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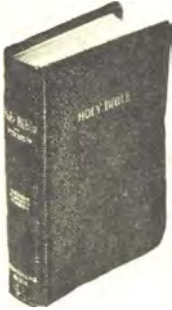
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Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

SOME THOUGHTS ON FELLOWSHIP

"When somebody mentions fellowship, I can just smell the coffee!" So said one brother. The abundance of "fellowship halls" in church buildings attests to the popularity of this view of fellowship. But consider two ladies exchanging a few polite phrases as they sip their coffee; are they really "having fellowship"?

In other circles, fellowship means money—taking up a collection or maybe sending funds to a missionary. But what of the Christian who drops in a quarter as the plate is passed; would you call that "fellowship"?

Elsewhere, being "in fellowship" or "out of fellowship" indicates one's acceptability status with certain persons or churches.

All of these may be legitimate uses of the word "fellowship," but lately I've been thinking that there is much more to it—much that I've missed. Several events occurring in a short space of time stirred my thinking, and while I pondered these things, the Lord brought Acts 2:42 before me, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." All at once the old definitions of fellowship just didn't fit. Drinking coffee together is too shallow, and passing a contribution basket is too impersonal for either to fill the demands of this verse. Fellowship is put in the same category as prayer and the teaching of the apostles. It is a vital part of church life, not a ritual for special occasions.

WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

Looking up the word "fellowship," I found it to mean more than mere association. It may mean either giving or receiving, but the basic thought is that of sharing—in a spirit of oneness or togetherness. Add this ingredient, and a coffee hour can become a time of true fellowship. Likewise, granted the right condition of heart, financial help to a brother in need can be fellowship in the truest sense. But there is still more.

The Scriptures speak of fellowship in various terms. "We are members one of another." "The members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of

Christ." "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard the other as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." "As each one has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, Gal. 6, Phil. 2, 1 Pet. 4). Now, where does this fit in with the apostles' doctrine, breaking of bread, and prayers? In most church gatherings I have attended, fellowship just didn't have much of a place.

This is a lack that people *feel* even when they cannot identify it. Teen-agers who have a hard time sitting through a church service will sit twice as long on a hard floor when there is the opportunity to openly share their joys and concerns. Adults, too, sense the same need. Why the current proliferation of home meetings? People find it rather difficult to "have the same care for one another" when they see only the backs of the others' heads and never hear them speak. One home Bible study group I know of is composed of about 20 people from different churches. "It's more like church than church is," one of the members said recently. A member of another group exclaimed one evening, "Why can't church be like this?"

FELLOWSHIP IN PRACTICE

From the practical angle, I think there are two elements that tend to promote true fellowship in these home groups (and the lack of which stifles it in most church settings). 1) The seating arrangement. When people can look each other in the eye, there's a much better chance for real communication to take place. The shy person is more likely to speak up—and though his words are few, he may make a valuable contribution. The talkative person—if he is at all observant—will pick up silent signals from others who are wanting to contribute something. Just a half-way commitment to the practice of the scriptures quoted above will generate a sense of commitment to each other. 2) Informality, under the leading of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't hurt to have a predetermined lesson text and a designated teacher, but text and teacher must be ready to step aside when the Holy Spirit indicates that He has other plans. This isn't always easy to detect. It requires that the atmosphere be such that all members feel free to speak up. Members must be able to disagree without being treated as if they are idiots—or heretics.

Read again the paragraph of scripture quotations. Now, think of applying them to the situation where Christians are met together to discuss the Word. There will be an air of common concern—sharing joys and problems, offering comfort, encouragement, and instruction to each other. The scripture studied will be related to actual, real-life situations, and the saints will be edified. If observation can be relied on, I can also say that the saints will be satisfied. In the fellowship of each other they will have found the Lord's supply for a need that hitherto had not been fully met.

Questions Asked Of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Are there not saved people in all churches?

All churches? Some modern ecumenists might avow such a belief, but I doubt that any Bible-believer wants to subscribe wholly to such a position when he stops to analyze it. "All" includes some who deny the deity of Christ, hold to a works salvation, never baptize anyone, etc. I suspect that some groups are so wrong that no person truly a part of it could be saved. It is one thing to realize that the name "Church of Christ" has been sectarianized and that salvation is in Christ and not in a church as such; it is another to give a blanket endorsement to everything claiming to be Christian. Ours is an age in which some folks seem to think that sincerity is the chief measure of what is acceptable to God.

I have no doubt but that there are many, many more Christians than the people who would be counted in a "Church of Christ" census, but this is not therefore to believe that almost anything goes. I have noticed that some people who talk about Christians in all churches are not very careful in being Biblical as to who is a Christian. Let me be careful that in rejecting one error I do not commit another.

The Restoration movement from the beginning recognized there were Christians scattered in the different churches of the day, and these sought to bring Christians together in unity by being simple Christians, by forsaking man-made creeds and traditions, and by getting back to the Bible. It was a later sectarian spirit within the movement that led some to claim to be the only Christians and that demanded almost absolute doctrinal agreement. Fortunately, not all the people who have been a part of the movement have adopted this narrow viewpoint, and some who have held it are coming to a more Scriptural position. Some, however, in rejecting the one extreme, have tended to swing to the opposite extreme, and accept as a Christian anyone who professes Christianity in almost any form. This is also a sad mistake.

Salvation is a matter of being "in Christ." There is only one source of information as to how one gets into Christ, and that is in the Bible. Some would substitute human judgment, church decrees, or something else, but we should recognize these for what they are. The Bible teaches that those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and who confess this and commit their

lives to Him by repentance and baptism are saved. Some churches teach this, and some people learn enough from the Bible to follow this in spite of the failure of other churches to teach it. These newly saved persons are not suddenly perfect people, doctrinally pure, wholly taught in the Word of God. Saved and added by the Lord to His church, they may, nevertheless, in the human process by which this takes place find themselves allied with a church that teaches much contrary to the Bible. They may do some stumbling around in the process of maturing as Christians, or they may be turned from faith and commitment in Christ and His truth to the doctrines of men. Still we believe some are saved, not because of the errors of those with whom they may be associated, but in spite of them.

A very practical problem is that some churches which teach the necessity of faith and repentance do baptize but attach no importance to water baptism in salvation. Even in this, however, we are persuaded that some are obedient to the Lord in spite of the view held by those who do the baptizing.

To concede that there are saved people in some of the different religious bodies is not to declare of all these churches that "one is as good as another," or that "it doesn't matter which church, because we are all headed to the same place." Instead, it is to believe that God's salvation is not made invalid by every misunderstanding of Bible truth.

What do you think of the Living Bible?

The Living Bible is a paraphrased translation, by Kenneth Taylor, that has become quite popular. As with any such work, one could find some flaws, but it is on the whole worthy of commendation. Many find it very readable and useful in helping them understand the Scriptures, and for this reason it is good. Taylor is an evangelical, so his work does not show a liberal bias. Like most good things, though, it can be seriously misused.

Users of *The Living Bible* should understand that it is a paraphrase and not an exact translation. This means there has been an attempt to express ideas and thoughts rather than just translate words. For example, if someone phones a message, a receptionist may copy and report that message word for word, or she may just pass on what to her seemed to be the content of the message. The latter is a paraphrased version of the message. The danger, of course, is that she may omit some important bit of information because it did not seem significant to her, or in the retelling may actually though unintentionally add to the message. Further, when one is dealing with the Bible, greater issues are at stake.

Taylor is apparently a conscientious man who respects the Word of God and who has tried to be careful in his work. He seems to have realized how easily a paraphrase may lead astray. *Time* magazine (7-24-72) reports that halfway through his work Taylor lost his voice, and that a psychiatrist who examined him suggested this

was his “psychological self-punishment for tampering with what he believed to be the word of God.” If this be true, it shows that he realizes the danger of the paraphrase of God’s word.

The Living Bible is a reading Bible, not a study Bible. It can help one grasp the general content of the Bible. When one begins a more intense study, or when an idea may turn on a particular word, the paraphrase should not be used. The person without a working knowledge of the original languages should have an *American Standard Bible* or a *New American Standard Bible* as a companion for study.

In the light of all the evil in the world, why do some teach that Satan is now bound?

Who always knows “why” many things are taught? Different persons may have different reasons. I strongly suspect that some teach Satan is now bound, not because events seem to agree with it, but because this is a necessary consequence of teaching that we are now in the millennium. Revelation 20 makes it clear that the binding of Satan and the millennium occur at the same time. If one believes that we are now in the millennium (i.e., “as much millennium as there is ever to be,” per a rather common a-millennial position), he must also find something in the present age that fulfills the binding of Satan. The rampant evil so evident about us, as well as the testimony of Scripture (2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:8,9; 1 Jn. 5:19), make this a rather difficult if not impossible chore.

The degree of Satan’s binding during the millennium is a point that should not be overlooked. It is not a mere matter of people keeping their distance from him; he is to be taken completely off the scene. Not even the nations (the Gentiles, the heathen—sometimes so translated) will be deceived by Satan at that time. Satan has always been limited and could go no further with temptation and evil than God allowed (Job 1 and 2; Lk. 22:31-32; 1 Cor. 10:13), so some limitation can never be used to fulfill this binding. Revelation 20 speaks of much more than limitation; it is a complete exclusion of Satan from the scene. Some seem to miss this.

When we realize how absolute the binding of Revelation 20 is, it becomes all the more evident that we are not now and never have been in the millennium that is described there. Satan will indeed thus be bound, as God promises, but he will also be bound when God promised it.

—7110 Bruton Road, Dallas, Texas 75217

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

The Coming World Church (Conclusion)

Bill McRae

The challenge to me and the challenge to you is this: What type of person ought we to be? How ought we to be living? If the rapture of the Church is near, if it is imminent, if it is upon us, then my Christian friend how is it to affect our daily lives?

Let me call to the witness stand the Apostle Jude. He would stand before us and quoting from his own words in his epistle in verse 3 would say, "Men and women, believers in Jesus Christ, let us earnestly contend for the faith." And that is one of the practical implications of the imminent coming of our Lord. It is "let us earnestly contend for the faith."

When General Sherman was on his march to the sea, General Hood circled behind him and cut off his return to his fort—the basic means of supply and communication. He sent one of his lieutenants through the lines to the fortress and shortly one of his men saw the signal being flashed to him from the front, "The lieutenant is here." It was at that moment that General Sherman by telegraphy sent back his world-famous message, "Hold the fort, I am coming." Standing with him was a Christian officer, Major Whittle, who related the story to evangelist P. P. Bliss. It was Bliss who wrote the song, "Hold the Fort, for I am Coming."

My Christian friend, if we are standing on the threshold of the great apostasy, if we are standing in the days when the rapture of the Church is upon us, one of the great messages that comes to us from the Apostle Jude is, "Hold the fort." Earnestly contend for the faith. And that is what we are committed to. The men who stand behind this pulpit and minister the Word are men who will earnestly contend for the faith. They believe that the Bible is the word of God. That it is inspired by the Spirit of God and it is inerrant in its entirety. They believe that Jesus Christ is God, they believe that He is the only way to God and that His death upon the cross is the only means whereby man in his sin can be reconciled to God. We shall earnestly contend for the faith, we shall hold the fort of God's grace, and we shall preach the Word. That is the great challenge that is upon us. As believers in Jesus Christ in this day when apostasy prevails on every hand and we seem to be under attack from the apostate from every direction, the message from our Lord will be, "Hold the fort, for I am coming."

Let Paul come to the witness stand. Paul, what manner of men ought we to be in view of the imminent return of our Lord? Paul would stand before us in the words of 2 Timothy 4 and say, "I charge thee before God and before Jesus Christ who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing, Preach the word." That would be Paul's admonition to us today. As we anticipate the

coming of the One who shall judge us, it is, "Preach the word."

It was D. L. Moody who said, "I felt like working three times as hard when I discovered that my Lord was returning again." May God enable us to be that type of Christian.

Paul, come to the stand again, will you? This time when Paul comes to the stand to exhort us as to what type of men and women we ought to be, I suspect that he would quote what he wrote to young Titus, when he spoke of looking for that blessed hope. His admonition would be to watch expectantly. And that ought to characterize us, Christian friends. Are you watching expectantly?

It is said that Dr. G. Campbell Morgan once wrote, "To me the second coming is the perpetual life on the path which makes the present bearable. I never lay my head on my pillow without thinking that before the morning breaks, the final morning will have dawned! I never begin my work without thinking that He may interrupt my work and begin His own."

John, will you come to the stand? What type of person ought we to be? John would quote for us from his first epistle 2:28. There he exhorts those to whom he is writing so to live that they shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

James, come to the witness stand! What manner of person ought we to be? James' exhortation to us I am sure would be that we ought to be waiting patiently for the coming of our Lord.

An insurance company some time ago recorded the story of a man and his daughter who went swimming in the Atlantic off the coast of New Jersey. Before very long they realized that they were being carried out into the ocean by the tide. The father turned to his daughter and said, "I am going to swim for shore in order to obtain help." He encouraged his daughter to continue swimming and said, "If you get tired, turn over on your back and you can float all day and I will come back for you." The father made it to shore, then the search party started looking for the daughter. They looked for four long hours until they found her quietly floating on her back out in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean. When they found her and brought her to shore, the newsmen were on every hand and the people were astounded at the calmness of this teenage girl. Her response was, "My father said that I could float all day, and I swam and floated because I knew that he would come." That is exactly the attitude of the believer as he finds himself encircled by every kind of uncertainty. As he finds himself in the midst of the trials and troubles and adversities of life, there is the calmness to rest in Him since He said He would come, we wait patiently for His coming.

Lord Chasberry said, "The only hope for all of the mess of this world is the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ." He said, "I do not know why we do not plead with God every time we hear the clock strike."

What manner of persons ought we to be? My friends, we ought to be earnestly contending for the faith, we ought to be preaching the Word, we ought to be walking circumspectly, we ought to be walking expectantly and waiting patiently.

Proving Jesus to be The Messiah

Dr. R. A. Young

Can you prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, promised of God in the Old Testament? Can you prove it if your source of proof is strictly limited to the Old Testament? Your proof must be so limited if you are to convince a Jew because he does not consider the New Testament inspired of God.

The Old Testament prophets wrote much about the Messiah to come. They told the place and nature of His birth. We are especially concerned about what they told of His relation to the Jews and their relation to Him. We are equally concerned about His predicted relation to the Gentiles and their relation to Him.

If the Messiah has come, it naturally follows that all the predictions concerning Him up to the present time must have been fulfilled. If they have been perfectly fulfilled in the life of Jesus, then Jesus is the true Messiah. To make the test, we need not resort to logic or argument. We need only to look through the eyes of documented history.

The very conception of the Messiah was to be a miracle performed by God, as He said, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (meaning God with us) (Isa. 7:14). The performance of this miracle was of such nature that it cannot be proved except by the testimony of those involved. Mary, Joseph and Elizabeth testified that an angel from God explained that before Mary and her husband came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. These witnesses were of unimpeachable reputation.

The Messiah must be born in Bethlehem as prophesied by Micah. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratha, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). The very word everlasting applied to Him indicates that He was not just a mortal man. History points to Bethlehem as the birth place of Jesus of Nazareth.

The next prophecy identifies this child (ruler) born of a virgin in Bethlehem as being the Messiah. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the Government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever" (Isa. 9:6-7).

This child ruler, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, must come through the seed of David.

In Jer. 33:21 and 26, God speaks of His covenant with David that he should not lack a son through his seed to reign upon his throne. It is worthy to note that Jesus of Nazareth fits into the picture of the Messiah in that He was a descendant of David.

It is vitally important to note the God-appointed relation of the Messiah to the Gentiles. "Behold my servant whom I uphold: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1). "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and will give thee for a light of the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6). "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek" (Isa. 11:10). ". . . and now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49: 5-6).

From the above, we see that the one who regathers Israel is the same person who is given for a light to the Gentiles. The following scriptures show that the one who regathers Israel could positively be none but the Messiah. "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, he shall be set up for an ensign of the nations. He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:10, 12). The Lord says "I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:3-6).

Now of the things which we have considered, this is the sum: The Messiah must be begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, a descendant of David, and He must rule upon David's throne forever.

The most important thing is that the Messiah should be given for a light to the Gentiles. The whole world knows that Jesus of Nazareth is the one and only descendant of David who has become a light to the Gentiles. Millions upon millions of Gentiles have come to the light of Jesus for near two thousand years.

In 70 A. D., the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews, as the Old Testament had predicted, to every nation on earth. At that time, except in potential, the Jews absolutely ceased to have a nation. In the strictest sense, their nation was re-born in 1948. From 70 A. D. until 1948, every nation on earth was dominated by the Gentiles. During all this time, Jesus of Nazareth has been a light to the Gentiles as someone has well written: "Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today, He (Jesus) is the central figure of the human race.

"All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that of the life of Jesus of Nazareth."



Can I Understand the Bible?

Alex V. Wilson

Yes, you can, by prayerful dependence on God's Spirit and by following certain principles of interpretation. The latter are based either upon common sense or upon the teaching of the Bible itself. Last month we saw four of these principles. (1) Interpret according to the *purpose* of each passage. E. g., Luke 18:1-8 does not mean that God is an unjust judge whom we must beg, cajole, and plead with before He will answer our prayers. No, Christ's purpose in telling this parable is revealed in verse 1: "Men ought always to pray and not lose heart." God is not like the judge in the story, but we should be like the woman, and persevere in intercession. (2) Interpret according to the *context*, both the immediate context and the overall context of the entire Bible. E. g., Acts 2, 4, and 5 show that the early church in Jerusalem practiced communism, i. e., community of goods. Should all Christians everywhere follow their example, today? No, (though God may lead *some* to do so), for 1 Tim. 6:17ff contains Paul's instruction to rich disciples, and neither there nor elsewhere does he tell them to sell or give away all their possessions. He urges them to be generous, and earnestly warns them of the dangers of riches, but goes no further.

Someone wrote, "We can only understand any particular passage of the Bible if we know what the whole Bible teaches; but we can only know what the whole Bible teaches if we understand what its particular passages mean." That makes correct interpretation seem impossible, doesn't it? But the problem is not so great if we follow our 3rd principle. (3) Interpret obscure passages *in the light of clear ones*. E. g., "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27). That verse might possibly be used to teach salvation by works ("If you don't visit orphans and widows, you stand defiled and condemned before God!"). But to teach thus is to contradict numerous very clear passages to the contrary: Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 3:5; etc. (4) Interpret according to *the original hearers' or readers' understanding*. E. g., Herbert Armstrong in his fantastic "British-Israel" doctrines, quotes Genesis 22:17, where God promises that Abraham's descendents will "possess the gate of their enemies." Armstrong explains,

A gate is a narrow passage of entrance or exit. When speaking nationally, a "gate" would be such a pass as the Panama Canal, the

Suez, the Strait of Gibraltar . . . Britain and America came into possession of every such major "gate" in this world! So we MUST be modern Israel, the descendents of Abraham.

But that is nonsense. In ancient times a city's gates were used as places for holding court, reading the law and making proclamations. Thus in Scripture a city's gates sometimes represent the city itself (Ps. 87:2; Gen. 24:60), and to "possess the gate of your enemies" simply means to be victorious over your foes. This is how Abraham would interpret God's promise to him.

Other Principles

Now let's consider some other principles of interpretation. (5) *Interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament.* This is especially true in the realm of ethics, and explains many Old Testament practices which to us today may seem harsh and cruel. Theologians call this the principle of "progressive revelation."

Revelation is not complete all at once. It grows clearer as the ages advance. God takes up man as He finds him, with his crude ideas and defective moral standards and social institutions (e.g., marriage, divorce, women's rights, slavery, etc.), and He makes the best of man that He can at the time.

For instance, the Mosaic law allowed slavery and did not clearly condemn polygamy, although it contained in itself principles which should have resulted in the abolition of both these practices (love your neighbor as yourself). When the Pharisees asked Jesus why God in the law allowed divorce if it were against God's will (as Jesus had said), Christ replied that that law was given because of the people's hardness of heart and that it was contrary to God's plan in creation (Mark 10:2-6). Again, Jesus forbade His disciples to imitate the example of Elijah when he called fire down from heaven against his enemies. What was suitable to the age and circumstances of that prophet (for Christ did not condemn Elijah for what he did) might not be suitable for a later age with its greater revelation of God's truth (Luke 9:51-56).

All of this does not detract from the sufficiency of the Biblical record, taken as a whole. It detracts only from the sufficiency of certain parts of it IF taken by themselves. Two principles must be kept in balance: (1) the whole Bible is inspired; (2) some parts of it need to be illuminated by other parts.

—E. J. Carnell, *A Case for Orthodox Theology*

Sometimes white settlers in America, violating this principle, justified aggressive wars against the Indians by referring to Israel's wars against the Canaanites. Later, many slaveowners justified slavery because Israelites and even Philemon were allowed to keep slaves. But that does not mean God considered slavery a good thing, which should be continued. "Progressive revelation" also explains why godly men in ancient times (e.g., Abraham, David) practiced polygamy, while elders in the churches must be husbands of one wife only.

(6) *Interpret according to the literary form of the passage.* This may sound technical and complicated, but actually it is not. The Bible contains various forms of literature, and they should not all be treated in the same way. We recognize this fact when reading other books; it applies to the Bible as well. We might say there

are *various kinds of truth*. Let's think about them. (a) *Historical* truth consists of factual statements. So-and-so went to this place and did that deed and said such-and-such. The statement he said may have been false—an honest mistake or a deliberate lie (like Satan's "You shall not surely die"). Thus not all the statements in the Bible are true; Satan's wasn't! Another example of this fact:

In the first 37 chapters of Job, his comforters say a number of things in the heat of debate which are spoken in the book in order to be contradicted and not in order to be endorsed. It is only when God Himself appears in the last 5 chapters that the first 37 chapters take on meaning. (John Stott)

So, inspiration doesn't guarantee that the person quoted is infallible—it only guarantees that the writer recorded exactly what the person said" (Peter Wagner). (b) *Poetical* truth is different from historical or scientific description. In Psalm 29 David calls thunder "the voice of the Lord." But obviously he was writing poetically, not literally. So to accuse him of being naive or superstitious would be as silly as to accuse Carl Sandburg of thinking fog walks on four legs just because he wrote, "The fog comes on little cat feet. . ." (c) *Phenomenal* truth is not scientifically accurate, but describes events from the point of view of the observer. Scripture describes the universe in phenomenal language, so that all people of all ages can understand. We do the same thing every time we ask, "Did you see the *sunset* this evening?" Thus Joshua's telling the sun to stand still does not mean that the Bible teaches that the sun revolves around the earth. Joshua doubtless thought it did, but even if he didn't he still might well have used the same words—speaking phenomenally.

(d) *Symbolical* truth occurs often in Scripture. Sometimes its meaning is obvious: "Behold the Lamb of God"; "This is my body." Sometimes the Bible itself clearly interprets the symbols: "You are the head of gold," said Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar when explaining the dream about the great image. Other times the meaning is not clear, and Christians differ—as Brother Boll and Brother Chambers held different beliefs about the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6:2. (e) *Proverbial* truth sets forth moral lessons in broad, general statements. But such proverbs are not *always* true; there are many exceptions. E.g., note the following quotes from Scripture: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). "Pilate said, 'What shall I do with Jesus?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified.'" (Matt. 27:22). Contradiction? Yes, but it's nothing to worry about, because proverbs are merely wise observations which are *generally*—but not *always*—true.

(f) *Cultural* truth is at times a little complicated. "Its significance can't be known without an understanding of the cultural environment in which it was given," explains Peter Wagner. He then gives an example:

According to 1 Peter 3, women are not supposed to braid their

hair. By this we certainly may understand that there was something wrong for 1st century Christian women to do it. But we needn't force 20th century women into the mold. That doesn't mean we can ignore the teaching, though. Peter was stating an eternal truth in culturally-bound language: Christian women should be inconspicuously modest. (Eternity Magazine, Nov., 1958.)

Should Christians today wash one another's feet, or is Christ's command (John 13:14) applicable only in a culture of sand and sandals? Should we greet one another with a holy kiss, as Paul commands in five different places? How and to what extent do Paul's teachings about the veiling of women (1 Corinthians 11:2-16) apply to us now? Christians differ regarding these and other matters. "Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5b).

(g) *Doctrinal* truth refers to passages which set forth the teachings of the Christian faith, about God, man, sin, salvation, eternity, etc. E.g., Romans 3:20-4:25, 13:1-7, and 1 Corinthians 15 give systematic explanations of justification by faith, the Christian view of government, and the resurrection, respectively. In such passages we find God's truth presented in the clearest, most orderly manner. Therefore we should seek to base our "theology" mainly on doctrinal passages rather than on poetical, symbolical, proverbial, or historical ones. (Pentecostals overlook this in their teaching about tongues as the necessary evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which they base on examples in the book of Acts. The epistles do not support their interpretation of Acts, however.) Of course, we do *not* mean we should ignore Acts, Psalms, Revelation, Proverbs, etc. and study only doctrinal passages such as the epistles. It is merely that in formulating doctrine we should begin with doctrinal passages, and give them the preference should there seem to be a contradiction between them and, say, a parable.

Wagner illustrates this principle for us:

One cult feels that clapping of hands and making loud noises are important parts of Christian worship services. In one of its publications a quote from Psalms supports each of the practices. "O clap your hands all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph" (Psa. 47:1). The comment: "Some may say, 'Why should I do that?' If for no other reason than because God tells you to, that should be enough!" Or again, "O come . . . let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" (Psa. 95:1). Comment: "Some may say they do not believe in making noise in church. In other words they disagree with God and what His word teaches. They don't believe in doing what God wants them to do! Evidently they are out of harmony with God . . ." One would think that if these physical manifestations were as important a part of Christian worship as the tract writer pretends, Paul would have mentioned them in 1 Corinthians 14 or in the Pastoral Epistles.

Never go first to the non-theological portions of Scripture to form any Christian doctrine or practice, then try to make the theological portions fit in. That's allowing the tail to wag the dog.

May God help us to study His Word carefully and prayerfully—and obediently.

Precious Reprints

The Word of Christ

R. H. Boll — 1951

When the word of Christ is received into the heart it produces a series of marvelous effects.

1) It produces faith—saving faith, life-giving faith. (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 20:31).

2) It regenerates. “Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth” (1 Pet. 1:23). “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth” (Jas. 1:18).

3) It Cleanses. “Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you” (Jn. 15:3). This effect is laid to the faith which is produced by the word (Acts 15:9). Note also the statement given in Ephesians 5:26—“having cleansed it (the church) by the washing of water with the word.”

4) It causes a cleavage between the believer and the world. “I have given them thy word, and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (Jn. 17:14).

5) It sanctifies—that is, it separates and sets apart unto God. “Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17).

6) It effects salvation. It is God’s power unto salvation to everyone that believes (Rom. 1:16). These are the words “by which thou and all thy house shall be saved,” as the angel said to Cornelius (Acts 11:14).

7) It is able to build up the believer and to give him the inheritance among the saints (Acts 20:32).

All of these bear testimony to the supernatural power of the word of God. It does not operate merely like the word of men—by intellectual enlightenment, logic, and reasonable persuasion. It does that, but far more. Its work is infinitely deeper and higher. It reaches dead souls and quickens them. It is itself living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joint and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). It kills and makes alive; it creates and destroys; it saves and it damns; it is to some “a savor of life unto life;” to others “a savor of death unto death,” depending on the attitude of the heart toward the word.

“For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe” (1 Thes. 2:13).



Viewing The News

J. D. MURCH, whose column "Today in Christendom" in *Christian Standard* has often been a source of material for this column, had an especially informative column on December 24, 1972, on the "New Battle Over Evolution." One of the astonishing things to me in the column was that the religion editor of *The Washington Evening Star and Daily News* has filed a suit in federal court to assure "fair play" for the scientific theory of creation. He names in his suit the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study of the University of Colorado and the National Science Foundation of the United States Government. Even if the suit is dismissed, as evolutionists hope, there seems to be at last an arousing from lethargy of people who believe in creation and who are scientific enough in their approach to speak out against the scurrilous attack now being made in text books and class rooms against those who refuse to bow down to the current trend of calling the theory of evolution a scientific fact. Creation is not only taught in Genesis, it is emphasized in at least sixty-five passages in Scripture.

Read Murch's column if you can, but at least note this fine paragraph from it: "Liberal evolutionists claim that there is no alternate, or creationist, scientific theory within the body of scientific knowledge that can be presented in a scientific text. This is a lie. They furthermore piously proclaim that the modern advocate of evolutionism clearly labels his view as a theory. (He then proceeds to use it as a fact.)"

"PRIEST ARRESTED in Zaire Because of Christian Name" is the headline for a short article in *Christian Beacon* for December 7, 1972. It tells of a Roman Catholic priest who was arrested and ordered to be ex-

pelled for baptizing (?) a baby girl under a Christian name. Zaire is the country formerly known as the Congo Republic, Africa, which was overthrown by the United Nations, reportedly by weapons supplied by the United States. The same issue of that magazine told of a recent ecumenical "sister celebration" in New York City in the Washington Square United Methodist Church, in which the Rev. Barbara W. McCall led in the reading of a declaration, "We, as women, feel it is time the church repent of sexism and be reformed." Included in the declaration was the statement that "We hold that Eve performed the first free act." That "free act" they approved!

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS have a "national team working to open contacts with other denominations and religions," according to an article sent me recently from *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, written by its religion reporter, Ben L. Kaufman. The article told of a speech by a Dr. C. Bronlow Hastings, assigned by the Southern Baptist Home MISSION Board to be its expert on Catholicism. Among the things he was reported as saying was that Catholics are moving to the concept of everyone being the "people of God," "and this means others also have a share of God's bringing salvation to mankind." How can we bring salvation if all men are already the "people of God"?

DR. MARGARET MEAD, prominent sociologist who has been recommending filthy things for decades, recently made the news columns again by predicting, and commending, a trend toward two different types of marriage in the future—"parental" and "student" or "individual." The latter marriage would "merely be a licensed union to live together and the couple would have to use birth control."

Such a "marriage" would be dissoluble at will. Dr. Mead's paper at a symposium on population also stated that other forms of marriage might be group marriages, polygamous, and polyandrous marriages and that "the consensus seems to be that once the main function of marriage no longer is to have children, the alternatives will multiply." Know your enemy, Christian!

THE COMMUNISTS have taught a great many people one of their weapons of subversion: Do the incredible and the bourgeois mentality will not give it credence. Hitler used this technique in telling a big lie often and people believed it. Politicians in this country are using it by claiming to be conservatives and then acting so left-wing that people will not believe it, claiming to be greatly aroused against spending and then doubling the national debt over the speed of the "spendthrifts," claiming to be a "hardliner" on communism and then befriending the communist countries and communists in our countries, etc., ad infinitum. The communists themselves are still using the technique of course, in claiming to have "softened" their attitude towards capitalists while as the same time increasing their efforts to take over the entire world.

DURING THE presidential campaign this fall there was an organization entitled "Evangelicals for McGovern," which took up the radical beliefs of Senator McGovern and defended them as being in accord with the gospel. David A Noebel has written a most enlightening article on this group and subsequent developments in the Christian Crusade Weekly for December 24, 1972. Probably the most important development so far as influence is concerned is the publishing of a book entitled *The Cross and the Flag* by Creation House. I have not seen the book, but if Dr. Noebel's quotations and summaries are as reliable as he usually is, some evangelicals have swallowed a good number of strange things. He quotes one article in the book calling the "new left" people, such as Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, "secular saints." I presume this is a violent reaction to those who have equated the gospel and capitalism as co-partners, but it is a very dangerous trend, for more to the left (socialism and materialism)

than even a pendulum should go!

THE JESUS PEOPLE are subjects of many articles that appear in every possible kind of publication. Some authors investigate a small group such as "The children of God" and write books about their denial of fundamentals of the faith as if all the "Jesus People" are that way. Others investigate a few that are drones on society, doing nothing to support themselves and living off others, and categorize all as that way. Others meet some of the best of them and speak of the true revival of New Testament Christianity as being accomplished. Let us use more common sense. The Jesus People I have met have had some characteristics that do not appeal to me, but they have been sincere, concerned, witnessing, Bible-believing, Bible-studying people of the charismatic movement. For their preaching of Jesus Christ I rejoice and will rejoice, but that does not give my commendation of any who are not that way, any more than you should condemn all of them just because of a few derogatory things others may say of some.

THE WRITER of the column entitled "Religion Today," Lester Kinsolving, had an article recently that commended a new hymnal jointly published by Canada's Anglicans and the United Church of Canada, and especially the "Sex Hymn," No. 204, which has the following lyric: "Now thank we God for bodies strong, vitality and zest; for strength to meet the day's demands, the urge to give our best. For all our body's appetites which can fulfillment find; and for the sacrament of sex that recreates our kind." When calling sex a "sacrament" becomes a thing to commend, the writer becomes a man to disregard!

NEWS BRIEFS AND COMMENTS: The people of South Korea are reported to be feeling they have been betrayed by this country . . . Changing to the metric system is reported to have a price tag of 40-60 billion dollars . . . Recognizing communist governments has the great disadvantage of helping fasten that government slavery on the people and making the slaves feel they have no friends in the "free world" . . . Advertisements for abortion are appearing in many college papers over the country . . .

Angola, Portuguese Guinea, and Mozambique are parts of Portugal. Many in this country feel they should be made to be independent because of their distance from the Portuguese capital, forgetting that they are closer to Lisbon than Hawaii is to Washington! . . . May the new year be one of blessing to you in the Lord Jesus Christ. May this column help remind you that our citizenship is in heaven and keep you waiting for our Savior

to come from there. If you have any questions or news items to include, send them to Ernest E. Lyon

2629 Valletta Road
Louisville, Ky. 40205

And if you know anyone who keeps up with news of all kinds and will look at the news with a spiritual insight and would be willing to write this column, let me know. I would like to be writing a different kind of column!



Now!

J. H. McCaleb

“If we are to enjoy life, now is the time—not tomorrow, nor next year, nor in some future life after we have died. The best preparation for a better life next year is a full, complete, harmonious, joyous life this year. Our beliefs in a rich future life are of little importance unless we coin them into a rich present life. Today should always be our most wonderful day.”

These words from the pen of Thomas Dreier are thought-provoking words. Never quite satisfied, never quite happy, we seem to look forward to a day when all our hopes will be fully satisfied. But, as successive objectives are attained, we find that something still is lacking, and we continue to press on until the end, searching for a satisfaction that never quite materializes.

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.” The word *know*, as used by John in this passage is not the one denoting the process of acquiring knowledge through successive stages of experimentation, but rather the word that defines absolute knowledge and complete conviction now. And so, we have that eternal life *now*.

If then, there is any happiness in eternity, we can, and must, experience that joy here and now. “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” John, the apostle, meant that they should have that joy *now*.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Mac LeDoux

Saigon, S. Vietnam

Weatherford, Tex. Letter Nov. 27.

Brother Le Doux has made arrangement so that he can fly by helicopter over dense jungle or mangrove swamps to isolated villages or hamlets in Vietnam that were recently overrun or destroyed by the Viet Cong. Brother Le Doux is able to do this special work in cooperation with the Vietnamese Air Force. Therefore it is possible for us to give immediate relief to helpless refugees until they can be brought to refugee camps where social and government agencies are able to reach them with extended aid. This benevolent work is a way that our outreached arm can reach the needy people of Vietnam with compassion in the form of much needed commodities bought on the local Vietnamese market, assembled and prepared by Christians in Vietnam. In the name of Jesus we can help families survive until they can rebuild. Each family package will contain several gospel tracts pointing them to Jesus. We can go directly to the people with needed gifts of love and the Message of Hope!

In appreciation of what was done by Christian sponsors in America for student pilots, the Vietnamese Joint Chiefs of staff have given Brother Le Doux approval for travel on military aircraft. In addition General Minh has made available helicopters for benevolent and relief work. It works this way: Brother Le Doux is informed by the Vietnamese that a small village or hamlet has been overrun or destroyed by the V.C. The Vietnamese Air Force makes available special helicopters to survey the immediate needs of the unfortunate people. Food, clothing and other items are bought on the Vietnamese market and given in the name of Jesus.

J. Miller Forcade

Salisbury, Rhodesia

November 23, 1972.

One never knows what to expect here. Only a little while ago one of our "boys" came and knocked on my office door to tell me someone wanted to see me outside. It was a colored woman who spoke Portuguese and a little English. She wanted to ask me some things about the church that meets here in Arcadia. When she asked for someone who could speak her language we called our "garden boy" to talk to her. He in turn translated what she said into Shona who told our house boy and he told me in English. The loss in communication is considerable in such cases.

She then asked me for a certain little book which she could read in English. "Is this the church where they close their eyes when they pray?" She wanted to be sure it was the right church. She may be a Christian for she does not seem to be satisfied with either the Catholic or Protestant ideas.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

November 16.

Daddy Brown is conducting Bible studies at Harare each Tuesday night now. He is teaching the book of Jude. There is only one chapter, but he finds lessons enough to last a good many weeks! He feels it is so relevant to our day. I have enjoyed the lessons. Last Sunday he preached at Tafara. There were two responses to the invitation. Here at Waterfalls a European mother and her daughter were baptized.

Dora was here a while this morning. She is fixing dinner for some of the church folk tonight. They show quite a lot of hospitality—and I am glad. The grace of showing hospitality is waning, I fear, yet it is commanded of God. David and Dora are hospitable.

Elaine Brittell

Zambia

November 17.

From the 24th of October I began night duty at the hospital with a dear friend who was seriously burned from her waist up. I did enjoy being with her. It was like a holiday for me. I stayed in town, sleeping during the day, then on duty at night till November 8, when she was transferred to Mufulira Mine Hospital. God blessed her and her face won't be scarred, but she has begun a series of skin-graft operations which make her very weak. Please pray she will soon be better.

Four more have entered God's family at Mujala. Danny and the young children have fixed mud blocks and put the wooden planks on top for seats. They are so nice.

Lester and Joye will go to California in January to attend their son Sam's wedding. Lester is to perform the ceremony. They will fly down, so Daddy may go with them. They will be gone a week.

George Galanis

Athens, Greece

Nov. Newsletter

As for my particular activities, they are as follows: The downtown Bible Center continues to proclaim the good news of the gospel. New souls are coming and going and a few stay and we follow up with them. The priests have poison to inject in the minds of the people against us and our message. Our nick-name is heretics. It is pathetic that the blessed word of God has been stigmatized as such. Last evening a university student came to my office, who had disappeared from our meetings he had started attending two years ago. He confessed to me that several people puzzled him with their bitter slander against us.

We are now holding four meetings a week at the Bible Center, and I have two other congregations I am responsible for. That means three more meetings a week to conduct. The Lord keeps me very busy by letting me conduct seven meetings every week. I realize that this is a great responsibility and I feel the burden of kneeling down like a camel to unload my problems and to be re-supplied with new strength of the Spirit to carry on successfully such a great task to the honor and glory of God. Please see my spiritual need for guidance and leadership and pray for me.

On the weekend of October 21, Raffingora Church of Christ (about 100 miles from Waterfalls) had a camp meeting for women. Because of the difficulty of transportation, not many of the Salisbury women could attend. Bro. Simon Nheweyembwa took a carload from Harari and Bro. Robert Gill took nine women from Mufakose and Highfields. All our family went too. The theme of the meeting was the Second Coming. On Saturday at 1:00 P.M. I taught the women on this subject until darkness at 6:00, while Bob taught the men on The Kingdom of God. That night there were several African speakers and many continued to sing past midnight.

Bob's Sunday morning sermon was on Luke 19—the Parable of the Nobleman. At the beginning of the service a weeping woman came in, accompanied by her mother and Sister Nheweyembwa. When the invitation was extended, she came forward, but she was dumb. Bro. Simon said that the woman had an evil spirit and prayed for her. She appeared very weak and so she was helped down to the river. The day before Sis. Nheweyembwa had explained to her the way of salvation and she had made the good confession to those present at that time. Before she could enter the water the evil spirit threw her to the ground. Slowly she revived and was led into the water. She began to respond and two brethren baptized her. When we returned to the compound the hat, stick and other implements she used to commune with the spirits were brought out of her hut and burned. The woman was talking and smiling and her countenance had altered so much that she did not seem to be the same person. Now she was a child of God; before she belonged to the devil.

Bro. Simon Nheweyembwa held a week's meeting at Nhowe Mission School the last of October and first part of November. He had 110 responding for baptism and 40 for rededication. Last year about this time he had over 70 baptisms there. God has certainly used this man of God in many ways. He had worked with Dad Garrett for 25 years.

Mabel Bailey

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

November 21.

Leonard keeps busy with his work of visiting the village congregations. He often goes out Friday or Saturday and gets home Sunday evening or Monday. They usually have two or three meetings and visit with the Christians at each place. There seems to be a great need for Bible teaching in some places. Everywhere they go the people say "Come again, soon." . . . We are happy that the van he is buying is proving to be just what he needed. He can be comfortable, yet it is good on the village roads.

We are enjoying having Leonard's sister here. She arrived November 3. She sees a lot of change in Bulawayo since she lived here 21 years ago. Winnie is glad to be back. We were sorry to hear of the death of Bro. Chaaba's little son. He died from measles.

He was 17 months old. Bro. Chaaba worked with us the four years we were at Sinde.

J. C. Shewmaker

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

November 24.

Brother Perry B. Cotham has recently closed a five-day evangelistic effort with the Hillside congregation here. His fundamental lessons were given in a forthright, forceful and unoffensive manner. Though there were no visible results, we believe his lessons will produce fruit in the future.

Day before yesterday our sister Georgia Hobby flew back to Victoria Falls, where she was to be met by her family and transported to Namwianga Mission at Kalomo where they work. She was two weeks in a hospital here with a broken hip, and two weeks at our place resting and waiting to have an X-ray made at the end of the month. Satisfactory progress is being made, we are happy to report.

The Hillside congregation has had quite a boost in both Sunday School attendance and our regular services. Five have been added to the Lord's body over the past two months. Also, two families have joined in fellowship.

Thos. W. Hartle

Cape Province, S. Africa

November 14.

Our final series of gospel meetings for 1972 were indeed commendable. The attendance was, Monday through Friday, as follows: 84, 79, 84, 64, and 122! The Friday evening attendance was a record attendance, which we have as yet not had for many many gospel meetings. We know that by the inspiring and heart-searching lessons presented by our guest speaker from Johannesburg, lost souls were informed and Christians were strengthened and edified, the weak ones uplifted.

This meeting was crowned with success, in that a married man who had been attending these meetings for most of the evenings and whose wife is a member of one of our local congregations, contacted the preacher after he had gone home on the final evening, and asked to be enlightened. The visit finalized in the man's being baptized at midnight of that same evening. What a joy and blessing to the wife . . . and once again the angels rejoiced, and we rejoiced as well!

As a family we wish to express our deep appreciation to all who are endeavoring to make it possible for us to obtain another car, by the means of the "car fund." At present the total therein is \$1260.00

Entombed Again

Fred W. Schott

Many times
Those who are looking,
Even looking for the Kingdom,
Take what they have
Of the Son of Man,
Wrap Him in their finest linen.
Then lay Him in a cold,
Dark tomb, called
The heart
Only to return.
How soon
Or how long the return,
Depends on the real desire
Of the soul—
To find that he has gone.
Quietly escaping their fine linen,
Rolled back the door of the tomb
And simply
Moved on.
Yes, moved on.
On to where he is not bound
However lovingly
And with so fine a linen,
On to where
He's *Free*
To *Live*.
For He that liveth
Cannot be found
Among the dead.
And what are these fine linens?
They are but the revelations
From Christ Himself,
Were so full of *Life*.
When first they came
Full of *Life*,
Till pride be taken in the
Revelations
And the Lord is again entombed,
Entombed by the very blessings
He sent our way.
Behold,
As He did the very first time,
And every time since
That men or a man
Have tried to comfortably
Seal Him in,
He escapes

Not only the linen,
But also,
I fear,
The tomb.
How sad,
When at last,
The soul does return,
Peeks through the open door,
And with the fine white linen
Is content.
Yet, the greatest tragedy of all
Must be when
After the dust,
The soil,
The very dampness
Of the empty tomb itself
Changes even the linen
From white to black.
And the soul,
Still confidently declares,
"Here lies proof
That all is well!"



Faith -- Neither Plus nor Minus

N. B. Wright

We are speaking of "faith" or the "believeth" of John 3:16. What kind of mixed up burden do we lay on the sinner who hears the condemnation and who responds to the offer of salvation in this Golden Text of the Bible?

There is a faith which justifies, Romans 5:1. That faith is the one we want for ourselves subjectively and wish to hold out to the inquirer objectively. Anything less obscures the way and anything more defeats the purpose of gospel preaching.

The song "Trust and Obey For There is No Other Way" strangely enough is popular with young people and contains a truth which we have all but buried under religiosity. In trying to be true to the Biblical teaching on "obedience," we have all but neglected the "trust" part. Then if you were to ask unwisely which of the two realities as expressed by these words is the more important, the answer might be: Yonder a man is walking—which of his two legs is the more important?

Our understanding is that saving faith is composed of two exercises of our faculties. They are: TRUST and OBEDIENCE. It is our conviction that the way we were bottle-fed in the so-called steps of salvation—faith, confession, repentance and baptism—did not have all of these exercises of a willing soul in proper perspective. Each has its place in salvation, as revealed in the Word. An absence of any one of them is not an expression of the complete will of God.

The death, burial, resurrection and appearance of Christ, as seen in 1 Corinthians 15, is the *procuring* cause of salvation. It is the gospel which saves.

Faith is the *appropriating* means of salvation. How tragic to misunderstand either. Here is what God has done—it is the basis of our redemption. Here is the acceptable response of man.

Satan in his wiles would pervert the first and obscure the second. God has made the way plain—the Way is the Person of His Son. The enemy would keep Christ from you by one act of perversion and keep you from Christ by removing or twisting the sign-post of acceptableness with God.

What good end would criticism of the imperfect communication of the gospel to the lost men serve were it to end there? This paper is to suggest a more Scriptural approach to the response a repentant soul makes to the glorious opportunity to express faith to God.

1. TRUST.

According to the gospel of John (19:30), the Lord Jesus on the cross said: "It is finished." What did He mean? It can't mean universalism. Rather, His cross-work (to use a word of the late beloved Bro. E. L. Jorgenson) of providing salvation for believing hearts was finished. It was one act for all time for all men who believe. What is one expression of this faith?

It is trust. Do we trust the finished-work of Christ? Are we going to add repentance, confession and baptism to supplement it? We fear lest it often has been done. Do we try to take anything from it? To try to add to it is to take from it. Either of these attempts would be wrong, even if not fatal. The false teachers who hounded Paul's steps in Galatia added circumcision to the cross. And Paul accused that sort of message as being another gospel, worthy of the curse of God.

Do I believe Christ in His work enough to make Him in His burial, resurrection and intercession my one, only and whole trust? Do I trust Him in what He did and does, or in what I did? Take care of the kind of gospel you preach to me. Otherwise, I might write an article for your special benefit! You see, I'm the needy one and don't appreciate a garbled message. It has to be plain for me to understand and true for me to rely upon it.

A good brother in So. Indiana, Earl Fulk (if you wish to drop a note of appreciation to him, address Pekin, 47165) used a dramatic

story. A tight-wire walker had a wire stretched across the Grand Canyon. He was going to push a wheel-barrow across the canyon. The Colorado river is only a mile below, at least in some places (this writer was able there the first time in his life to spit a mile). When he was ready to walk across the chasm he asked a by-stander: "Do you believe I can push this wheel-barrow across to the other side?" The answer was: "Yes." Then the gent said: "GET IN." Were a man to take his place in the barrow, we wonder whom he would trust? How much could he add to the efforts of the walker?

It is as though the Lord Jesus asks us: Do you believe I can see you safely across to the other side of time to eternity? If you answer "yes," then His word is: "GET IN." Then how much work of worthiness do we add to His work?

2. OBEDIENCE.

How long have we noticed in the Hebrew epistle that faith and obedience seem to be used synonymously? No, obedience isn't something that we add to faith or trust in becoming children of God, it is an expression of that faith, that trust. It is "getting in."

Are there different exercises—different from one another yet a part of saving faith—in this expression called obedience? We believe so. The Word does say to repent and be baptized, as in Acts 2:38, to which we hold without apology. We praise God for the opportunity to avail ourselves of His goodness and concern. Then in Romans 10 we read of confession—confession of His Name, His deity. What a privilege! How quick we are to jump at the chance!!

Now, having rendered obedience, can you rest assured in the Lord? Faith does. Confident in what He did. And joyful for the opportunity to avail ourselves of His grace.

CONCLUSION

Seeing then that we add nothing to faith in our acceptance of the gospel lest we mar the work of God, let us try to put these different exercises in proper perspective.

Faith, according to the Golden Text, is the basis of salvation. We have seen Whom we trust and how obedience is to be exercised. Let us think of these exercises as a step—a step of faith; a step of acceptance to God.

An illustration might help. Think of a step in the process of walking. We are told that after we take one step, we lean the body forward. The body is now off balance; so the other foot comes forward to break the fall. And so on, step by step. One step then is composed of a series of movements. But they all contribute to the step.

A step of faith! All right; here is a series of movements, each one being an aspect of faith. One aspect of faith would be trust; another repentance; another confession; and still another baptism. Isn't it, we repeat, all faith?

Say, what kind of faith do you have?

A long-time professor at Marion (Indiana) College digs into American history to illustrate Jesus' Calvary death by crucifixion.

Jesus Paid it All

Allen Bowman

The American statesman Henry Clay, brilliant but fond of extravagant living, once found himself deeply in debt to his bank and unable to pay. With heavy heart he went in to seek his creditor's forbearance. "About that debt I owe—"

"You owe nothing," the bank official interrupted.

"But you don't understand, sir. It's that debt to this bank."

"There is no debt." And to the astonished customer the official explained that Clay's friends, seeing his embarrassment, had collected enough to pay the obligation. They had taken care of it all without revealing the secret to him.

Clay was unable to say another word. With gratitude welling up, he could only turn and walk out.

Our debt through sin is one that we cannot possibly pay, yet it is so appalling that if it is not taken care of we shall suffer eternal loss. But it was paid in full by Jesus Christ on Calvary. And unlike Clay's friends, our Benefactor has fully informed us of the fact. We have only to believe. Yet the truth is so stupendous that it staggers us.

With what can we compare the atonement? We have all heard of some compassionate person's bearing the penalty due to another. There is the touching story of the schoolboy in a mountain area who was caught stealing another pupil's lunch. Thin and frail, he never had enough to eat. When he came trembling to the front of the room to get the whipping that was due him, a big boy stepped up and said to the teacher, "Sir, let me take the lickin' for him." And the teacher consented.

The rescued lad was overwhelmed with gratitude. But his friend had done nothing about his offense against God. What about the penalty for breaking the eighth commandment? Only the Son of God could take care of that.

More recently is the story of a Franciscan friar, Maximilian Kolbe of Poland, who was imprisoned by the Gestapo and brought to the dreaded Auschwitz concentration camp on February 17, 1941. At the end of July a prisoner escaped, and ten men in the prison block were therefore condemned to die of starvation. Among them was one who pleaded: "Have mercy! I have a wife and children."

Kolbe stepped forward and offered himself instead. The surprised commandant consented to the substitution, and the friar went into the hunger bunker. Thus he freed the condemned man and comforted the other nine. He died there on August 14.

When Bishop Johann Neuhaeusler told the story in 1960, the freed man was still living, duly grateful to his noble benefactor. But the friar had saved only the man's physical life. His sacrifice

could do nothing to reconcile the person to his God. Only the suffering and death of the Son of Man could accomplish that.

Adam Clarke, thinking of Calvary and its far-reaching significance, wrote: "The whole is grand, majestic and awful."

They say that Napoleon once pointed to a spot on the map, the British Isles, and remarked wryly to his officers, "Gentlemen, if it weren't for that red spot, I could conquer the world." A far greater tyrant than Napoleon is Satan. Can you see him calling his minions together and pointing to a red spot on the world map? The spot is Golgotha and the devil is saying, "If it weren't for that red spot, I could conquer the world."

Yet there are Christians who harbor an uneasy feeling that, in spite of Calvary, there is somehow more that must be done for them. Hannah Whitall Smith, famed Quaker saint of the nineteenth century, encountered a Christian lady who felt she must go through a long preparatory emotional exercise in private devotions to condition herself for prayer. Mrs. Smith described the process as "winding up her machine." All the struggling soul needed to do was to plead the name of Jesus.

Thus earnest seekers after God make vows and adopt rigid schedules of Bible reading and self-denial. They fast and pray for long hours. They serve busily in the church. Of course the means of grace are important. But these half-believers do all this as a sort of penance. For that purpose it is absolutely useless. We cannot pay the least bit of sin's debt. It is already paid in full.

Watchman Nee, the Chinese evangelist, well said, "The Christian faith begins not with a big *do* but with a big *done*." Augustus Toplady expressed it in memorable words:

*Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

"But," says a colossal sinner, "consider the depths of sin I've gotten into. Can God's grace actually reach me?" Yes. The amount of one's sin has absolutely nothing to do with it. The disgracefulness of one's life is beside the point. It takes just as much grace to save a self-righteous Pharisee as to save a murderer or a prostitute or a drug addict. Accept God's gift!

At best we are guilty of sins of ignorance and are tarnished with faults and imperfections. The blood of Jesus, shed for us all, takes care of these too. It is merely for us to confess and believe.

To gloss over sin by hoping for some sort of atonement through good works is to invite disaster. "But if we freely admit that we

have sinned, we find God utterly reliable and straightforward—he forgives our sins and makes us thoroughly clean” (1 John 1:9, Phillips).

*Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.*

—In *The Alliance Witness*

The Perverse Woman

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

At a small social gathering I was desirous of meeting the wife of a man my husband and I had known professionally. I thought she was there but could not pick her out at first. Then I happened to see him motion to a woman across a number of heads and say “Come here.” She saw his motion and could have heard his words but made no move to respond. I said at once to my husband what later proved true, “That is his wife.” My reasoning was that any other woman would have responded, if not out of courtesy, out of curiosity to know what he wanted.

This was a small matter but will do for an introduction. It did not necessarily indicate a perverse spirit. The Lord has revealed many women to us in the Bible. Many of them were disobedient: Eve heads the list but it is impossible to mention more than a few of them in this brief article. Hagar was rebellious and had a marvelous experience of the Lord’s patience and guidance. Vashti has been shrouded in a cloud of false modesty thick enough to hide completely God’s lesson for us in her life. She was simply disobedient—no other fault is recorded of her. So far as the Bible reveals she was not asked or expected to make an immodest display of her beauty. No matter what kind of guests the king had she in all purity could have complied with his request. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ leave His church in a wicked world for that very purpose, i.e. to display her beauty of heart and life (beauty obtained by faith from Him) to the lowest in order that some might be drawn to Him? Many professing Christians will be turned away when He comes, for no more than Vashti did—for doing good works in their own name and way instead of obeying the Lord (Matt. 7:21-23).

So far as we know, Miriam had no husband, but she was judged (Numbers 12) severely for rebellion against her younger brother. This because God had given Moses the preeminence over his brother and sister though He had especially chosen all three (Micah 6:4) to be leaders of Israel. “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” (Judgment on witchcraft will surely be severe.)

Jezebel not only disobeyed, as most of us do occasionally, but as one preacher put it, she “ran the roost *and* the rooster.” She manipulated Ahab into disobedience to God for which he lost his life.

Then there was Rebekah who has been severely criticized for having deceived Isaac *into doing the will of God*. Why he had to be deceived we are not told, but God who knows the end from the beginning may have chosen Rebekah for his wife for that very purpose. She risked a curse for her faithfulness (Genesis 27:13).

Queen Esther risked her life to go in to the king, against the law, at the insistence of Mordecai to whom she had always been obedient. She, too, was willing to take the consequences (Esther 4:16).

But none of these was perverse in the sense of the word as it used in our title. King Saul, the husband of this perverse woman, called their son Jonathan the “son of a perverse rebellious woman” (1 Samuel 20:30). King Saul was a many-sided, interesting character. Chosen from the tribe of Benjamin which was not the kingly tribe and could not be established (and he may have known that —1 Samuel 9:21) he nevertheless strove mightily to secure the kingdom to his son Jonathan. Because Jonathan loved David, his rival in Saul’s eyes, Saul called Jonathan the “son of a perverse rebellious woman”. The word “perverse” describes “one who makes crooked” Evidently his ways were perverse to Saul’s eyes but apparently not to God’s. The meaning seems to be that Saul’s wife had reared the boy in the right way which was perverse to his father’s way and will. It may be that Samuel’s word (1 Samuel 13:13-14), which was as mistaken as was Nathan’s to David (2 Samuel 7:2-4, 12-15), may have encouraged Saul to think that though *he* had lost the kingdom he might yet pass it on to his son. But the kingdom could not be perpetuated in the tribe of Benjamin. Judah had already been designated as the kingly tribe (Genesis 49:10). Saul seems to have been typical of the law period; David of this day of grace and conflict (Ephesians 6:10-20; Jude 3) and Solomon of the age of the culmination of God’s purposes in the earth, especially concerning Israel.

Jonathan would likely have made a good king, having been brought up by a mother courageous enough to keep him in the right way in face of his father’s opposition. If only passive and negligent it could have hindered her work much indeed. Jonathan’s mother must have been a worthy woman in God’s sight. She more nearly resembles “the upright in the way” in Proverbs 29:27b than the woman delineated in Proverbs 31. Her name was Ahincam and she was the daughter of Ahimaaz (1 Samuel 14:50). She seems to have been Saul’s only wife since no other is mentioned.

EXODUS 33:14

*Another year I enter
Its history unknown;
Oh, how my feet would tremble
To tread its paths alone!
But I have heard a whisper,
I know I shall be blest:
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."*

*What will the New Year bring me?
I may not, must not know.
Will it be love and rapture,
Or loneliness and woe?
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper,
I surely shall be blest:
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."
—Author Unknown.*

"Having No Hope . . ."

Frank M. Mullins, Sr.

The above quoted words from Ephesians 2:12 describe the condition of a vast host. They have no hope for eternity and no access to God in the present time. This vast host of people is made up of your neighbor, your closest friends, your nearest relatives—those closest to your heart and life. They possess many admirable qualities. They enjoy much of prosperity. They live comfortably in these days of plenty. They hold responsible positions. They have the esteem of their fellow-man. But they have no hope. They are not prepared for eternity. *They do not know what it means to look to God in the every day affairs of life, and when the time of troubles and sorrow comes they must bear their burden alone without God.* How tragic their going out into eternity with no hope and without God!

You may well ask: "But how do you know this is their state?" Very simply. The Lord said: "Whoso denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:23). Again, Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). In the first verse of 1 Timothy the Holy Spirit led Paul to write these words: "Christ Jesus our hope." *There is no such thing as hope and access to God apart from God's Son and His blood atonement on the cross.* "God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged, he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." Why do they have no hope and are without God? *Because they have not accepted Christ.*

—In *The Evangelist*

NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky.: Some new youth leaders, working under good elders, have been and are a blessing. The young folk, many still children, who are willing to be developed in the Lord are greatly encouraging to the many who keep them in their prayers.

The Robert Garrett family arrived in Louisville on Monday, Dec. 18, and all who had prayed for and looked forward to their coming were happy and thankful. It was a blessing to see them at PCS on the 19th at the choral concert.

The concert was, of course, on the subject of the birth of Christ. Other carols were sung and the whole program was climaxed with the singing of "The King Is Coming." It was magnificent.

Kentucky Ave.: Word and Work has received no official report on the Youth Outreach held Nov. 17-19, but the unofficial report was good, despite the small crowds. The special guests (The Horizons) were commended for their singing.

Waterford Church: There have been two new births and one came for membership and three or four re-

dedications since our last report.

Arcadia Songbook Need is Met

"Thank you for letting me know a view churches and an anonymous in-Ky. Avenue, Cherry Street, and High-bout the generous response from the individual in our request for songbooks. The four sources mentioned above accounted for 107 copies, which is very ample for our needs. Let the people be "restrained from bringing." -Sister Dollie Garrett.

Nelsonville, Ky.: Highlights during the holidays included a wedding on the 22nd, Christmas caroling on the 24th, and Watch night service on the 31st. Thirty-six were present for the year-end meeting, with all staying until midnight.

The Bible Institute

Classes in the Bible Institute are back in full swing after the holiday recess. The second term will begin January 22 and run through April 13. It is hoped that some who did not have time to schedule the earlier term, will be able to take advantage of the classes to be offered in the second. Inquire from Portland Christian School for particulars.

Abigail Dugger Chowning

Abigail Dugger Chowning went home to be with the Lord at 3:50 Monday morning, December 4, 1972. Her departure was sudden, but how gracious of the heavenly Father to take her without suffering or lingering.

Sister Chowning was the last member of the William R. Dugger family, for whom the town of Dugger, Indiana, was named. She was the widow of Oscar Chowning, a long-time elder of the Dugger Church of Christ. She had been a Christian for over 70 years and faithfully taught a ladies Sunday school class at the Dugger Church for many years.

For the last 13 months she had resided with her son, Bruce, and family in Sellersburg, Indiana. Her health had been extremely good for her 84 years, and only one time during those months had she failed to attend three services a week at Cherry Street Church of Christ, New Albany, where her son is minister. Funeral services were conducted at the Dugger Church of Christ on Thursday, December 7. Brethren Eugene Graham (her nephew), Bob Yarbrough (her grandson-in-law), Buford Smith (her minister), and Elmer Ringer (her friend) conducted the services. A group of her friends sang "Beyond the Sunset," "Face to Face," and "We'll Say Good Morning in Glory."

As her only son, I rise up and call her "blessed." She was indeed a worthy woman who loved the Lord. I give Him my humble thanks for the privilege of calling her "Mother." -Bruce D. Chowning, Sellersburg, Indiana.

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Sister Mildred Lale, who, with her sister Edith, has been doing the office work for several years, has suggested that we list her telephone number at home so that those who want to call about orders will be able to do so. We greatly appreciate her willingness to use her home and her time at home for the convenience of Word and Work friends.

—Robert Heid

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