

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLV, February, 1951)

HEAVENLY PEACE

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

—John G. Whittier

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

"FEELINGS"

"Feelings are no evidence of salvation." This truth, often mentioned, needs constant emphasis, for there are always people who fancy they are saved because some great emotion has swept over their souls. And, on the other hand, there are those who doubt God's word after their obedience to the gospel, because they have not experienced some special sort of feeling they had expected. Feelings follow where there is faith. If you were pressed and distressed by a debt you could not pay, and a friend perfectly trustworthy and able, would give you his promise that he would pay the debt for you, a feeling of great relief would come over you. But if a question were raised about your debt, you would not consult your feelings, but stand on the word of your friend. If someone asked you whether you felt that your debt was paid, you would answer, "It is not a question of how I feel, but of the good word of my friend who promised to assume the debt." Let your hope of salvation be based on the firm foundation of God's word, without regard to feelings. If feelings then come, it is well. If not, the word of God is still true.

JOYLESS CHRISTIANS

But another word needs to be added. Where there is constant gloom and spiritual depression, no joy, no peace, no happiness in the Lord—something is bound to be wrong. It may be just unbelief; or a lack of knowledge and understanding; it may be some sin, or sins, unconfessed, unrepented of, or even habitually practiced. Or it may be that you are holding out against God in some particular matter, though heart and conscience have long protested, and you have known quite well what you should do about it, and have not done it. It may also be that you are living under law, and not under grace, and so your hope and outlook cannot but be darkened. Such and such like causes may account for a joyless Christianity. It is an abnormal condition, and should not be allowed to run on. If your Christian life and service are drab and dreary there must be a rea-

son. Find the cause and correct it. Not that you should try to work for feelings; nevertheless the normal Christian life is one of joy and peace—and that founded upon the truth of God's love, His free forgiveness, and His promises. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24). "Faithful is he that calleth you who will also do it."

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LOOKING UNTO GOD

The principle of looking away from self unto God is taught and stressed in many ways in God's word. Over and over again we find the exhortation in the Old Testament scriptures. There is the "looking-to-the-Lord psalm," 123: "Unto thee do I lift up mine eyes, O thou that sittest in the heavens. Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look unto Jehovah our God, until he have mercy upon us." Or, again, in Ps. 25:15—"Mine eyes are ever toward Jehovah; for he will pluck my feet out of the net." Micah the prophet says, "But as for me, I will look unto Jehovah" (7:7). "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth" (Isa. 45:22).

Perhaps the Serpent in the Wilderness is the outstanding Old Testament illustration. The camp of the Israelites was infested with venomous serpents. Many were bitten and died. The people appealed to Moses, and Moses appealed to God; and the Lord answered to the plea for help. He did not drive the serpents out of the camp, but He ordered a remedy—a very strange one, yet perfectly effective: Moses was to make a serpent of brass and set it upon a standard, and every one who would look to that brazen serpent should live (Numb. 21:4-19). Not by looking at themselves, not by examining their hurt, not by treating the bite of the serpents, but by looking away to the serpent on the pole, they were to be healed.

Most of my readers will recall the word that Jesus spoke many years later: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15). As the serpent in the wilderness was God's perfect remedy for the bitten and dying of the people of Israel, so the Son of man, uplifted on the cross, was God's all-sufficient and perfect remedy for man's death-bearing sin. Men look at themselves—try to analyze and diagnose their condition, try to cure themselves and one another—resort to all sorts of vain devices to overcome the sin that dwells in them; but as the one and only hope of the doomed Israelite in the wilderness lay in looking away from himself to the uplifted serpent, so sinful man's only hope now lies in looking away to the cross where the Savior died.

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BRIEF SERMONS

"Vested interests are the chief enemies of civic and political reforms." In matters of religion also; we might truly say *especially* in matters of religion, vested interests are the enemies of reform,

"The children of God are not born at Mount Sinai, but at Calvary and at the open tomb."

"Lord, give us a true standard of values; and enable us to know a trifle when we see it."

If you do not love God with all your heart it is certain proof that you don't know Him.

"Though love repine, and reason chafe,

There came a voice without reply:

'Tis man's perdition to be safe

When for the truth he ought to die."

"Three things render death bitter, namely, attachment to the earth; remorse for sin; uncertainty of salvation."

William Carey, the great missionary of India, asked for prayer for his son: "Pray for Felix: he has degenerated into an ambassador for the British government."

"The fact that the best of men was put to death on the shameful cross—that in itself would be no gospel. Only if his death expresses more than the love of a man to men but the love of God to men, does it become a gospel."

And to this we must add—that if the story ends with the cross, even that were no gospel. "If Christ was not raised, our preaching is vain; your faith also is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."

Many "buy off" from actual service by giving money to have it done. But where are *your works*? Why not actually go *do* something for someone, just for Jesus' sake? What blessing you miss by side-stepping it!

GOD KNOWS BEST

God had a point in not revealing to Christians the time of the Lord's coming. If Columbus had known how vast the sea he was to sail he might have never set sail. But as it was, day by day his crew watched, hoping momentarily to sight land. They sailed and sailed until the crew was on the verge of mutiny, but Columbus said, "Let us sail on a little farther." And so they sailed and sailed a day at a time, always looking, watching, until one day they spotted some land weeds on the water—signs. They took new heart and sailed on. More land weeds were seen after many days and finally a shout of joy, for they had sighted land.

It has been 1900 years since the New Testament teaching was given relative to the coming of Christ. God saw fit not to reveal the day of His coming. It was better and easier that the disciples live day by day in hope of that event. To have set a 1900 year (or more) hence date for the appearing of the Lord might have proven disastrous to the courage and patience of these disciples.

NEWS AND NOTES

Gallatin, Tenn.: "Brother Hall Crowder began his work with us the first Sunday of the year with fine audiences and two good messages. We baptized two more here the next to the last Sunday of the year. We have had a good many additions this year both by baptism and membership. We got back into our newly remodeled building in March of 1950. Our contributions for all purposes during 1950 were \$20, 218.91. I shall continue my work with the congregation in the capacity of an evangelist and Bible teacher. I shall be available for more meetings this coming year."—H. L. Olmstead.

New Orleans, La.: "The Ramseys are doing good ministering in their sector of Louisiana. Two adults are to be baptized here at Seventh and Camp Streets church next Lord's day, the 17th. Increased attendance at Amite; other congregations of Tangipahoe Parish are said to enjoy increased attendance. Francis Holdeman, minister who shortly ago separated himself from denominationalism and is now leading a little band in the New Testament Way, is doing an encouraging work at Boothville. Keen interest is showing at Ponchatoula, a new point, the young people are taking hold in a way which if continued will bring fruit. There is much unpossessed territory in Louisiana."—Stanford Chambers.

Pendleton, Ky.: "We are still working for the Lord but still need a preacher. Brother Clyde Edens is preaching at Bethel in Indiana. We are planning to do more work next year by the help of the Lord."—Otis Sparrow.

Ottumwa, Iowa: "The church meeting at Finley Avenue and Adella Streets plan to have three protracted meetings in 1951: the first in March with Larry Robertson as evangelist."—F. S. Graham.

Winchester, Ky.: "The last Sunday of 1950 brought rejoicing to each of us at Main Street, as two placed membership with us. This made a total of eight who had placed membership during the year. Two were added through baptism.

"Brother May and Brother John Adams did much to strengthen the church in revivals held for us in 1950. One of our best Vacation Bible Schools was held last year.

"The Lord has blessed us with spiritual growth, good interest, and financial gain. For all these things we thank and praise Him. Much yet remains to be done. May each child of God press on in 1951."—Ben Rake.

Lockport, Ky.: "We are doing very well at King's Palace church, but we have need of a preacher every Sunday and Thursday night. We have one to visit us some of the time, but need one all the time."—Lorenzo Raisor.

This Lockport congregation and the church at Pendleton, Ky., are both asking for preaching. They are both mission points. They would appreciate having boys from Kentucky Bible College.—Pub.

Redlands, Calif.: "I received the book, "Letters to Young Churches." It is a modern translation of the epistles of the New Testament. I like it very much. While this book is a modern translation I consider it almost a commentary, when read as such in connection with the King James or the American Standard Bible. I consider it more helpful in some respects than anything I have read. In the third epistle of John it brought out thoughts I had never seen before and which gave me a complete key to the entire letter."—Felix Owen.

Dallas, Texas: "We have been in Dallas, Texas, with the Mt. Auburn church of Christ, for about four months. We praise the Lord for some very encouraging signs of progress in this work, and for the very excellent spiritual group with which to work.

"There have been 28 or 30 responses to the invitation. About 18 of these came forward at the mid-night hour on New Year's eve, to confess sins, for restoration, and to rededicate their lives to the Lord. We had good cooperation in this service, with representations from Fair Park, East Grand, and Prairie Creek congregations. Excellent

speeches were made by S. A. Lawyer, J. E. Blansett, Eugene Mullins, Frank M. Mullins, and Jesse Z. Wood. Many others participated in the service, and brought great blessing.

"Other responses have been in regular services, some for consecration, some for restoration, some for membership, and some for baptism. We praise God for the increase.

"One of the most encouraging features of the work is the splendid reception given our radio program broadcast over KSKY, 660 kc. each Sunday morning, 9:30 to 10. We are discovering many folk, in Texas and Oklahoma, who love the whole truth of God.

"We were in Abilene a few days during the Christmas season, and had the privilege of speaking for, and meeting with the Southside brethren one Wednesday night. Doug, Jack and Kenneth Lawyer conducted services at Mt. Auburn in my absence. We enjoyed our visit in Abilene, and rejoice in the good work Brother and Sister Kitzmiller are doing.

"H. L. Olmstead is scheduled to be with the Mt. Auburn church for a series of meetings starting the third Sunday in June."—Robert B. Boyd.

Gallatin, Tenn.: "I spent the third Lord's day in January with the good church at Allensville, Ky., where we had two very good sized audiences for the day. Brother Crowder baptized 3 that Sunday here at Gallatin and I baptized another, a man, on Tuesday. There was another by membership on the 4th Lord's Day. Attendance and interest are fine, especially so considering the weather we have had on Sundays."—H. L. Olmstead.

Louisville, Ky.: "After overcoming many difficulties, the church at Eastview, Jefferson Co., Ky., near Okolona, has its new building now under construction. The work will proceed as the weather permits. The brethren are going forward in faith, looking to God through prayer, and rejoicing that the much needed and hoped-for building will soon be a reality."—Claude Neal.

A Busy Preacher

Brother Sidney Mayeux, Glenmora, La., preaches 1st, 2nd and

4th Sundays in Oakdale, 3rd Sunday in Glenmora, and at Forest Hill on 1st and 3rd Sundays at 2 P. M., at Cypress 4th Sunday at 2 P. M., and 2nd Sunday at 2 P. M. he preaches near Glenmora in the homes and conducts prayer meetings in Oakdale on Wednesday night and Glenmora Thursday night. Also, he makes many visits to hospitals, and in homes, encouraging the sick, reading the Bible and having prayer, and teaching those who desire it.

Ormsby and Camp Taylor Changes

After seven years with the Camp Taylor church, J. R. Clark has accepted work with the Ormsby Avenue church, Louisville, beginning the first Sunday in February. On that same day P. J. Bornwasser is to begin at Camp Taylor. Brother Bornwasser preached at Camp Taylor when it was a mission and he was a boy. The congregation was very much impressed with his message on the New Birth on a recent Sunday and immediately invited him to assist them in the work.

Lyon to Highland

Ernest E. Lyon has accepted the Highland pulpit for three months, after which more permanent arrangement is to be made. Being under contract as music instructor at the University of Louisville, Brother Lyon is on double duty. He is asking the congregation to cooperate with him in a visitation program, in which Brother and Sister Harris Briley are taking the lead. Attendance continues to be very good.

In reply to inquiry, H. L. Olmstead states that he is not interested in located work at present, but he does have some time for additional evangelistic meetings during 1951.

ANNOUNCING CLUBBERS

For the benefit of Louisville Word and Work subscribers whose time has run out we are able to announce a few who are gathering names. At Portland Ave. Mrs. Tona Covey, 2210 Portland, will take your name; Highland, Mrs. Evelyn Clark, 1123 Meadows Ave.; Camp Taylor, Mrs. Earl Reisser, 3772 Illinois Ave.; Ormsby, Mrs. Ada Leffler, 2732 Garland; South Louisville, N. Wilson Burks, 6602 S. Third; Jefferson St., James Har-

dison, 2621 Montgomery St.; High View, W. Edward Schreiner. At other congregations see your minister. The club price is only \$1.00.

Book Prizes for Subscribers

For one new name at \$1.25, either *New Creation* by Dennis Allen or *Thessalonians* by Boll; for two names, new or old, at \$1.25 each, *Disciplined by Grace*, Stormbeck; for a club of ten at regular club rate, new or old, a 1950 bound volume of *Word and Work*; for

the largest club a grand prize of a *Jamison, Fausset and Brown Commentary* on the whole Bible. These special offers terminate on March 10. You must request your book prize to receive it.

Two times recently an envelope has been dropped in the offering at Portland Avenue church labelled "For use of publishing *Word and Work*." Each time the envelope contained \$15.00. We wish to say thank you to our anonymous friend.

ADVICE TO PRÉACHERS AND TEACHERS

A sermon is too often like Hodge's horse. It is overdone with brasses and bells, harness and harmony, but there is no real strength in it, no life and vigor. It is fine, but not forcible.

Now it strikes everybody that the trappings of a poor old half-starved horse look like mockery. You cannot plough fields with ribbons and bells; you want muscle and sinew; and so there is no moving men's hearts with pretty phrases and musical nothings. What is needed is thought, truth and sound doctrine, and the Spirit of God.

Young men are apt to think less of what to say than how to say it; but our advice is, think of both in due proportion. Set the matter before the manner; get the horse first, and get a good one, and then harness him. Give the people the grand old Gospel, and plenty of it, and they will not much mind the way in which you bring it forth.

A good horse should be decently harnessed, and the divine truth should be fitly spoken; the mischief is that some appear to think that the harness makes the horse, and that a fine style is the main thing in a sermon. Churches and chapels would not so often be empty if ministers would take heed what they preach as well as how they preach.—*Spurgeon*.

BE READY EITHER WAY

In Matthew 24:45-51 we have portrayed the unfaithful servant who said, "My Lord tarrieth"; he put far off the day of His coming and, as a consequence, he beat his fellow-servants, and ate and drank with the drunken. (It is the faithful servant who expects his Lord, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.) In the following verses (Matt. 25:1-12) we have a picture of the wise and foolish virgins. The foolish virgins took oil in their lamps, but not enough. They were not prepared for a *long pull*. In the one instance the servant had put far off the day of His coming, and in the other the virgins were not prepared for a long pull. We must be ready if He comes today, and patient if it is in the future. (Some would have it that the foolish virgins failed to take any oil at all—this to offset any implications against the security doctrine. In that case the Lord would have said, "Five of them were wise and five of them were idiotic!")

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Robert B. Boyd

If there is any advantage of having a subject with the ring of sensationalism, then I have no such advantage. The title of my message does what I presume titles are supposed to do—it explains quickly and briefly what I'm to talk about—First Things First. I have no big words to define. Nevertheless, in spite of the simplicity of the title, I regard the task before me as one that is tremendous, for to get people to put first things first is just that—a tremendous task. May the Lord enable your speaker to accomplish some definite goal in the presentation of this theme.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

Failure to put first things first hinders the free-flow of God's grace in the accomplishment of His purpose and plan for our lives. Failure to put first things first weakens our testimony, and we fail to find real joy in Christian living. We live lives in which God is supplanted by mammon. Material things become improperly magnified, and spiritual things improperly minimized. In such living, temporary things are treated as eternal; and eternal things are treated as temporary. As professing Christians, we claim that we believe that eternity is the important issue. But when we fail to put primary things in primary places we treat eternal things as temporal.

Because of our failure to put first things first, right things, right motives, and right desires—right in themselves, I mean—become wrong because of improper emphasis and evaluation. For instance, we work, and receive wages for work whereby we support ourselves and our families, and thus we engage in that which is right in itself. But the vast majority of Christians violate the command of Christ which says, "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . ." (John 6:27). To work is good and right; but to work FOR the food which perisheth—to make material things, and the satisfaction of self, the goal of our work—turns that which is right into something that is wrong due to improper emphasis. The Christian does all of his work "as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Eph. 6:5-7).

Again, as Christians we claim the right to engage in wholesome, enjoyable recreational activities, but we make such activities wrong by making them the chief thing. We, as Christians, find it so easy to allow things that are right in themselves to become obsessions. Instead of using our work to glorify God, and instead of using recreational pursuits to a mental and physical advantage, whereby our bodies are in better condition to glorify our God, these things possess us so completely as to be our god! I go into various homes throughout the country, and it often takes but a few minutes in a home to

tell whether or not the man of that house is an enthusiastic fisherman. His speech gives him away. Or maybe the young woman of the home is an enthusiastic follower of some particular popular orchestra or a vocalist; or perhaps the young man is a sports enthusiast. If so, it takes but a little while to learn these things. But I find too often that any effort to turn the conversation to the Lord Jesus Christ immediately produces frigid air—and I don't mean the mechanical type of Frigidaire that runs by electricity. As we speak of Christ, there is a certain tenseness and coldness. People look down toward the floor in embarrassment, and when finally some one has succeeded in turning the conversation back to material things, it is easy to feel the relief that these same people experience. Well, do not misunderstand me. I speak not against fishing or hunting, or the enjoyment of music or sports. But I'm warning against a weakness of the flesh. Our natures are such that we must ever guard against becoming obsessed with these material pursuits. When we make such things the chief thing, and find it stuffy and stifling to talk freely of Christ, we are treading dangerous ground. Oh! that men who wear Christ's name in every place might seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!

DISCOURAGING RESULTS

What can we do? Surely this is not a neglected subject on the part of preachers. No doubt all of us, at some time or another, and in one way or another, have spoken many times on this theme. Most of us have frequently felt discouraged with the results of our sermons. We've seen church attendance suffer because many who are members put other things first. We have not sat idly by, but have cried out against this. We've quoted scripture. We've spoken kindly, with tears in our hearts, and flowing down our cheeks. When that has seemingly failed, we've spoken loudly, and perhaps somewhat harshly, hoping to frighten the members of our flock into proper conduct. Yea, we've commanded and demanded. We've threatened judgment upon our hearers, and not without scriptural foundation, if they did not put Christ first. And with what results? Well, if we have succeeded in begging some folk into making new resolutions, or frightening some into making strong resolutions, we are soon knocked cold with the disappointing facts that the results are not permanent.

Again, we've heard the cry for laborers on needy and neglected fields; or a message comes to us concerning a laborer that is being sadly neglected as to support on some field. We, the preachers, often read these pitiful cries with tears in our eyes. Many of us preach for small congregations, but even so, we know the reason that we must throw the appeal into our office waste-basket, instead of responding to the appeal. It is simply because God's children do not put first things first! So we resolve to preach again on first things first. This time we tell of the great neglected needy fields and poorly supported, self-sacrificing laborers. Perhaps the contributions pick up a bit on that particular occasion, but somehow results are not permanent. And not only along these lines—that of church attend-

ance and giving—have we noticed the failure to put first things first. We've seen many poor choices in everyday living too—choices that indicate that Christ is far from first in the lives of the majority of people who profess to be His followers. So we've cried out against all of this too. But with what results?

WHAT IS WRONG?

Something is wrong. What is it? Is it our approach to the theme? Yes, in many instances, I fear a large share of the blame falls right back upon our (the preachers') shoulders! We are not putting first things first in our preaching on First Things First! And I number myself among the guilty. For we are trying to get people who are yet carnal—who "walk after the manner of men"—to accept a set of rules that the natural man is not pleased to keep! There is, my brethren, a first of firsts—the "firstest" of all—that must be taken care of, and until done, no amount of pleading and commanding will get permanent results. Let me read you a few verses from the book of II Corinthians, beginning with the first verse of chapter 8. "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: and this, not as we had hoped, *but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.*" (Emphasis mine.) Now, here are a group of God's children who were putting first things first. These people, in loving service and liberality to God, had surpassed the fondest dreams and expectations of the Apostle Paul. They were greatly afflicted, and in deep poverty. Yet, "with much entreaty . . . they gave of their own accord, beyond their own power." Why? How can we explain such unusual practice—unusual, at least, in the light of present day giving? The answer is beautifully simple—simple, at least to state, but difficult to bring to pass. Here it is: "but **FIRST** they gave their own selves to the Lord." Surely, that is the first of all firsts. And unless the people to whom we address our pleas and demands have first given their own selves to the Lord, we will continue with our disappointing results. (To be continued.)

What difference does it make whether Christ appears before the millennium or after the millennium? The difference is that if His coming is to be delayed a thousand years and more it could not possibly be a present and blessed hope. It is a great thing to know that He may come for us at any moment, and it is upon this ever present possibility that the Word of God bases its exhortations for every Christian grace. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).

But suppose one denies there is to be a millennium? Then that one denies the Word of God. Rev. 20:4-6.

PICTURE OF A LOST SOUL

Frank M. Mullins

"HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD"

The above quotation, from Ephesians 2:12, paints the blackest picture a human soul can know, the picture of a lost soul who has no hope either now or in eternity, no access to God now in any time of trouble, no possibility of seeing God in the broad expanse of eternity when our little time on earth is ended. And the tragedy of it is that it includes your neighbor, your closest friend, your nearest and dearest relative—those whom you know best and admire most. They possess many admirable qualities; they are prosperous refined people; they are kindly in their attitude, honest in their dealings with their fellowman; they hold responsible positions; they have the esteem of their fellow-man, but *they have no hope and are without God in the world!* How pitiable is their condition! How tragic each day that passes, bringing them that much closer to eternity without hope, without God!

You may well ask, "But how can you know this is their state?" Very simply. The Lord said so: "God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already" (John 3:18). They are under condemnation because they have not accepted Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the Savior of the world, as their own personal Savior. Failing to do so they do not have access to God. Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

It is vain to talk of having God and at the same time rejecting His Son. Hear the word of God: "Whoso denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:23). There is no such thing as eternal salvation or access to God apart from God's Son and His blood atonement on the cross for our sins. God's testimony is that He has given us eternal life only in His Son (read Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11, 12; Heb. 9:24-26). And there is forgiveness of sins only on acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, and until then your loved one, your friend and neighbor, has no hope and is without God, because he has no Savior. *There is no Savior but Jesus Christ, God's Son.* If in reading these lines some one realizes his need of Christ we are ready to help you in any way we can. "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" What ever else one may have he does not have eternal life apart from God's Son. "Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation." Accept Him now!

If you are enveloped in fog and can't see, stand still.

PURPOSING

Stanford Chambers

Is it not the duty of Christians to tithe? And should all that comes in be tithed, or only the proceeds? What portion is one's own?

Christians are not under law, yet what they do (or do not) and how they act is an index to how much (or how little) the grace of God has worked in their hearts. As he hath purposed in his heart" (2 Cor. 9:7) is the New Testament way of instructing us on giving. This instruction assumes that one purposes something; that he sets for himself a standard. It is spiritually wholesome for one to remember that "the tithe is the Lord's," but the tithe is the Lord's because *all* is His. The whole nation of Israel was the Lord's so He ordained the setting apart of the Levites representative of the whole nation. The Levites were His because the whole nation was His. How much is one's own? *None*. See Acts 4:32 on how the first Christians regarded their possessions. "It is required of a steward that he be found faithful." Whether his faithfulness depends on his turning everything into special and immediate service for his Lord would depend upon circumstances. Under ordinary circumstances He would have a successful farmer or mechanic hold sufficient capital for carrying on and for the sake of increase, which enables him to keep on giving. If he is farming or keeping shop for God his faithfulness will be made manifest in due time.

If the Christian purposes in his heart to give the tenth of all that comes into his hand let him see to it that he does so. If he purposes to give the tenth of the proceeds (that is, after accounting for what it actually costs him to obtain) let him see to it that he does that. If he purposes to put directly into service two tenths or more let him do as "he hath purposed in his heart." He is to *purpose something*.

"Covetousness is idolatry," and it is obvious that the churches are full of idolaters, hence the merchandizing and the cheap and questionable methods of squeezing and extracting money from them, "raising money for the Lord's work." Such giving (???) does not evidence that faithfulness required of a steward. Without doubt money is the acid test.—From *Truth Advance*.

THE REAL ABSENCE

When the Lord took bread and said, "This is my body," and also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," He did not mean to say that the emblems had been changed into the actual body and blood of the Lord—He stood before them in His actual body. The purpose of the Lord's supper is not to celebrate the *real presence* of the Lord, but the *real absence*, for it is to be done "till he come." If the emblems were changed into the actual body and blood of the Lord it would be natural and proper for us to fall down and worship them, as do some. But, as it is, we worship and adore the absent Lord portrayed in the emblems, not the emblems.

DOCTRINE AND SPIRITUALITY

Frank S. Graham

From men of different religious groups we hear the charge that some who seem to be sound in doctrine are lacking in spirituality. "Many of the saints are straight as a gunbarrel doctrinally, and as empty spiritually," is an assertion which appeared not long ago in a well known inter-denominational journal.

In a recent letter, a publisher declared, with reference to the churches of Christ: "We are a doctrinal people but not a spiritual people."

Granting that some who emphasize a few, or even many points of New Testament doctrine, lack spirituality, we are confident that this weakness is not a result of giving attention to the doctrine in its entirety. The scriptures show that doctrinal teachings are directly related to attitude, conduct, and spiritual growth. Paul writes of "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3).

The doctrine that Christ died for all is related to living unto him: "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15). The vital doctrine of salvation by grace has a close relationship to godly living: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). "That blessed hope" is mentioned in the next verse, a doctrine which, according to 1 John 3:3, is an incentive to purity of life.

Even the doctrinal significance of water baptism should be conducive to godliness and spirituality, if its bearing on walking in newness of life is rightly considered (See Rom. 6:4).

Therefore, those who are laboring to raise the spiritual level of the children of God should seek to give well-balanced attention to the whole body of New Testament doctrine. Doctrine and spirituality are too closely related to be put into separate categories. If individuals or congregations lack spirituality, neglect of doctrine, or false doctrine may underlie this condition.
Ottumwa, Ia.

GO ON TO MOUNT OLIVES

After the Supper the disciples and the Lord sang a hymn and went out "into the Mount of Olives." Now and then you find brethren who think that at the close of our worship service we should sing a hymn and immediately go out. But such should read the whole scripture and *go on out to Mount Olives*. However, according to Romans 14, if one has such scruples let him go on out, but let him not seek to force the whole congregation to go out with him.

The trouble with troublemakers is they always consider other people the cause of the trouble.

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Continued)

PAUL'S MINISTRY AT ICONIUM. Having been cast out of the borders of Antioch, Paul and Barnabas journeyed east to the city of Iconium. Here their experiences were much the same as at Antioch. In the synagogue they "so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." With what earnestness and fervor they must have spoken—they "so spake" that this great result followed. But opposition followed also; and as at Antioch, so here it was instigated by the Jews "that were disobedient." "They stirred up the souls of the Gentiles and made them evil affected against the brethren." The Revised Standard version renders it, "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren." We are reminded of the "whispering campaigns" of our own day, not only in politics but also in religious circles. Those Jews knew how to use such unfair and evil devices! What libelous insinuations and false charges they circulated in this manner we do not know; but they were successful in poisoning the minds of many people and bringing about strife in the city. And we doubt not that they blamed Paul and Barnabas for the resulting disturbance!

But the brethren did not leave Iconium at the first sign of trouble. Indeed, that was all the more reason for their staying there for some considerable time. For these converts needed much teaching and encouragement to enable them to stand against the opposition. Quite probably, too, there were others yet to be brought into the fold. So they continued "speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands." How much the success of the gospel was due to the boldness with which the apostles proclaimed it against all opposition! And that doesn't mean that they were harsh and bitter in their preaching. They spoke the truth in love; but they spoke with firmness and conviction, withholding nothing that was profitable and presenting the truth clearly and forcefully. Note also in this passage the expression, "the word of His grace." They were proclaiming the grace of the Lord Jesus—it was a gracious message they were bringing to the people. But the opposition continued to grow; "the multitude of the city was divided," some taking sides with the Jews and some with the brethren; and at length the persecution reached the point of open violence. Having learned of the threat against their lives, Paul and Barnabas made their escape and journeyed south to Lystra.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA. In this city their experiences were quite different from those elsewhere. No mention is made of a synagogue of the Jews; it is probable, therefore, that the Jewish population there was small. However, it was among his converts at Lystra that Paul later obtained one of his most trustworthy helpers in the work of the gospel, Timothy, son of a Jewess whose hus-

band was a Greek. (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:2). But it appears here at Lystra Paul and Barnabas were of the most part confronted with heathenism in one of its crudest forms. Before the gate was a temple erected to Jupiter, esteemed as "the father of Gods and men"; and among their cherished traditions was the mythical story of a visit which Jupiter and Mercury had once made in human form to these very regions. But even in such places the gospel is the power of God unto salvation; so to these people in heathen darkness Paul preached the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus.

On one occasion his attention was attracted to a man sitting in his audience who had all his life been a cripple. He was listening to the apostle; and there was something about him—perhaps the light of confidence in his eyes, or the trusting expression on his face—that made it evident to Paul that he had faith to be healed. We can well understand the amazement of the people when they saw this stranger suddenly stop speaking and, while looking intently at the cripple, shout to him, "Stand upright on your feet." And when this man, who had never walked, instantly leaped up and began to walk about, their enthusiasm had no bounds. "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Such was the explanation that naturally occurred to them; Jupiter and Mercury had visited them as in the olden days! And, since Paul was the chief speaker, they called him Mercury, the messenger of the gods. Preparations were promptly made to pay divine honors to their visiting deities!

If Paul and Barnabas had been seeking honors for themselves, here was an opportunity to bask for a little while in the light of human adoration! But when they became aware of what was intended, they were horrified. They could not afford to let this go on. So they pled with them earnestly to desist from such a thing. "We are also men of like passions with you." (Can we imagine Paul's saying this to a heathen mob before he became a Christian?) And in their pleading they presented to the people the truth concerning the true and living God. This was the lesson most needful on that occasion. They should know that Jupiter and Mercury and all the rest of those heathen deities were vain things, and that the God whom Paul and Barnabas preached was the living God, the creator of all things; that in generations past He had suffered the nations to walk in their own ways; that it was He Who had given them rains and fruitful seasons and all blessings that had brought joy and gladness to their hearts. Even with all these words they found it difficult to restrain the people from going ahead with the intended sacrifices.

"But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium," with satanic hatred against the truth and against those who preached it. From miles away they came; "and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead." How fickle is the multitude! One day the people of Lystra were determined to worship Paul and Barnabas; within a short time they were ready to stone them! But such is the inherent character of the multitudes everywhere and at all times. They are

not to be trusted. Even among the churches we have known of the multitudes' turning against faithful, upright preachers of the Word whom they had previously held in high esteem, only because they were "persuaded" by preachers from elsewhere. Stoning is now out of fashion; nevertheless good men sometimes become victims of false and malicious propaganda having its origin in jealous hearts. Paul was dragged out of the city and left for dead. To the disciples gathered around it must have seemed the end. But his work was not yet done; so in a miraculous manner the Lord delivered him. (See 2 Tim. 3:10, 11.) He arose and returned to the city; and the following day, in company with Barnabas, he set out for Derbe.

THE RETURN JOURNEY. No details of their ministry at Derbe are given except that "they preached the gospel in that city and made many disciples." From there their shortest, and probably their safest, route to the home base of Antioch of Syria was overland by way of Tarsus. But there was work to be done among their recent converts. Paul was not one to be content with baptizing people and then leaving them to struggle on alone against the adversaries. He carried them on his heart; sometimes he wrote them letters of encouragement and admonition; when he could he visited them. So back they went—back to Lystra, where Paul had been stoned; and back to the other cities where his life had been endangered. The disciples in these places no doubt were enduring persecutions; with great boldness Paul and Barnabas returned to confirm their souls and to exhort them to continue in the faith, telling them "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." (Is the expression "kingdom of God" here the equivalent of "the church?" From Colossians 1:13 we know that Christians have been translated "into the kingdom of the Son of His love"; but here is evidence that there is another "phase" of the kingdom into which they have not yet entered.)

In every one of these churches elders were appointed. Does it not seem remarkable, in view of the high qualifications required for the eldership in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9, that in such short time there should be found men in these churches qualified for this important work? And we cannot think that the apostle would appoint men to that office who were incompetent. That is often done nowadays, but with questionable results. Frequently the latter state of such churches is worse than the former! Yet a church without elders cannot be so efficient as a church should be. The lack of suitable eldership material in so many churches is a serious defect of our times. What is the trouble? For one thing, our converts have not applied themselves as diligently as they should to the building of that Christian character that the office requires. Evidently they had done so in those churches; so, when Paul and Barnabas returned within a few months, some were ready to step into that position of responsibility.

This work of consolidation having been accomplished, they retraced their steps through Pisidia to Pamphylia, preached the word at Perga, and from Attalia set sail for Antioch. What joy there must

have been among the disciples in that city when they learned that these faithful preachers had returned! The church was gathered together, and they told all that God had done with them. (They took no glory to themselves—it was all what God had done.) “And they tarried no little time with the disciples.”

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:17-22.

R. H. B.

If the student of Paul's epistle to the Galatians should find in some parts of it some difficulty, he should feel encouraged in the conviction that the apostle's teaching is *very much* worthy of our attention and patient consideration. If men think that gold is worth digging for, these truths of the Spirit are “more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold.” We are not dealing here with matters that were of interest only to those Galatians of old. The teaching of this epistle is necessary, and of great practical concern to us today. That covenant with Abraham, for example, on which our present lesson turns, is a matter of high importance to us. It lies at the foundation of the gospel, and concerns our hope and salvation. Its nature and provisions concern us as much as it did the Galatian churches. The errors concerning it which endangered the faith of the Galatians are very common today also. In fact the spiritual life of many has been darkened and crippled by failure to understand the great principles set forth in this epistle to the Galatians.

Let us now look back once more at some of the verses touched upon in the preceding lesson.

“Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. [For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect. Rom. 4:14] For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. 3:17, 18).

The Abrahamic covenant was a covenant of promise—not like the covenant of Mount Sinai, like a covenant between two parties (“if you will do this, I will do that”—see Exod. 19:5, 6, 8)—but simply a covenant of free promise. Now the only thing anyone can do with a promise is to believe it and receive it. We read therefore that “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.” Moreover, being a covenant of promise, it is necessarily also a covenant of grace. For the promise was not given to Abraham as a reward for goodness (for however high and noble Abraham's character was, like all other men, he was a sinner—Rom. 3:23); nor did he earn and merit the promise of God by works. It was a *free* promise. “Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” But faith is the one non-meritorious thing, for it is simply the reliance upon the promise and upon the God who gave it.

It leaves no room for boasting—only for gratitude (Rom. 3:27). “Therefore it is of faith that it may be by grace . . .” (Rom. 4:4, 5, 6). Such then was the covenant which God made with Abraham—a covenant of promise and of grace; and we come in for the benefits of it through Him who is Abraham’s Seed and Heir of all its benefits, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This was the free gift, and this the salvation by grace that was endangered by the teaching of the Judaizers among the Galatian churches. We can discern now more clearly the import of verses 17 and 18 of the third chapter of Galatians.

But what of the Law then? Why was it given at all? What was it for? Paul seems to have so completely eliminated the Law from God’s plan of salvation that such questions must inevitably be asked and answered. (In Romans also—where Paul sets forth the contrast between law-salvation and faith-salvation, this question arises. See Rom. 7:7, 13f.) Here is the apostle’s answer:

“What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed [the Seed] should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.” (Gal. 3:19, 20.)

The law, therefore, was provisional. It was given for a necessary restraint, “because of transgressions. It kept down much outward wickedness. It pointed the way of righteousness. At the same time it convicted man of his sinfulness and helplessness. (“For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.”—Rom. 3:20; 7:7.) It could tell us what is right, and show us our wrong—but in itself could do no more. It “worketh wrath.” It made sin exceeding sinful (Rom. 7:13). It brought men under a curse (Gal. 3:10). The people indeed pledged themselves to keep it all (Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 7) but, alas, they uniformly failed, and broke their covenant over and over again. If it had not been that merciful and gracious provisions for forgiveness and atonement had been made, Israel would have had to be destroyed before even they began their national existence in the land. For all of which the law was not to be blamed, but the people. They, like ourselves, were just ordinary fleshly human beings. So it is with us also as it was with them. For the law is “righteous and holy and good”; and “the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7:12, 14). Nor was the law abrogated, as some think, but the believer is delivered from it. The law has dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth (Rom. 7:1). We are delivered from its dominion through death—Christ’s death, who bore its curse and paid its penalty on our behalf. “I, through the law, died unto the law that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ . . .” (Gal. 2:19, 20; 3:13; 4:4).

The law was “ordained through angels,” Paul says (comp. Heb. 2:1, 2) and “by the hand of a mediator,” namely Moses, who mediated between the people and God (for the sinful people could not have direct dealings with a holy God: they were not even able to endure the Voice that spake to them from the mount (Deut. 5:22-28). The covenant of Mt. Sinai was a contract between two separate

parties: the holy God and sinful Israel. Hence the need of a go-between. But in the covenant of promise God is the one, only contracting party, binding Himself to bless all who believe and come to Him through Christ.

Some have found difficulty in the fact that Christ also is spoken of as Mediator. "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus then is indeed a mediator, but His is a mediatorship very different from that of the Old Covenant. He is not like Moses, who, himself but a man, was a go-between twixt God and a sinful people, a servant running errands back and forth from the one party to the other, transacting business for God, and stipulating terms of acceptance with Israel: in Jesus, God comes Himself to deal with us and to bless us. In receiving the Son we have the Father also; for Christ is the "Daysman," who can lay one hand on us because He is Son of man, and the other on God because He is the Son of God—the Living Link joining us to the Father.

Here another question presents itself: Is the Law then opposed to the promise of God? (Gal. 3:21.) No, says the apostle—emphatically *No!* The law in itself is holy and righteous and good. Its demands are right and just. The deficiency of the law lay not in the law itself, but in man's sinful disposition. It could only condemn—it could not justify. It could only pronounce the just death-sentence—it could not give life. It could only shut us up in the prison-house of sin, so that our only hope of life and righteousness lay in the free promise which is by faith in Jesus Christ to them that believe (Comp. Rom. 3:21f.). The fact is, the law could and should have given life. "He that doeth them [the precepts of the law] shall live in them" (Gal. 3:12; comp. Rom. 10:5). But therein lay the fatal sting, for no man kept it. "The commandment which was unto life, this I found to be unto death." "Did then that which is good become death unto me?" asks the apostle; and again the answer is an emphatic *No*. "God forbid; but sin that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good" (Rom. 7:10, 13). There was no fault in the Old Covenant (the Law and the Old Covenant are synonymous). The fault lay in man's sinful nature. "For finding fault *with them*, he saith, *Behold* the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for *they continued not in my covenant*, and I regarded them not" (Heb 8:8, 9). Now that New Covenant is the free promise through Christ Jesus,—which is designed to obviate the weakness of the Old. "For *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4). "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). (To be continued)

"FAITH OF OUR FATHERS"

E. L. J.

As announced last month, the Barclay articles on Prophecy, Israel, and the Millennium continue in this department. At least another installment from this brilliant writer is yet to be printed—perhaps two or three more. As we read the Barclay Postscript, concerning the dearth of prophetic literature, and his earnest wish for a better supply among disciples, we rejoiced in our opportunities and thanked God for the privilege of adding "Faith of Our Fathers" to the meager list.

The present reprint is lifted from the 1867 series in *Millennial Harbinger*. In presenting this series, W. K. Pendleton, then editor of *The Harbinger*, wrote:

We are gratified to announce a new and most interesting feature in this volume. Our beloved brother J. T. Barclay will give us a series of articles on prophecy. We need not say, that but few living men have had equal opportunities for studying this subject, and none have improved them better. For many years our resident missionary at Jerusalem, and ardently devoted to the study of prophecy, he brings to its discussion the rarest advantages, and will be able to give a charm to its investigation, which but few, if any men of the age, could impart.—W. K. P.

PROPHECY

Dr. J. T. Barclay

"Believest thou the Prophets?"

"The wise shall understand."

I.

To popularize prophecy—in the hope of attracting to it that measure of attention to which the momentous interests involved so justly entitle it—is the special object of a few articles I propose writing upon the subject, in which I shall attempt to exhibit the importance and obligation of its study, refute the objections that have been so inconsiderately and injuriously urged against it, remove the prejudice thus engendered, harmonize the principles of prophetic hermeneutics, and otherwise endeavor to stimulate its study and facilitate its apprehension.

Fully assured that the fast ripening purposes of Him who is at once "his own Interpreter" and the all-wise Disposer of all events, are at least sufficiently unfolded by his gracious providence to enable us to "scan his work and make it plain," an effort will be made, in humble reliance upon the Divine guidance and blessing, to present such a view of the matter as may suffice, however compendious, so to represent the subject as to enlist the interest and assist the investigation of any one sincerely inquiring after truth; and, if not to arouse the dormant conscience of the scoffer, at least to arrest the attention of the heedless and apathetic. Allow me to remark, however, that I am neither an alarmist nor a thaumaturgist.

For if it be true, as is most confidently believed by some of the most eminent students of prophecy, that we are already entering upon that eventful era of knowledge and power known in prophetic

terminology as "the time of the end," when the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness, it is undeniably true that what was, but a few years ago, "shut up and sealed" by special prophetic embargo, may now be satisfactorily explicable—the seal of mystery being thus removed by the unerring hand of Providence—for thus it is written: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and *knowledge shall be increased*" (Dan. 12:4); as says also another revealing angel—addressing the writer of the most obscure of all the prophecies, from the anticipated standpoint of the present day; "*Seal not the sayings of this book; for the time is at hand*" (Rev. 22:10).

Much prejudice, as well as apathy, it is well known, operates, most unfortunately, to negative the study of Prophecy in general, and especially the Apocalypse; and not only so, but it is a subject actually tabooed in many a pulpit and religious journal; and yet, most truthfully has it been observed of the Book of Revelation, (confessedly one of the most symbolical and recondite of all the prophetic oracles) that "even if one does not understand the first and most immediate history of its explanation, it is a book for all hearts and all times. It contains the essence of Christianity and of worldly history. . . . It is a book of instruction and comfort for all the churches among whom Christ walks, even when the uneducated do not understand the learned explanation of it." And truly no better sedative of unhallowed ambition, nor antidote to worldly-mindedness, could be devised than this divine catholicon for pining Zion—a balm for so large a portion of the ailments to which humanity is heir. As a lamp to the feet and a light to the path of the benighted traveler, so is this blessed volume of illumination to the pathway of the weary pilgrim wending his way amid the mazes of this wilderness world—a never failing ground of faith and hope amid all the trials of God's people in all ages—such is the sure word of prophecy whereunto we "do well to take heed, as a light that shineth in a dark place." How, then, can we declare the whole counsel of God, as ministers thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work, without assigning a suitable place to prophecy in "preaching" the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ?!

Most appropriately observes the late erudite Professor of Sacred Literature in Andover Theological Seminary, Moses Stewart, in his learned work on the Apocalypse, (and it is to a due appreciation of this sentiment, under the circumstances alluded to, that I may ascribe the ineffable joy I have derived from the study of prophecy): "All that hope or fear can do in the way of operating upon the minds of men to encourage them to persevere in a course of holy life, and to dissuade from opposition to God and the purposes of his redeeming grace, seems to be held forth by the Apocalypse. No book in all the Bible can, on the whole, and when rightly understood, be regarded as exceeding it in respect to adaptedness for making impressions of such a salutary nature. If the human mind can be affected (and who will deny that it is most deeply affected) by hope and fear, the highest point to which the agency of these prin-

ciples can be carried, is attained by the writer of the Revelation. Above all, the Apocalypse when rightly understood, should be the *vade mecum* of such as go forth to publish a Savior's name amongst the heathen. Surrounded by those who are servants of the powers of darkness, discouraged perhaps by small success, and disheartened by the strength of superstition, and by zeal for bloody and foolish rites and ceremonies which pervades all around them, the faithful missionary may read with tears of joy the precious promises so often held out in the book before us—promises of the universal triumph of truth and love over all the opposition of error and malignity; and when he lights upon the soul-reviving assurances of the Savior, that 'he will surely come,' his heart may respond, like that of the Apocalyptic seer, 'Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.' . . . As I have said before, I say again, that I know of no book in all the scriptures which contains matter adapted to higher moral excitement than the Apocalypse."

For the same high estimate of prophecy the weight of such names as those of Sir Francis Bacon, John Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, his successor Whiston, the great Mathematician, and hosts of the wisest and best men that have ever adorned the annals of time may be appropriately adduced as corroborative testimony. And what saith He who spake as never man spake?—what is *His* estimate of the value attaching to the study of prophecy? Let it be inferred from what his great revealing apostle declares in his brief introduction to the Apocalypse: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein"; but especially from his ample endorsement of John's declaration, "These things are faithful and true; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Nor should the reproof so pungently administered to two of his disciples when on a certain occasion they manifested an ignorance of prophecy, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," be lost upon us.

Surely then it is permitted to us—be the adverse opinion of some of our fellow-creatures what it may—to investigate these high and holy mysteries, as saith the prophet, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye," for "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the Law." Assuredly then the study of prophecy is legitimate and allowable, let who will maintain the reverse; and not only allowable and proper, but commendable and important: hence its obligation! a duty, however, arising not only from its importance, but negatively from the culpableness of its neglect.

To no book whatever [as the book of Revelation] attaches so signally the stamp of a Divine origin; and hence it is affirming but little to aver that though we may not attain to the full assurance of faith in all things, it is both profitable, and intelligible to a most encouraging extent. But, there being no "royal road" or privileged way of access to the arcana of prophecy—however much obstacles

may be removed and facilities afforded—if we would intelligently understand these heavenly mysteries, we must adopt the practice of the noble Bereans, and search the Scriptures—the *prophetic* Scriptures, as they did daily—*diligently searching* as for hidden treasure.

The reason why so many have derived but little benefit from the study of prophecy, is, doubtless, that they have examined the subject so superficially. Let geometry be studied with as little care as many bestow upon prophecy, and the student will never pass over “*pons asinorum*” of Euclid’s Elements. Let it be especially borne in mind, however, for our consolation and encouragement, that the blessing consequent on a due attention to prophecy, is not made upon a full comprehension of its glorious mysteries; but is most graciously promised “to him that *readeth*,” and keepeth (in mind, as the word simply means) those things that are written therein.”

That the investigation of prophetic truth should possess no charms for the giddy worldling, the self-satisfied formalist, and even for the truly converted that are *at ease in Zion*, complacently lending a listening ear to the syren song of pleasure, is not so very strange; for

“Sounds *prophetic* are too rough to suit

Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute.”

But that any who profess, enjoy, and manifest the religion of Christ should slight the spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus, is matter of profound surprise; and still more astonishing is it that those whose characteristic, *distinctive* motto it is to “*prove all things*,” should be guilty of slurring over the admonitory injunction with which this all-comprehensive precept is introduced to our notice—“*Despise Not Prophecyings*”—prophecyings too about “times and seasons” about which there is no need that one be ignorant.”

It may wound our denominational pride a little to be told that though we profess to “*prove all things*,” we “yet lack one thing” of transcendent interest, so long as we neglect the cultivation of prophecy; yet confessedly the charge is *just*, however mortifying. For most evident is it that without the parapets, copings and turrets of prophecy on the wall of our Zion now so long joined all around, and built up so high, too much are these revived walls of primeval Christianity like those of Jerusalem at a certain stage of the great Jewish Reformation. These, it will be remembered, were then reared up only half their required height, despite the superhuman efforts of that great Reformer, the pious Tirshatha of the Holy City—striking type of the great Reformation of the present age so happily accomplished by that greatest and best of all men and reformers in all post-apostolic times, whose long-cherished intention it was, as so often announced in his “Harbinger,” but unavoidably postponed from time to time, till too late, to devote much of his remaining energies to the elaboration of these soul-engrossing themes—the contemplation of which, as his end approached, afforded his capacious soul such rapturous delight. And although the height to which we have reared the wall enables us successfully to set at defiance the united efforts of all the Sanballats, Tobias, and Gashmus of Samaria, Philistia, and Babylon; yet it must be admitted that

for want of these bulwarks and towers of watchmen and seers we are unable to "view the landscape o'er" from these lofty stand-points—as it is equally our duty, our interest and our honor to rear and occupy, that we may the better see the King in his beauty and the land that is afar off.

Candor extorts the confession that as a people we seem to look too exclusively for growth in grace and establishment in the faith to the New Testament Scriptures, whereas it is most evident that the primitive saints were *jointly* "established according to the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Well spake good king Jehoshaphat therefore to self-reliant Israel: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper;" and to the same effect also Isaiah testifies: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." He then that would be firmly established in the faith, hope and love required in the Scriptures must make the *prophets* as well as the apostles, his bosom companions and the men of my counsel.

How my cheeks burned with the crimson of sympathizing shame when I heard, on a certain occasion, a learned D. D. remark complacently that he knew "no more about prophecy than an unborn babe!" But still more was I shocked and scandalized at the declaration of one of our brethren, unblushingly averring that he knew "no more about prophecy than a horse does!" Is it not a significant fact, strongly addressing itself to our hopes and fears, that the great Prophet and Teacher never displayed more indignation against those self-satisfied religionists of his day than when they *despised prophesyings*, and were consequently unable to "discern the signs of the times; nor does he ever seem to have evinced more displeasure towards his disciples than when they were "Slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."—*Millennial Harbinger*, 1867.

But—hoping to speak more directly to the point hereafter—let these few desultory remarks suffice, by way of preface, proem, and apology, in thus undertaking to advocate this important yet obscure subject in the *Millennial Harbinger*—a journal, by the way, whose very name seems to involve the necessity of discussing such themes—not only for consistency's sake, in consonance with its significant title, but still more appropriately, in accordance with the demands of the age and the signs of the times.

J. T. B.

P. S. Just as I had finished writing the foregoing lines, a brother came in, and asked me if I would not like to look at his "prophetic paper,"—stating that he has always been fond of prophecy; and that inasmuch as we have no such productions of our own he was compelled to patronize the works of some one or more of the sectarian denominations.

Now this reminds me that I am cognizant of many such cases. I have also occasion to know that some of these brethren evince a very strong inclination to take leave of us and cast in their lot amongst those who feel more interest in what so deeply interests them, than we do as a religious community. And I am likewise fully persuaded that there are many amongst the various religious communities around us who would gladly unite with us did we but give to prophetic subjects that attention to which, in their estimation at least, it is so justly entitled. All the greater is the shame, therefore, that we have no prophetic literature of our own, except a few occasional essays in some of our serials. I remember, however, with pleasure, that although we have no such systematic, standard works, nor even a single permanent volume devoted to that subject, that Prof. Milligan, some years ago wrote quite a number of short and well-digested articles on the subject—very good in the main—which, I doubt not, it would be conferring a decided benefit to the brotherhood were he to give them to us in an extended and permanent form. The brotherhood is also indebted to Bro. Lard's able pen for at least two very interesting articles on the Millennium, which would well bear publication in pamphlet form, and handsomely repay perusal. Both of these contributions, and perhaps many others of which I have no knowledge, would serve a valuable purpose, both in gratifying an already existing want and in awakening a latent and innate taste for prophetic exposition—that food of the soul for which there is naturally such a hungering and thirsting; for well has it been observed by an eminent writer, that “Besides the pleasure derived from acquired knowledge, there lurks in the mind of man, and tinged with a shade of sadness, an unsatisfied longing for something beyond the present—a striving toward regions as yet unknown and unopened. Such a sense of longing binds still faster the links which in accordance with the supreme law of our being connect the material with the ideal world, and animates the mysterious relation existing between that which the mind receives from without and that which it reflects from its own depths to the external world.”

—From *Millennial Harbinger*, 1867, pp. 30-36.

EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER

“Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together . . . but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh.” Before dawn is the darkest part of the night. As the day draws nigh the great apostasy foretold is getting in full swing, and the danger of falling away increases, therefore the need and imperativeness of exhorting one another the more. Exhorting one another and interceding on each other's behalf is a duty not to be shirked. The assembly gives opportunity to exhort and to be exhorted. Forsake the assembly and you inevitably fail in many other duties. Cain was not the last to say, “Am I my brother's keeper.” Many by actions if not in words are saying it today.—S. C.