

# THE WORD AND WORK

(VOLUME XLVII, AUGUST, 1953)

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**THE WORD AND WORK** 2518 Portland Ave. Louisville 12, Kentucky  
Entered at the Louisville, Kentucky, Post Office as second class matter.

Single subscription, \$1.50; two subscriptions, \$2.75;  
clubs of four or more, \$1.25 each.

## GOD'S TIME

God's time is never wrong,  
Never too late or slow;  
The planets move to its steady pace  
As the centuries come and go.

Stars rise and set by that time.  
The punctual comets come back,  
With never a second's variance,  
From the round of their viewless track.

Men space their years by the sun,  
And reckon their weeks by the moon,  
Which never arrive too late  
And never depart too soon.

Let us set our clock by God's  
And order our lives by His ways,  
And nothing can come and nothing can go  
Too soon or too late in our days.

—Annie Johnson Flint.



# Words in Season

R. H. B.

## THE EVIL DAY

In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of a coming evil day (Eph. 6:13). Certainly all days are evil (Eph. 5:16). At no time may the Christian relax his vigilance. "Be sober, be watchful . . ." says the apostle Peter. But there comes a day which is preeminently *the* evil day. Paul refers to it in the great Christian-armor passage in Ephesians "Wherefore take up the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in *the evil day*, and, having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). It is a day when evil powers combine, when Satan's strategy culminates in intensive assaults—an evil day par excellence, when after many ordinary days, suddenly it seems that all the furies of hell have broken loose, and all storms and tempests are unleashed. Such a day comes sometimes in the individual life: also in the life of a nation: and ultimately it will someday come upon the whole world—"that day of trial that comes upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

## EVIL DAYS TO INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

Speaking to the individual Christian, Christ's apostle warns him to "stand fast in the Lord and in the power of *His* might"—for your arm of flesh will fail you in the evil day—and "put on the whole armor of God." The Lord Jesus knew that the evil day was on when to His enemies who had come to arrest Him He said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." On that night the air was thick with demon-influences. Of this hour the Lord had forewarned His self-confident disciple: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat." And again, when He found them sleeping: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." So do we all need God's power and God's armor against the day of the great test, and woe be it if the evil day should find us unarmed and unprepared! For indeed, "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this (age of) darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness (the armies of evil spirits) in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God . . ." No other armament can avail in such a conflict.

## THE SECRET FORCES OF EVIL

But aside from its reference to the individual Christian, there is also an evil day for the whole world. All history is moving on toward that hour of crisis. It will be Satan's supreme and desperate struggle to seize the dominion of all the world by a final and decisive victory. The secret forces of evil have long been in readiness, waiting only for this hour. Paul said that in his days the mystery of iniquity was already working, but as yet under restraint; and that it

would continue to be held in check until he that restraineth now will be taken out of the way. (2 Thes. 2:7). Like a swollen river hurling its might against confining dykes and levies, so the massing power of evil strains against its God-imposed bars. Several times in the past it seemed to have burst through the bounds. The French Revolution was an instance of such an out-break. It was a most significant one, because it sounded the tocsin of a new era, in which its characteristic features were to be increasingly manifest. There was first of all the subtle spread of infidelity, fostered by such men as Voltaire and Rousseau. The populace, filled with hatred against the oppressing government, and disgusted with all the falseness and hypocrisy of the prevalent religion, cast off all restraint. The shout of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was their revolutionary battle-cry. "There is no God!" they cried, "Let there be no God!" The leaders, monsters in human guise, such as Danton, Marat, Mirabeau, Robespierre, stirred the frenzied mobs to deeds of violence and unspeakable enormities. The guillotine worked ceaselessly day and night. Blood flowed in the streets. Every form of crime and vile misdeed was publicly perpetrated. In the Cathedral of Notre Dame a harlot was enthroned on the high altar, and, carried through the streets of Paris, acclaimed as "the goddess of reason." The evil day had come to France. Yet this was not the full and final manifestation, nor did it take in the predicted world-wide compass. England also had her infidel leaders, Hume, and Bolingbroke and others, and she could easily have fallen into the same ruin. But in God's providence the time for that was not yet. A restraint was raised, chiefly through the earnest and powerful testimony of George Whitefield and John Wesley, calling the people to repentance and faith in God. No fair student of history would deny that the work of those two great men and their helpers saved Great Britain from the same ultimate disaster.

### **REVOLT AGAINST GOD**

The more recent pact has furnished more examples of the like outbreak of the hellish forces, all on the same pattern: always, first infidelity, spread through demon-inspired leaders and teachers, undermining what faith there was among the common populace, thus preparing them to take up their revolt against God, to foment revolution, bloodshed beyond measure, and every crime to which the devil could incite fallen humanity. And these more recent instances of the outbreak of the infernal powers were wider in extent, longer-lasting, and more fearful than that of the French Revolution. The evil powers are gathering force. In Germany it was the philosophy of Kant, the devilish doctrine of Nietzsche, and withal also the work of the destructive critics (for the German school was the Pandora box which spread the deadly fumes of modernistic unbelief throughout the nations of Europe, and, alas, America also) thus giving the lie to the Word of God, and destroying the restraints of the truth and the fear of God. These prepared the way for Nazi-ism, World-war II, the brutal slaughter of millions of Jews, and to all the coincident excesses of wickedness. That outbreak was subdued, in part, and for the time. But now Russia,

growing swiftly in range and power, frankly and blasphemously atheistic, is creating a hell of her own which bids fair to engulf the entire world. There is something inexplicable, something uncanny, in the obsession which causes free-born men of free nations to devote themselves passionately to the furtherance of the tyrannical totalitarian power, and that in full knowledge of the brutal ruthlessness and utter consciencelessness of that regime. The Bible lays such like blind infatuation of men to Satanic power to the influence of demons (See Rev. 16:13-16).

### **THE FINAL SHOWDOWN**

Now in the Word of God the course of the full final manifestation and brief triumph of the mystery of iniquity and its termination is clearly traced. The classic passage is 2 Thess. 2. The program is this: (1) The mystery of iniquity, working all along, secretly, but under restraint. (2) The "Falling Away"—literally, the apostacy, that is, the abandonment of all the foundations of Divine truth, by men who have not received the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, which then (as now already) will include the vast majority of mankind. (3) Then follows the removal of the restraint upon the forces of evil. (4) The revealing of the man of sin—the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God and is worshipped, the lawless one, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish. (5) The judicial blinding of the multitudes who have abandoned the light and truth of God. (6) The Lord Jesus, by the manifestation of His Coming (lit. "the outshining of His presence") will bring to nought (destroy) the man of sin, and slay him with the breath of His mouth. (7) Judgment falls upon the masses and individuals who have followed him.

The final showdown is prophetically described in Revelation 19, where the Beast, the world-dictator, who is none other than the man of sin of 2 Thess. 2, arraigns his hosts, the kings of the earth and their armies, against Him who descends from the opened heavens. It is there that he meets his doom; and there, too, Satan comes in for his long-delayed punishment (Rev. 20:1-4). Sooner or later these predictions will have their fulfilment.

But the Christian who in the present time has stood firm and true in the Lord and in the strength of His might will not have to face the great evil day that is to come. Yet, "Watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36).

### **MONEY-MAKING AND MONEY-GIVING**

Brother David Lipscomb, writing in the Gospel Advocate, said "One good personal worker is worth a dozen money-givers." Now gifts of money are sacrifices well-pleasing to God, when they come from a faithful heart and are presented in the name of Jesus, sanctified by His blood. But before He wants your money, God wants you; and you yourself are infinitely more important to Him than anything

you have in your possession. What is your money to Him if He has not your heart? But if He has your heart, your money will not be withheld.

But many who are ambitious for the things of the world deceive themselves, saying: "I cannot do anything for the Lord. I will turn my attention to money-getting; and when I have made my fortune, I will use it for God." Alas, my brother! We have heard that before, and the outcome is in every case the same. Your heart hankers after these things, and under a very thin pretense you have undertaken to combine the service of God with that service of mammon that begins in anxiety and ends in covetousness. You can never do it. The money you may get, but you will lose your soul. You may give, but the chances are great that you will give far less (in proportion) than when you were poor.

There will always be wealthy Christians of generous heart whose possessions are subject to God's orders. But the place of the faithful rich man is a particularly difficult one to fill, and those who fill it worthily are not of the class mentioned above who follow, self-willed, their desire for money on the pretext of using it for the Lord after they get rich. But remember the saying, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much", and do give as you can to-day. A steward is not responsible for the amount intrusted to him, but for the use he makes of that which is intrusted to him. The cause of Christ needs humble, consecrated servants more than it needs men of means to make donations.

#### **CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL**

Do you believe that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation? I doubt it, my brother. For if you believed that, you would not be so timid about speaking of it to your friends and neighbors or to the next sinner you happen to be thrown with. How often have you avoided the subject when at a little risk you might have testified of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that, perhaps, to the saving of a soul! Or, when you did speak, how half-hearted, how embarrassed, how apologetic you were about it! Why, my brother? Seek the cause in your own unbelief. You have no real confidence in the gospel. You are only theoretically convinced that Christ can save any and every sinner.

In fact, you see many every day of whom you think in your heart that they are too bad to be saved and there is no use of trying. You are quite taken off your feet when a very degraded man is suddenly turned to walk in the way of God's saints; and you are disposed to lay it to the man's will power, or some hereditary advantages, or to almost anything except the story of the cross. Yea, when you do speak the gospel, you change it, you sugar-coat it, misrepresent it, and assist its invitation with appeals and motives foreign to its spirit. All this proves that you have no confidence in the gospel. But go to God and ask Him to make you realize in your own soul what power is His to save through the gospel, that so you may wax more abundantly bold to preach it, and to say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

## THE NEGLECTED CHURCH

J. R. Clark

Here she stands, a potential tower of strength, a light-house in your own community—the Lord's own church. Those who started this congregation did so with the idea of being a blessing to the community itself.

The founders of this newly established church of the Lord counted on the cooperation of local Christian people in their work—and still do. To this end they offered and do offer pure Christianity direct from the Fountainhead, the New Testament.

They have no human creed, accounting that the New Testament alone is sufficient as a guide. They do not even have earthly headquarters, for Christ alone is looked to as Head. They call themselves Christians, thereby honoring their Head, the Lord Jesus.

They spread the Lord's Supper every Sunday as did early Christians, and ask people to become Christians in the way the Lord decreed in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15, 16).

Furthermore, it is their earnest conviction that to hold to the above pattern of teaching without giving proper emphasis to spiritual things would be to hold a form of Godliness, while denying the power thereof.

They emphasize the grace of God in salvation, present and future. They believe firmly that God answers prayer, believe in the indwelling Holy Spirit, and in the coming of the Lord to receive us unto Himself and to do all that the prophets have spoken. They believe Revelation 19 and 20 as written, but do not make a test of fellowship of their conviction. They are strong on love and tolerance, accounting that if they themselves are saved by the grace of God, and stand in grace, they cannot be quick to condemn others. To his own Master each Christian standeth or falleth. The grace of God makes them humble, and different from the Pharisee who trusted in himself that he was righteous and set all others at naught.

One could not go wrong in casting his lot with this church. Nothing short of pure Christianity straight from the Book should satisfy us all. The Bible teaches us that in the end-time there will be a great federated apostate church (Rev. 17) and God asks His people to come forth out of her (see Rev. 18:4, 6).

Let us all take our Christianity straight—straight from the Fountainhead—shying away from all creeds of men, written or unwritten.

Neighbors, the model church in your community asks you to be a Bible Christian—that's all. Too few neighbors recognize and support such a church even after it is established nearby. Too often this neighborhood church is filled chiefly with those who commute from other communities, while the neighbors take busses and cars to distant points, if indeed they attend worship at all. Friends, why pass up this light-house in your community? Why must it be filled with those from a distance? Perhaps it is the fault of the church itself, in that she fails to make herself known to her neighbors. Or can it be that the days of Noah are being reconstructed before our very eyes, a deaf ear being turned to the truth of God?

# NEWS AND NOTES

**Brandon, Florida:** Dennis Allen surprised us, dropping in on us night of 8th inst. and "hoped us up" speaking on good gleanings in 1 John. Father and Mother Allen were with him, whom we were happy to see. Another surprise visit a week later by "Good Tidings Quartet", composed of Neal Phillips Mac LeDoux, Lowell LeDoux, and Mason Broussard. Their singing was an inspiration to all who heard, and with it came conviction that these young men are "all out for the Lord", who needs and uses young men.

Word and Work readers have shown much encouraging interest in Brandon, and will be glad to know that the building is being used, though much remains to be done. Bro. Rutherford is expected in October for meetings. Prayers are appreciated. Considerable activity observable. May it all be scripturally motivated.

—Stanford Chambers.

**Gallatin, Tennessee**—Additions here the last three Lord's days: two young ladies, a husband and wife, a husband and father by baptism and another man (head of family) by membership and restoration.

—H. L. Olmstead.

**Buras, La.:** Boothville-Venice Church of Christ has just completed a ten-day revival (July 6-15), with Bro. Antoine Valdetero of the Church of Christ in Crowley. Attendance was good and much interest shown; and though there were no conversions or responses, God moved Val to do a wonderful work with the children and young people and the seed embedded in their hearts will do much good in the future. Bro. Richard Ramsey, John Fulda and Byron Andrus were with us the last night and God blessed us with much spiritual song and fellowship. We give God the glory and praise for such a fine meeting.

Boothville had one response on Sunday, July 5, for rededication and placing of membership.

—Francis Holdeman.

**Jennings, La.:** We have just closed a two-weeks Youth Revival at the Jennings church with Kenneth Istre doing the preaching, and

Mac LeDoux directing the song service. The "Good Tidings" quartet stirred our hearts with their message in song. There were large crowds at each service with many visitors present. Seven responded to the gospel invitation. (3 rededications and four baptisms.)

We conducted a vacation Bible school during the two weeks and had many visiting children attending. Bro. Antoine Valdetero was one of the teachers, and all of our young people were a great blessing to us, for which we do praise our Lord.

—Ivy J. Istre.

## **Yearly Meeting at Davis City, Ia.**

The annual assembly of the churches in this part will be here at the park, Wednesday, Aug. 19, 11 A. M. to 4 P. M. with basket dinner. Subject: "Things Needed in the Church and How To Supply." General invitation to all in reach for a day of fellowship, edification, and refreshing. Preachers and church leaders will be the speakers.

—Wm. J. Campbell.

**Davis City, Iowa:** Bro. Joe Lemon, of Chillicothe, Mo., began a lawn meeting with the brethren at Eagleville, Mo., the 12th, with good attendance. To continue two weeks.

We were at Marshalltown, Ia., for their 50th anniversary of the beginning of the church there, last Lord's day.

Now planning to be with the church at Minneapolis, Minn., July 26 to August 2.

—Wm. J. Campbell.

**Bryantsville, Indiana:** We have been rejoicing in the good interest and attendance lately. The Lord has richly blessed us in our Vacation Bible school from June 8 to June 22. Our attendance ran from 87 to 105. On June 28, eight of the young people were baptized into Christ. This indeed is a cause for rejoicing. —Eugene Pound.

**Louisville, Ky.:** Opening of the Ralph Avenue Church of Christ (formerly Parkland Church) was held Sunday, July 19, with dedication service at 3:00 P. M. Visitors participated in the informal program, and enjoyed good fellowship and special singing.

—J. L. Addams.

**Lexington, Ky.:** Brother Ruth-erford is to be with Sugar Creek Church, near Warsaw, Ky., in a series of meetings beginning July 27th. August 2nd is their home-coming and centennial celebration. Dinner will be served on the grounds and all members and friends of the church are cordially invited.

**Antioch, Ky.:** The Antioch meet-ing continues through August 2 with Robert B. Boyd and the "Good Tidings" quartet.

**LaGrange, Ky.:** Sixty children turned out for the first day of Bible School. Bro. Jimmy Hardison will preach in the night meetings, July 27 to August 1, and N. Wilson Burks, August 1st to 8th. Bro. Demus Friend will lead the singing. Meetings begin at 7:45 D. S. T.

—H. Ott.

**Palmer's Prairie, Ind.:** Eight young people were baptized in the D. V. B. S. recently concluded.

—Coy Campbell.

**Louisville, Ky.:** Portland Ave. tent meeting enters its third week with six baptisms and several re-dedications to date.

**Fern Creek, Ky.:**—We rejoiced when one of the V. B. S. pupils made the good confession and was baptized at our morning worship service. That night at our closing program Bro. Gruver, a surprise guest speaker, told simply but effectively how the Lord had led him to many places in the world to preach and teach the Word. At the invitation four responded for baptism, one for rededication to Jesus. All had been in V. B. S. except one who is the mother of one of the boys who came.

We closed a two-week meeting at Waterford last night. Eugene was a great help in leading the singing, which of course, makes me very happy and thankful. Five confessed Jesus during the first week and Bro. Stinnette baptized them in the beautiful natural setting of Salt River. One more accepted his Lord on the river bank. Yesterday morning another accept-ed her Lord and last night two baptized believers came to identify themselves with the Waterford con-gregation. This has truly been a "mountain top" experience for me

with these good people.

—H. E. Schreiner.

**Ponchatoula, La.** The Booth-ville church is making great spiri-tual strides under the leadership of Bro. Francis Holdeman. Remem-ber him in your prayers and offer-ings.

John Fulda is kept busy by the Amite church of Christ and also leads singing in revival meetings. Last week the Amite church held a vacation school with record at-tendance. A Tuesday night song practice has been started at the church there. Brother Knepper is to be with them in August for a re-vival meeting.

Kenneth Istre preached at Hay-den Grove church for a week to audiences that packed the building. Dennis Allen is holding a revival meeting this week for the Pine Grove church.

Through the liberal offerings of God's people a new tent has been purchased by Richard Ramsey, with benches and chairs and other acces-sories. The last meeting with the old tent was at Madisonville last week, where hardly anyone had ever heard of a "Church of Christ". In five nights of services we had only two visitors. But in the day-time the house-to-house work and the loudspeaker work sowed seed that should come to harvest some day.

A. K. Ramsey is now gaining strength, and driving his own car to town and attending church. He has not yet tried to resume preach-ing.

—Richard Ramsey.

**The Good Tidings quartet** (Ma-son Broussard, Neal Phillips, Low-ell LeDoux, and Mac LeDoux) and I have been traveling together in evangelistic work this summer in areas where the Good Tidings Broadcast is heard. We offer Word and Work readers the following re-port, asking that you join us in praising God for all victories, and in praying for our present and fu-ture efforts.

—Robert B. Boyd.

**Mobile, Ala.**—June 7, we assist-ed Dr. Cecil E. Brooks to establish the new Broad Street church of Christ. (The Good Tidings chorus also was present for these opening services). There were two services, 11 a. m. and 2:30 p. m. In answer to prayer God blessed with good crowds, and two responses to the



invitation, and we were able to leave a faithful little group in Mobile, under the leadership of Dr. Brooks.

**Pensacola, Florida**—June 7-14. We conducted a tent revival at the Corry Field Heights church of Christ, where R. D. Ruben is the minister. By request most messages were prophetic. The brethren were fervently attentive, honest and open-hearted, willing to receive the truth in spite of much opposition. Through the presence of the quartet, God opened doors of opportunity abundantly. The boys sang for a Kiwanis Club, were given time over a radio station, sang on the daily and weekly broadcast in Mobile, sang in restaurants, in the hotel, in private homes, in an open air service at the home of an elder of one of the rural congregations, and in many other places. God truly gave us an open door, and it was a pleasure to work with such a congregation, and with their minister, Bro. Ruben, who wants his people to have and know the whole truth of God. Dr. Brooks goes over each Wednesday night and teaches a Bible class.

**Jacksonville, Florida**—June 28-July 5. We were with the Woodstock Park Church of Christ, where Eugene McGhee is minister, and where lives Bro. Dan Richardson, through whom God has made the 13-station Good Tidings network possible. About 20 responses mainly for restoration and reconsecration, with 1 baptized early in the meeting (before I arrived). Daily broadcasts in Jacksonville, too.

**Frankfort, Kentucky**—Antioch church—Asa Baber, minister, July 22-Aug. 2. At writing, this effort is in progress, and God has blessed with a marvelous start. Again, through the quartet God has opened many doors. Local radio station has given us a thirty-minute Sunday hymn program, daily 15-minute broadcasts the duration of the meeting.

**Denton, Texas**—We are scheduled to be with the W. Oak St. church, where J. Z. Wood is the minister, Aug. 10-16.

**Johnson City, Tenn.** — Scheduled to be with the Mountain View church of Christ, where Paul Clark

is minister, Aug. 26-Sept. 6.

In between meetings (when your writer had to be with his home church, the Mt. Auburn church in Dallas) the boys have kept busy and done effective work. They were with Kenneth Istre in a revival at Jennings, June 15-26. After the Jacksonville, Florida, meeting they worked with John H. Adams, at Maxville, Fla., where J. Edward Boyd is the minister. In addition to this they've made one-night appearances at Brandon, Fla., Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Jacksonville, Fla., (Southside church, Sun. July 12), Hapeville, Ga. (Sunday, July 19), Chattanooga, Tenn. and Mackville, Ky. In addition to future work listed above, they will conduct services at several of the Louisiana churches after the Denton, Texas, meeting.

We believe we've seen the dawn of a new day in the work of evangelism among the people who seek to declare the whole counsel of God on every Bible theme, and want to earnestly enlist the prayers of all the saints.

There have been 8 baptisms this summer in connection with the work in Dallas, and two have confessed sins publicly.

Robert B. Boyd.

In recent months a few opportunities have developed for preaching to the Negroes. Brother A. K. Ramsey of the Amite church twice spoke in their churches, and Bro. Odis Ford of the Pine Grove church recently preached to them. Several Negroes attended the tent revival in Tickfaw. The time seems ripe for doing a great work among the colored people of this area, if only we knew how to go about it. Pray the Lord of the harvest.

**About the forthcoming book on Daniel:** The linotype operator read it as he set the type. He said, "Brother Boll, this is the best book I have ever read!" And then he gave Bro. Boll \$20 to help pay for it. Also he has his order in for two when they are finished.

**All true knowledge comes from personal labor: all true conviction from personal study; and it is as impossible to transfer a vital belief as it is to enter into the secrets of another's soul.**

—B. F. Westcott.



## Questions and Answers

R. H. B.

**If Jesus had a number of brothers and sisters (as non-Catholics believe) why did He request the disciple John to care for His mother immediately preceding His crucifixion?**

Even if the children mentioned ("James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon, and his sisters," Mark 6:3) had not been half-brothers and half-sisters of Jesus, yet they most evidently in some way were reckoned as belonging to the family and by Jewish custom they would have seen to the support of Mary. The lack of relatives would not have been Christ's reason for asking one who was outside of the family to take care of His mother Mary. Why then did the Lord, speaking from the cross, commit His mother to John's care? See the statement of John 7:5—"For even his brethren did not believe on him." Could Mary have been happy with them if they thought that Jesus was executed by misadventure, or as a transgressor of the law?

**What was the relationship between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar? Was it grandfather and grandson or was it father and son?**

Nebuchadnezzar (according to accepted historical data) died in 561 B. C. and was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27-30) who reigned two years and was assassinated by his brother-in-law Neriglissar. After a short reign the latter was succeeded by his son Labashi Marduk, who, in less than a year was also slain; and in 555 B. C. Nabonidus succeeded to the throne. His son Belshazzar shared the reign with his father Nabonidus. Belshazzar was, through his mother, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. This explains the queen-mother's speech (Dan. 5:10-12) and the fact that Belshazzar offered Daniel the rank of third ruler of the kingdom.

**Please explain Rev. 12, verse 4. Is this the reason there is a vacant space of immense dimensions in a part of the planetary heavens?**

The woman and the dragon, and the "stars" also, of Rev. 12, are symbolic figures. The "dragon" is Satan, as explained in verse 9; "stars" are used symbolically in O. T. and in the book of Revelation to designate angels or important personages. No literal stars are meant here. Satan has a following of angels, whom he drew after him in his fall. (See v.9. For use of the term "stars" see Rev. 1:20; 8:10; 9:1; 22:16).

**Was the statement in Zech. 14:4 fulfilled at the crucifixion of Christ?**

By what law or principle of Bible interpretation could that possibly have had reference to the crucifixion of Christ? Read all of Zech. 14. There we see Jerusalem in her last extreme trouble. She is surrounded by hostile nations: the city is taken and invaded. Half of her inhabitants are cut off. Then, suddenly, the Lord, followed by a retinue of His holy ones, comes down for her help; and His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives (especially designated as the mount which is to the east of Jerusalem). The mount is split in two, and by the valley thus created the distressed ones flee. After that the Lord takes possession, and is thenceforth King of all the earth. (Comp. Rev. 11:15.)

**Is it wrong for Christians to have a communion service on Thursday night? Was not the Lord's Supper first observed at that time? (1 Cor. ch. 11, verses 23-26).**

Although the Lord's Supper was instituted on the night in which He was betrayed, it was not practiced until after the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost. We have one indication as to the time when the church observed it, in Acts 20:7—where the language used implies that the first day of the week was the usual and regular time of the observance of it. 1 Cor. 11:26 does not show on what day, or how

often, the Lord's Supper was to be celebrated. The whole context down to verse 34 shows however that it was a **frequent** observance. Acts 20:7 is sufficiently clear for guidance; and with that agrees all the historic testimony of the practice of the early church. We do well to stay with that.

#### **Are the "Great Tribulation" and the "the Day of the Lord" the same?**

The "Great Tribulation" and the "the Day of the Lord" are not one and the same. Though closely connected they are not identical. The Great Tribulation is, as it were, the penumbra of the Day of the Lord. But the Day of the Lord in its full and final meaning is not until the Lord Himself steps in and takes control and executes vengeance in the earth.

The distinction is clearly marked. The Great Tribulation is brought about by the wrath of Satan. (Rev. 12:12); in the Day of the Lord, the Lord Himself comes forth to execute the wrath of God. During the Great Tribulation the Beast reigns, blaspheming God, and is worshipped by all the earthdwellers (Rev. 13:7, 8). In the day of the Lord He, and He alone, is exalted. ("Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day". Isa. 2:17. Comp. Ps. 46:10). In the Great Tribulation the saints are persecuted and afflicted; but the punishments of the Day of the Lord fall on the wicked (2 Thess. 1:8, 9). The celestial phenomena (when the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, etc.) follow "immediately after" the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:29) but **precede** the Day of the Lord. (Acts 2:20).

## **KENTUCKY BIBLE COLLEGE REPORT**

Winston Allen

Last month it was announced to Word and Work readers that Kentucky Bible College is considering purchase of the former Kentucky Wesleyan College campus, Winchester, Kentucky. Since then many churches have been visited and thousands of individual Christians have been contacted through the mails. This is being done to acquaint brethren with the matter—asking them to respond as the Lord lays it upon their hearts.

To date (7:31) twenty churches and twenty-five individuals have assured us of their interest and support. The amount purposed by them (if the property is purchased) \$33,834.50 (a portion of which, Lord willing, will be given in 1954). Many more are yet to be heard from.

We desire to go forward on the fact that (as one individual expressed it) the Lord's full and gracious promises are not based "upon how many churches there are in our fellowship or how many people in these congregations, but upon His own power and resources." Do we truly believe that He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" ?

Members of the Advisory Board, which will meet during the Bible Conference, will thoroughly discuss the Winchester matter, and give advice regarding the future of K. B. C.

As stated last month at least the first term of school, which begins September 2, will be at our present location, 2500 Portland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky. Students who plan to attend K. B. C. during the '53-'54 school year should *immediately* make application for rooms. Write to Winston Allen, 2630 Montgomery, Louisville 12, Kentucky.

## “THE BIBLE OR THE CHURCH?”\*

If we accept Christianity as Divine revelation, the question still remains, how far may we not have departed from “the faith once for all delivered”? We know how we can test our chronometers. Is there any standard by which we can test our religion?

“All who profess and call themselves Christians” will reply with united voice in pointing us to the Bible. But this unanimity is merely apparent, not real. The vast majority of Christendom will object to our appealing to the Bible directly and immediately. We must, in turning to it, subject our minds to an authority that claims to be its interpreter. Every citizen is supposed to know the laws of his country; but though the statute-book is the standard of authority, the interpretation of the statutes does not depend on the citizen’s private reading of them, but on the decisions of competent tribunals. So also in the religious sphere. The Bible is the only, as it is the infallible, standard of faith and practice, but the church claims to be its authorized exponent.

At first sight nothing can be simpler than this, nothing more reasonable, nothing more practical. But no sooner do we attempt to act upon it than difficulties overwhelm us. What is the church? and where do we find it? There are rival claimants to the title; to which of them shall it be accorded? Answer will be made that the Eastern Church is heretical. But what tribunal has so decided? and by what standard? The tribunal, we shall be told, was the Catholic Church, and the standard was the common faith. But this is a most transparent begging of the question. What took place was that the head of the Western Church excommunicated the Eastern Church for refusing to acknowledge his supremacy, which supremacy the Eastern Church denounces as “the chief heresy of the latter days.” Which, then, is in the right?

If we appeal to the Church of England, her answer will be definite and clear, that *both* are wrong, and that they have “erred, not only in their living and manners of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.” Nor need we look to the Church of England to claim for herself the place she refuses to accord to any other church, of being “*the* witness and keeper” of the truth. Hers is the humbler position of being “*a* witness and *a* keeper of the Holy Writ”; and to that supreme authority she appeals as the only sanction for her practice and her teaching.

But, we are told, Christ did not write a book; He founded a Church; and He speaks in and through the Church; our part, therefore, is to commit ourselves to the Church’s teaching and guidance.

This is merely an attempt to get behind the question which it pretends to solve. How do I know that Christ founded a Church? And how do I know that I can trust myself to the teaching of what claims to be the Church? The only possible answer to these ques-

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\*The author, an eminent official in the British government, writes from the standpoint of a member of the Church of England.

tions is an appeal either to the Church itself or else to the New Testament. If the former, then I am to trust the Church because the Church claims my confidence—a flagrant case of what in another sphere is known as “the confidence trick.” If the latter, then by all means let me turn to the New Testament. But no “thimble-rigging” can be tolerated here. If the Church speaks with inherent authority, I must render unreasoning obedience to her teaching; but if she appeals to Holy Scripture, she must place an open Bible in my hands. If we accept the former alternative we find ourselves again at the point from which the argument has moved away. What, and where, is the Church? Is this question to be decided by a plebiscite? Are we to be content to settle it by blindly joining the biggest crowd? Or are we to yield to whichever authority presents its claims with the greatest arrogance? It is not thus that in sublunary affairs the thoughtful direct their conduct. But it is precisely thus that in highly-favoured England, in this enlightened age, people of culture decide a question which concerns their eternal destiny!

If our choice must be limited to one or the other of the two most ancient Churches, it is extraordinary that educated Englishmen, acquainted with the history of both, should hesitate for a moment which to choose. That Rome should loom greater on our view is natural, but that Rome should engross our attention can be accounted for only by our insular ignorance and prejudice. For, as Dean Stanley writes:—

“That figure which seemed so imposing when it was the only one which met our view, changes all its proportions when we see that it is overtopped by a vaster, loftier, darker figure behind. If we are bent on having dogmatical belief and conservative tradition to its fullest extent, we must go, not to the Church which calls itself Catholic, but to the Church which calls itself Orthodox.”

And yet the fact is clear that in a book addressed to English readers the Eastern Church may be ignored as absolutely as though it had no existence.

Papal supremacy is the special characteristic of the Western Church. Even if the history of Christendom had run differently, and this dogma were accepted by Christians of every name, a sceptic would be none the less entitled to ask on what authority it rests. Christ, we are told, entrusted to the Apostle Peter the keys of the Church, thus conferring upon him the primacy of the Church. Peter became Bishop of Rome, and every after-occupant of the See of Rome has succeeded to the Primacy. The Bishop of Rome, therefore, is supreme Pontiff, Christ's Vicar upon earth.

By all means let us investigate this without prejudice or passion. Let us refuse to be influenced by the fact that some of those who have filled the Papal throne were shameless profligates of infamous character. Let us refuse also to take account of the high personal qualities of its present occupant. And his environment is nothing to us. Gorgeous vestments, a magnificent ceremonial, regal dignity and pomp—all these serve but to prove the faith of those who accept his claims. But what concerns us is the evidence on which these

claims are based.

Suppose it be conceded that the Apostle Peter held the place thus claimed for him, what ground is there for believing that his successors in the See of Rome had equal precedence and power? The only ground is that they themselves have asserted it, and that half Christendom has yielded them the position. *Evidence* there is absolutely none. What ground, again, is there for believing that the Apostle Peter was ever the Bishop of Rome? The only ground is that the Roman Church asserts it. *Evidence* there is absolutely none.

Indeed the very statement itself implies an anachronism as glaring as if it were asserted that the apostle was a cardinal. Of course there must have been bishops in the Church at Rome, as in the other Churches, but the thought of a bishop with a diocese or see, belongs to post-apostolic times; the New Testament knows nothing of it. And as Dean Alford bluntly says, "The *episkopoi* of the New Testament have officially nothing in common with *our bishops*."

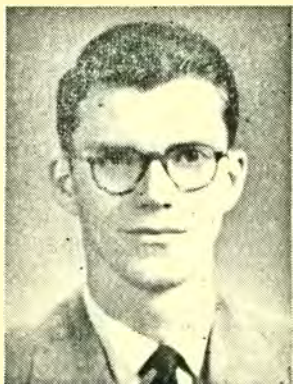
It is proverbially difficult to prove a negative; but the absence of all reference to Peter in *Romans* makes it reasonably certain that he had no relations with the Church in Rome when that Epistle was written: the last chapter of the Acts makes it practically certain that he was not in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment; and the last chapter of 2 Timothy leaves no doubt whatever that he was not there during Paul's last imprisonment. And to turn to a witness of post-apostolic times, Clement of Rome will confirm us in this conclusion. He was admittedly bishop of the Church in Rome before the end of the first century, and his epistle to the Corinthians is admittedly genuine. Can any honest-minded man believe that his Epistle was written with the knowledge that the Apostle Peter had ever preceded him in the bishopric?

We are not dealing here with deep theological problems beyond the power of common men to investigate. And the conclusion is clear; first, that even if it could be shown that Peter was "the Vicar of Christ on earth," the fact would give no such precedence or dignity to the Roman Popes—a bishop might as well claim to be a cardinal or a marquis because his predecessor in the see wore the hat of the one or the coronet of the other; secondly, that the story that Peter was ever Bishop of Rome is the merest legend, and absolutely inconsistent with his office of Apostle; and, thirdly, that the figment of his having had a position of supreme authority in the Church is not supported by the Scripture to which appeal is made in its support.

Some errors are based on misread passages of Scripture. Others grow up apart from Scripture altogether, and Scripture is afterwards perverted to support them. In this latter category is the figment of the supremacy of Rome. It had its origin in the pride begotten of citizenship in the Imperial city—in what Augustine himself described as "the insolence of the city of Rome." Such is the foundation upon which rests the claim of the Pope to be the Vicar of Christ on earth.

—Sir Robert Anderson.

## TO ASSIST BROTHER BIXLER IN JAPAN



Brother Edwin Thomas Marsh, the only son of Howard T. Marsh, Sellersburg, Indiana, is making plans to sail for Tokyo, Japan, sometime between the 20th of September and the 10th of October this year. He will assist Bro. O. D. Bixler in the school and church work there while spending at least two years in language school, after which time he hopes to be more useful in the Japanese mission field.

The church at Sellersburg has agreed to sponsor Brother Tommy and will be responsible for collecting and forwarding all funds necessary for his support and work. A fund has been started in Sellersburg bank for him and a few contributions have been received. Your prayers and contributions are solicited. Please send all donations for this work to the Sellersburg Church of Christ Box 85, Sellersburg, Indiana. About \$500

will be needed for travel and \$100 per month for support. If you are interested it is urgent that you act soon, because there is not much time left to complete arrangements.

If you would like to have Brother Tommy visit your congregation before he leaves, write him and he will try to arrange a convenient date for you. Other announcements will be made as plans are more complete.

—Howard T. Marsh.

## HOW TO MARK A DISCIPLE

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

“If I were to speak with the combined eloquence of men and angels, I should stir men like a fanfare of trumpets or the crashing of cymbals, but unless I had love, I should do nothing more. If I had the gift of foretelling the future and had in my mind not only all human knowledge but the secrets of God, and if, in addition, I had that absolute faith which can remove mountains, but had not love, I tell you I should amount to nothing at all. If I were to sell all my possessions to feed the hungry and, for my convictions, allowed my body to be burned, and yet have no love, I should achieve precisely nothing.

“This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience—it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

“Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not compile statistics of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails.

“Love knows no limit of its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope: it can outlast anything. It is in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen . . . . .

“In this life we have three great lasting qualities—faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

—J.H. McCaleb in *“Chicago Christian”*.

## A TWO YEARS' PRISON MINISTRY

(Lessons on the Book of Acts)

J. Edward Boyd

**A TWO YEARS' PRISON MINISTRY.** In one sentence Luke tells the rest of his story. It covers a period of two full years, during which time the apostle carried on a ministry of preaching and teaching "in his own hired dwelling." He was a prisoner, chained to a Roman soldier; yet perhaps no period in his life was more fruitful. People came to him; and he was permitted to speak to them boldly without restrictions. In this chief city of the Roman empire he proclaimed another, a higher, a more enduring kingdom—the kingdom of God. In the city of the Caesars, to whom men paid divine honors, he taught the things concerning God's King, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is some day to receive the kingdom of the world and to reign for ever and ever (Rev.11:15), and upon whom sinners must even now believe if they are to be saved from eternal ruin. How many were thus led to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus we are not told. Already, as we have seen, there was a thriving church in Rome, "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Romans (15:14.) To them he had previously addressed an epistle that has been called "the most profound work in existence." We cannot doubt that by this prison ministry many more souls were added to their number.

Indeed, Paul did not look upon his imprisonment as a misfortune. To the Philippians he wrote: "The things which happened to me have fallen out rather to the progress of the gospel." (Phil. 1:12.) He spoke of two good results that had come from it. (Verses 13-18.) His bonds "became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest." It became well known among them that his imprisonment was for the sake of Christ. Every six hours, day and night, the soldier to whom he was bound was replaced by another. Thus a number of them had opportunity to hear the gospel as he taught it to his visitors. Then there would be conversations between prisoner and guard when no one was present. Many times the name of Christ was heard; many times was the gospel story told. There would be much talk among the soldiers about this most unusual prisoner, who showed no bitterness nor resentment because of his misfortune, who was always patient, kind, clean of speech, filled with peace and joy they had seen in no one else, and who was constantly telling of one Jesus who had died to save people from their sins and who had been raised from the dead. It was an opportunity that he would not otherwise have had; and he rejoiced because of it.

Another result had come from the apostle's imprisonment. His patient suffering for Christ's sake and his perseverance in the preaching of the gospel under such circumstances was an inspiration to others. Most of the brethren in Rome gained confidence in the Lord because of his bonds, and so were "more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." (Phil. 1:14.) It appears that a few still timidly held back; and some who were speaking out were



doing so from an unworthy motive. (Verses 15-17.) These latter were probably Judaizers, of the same sort that had given him trouble elsewhere. They were proclaiming Christ from a spirit of envy and rivalry, hoping thereby to add to his afflictions. But however selfish the motive of these partisans, he could rejoice if only Christ was preached. After all, with him that was all that mattered, that Christ should be proclaimed everywhere. Gladly would he suffer anything if thereby he could contribute to that result.

So the gospel made progress in Rome, a city which is believed to have had at that time a population of more than two million. About half of these were slaves, mostly a degraded lot; a large majority of the free men were paupers, living on public or private charity, interested chiefly in bread, the games of the circus, and gladiatorial contests. The greater part of the wealth of the city was in the hands of a few. At the head of the state was the emperor Nero, merciless, lustful, cruel, unscrupulous. His court was exceedingly corrupt; in his household of slaves and dependents there were practiced "vices so monstrous and so unnatural that they shocked even the men of that generation, steeped as it was in every species of obscenity." (Conybeare and Howson.) Yet at the time when the Philippian letter was written there were saints in this same household. (Phil. 4:22.) Even there the gospel proved itself to be the power of God unto salvation. Many of the converts in those days were slaves. There is evidence of this in the instructions and admonitions addressed specially to them. (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9.) The Greek word translated *servants* in these passages really meant *slaves*.) Such was Onesimus of Colossae, who had fled from his master Philemon, probably hoping to lose himself in the vast population of Rome. Somehow he came in contact with Paul and was converted to Christ. The apostle then sent him back to his master, who happened to be a personal friend of Paul and a faithful servant of the Lord. This was the occasion of the epistle to Philemon, in which he pleaded with his friend to receive back his runaway slave as "a brother beloved." (Philemon 16.) It is clear that the apostles made no attempt to change the existing social order. That was not their business. The purpose of the gospel is not to improve the present age, but to save men and women out of it. Such improvements as have been brought about by the reason of its influence are the by-products of the gospel, not its chief end.

During his imprisonment Paul's influence continued to be felt far beyond the boundaries of Rome. He wrote a number of important letters: Philippians and Philemon (already mentioned), Ephesians and Colossians. It is believed that the epistle we know as Ephesians was a circular letter, copies of which were sent to a number of churches in Asia Minor, including Ephesus and perhaps Laodicea. (See Col. 4:16.) To assist him in his ministry at this time the apostle had a number of faithful helpers; Luke and Aristarchus; Tychicus, "the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord," the bearer of letters to the churches; John Mark, now restored to Paul's favor; Epaphras of Colossae; one Jesus called Justus; Demas who later, because of love for the present world, brought sorrow to the apostle's heart by defection. (2 Tim. 4:10);

and Timothy, who for so many years had been a tried and true companion in the work of the Lord. Also there was Epaphroditus, whom Paul called his "brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier," who came from the Philippian church with a gift and hazarded his life to supply what was lacking. (Phil. 1:1; 2:25-30; 4:18; Col. 1:1; 4:7-14; Philemon 23-24.) All these and no doubt many others who are not named, played an important part in the furtherance of the gospel.

#### THE END OF THE STORY

With the brief statement concerning Paul's two years' ministry in Rome the historian Luke brings his story to an end. There is no account of the trial, no information concerning its outcome. What is the reason for this silence? Perhaps he intended to add another volume; but if he did so, there is no trace of it. There is reason to believe that Paul was acquitted and released, that he travelled farther west as he had planned (Romans 15:24, 28), that he again visited some of the churches, and that he was again arrested, brought back to Rome, and beheaded as one of the victims of Nero's persecution. He had himself expressed confidence that he would be set at liberty. (Philemon 22; Philippians 1:22-25.) There is evidence of his release in Christian writings of the early church—in the writings of Clement, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Eusebius. Some things in the epistles to Timothy and Titus are difficult to explain on any other hypothesis. But Luke's silence remains a mystery, the more so because we know that he was with the apostle when the time of his martyrdom was drawing near. (2 Tim. 4:6, 11.)

So we have come to the end of the story; yet it is not the end, but the beginning; for the Holy Spirit continues His work of taking out a people for the name of the Lord (Acts 15:14), and will continue to do so until He comes to receive them unto Himself. While at Rome Paul wrote of the gospel that it "was preached in all creation under heaven" (Col. 1:23)—an amazing accomplishment for those first thirty years or so, evidence of the faithfulness and zeal with which those early Christians carried out the Lord's instruction to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15.)

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## HOW MUCH SHALL I GIVE?

Richard Ramsey

It is my opinion that you can estimate the amount of money a man gives to the Lord without ever asking him about his contributions. Time and time again I have heard some people complain about the church. Time and again I have heard people complain about high prices and taxes. Time and again I have seen men indifferent about attending church or taking part in the Lord's work. But never have I found a liberal giver among these people. Whenever I meet a complainer, I immediately begin to wonder just how much he is giving to the Lord. When we really appreciate what the Lord has done for us, we don't go around grumbling and complaining. A man who truly appreciates what God has done for him

is going to be a liberal giver to God's work. As a dear Christian lady said in a note this week, "I cannot stop giving until Jesus stops giving to me."

How much do you have to give to be considered a liberal giver? The widow whom Jesus commended gave only two little coins. She didn't give much if you count the actual value of those coins. But Jesus said that she gave every penny she had. In other words, the liberality of your gift to God is not measured by the amount you *give*, but by the amount you *keep*. If you spend \$5 a week on cosmetics, chewing gum, cold drinks, coffee, cigarettes, movies, daily newspapers, magazines, new hats, etc.—all of which you could have done without—you ought to be downright ashamed of yourself to give less than \$5 to the Lord on Sunday. How in the name of God, can a man claim to love Jesus when he spends more money on worldly pleasures than he spends on Jesus? How can a man claim to be serving God above all else when he spends \$10 on a pleasure trip or party but thinks 10 cents is enough to drop into the Lord's collection plate? Oh, brethren, where are our hearts? Where is our sense of values? Do we think that we can fool God? "Be not deceived," said the apostle, "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Friends, every dollar we spend is a seed sown; if we spend that dollar to God's glory, it is a seed that will some day bear fruit to God's glory and to our eternal happiness. In what field did you sow your seed this week? Will there ever be any harvest there for God's glory?

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"They that go down to the sea in ships,  
That do business in great waters;  
These see the works of Jehovah,  
And His wonders in the deep.  
For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind,  
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.  
They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to  
the depths:  
Their soul melteth away because of trouble.  
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their wits' end.  
Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,  
And He bringeth them out of their distresses.  
He maketh the storm a calm,  
So that the waves thereof are still.  
Then they are glad because they are quiet;  
So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.  
Oh that men would praise Jehovah for His lovingkindness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!  
Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people,  
And praise him in the seat of the elders."

—Psalm 107:23-32.)



## Seed Thoughts

J. R. C.

### WORKING AND WAITING

The question is often asked whether the faithful performance of duty is not sufficient preparation for the Lord's return. If it were, the Lord would certainly have said so, and would not have burdened the pages of His Word with the frequent and insistent teaching of His coming, and the emphatic, oft-reiterated command to wait for Him, to look for Him, to watch for Him. This is not simply an incidental matter; it is a specific part of the Christian faith. The Thessalonians for example, as Paul reports, "turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God." That, however, was not all of their religion, for another item follows, joined to the foregoing by "and"—"and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. 1:9, 10.) So likewise, in summing up the Christian religion in his Epistle to Titus, Paul says: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:11-13.) Shall we now, just because our Lord has tarried so long, relinquish this important feature of "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints?" Or shall we, as the tendency seems to be, nullify this doctrine with specious reasonings and "explanations," so as to make it virtually come to nothing?

### NOT IDLE EXPECTATION

The objector always loves to caricature the truth. He draws the picture of Christians standing on stumps, roofs, or hilltops, gazing up to heaven in expectation of the Lord's returning, and not doing the Lord's work the meanwhile. Let us not be deceived. The first Chris-

tians expected the Lord very intensely, and they also worked harder than we do. Their expectation was the spring of their earnest activity. The true faith in Christ's coming spurs to enthusiastic effort. It is not like standing on the depot platform waiting for the incoming train; for the Lord has not told us when He is due. We have an indefinite time before us and the instructions, "Occupy till I come;" with the warning also, "Behold I come quickly;" "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." But if we look forward to the Lord's coming, and conduct our daily life and do our work with constant reference to Christ's imminent return—this is waiting for Christ; this is God's will; this is the true Christian life.

### ERROR'S OPPORTUNITY

When Christians neglect any part of the truth, Satan is quick to take advantage of the fact. The omission of a truth leaves an opening for corresponding error. The minds and hearts awakened on the subject of Christ's coming have need of true and strong teaching on the subject. This failing, Satan will supply the longing of these souls with spurious and counterfeit doctrines. Some of the false teachings on these points could never have got such scope and ascendancy if the truth had been boldly, faithfully, and unbiasedly taught. In this, as in every other matter of faith, the whole counsel of God is needed, and a close adherence to the word will lead no man astray.

### The Test of the Man

As big and as proud as was Nebuchadnezzar yet he humbled himself as a child when truth was brought to him. This is a picture of the right kind of man. His willingness to humble himself and repent showed the real man in him. There is something besides evidence that is needed for a man to be convinced—attitude and a good heart.

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN ONLY

E. L. J.

Paul's inspired statement, "There is one body," was true in his day and it is true today. As there is one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God, so there was then, and there is today, but one church. It consists as to membership, of all who have truly accepted Christ in the gospel way. A certain spiritual oneness, the "unity of the spirit," the unity *wrought by the Spirit*, runs through the whole family of God. This must be confessed at the outset, and what I have to offer in this paper, in order that believers may understand the way of the Lord more perfectly, is offered to them *as believers*, and not as unsaved sinners.

But the members of this one and only church have not given diligence to *keep* this unity which the Spirit has wrought. They have set up denominational fences, they have joined themselves to man-made parties so that many members of God's church are now members of something else also, and they have become sadly scattered abroad.

Clearly these saved but scattered children of God ought to be gathered. That inward unity which already exists ought to be outwardly, visibly and organically manifested, realized and demonstrated. To this most Bible readers will agree, and I do not stop to debate the point here.

But it is evident that no such unity is possible except on the Bible basis of being simply Christians, in contrast with what it means to be partisans and sectarians. Therefore, let us seek to understand what it is and what it means to be a Christian only. And let us take the method which is called "elimination," and mention first two things that it does *not* mean.

The first is this: when I say I am a Christian only, I do not mean to say that I am the only Christian; and when all those in the aggregate, who have separated themselves from various sects in order to be members of no sect profess to be Christians only, they do not profess to be the only Christians. They recognize that there are others who have not yet taken this independent stand, perhaps never even supposed that it is possible. In support of this statement it is only necessary to call attention to a certain practice which prevails among those who *have* taken that stand; namely, the practice of receiving into fellowship *without baptism* those who have already turned from sin, and who have been scripturally baptized. For example, if a member of some sect who had truly obeyed the gospel should come forward presenting himself for congregational membership, the leader would likely take him by the hand and welcome him on behalf of the congregation, with the explanation that the brother desires to lay aside all denominaional connections and be henceforth just a Christian. But to take a man by the hand and to make such an explanation does not *make* a Christian; yet when that is done, the church recognizes him as one of them—which simply shows that they recognized him as a Christian before he came. That is, without affirming anything as to his former acceptance with God, they recognize that

he was at least in standing, position and relationship—if not in actual state, condition and life—a Christian before he took his stand as a Christian *only*.

Second. Just as all those in the aggregate who have taken their stand as Christians only do not profess to be the only Christians, so also they would not say that *all* who have taken that stand *are* Christians. Some of them may not be Christians at all. They have gone through the outward acts, or they could never have been enrolled on earth. But there are those who have been enrolled on earth who have never been enrolled in heaven. Their names are in church directories but not in the Lamb's book of life. They have confessed with the mouth, but they have not believed with the heart. They have gone down into the water, but they have come back up into the world. Sometimes for political reasons, as to get votes; sometimes for business reasons, as to get trade; sometimes for social reasons, as to win a wife; and sometimes for other reasons they go through the form of "joining" the congregation, when they have never been added to God's church. For the Lord alone adds men, and He adds those alone who truly turn to Him with all the heart in the gospel way. Therefore, it is freely granted that there are those who profess, not only to be Christians, but Christians only, who are not Christians at all. There is something in a name but there is not *that much* in a name. You may call a book a boot, but that does not make a boot of the book; you may put the quinine label on the morphine bottle, but that does not change the contents of the bottle. Just so, you may put the "Christian" label on a man, and you can put the "Church of God" or "Church of Christ" label on a congregation, when the man is not a Christian at all and when a congregation is not a Church of God at all. So far so good, but it is not far enough. If one is truly a Christian, that is the one and only right name to wear; but if it is in name only, and not in faith, spirit, attitude, life, and fruits, it would be better to wear another name. It makes no difference what name you wear—unless you intend to live right. And to wear His name while not living right, is to trail it in the dust and misrepresent His cause.

So then those who profess to be Christians only are not the only Christians; nor are such professors necessarily *all* Christians. These concessions are made because they are true and because they ought to be made; and because if I do not make them you would not care to read the plain, direct, and I think convincing, words that are to follow on the side of what it *does* mean to be a Christian and a Christian only.

1. *It means the Christian is standing on ground that is common to all believers: union and unity ground.* Unity ground, because it is co-extensive with and limited by "the whole counsel of God" alone—a position such that whatever other may be right, it *must be right*. To illustrate that this alone is union ground, suppose a large gathering of professing Christians, but of mixed denominational connections. If all "Christians" be asked to rise they would do so in a body. That is unity. But if now they be asked to sit down at the call of their party names, they could not act unitedly, but only a group at a

time. That perfect unity they had as Christians is broken up as partisans. Why are they united as Christians? Because that name is in the Book, 1 Peter 4:16; why are they divided as partisans, as “—ists” and “—ites?” Because those names are *not* in the Book. So then the Christian who is neither more nor less than that (and I mean in faith and life as well as in name) occupies ground that is not only safe and scriptural, but that is *already, without argument*, common to all believers.

2. *It means that the Christian will never need to change church.* To illustrate this point: A lady was enrolled in our congregation, attended for a short while, and then began to miss. I called upon her and said, “Sister, we have missed you. You have neglected the assembly where, ‘upon the first day of the week’ we ‘break the bread’ and ‘lay by in store’ as God directs.” She answered, “I have been going to ———,” (naming a party wearing a human name, and which does not attend to those sacred first-day-of-the-week items) “and I have learned so much.” “Possibly,” I answered, “but if you have learned something not in the Book you do not want it, do you? and if it is in the Book, did it not belong to you as a Christian, since your creed book is the entire Bible? And could you not thank God for it, believe it, and begin to practice it in your daily life, without joining those who pointed it out to you?” Then she saw that all the true and good in all the creeds, and even the truth that is in none of them belongs to the Christian; and that as Christians we may appropriate and practice truth we hear, without “changing church.” She came back and brought her husband too.

3. *To be a Christian and that only means, more than anything else, that one has Jesus and Him alone for his teacher.* Certainly, we try to teach each other as I am trying to teach you now; but we cannot teach in the final, authoritative sense. All the teacher may properly do is to call attention to that which Jesus has *already said* and caused to be recorded. It is in this sense that He says, “Call no man father on the earth . . . neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ;” “Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren.” (Matt. 23:8-10).

That is what it truly means to be a Christian; a *Christ-ian*, a follower, not of Luther nor Wesley, nor Calvin nor Campbell (I use their names freely because they taught this same thing themselves); not even of Apollos or Cephas or Paul (1 Cor. 1 and 3), but of Christ. It is good to be tied by no string and by no thing to any man or set of men. It is good to be responsible to no man-made ecclesiasticism, the synod, the conference, the delegated assembly, or the church paper, but to be free from men and responsible for our faith and teaching to God alone—and may He help us to know what *that* responsibility is. Jas. 3:1. Never until the Christian learns to read and believe his Bible without being blindly bound to what his denomination, his party, or his brotherhood believes, or to what this able editor and that venerable brother believes, will he be in position to find the whole will of God. But he who reads his Bible regardless of his party, caring not (except for their sakes) whether any one on

earth agrees with him if only he can agree with God, this man will outstrip his party and become a leader and not a follower in it, to lead them back to God, back to the Book, back to the good old ways.

The independence of each congregation and of each individual believer from all sectarian alliances is not an arbitrary teaching of the New Testament but in the nature of things it is imperative in order to a full understanding of the truth. The newspaper is the people's Bible and few Christians really read God's Word. Even of those who do, few have the courage to accept its teaching on some lines. If therefore I am not free to believe and practice what I may find revealed until thousands of others—the brotherhood in general—finds and accepts it, it simply means that I am cut off from truth permanently. An illustration true to life will make this plain: A group of believers, more than average in devotion, are studying God's Word. They are tied up individually and congregationally with a given denomination, which also owns their church-house. "I have found something in the Book," says A. to his brethren, "that I never knew before; something that we ought not only to believe, but to practice as a congregation." (It may be for example the matter of breaking bread "upon the first day of the week.") As A. unfolds his discovery, B. says, "You are surely right; let us accept it and begin to do it." But C. answers, "Have you considered, brethren, that the 'brotherhood in general' does not believe in it that way and that we will be excommunicated and ostracised if we teach that?" And D. adds, "Yes, we will even lose our meeting-house, because our leaders won't stand for such teaching." Whereupon A. answers, "I had not thought of that; really I do not wish to be cut off from our denomination, and lose the house. Let me see that passage again; perhaps my conclusion was hasty after all. I am not sure that it just must mean what I thought it meant!" And the upshot of it is that A. himself, and the whole church is robbed of that truth—and it may be a *vital* thing too, because they feared the higher-ups, and found themselves fastened to unscriptural overhead machinery!

Finally, whoever takes the independent Christian stand, though some may think he is narrow, will find himself in the finest of religious company, enjoying the fellowship, not of the original Christians alone (for no one will undertake to say that *they* belonged to any sect), but of men like Luther, Wesley and other great reformers as well. Luther wrote:

"I pray you leave my name alone, and not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. Paul (1 Cor. 3) would not that anyone should call himself of Paul or of Peter, but of Christ. How then does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Leave, my dear friends, these party names and distinctions. Away with them all and let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes."

And Wesley wrote:

"Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples at the feet of our common Master, to hear His Word, to imbibe His Spirit, and to transcribe His life into our own."