation of the Old Testament Scriptures by the Jewish Publication Society is still the standard English-language version, although Jewish scholars are working on a modern version to be published within the next decade.

As a conclusion to the article, Prof. Martin Marty of Chicago is quoted as saying:

"We shall simply think of keeping the King James for one purpose and the new translations for another. It is interesting that even the conservative Christians today accept modern translations, because they caught the

idea that they can get more out of them than they do the King James Version. Everyone is going to have to learn to coexist with a lot of different translations."

The point of Prof. Marty's closing statement is well-taken. Presently I am involved in a home Bible study group and the variety of versions, even among a small number of people, is amazing—and sometimes disconcerting. While realizing as never before the need "to learn to coexist with a lot of different translations," I occasionally long for the days when almost everyone, particularly in relation to the public reading of the Scriptures, used the same version—namely, the King James Version (such an admission as this, I suppose, is in the minds of many a sign of getting older). Today's multiplied translations and paraphrases often tend to confuse rather than clarify, and as for Bible memorization, it has been virtually nullified in many quarters simply because neither Sunday school teacher nor pupil could settle on any one translation from which to memorize.

Having been raised on the King James Version, plus all my Bible memorization being based on it, this translation will no doubt always be my favourite, and I say this at the risk of being thought of as narrow-minded, begoted, obscurantic, not "with it," and so on.

The New Scofield Reference Bible has served to update many of the King James Version's archaic words and phrases, although my own personal opinion is that the editors did not go far enough. Had many more acceptable changes been made, the New Scofield Reference Bible might have had a much wider reception, particularly among young people, and I make this kindly

observation and criticism as one who this past year read every word of it from Genesis through Revelation.

It was the Apostle Paul who said, “I have learned in whatever state I am, in this to be content” (Philippians 4:11). Adapting his words, I so far can only say, “I am learning in whatever new version I am, in this to be content.”

Thank God for good, solid, updated translations, yet it would be a relief not to see any more for a long time to come, primarily because few Christians have hardly been able to read and digest even a fourth of those now available. Having said this, please don’t get the idea that I am against all new translations, or ungrateful for the toil of diligent scholars, or against genuine progress in accurately translating the Scriptures (11 translations are within arm’s reach as I write!) It’s just that in my opinion we’re overloaded with them, and I am sure there are many others who share this same view.

Nevertheless, whatever your favourite version may be, by all means keep reading the Book of books daily. Oh yes, and always remember that in reality the best translation of the Bible is a man or woman living a godly life in obedience to it.

Learning to Do Without

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Learning to Do Without

In midsummer my home assembly received an informative letter concerning the plight of fellow Christians in Budapest, Hungary (population 1,900,000). Evidently the government wanted the property on which their old assembly building was located, leaving this local church of several hundred believers without a suitable facility in which to gather for their various meetings.

A new assembly building will cost them approximately $150,000. By our living standards the great majority of these dear saints are poverty-stricken. Yet, out of their meager material means they are giving what they can toward this project, many of them having sold personal possessions such as jewelry in order to have something to contribute.

As a local assembly in the United States we felt burdened to respond to this vital project, although our gift was precious little compared to the total need. At the present time of writing (August 1976) gifts totalling $5,887 have been received from various North American assemblies.

In thinking about this worthy project and its representative need, as well as the needs of so many others worldwide, it is to be wondered if we in plush luxury-laden America have learned anything at all about

doing without in order to assist others for the Name and sake of our Lord Jesus Christ (and I address my own heart and conscience first). A case in point is the energy crisis which burst upon us three years ago. At the time, and for many months following, there was a great deal of talk about the possibility of rationing gasoline and that its cost would eventually rise to a dollar a gallon. As a nation we were asked to cut down on fuel consumption in every possible way, including the turning down of thermostats. Now, after three years, using my home State of Michigan as an example, people in general have cut down very little on fuel consumption, if at all. As for gasoline, more than ever is being consumed as multitudes, evangelical Christians included, pursue a life-style to which learning to do without is totally foreign. In a recent issue of U. S. News & World Report a University of Kansas professor was quoted as having said that if the people of the United States had met the crisis of Pearl Harbour in the same way they have met the energy crisis, we would now all be speaking Japanese.

I am reminded of a quaint little story which appeared in LeTourneau College's Now publication a couple of years ago. A preacher was holding evangelistic services in a district where there had been one drought after another. As a result, the people in that vicinity were very poor; but many were experiencing the joy that comes from a vital relationship with the Lord. The preacher had been invited to stay with one family which was not blessed with a great deal of this world's goods, and he shared a bed with a little fellow who was quite used to being denied some of the extras that many youngsters enjoy.

One night as they both retired, the little fellow looked up at the nicely dressed preacher and in his stuttering voice said: “Mis-mis-mister, if, if, if you want anything that you don’t see around here, ple-ple-please tell us about it; and we will show you how to get along without it!”

Undoubtedly that little boy could teach most of us a few things.

Technologists tell us that there is an energy crisis, that the day of cheap energy is a thing of the past, and that a day of reckoning will come if we blindly pursue our present reckless consumption of available resources. In other words, they are telling us that some day, like it or not, we are going to have to learn to do without. Meanwhile, as Christians midst material plenty, we may well ask ourselves if we have learned anything at all about doing without in order that other Christians, not so fortunate as we are, might have a little more to assist them in furthering the Gospel of Christ.

As we approach another Christmas season, coupled with the challenges and possibilities of another New Year, it is especially pertinent that we think about these things, including our priorities.

Other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, there is no better example of one who learned to do without that others might be benefitted than that of the Apostle Paul, who exhorted the Galatians: “And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9-10).

Oldest Hebrew Manuscript

According to The Jerusalem Post, a facsimile edition of the Aleppo Codex — the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible — was unveiled to the press in Jerusalem last July 7th. It represents the fruit of twenty years of research by the staff of the Hebrew University Bible Project. The original manuscript dates back to 930 A.D., having been corrected and punctuated by Aaron ben Asher at that time.

In the seventh century A.D. rabbinic leaders in Babylonia (modern Iraq), then the world center of Jewry, felt the need to establish the official text of the Torah (the Law or Pentateuch). Their efforts led two centuries later to the massoretic text of Aaron ben Asher, which won general acceptance. By the end of the eleventh century A.D. the manuscript —a codex (book) rather than a scroll —had been carried off from Jerusalem to Cairo to Maimonides, the greatest rabbinic authority of medieval Jewry. Miamonides declared that only this codex might serve as a model for writing scrolls of the Law. The fact that every printed Hebrew Bible in the world today is identical is due to this decision by Miamonides.

From Egypt the Ben Asher codex was transferred to Aleppo, Syria, where the Jewish community held it in unique reverence for many centuries. In 1948, during the outbreaks against Syrian Jews that followed Israel’s War of Independence, this treasure was set on fire. Fortunately, about 600 of the 800 pages of the manuscript were saved. In 1956 they were smuggled out of Syria by devout Jews and delivered for safe keeping to the then President of Israel, Izhak Ben Zvi. This

invaluable manuscript is now kept at the Yad Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem.

Most of the Pentateuch is among the lost portion of the codex. It now begins with Deuteronomy 28:17 and includes the books of Joshua, Judges and Samuel. However, 1 Kings is Missing, as well as parts of 2 Kings and Jeremiah. Most of the Minor Prophets, Chronicles and the Book of Psalms are preserved, although some of the later books are missing.

The facsimile of the Aleppo Codex is in the actual size of the original. The 500 red and blue, leather-bound, numbered copies will sell for about $400 or approximately 3,200 Israeli pounds. The total cost of the project was about $125,000 according to Professor Goshen-Gottstein, who directed the project.

The United States in Prophecy

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The United States In Prophecy

William Kelly (1820-1906) was once told by a Dublin professor that if Mr. Kelly would settle there as a teacher, he would make a fortune. Typical of his simplicity and self-effacement, Kelly replied, "For which world?" C.H. Spurgeon, borrowing Alexander Pope's words, said that Kelly was "born for the universe." An outstanding spiritual scholar, Kelly's list of writings include Lectures or Notes on all the books of the Bible.

One of his volumes, Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets, was first published in 1874. In his comments on Joel regarding various details pertaining to the coming "Day of the Lord," Kelly made some astute observations about several nations, including the United States. While we may not agree with every detail, I felt our readers would be interested in his remarkably up-to-date insights from Scripture, keeping in mind that Kelly wrote these words a little over one hundred years ago. The following paragraphs are quoted in full from pages 109-10:

England, like the rest of western Europe, will be under the apostate influence of Rome and the antichrist; for there is no power faithfully protesting against this iniquity. For similar reasons, if I might venture to give an opinion (and I never think of giving one's own thought as more than that), it is that the United States of

America will be swamped into a political marsh; and as they have been hitherto a mere omnium gatherum or conglomerate from the rest of the world, especially from Europe, comprising no doubt a vast deal of skill, industry, and enterprise, but also not a little of the scum and refuse of all nations; so I believe they will break up into factions of noisy primitive elements; and, after going off in boastful vapouring, will at length burst as a bubble.

Population does not in itself make a nation strong. Some of the nations greatest in masses of men have been politically weak before a small energetic kingdom. Look at Darius' power, as opposed to Alexander and his Macedonians. The last appeared contemptible. Did it not seem the greatest folly for these few adventurers to invade Asia, and face the enormous armaments of Persia? Yet the he-goat with his horn was too much for the myriads of the great king, and the second empire collapsed.

So as to America, I conceive that the young giant power which has grown so fast will sink still faster, probably through intestine quarrel, but assuredly somehow before that day comes. They will break up into different fragments. Their prime object is to maintain political unity. This is their great ambition, and though it may appear to stand and advance, as everything ambitious is apt to prosper for a time, it will be all blown down before long. For it is a remarkable fact that there is no place in prophecy for a vast influential power, such as the American United States would naturally be, if it so long retained its cohesion. Is it conceivable that there should be such a power existing at that day without any mention of it? Can the omission be accounted for save

by its dissolution? However, I particularly wish every one to understand that this is merely drawn from the general principles of the Word of God.

India I presume will be part of the north-eastern system spoken of here and elsewhere. The British will lose possession of India, as nationalists wake up to yearn after their own distinct position. And such is even now the tendency, which prophecy distinctly recognizes as characterizing the end of this age. The Russian empire, as being itself north-eastern, is destined to be the suzerain power there. They may not be aware of the role divine prophecy attributes to them, of their immense success, and of their total destruction under the hand of Jehovah. But Scripture is clear. (Compare Ezekiel 38, 39.) Divine judgment will not slumber.

A Prayer

Many months ago a Christian friend sent me a copy of a poem which Sam Mattix quoted at a meeting sometime after his release with P.O.W.'s from various North Vietnam prisons. Since neither the author nor the source was given, it is not possible at this point to give credit to whom credit is due. The poem, in the form of a prayer, reads as follows:

O Lord, help me in silence to find peace — not just emptiness in suffering to find meaning — not just agony in knowledge to find wisdom — not just information in routine to find order — not just boredom in order to find purpose — not just conformity in daily life to find surprises — not just the expected in prayer to find You — not just my own desires in change to find promises — not just threats in opportunities to find possibilities — not just problems in sin to find forgiveness — not just

guilt in problems to find hope — not just despair in leadership to find direction — not just power in challenges to find trust in You — not just personal insecurity. Amen.

Be Careful For Nothing

“Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

Commenting on the words of this familiar text, George Muller said:

“This is one of the privileges of the child of God, that they are permitted, and not only permitted, but invited, and not only invited, but commanded, to bring all their cares, sorrows, trials, and wants to their heavenly Father; to roll all their burdens upon God. And because they are permitted, yea, commanded so to do, they have no need to be anxious about anything. If the men of the world see that Christians are anxious like themselves, they will have ground for saying that our profession of having an Almighty Friend and Helper in Heaven is only a profession; and therefore we dishonour God by not trusting Him in the hour of need. We have, however, such a Friend, and He is willing and able to help us and to deliver us in His own time and way.”

The Security of the Saved

From The Editor's Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

The Security Of The Saved

Today, a frequently discussed question relative to the Word of God is the eternal security of the believer, or as the older theologians called it, the perseverance of the saints. The doctrine of security is one of the five points of Calvinism, the other four being: the total depravity of man, unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace. This important major doctrine is well stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which asserts: "They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (17:1).

The fact, however, that the doctrine of security is one of the five points of Calvinism and is firmly upheld by the Westminster Confession of Faith is not what gives it a place of importance. Rather, it is distinguished in its importance because, as Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has so aptly stated: "… it is set forth in the New Testament in the most absolute terms and is there seen to be an indivisible feature of that which God undertakes when a soul is saved.'"

It was Charles H. Spurgeon who said, "I believe not so much in the perseverance of the saints as in the perseverance of the Saviour."1 Sometime ago the editor was having breakfast with several evangelical

preachers. As we chatted, one of these preachers whom I knew to be Arminian in his convictions told us of some spiritual blessing he had experienced recently in his ministry, and in his description of what had happened he said, “Several young people were saved for the first time.” Not wishing to get into a possible argument, I simply smiled to myself, yet at the same time realized the seriousness of his erroneous teaching, coupled with the fact that many of God’s dear people live in needless fear of losing their salvation if they somehow don’t hang on.

Granted, many Scriptures seem to teach that a child of God can lose his salvation. However, all seeming difficulties of either a moral or Scriptural character can be properly understood by the application of four key points. First of all, there are those who object that the doctrine of eternal security leads to license, but those who raise this objection fail to understand the true believer’s heart. The Christian who truly loves the Lord will not want to sin. William Hoste has discerningly stated: “It is the one who enjoys most of Christ who will seek most to please Him.” Second, the sinning believer is subject to God’s chastening judgment, which eventually leads to the “sin unto death” (Heb. 12:6; see 1 John 5:16 with 1 Cor. 11:27-32). Third, while the believer’s union with God in Christ can never be broken, his communion can, and this is the explanation of many Bible passages which appear to pose a difficulty. Fourth and last, a number of passages refer to professors, who may have considerable light and knowledge but in reality are not possessors of eternal life (1 John 2:19).

It is true that the expression “eternal security” does not occur in the Bible, but neither does the term “trinity”

occur. Yet, who among true believers would deny the latter doctrine just because the term is not found in the Scriptures?

The plan of salvation (Eph. 1:3-14), the purpose and power of the Father (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Pet. 1:5), the promise and prayer of the Son (John 10:28-29; 17:11, 15), and the presence and permanence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; Eph. 1:13; 4:30), all guarantee the eternal security of every true believer. In fact, any one of these blessed spiritual realities is sufficient to guarantee eternal security.

On this important doctrine, Dr. E. Schuyler English has forthrightly written as follows: “Reverently we say it: if God fails to keep a single one of those for whom Christ has died, He dishonors the Son and fails to fulfill completely that which was accomplished by His Son at Calvary. To reject the doctrine of the Christian’s eternal security, however well-meaning this disallowance may be, comes dangerously close to doing despite to the grace of God, and to His love and power.”2 Many years ago at the great Keswick Convention in England, a Christian said to Mr. George Silwood, “Is it not blessed to be safe in the arms of Jesus?” “Yes,” said Mr. Silwood, “but I am safer than that.” When asked how this could be, Mr. Silwood joyfully replied, “Why I am as safe as an arm of Jesus.” (See Ephesians 5:30.)

* * *

The Early Conversion of Children

Seventy years ago an evangelist named John A. Hoffman boxed in an area down the side of his personal stationery. In this box he listed 22 reasons why children

should be converted early in life. In July 1977 his daughter, Mary Hofman, who resides in Portland, Oregon, sent this list to the editorial office of Child Evangelism Fellowship in Warrenton, Missouri. Having appeared in the April CEF's "Fellowship News,"

I felt our readers would be interested in thoughtfully going over them. They should serve as an encouragement to all of us who, in any measure, work among children.

The list is as follows:

1. Because children are sinners and are lost.

2. Because Jesus Christ died for them and they can be saved.

3. Because the simple plan of salvation through faith in Christ is the same for children as for grown-ups.

4. Because there is a special promise for the young: "Those that seek me early shall find me."

5. Because it is constantly found that there are children who want to come to Jesus, but who do not know the way.

6. Because they are not safe until they have come.

7. Because they may die while they are still young.

8. Because the Lord may come and none of them will ever grow up.

9. Because when the child's heart is tender and not yet hardened by sin, he is more receptive to the Gospel.

10. Because the child receives the truth in more simple faith than the adult.

11. Because it is easy for children to love, and therefore, they may be taught to love Jesus.

12. Because it is easy for children to trust, and so they may be led to trust in Jesus.

13. Because those converted early in life often make the most earnest and consistent Christians.

14. Because, having life before them, they are likely to become the most useful Christians.

15. Because the influence of a Christian child may lead others to Christ.

16. Because we now have the children with us, and it is easy to get them to listen to the story of the cross.

17. Because thousands of children leave our Sunday Schools unconverted at the age of thirteen or fourteen.

18. Because when they grow up without Christ they often drift into sin, and it then becomes very difficult to reach them.

19. Because these children will become the parents of the next generation.

20. Because the work among the young does not require special gifts so much as earnestness and love.

21. Because it is a work that brings us nearer to Christ.

22. Because the lambs are so dear to the heart of the Good Shepherd who said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

1 Systematic Theology, III, p. 267.

2 Our Rope, June 1952, p. 760.

Learning from Letters

From the Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

Learning From Letters

Ordinarily it is impolite to read other people’s personal mail, but when personal letters are published in book form for all to read it is quite legitimate to read them, and this, with much profit.

Last year The Banner of Truth Trust publishing company of Edinburgh, Scotland and Carlisle, Pennsylvania, published a paperback entitled, Letters of A. W. Pink. These published letters were written during the period from 1924 to 1951.

Over the years I confess to have occasionally wondered about Arthur W. Pink. I knew virtually nothing about the background of this Christian author, yet many of his books have for years been on my library shelves. As I have read or referred to these books, I have been spiritually blessed and instructed more fully in the Word of God. It might interest you to know (if you didn’t know it before) that our associate editor, James Gunn, wrote most of the material in chapter 20-23 of Pink’s Gleanings in Joshua, since the author died on July 15, 1952, before the series was completed.

I am well aware that Pink has been criticized, and sometimes quite harshly, for certain of his views with which many of us would take issue, and rightly so. However, it is not my purpose to pursue those things held by Pink which most of us, if not all, would consider

extreme or radical, and in some instances erroneous. The fact remains that he was overall a godly and gifted man. Few in the more modern times have addicted themselves to the kind of in-depth Bible study in which he engaged. For some thirty years, in comparative obscurity, he wrote and edited a magazine of Biblical exposition entitled Studies in the Scriptures. It is largely, if not exclusively, from hundreds of his expository articles and series published in this magazine that his many volumes have been produced.

As the publishers state concerning the Letters of A. W. Pink, “The insights which characterize his other writings abound here also. This first collection of his letters is a natural introduction and companion to his major works of biblical exposition.”

I thought it would be edifying to our readers to ponder what Pink had to say about his method of studying the Bible. In a letter written to a Mr. Lowell Green on December 18, 1933, and as part of a chapter called “Profiting from the Word” (pp. 23-25), he wrote:

“In my early years I assiduously followed this threefold course: first, I read through the entire Bible three times a year (eight chapters in the Old Testament, and two in the New Testament daily). I steadily persevered in this for ten years, in order to familiarize myself with its contents, which can only be done by consecutive reading. Second, I studied a portion of the Bible each week, concentrating for ten minutes (or more) each day on the same passage, pondering the order of it, the connection between each statement, seeking a definition of the important terms in it, looking up all the marginal references, being on the look-out for its typical

significance. Third, I meditated on one verse every day; writing it out on a slip of paper in the morning, memorizing it, consulting it at odd moments through the day; pondering separately each word in it, asking God to open to me its spiritual meaning and to write it on my heart. The verse was my food for that day, meditation standing to reading as mastication does to eating.

“The more some such method as the above be followed out, the more shall we be able to say, ‘Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path’ (Ps. 119:105). Let me use this verse as an example of what I mean by the third method above, of meditating on the Word. After getting the verse definitely before my mind (accurately memorizing it), I begin by asking questions: thus —Is the second clause of this verse merely a repetition of the first? That is hardly likely. What, then, is the distinct and separate concept in each clause? To help me answer, I must next ponder the exact terms found in each. In the former a ‘lamp’ is mentioned, in the latter ‘light’; in the former ‘my feet’ are in view, in the latter ‘my path’. While, then, the concepts of both clauses are similar, yet they are not identical.

“Satisfied on this point, that the second clause it not merely a repetition of the first, I seek to ascertain the difference between them: and this, by defining the figurative expressions here used. ‘Thy word is a lamp.’ When is a ‘lamp’ needed? Not in the daytime, but at night, when it is dark. If we are more or less familiar with Scripture, other verses will now flow into the mind, linking up with the one we are pondering! For example, we shall recall how 2 Peter 1:19 tells us this world is ‘a dark place’. And why is it so? because ‘the Light of the world is absent (John 8:12; 12:35). Then we shall recall

that ‘the night is far spent’ (Rom. 13:12) — hence our need for the ‘lamp’!

“Second, note ‘a lamp unto my feet’ and not ‘my eyes’ — not to read by, but to walk by. This world is not only in darkness but it is a place of great danger to the child of God, for there are gins and snares, pitfalls and precipices on every side, and unless I have the light of God’s Word directing my ‘feet’, I am sure to fall into those snares — see Proverbs 4:19!”

From Sinkiang To Sinai

In the January 1979 issue of the Prophetic Witness, Dr Frederick A. Tatford has penned a brief article entitled “The Himalayan Highway.” Like myself, you may not have known that there is in existence today a road, ten yards wide, which runs from China through Tibet as far as Iran. It is described as one of the most spectacular engineering feats of modern times. Last June a 540-mile section was opened from Sinkiang Province in China to Pakistan, following the old silk route initiated by Marco Polo. For eight years some 10,000 Chinese laborers have carved the road out of the sides of mountains, some of which are 18,000 feet high. So far 2,700 lives have been lost in building this formidable highway. Most of the work has been done with pick and shovel since modern machinery has proved unwieldly and impractical in that part of the world.

Ultimately, the intention of the Chinese is to extend this road to Africa as a solution to meeting the tremendous food needs of China’s 850,000,000 people. This means, of course, that the road must cut through the Middle East via Sinai enroute to Africa.

Currently, thousands of men are being employed to keep the road free from the landslides of torrential rains, and in Pakistan it is being heralded as “the new wonder of Asia.”

As Dr. Tatford has indicated, John the Seer has told us that some day the waters of the Euphrates will be dried up in order that “the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” (Rev. 16:12). This prophecy reveals that at some time yet future all the barriers will be removed for an invasion of Israel from the Far East.

Thus it is not without good reason that Dr. Tatford asks, “Is this merely an engineering feat or are we seeing the basis being laid for the fulfilment of yet another Biblical prophecy?”

Tribute

O Lord

I cannot bear Thy cross

Beyond the city gate,

Nor ever know, as Simon knew,

The burden of its weight.

I cannot lean,

As John, beloved,

With reverence on Thy breast;

Nor walk,

As Peter walked in faith,

Across the billows’ crest.

I cannot work, as Martha worked,

Nor bring the ointment sweet,

As Mary

Broke her costly flask

Of fragrance

At Thy feet.

I can but look to Thee in prayer,

And seek

Thy Spirit's fill

One gift to give:

My heart and soul surrendered to Thy will.

—Constance Calenberg (in The Pilgrim)

* * *

It is easier to serve God without a vision, easier to work for God without a call, because then you are not bothered by what God requires; common sense is your guide, veneered over with Christian sentiment. You will be more prosperous and successful, more leisure-hearted, if you never realize the call of God. But if you once receive a commission from Jesus Christ, the memory of what God wants will always come like a goad; you will no longer be able to work for Him on the common basis.

Practical work may be competitor against abndonment to God, because practical work is based on this argument — Remember how useful you are here, or — Think how much value you would be in that particular type of work. That attitude does not put Jesus Christ as the Guide as to where we should go, but our judgment as to where we are of most use. Never consider whether

you are of use, but ever consider that you are not your own but His.

—Oswald Chambers

A Last Link

MIF 3:4 (July-Aug 1971)

Editorial

W. Ross Rainey

A Last Link

According to U.S. News & World Report, long-standing hurdles have now been removed for construction of the last section in the famed 14,000-mile Pan-American Highway, extending from mid-Alaska to the southern tip of South America. This last link is through a 256-mile stretch of jungles and swamps in Panama and Columbia, and it will take five years to complete a usable road, 10 years for a full paved highway.

The U.S. Congress already has voted the U.S.'s share of about 100 million dollars. Plans are to let bids for the Highway project in July and to begin construction as soon as the next dry season starts, in January. After 33 years of road building, hopes are that by late 1976 U. S. tourists will be able to drive south of the border into South America.

The main hangup has been the 40-mile wide Atrato Swamp with its apparently bottomless muck, but American engineers operating with helicopters and infrared photo-mapping equipment found a way to build across the Darien Gap by laying a causeway directly across the swamp by using rock fill, with a long bridge to be constructed for one portion.

Thinking about all this, I couldn't help but thankfully reflect on the "Highway to Heaven." It required the

infinite wisdom of the Triune God to make it possible, its purchase price having been the precious blood of Christ, and there is no last link yet required — the work was finished some two thousand years ago. To sinful man there are many highways that seem to lead to Heaven (Prov. 14:12), but the Lord Jesus Christ dogmatically said: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6; cf. Matt. 7:13-14). It is both significant and fitting that the early Christians were looked on and referred to by pagans as those of “the Way” (Acts 19:23; 24:14).

Along the highways of this life, are we telling others of Christ Who alone is “the Highway” to Heaven?

—W.R.R

Unscriptural Expressions

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Unscriptural Expressions

Have you ever thought about and perhaps even questioned in your own mind some of the more or less unscriptural expressions used by Christians and sometimes passed along from generation to generation?

For instance, we frequently hear in both praying and preaching the desire stated that sinners might be brought to “a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.” Without nitpicking, it seems to me that this is not an altogether scripturally accurate expression. Multitudes of people have “a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ,” yet they are not saved. I know many such individuals personally, and undoubtedly you do also. In other words, those to whom we refer know the facts of the Gospel, but they have never personally come to know Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

When in my early twenties, someone pointed out to me that it is Scripturally accurate, and therefore much better, to use the term “saving faith” rather than “saving knowledge.” After all, it is not our factual knowledge of Christ that saves us, necessary as some knowledge of Him is, but it is our personal faith in Him that saves.

Another unscriptural expression I have heard from the time I can remember is linked with the Lord’s Supper — namely, that as often as we eat the bread and drink of the cup “we do show the Lord’s death till He come.” To

this day we frequently hear this expressed in both prayer and spoken word. Its use, of course, stems from a poor translation in the King James Version (1 Corinthians 11:26). The word “show” should have been translated “declare” or “proclaim.” When we remember our Lord in His death we do not “show” it; we “declare” or “proclaim” it. And this is why the Lord’s Supper is as much a Gospel meeting as any meeting expressly convened for the preaching of the Gospel.

Browsing through some of Walter Scott’s articles in his now long out of print book, Selections from Fifty Years’ Ministry, he commented on a number of unscriptural expressions prevalent in his day, several of which have carried down to the present time.

Among those cited are the following:

1. “The righteousness of Christ.” This common theological phrase is not once employed by any of the sacred writers. “The righteousness of God” is scriptural language and thought (Romans 3).

2. “Jesus on the cross forsaken by His Father.” On the contrary, that relationship was unbroken, for Jesus said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” On the cross it was a question of glorifying God in His holy nature in respect to sin, hence the cry of agony was addressed to God, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This, by the way, is the only instance recorded of our Lord directly addressing His Father as God (Mark 15:34).

3. “Jesus came from the bosom of the Father.” He never left the bosom of the Father. Morally He was ever there. On earth after His coming from God, it is said, “The only

begotten son, who is (not was) in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18).

4. "The debt is paid." Scripture never so speaks. The penalty has been endured, and the sins are forgiven. What you as a creature in common with angels owe to God is OBEDIENCE — that is not, cannot in the nature of things be paid, but "when they had nothing to pay, he frankly" — paid (?) — no, "forgave them both" (Luke 7:42).

5. "A risen Christ." Why reverse and twist the order of the beautiful words of Scripture? Is there a Christ not raised? "Now is Christ risen from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20; etc.).

6. "Archangels." There is only one such referred to in Scripture (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9).

7. "Streets of gold." "Street" not streets (Revelation 21:21).

8. "Christ our Elder Brother." This is a most irreverent expression. He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Hebrews 2:11), nor is God ashamed to avow us as His people (Hebrews 11:16). What marvelous and condescending grace! But to speak of Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever," as our elder brother is an unpardonable impertinence, and an insult to the preeminent dignity and glory of Him who is our Lord and Master (John 13:13-15).

9. "The song of angels." We would not say that angels do not sing. There are two things not predicated of angels: it is not said they love, nor are loved; neither is it on record that they sing. In Revelation 5, the redeemed sing; the angels say; see also Luke 2:13-15, the angels

say. The first song recorded in Scripture is contained in Exodus 15 — a grand celebration of vistory accomplished by Jehovah and sung by the redeemed host of Israel.

10. “We shall cast our crowns at His feet.” The crowns of the redeemed are cast before the throne (Revelation 4:10), while they themselves fall down before the Lamb (Revelation 5:8). How exquisitely beautiful! Our crowns before the throne, for that is the source of our royal dignity, and thus we acknowledge it, but we owe all to the Lamb — to His precious blood, and hence we fall down before Him.

A Scholarly Squelch

Not until recently did I learn from my father that as a young missionary in China he had enjoyed personal contact with the then well-known Christian scholar Dr. Robert Dick Wilson (1856-1930). Dr. Wilson was a Presbyterian philologist and theologian. He was the author of many scholarly works and had a distinguished teaching career. From 1900-1929 he was professor of Semitic philology and Old Testament introduction at Princeton Theological Seminary and was co-founder of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929. Whenever I hear or read this celebrated scholar’s name, I usually recall an incident from his experience which has been published in leaflet form, entitled, “Snowed Under.” Its substance is as follows:

A man once said to Robert Dick Wilson: “Dr. Wilson, how can you hold the position that the Bible records are absolutely dependable? They are not in keeping with what I conceive to be scholarship.”

Dr. Wilson said to him: “Do you read Hebrew?”

“No.”

“Do you read Greek?”

“A little.”

“Have you read the original records?”

“No.”

“Do you speak French?”

“No.”

“Do you speak German?”

“No.”

“Do you speak Persian?”

“No.”

“Do you know astronomy?”

“No.”

“Are you a chemist or physicist?” “No.”

“What is the claim of scholarship you are making? I read Hebrew, I read Greek; I speak French; I speak German; I speak Persian; I know Sanskrit; I know astronomy; I know most of the sciences. I claim to be something of a scholar. On what basis of scholarship do you put your doubt of these records? On my basis of scholarship I put my affirmation that these records can be depended upon.”

By the time Dr. Wilson got that far, the man had sneaked out of the room.

The moral of the account is: do not let anyone claiming scholarship scare you away.

Advice to Young Preachers

W.H. Griffith Thomas said it: “Think yourself empty, read yourself full, write yourself clear, pray yourself keen — then enter the pulpit and let yourself go!”

Walter Scott

MIF 7:2 (Mar-Apr 1975)

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Walter Scott

In February 1969 I took time out of my schedule to assist my father in the somewhat tedious task of selling and disbanding the old family homestead in Mt. Plymouth, Florida. The old house, the second on the site (the first had been destroyed by fire), and the adjacent property had been on my mother’s side of the family for the better part of a century. Mother had gone to be with Christ three years before and, because of his extended preaching trips, it was difficult for my father to try and maintain the house, coupled with the fact that while away on one of his trips, the house had been robbed.

It was in this home that an assembly work had been carried on for many years and later developed into what is today the Hiawassa Bible Chapel in Orlando. Then from the Hiawassa work still another local assembly was established in the Winter Park area, known presently as Lake Howell Bible Chapel. It was to this chapel that my father gave many hundreds of choice books from his extensive library. There were, however about 200 volumes which I rightfully appropriated for my own library, and among them a splendid book by Walter Scott, entitled, Selections from Fifty Years’ Written Ministry, and published in 1913. Today, Walter Scott is probably best remembered for his classic Exposition of

Revelation, which I think is still the choicest volume available on Revelation, although there are some no doubt who would dispute my words.

At any rate, from time to time I will be sharing selections from this book which has long been out of print, assured that our reader family will be spiritually blessed and enriched as a result. Our first selection is, fittingly enough, a brief commentary on Revelation 21, and called, “The Gates of Pearl.”

In the magnificent jasper wall (Divine glory) are set twelve gates of pearl, and adds the seer, “every several gate was of one pearl.” In Matthew 13:46, to which reference is here made, we learn that the pearl was of “great price,” costing the Lord all that He had in order to procure it and make it His own. Now in His love He is cleansing and beautifying it, and will not rest till He has set it in glory—in the jasper wall. Matchless pearl! Divine beauty is thine! O Church, thy Lover has thrown His own loveliness over thee, and He is about to present thee, fruit of His agony and death, to Himself spotless and in glory!

Amongst the symbolic numerals of Scripture, twelve is largely employed when human administration is in view. The gate of the city in the east from time immemorial is the place of judgment. Thus in the twelve gates set in the jasper wall, and arranged in triplets on the four sides of the golden city, and thus facing all parts of the redeemed earth, we witness in perfection the true union of Church and State, of which chapter 17 presents Satan’s counterfeit. The seat of government over the gladsome earth will be the golden city—the Church in eternal association with Christ—a blaze of glory, grandly

resting as a canopy over Mount Zion (Isaiah 4:5,6), the light of the millennial world (Revelation 21:24), and the object to which are brought the treasures and homage of kings and nations (24, 26). O believer, what a destiny is before thee! We are of God (1 Corinthians 1:30). What an origin is thine, rivalling that of the proudest monarch on earth! Grand times these when the aristocracy are all heaven-born! The government will be administered not as in Judaism by angels, but by Christ and the heavenly saints (Hebrews 2:5-8; Ephesians 1:22). Dear cast-down saint, look up, God thinks much of thee. Thou art forgetful of thy high dignity: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” And as if that were not an honour great enough for thee, adds the inspired record, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3).

The “names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” on the gates of the golden city signify the fulfilment of Matthew 19:28, when the twelve apostles from their royal seats of glory will govern Israel. And what mean the waiting angels as porters at the gates (21:12)? Now they are sent forth on their mission of mercy to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1: 14); there they will be sent forth by the glorified saints on governmental missions. Wondrous gates of pearl! Christ will exhibit the Church to an admiring world. Pearl-like, her beauty and value will be witnessed by creation as He regards her. Her unity too—“one pearl”. May our God send our hearts bounding forward in eager desire to His and our wondrous future! Matthew (Matthew 13) shows Christ seeking for, buying, and finding the pearl. Paul (Ephesians 5) reveals Christ in the highest glory

beautifying the pearl. John (Revelation 21) displays the grandeur of the pearl in its Divine setting.

Eye On Iran

The January 1975 National Geographic magazine has a lead pictorial article entitled, “Iran: Desert Miracle.” Snail-like in shape, but not in progress, this Middle Eastern country has an area of 636,293 square miles and a population of 32,000,000 (it is expected to rise to 36,000,000 by 1980). Its capital city is Tehran (population 3,500,000). Iran is rapidly being industrialized, its economy centering on oil, grain, wool, cotton, and tobacco, coupled with a plentiful supply of natural gas, and raw materials including coal, iron, copper, zinc, lead, manganese, chromite, sulphur and barite.

Many Bible prophecy students think that Iran—the ancient Persia—will play an important role in the future. Various Scripture passages tend to confirm this, among them Ezekiel 38:5, which places Persia among the nations that will ultimately move against Israel and be involved in the coming great tribulation battle of Armageddon. As we watch the Middle East, keep an eye on Iran.

New Privacy Law

The growing federal bureaucracy of the United States has information on millions of Americans stored in its computers. As a result, on December 18, 1974, Congress moved to check the use and abuse of this information when it passed the bulk of the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, and which goes into effect in nine months.

Privacy is an extremely important element in life. We need it and we have a right to it. However, thinking about this new law and the subject of privacy in general, I was reminded that there is no privacy from God's absolute knowledge of every detail of our words and deeds, even though multitudes of men and women the world over like to think otherwise. The Word of God tells us that "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). Believers and unbelievers alike need to realize this truth, the former in particular reminding ourselves that some day, perhaps sooner than we think, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Changing Years

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

The Changing Years

ACROSS the threshold of the year
I dare not step without a guide,
Oh, let me feel Thy presence near,
And know Thee ever at my side.
So many foes on every hand,
So many snares laid for my feet,
Left to myself I cannot stand,
To trust in self, but courts defeat.
But with Thy strong hand clasping mine
The future I can calmly face;
Strong in the love that made me Thine,
And leaning wholly on Thy grace.
Thus shall my way still brighter grow,
Life’s trials tell me all Thou art,
Till with Thee I more fully know
The wealth of Thy great loving heart.
—Selected

Lessons On Listening

Some time ago Dr. Lyman K. Steil, a professor in the department of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota, was interviewed by a representative of U.S. News & World Report. As part of the interview article, eight tips were given for better listening. Here they are:

1. Resist distractions. Concentrate on what is being said.

2. Be an opportunist. Find areas of interest between you and the speaker. Ask yourself: “What’s in this for me?”

3. Stay alert. Don’t daydream if a speaker’s delivery is slow. If your thoughts run ahead of his words, use the time to evaluate, anticipate, review.

4. Identify the speaker’s purpose and adapt to it. Is the aim to inform, to persuade or to entertain?

5. Listen for central themes rather that for isolated facts.

6. Plan to report the content of a message to someone within 8 hours.

7. Develop notetaking skills.

8. As a listener, take primary responsibility for the success of two-way communication. Don’t just depend upon the other person.

These are good points for us to ponder and to put into practice insofar as it is possible.

In the Christian context of things, we rightly expect preachers to be prepared to preach, but what about audiences? Shouldn’t a speaker, and more particularly a preacher, have a right to expect some preparation on the part of his listeners? Undoubtedly, there would be less

unkind criticism of preachers if listeners prepared themselves to listen.

It was James who said, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). As has often been pointed out, since our Lord gave us two ears and one tongue, we should hear twice as much as we speak. Several times in the Synoptic Gospels the Lord Jesus exhorted, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (e.g., Matt. 11:15; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8). Also, either toward the close or at the very end of Christ’s messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Saviour exhorted, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; etc.). Notice that the Lord Jesus does not say “ears” in these verses, but “ear.” His exhortation is that we might have at least one ear open to what the Holy Spirit has to say.

One of today’s chief problems is that few want to listen; virtually all want their say. At times we have gone dialogue-dippy, and as a result there is a grave imbalance in some types of meetings, the result being that some gatherings represent little more than sessions of pooled ignorance.

Perhaps today the most overworked expression falling freely from the lips of all but the most timid and fearful is, “I think …” If you don’t believe this, let me suggest that in the course of a normal day you try and keep track of the number of times you use this statement, or its equivalent (e.g., “It seems to me…”), and I can guarantee you’ll be in for a surprise.

Basically, what you or I think really doesn’t matter. What really matters is what GOD thinks and says. We need to

listen to Him, and then heed His commands and precepts, depending on the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts to truly hear the Word of the Lord with a digged ear (see Deut. 15:17), and this, with a view to obeying the truth as He teaches us.

There are few better New Year's resolutions we could make than to determine, with our Lord's help and by His grace, to be better listeners and doers of His Word throughout 1982.

Marcus Aurelius

Somehow the formidable name, Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.), lives in my memory from early school days. He was both a Roman emperor (161-180 A.D.) and Stoic philosopher. In one of his writings entitled Meditations he expressed a high sense of duty toward mankind. Evidently, he was in measure kindly disposed toward Christianity, but he remained loyal to the old state religion, allowing his mentors —Cornelius Fronto and Junius Rusticus — to influence him away from Christianity. As a result, Aurelius allowed anti-Christian informers a veritable free hand, this in turn having issued in several outbreaks of severe local persecution, notably in Lyons in 177 A.D. Nevertheless, Christianity had a marked influence on Aurelius and it is of interest that he identified the following traits of a successful person:

1. Consciousness of an honest purpose in life.

2. A just estimate of himself and everyone else.

3. Frequent self-examination.

4. Steady obedience to what he knows to be right.

5. Indifference to what others may think or say.

As I pondered this brief list of traits, I couldn't help but think of various New Testament verses which clearly enunciate and underscore the solid truths they represent. For instance, regarding number one in the list, I couldn't help but recall Philippians 1:21 and 3:14 & 15. As for number two, my thoughts turned to Romans 12:10 & 16, as well as Philippians 2:4. On point three I was reminded of the value of the Lord's Supper and the exhortation of 1 Corinthians 11:28. With regard to number four, I recalled Christ's words in John 13:17, and finally, as to Aurelius' last point, I was reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.

Today there are multitudes of people like Marcus Aurelius who have one way or another been influenced by the truth, and as a result both exemplify and proclaim high standards of morality. Yet, the tragedy is that the truth, having influenced them, has never been allowed to change them. Perhaps this is your present situation. If so, it is my prayer that the Spirit of God will convict you of your sins and lead you to confess, as your Saviour and Lord, Him who is the personification of all truth, the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), even as God, our Saviour, desires "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

Editor's Note

These lines are being written on October 15th in Peterborough, Ontario, where I am teaching for the second year in a row a course on 1 CORINTHIANS at Kawartha Lakes Bible School. It was my fond hope in

this issue to publish an up-to-date list of all our FOCUS committee members, but I still do not have this information available. Our Annual Committee Meeting is scheduled for November 7th in Toronto, so in the March-April issue I will plan to publish a complete, updated list of our members, as well as provide a brief report on the meeting itself.

It is with much praise and thanksgiving to our Lord that with this issue I begin my eighth year as editor of FOCUS magazine.

How Well-Dressed Are You?

From the Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

How Well-Dressed Are You?

According to an article which appeared last fall in U.S. News & World Report, entitled, “Does What You Wear Tell Where You’re Headed?”, clothes can make or break one’s chances for moving up the management ladder. At least this is the opinion of Mr. John T. Molloy, 42, a consultant who has devoted his career to studying the role of apparel in business success.

In summarizing tips for executives, Molloy maintains that dark blue or gray clothing implies power and prestige. Leaders should wear something that makes them stand out. Beige raincoats show more class than black ones do (and to think, I just bought a navy blue “London Fog” all-purpose raincoat to replace my tattered beige coat!). Women executives should wear appropriate clothes to work. Gaudy ties have a lower-class look. For businesswomen: carry an attache case instead of a purse. And finally, bow ties show unpredictability (I always did wonder about those two preachers I know who wear bow ties almost exclusively!).

To a degree, clothes certainly do make a man or woman. Reflecting on this fact in the light of Molloy’s comments, my thoughts turned to the Christians’ wardrobe as set forth in the Word of God. For instance, we are commanded to decisively and permanently “put off,” or

as A. T. Robertson says of Colossians 3:8, to “lay aside like old clothes”1 the garments of the old nature, and “put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forebearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you so also do ye. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:12-14).

As to style, Christian women are to “adorn themselves in modest apparel, with godly fear and sobriety…” (1 Tim. 2:9-10; see also 1 Pet. 3:3-6).

Then, too, let’s not forget the believer’s military wardrobe described in Ephesians 6:11-18, wherein the Apostle Paul exhorted: “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, with which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

While Paul does not specifically mention the piece of armor known as the greaves, which covered the knees and lower limbs, they are at least implied in his reference to prayer.

Peter exhorted believers “to be clothed with humility” (1 Pet. 5:5), while Paul further commanded believers to “put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12), and best of all to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

Most true Christians over the world fall far short of the standards set by the fashion designers of New York and Paris. Many have precious little to wear in the way of clothing, particularly those in so-called third world countries, since most of their meager livelihood must be spent on food (if it is attainable). As to outward appearance, there is little excuse for the believer — no matter how few clothes he or she may have — not being neat and clean. As for our spiritual garments, there is no excuse at all for not being well-dressed.

We should be far more concerned about the standards and fashions God has established for us in His Word than with those set by the world, remembering that “the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John. 2:17).

I wonder as we go about our daily tasks, seeking to fulfill our responsibilities in the home, the office, the factory, the school, the community, yes, and in the local assembly, just how well-dressed we are in the sight of God? Will people remember us more for our keeping up with the world’s latest and everchanging fashions, or

will we be remembered more for the way in which we adorned the doctrine of God (see Tit. 2:10ff.)?

* * *

Tidings From Timna

A reporter for The Jerusalem Post, Abraham Rabinovich, writes that more remains have been uncovered at Timna, the town and area in which Samson raised havoc. Located in the middle of the Sorek Valley and near to today's rail line to Jerusalem, it seems evident that the purpose in having built ancient Timna was to guard the old trade route between the coastal plain and Jerusalem that roughly followed the same path.

In modern Arabic the site of Timna is called Batash, scholars having assured us that this is the Biblical Timna where Samson slew a lion, picked a Philistine wife, and caused no little stir when his father-in-law passed the bride along to someone else during Samson's absence. Samson's exploits in the area symbolize the power struggle between the Israelites and the Philistines. The same struggle had been waged earlier between the invading Israelites and the resident Canaanites.

It was not until David's time that Timna and the surrounding area came under Israelite control. Later, in the period of the divided kingdom, it became a border town along the northern perimeter of Judah.

Sennacherib, a cruel and boastful Assyrian king, destroyed Timna around 701 B.C. The city was rebuilt and then destroyed again by the Babylonians. Archaeologists have found signs of sparse settlement dating back to the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. when some Jews returned from the Babylonian exile.

* * *

Henry C. Spence

For some time I wondered why I had not heard from Henry S. Spence of Bournemouth, England. Then, while reading a little bi-monthly paper entitled, “Wholesome Words,” which I receive from New Zealand, I saw a note beneath a brief article from his pen, informing readers that this dear brother had recently been called into the presence of Christ.

Although we never met face to face, I feel in some measure, at least, that I knew brother Spence personally. Occasionally he sent me short devotional articles, a few of which have been published in Focus. He was enthusiastic about the magazine and his little personal notes, generally written in longhand, were always a source of encouragement.

As a little tribute from this editor to the fragrant blessing of his memory (see Prov. 10:7a), I felt it would be in order to publish what was probably among the last devotional articles he wrote. The following thoughts on “Friendship” have been taken from the March-April 1978 issue of “Wholesome Words,” beneath which article appeared the note that he had then recently been called “into the Presence of this Friend whose Name he ever sought to exalt in his writings”:

Friendship is a union between individuals for mutual help; and the longing for friendship is universal. There are trials which are the common lot of humanity. Loneliness —from this great solitude refuge is sought in the companionship and understanding of a friend. The second is sorrow — when this comes the human heart

longs for sympathy which is sought in the heart of a true friend. The third is perplexity —and we long to have someone to confide in — and in whom we can trust for guidance. The fourth is weakness — in times of temptation we need more than advice, and sympathy; we need succour (encouragement). A friend's sympathy lightens sorrow, a friend's advice will often remove perplexity, and a friend's succour will save ruin and hardship.

But while friendship can do much along life's journey, there arise situations in life when the best earthly friends fail by the call of duty, as also by death our dearest friends might be removed, so there always arises a longing for a companionship that will never be broken, for a sympathy that will never be misunderstood, for a wisdom that will never be baffled, and for a strength that will never weaken.

This companionship is found only in the Divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is truly "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). The Lord Jesus is the "eternal Lover of our souls," for He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, `The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me' " Hebrews 13:5-6). For "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35).

Dear friend, can you say with the hymn writer?

I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!

He loved me ere I knew Him;

He drew me with the cords of love,

And thus He bound me to Him.

And round my heart still closely twine

Those ties which naught can sever,

For I am His and He is mine,

Forever and forever.

“Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:5b-6).

* * *

“There is much in the world to make us afraid. There is much more in our faith to make us unafraid!”

—Frederick Cropp

* * *

“He should not preach about hell who can do it without tears.”

—D. L. Moody

* * *

“What? thought I, shall I be proud because I am a sounding brass? Is it such a great thing to be a fiddle? Does not the person who has the least of the life of God in him have more than these instruments? Besides, I remembered that these instruments would vanish away, though love would never die. So I concluded that a little grace, a little love, a little of the true fear of God are better than all the gifts. I am convinced that it is possible for an ignorant soul who can scarcely give a right answer to have a thousand times more grace and to be more in the love and the favor of the Lord, than

some who have marvlous gifts and can deliver themselves like angels.”

—John Bunyan

1 A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, IV, p. 501.

Secrets to a Blessed New Year

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Secrets To A Blessed New Year

It goes without saying that every dedicated child of God desires sincerely to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. However, true believers soon realize we are engaged in a great spiritual conflict (Eph. 6:12), and that we have an adversary, Satan, who seeks constantly to sidetrack and defeat us. In fact, it was the late Paul E. Little who referred to the Christian life as “the victorious Christian conflict.”

Speaking of victory, it’s true that today God’s people rest on a victory already won through Christ on the cross (1 Cor. 15:57), but the question is asked, and rightly so, “What can be done to translate that victory into everyday life and living, involving the home, the neighbourhood, the marketplace and the local church?” In other words, how can we become true overcomers on a daily basis?

As a manifold answer to this key question, here are seven secrets to being a victorious Christian throughout this New Year, the first secret being:

1. Yield to the Lordship of Jesus Christ

(Luke 9:23; see 1 Pet. 3:15)

“And He (Christ) said to their’ all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Having “come unto” Christ for deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin (Matt. 11:28), and we prayerfully trust you have done that, the next step for the Christian is to “come after” Christ and thereby become his disciple. Among other things, this involves a supreme love for the Lord Jesus, a love that supersedes every earthly tie and relationship (Luke 14:26). It also involves denying one’s self and, as William MacDonald has written: “Denial of self is not the same as self-denial. The latter means foregoing certain foods, pleasures, or possessions. But denial of self means such complete submission to the Lordship of Christ that self has no rights or authority at all. It means that self abdicates the throne.”1 On the matter of taking up one’s cross daily, he has further stated: “The cross is not some physical infirmity or mental anguish; these things are common to all men. The cross is a pathway that is deliberately chosen. It is ‘a path which so far as this world goes is one of dishonour and reproach’ — C. A. Coates. The cross symbolizes the shame, persecution and abuse which the world heaped upon the Son of God, and which the world will heap on all who choose to stand against the tide. Any believer can avoid the cross simply by being conformed to the world and its ways.”2 To follow the Lord Jesus means, of course, to live a life of obedience to the revealed will of God. This is what perfectly and totally characterized our Lord’s life, and as Peter has told us, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).

It was Borden of Yale who said, “Lord Jesus, I take hands off, as far as my life is concerned. I put Thee on the

throne in my heart. Change, cleanse, use me as thou shalt choose.'

Can you and I prayerfully say that? The second secret is:

2. Pray Daily

(Psa. 86:3; 88:9, see 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18 with Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2)

"Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily" (Psa. 86:3).

Every child of God needs to commune with the Lord daily. In this way He can impart to us His wisdom and strength, as well as provide all our other needs. The problem is, as once expressed by Lewis Sperry Chafer: "Prayer is hard work and we are inherently lazy."

For your own spiritual blessing and profit, consider several of the practical byproducts of prayer:

1. Fortifying peace (Isa. 26:3 with Phil. 4:6-7).

2. Renewed spiritual strength (Isa. 40:31).

3. Every need supplied (Matt. 7:7-8).

4. Abounding joy (John 16:24).

5. All-sufficient grace (2 Cor. 12:9).

6. Divine wisdom (James 1:5).

7. An increased sense of the presence of God (James 4:8).

The next secret is:

3. Read God's Word Daily

(Acts 17:11; see Josh, 1:8; Psa. 1:1-3)

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Handley C. G. Moule, the Bishop of Durham, wrote: “I place, of course, the secret study, of the holy written Word of God supreme among the helps to secret prayer. Read the Bible on your knees, at least on the knees of your spirit.

Read it to reassure, to regulate, to feed, to kindle, to give your secret prayer body and soul. Read it that you may hold faster your certainty of being heard. Read it that you may know with blessed definiteness whom you have believed, and what you have in Him, and how He is able to keep your deposit safe. Read it in the attitude of mind which the Apostles read it, in which the Lord read it.”

G. R. Harding Wood of Great Britain has suggested that we should read the Bible:

1. COMPLETELY, as part of the Bride of Jesus (just as a bride reads a love letter).

2. CONSTANTLY, as a traveller to the home of Jesus.

3. CAREFULLY, as a scholar in the school of Jesus.

4. CONSCIENTIOUSLY, as a soldier in the army of Jesus.
3 The fourth secret to being a victorious Christian throughout this New Year is:

4. Fellowship With God’s People

(Heb. 10:25)

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).

It is God’s clear will that every believer align himself or herself with a local assembly of Christians which exalts the Lord Jesus and preaches the BOOK, the BLOOD, and the BLESSED HOPE.

The idea of a “loner” in the service of Christ is utterly foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. The fifth secret is:

5. Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

(Eph. 5:18)

“Be (being) filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

In proportion as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, He will fill us with God’s love and power and enable us to manifest His fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

Remember, the filling of the Spirit and the lordship of Christ are two sides of the same coin of truth. Yieldedness is the key.

The next secret is:

6. Witness To Others

(Jer. 7:25; Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 16:5)

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).

It is our daily responsibility not only to keep the faith but to share it.

It was Charles H. Spurgeon who said, “Even if I were utterly selfish and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose if I might, under God, to be a soul-winner, for never did I know perfect overflowing, unutterable happiness of the purest and most ennobling order till I first heard of one who had sought and found the Saviour through my means. No young mother ever so rejoiced over her first-born child, no warrior was so exultant over a hard-won victory.”

What is a witness? The dictionary definition is “a person who saw, or can give a firsthand account of, something … to testify to … to serve as evidence of.”4 One thing, being a witness is not something complicated. As a fitting reminder of this, someone has said, “Too many Christians think they are called to be lawyers for Christ instead of witnesses. Just testify concerning the things you know about Him!”

It goes without saying that if our witness is to have any weight, then it must be backed up by a consistent life. Richard C. Halverston, United States Senate Chaplain, has appropriately said, “Let every serious-minded Christian who would be an effective witness for Christ live as though he had the right to be heard.”

Actually, there is no set prescription for witnessing. Any method can be used provided it is in keeping with Christ’s character and has as its objective the pointing of men and women to Him. Reuben A. Torrey was led to Christ through the witness of a godly mother; Sam Jones, the noted southern evangelist, through the witness of his father; George Mueller through the witness of a friend; John R. Mott through the witness of

a teacher; George Whitefield through the witness of a book!

Above all else, remember that the primary requirement for witnessing is first by being, then by doing!

Finally, we come to our seventh and last secret to being a victorious Christian throughout this New Year:

7. Look For Christ's Return

(Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:13 with James 5:8)

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

The Greek verb for "we look" is in the present tense, instructing us to continually look for the Lord Jesus who at any moment may return.

Among his last words, the Apostle Paul spoke of the "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8). This reward is within the reach of every believer, the condition being that we love Christ's appearing. The verb for "love" is in the perfect tense, an accurate translation being, "that have loved and continue to love His appearing." In other words, there is a durative quality about the Christian's attitude toward the Lord's return. If in that day we are to receive the reward, then we must love his appearing with steadfastness and consistency.

Here, then, are seven secrets to realizing in everyday experience what it is to be a truly triumphant Christian throughout this New Year: YIELD TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, PRAY DAILY, READ GOD'S WORD

DAILY, FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD'S PEOPLE, BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, WITNESS TO OTHERS, and LOOK FOR CHRIST'S RETURN.

As for New Year's resolutions, consider those of Jonathan Edwards:

1. Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live.

2. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, to improve it in the most profitable way I can.

3. Resolved, never to do anything which I should despise or think meanly of in another.

4. Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.

5. Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

(Editor's note: In our Lord's will, the series of studies on Jude will be resumed in the next issue.)

1 William MacDonald, True Discipleship, p. 6.

2 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

3 G. R. Harding Wood, Enjoy Your Bible, pp. 17-21.

4 Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 1634.

Rabbi Shimei

MIF 7:4 (July-Aug 1975)

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Rabbi Shimei

An ancient Jewish rabbi, named Shimei, wisely urged: "Set a time for the study of the law, say little, do much, and greet everyone with a cheerful countenance."

These words represent good advice for us today, and each point can be substantiated from the Scriptures.

First, "set a time for the study of the law." Every true Christian should form the habit of a daily "Quiet Time" to prayerfully read God's Word (Acts 17:11). However, it is this editor's calculated estimate (and I would delight to be proved wrong!) that most Christians today have not formed such a habit. The shallowness of our Christianity tends to confirm this, and perhaps there is no better confirmation of it than the frequent dearth of meaningful participation in many of our "Breaking of Bread" meetings.

Second, "say little." We live in a day and age when virtually everyone wants to have his say, whether or not he has anything to say. Talk is cheap. The first words off the tip of our tongues are often not the best. It's better to listen, to wait, to be silent, to meditate. As James has exhorted us, "My beloved brethren, let every man be… slow to speak" (1:19).

Third, “do much.” One of the most justified criticisms of God’s people today is that we have talked much and done little. The old quip is unfortunately true, “When all is said and done, more is said than done.” Let us consistently keep in mind that “an ounce of walk is worth a ton of talk.” Ponder our Lord’s words in John 9:4 and the Apostle Paul’s exhortation in 1 Corinthians 15:58. If you don’t recall these verses, is it too much work to look them up?

Fourth, “greet everyone with a cheerful countenance.” This, of course, does not mean that we’re to go around greeting everyone we meet with a silly little grin. Rather, as we go about our job, pay our bills, make our purchases, fix things around the house, and so on, there should be a cheerfulness about our bearing, a cheerfulness that is exhibited in kind words and deeds (Psalm 21:6; 42:11; 43:5; Proverbs 15:13; Acts 2:28). And remember, like enthusiasm, cheerfulness is catching (see Acts 23:11; 27:22, 25, 36).

Thank you, Rabbi Shimei, for your words of helpful and healthful counsel.

Reaction too Slow

A federal inspector has testified that quicker pilot reaction to a warning horn might have prevented TWA Flight 514 from crashing into a Virginia mountain last December 1, killing all 92 people aboard. Richard R. Neville told a board of inquiry into the crash that the horn’s beep eight seconds before impact, set off automatically by radio altimeter, signaled that the plane was just 500 feet off the ground. At that point the doomed jet was half a mile from the ridge where it crashed.

Asked whether a burst of power immediately after the horn's warning could have carried the Boeing 727 safely over the mountain, the inspector said he would have to assume that would have been possible. He emphasized in his testimony, however, that the speed of pilot reaction would depend on how busy he was at the time. The flight's crew was fighting hard against storm winds. The pilot tried to apply extra power six seconds after the horn sounded and was climbing when the plane crashed 95 feet below the top of the mountain.

Having read this account, I was reminded of the many warnings in the Word of God regarding man's need to receive Christ before it is eternally too late. Granted, the pilot's length of time to react to the danger signal was extremely short, but at best so also is the length of our earthly life. Multitudes of people are too busy, or else preoccupied with this thing and that, to heed the warning of the Gospel in time. Spiritual disaster for all eternity is the tragic result.

Remember, God has declared: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Teen Commandments

On the occasion of my oldest son's fourteenth birthday earlier this year, a much beloved friend — now an octogenarian — whose life and testimony in Christ have been a great blessing to our family, sent him a card with the following "teen commandments":

1. Don't let your parents down; they brought you up.

2. Choose your companions with care; you become what they are.

3. Be master of your habits or they will master you.

4. Treasure your time; don't spend it; invest it.

5. Stand for something or you'll fall for anything.

6. Select only a date who would make a good mate.

7. See what you can do for others; not what they can do for you.

8. Guard your thoughts; what you think, you are.

9. Don't fill up on the world's crumbs; feed your soul on the Living Bread.

10. Give your all to Christ; He gave His all for you.

Surgery on the Sphinx

Since the middle of last year Egypt's fabled Sphinx has been undergoing a bit of surgery. Drifting desert sand has been eating away at the soft-stone monument, coupled with the fact that its massive noseless head is too heavy for its neck. To cope with these problems, neck braces were installed to shift the weight of the head to the shoulders, while the thighs were wrapped in plastic and injected with chemicals to prevent further deterioration. The braces being used were actually built during the Second World War to protect the Sphinx from German bombing raids, but for some reason were never put on. There are no plans to restore the missing nose, which contrary to popular belief, was not shot off by Napoleon's invading troops in the 19th Century. The truth of the matter is, a religious sheik mutilated the face in 1436 because he believed the flow of people visiting the Sphinx was a sign of atheism.

Built some 45 centuries ago, the Sphinx stands before the Pyramids of Chephren and Cheops, looking east into the rising sun. The lion's body and the large human head have fascinated tourists ranging from Alexander the Great to Henry A. Kissinger. The Sphinx is probably the idealized portrait of Chephren that architects transformed into a monument for him from a bluff of rock that remained after the best. stones had been taken for the pyramids. It stands 66 feet high and is 244 feet long, having been built during Egypt's Fourth Dynasty around 2550 B.C.

With this bit of surgery, the experts claim that the Sphinx will survive another several thousand years. The experts, however, may be wrong. Men go to great lengths sometimes to preserve monuments from antiquity, and with this no fault is found, but to say that the Sphinx will be around another several thousand years is open to serious question. God's Word tells us that at the end of the millennial reign of Christ "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are in it, shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). In other words, Peter is saying that every vestige of sinful man's works — the Sphinx included — shall be "burned up" and "dissolved." And there is good reason to believe that this divine purging or renovation of the present heavens and earth is considerably closer than several thousand years away.

30th Anniversary

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

30th Anniversary Issue

The first issue of “Food for the Flock” was published in January 1955. As a charter subscriber, the only issue missing from my own personal collection of copies over the magazine’s thirty-year history is the July 1964 issue. It arrived in the mail in such a mutilated condition that it was barely readable and I have been unable to replace it.

In 1965 the June and July issues were combined for the first time. Then in the fall of 1968 the Committee members made the following decisions which became effective on January 1, 1969:

1. The magazine was to be issued bimonthly (a move to save both printing and mailing costs).

2. The number of pages in each issue was increased from 18 to 24 (this made the total amount of material basically the same as in the past).

3. The general format was to undergo a sweeping change.

4. The written ministry would be directed toward a more relevant and time-related emphasis.

Commencing with the Jan.-Feb. 1969 issue, the magazine was published under a new title: “Ministry in Focus.” Unfortunately, many people acquainted with “Food for the Flock” thought that the latter had ceased

publication. Thus in 1981 the Committee members, at the suggestion of Mr. James Gunn, reinstated the old name, using “Ministry in Focus” as a subtitle. Also, it was at the beginning of 1969 that I became associate editor. I continued in this capacity for five years, having become editor at the beginning of 1975.

In the very first issue the purpose of the magazine was stated as follows: “A monthly publication designed to promote the careful study of the Scriptures, to edify and instruct the Church, to comfort and encourage the people of God, and above all, to bring glory to the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The late Mr. James Gunn was the first editor. Other members of the Executive Committee were Ernest B. Sprunt, John Robertson, Ormer G. C. Sprunt and J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr. Those who served as Associate Editors were Robert McClurkin, David Leathem and Thomas G. Wilkie. The Advisory Committee was composed of Cecil Batstone, Guy Cesar, Aubrey Dellandrea, William Funston, David Kirk, John Martin, Norman MacNeil, Clark McClelland, Paul Plubell, Wylam Price and Gordon Reager.

Many of these brethren who were linked with the magazine from its beginning have, of course, gone Home to be with Christ.

Since the Jan.-Feb. 1985 issue of “Food for the Flock” marks 30 years of continuous publication, we felt it would be fitting to make it a special edition as a further expression of our praise and thanksgiving to God for His great faithfulness. Thus we have reprinted three articles which appeared in the first issue. I have also included the last book review sent to me by Mr. Gunn.

As I write these lines, it is mid-October 1984. Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 27th in Toronto. In our next issue, as has been our custom, we will publish a brief report on the meeting. Also, in that same issue I trust to complete my series of studies on JUDE.

As an appropriate capstone to my brief comments on the history of “Food for the Flock” I can do no better than to quote as follows from Mr. Gunn’s “Editorial” in the first issue of the magazine:

“Of late years there has been increasing evidence of a definite decline in personal Bible study and devotion to the Lord. During the Second World War the saints were living unsettled lives, with added work and worry, and so much rush and bustle, that they found few opportunities for the careful reading of the Scriptures or the preparation of the heart through prayer and communion with God. Since the close of the war, most Christians have lost the art of ‘redeeming the time’ and find it hard to settle down to spiritual living. True, the world has added attractions, and has perhaps taken a larger place in the hearts of believers. Yet, with all who are truly born of God, there is an underlying love for the Man of Calvary. Keeping these things in mind, ‘FOOD for the FLOCK’ is being printed with the hope of reviving the soul and feeding the inner man, so that the saints may be drawn closer to the Lord and given a renewed appetite for the reading and study of His Word.”

A Song in Siberia

From the Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

A Song In Siberia

A Song in Siberia is the title of a book co-authored by Anita and Peter Deyneka, Jr., of the Slavic Gospel Association, Wheaton, Illinois. The book chronicles twelve years of harassment and pressure from the Soviet authorities of a single congregation of believers in Barnaul (pronounced bar-na-ool), but also years of triumph and blessing through God’s power and protection. Barnaul is one of Siberia’s important industrial centres with a population of almost half a million. It is a capital of the Altai region, located roughly a thousand miles east of the Urals, two thousand miles west of the Pacific, and 125 miles north of Novosibirsk, Siberia’s largest and leading city. Barnaul lies along the Ob River, where temperatures range from 100 degrees F. to colder than 60 degrees below zero F. A reading of this bock makes one realize how little, if anything, we sacrifice for our Lord and His Gospel in lands so blessed like the United States and Canada. How easy it is to take our citizen liberties for granted and not realize that believers on the other side of the world are almost daily persecuted by the authorities and other unbelievers around them. I guarantee if you read this book you will be humbled and made to think about the possible shallowness of your own Christianity.

The authors have travelled extensively in the Soviet Union, their information having been drawn from

primary sources — they spent weeks interviewing members of the Barnaul church who have managed to emigrate to West Germany.

Although atheist officials have sought to stamp out the church in Russia, or at least to keep it from growing, they have been unable to stifle the witness of believers. God's people witness consistently through daily example and life-style. In my reading I was impressed with the fact that a Communist commission investigating why Christians are so successful in spreading their faith came to the following conclusions:

1. The believers are skillful, conscientious workers without exception and are respected for this.

2. The believers do not have problems with alcohol. Increasingly they are given tasks that require reliability.

3. The believers do not let anyone die without comfort.

4. The believers do not subscribe to any peace resolutions in world politics, but they do promote peace in the way they live. They live in peace with their families and also help other families when these families are having problems.

In more recent years few books have stirred me as this one has, and if nothing else it has burdened me to pray more for my fellow believers behind the Iron Curtain.

A Song in Siberia may be obtained from David C. Cook Publishing Co. either in Eligin, Illinois or Weston, Ontario. The $3.95 cost of this paperback is a modest investment compared with the spiritual dividends to be realized through reading it.

* * *

Georgi Vins

It was a pleasant surprise to read a full page article on Georgi Vins in the May 21, 1979, issue of Time magazine. A few years ago I read about the plight of this Christian leader in Russia and at the time felt a definite burden, along with thousands of other believers over the world, to pray for him. A leader of the breakaway "Reform Baptists," Vins has spent eight of the past 15 years in prison because of his uncompromising Christian convictions. Forbidden to preach the Word of God in public or to bring up their children with religious instruction, Vins said of the Reform Baptists: "In accordance with Biblical teaching, we believe that every authority is ultimately from God and that we are obliged to submit ourselves to such authority on all civil matters. To work. To pay taxes. To show respect to the government. But when it is a question of faith, then we submit ourselves to God alone."

Georgi Vins, 50, received a degree in electrical engineering from the Kiev Polytechnical Institute in 1952 and was officially ordained as a minister in 1962. He was released by the Russian authorities through a trade by the United States with the Soviet Union of two Russian spies for five Soviet prisoners of conscience.

In describing something of the Reform Baptists' underground activities, Vins tells of a remarkable mobile publishing operation called Khristianin (the Christian) that roams the country turning out thousands of Bibles and pamphlets. Local Baptists gradually buy up paper and hoard it until a ton or more has been collected in one place. Then, they call on one of their printing teams, which arrives with a special offset press than can be

dismantled and carried in several suitcases. Since the Soviets permit no teaching seminaries for Protestants, the Reformers also run a Bible correspondence school, as well as an organization that seeks aid and publicity for religious prisoners. Their evangelistic work includes open-air testimony meetings, held in the woods, which often attract a thousand or more young people.

Georgi Vins' present determination is to continue speaking out and writing on behalf of the Reform cause wherever God directs him. He said that in Moscow, just before he was deported, a polical officer explained that he had been deprived of his citizenship for actions harmful to the Soviet government, and "went on to say that at first American society would show great interest in me, but in the end everyone would forget me. I would be of no use to anyone, 'Your fate is a sad one,' he said. 'You will always be an exile.'" Vins replied: "The God in whom I believe will decide that."

We give thanks to our Lord for answered prayer on behalf of Georgi Vins. Our continued prayer is that he will be a powerful voice for Christ in the West and not be side tracked by the easy-going, soft, shallow, materialistic brand of Christianity which pervades much of evangelical witness in North America today.

Meanwhile, in view of such dramatic answers to prayer, let us not forget to continue to pray for those of our fellow believers over the world who are in prison for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Explicit on this point are the words of Hebrews 13:3: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

Via Dolorosa

According to a brief article in The Jerusalem Post, a Benedictine priest says that the Via Dolorosa ("Way of Sorrow") is not the true route Jesus followed to His death on Calvary almost 2,000 years ago. Virgil Pixner, of Mount Zion's Dormition Abbey, says the present trek, which cut west across the Moslem and Christian quarters of the Old City, lies 400 metres north of where the real "way of the cross" was. Both the present-day route and the original one led to Calvary's Hill, now enshrined by the hulking, stone Church of the Holy Sepulchre, along with the site of Jesus' trial.

Pixner, a member of the Abbey's faculty who teaches Christian archaeology, expounds his revolutionary conclusion in an article to be published in the forthcoming issue of "Christian News from Israel," a magazine published by the Religious Affairs Ministry. He says the Via Dolorosa "migrated at least twice down the ages" to its present course, which was laid down by the Crusaders, because of mislocation of the Praetorium, where Pontius Pilate Sentenced Jesus to die on the cross.

When I trod the traditional course of the Via Dolorsa a little over six years ago, I must confess to wondering if indeed it was the true route. It's not likely that Pixner's article will resolve anything. And, after all, the matter is not that important. The important thing is that the Way to heaven has not been mislocated, for Christ Himself said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Many, of course, dispute the way to heaven, just as they dispute the way of the Via Dolorosa, and we are reminded of

Solomon's words: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

There is only one true Way to heaven and, make no mistake about it, that Way is the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you by faith received Him as your own personal Saviour? Are you on the one and only Way to heaven?

On Leadership

"A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a postition of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of the external situation. Such were Moses and David and the Old Testament prophets. I think there was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord of the Church to fill a position he had little heart for. I believe it might be accepted as a fairly reliable rule of thumb that the man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God's heritage, but will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing and altogether as ready to follow as to lead, when the Spirit makes it clear that a wiser and more gifted man than himself has appeared."

—A. W. Tozer

Are You A Postcard Christian?

From The Editor's Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

Are You A Postcard Christian?

To the Corinthian Christians the Apostle Paul wrote: "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:1-3).

Ordinarily we think of a letter as something sealed and meant to be read only by the intended receiver or receivers. The present day post card, open even to the mail carrier to read if he so desires, is a better example here of what the Holy Spirit purposes to make all true believers in Christ.

It was customary in Paul's day, as it is in some quarters today, to give letters of commendation (see Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1). The apostle's enemies, no doubt the Judaizers who in part are described in 2 Corinthians 2:17a, demanded such letters, thereby challenging Paul's authority and apostleship. Paul replied that he needed no such credentials, the Corinthian believers themselves being his letter, though chiefly they were "the letter of Christ" (2 Cor. 3:2-3, NASB). He could not have written like this in his first letter to them, but because of their obedience he could now rightly say this.

His expression of love and confidence toward the Corinthians must have led them to earnest inquiry on their part to determine if they really were what the apostle said they were.

When Paul spoke of them as “the letter of Christ,” he described the general character of the Church and her responsibility. The Church is Christ’s letter of commendation to the world, and what a solemn responsibility it is to recommend the Lord Jesus Christ in our walk and talk. Lest his words should have been misunderstood by any of the Corinthian saints, Paul quickly swept away any thought of self-commendation or self-sufficiency on his part. Rather, he forthrightly declared, “Our sufficiency is of God” (3:5; see 1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Regarding the Corinthian believers as “the letter of Christ,” we note the following:

1. God was the Author — the Apostle Paul merely the pen.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ was the subject.

When speaking to young Christians in one of his lectures, Charles H. Spurgeon said, “Of all I wish to say this is the sum: my brethren, preach CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole gospel …”

3. The Holy Spirit was the imperishable and illuminating ink — their Life!

4. Their regenerated hearts were the writing tablets. Surely, the words of verse 3 are an echo of Ezekiel 11:19.

Very few unregenerate sinners will read the Bible, but unbelievers do read Christians, and as someone has stated:

You're writing a gospel, a chapter a day,

By deeds that you do and the words that you say;

Men read what you write, whether faithless or true

Say, what is the gospel according to you?

In his flexible, contemporary style, J. B. Phillips has beautifully translated 2 Corinthians 3:2 and 3 as follows: "You yourselves are our testimonial, written in our hearts and yet open for anyone to inspect and read. You are an open letter about Christ which we ourselves have written, not with pen and ink but with the Spirit of the living God. Our message has been engraved, not in stone but in living men and women."

A Lesson From Aloft

Recently, following a brief season of ministry in New Jersey, the editor was returning home via Northwest Orient Airlines' Flight No. 217 out of Newark's International Airport. As our Boeing 727 made its descent toward Detroit's Metro Airport, we momentarily veered to the right, gained speed and altitude, and in a few seconds I could see the entire airport complex as we quickly jetted away from the area.

It was then that the pilot's calm, reassuring voice informed us that one of the gauges on their instrument panels indicated some trouble with the wing flaps and it was his decision to check things out thoroughly before landing. For some ten minutes or more we made a wide circle over city suburbs, during which time everything

was carefully checked, including a visual check of the flaps by the flight engineer from the windows of the passenger cabin. Again, having entered the landing pattern, we were soon safely down on terra firma, and this, with appreciation for the cautious precision of wise and experienced pilots.

Reflecting on this little experience aloft, I couldn't help but think of our lives as Christians. Our spiritual sphere is "in the heavenlies" which, among other things, is a place of conflict with diabolical foes (Eph. 6:12). Little wonder, then, that the Apostle Paul exhorted the Ephesian believers to "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (Eph. 5:16). The Greek word translated "circumspectly" means "with exactness" or "carefully." It is used, for instance, in Matthew 2:8 in connection with Herod's sinister commission of the wise men to go and accurately or carefully search for the Christ-child. Thus the word carries the idea of precision and accuracy.

As for the Christian life, it cannot be left to chance. We must make wise decisions and seek to know, do and love God's will. Christians face many dangers in the enemy territory of this evil world, but the Word of God and the Holy Spirit have been given to us to alert us to these dangers, as well as to enable us to walk wisely and precisely. Many a Christian life would have been spared shipwreck if, on a spiritual level, the same precise care and caution had been applied to their walk as professional pilots apply to their flying.

Christ's Postascension Appearances

Did you know that there were five appearances of Christ after His ascension? They are as follows:

1. To Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26-13-18).

2. To Paul in Arabia, although this appearance is somewhat conjectural (Acts 20:24; 26:17; Gal. 1:12-17).

3. To Paul in the temple (Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-21).

4. To Paul in prison at Jerusalem (Acts 23:11).

5. To the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:12-20).

The Word Became Flesh

MIF 10:6 (Nov-Dec 1978)

From The Editor’s Note Book

W. Ross Rainey

The Word Became Flesh

In the past the editor has occasionally quoted from a book by Walter Scott, now long out of print, entitled, Selections from Our Fifty Years’ Written Ministry. Once again, browsing through this rich depository of distilled comments on a variety of Biblical subjects it is appropriate, particularly at this time of the year, to share with our readers some precious thoughts on our Lord’s incarnation from the pen of this beloved, faithful and gifted servant of Christ of a past generation.

Ref erring to the Apostle John, Walter Scott wrote as follows:

In the Gospel by “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” the fact of the Incarnation, not the manner of it, is expressed in five words, “The Word was made flesh.” But you cannot make the Word — a divine Being —this or that. “The Word became flesh” (R.V.). He voluntarily assumed humanity. The bosom of the Father was the source of those wonderful disclosures which in their range and character are unequalled in the Sacred Volume.

The Apostle shows Christ in this world as the WORD — a divine Person. He is so termed as absolutely expressing God in His nature, character, and ways. He is also termed the WORD OF LIFE (1 Epistle), as eternal life is

alone expressed in and by Him. The Lord is also spoken of as the WORD OF GOD (Rev. xix. 13), as fully representing God in judgment.

In the first two verses of the Gospel we have a compendium of divine truth which the keenest intellect in existence cannot fathom. Those twenty-five words lead us with believing hearts and adoring souls into the region of the Eternal and Infinite. The question is not: Do you understand? but, Do you implicity believe? The mystery of the God-head cannot be solved by reason. Faith believes where reason gropes in utter darkness. Then in verse three we get the relation of the WORD to creation. “All things were made by Him”; while in verse four His relation to the responsible part of this creation is next stated, “In Him was life.” Then we pass on to verse 14, “The WORD became flesh.” This is the last notice of the WORD in the Gospel. To sum up in briefest terms possible, the foregoing testimony, we have:

1. “Was the WORD” — Eternal Existence

2. “Was with God” — Distinct Personality

3. “Was God” — Deity

4. “In the beginning with God” —Eternal Companionship

5. “All things made by Him” — Creatorial Power

6. “In Him was life” — Source and Fountain

7. “The light of men” — Revealer of God

8. “Became flesh” — Assumed Humanity

In the two synoptical Gospels Matthew and Luke — we have the most careful adjustment of those two closely related facts: The Divine conception and the human birth: conceived of the Holy Ghost, yet born of the Virgin

Mary in Bethlehem —the birthplace of David, Israel's illustrious king.

In the Johannine record of the Lord's Incarnation we can readily see why there is no statement as to the holiness of the humanity He assumed. Any such assertion would have been out of place. The assumption of humanity by the Eternal WORD settles the question. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." God in becoming man did not cease to be God. The fact that it was God who became flesh settles for all time the question of the intrinsic holiness of Christ's humanity. Holiness was inherent in His Being. As the man Christ Jesus, He was absolutely holy, as He was as God in eternal ages.

The beloved Physician, Luke, develops in fullness and in wealth of detail the holy humanity of our Lord. Christ as man is the aspect in which He is set forth in the third Gospel. Luke is the Gospel of the Son of Man, hence the precision of statement guarding the humanity of our Lord. In the very record in which His connection with the human race is shown He is separated from every member of the human family in the impeccability of His nature. He holy, they sinful, yet, strange to say, "His delights were with the sons of men." In the manner of His conception He stands absolutely alone, but a true, real human birth.

Youth And Suicide

According to an article in U.S. News & World Report, there has been a dramatic increase in suicides and attempted suicides by Americans in their late teens and early twenties. As might be expected, this is causing widespread concern among parents and educators.

The trend is accented by the latest government statistics which show that suicides among Americans aged 15 through 24 more than doubled in just over a decade, from 1,876 in 1965 to 4,747 in 1976. They account for 1 out of 10 deaths in that age group, and now rank third — behind accidents and homicides — as a killer of young Americans. The foregoing statistics compare with a 25 percent increase in reported suicides at all age levels, from 21,507 in 1965 to 26,970 in 1977.

Even among children under 15, as many as 163 suicides were reported in 1976.

For every person who dies by suicide, there are many others who fail in the attempt, one authority having estimated that suicide attempts outnumber actual suicides by 50 to 1.

In every generation youth's accent is on life and living. Why, then, is there this upward trend in suicides among young people? There are no simple answers, but nearly all experts point to the stresses and frustrations that afflict today's youths. Some are confused and frightened about the future. Will they be able to get jobs? If they get jobs, will they be meaningful? And if they get married, will their marriage last?

Undoubtedly one primary cause is insecurity in the family brought on by the high divorce rate.

In the Bible there is no specific command against suicide, although prohibitionary implications may be drawn from Exodus 20:13, 1 Samuel 2:6, Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 14:7-9, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and Ephesians 5:29. While we are told that the early Church Fathers allowed the taking of one's life midst very stringent circumstances, the outstanding theologian, Augustine of

Hippo (354-430 A.D.), denied its legitimacy no matter what the circumstances, stating that it precluded the possibility of repentance, that it was a species of murder, and that it violated the sixth commandment.

Seven suicides are recorded in the Scriptures. All were men and not one of them was in the will of God at the time of his death. They are Abimelech (Judg. 9:54), Samson (Judg. 16:30), Saul (1 Sam. 31:4), Saul's armour-bearer (1 Sam. 31:5), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:5; Acts 1:16-19).

Samson's death was more of a warrior's heroic act than a true suicide, and to a degree the same can be said for Saul's armour-bearer who evidently, out of a sense of faithfulness and devotion to his king, chose to be identified with him in death than to allow the Philistines to take his life.

Christians can and do commit suicide, but to all who contemplate it, believers and unbelievers alike, it should be remembered that the taking of one's life does not end it all. This the Bible makes clear (see Luke 16:25). In reality, behind suicide are the sins of selfishness and self-centeredness, and those left behind are not only faced with sorrow but frequently with many complications. For a believer to commit suicide means in some measure, at least, to "suffer loss" at the judgment seat of Christ Cor. 3:15), but not the loss of his salvation.

No matter how grim his circumstances, the believer possesses many resources to overcome the temptation to commit suicide, not the least of them being the promises of God, confession of sins to God, followed, of course, by the righting of whatever wrongs can be

righted. If the believer's stringent circumstances are not a result of sin, then he has the example of men like Job and the Apostle Paul, and a word of comfort and assurance like 1 Corinthians 10:13. There are also the examples of Elijah and Jonah who, for different reasons, wished for death, but they did not take the matter into their own hands, and God delivered them.

Clearly, in the light of God's Word, suicide is a sin. As Christians we most certainly have a responsibility to pray for those whom we know, both believers and unbelievers, who are beset by life's very real and grievous frustrations and adversities, and to lend whatever practical help we can. It may be that by expressions of genuine Christian love and patient understanding our Lord will use us in these days of increasing suicide among younger and older alike to lead a soul to Christ or to restore a backslidden child of God, and in this way help stem the tide of this diabolical trend.

William Kelly's Library

MIF 8:5 (Sept-Oct 1976)

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

William Kelly’s Library

Last November, Mr. Edward F. Armstrong wrote an interesting letter to Mr. James Gunn, our associate editor, regarding William Kelly’s valuable library of 15,000 volumes. The following is the substance of Mr. Armstrong’s letter:

Dear Mr. Gunn:

Many brethren on both sides of the Atlantic have desired to see William Kelly’s choice collection of books. I had contacted many libraries, also publishing houses in England, but to no avail.

After spending two wonderful weeks at the Keswick Convention this past summer, we remembered the Lord in an assembly at Stockton, England, where I spoke to an elderly brother of my desire to see Mr. Kelly’s collection. He told me where I might get information regarding the same.

I was then led to the library in the town of Middlesbrough, England, where they very kindly gave me the following important items to copy:

“September 27, 1904.

“Offer of Reference Library to the town of Middlesbrough, England. The chairman, Alderman Ball, having reported that an anonymous donor was desirous

of presenting a reference library of 15,000 volumes. It was ordered the same be gratefully accepted."

The librarian visited Mr. Kelly's home in Blackheath, London, to inspect the collection and report thereon.

"March 3, 1906. William Kelly: Extract from his obituary in the 'London Times.' Mr. Kelly, on the suggestion of the Archbishop of York, presented his large and valuable Theological Library to the town of Middlesbrough, Yorkshire, England."

Here are two items of great interest. First, a Bible of tremendous value. A Complutensian Polyglot. This edition of the Bible was undertaken by Cardinal Ximenes in 1502 to commemorate the birth of Charles V of Spain. It was printed at Alsali in Spain between 1514 and 1517, but its issue was not sanctioned by the Pope until 1522. It is the first and most famous of the Polyglots and contains the Greek Septuagint, Hebrew, Latin, and Chaldee Paraphrase. About 300,000 pounds was spent in the work of procuring manuscripts, editing and printing it.

Although its text of the Greek New Testament was the first to be printed, Erasmus' New Testament of 1516 is generally awarded the title of "First Greek New Testament," as it was published six years before the Complutensian Polyglot was issued.

Second, there are issues of the oldest Bibles in the world:

1. The Vatican Manuscript.

2. The Sinaitic Manuscript.

3. The Alexandrian Manuscript.

4. The Manuscript of Beza.

5. Cursvive Manuscripts.

These are just a few that may be seen in a private room of the library where one can sit quietly and make notes with permission of the librarian.

A brother in Scotland writes: “What a pity the whereabouts of Mr. Kelly’s wonderful library is not better known to the Christian public. He was a mighty apostle of the Word and his writings have been a blessing to many.”

After many years of research, I was very pleased to locate this great writer’s works, as he is my favourite author, and in my library I have many of his books.

Yours in His service,

Edward F. Armstrong

The Dead Sea And Skin Disease

Three years ago, standing by the northern edge of the Dead Sea, I watched people sitting and floating in the water, while others had smeared themselves with gray slimy mud from the bottom. The mud treatment did not appeal to me, although looking back I wish there had been time that day for a dip in the world’s richest body of water. Nevertheless, since “feeling” and tasting the Dead Sea’s water that day, I have often thought it must surely have some therapeutic value for those suffering with skin diseases of one sort or another.

My thoughts along this line were recently confirmed. According to the May 18, 1976, issue of The Jerusalem Post the beneficial effects of the Dead Sea in treating psoriasis have been recognized by medical insurance

funds in Scandinavia and Central Europe. This was stated by Dr. W.W. Avrach, of Hadassah Hospital (Jerusalem), dermatologist to the 11th national scientific convention of the Dermatological Society.

Dr. Avrach said that “results of the treatment at the Dead Sea were just as good as in any hospital—and the Dead Sea was much cheaper.”

Of the several hundred patients treated at the Dead Sea, “24 per cent recovered completely, 53 per cent showed a marked improvement, and 19 per cent partial improvement; and 4 per cent showed no improvement.”

But, he noted, the cure is not permanent, the rate of relapse being similar to that after treatment in a hospital.

The Dead Sea, called in Scripture the Salt Sea (Genesis 14:3), the Sea of Arabah (Deuteronomy 3:17), or East(ern) Sea (Joel 2:20; Zechariah 14:8), has the earth’s lowest surface, 1290 feet below sea level. It occupies part of a geologic fault that extends from Syria through the Red Sea into Africa. Measuring 47 by 10 miles, it has an area of 300 square miles with cliffs rising 1500 — 2500 feet on either shore. The water attains a depth of 1300 feet, though southward it averages less than ten feet.

The Dead Sea is the most important mineral resource of Palestine. The quantities of common salt (sodium chloride), chloride of magnesia and magnesia bromide dissolved in the water of the unique lake are practically inexhaustible. According to experts, the Dead Sea contains 2000 million tons of potassium chloride, 980 million tons of magnesium bromide, 11,000 million tons

of sodium chloride, 22 million tons of magnesium chloride and 6000 million tons of calcium chloride.

From these figures it is readily observable that astronomic sums in dollars are represented. Some have estimated that the Dead Sea alone would produce 200 trillion dollars in wealth. An American chemical engineer, Dr. Thomas H. Norton, estimated the content of the salts to be at least 250,000,000,000 pounds. The world's most ample supply of potash, used for explosives in wartime and for fertilizer in peacetime, is located at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

Ezekiel predicts a healing of its waters, granting abundant life during Christ's future millennial reign (47:8-10). Meanwhile, in so many ways—the wealth of the Dead Sea being one of them—the nation Israel is a prime target of aggressive rulers and will be the specific target of the coming world ruler, the Man of Sin.

I Sought the Lord

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew

He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;

It was not I that found Thee, O Saviour true,

No … I was found of Thee.

Thou didst reach forth Thy hand and mine enfold;

I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed seas,

'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,

As Thou, Dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love, But, O the whole

Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee;

For Thou were long beforehand with my soul,

Always … Thou lovedst me.

— Author Unknown

Editorial (May–June 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, May–June 1972.

In recent years from various parts of the world, including North America, earthquakes have frequently made the headlines of our newspapers. In fact, just a few years ago in St. Louis I experienced the effects of a mild earthquake which struck the eastern section of Missouri.

The Bible has a great deal to say about earthquakes, both past and future. It records historical instances of them at Sinai (Ex. 19:18), when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up (Num. 16:31-32), when Jonathan and his armorbearer attacked the garrison at Gibeah (I Sam. 14:15), when the Lord revealed Himself to Elijah in the still small voice (I Kings 19:11), at the crucifixion of Christ (Matt. 27:51), at the resurrection of our Saviour (Matt. 28:2), and when Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi (Acts 16:26). There are unfulfilled prophecies of earthquakes in Ezekiel 39:19, Zechariah 14:4, Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8, Luke 21:11, and Revelation 11:19.

The following interesting statistics about earthquakes were recorded in The Medical Journal of New Zealand: "In the 50-year period from 1897 to 1946, earthquakes of an intensity of 6 on the Richter scale varied between 2 and 3 every 10 years, but in the next 10 years between 1947-56 they more than doubled to 7. From 1957-66 they doubled again to 17. But 1967 experienced as many as the whole 10 years before - 17. In other words, 10 times as many. There has been a steady climb upward since. Here are the annual figures: 1968, 19; 1969, 21;

1970, 24; and in the first part of 1971 up to July 21, there had already been 17."

When outlining events preceding His return to the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "And great earthquakes shall be in different places" (Luke 21:11). While the Church is not bidden to look for signs but for the Saviour Himself (Phil. 3:20), yet, with such prophecies as this directly from our Lord, coupled with the available statistics, it would seem that the time of His return to the air must be very near.

MARANTHA!

Editorial (September–October 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, September–October 1972.

According to Detroit's July 1st "Free Press," clock-watching scientists of the National Bureau of Standard at Boulder, Colorado, planted an extra second into earth time June 30th to bring it in line with the universe. Scientists claim that if the time lag had not been adjusted the sun would be going down at noon in the year 9912 - give or take a century or two.

The extra second will be important to navigators at sea, tracking stations on space probes, communications systems and computers that talk to each other. Scientists at Boulder said the extra second synchronized "sun time" with "atomic time." According to suntime, a day is based on one complete revolution of earth - a night and day. A day by atomic time, however, is based on devices accurate to a millionth of a second.

"The problem is the earth is not a very good clock," said Dr. James Barnes of the bureau of standard. "It speeds up and it slows down."

The decision to add a second to June 30th, 1972, was made at the 1967 International General Conference on Weights and Measures.

The geophysicists said that variations in the way earth spins on its axis, ocean tides and the "sloshing" of the earth's molten core threw the timing out of kilter.

Quite frankly, I was totally unaware of the fact that our earth time was out of whack by a second. Nevertheless the article set me to thinking about how minutely aware

man has become regarding the universe about him, yet, with all his tremendous technological advancement, he seems increasingly unaware of his spiritual needs before the living and true God. And, even as Christians, we can be unaware of our spiritual privileges and responsibilities (see Rom. 13:11; I Cor. 9:27; 16:13; Eph. 5:15; 6:18; Phil. 3:2; 4:5; Col. 4:2; I Thess. 5:4, 6, 21; I Tim. 4:16; II Tim. 4:5; Heb. 3:12; 12:15; I Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8; II Pet. 3:17; II John 8; Jude 20; Rev. 3:2-3, 11; 16:15).

W.R.R.