

THE WORD AND WORK

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WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE BIBLE FROM TWO VANTAGE POINTS

There are two points of view from which to study the Bible. The first is in view of the gradual unfolding of the doctrines concerning God, God's things, and God's dealings. This is not only a wonderfully interesting, but also an exceedingly profitable, way of looking into the word of God. Put yourself in the place of the people to whom the portion of the Scriptures you are studying was given; try to realize their circumstances and surroundings, and especially their state of enlightenment or ignorance, and endeavor to realize how the portion of the word would have struck you, had you been in their place and their case. Nothing will give you a clearer insight into the primary purport and meaning of the word; nothing will so free you from preconceived notions and presuppositions that hinder the truth. Then, as you discover the gradual advance in God's self-revelation and in his dealings with men, your interest will be gradually stimulated, and the impression of the truth will gradually deepen and become more definite and vivid. This is a most effective way of studying the whole Bible; yet it is not in itself sufficient.

THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF ITS HIGHEST REVELATIONS

After having gone over the Bible in the manner suggested in the preceding paragraph, the second point of view must be taken: the Book must be studied in view of the full and complete revelation. It is the great fallacy of many renowned Bible students to suppose that because such and such a statement in the Old Testament or in the Gospel could not have borne such and such an import to the minds of those that first heard it, that therefore it could never have been meant to have that import. For example, it is fairly certain that neither Moses nor any of his people understood that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had a part in the creation, although he used a plural noun of God, coupled with a singular verb. And though he represents God as saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," it did not carry the same import to his mind that it now bears to us. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that therefore that language had no further, deeper meaning than that which Moses and Israel saw in it at the time they first received it. The word of God holds treasures of truth even yet unminded, and the latest, most perfect revelation opens the depths of former messages—depths that had never been suspected. The same point is illustrated in regard to doctrines concerning the nature and hereafter of man. There was at first little indication of a resurrection, a future life, a conscious existence after death. The inspired men of old rarely looked beyond the physical life, and spoke of death

and hereafter in terms of the body, and in reference to the material man, not the spirit. But when life and immortality was brought to light through the gospel, and resurrection and conscious existence after death were taught by Jesus and his apostles, it was not only an advance in truth, but it threw a light of deeper significance on certain old passages, and confirmed the vague intimations given aforetime. Yet there are those who are so foolish as to endeavor to trim down the fidler revelation to the measure of the imperfect one, and not only deny the Old Testament statements concerning death and the hereafter, etc., any deeper meaning than the primary import those words then bore to the hearers of it, but they want to reduce the New Testament statements even to the limits of the Old Testament conception. Many illustrations could be brought of such like mistaken dealing with the Scriptures. But, having traced the rise and unfolding of God's teaching, the true course is to turn back and look at the earlier word in the full light of the later, and so perceive its marvelous depth and consistency; for to the Christian the Old Testament means manifold more than it ever meant to those to whom originally it was given.

TWO WAYS OF BIBLE STUDY

There are again two ways of studying God's word: the active and the passive. And of the two, both good, the passive is the better for us and more needed now. The passive is receptive; the active, productive. The passive is characterized by devotion and a quiet drinking in of God's mind; the active, by discursive thought. You have, no doubt, after reading a chapter, or even a verse or two, felt, as it were, a vast deep, an infinite height, behind what you read—something you had touched, and yet had not got hold of; something that was infinitely satisfying, and yet, because you have not grasped it, leaves you unsatisfied. How often we hear a brother or sister say: "There is a great deal in that!" Yet they could not tell you what it is, nor describe what they see; but they feel, as by a sixth sense, the deep, wonderful background. Now when a man, having been so impressed by a word from God's mouth, rests upon it, looking it over and over, brooding upon it as a dove upon her nest, without conscious exercise of reasoning or analytical powers, simply drinking in, letting the impression deepen, as when a seal is being pressed more and more deeply into wax; beholding, receiving, adoring; seeing God in and behind the word and worshipping—then it is that the word of God is doing its supreme work upon him. How different this quiet, transforming meditation, in which our minds and spirits are yielded up to the influence of God's mind and Spirit, to that anxious, hasteful seeking after "points" and arguments, that nervous flying from text to text, that empty dissecting and analyzing, that dry dogmatizing and philosophizing and wise opinionating that we sometimes call Bible study! Some purely intellectual, analytical, and synthetic, and even polemical, study of the Bible is necessary. But we have had too much of it in proportion. We need to learn to wait in silence upon God only, and to commune with God himself through His word. For thereby does man live.

DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY

A writer in the Century Magazine calls attention to the fallacy of "divided responsibility." It is common, when a certain responsibility rests upon ten or a dozen men, for each one to imagine that his share of it is only one-tenth or one-twelfth of the whole. This is a considerable mistake. The whole responsibility rests wholly upon each one of these ten or twelve. They may not feel it to be that way—likely they do not; for that is the secret of the mob spirit, which does outrageous things which no one individual in the mob would do by himself, and it is also the secret of mismanagement and neglect on part of committees, assemblies, societies, and even congregations of Christ, and assumes the shape of "everybody's business, nobody's business." But the fact remains that each has the whole responsibility as far, of course, as his power and ability extends; and justice, whether God's or man's must so adjudge it. That sheds a new light on our actions. Let us say I stayed away from the assembly of the church without sufficient reason. It made small difference. They had a good house and a helpful meeting. Very well; but what if each member had done just what I did? The result would have been that the church could not have met at all. So then I did my part to prevent the assembling of the saints and the worship of God that day. My wrong would have been no greater if all the rest had so stayed away; nor is it any smaller because all others went and attended. Again, you gave nothing and did nothing for the spread of the gospel at home or perhaps for the spread of the gospel in heathen lands. "Things nevertheless ran along very well, I think," you reply. True; but suppose every Christian had done exactly as you did about it, then what? Why, the gospel would not have been preached, the "commission" would have been disobeyed, souls would have perished in darkness, and Satan's kingdom would have prospered. By your failure to do and to give, you did all you could to bring about these results. Neither is your responsibility or disobedience increased or diminished by what all the others have or have not done toward furthering God's work. That is how God looks at it. Let each Christian, therefore, realize the life and commission God has laid upon him; and when each is true to his own responsibility, the church, it goes without saying, will be true to hers.

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A QUESTION OF FORGIVENESS

Must we forgive even those that have wronged us, who are not in the church? An answer to this question is requested by a sister. If I should say, "No, we need not forgive sinners," I am sure the sister's own heart would immediately protest; for a conscience even a little enlightened would rebuke an attitude of grudge-bearing, enmity, hatred, or an unforgiving spirit toward sinner or saint. How could it be that a Christian who owes his very life and hope to mercy, whose forgiveness has been purchased with the blood of a loving Redeemer, should refuse mercy and forgiveness to a fellow-man? It was by insult and injury unjustly heaped upon One that we were healed. Shall we refuse to bear such things, or demand

justice against those who have wronged us, the while we ourselves are creatures of grace? These questions are of a kind that answer themselves.

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING

The man who says, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget," is probably unwilling to do either. That is one of those phrases on which the copyright has run out long ago: one of those high-sounding platitudes by which the carnal man justifies himself. Whenever we genuinely forgive, the forgetting will take care of itself, and we need not take any trouble. Can we forget? Well, if we cannot help remembering the wrong done us, perhaps we can help recollecting; and if it comes to our minds unbidden, we can keep from doting and dwelling on it; and if we are bound to think of it, we can think kindly and gently and forgivingly, with even some little gratitude to the Lord, who counted us worthy of the suffering and the test of it.

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A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

There are some natures more sensitive to ill treatment than others—high-strung, resentful, touch natures, to whom malicious injury or a slight brings suffering so keen, and a rush of passion so strong, that calmer dispositions find it hard to understand and sympathize. It is simply a natural predisposition, a special manifestation of the flesh, manifest in another in an almost overwhelming tendency to drunkenness, or in another in proud ambition, or in another in lust. In every case it is to be overcome. If we are touchy, it is but the self in evidence, the inordinate self-esteem and self-love. Self wants to be petted and humored, or, to say the least, always treated perfectly right, according to its own notions of what is right. It watches jealously over its own honor; it loves to have the preference and the preëminence, and is quickly resentful of any slight, even apt to fancy it where none was intended, quick to take up insults, very tender in its sympathizing with itself, hard to conciliate, and not a little inclined toward jealousy and envy. These are unmistakable traits of the flesh, and belong to that list that begins with "adultery, fornication," etc., in Gal. 5. Now to stumble into, extricate ourselves, and to overcome each of these tendencies day by day is certainly a warfare. But there is something better. It is the bird that flies low that strikes so many twigs and limbs. Could we not, by God's grace, rise above the tree tops and fly home less impeded? When the flesh's sinful motives work in you, fix your eye above upon God and Christ and that high calling. And that is better than paying so much attention to self and considering so carefully our own feelings. We may not have so much forgiving to do if we quit noticing the slights and insults that come our way, and live in a higher atmosphere, and our lives will be correspondingly nobler and happier.

To those of us who still believe in the Bible as the final and infallible Word of God, there remains the Christ of the virgin birth, of virtuous life, of vicarious death, and victorious resurrection; and with all confidence we may go forward with our work of seeking the lost, remembering His promise: Lo, I am with you alway.—G. Campbell Morgan.

NEWS AND NOTES

Johnson City, Tenn.: "It is wonderful to see the hand of the Lord working in the lives of His children, and when a need arises in one part of the country, to see the solution of that problem and the fulfillment of the need taking shape hundreds of miles away.

"Recently, when Bro. Ivy Istre, of Jennings, Louisiana, became sick, his doctor prescribed a long rest, and there arose a need for someone to help with the work there. When the brethren at Mountain View and Locust Street learned of the need, they decided to share one of their ministers with the brethren in Jennings. They felt the Lord had been especially good to them, having placed two full-time ministers on the field here, and in addition to that, had directed to our midst Brother Mack LeDoux, who is a student at State College in Johnson City, and is also a very able worker for the Lord. To be unwilling to share one minister with the Jennings brethren would be nothing but selfishness, so it was decided to give Brother Paul Clark a two-months leave-of-absence from the Mountain View work so he could go to Jennings. In his absence, Brother Kenneth Istre and Brother Max LeDoux are both doing a wonderful Job caring for both works here.

"To add to our blessings, Brother Ivy Istre and wife have decided to make Johnson City their place of abode during Brother Istre's period of recuperation, so we are enjoying their fellowship in the Lord. Also, the Lord has recently directed another student-minister our way. Brother Emil Menes has entered State College and has identified himself with us, and his fellowship promises to be a blessing to both congregations.

"We feel that God has blessed in our labor, that it was His hand that has directed in all this, and that He is continuing to pour out His blessings." L. A. Singleton.

Meeting at Borden

Brother E. Gaston Collins, minister of the Borden, Indiana congregation, conducted a protracted meeting for the church the latter part of August. The singing also was under the direction of local

men, Joe McKinley and Herbert Baker. Crowds were very good with visitors along. Two confessed Christ and were baptized and one came for membership and rededication.

Home From Japan

Brother Colis Campbell, wife and little daughter, were scheduled to sail from Japan on September 24. They have been in Japan for four years and have worked with Brother E. A. Rhodes in developing a work at Yokohama. They have a nice spacious piece of ground in Yokohama, a new combination kindergarten and worship building, a nice new five-room house, and the old improvised church building. All of this has been paid for and a good work is being done with children and adults. Brother Colis should be ready to visit among the churches by the first of November. About \$700 is in his travel fund and, at least, \$500 more is needed to take care of his trip home. In order to come home now he sold his car, with the understanding that the money used out of this car money would be replaced to provide him with another car to be purchased in the States. Let us remember this good missionary.

Brother E. A. Rhodes and wife are returning to Japan to continue their work there. Brother and Sister Rhodes have done a faithful and true work in Japan for many years, both before and since the war.

Greenville, S. C.: "Wanted: information regarding a group of New Testament Christians in or near providence, Rhode Island. A young man, recently baptized here, resides in Providence and wants information.

"The work here at the Washington Ave. Church of Christ is making some progress. The Lord has blessed us with three fine young men added to the congregation by baptism since I came here last spring.

"The Mountain View Church of Christ, where Brother Paul Clark ministers, held a homecoming service recently, and a considerable number of the folk from the Washington Avenue Church of Christ

visited them, and a very fine time was enjoyed by all."—Brady M. Green, 2 Sumter St., W. Highland, Greenville, S. C.

Overman Meetings

Mackville, Ky.: "Thus far I have been used by God's grace to assist in the following meetings, all of which have been uplifting and for which we thank Him: from April 6-13 at Gallatin, Tennessee, with Brother Hall Crowder, resulting in four baptisms; From June 2-8 with Brother Howard Marsh, Sellersburg, Indiana, in both Vacation School and Meeting, resulting in twelve baptisms and three for membership; from June 8-23 with Brother Elmer Ringer, Tell City, Indiana, in both meeting and Vacation School, resulting in five baptisms and one membership; from August 8-17 with Brother Dale Jorgenson at Salem Church, Cynthia, Ky., Vacation School and Meeting resulting in five baptisms and one for membership. At all these churches I was cordially received and God's blessings were upon the work.

"From August 18-31 Brother Hall Crowder of Gallatin, Tennessee, conducted a very fine meeting with us at Mackville. His preaching about Jesus and our need to follow Him was soul-stirring and good. The work of the Holy Spirit was evident and expressed in seventeen public rededications and six baptisms. May the Lord bless Brother Hall for his labors and accept our thanks for having sent him our way.

"From September 15-21 I will be assisting Brethren Paul and Harold Preston in a meeting at the old Oregon church on the Kentucky River near Ebenezer, Ky."—Orell Overman.

Chattanooga, Tenn.: I was with 5th and M church, Louisville, Ky., in a gospel meeting August 24 through 31 where N. Wilson Burks is minister. I enjoyed working with these brethren. This was the third meeting with this church. As many know, D. H. Friend labored effectively with this church about twenty years. Brother Burks followed him. He is doing a good and constructive work here. He is not only a good preacher, but is a splendid organizer. From what I could see his Deacons "Deek," as Billy Sunday put it. The member-

ship expressed appreciation of my evangelistic efforts, and otherwise showed their interest by having us in their homes.

"One placed membership during the meeting. There were eight responses the Sunday following the meeting—two of these for baptism. Brother Burks writes that this makes 36 responses to date in 1952 at 5th and M.

"I enjoyed two days of the fifth annual Louisville Bible Conference, 2500 Portland Avenue., sponsored by Kentucky Bible College. This is a feast of good things. The Word and Work continues great. Frank Mullins is to be with us at McCallie Avenue, Chattanooga, Tenn., Oct. 26 through Nov. 2."—E. H. Hoover.

Home-Coming at Bethel

The little church Bethel near Floyd Knobs, Indiana, enjoyed a home-coming day on Sunday, September 21. Brother Antonie Valdetero from Louisiana preached at the morning service. Then came dinner on the ground and afternoon meeting. Paul Knecht, Sr., Paul Knecht, Jr., and Brent Hickman all spoke at this service. Bro. O. E. Shields has done considerable preaching at Bethel. At the present time Brother Paul Knecht, Sr., is minister there.

Monthly Song Rallies

The churches of Louisville and community have revived their monthly meetings for song. This community song fest is being held on the third Tuesday nights and at different churches. The first was held at the Highland church on the third Tuesday of September; the next is scheduled for the Ormsby church, 622 E. Ormsby for October 21 at 7:45 P. M. These song rallies are in charge of E. L. Jorgenson, Willis Allen and Dale Jorgenson. The object of these meetings is to indirectly improve the singing of the congregations.

Frankfort, Ky.: "From August 4-17 we were blessed with having Brother Howard Marsh as evangelist and Tommy Marsh as song leader for our annual revival. There were 22 responses to the invitation, 13 for baptism, 5 for membership and 4 for reconsecration. The attendance for the entire meeting was fine: many nights we had to use chairs and then open the Bible school rooms to seat the people.

"We have enjoyed about 20% increase in our Bible school and morning worship services and about 80% increase in Sunday night services this summer, for which we praise the Lord and give Him glory."—Asa Baber.

Gospel Meetings Announced

Frank M. Mullins of Dallas, Texas, is to be in a meeting at the Highland Church, Louisville, from November 10-20. John May of Lima, Ohio, is scheduled for a meeting at the Shawnee church, Louisville, from Oct. 13-26. As

we go to press Orell Overman is in a meeting at Jefferson St., this city, and R. H. Boll is preaching at Pekin, Ind., R. B. Boyd is starting at Parksville, Ky., to continue two weeks, and H. L. Olmstead is finishing at Bohon, Kentucky. All but the Olmstead meeting will be running most of the first half of October. Also a mission meeting is planned at LaGrange, Ky., beginning October 26. Come to the little white church building on the highway about three blocks from the court house. Brother Willis Allen is the evangelist.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear Brethren in Christ Jesus:

If our plans work out according to schedule, on September 28 we will take up our new work of evangelism. We are planning to hold our first Sunday service in Ponchatoula on that date.

On the same day Brother N. B. Wright will take up the work in New Orleans as preacher for the Church of Christ at the corner of Seventh and Camp Streets. A more consecrated and zealous man could not be found than Brother Wright, and I am confident that the Lord will use him there.

My five years with the New Orleans church were enjoyable, and I feel that the Lord greatly blessed us. We are grateful to the members there for all that they did for us during our stay, and for their help to us in getting started in our new work.

In general, our plans are as follows:

1. To try to build up a church at Ponchatoula. For the time being we will hold Sunday night services and midweek services.
2. To preach on the streets of towns and in country communities, using the loudspeakers. There are hundreds of such places within driving distance from Ponchatoula.
3. To hold revival meetings where opportunities arise. (The Jennings church has offered us the use of their tent for this work.)
4. To preach on Sunday mornings wherever opportunities are offered. Also it is my prayer that another mission point may be started.

The first entry in this evangelistic fund was made on July 1, 1952. The following is a report on the fund as of Aug. 31, 1952:

Receipts	\$610.95
Expenditures	574.53
Balance on hand	\$ 36.42

The expenditures were as follows: Loudspeakers \$342.31; 35mm projector and screen and other accessories, \$137.31; gasoline, recordings, filmstrips, etc., \$94.46.

Special offerings during September have enabled me to move and to get located. A report will be given later to bring the statement up-to-date. So far I have a promise of \$108 per month for my personal support.

My schedule for the next two months includes a revival meeting at Shiloh, probably one in Ponchatoula, one at another church if the dates can be arranged, a tour of the Louisiana churches which would be interested in seeing pictures of Summer Bible Camp and of Kentucky Bible College. I will be able to do much street preaching with the loudspeakers during the time, and after December 1, I should be free from all previous commitments to give full time during the winter months to this evangelistic program. But, as I said before, our plans must be flexible, to be changed as the Lord directs.

Richard Ramsey, General Delivery, Ponchatoula, La.

“WORLD-CONVERSION” — WHEN?

R. H. B.

The age in which we are living is a very strange and peculiar one, distinct and different from all the dispensations that went before. It is both a glorious age and an evil age, blessed and wonderful, and dark and terrible. It is called, “the present evil age,” and we are told that the Lord Jesus died to deliver us out of it. (Gal. 1:4*.) It is “the age of this world” (Eph. 2:2 R. V. mg.). The King is absent (Luke 19:12). Satan is the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), busily working to blind the minds of men to the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three times the Lord called him the “prince of the world” (*Kosmos*, the present world-order). He is the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2, 3) — the deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9). “We are of God,” John writes to Christians, “and the whole world lieth in the evil one.” (1 John 5:19.)

But there is another side to it. Though the King is absent, the Holy Spirit is present and working in men and among men as never at any time before. The gospel is being preached to all the world. God is visiting the nations to take out of them a people for His own Name. (Acts 15:14.) Universal reconciliation, world-wide amnesty is proclaimed. Those who respond to the invitation of the gospel are separated from the world and added to the Lord — an incredible thing, never before made known. (Eph. 3.) The church is being formed. The word for “church” in the original means literally a “called-out assembly.” The church is an election, composed of individuals of every nation, chosen and called through the gospel. Not whole nations — not the Jews, not Gentile nations, but individuals out of both constitute its membership. (Rom. 9:24; Eph. 3:6.)

Throughout the entire age the church is a small minority. Not at any time anything grand in the world’s estimate, or great and powerful among men, but sharing her Lord’s rejection and reproach she is appointed to walk with Him in the way of the Cross. “All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” — Satan will see to that, for they are Christ’s “fifth column,” threatening the foundations of his kingdom. So Satan works from within (alas, too successfully) to corrupt her, and from without he seeks to destroy her by opposition and persecution. “If the world hateth you,” said the Lord to His own that were in the world, “ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:18, 19.) “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” He said, “but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33.)

Nor will it ever be different till the Lord comes. The fatuous dream of world-conversion and of growing earthly power and grandeur which has led carnal Christendom astray through the centuries, runs directly contrary to the revelation of God’s word. Instead of

* The word “world” in Gal. 1:4, as in various other places, is here “age”—the Greek word *aion*. The Am. Rev. Version usually indicates this in the margin.

progress, there will be deterioration. The picture of the last days of this dispensation is appalling for its darkness. The professing church becoming more and more corrupt (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3, 4) — only a relatively small remnant true and faithful (as in Sardis, Rev. 3:4), loyal as a bride looking for the return of the Bridegroom.

The world will be ripe for judgment — as it was in the days of Noah. (Matt. 24:37-39.) “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8.)

And yet — will there not be a day when all the world shall be subject to Christ? Certainly there will be such a time. Over and over it is predicted in the word of God. “O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.” (Ps. 65:2.) “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord.” (Ps. 86:9.) The domain of God’s great King shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. “All kings shall bow down before him; all nations shall serve him.” “In his days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon be no more.” (Ps. 72:7, 8, 11.) In those days the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; and the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as waters cover the sea. (Isa. 2:4; 11:9.) And so in many other passages.

In the New Testament also such a time is envisioned. The Nobleman goes to a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom and to return; on His return He destroys His enemies and assigns government to his faithful servants. (Luke 19:11-27.) When the 7th trumpet is sounded the announcement is heard: “The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”; and elsewhere also the seer of Patmos speaks of the time when all the nations shall come and worship before God. (Rev. 11:15; 15:4.)

That this development cannot take place in the present age and dispensation we have already seen. The question now arises, *when* will this be? and *how* and by what means will it be brought about? First of all, let us discern the fact that another age is to follow after “this present evil age,” in which Christ will yet be supreme and will exercise His regal power. At the very time when (according to a mistaken exegesis of 1 Cor. 15:23, 24) Christ at His return is supposed to give up the Kingdom to the Father, He will assume the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31). And the supreme position far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, He holds “not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.” (Eph. 1:21.) (“The word here in the original again is *aión*, age.)

But how will all mankind then be brought into subjection to God’s great King? Several factors will combine to bring this about: first, the Great Tribulation and the terrors of the Day of the Lord — the vengeance in flaming fire upon them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sweeping though those judgments be, there will be remnants left (Isa. 24:1, 3, 6, 13, 14) — the remnants of nations over whom the saints shall reign. (Rev. 2:26, 27; comp. Dan. 7:27.) Now when God’s judgments are

in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9.) That does not militate against the fact that *the gospel* is the power of God unto salvation. But when the hard soil is broken up the seed has the better chance. Mere calamities and disasters do not save men. They may even harden their hearts. But again they may be effective as a preparation, when followed by God's word of salvation. When God's righteous acts are made manifest, the nations will come and worship before Him. (Rev. 15:4.) Satan — he who veils the hearts of the unbelieving that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should not shine upon them (2 Cor. 4:4), the deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9), will be bound and removed, and men will see more clearly. "O Jehovah . . . unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit." (Jer. 16:19.) Chiefest of the agencies of this world-conversion will be restored Israel — saved out of the Great Tribulation (Jer. 30:7). Jehovah will again dwell in the midst of His people, and nations shall come to her light and Kings to the brightness of her rising. (Isa. 60:3.)

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and to seek Jehovah of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus said Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. 8:20-23.)

The same prospect is reiterated elsewhere, in the prophets and in Psalms. "The princes of the peoples" will be "gathered together to be the people of the God of Abraham"; and, again, that men will "declare the name of Jehovah in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem, when the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah." (Ps. 47:9; 102:22.) Or, as in Isa. 2, and in Micah 4 —

"Many nations shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it." (Micah 4:2-4.)

That this was not fulfilled on Pentecost should be obvious to any open-minded reader; and that by "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" is not meant "the church," as some have fancied, should be clear from the verse just preceding this prophecy (Micah 3:12) and all the various references in the prophets to God's "holy mountain."

This new condition, therefore, will to great extent be due to

the conversion and restoration of Israel (Ps. 67). "For," as Paul tells us, "if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15).

That therefore all the nations of the earth will some day own Jesus Christ as Lord and King we find declared in all the scriptures; that this cannot be at any time during this present dispensation we have also seen. The Question of interest now is — What has the church to do with this development? Do we have any part in this great program? This is the age during which the church is being formed. We are in the world, but as our Lord, not of the world; and "as he is so are we in the world" — sharing His reproach and His rejection. The church is called into the fellowship of God's Son (1 Cor. 1:9) — for suffering now, and glory promised afterward. And so throughout all this dispensation, conditions being even worse toward the last. What part then can the church today have in that great universal world-turning? Surely she has a part — a most important and essential part. The Great Commission itself indicates that: "Go ye into all the world," and "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." "But," you may reply, "will the nations obey?" No — they never did, and throughout "this present evil age," never will. Only individuals from among Jews and Gentiles turn to the Lord. But as the apparently fruitless work of Christ's earthly ministry was the all-important, necessary basis for the greater work that was to follow, so the church's work, relatively so futile, plays an all-important part toward the glories of the age to come. Thus, when Isaiah had pictured a vision of a wonderful time to come — a prophecy which his hearers would not see fulfilled — he added, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass," (Isa. 32:20.) The church sows for a mighty harvest. She not only sows — she is herself the seed, which, as her Lord, falls into the earth to die, that it may bring forth much fruit. (John 12:24-26.)

So while the faithful church of God pursues her difficult course, and seems to be making little more impact on the world in general than did the Israelites on Jericho by marching around it, she can envision the falling of the walls according to God's promise. Like theirs, so her toilsome work of faith is absolutely essential to the final victory. It is told of David Livingstone that in hours of weariness and depression the task before him seemed hopeless. From the writings of W. M. Clow I quote:

"When David Livingstone made his adventurous journey into the heart of Africa, he had, as his journal tells us, days of despair. When he saw the mass of unbroken heathenism, when he recalled how dull and brutal many of the tribes were, when he saw the curse of Africa's 'open sore' — that merciless slave-trade, and when he remembered the apathy of his fellow-countrymen, he sank into hours of discouragement. But ever and again he had the vision of an Africa redeemed. He heard its wide distances jubilant with the song of praise to Christ. He saw its people clothed in their right minds at the feet of Jesus. He saw its little children lifting up their young hearts in prayer to their Redeemer. For the joy that was set before him he endured his cross, despising shame."

And such is the task and lot of His church "until He come."

"Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder, with heresies distressed:
Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping will be the morn of song."

"Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious, her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious will be the church at rest.

DENOMINATIONAL CONCEPT

Stanford Chambers

Is your concept of the church of God or church of Christ the denominational concept? It is true of the majority even of those opposing denominationalism.

Congregations of certain well-defined characteristics with emphasis on certain externals, rejecting other well-defined characteristics, such congregations qualify for endorsement as "churches of Christ." And the sum total of these "churches of Christ" (draw a circle around them) composes the church, the body of Christ. That is the denominational concept, an unscriptural concept, needing correction. It betrays itself as the conception of those who are talking about "What the Church of Christ Teaches," or who "Investigate What the Church of Christ Stands For." It is the thought of those who "walk not with us" when they are saying, "I don't think much of the Church of Christ," or "Deliver me from the Church of Christ antagonistic spirit," etc.

The church of our Lord, the body of Christ, is not composed of congregations of Christ as its members. "But ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. 12:27). Individuals, *not congregations*, are its members, individuals who are members of Christ. The church of Christ embraces every such person, and the aggregate number of such comprises the body of Christ. It is not an organization comprised of a circle of local organizations or churches. The churches of Christ do not compose the church of Christ, be they all as truly such as those that through Paul saluted the saints at Rome. Local churches are not transported to heaven at His coming; the local setup is but temporal, important though indeed it is, and is dropped off when the church is received up.

There is nearby a congregation representing the denomination that calls itself "The Church of God." Now all that we have said about pertaining to the church of Christ applies as well and as fully to the church of God. They are not twain but one, and cannot be different. Just as there is the denominational concept "church of God," which is not denied, so there is the denominational concept "Church of Christ" even though it is denied. Do *you* think of the church of Christ as a circle of churches or as an aggregate number of saved individuals.

"TEST YOURSELF: DO YOU BELONG TO GOD?"

Richard Ramsey

In John 8:47 these words are recorded from our Lord: "He that is of God heareth the words of God." The same idea occurs frequently in the writings of John, in such statements as, "My sheep hear my voice," "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," "He that knoweth God heareth us."

Friends, taking these statements to mean just what they say, I conclude that the best test you can make to see whether or not you are a child of God is to see whether or not you love the word of God. He that is of God heareth the words of God. If you have been truly born again, you will love God's word. No supposed experience of grace, no witness, no vision, no feeling in your heart is of any value in proving that you have been saved. God's word never said "He that is saved shall have a dream to prove it," but God's word said, "He that is of God heareth the words of God."

Frequently I have talked to people, both in groups and privately, who talked loud and long about how sure they were of their salvation, and how they knew that they had been born again, and so forth. But these very same people who talk loudest about their saved condition absolutely refuse to hear the words of God. You quote the Bible to them to show them their error and they become furious. One of these so-called Spirit-filled, born-again women preachers flew into a rage when I dared to quote to her the words of the Holy Spirit from the sacred text, saying, "Let a woman keep silence in the church for it is not permitted unto her to speak." She claimed to be a child of God, but she refused to listen to the words of God. Many other people I have encountered who like to speak rapturously of the precious blood; but you quote to them God's command to be baptized and they say, "Oh, there you go, talking your doctrine again." Many people claim to belong to the one true church and yet kneel down before images, when God's word forbade the making of images.

On and on I could go multiplying examples — but what's the use? Do you not see, friend, that all your claims to be of God are proved false unless you hear the words of God? The best proof that you are saved is that you hear God's words, for as Jesus said, "He that is of God heareth the words of God." All your churchgoing, important as that is, and all your almsgiving, needful as that may be, do not prove that you are on the road to heaven. But "He that is of God heareth the words of God." If you willingly accept and obey God's word, there is proof positive that you are of God; but if you reject or dislike the Bible, or parts of it, there may be grounds for doubting that you are truly a child of God.

The moon in an eclipse complained to the sun, "Why dost thou not shine on me as usual?" "I am shining as I always do," the sun replied, "but don't you see that the earth has got between us?" So it is with the believer when in darkness. God has not hidden his face or ceased to shine, but the earth with its carnal interests and cares has come between.—Selected.

GOD'S WORD FOR THE HOUR

In announcing the forthcoming International Congress on Prophecy to be held in the Calvary Baptist Church, N. Y. City, Nov. 9-16, John W. Bradbury, Chairman of the same, offers the following strong and timely exhortation to the study of God's word of Prophecy in the solemn and critical time.—Ed.

As Christians we are faced with situations in both Christendom and the world which drive us to our knees in prayer and compel the greatest humility and the most serious thinking. Conditions seem to be saying to us that we are in the end-time of world history.

Many of us believe that the answer to our present day crisis is to be found nowhere else but in the Word of God. The virtue of a Christian lies in his being able to think God's thoughts after Him. It is still true, as revealed to Daniel, that "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth in him" (Daniel 2:22). We feel that God will reveal His purpose now, if we will wait upon Him in the earnest study of His Holy Word with this end in view.

There is also a sense abroad in the world and in Christendom that the signs of the times are portents of a vast apocalypticism. The action of the World Council of Churches at Toronto in 1950 in deciding that the themes of the next General Assembly to be held at Evanston, Illinois, in 1954 should be: "Jesus Christ our Lord, the only hope of both the church and the world" means that ecclesiastical powers are compelled to face this. The committee of twenty-three theologians who were commissioned to study that theme reported at Rolle, Switzerland, August 4-11, 1951. There, they stated objectively: "It is therefore essential that we recover a sense of the hope which is involved in the simple statement of the Apostles' Creed: He shall come again. In amplification of this it is stated:

As the Lord of the future who will come again as Judge and Savior, He gives us the assurance that our work is not in vain, and at the same time lays upon us the necessity to work while it is day . . .

Having this hope we are to be as men who watch for their Lord, with loins girt and lamps lit, active in the Master's service and constant in prayer, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. . .

There is no hope except in the crucified, risen and coming Lord."

This significant position taken by the theologians has brought strong reaction on the part of the "liberal" churchmen in this country who refer to it as the "doctrine of despair." The reason is that religious liberalism has piloted the church into the stormy sea of world affairs with the apparent idea that evolutionary social-progressivism is still in progress. They are blind to the fact that the professing church is in danger of being submerged under the waves of the approaching storm. These "liberals" regard emphasis upon the return of our Lord as "waves of poison gas."

Among Christian people in this country and in other parts of the world affected by our country's religious confusion there result the most tragic consequences. God's great redemption is not clearly witnessed. The Gospel trumpet has an uncertain sound.

In view of the state of the world and the confusion in the church, how necessary it is that devout minds, accepting the suprem-

acy of the Word of God, should apply themselves to the work of witnessing "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints" in all its fullness. This involves the consummation of all things.

We are duty-bound to declare the whole counsel of God. That includes, besides the great Gospel of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ in its fundamental sense, the revelation of God concerning His purpose regarding the Church, Israel and the Gentiles (the nations). If, as the Scriptures declare "(for) whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4), then are we not obligated to obtain and impart that "learning"?

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

(Acts 23:12-35)

A PLOT THAT FAILED. Day dawned—the last day that Paul was to spend in Jerusalem; for before it was past the first links of the chain of circumstances by which he was to be led to Rome had been forged. There was a plot by more than forty Jews. They bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor drink until they had killed him. The chief priests and the elders were made participants in the conspiracy. They were to request the tribune to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin again for another investigation. Since Claudius Lysias was desirous of getting information about him, there was no doubt that he would accede to their request. The plotters were to be lying in wait, ready to kill him on the way. It was a daring scheme, in view of the guard of Roman soldiers; but the elements of determination and surprise gave promise of success.

Now it "happened" that a nephew of Paul was in Jerusalem; and it also "happened" that this lad learned the details of the plot. Here is another link in the chain! He made his way into the barracks and told his uncle what he had learned. It is interesting and instructive to note the apostle's method of dealing with the situation. He did not say, "The Lord has promised that I shall testify in Rome; I am putting my trust in Him; I know that He will be true to His word; so I shall do nothing about it, except to leave it entirely in His hands." No, he called to a centurion and asked him to "bring this young man to the tribune; for he has something to tell him." Faith in God is not incompatible with the exercise of common sense, except where His will expressly so demands. I have heard some criticize the construction of storm cellars in regions where tornadoes are frequent, on the ground that the people should trust in the Lord! Some refuse medicine in case of illness for the same reason. But to Paul faith did not mean the abandonment of ordinary means, when they were available. We shall see this again and again in the course of our narrative.

Claudius Lysias took Paul's nephew by the hand and led him aside to hear his story. This Roman soldier had some of the faults common to public officials; yet he commands a high degree of admiration for his fidelity to duty, soundness of judgment, promptness of

action, and consideration for his prisoner. He did not know it, and he did not mean it so; but he was the right man in the right place to be used of God for a special purpose in this emergency. How easy it is for us to see the hand of the Lord manipulating everything to accomplish His own purposes! The tribune takes the young man aside; with boyish eagerness and excitement the lad pours out his story; Lysias listens quietly and thoughtfully, and then dismisses him with the caution: "Tell no man that thou has signified these things unto me."

Lysias saw what he must do. He was responsible for the safety of this Roman citizen; and Jerusalem was too dangerous a place for him. He must get him out of the city, promptly and secretly. To two of his centurians he gave orders that two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen be made ready for a journey to Caesarea; and that mounts be provided for Paul. At nine o'clock that evening they set out; early the following day they arrived at Antipatris, some forty miles away. Thus the apostle had been delivered from the plot of the Jews. And everything about the deliverance seems quite ordinary—nothing that would be called miraculous, except the vision of that night. The love, thoughtfulness, and courage of a sister's son, the rights and privileges of his Roman citizenship, the sound judgment and prompt action of the Roman tribune, the military escort of four hundred and seventy armed men, furnished at the expense of the Roman government—these were the instruments by which it had been effected. And yet it was just as surely of the Lord as was the deliverance of the apostle Peter from the prison cell when the light miraculously appeared, the chains fell from his hands, locked doors opened of their own accord, and an angel led him forth into the street. God works for His people in the commonplace things of life as certainly as He has ever done in the miraculous.

At Antipatris the foot soldiers turned back; and Paul was conducted on to Caesarea by the cavalry. There he was turned over to Governor Felix, together with a letter from Claudius Lysias. This is an interesting document, a sample of the communications between officers of the Roman army of occupation. We may be amused at Lysias' deviation from precise truth in order to place himself in more favorable light with his superior officer. He very definitely creates the impression that he had received Paul *because* he had learned that he was a Roman. No doubt he fervently hoped that Felix would never learn of the binding of the apostle in preparation for scourging! From this letter we gain the information that, while he had not been able to get any satisfactory reason for the Jews' attitude toward Paul, he was convinced after his appearance before the Sanhedrin that it was "about questions of their law," and nothing worthy of imprisonment or bonds. He also explained that because of the plot against the prisoner he had sent him to the governor "charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. Felix read the letter, asked Paul the routine question, "Of what province are you?" and then said, "I will hear thee fully when thine accusers also are come." "And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace."

TENTH LESSON ON ROMANS

R. H. B.

THE WRETCHED MAN AND HIS DELIVERANCE

(Romans 7.)

Through all this new chapter (Rom. 7) the inspired apostle is still expounding the weighty statement he had made in 6:14—“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.”

In the first six verses he sets forth the Christian's deliverance from the law through death—not his own, but Christ's death, which, by virtue of our union with Christ, is reckoned to us, and which we, in faith must reckon to ourselves (6:11). From Rom. 7:7 to 24 he shows how the law is the power of sin, and pictures the bondage to sin into which a man is brought by the law, but all along carefully vindicating the law from all fault in this matter, and laying all the blame on the sinful human nature, the sin which dwells in the flesh. The failure is due to the fact that a spiritual law is brought to bear on a carnal man. The hopeless struggle which ends in defeat is set forth in vs. 14-22; but v. 25 sounds the note of deliverance and victory through Christ.

* * *

To illustrate the fundamental truth that “the law has dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth,” Paul takes the case of wedlock. The law binds the wife to her husband for so long as the husband lives. If the husband dies she is free from this law, and she may marry another man without blame. The comparison is that thus we have died to the law (through Christ's death on our behalf) in order that we may now be joined to Another, even to Him who was raised from the dead; so that we may henceforth bring forth fruit unto God. (Comp. 6:21, 23.)

In the illustration the husband dies and the wife lives, but in the application is it the wife dies, and is then joined to another? This has occasioned much perplexity. Who is the wife, and who is the husband in the case? The matter is not so mixed up as it may appear. The illustration of a wedded couple was chosen because by it alone could such a case be illustrated: for there is no other earthly comparison in which we can see a party released from law by death, yet remaining alive to be joined to another. For the death of either partner is the death of both *as a married couple*. The wife dies *as a wife*, though she survives as a woman. In like manner a death took place for us—not our own death, but the death of another which was valid for *us*, and in which, therefore, legally, we died. On a dead person the law has no more claim. Thus we are free to be joined to Another, namely, to Him who was raised from the dead. Only in this way can we live unto God (Gal. 2:19) and bring forth fruit unto God.

And as to who was “the husband” in the comparison to whom we were formerly joined—perhaps that does not so much enter into the matter, for Paul is chiefly concerned in showing that we died and are therefore free from the law. But if it be insisted

that the former "husband" stands for something from which by death (Christ's death for us) we are released—the answer must be found in Rom. 6:6. The husband is not, as some have thought, the Law. We were not married to the Law, but the Law was that which had bound together the husband and the wife. Furthermore the Law did not die, cannot die; but we die to it (7:4). It was our fleshly humanity that was nailed to the cross, when the Lord Jesus took our place and gave Himself for us. (Comp. Col. 2:11.)

But in all this the chief point is that through Christ's death on our behalf we died and having died we were made dead to the law. "We have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held." And this is shown to be absolutely necessary if we are to live unto God and bring forth fruit unto God. (Comp. Gal. 3:19.) Many who have come to the Lord Jesus endeavor to live by law, and are continuing under its dominion. The result is that portrayed in the rest of this chapter. But the Christian who has entered into the truth of this teaching now serves God "in the newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter"—that is to say, upon the new principle of spiritual life, not upon the old principle of legal observance.

But now the apostle turns to forestall a wrong conclusion. His evident joy over the fact that we are dead to the law, as also the statement that the law incited us to sin "when we were in the flesh" (i. e. before we died. Cf. Rom. 8:9)—might lead some to think that the Law itself was sinful. This he indignantly denies. But he shows that the law makes us sin-conscious. It reveals our sin to us and pronounces the sentence of condemnation on it. Thus when law comes in (although the law itself is holy, righteous, and good) sin gets complete mastery and effects our ruin and death. (Verses 7-13.) But it is not the law, but *sin* working death to us through that which is good. Then comes the picture of the carnal man, a slave, "sold under" sin, struggling to keep a spiritual law.

Through all this discussion Sin is not a sinful act, but an evil power and principle—personified as it were. It *dwells in the flesh* (vs. 17, 18), and dominates the man as its helpless slave. He is no longer his own master, nor can he do what he wants to do. (Comp. John 8:34.) If he wants to do what is right he finds himself under the law of an evil power, an inward though foreign force, which evermore drags him down into all manner of evil. (Vs. 15-17.) He is good at making resolutions, but a failure at keeping them (v. 18.) He delights in the law of God after the inward man, but finds a different power—the law of sin—in his members, warring against the law of his mind. And "the law of sin" proves to be the more powerful, subdues him and brings him into captivity. (Vs. 22, 23.)

Who is this man? Is it Paul himself? Many think so because he writes in the first person. If so, is it Paul before he became a Christian, when he was still Saul the Pharisee? Of is it Paul the Christian? If so is this the regular, normal Christian experience?

In answer to the last of these questions we must say No. The man of Rom. 7:7-24 is not the man spoken of in Rom. 6:6. 14, 22; nor is he the man of Rom. 8:2, 15, 16. Many Christians, of course,

do have this experience, but that is not the normal Christian life. We cannot admit therefore that Paul is here describing his own Christian experience. But, as seen in verse 5, it is the experience of a man "in the flesh" who is under the law, over whom therefore sin has dominion (Rom. 6:14; 7:8; 1 Cor. 15:56.) This may be an earnest Jew, such as Paul once was; or a Christian, who ignorant of his rightful position in Christ (v 6) tries to live by the law, instead of reckoning himself dead to it and to sin. (Rom. 6:11; 7:4-6.)

But in the last utter failure, deliverance is sighted in Jesus Christ. This sad conflict is not related to exhibit a final despair, but to set forth the deliverance through Christ. (V. 25.) The last sentence of Rom. 7 sums up the truth illustrated by this whole conflict—namely that, left to myself, serving "in the oldness of the letter" I serve God's law indeed with my mind, but with my flesh, the law of sin. (Comp. 8:8.) The next verse (8:1) strikes the note of freedom and victory which characterizes the eighth chapter of Romans; of which more in the next lesson.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

What statement in chapter 6 is the apostle still expounding here? Why is the Christian free from the law? In verses 7-24 is Paul describing his own Christian experience? Is that the picture of a normal Christian life? Does the struggle of Romans 7 end in defeat or in a cry of thankfulness for victory?

THE PHASES OF THE KINGDOM

John S. May

A-Millennialists object strenuously in referring to the "stages" or "phases" of the Kingdom. Yet here in the most important Old Testament kingdom passage, the kingdom is shown in its two outstanding "phases." It is first of all the "stone" cut out without hands and, second, it is the "great mountain" that filled the whole earth.

In the interpretation of the dream, Daniel makes it very plain that just as the stone did "break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," so shall "it" (the kingdom of God) "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." See Daniel 2:44, 45.

It is perfectly obvious that the kingdom of God is in existence *prior* to the smiting of the kingdoms just as the stone was in existence prior to the smiting of the image. Hence, those who would show by a few syllogistic arguments plus Colossians 1:3 that the kingdom has been established and then shout, *therefore* Daniel 2:44, 45 has been fulfilled, had better restudy the passage to find out for themselves that the "cutting out of the stone" is not the same as "the smiting and destruction of the image" and neither are the two events simultaneous.

God's way lies over the hill—HE can see the other side.—*Selected.*

A MODERNIST'S CONVERSION

A few short years ago, Dr. Cyril Joad, noted University of London Professor of Philosophy, was one of Great Britain's front-rank scoffers. As he himself confesses, he was "a derider of religion, a misleader of youth, and an enemy of the Church." Highly honored by university circles in Great Britain and abroad, Joad ridiculed the Bible teaching of God and put in the Almighty's place a vague, uncertain life-force, the sum total of all things which had life. He rejected creation, as taught in Scripture, and substituted evolution, claiming that man was on his way to become superman. He dismissed heaven and hell as fairy tales, and publicly proposing plans which we cannot mention, he declared that what people call "sin" and "evil" is only a slight error, an accidental part of human development. Men's mistakes, he held, came from either their poverty or their childhood surroundings. To remove evil, therefore, he held with many atheists and Communists, it was necessary only to destroy poverty, or to "entrust children to psychoanalyzed nurses and teachers." In this all-out campaign against Christ, he hurled his barbed sarcasm, without any check on its blasphemy, against the Savior, His followers. Here, then, was an applauded leader of infidels, a university professor whose attacks on the Gospel were frequently cited by atheist writers when tauntingly they asked common people how they could believe God, Christ, the Bible, when a Number 1 scientist like Dr. Joad completely swept all this aside as superstition.

Then suddenly Dr. Joad startled the scientific and the skeptical world. In an article featured by "The American Weekly," He reviewed his anti-Christian creed and confessed, "I have come flatly to disbelieve all this." He was through with his own unbelief. Now, rejecting his own claim that sin is accidental and incidental, he stated that man is evil from his first breath, adding, "The Christian doctrine of original sin expresses a deep and essential insight into human nature." Nor did he shrink from admitting his own guilt and the necessity of finding divine help. After delving deeply into the Savior's teaching for light, he reports, "The more I knew of it, Christianity seemed to offer just that consolation, strengthening, and assistance." His own man-made creed now became "intolerably trivial and superficial," and he declares, "I abandoned it." Having met Christ and studied His truth, the man who had dedicated most of his life to tearing down the churches of Christ now tells the people in our country that he has placed his hope in "the Christian doctrine that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners." Pointedly he reveals — and may the Holy Spirit indelibly impress these words on your heart if you are still outside the church and against it — "Since it is impossible to live a Christian life alone, let alone to worship God by oneself, the next step was to join a corporate body for Christian worship, to return, in fact, to the bosom of the Church, and to set one's feet on the . . . path that leads to heaven." Thus, by taking time to meet Jesus and study His truth, an infidel, acclaimed as "one of Britain's most famous and popular 'freethinking' philosophers," has come to Jesus before the eyes of the world, contritely confessing his sins and confidently acclaiming the Son of God his Savior.—Walter A. Maier (in "Great Gospel Sermons").

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

The following reprint from the pen of R. H. Boll is as timely today as it was in the day it was written in 1938, and it seems to “belong” with the other able reprints of this work, in defense of the undenominational Christianity for which we stand.

THE MAKING OF A SECT

That differences of views and doctrines should exist in the church of the Lord is not strange. Nor is it in itself bad. When free brethren study God's word independently it is to be expected that on one point and another they will arrive at different conclusions. Where brotherly loves rules these different views and findings, and the discussions that follow, are mutually helpful. Where motives other than love control, differences result in dissension, strife, bitterness, sectarian parties and partisan hate. The blame in such a case, however, does not rest on the differences themselves, but on the spirit and attitude of those who differ. The wrong comes in when lines are drawn, when brethren are “marked,” branded, ostracised, disfellowshipped. So long as brethren in Christ confessedly stand upon the Bible as the sole and absolute authority in all matters of doctrine, and confess the Divine Sonship and supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ; so long as they are agreed on what makes a man a Christian and how to work and worship together, no differences would or could divide them, their hearts being right toward God and toward one another. It is when they begin to regard one another as being of different sorts and kinds, because of differences of views, that they become guilty of the wrong warned against in 1 Cor. 1:12.

Moreover when any such difference of views is made the occasion of division, the human authoritative creed, written or unwritten, follows inevitably. For example, the brethren who make fellowship depend on assent or acquiescence to their anti-millenarian contentions have as definite a human creed as any denomination in Christendom; and they have formed themselves into a sect as well-defined as any other sect in Christendom. This regardless of the respective merits of the questions involved, or who is doctrinally right or wrong in the matter. It is strange that brethren cannot see this, but will go on proclaiming themselves the non-sectarian, undenominational church of Christ, and as holding no human creeds nor authoritative standards of doctrine, while nevertheless ousting from their fellowship all who do not agree with them in their anti-millenarian ideas. Some perhaps have seen this point, and have tried to justify themselves by representing the brethren whom they oppose as fundamentally unsound. But this is obviously a mere pretext, gotten up to clear themselves. For both sides in said controversy acknowledge their agreement in other matters. If either side therefore disfellowships the other it means that those who thus disfellowship their brethren forfeit their own standing as undenominational, non-sectarian Christians, and should in fairness and honesty mark themselves with some distinctive title, such as, for instance, “Church of Christ, Anti-Millenarian.” As for myself I would be far from dis-

fellowshipping any brother because of differences in prophetic teaching.

To be sure the immediate reply from the anti-millenarian opposers would be, "Why don't you call yourself the 'Pre-millenarian Church of Christ'? It was you, not we, that brought in the divisive doctrine. We stand where we stood before; but you have separated yourselves from us."

To this I must make the following answer, on my own behalf and on behalf of others who have been ostracised, discredited, dis-fellowshipped by anti-millenarian brethren:

1. We do not deserve any sectarian title, such as "Premillenarian Church," because what "pre-millenarian" teaching we hold we do not hold as a distinctive doctrine. We do not make it a test of fellowship. We would welcome among us and in our fellowship brethren who hold anti-millenarian views, and would gladly bear with their different outlook and teaching, just as we would be borne with by them. We have therefore no distinctive differences upon which to base a sectarian party, but stand upon the broad ground of New Testament Christianity only. But those who make their anti-millenarian views a creed and a test of fellowship have forsaken the ground of non-sectarian New Testament Christianity and have constituted themselves an anti-millenarian sect. In all justice they should therefore be denominated and known as such.

2. In the "pre-millennial" teaching for which those brethren have condemned us and are attempting to cast us out, there is nothing that is either new or divisive. It is not a new teaching for it was held by the professing church as a whole for the first three centuries and by multitudes of faithful Christians since. In the pioneer days of the Restoration, in the days of Campbell, Stone, Lard, and others as well as in later days, this teaching was freely taught and cherished by many noted leaders and many of the rank and file of the church. It was not divisive then, for though it was freely discussed pro and con, it caused no rift in the fellowship. It is not divisive now. For though some have risen up who evidently have never understood what the principles of undenominational New Testament Christianity are, and have made their opposition-views a test of fellowship, the fault of that lies not in the teaching against which they have raised their opposition, nor even in the fact of the opposition itself (for Christians are free to oppose what they believe to be wrong) but in the divisive sectarian spirit and course which the opposition has followed, and by which they have separated themselves from their "Premillennial" brethren and constituted themselves an anti-millenarian party and sect.

3. Finally, because the *principles* of non-sectarian New Testament Christianity, for which we whole-heartedly stand, *must be* maintained, and that the whole church be not led into a sectarian rut by those who are seeking to impose their anti-millenarian creed on it, all Christians who prize their freedom in Christ should stand up against the sectarian efforts of those leaders who would make the anti-millenarian or pre-millenarian views a test of fellowship. However important may be the intrinsic merits of the doctrines in question, the principle of free New Testament Christianity which is at

stake is of still greater importance; for upon the maintenance of that depends our existence as a religious people whose only plea is that of the nonsectarian, undenominational New Testament faith.

Too long have good brethren, in their desire to avoid "trouble," put up with their sectarian course. If the whole "church of Christ" is not to degenerate into an anti-millenarian sect, it is certainly high time that those who understand and love the righteous principles of nonsectarian faith rise up and call a halt to the insidious work which threatens to overthrow our very foundations, and to contend—not for premillenarianism or anti-millenarianism—but for that basis of brotherly unity in Christian liberty on which alone a true New Testament Christianity is possible.—*Word and Work*, 1938, p. 93.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

By George Müller of Bristol

In confessions of faith, the truth that the Lord Jesus will come again may still have a place; but practically, to by far the greater number of His disciples, it has been a mere doctrinal statement that has not been enjoyed, and which has had no influence upon their lives. The Lord, however, desired it should be otherwise. He intended that His Church should look for Him; that she should watch and wait for His return. Again and again, during His personal ministry, the Lord Jesus foretold this great event; and after His ascension the apostles referred continually to it.

The second coming of the Lord Jesus means that He will return *in person*, and has no reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, or to His manifesting Himself in an especial manner to the believer in the way of comfort, instruction or help of any kind; nor has it reference to our death, when we, as believers, are taken to be with Him.

If, however, anyone should say, "Why lay such stress upon this; is not our going to Him when we die the same thing?" The reply is, "There is a vast difference between these two events."

(a) As *individuals* we shall at that time [death] be brought only to a state of *partial* happiness; we shall have no glorified bodies then, but we must await the hour when "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Nor when we fall asleep do we reign with Christ and sit with Him upon His throne; because He will not then be manifestly reigning.

Blessed though it is for the child of God when he departs "to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," it will be unspeakably more blessed still to enter upon that *fulness* of glory which awaits us only at our Lord's return.

(b) Satan will not be bound until Jesus comes again, and for this reason, by the permission of God, he still has power here, both in the world and in the Church

(c) The *whole Church* will at once be introduced to full eternal happiness and glory at our blessed Lord's return. Not only as *individuals* will our cup of joy be full to overflowing, but we shall rejoice throughout eternity with *the whole company of the redeemed*.
—From the Colportage Library.

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