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MARCH, 1973

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Gordon Linscott is a guidance counselor for a junior high school in Louisville.



Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

The editorial advisory committee of the *Word and Work* meets twice a year to consider ways and means of improving the magazine. Here are some thoughts that came out of the most recent meeting.

Eleven issues

Beginning this year, the W & W will adopt a practice already being followed by many monthly magazines. We will publish eleven times a year instead of twelve. Present plans are to make a November-December combined issue. This will take some of the burden off of our volunteer helpers at a busy time of the year; it will also help offset recent increases in mailing costs.

On differing views

There was a time—back when the controversy over prophecy was raging hot—that the W & W was a semi-official voice for a group of churches of Christ which welcomed prophetic teaching. As the controversy cooled down, the closeness of bond between these churches relaxed somewhat, and the W & W ceased to be the champion of a “cause.” I doubt that *anybody* today reads these pages expecting to find the last word on *anything*. But isn’t that the way it should be? Paul was an apostle, yet he wrote, “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24). This we would like to be to you—helpers of your joy, not those who would dominate your faith.

Taking this editorial stance creates some problems. If we are not to dominate your faith, then we have to let you read differing views, where there are varying opinions. Of course, this is not really new; R. H. Boll and Stanford Chambers disagreed on certain matters, yet worked together in harmony. It is much easier to hold rigidly to a doctrinal position and tolerate no deviation; it is hard to throw open the door to disagreement without getting more than you want. So we ask the Lord for wisdom. We did adopt one guideline that should be helpful; it was decided that controversial material should be published only when the content is positive and edifying in nature.

Being non-sectarian

During my first year of college in western Tennessee, some of us in the dorm would play a game on Sunday mornings. The air waves were full of preachers, and we would try to identify them (by denomination) by their vocabulary and style of preaching—and we could do it. Every denomination has certain terms that are endowed with a special meaning. Even biblical expressions—e.g. “baptism in the name of Jesus,” “the new birth,” “receive the Holy Spirit”—take on special meanings in certain circles. Can’t we get away from all of that? It should be possible, if we are careful to use terms only as they are used in the Bible.

At least half of our readers are from churches of Christ of various kinds, so we will probably continue to see occasional references to “the Restoration Movement” and other matters that relate to the Church of Christ. Missionaries sent out by these churches will continue to be featured in the *Missionary Messenger* section. However, we will continue to print occasional reports from other missionaries in other fields, believing that an enlarged vision of what God is doing in the world will inspire the reader on to “greater things for God.” As for denominationally-colored vocabulary, we’ll probably never escape it entirely. We do set as a goal the printing of a publication that any Christian anywhere can pick up and read and understand without getting a translation into plain English.

Precious Reprints

Needed: Prophetic Insight

Stanford Chambers — 1932

Said Jesus to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to try Him, asking a sign from heaven, “Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.” Thus did these men come in for the rebuke of the Lord Jesus. Demanding a sign from heaven, they betrayed the fact that they did not recognize a sign from heaven already before their eyes. Had not Isaiah said, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”? And Jesus in their very midst was that sign, and they knew Him not. These men had no prophetic insight. “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” The signs of the times are interpreted by what the prophets have spoken.

Back of this inability to interpret was responsibility for an attitude. Back of these leaders’ eye-trouble was a serious heart-trouble. Physician at hand, He could profit them nothing, for they neither realized their condition or need nor who He was. “Ye cannot discern the signs of the times.” Jesus must therefore weep over Jerusalem, because knowing not “the day of their visitation,”

they must suffer the indescribable consequences of the judgments of God falling upon them—as they did in 70 A.D.! “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets!” Though they had the word of prophecy made more sure unto them, they gave no heed thereto, and that day came upon them unawares! And could they have but known! Could they have but discerned the signs of the times!

The lack today

Beloved, there is the same lack of prophetic insight today. Heard on every hand: “Don’t ask me about the prophecies; I don’t understand them. Nobody does. What about the contradictory interpretations?” Don’t waste time on the prophecies, stick to the Gospel. And there is that same unbelief—“All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”

Brethren, there is a “day of visitation” ahead, a day when the judgments of God will fall upon this world in such retribution as has never been known. “As a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth.” “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” “Wherefore exhort one another . . .” Of all men who should “cry aloud, and spare not;” of all who should as watchmen on the wall give warnings and exhort to “supplications that ye may prevail to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of man”—who should it be but they who profess to speak where the Scriptures speak? For the Scriptures have spoken on these things. And in view of the present distress, the falling away, the boastful lawlessness, the moral degeneracy, the God-defying blasphemy, who can say that that day is not due? Trembling lays hold upon one who contemplates what it would mean to vast numbers of members of churches of Christ should “these things” begin to come to pass in this generation! “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The prophets would give vision, but the people have been led by their guides to believe that the prophecies are sealed. Alas! Many are without the vision!

Beware

Beware of false prophets, to be sure. Beware of false interpretations. Beware of guesses and speculations, of fanciful theories; amen, amen! But beware also of any attitude discouraging interest or faith in what the prophets have spoken, or taking heed “as unto a lamp shining in a dark place.” What if we have failed to enter into that light ourselves, and those who are entering or seeking to enter we hinder?!! Who would, in God’s presence, want to face the fact of having tried to laugh the whole thing out of court—this matter of discerning the signs of the times? Who will stand justified for reasoning from premises of abuse to conclusions of non-use? And who, upon the Great Physician’s diagnosis, would enjoy having it pointed out that his blindness to vision was due to the condition of his heart? God forbid it.

Stanford Chambers was a school teacher and Bible scholar for many years before his death in 1969.

Carl Kitzmiller is minister at the Piedmont Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas.

Questions Asked Of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Tax evasion is wrong, but is it wrong to avoid taxes legally?

The Christian is required to be subject to his government and its officers (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-16), except in the obvious cases of conscience and conflicts with one's higher obedience to God (Acts 5:29). In His admonition to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Luke 20:25), Jesus seems to have quite clearly put His approval on the payment of taxes even when we might not approve of every use for which the funds will be spent. As the question states, tax evasion, by which we mean all *illegal* efforts to avoid payment of taxes, is wrong. The Christian should never be guilty of tax evasion, not only because his return might be audited ("because of the wrath," Romans 3:5), but even if he could know his evasion would never be discovered by man ("for conscience' sake," Romans 13:5). I am sometimes surprised at the calloused lack of conscience some professing Christians seem to have with respect to reporting earnings and in engaging in other dishonest and plainly illegal practices in tax matters.

Our question deals, however, with the use of certain legal ways to avoid or reduce taxes. So long as these ways are not of themselves morally and spiritually objectionable, I can see no reason why the Christian should not avail himself of them. This is simply a matter of practical wisdom. It is true, of course, in a wide variety of areas that all that is legal is not necessarily morally or spiritually acceptable. I doubt that we will be able to give a blanket endorsement of every legal practice even in tax matters. Each case will have to stand in its own merits. I would have considerable reservations about the righteousness of some of the intricate manipulations which require a sharp lawyer and leave a man of wealth virtually free of tax. Or, again, pressure on an assessor to reduce a property assessment might not cross legal bounds but could be selfish and unchristian. However, to claim one's deductions, to adjust one's situation to get the allowed tax breaks, or to make the laws work in one's favor do not normally or necessarily mean wrong-doing.

Making a year-end contribution to the church that will move one to a lower income tax bracket and make the gift cost virtually nothing may not be the highest or most sacrificial form of giving, but it is not dishonest. It can often be good stewardship. I knew a good

Christian woman who would not report her church contributions, believing she should not give that which cost her less than its full value (something of the principle of 2 Samuel 24:24, I suppose). I respected her conscience in the matter but wish she could have understood that she could have given the full sum, then by reporting it would have had a tax-saving which could have been given extra to Christian work in which she was interested. Again, this would have been good stewardship.

Ideally, our government wants us to pay only the taxes that are legally due and will help us to that end. In practice, some of the representatives of government may not be as concerned with our welfare and may act more as adversaries. Unfortunately there may also be honest disagreement on interpretation and application of the laws, so that legality in some areas may be indefinite. As a rule, however, the Christian is to go the extra mile, give good measure and more than is required, and avoid the very appearance of evil.

I don't hear much said anymore about being non-sectarian. Some of the older preachers stressed this point a great deal. Is it not just as important today?

Just as important, yes, but maybe more difficult to recognize.

One problem is disillusionment with the success of the advocates of the non-sectarian position. In too many cases the "non-sectarian" has ended up with a party all his own. It may lack formal organization and a written creed, but it is really not much different from what he opposes. In many cases the preaching has been far better than the heart attitude and the practice. The ideal is hard to achieve. The Bible still condemns the sectarian party spirit, but we do not get rid of it by declaring that our party is not a party.

Personally I believe the ideal should be pursued, and I find much in the past efforts of the Restoration movement that must be commended. One great failing has been the attempt to get rid of sectarianism—a mark or symptom of carnality (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)—without seeking the spirituality that would give the effort meaning and success. There are many things which are right about the non-sectarian plea, and, in the power of God, we need to press on always to the ideal.

We also need to recognize that the religious situation we face today is not quite identical with that faced by the church of the last century. Many people in our age are probably not as sectarian in spirit as may have been the case in an earlier day. Those who belong to an openly avowed denomination do not seem to offer the same rabid defense for their party as was once the case. The defenses offered for the various denominations are generally not very loud today. Partly this is due, not to greater spirituality, but to a great lack of conviction. Unbelief is eating the heart out of commitment to anything but self. And, of course, part of the declining stress on sectarianism is due to the fact that ecumenism has become a strong current of the day. The kind of ecumenism cur-

rently promoted, however, possesses a weakness all its own in that it pursues unity (or, more accurately, union) at the expense of truth. Hence, it seems to solve sectarianism, but only to create a more serious problem.

Another change in our day is the failure of old party lines caused by new and different issues. We are seeing a probable realignment of professing Christians along new lines created by liberalism, social activism, the charismatic movement, etc. These issues have cut across the old party lines and tend to make them less binding. We do not say the party spirit is absent by any means, but things are in a state of change. They may crystallize as firmly as the old denominational lines, but some are now undecided about what to fight for or whose party to support.

Those who would be "just Christians" will find the devil trying to defeat their efforts in several possible ways, but it is a mistake to surrender the ideal just because it is difficult to achieve.

I have the problem that although I want to do what is right I am often uncertain as to what is right to do. Many issues and activities are neither wholly good or bad, and the right cause is not always evident. How can I know what I ought to do?

Let's assume that your self-evaluation is correct, that you do indeed really want always to do what is right, and that your problem is lack of knowledge and not a lack of desire. I'm sure many Christians really do feel this way. We have truly repented of sin, and we would like to live our life without sinning. This is not to say that there's never a conflict with the flesh, or that temptation is not enticing, or that we are always successful in doing even the right we know. But in the inner man there is the deep desire to please the Lord and to do only what is right. Of course, this is as it ought to be.

Unfortunately it does not seem that all professing Christians really have this desire. They have repented of some sins but not of *sin*. They don't want to commit vicious criminal acts, but they do not have much hesitation about what they might call "little" sins. They do not have a very strong hatred of sin, and they have a ready excuse for it. Needless to say, without this desire to do right always we cannot live victorious lives. Satan will have too many victories even when we take a stand in our hearts against all sin.

Sometimes issues are complex. Advocates of almost every cause argue the virtues of their cause and appeal to Christians for support. It would be humorous were not such serious matters involved to examine how professing Christians line up on political and social issues of the day. The answer that gets a majority of religious support is not always the Christian answer. Evil men have always tried to make merchandise of religion to use it for their own purposes, and that is still taking place today. Fads of thought come and go, and succeeding generations wonder how their fathers could have ever considered their answers as right and Christian. I do not profess to have the wisdom nor the ability in this short answer to "solve" all these complex issues. The

best we can do is to try to understand the issue, to immerse ourselves in the word of God, and by prayer to seek the wisdom and guidance of the Lord.

We lose the battle sometimes because of ignorance of the Word. It is not enough to want to do right but neglect the instruction of the Word and substitute feelings, vague impressions, etc. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11), declared the Psalmist. The word is able to furnish us completely for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Surely then, a deep understanding of the word of God applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-16) and a humble, prayerful attitude of teachableness will go a long way toward solving the problem you mention. Good Christians do disagree on many things in the Bible, but I've noticed that those who really respect and love the word and allow it to rule generally are not as far apart in right and wrong as it sometimes seems.

Perhaps the Lord allows us to be confronted with complex issues and those times when light seems to be lacking so as to show us the degree of our desire for understanding and to teach us reliance on Him.

7110 Bruton Road, Dallas, Texas 75217

Can God indeed provide?

An Axle in the Wilderness

Fred Hill — Sumatra

"What is that red light on for?" I struggled to answer out of a fitful midnight sleep in the bouncing car. "Just the generator." We stopped to make repairs and worked till 3:00 a.m.! But that wasn't the first time the eight of us had car trouble on this evangelistic tour. The universal joints fell to pieces an hour after the journey began. Little did we expect we would reach our first destination in 38 hours! It was only 270 miles away.

And there was more fixing as we went from one town to the next. We worked on the generator again, put in a new armature and new voltage regulator, repaired a broken spring and did a bit of welding. But with all that behind us we were not prepared for our big adventure—a broken axle! We were in the middle of nowhere and needed a part found only in the big city. But who said the Lord could not provide an axle in the wilderness as well as a "table"? (Psalm 78:19).

Was it coincidence that the next car to come lumbering up the mountain range was the same model Landrover as ours? Was it by chance that the driver had a spare short rear axle? Or that he would lend it to total strangers? Surely it was the Lord's faithfulness, and we praised Him!

—In *Worldwide Thrust*



God Is

N. B. Wright

God in His Word never argues for His existence. Yet He speaks. And men hear. Numbers, even great numbers of people, are in doubt, fear, confusion. Some of them sell themselves to do evil; other trust to luck until hell catches them.

It is a true observation that often a promise offered to those who accept His overtures of mercy contains, in the same context, a pronouncement of judgment to the hard of heart. God today as always uses His Word to separate the men of faith from the playboys of the dark regions.

It may be that the same treatise used to warn the wicked will also be used to bring great comfort and direction to the weary, suffering saint.

GOD IS LIVING

We concur with a certain editor-in-chief that a Christian magazine should not give undue advertisement to the atheistic error called: God is dead. It seems strange to us that a would-be-theologian should advertise the fact world-wide that he does not know the true God.

We think that a lot of preachers, on the other hand, have rushed into their pulpits to give text after text in an effort to prove that our God is the living God. Well and good—maybe. Good, if they did not “beg the issue.”

The fact is, the gods of the theologians (mentioned above) are not dead—they just never lived. Be it any one of the Roman or Greek pantheon of gods, they existed only in the superstitious fables of human mythology, as Jupiter or Zeus. Ask any one who ever made a notebook on the poet John Milton. Some others, as Buddha, lived as men and were gone forever.

Who is the living God? Some believers may be surprised; many worldlings may be astonished; others made angry. But the truth remains just the same. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the one and only living God Who ever was, is, or will be. Yes, Jehovah, the God of the Jews. Amen!

Believers who are instructed properly rejoice in the fact; unbelievers one day must reckon with the God of the Jews. If any of

them be anti-Semitic it means that their condition makes them all the more ripe for judgment. I call upon all who may be thus tinted to repent and do obedience to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

GOD IS HIDING

“Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself.” So said the prophet Isaiah in 45:15. The blasphemer raises his dirty hand to heaven and says: “If there is a God let Him strike me down.” It possibly could be that He is too busy to be the “office boy” of every smart-aleck that comes along; and too busy to pay attention to flea bites. Yet He is never too occupied to hear the faint cry for help from any sincere soul.

How then does any one come to know Him—since He is hiding? It seems, with very few possible exceptions in cases of utmost sincerity, God refuses to be discovered. But He delights to reveal Himself. God must be sought: “For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found” (Psalm 32:6).

Sinners come to a very fatal conclusion. Because He is hiding their thought is: “He hideth his face; he will never see it” (Psalm 10:11). What saith the answer? Here it is: Thou hast seen it. He is far from being inactive. Therefore, “Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7).

GOD IS LOOKING

You have heard of the one-way glass; you can look out, the other person cannot look back at you. Although God is hiding, He is looking. And He sees plenty!

One of my former auto mechanics had a sign with an eye upon it over his tool cabinet; it read, “Big Brother is watching you.” We shall see that God really sees the acts and understands the motives of wicked persons. All such men will be called upon to give account (believers, too, but in a different way).

“His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men” (Psalm 11:4). Again: “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God” (Psalm 53:2). Once more: “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

GOD IS WAITING

Yes, God is waiting for you. He is waiting for the prodigal to leave the hog field and come home to Himself. The actual return

was a time of rejoicing in the Father's house. He is waiting for you to accept His invitation. Really, if He had not invited, we would have no place to go. If Christ were not the way, there would be no road back. Were it not for His power (but the decision is yours), there would be no means to find the road or to persevere.

He is waiting for the beloved to come to a more dedicated walk—a crucified life. Having begun in the Spirit, you can be perfected in no other way.

GOD IS SAVING

Our blessed Lord is the Savior of all men; especially of those who believe. He makes His offer to all and effects His salvation to those who believe.

And here is the answer to the atheistic theologian: To know the living God in personal experience. The apostle said: "I know him whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12). John said: "We know and have believed . . ." (1 John 4:16). And Peter: "And we have believed and know . . ." (John 6:69).

GOD IS ABIDING HIS TIME

Of the wicked He says: "The Lord will laugh at him: For he seeth that his day is coming" (Psalm 37:13).

He shall not hide forever. There will come a day when He shall roll back the heavens so that sinners will see Him in glory and themselves go into hiding in the caves and the rocks of the mountains. (Revelation 6:14-17; Matthew 26:64.)

In the Great Tribulation He manifests Himself more and more by the awful judgments of that time. When sin has come to the full and sinners to full bloom as stinkweeds, He comes visibly to require the life of every unrepentant sinner alive. Revelation 1:7; Isaiah 63; Habakkuk 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

CONCLUSION

As a member of the human race, the race having been created by God, you can say: "I am" and know yourself in distinction from all other creation. You can also say "I am" and "God is." No mere animal has such powers. The conclusion is: "God is" therefore "I am." Then one begins to wonder: What will "God" and "I" do about it? The Father has already expressed Himself in such words as these: Repent or perish; believe and be saved. He has made gracious provisions for the acceptance with Himself in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One has aptly said: God has voted "Yes" for your salvation; the devil has voted "No;" now your vote breaks the tie.

Say, just what is your vote, anyway?

—In *The Deep Blue Yonder*

Alex Wilson is a missionary to the Philippines.



Ready, or Not?

Alex V. Wilson

Several months ago we mentioned that Bible-believing Christians disagree over whether or not the church will be on earth when the Beast persecutes God's people—the period called the “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21; from now on the abbreviation “trib.” will be used for this period). Because many Christians have only rarely, if ever, heard the view that the church may go through the trib., it may seem strange or even “liberal” to them. The view probably brings questions to their minds, and disappointment or even fear to their emotions. For this very reason, we need to examine the question thoroughly and with open minds. Brother Boll wrote that if there is any doctrine or any Bible passage which we fear to investigate, then that may be the very doctrine or passage we need. Naturally, the important thing is not “Which view do I prefer.” What matters is not what we *hope* the Bible says, but what it *really* says. With this in mind, let's examine some questions often raised about the possibility that the church may go through the trib.

“Christ Couldn't Come Today”

“If the church will go through the trib., then obviously Christ cannot come today. The *rapture* (or catching-up of Christians to meet Him in the air, 1 Thessalonians 4) could not take place until after the Beast comes and persecutes the church. But that puts certain events between us and the rapture, which is unbiblical.” So runs the most common objection to the “mid-trib.” or post-trib.” views.

But consider. Is there any clear statement in Scripture that the rapture may occur at any moment? *Could* the rapture have taken place at any time, on any day, since Christ ascended to heaven? Were there not certain events between the early disciples and the rapture? Yes, there were. Christ taught that certain “things must needs come to pass” before the end: false Christs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecutions, and world-wide evangelization (Matthew 24:5-14). He taught that the temple would be destroyed, the Jews led captive among the nations, and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles (Luke 21:5, 6, 24); those events did not occur till 70 A. D. Something else definitely had to happen before the rapture. Peter had to get old and die! Jesus had told him, “When you were young, you walked where you would; but when you are old, another will

carry you where you do not wish to go.” This referred to Peter’s death (John 21:18, 19). In line with this, Peter expected to die: “I know that the putting off of my tabernacle (body) will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me” (2 Peter 1:14). Therefore the rapture could not occur at any time, on any day, during the first decades of the church. Christ would not come for His people until after Peter died, which happened during the 60’s A.D. Thus it was not unbiblical in those days to put certain events between their time and the rapture. (Are we sure it is unbiblical now?) This does not mean the early disciples therefore thought Christ’s return would be long delayed. A rumor spread that the apostle John would be alive when Christ came (John 21:20-23). The rumor was unfounded, but it reveals that the early church believed Christ might return in their generation. So apparently it was possible to be expectant and eager for His return even while realizing it would not occur at any day but that certain events would precede it. Peter’s writings reveal that the “revelation of Jesus Christ” was a thrilling hope and challenging incentive to him, even though he knew *he* would die first (1 Peter 1:5-7, 13; 4:7, 13; 5:4; etc.).^o

“Watch”

Another objection is this: “We are told to watch. We can watch for His coming only if no other predicted event comes before it, needing to be fulfilled. If we are to watch for it, it must precede the trib. Otherwise we would not watch for it but for the trib. which comes first.”

This seems reasonable but actually it is based on a misunderstanding of the word “watch.” In the New Testament four different Greek words are translated by the English word “watch.” Two of them mean gazing at or fixing one’s attention upon some object (*e.g.*, the Pharisees watched Jesus to see if He would perform a miracle on the Sabbath, Mark 3:2), but these two words are never used regarding Christ’s return. The two verbs used to urge watchfulness because of His coming both mean “to be awake, sleepless, and/or vigilant.”

The true meaning of the command to watch is not to watch for Christ’s return. Scripture does not use this language. **Nowhere** are we told to watch for the coming of Christ. We are exhorted, rather, in view of the uncertainty of the time of the end, to watch. “Watching” does not mean “looking for” the event; it means spiritual and moral “wakefulness.” (Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 115)

In other words, “Don’t get spiritually sleepy, careless, and negligent;

^oEven most pre-trib. teachers, who emphasize the any-day possibility of the rapture, believe that the rapture immediately precedes Daniel’s 70th week. But the 70th week could not begin until Israel was restored to Palestine as a nation. That is, it would have been impossible for the 70th week (and thus the immediately-preceding rapture) to take place during the 2nd-19th centuries or even the early 1900s when the Turks ruled Palestine and the Jews were scattered worldwide with no national government. Thus the “any-moment” rapture seemingly is not supported even by the usual pre-trib. teaching. Certain events would precede the rapture.

keep awake and alert, doing your duty." Why? Because our Master shall return, and we shall give an account to Him.

The admonitions to watch given in Matthew 24 are related (in context) to His coming *after* the trib., for that is the only coming mentioned in that chapter (vv. 29-31). Titus 2:13 says we Christians are looking—not for a secret, any-moment rapture, but rather “for the *appearing of the glory* of Jesus Christ,” and all Bible students agree that that event takes place at the end of the trib. when He will defeat the Beast and every eye shall see Him (Revelation 19:11ff; 1:7). Luke 12:36 says, “Be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their Lord.”

The use of the word “looking for” does not carry with it the necessary idea of an any-moment event, although it does connote a complex of events which might begin at any time. We may discover the meaning of the word from its uses elsewhere. Simeon was “looking for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). Joseph of Arimathea was “looking for the kingdom of God” (Luke 23:51). Both of these pious Jews were living in constant expectation of a complex of events which would include the appearing of Messiah, the over-throw of the enemies of God, and the inauguration of the kingdom of God (**Blessed Hope**, 116)

Thus Christians can be watching and waiting for Christ, expectant and eager for Him, even if they believe the Bible teaches that certain events will take place before His coming for the church.

“It Destroys Our Hope”

Some folks say, “If the church will go through the trib., that destroys our hope. It removes all the joy from Christ’s return. It would replace our desire for His coming with a dread, because of the persecution which will precede it.”

Brother Boll aptly defined hope as *desire plus expectation*. No one *desires* tribulation, of course. But—as Brother Linscott pointed out years ago—the Bible says our hope is Christ Himself (1 Timothy 1:1), rather than escape from hardship. Do we desire *Him*? Also, Paul reminds us that “when Christ appears, then you also will appear with him in *glory*,” and “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Colossians 3:4; Romans 8:18). Look beyond the sufferings to the glory, beyond the cross to the crown.

Hope includes expectation as well as desire. But does the object of the expectation have to be something that will materialize right away, with no time of waiting? No. In 1 Corinthians 16:10,11 Paul asks the believers to send Timothy to him, for “I am *expecting* him with the brethren.” Paul *hoped* for his arrival, but knew it would not occur for some days or weeks—the length of time required to travel from Corinth to Ephesus. 1 Corinthians 9:10 says, “He that plows ought to plow in *hope*,” but the hopeful plower still knows that the harvest will not be for several months. Thus to prove that the first Christians hoped for the Lord’s coming does not at all prove that they expected Him at any day.

There is in our Lord’s teachings a twofold emphasis: expectancy and perspective. He wished to leave every generation of His people in the position where they might feel that their generation might be the

last and yet unable to set dates. The reaction which this should create is seen in the Apostle Paul. Paul lived his entire life with an attitude of expectancy toward the return of Christ. He talks as though his generation would witness the end; yet he nowhere expressly affirms that the end will come in his lifetime. On the other hand, he has a long-range historical perspective. He sees the salvation of the Gentiles and then the final salvation of Israel (Romans 11). Paul lived as though Christ were coming back in his own generation; but he worked and planned as though the world would go on for a long time. This is the Biblical tension; and this is the attitude God would find in every generation. (Blessed Hope, 156)

"We Shall Not Face God's Wrath"

The objection is sometimes made, "We cannot go through the trib., for Scripture promises that we shall escape the wrath of God: Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:10."

Here we should distinguish between persecutions from *men*, and wrath from *God*. Everyone agrees that Christians will be delivered from the wrath of God, both the final judgment and the plagues poured out upon the Beast and his followers during the last days. But that does not mean we will necessarily escape the tribulation brought by the Beast against the saints. God did not deliver the church from the persecutions of the Roman emperors, the Roman popes, the Moslems, or the Marxists. There is no special reason why He must deliver from those of the Beast.

"But if God's outpoured wrath and the Beast's persecutions occur at the same time, how could we escape one and not the other?" The answer: Nobody knows *how* it could or might be, but we do know that some of God's people on earth at that time will be delivered from His wrath: "They (His agents of judgment) were told not to harm the grass. . . but only those of mankind who have *not* the seal of God on their foreheads" (Revelation 9:4). Just as the Israelites were in Egypt in Moses' day and yet spared from some of God's plagues upon the Egyptians, so in the trib. God will spare His people from His wrath (whether those people be the church or "tribulation-saints"). Revelation 3:10, "I will *keep you from* the hour of trial," does not require a rapture to heaven in order to be fulfilled. John 17:15 uses identical wording for Jesus' prayer: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest *keep them from* the evil one." We can be kept from Satan without being physically removed from this world. Similarly, Galatians 1:4 says Christ "gave himself to deliver us out of this present evil world" (or age). This cannot mean He removes us bodily from this world or age, but that He frees us from its power and control. In the same way, being kept from the hour of trial can mean preservation in the midst of the outpoured bowls of God's wrath. It does not necessitate physical removal from the scene.

1 Thessalonians 4 and 5

A final question: "Don't 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5 clearly distinguish between the rapture (4:13-18) and the Day of the Lord (5:2, 3)? Paul draws such a contrast between "ye" (the saved) and "they" (the lost), in 5:1-10. Doesn't that show that the rapture

precedes the Day of the Lord?"

Not necessarily. True, Paul differentiates between Christians, to whom Christ's return will bring comfort and completion of salvation, and the unrepentant, to whom will come inescapable destruction and wrath. But he nowhere says these different *results* of the advent will occur at two different *times*. If police capture a gang of kidnapers with their victims, the latter will rejoice and the gangsters will be terrified—all at the same time. Compare 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

The Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly to the unsaved (5:2, 3) but *not* unexpectedly to the redeemed (v. 4)—though they will not know the exact day and hour (Matthew 24:36). If the rapture precedes the Day of the Lord, would Paul have said that that day would not overtake Christians "as a thief"? Would he not say that that day would not overtake them *at all*, since they would already be raptured and in heaven? The distinction he draws is between people who are caught off guard, completely unawares, and other people who are waked-up sons of day and know what to expect, since God has revealed it to them beforehand.

Even the passage regarding the rapture, though it does not mention the time of its occurring, seems to fit in better with the post-trib. view: 1 Thessalonians 4:15 mentions the *coming* (Greek *parousia*) of the Lord.

The word "coming" (*parousia*) was something of a technical term in the 1st century. Primarily it meant "presence," and so "coming to be present." But it was especially used to describe an official visit by an emperor, king or governor. The *parousia* of the emperor was his presence in person in some part of the empire, and the manifestation of his sovereignty there. Of course he was emperor all along, but his "coming" made it manifest in a particular place. In such a way the New Testament looks forward to the coming of Christ. All He now is will be revealed. Already He is Lord, and we in the church worship Him. But at His coming, every eye shall see Him. (D.W.B. Robinson, *The Hope of Christ's Coming*)

Notice that *parousia* emphasizes the public demonstration of the king's glory, not his calling away of his citizens. Again, v. 17 says we shall *meet* the Lord in the air; in Greek "meet" is *apantesin*.

When a dignitary paid an official visit or *parousia* to a city in Hellenistic times, the action of the leading citizens in going out to meet him and escorting him on the final stage of his journey was called the *apantesis*. So the Lord is pictured as escorted to the earth by His people—those newly raised from death and those who have remained alive. (F. F. Bruce, *New Bible Commentary*)

It is also instructive that this word meaning "meet" is used only in two other places in the New Testament. Matthew 25:1, 6 tells of the virgins who went to meet the groom and then return with him to the feast; they did not go with him back to the place from which he had come. Acts 28:11-16 describes how brethren from Rome went to meet Paul and then accompanied him to Rome, from whence they had come. "Meet" thus would seem to indicate that when we

are caught up to Christ, we shall not then go off with Him to heaven but rather come back with Him in glory to earth.

Conclusion

If a Christian believes the Savior will come after the trib., but he is wrong and the rapture comes first, he will be surprised—and delighted! If another Christian believes the Savior will come before the trib., but he is wrong and persecution by the Beast comes first, he will be surprised—and terribly disappointed, upset, and possibly bitter. Let's continue to study, pray, and serve, prepared for whatever will come. Oswald Smith wisely advises,

You ask, Is the Church to go through the Tribulation? That is not the question. It is this: Is the Church ready? Are you ready, ready either for Tribulation or Rapture? If you are, that is all that matters. What difference does it make so long as you are ready? If you are to be in it, you cannot avoid it, and if you are to escape, you will not be in it.

A Fresh Wind in Europe

"Many are tired of the atheistic rationality and immorality of their society."

A fresh wind of revival is spreading across Europe. Throughout the British Isles and the Continent young people meet for Bible study groups, rap sessions and conferences. Many participate in door-to-door visitation, Christian coffee houses and Jesus music festivals. As a result, hundreds of European youths are turning to Christ.

Similar to the Jesus Movement in the U. S., this European spiritual awakening emphasizes a personal experience with Jesus Christ. For decades European young people have been repelled by the barren orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic and state churches. Many are tired of the atheistic rationalism and immorality of their society. Now thousands are examining the claims of Christ.

Last summer a contingent of British university students set out for the Olympics in an old double-decker bus decorated with Jesus slogans in various languages. All the way to Munich they spread the Good News. Arriving at the Olympics they spent many thrilling hours witnessing to Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians and others.

In Denmark 5,000 young Danish Christians plus a few Swedes staged a Saturday night witness march through Copenhagen's famous "walking street." It was part of the Long Day Jesus Festival that officially ended with a huge rally in front of the town hall. Later that night some of the Jesus demonstrators attempted to close down a sex club and two pornography shops.

British tradition was shattered this past fall when thousands of young Christians—both Catholic and Protestant—staged a London Festival for Jesus. Gospel pop concerts, teaching and training sessions and mass open-air worship involved over 65,000 people during the five-day period.

Even in riot-torn Northern Ireland hundreds of youths have been converted and additional hundreds of Christians have become more deeply committed, according to workers there.

Behind the Iron Curtain students are surprised to discover that Christianity is rational, said one university professor. The professor was led to Christ by a student, and now he regularly conducts Bible studies and discussions on apologetics. Many other small youth groups gather for Bible study in these countries, sometimes reading hand-copied editions of Christian books.

Perhaps the Jesus Movement is even gaining prominence in Russia. One visitor in Moscow was astonished to meet a group of young Russians strumming guitars and singing about Jesus on Red Square!

Truly new doors for the Gospel are being opened throughout Europe. The Catholic Church in some locales is actually encouraging evangelicals. One head priest at a university church in Austria asked a Campus Crusade folk group, the Forerunners, to sing in two masses. In Belgium a number of priests invited members of an Operation Mobilization team to give testimonies and even urged parish members to open their homes to the young workers.

While once-closed churches are more open to the Gospel, they are prime targets for groups spreading devious doctrinal errors. Mormonism and the Jehovah's Witnesses are also rapidly spreading among those who have never been taught Bible truths.

The origin of the revival can partially be accredited to God's work through visiting evangelists, dedicated missionaries and inter-denominational groups like Campus Crusade, the Navigators and overseas Missions. Also, widespread coverage of the American Jesus Movement in the press and television has created an openness to Christianity that did not exist before.

Through international media Europeans are made aware of miracles like Calvary Chapel in California. There young people—both hippie and straight—and adults fill the 1,000-seat auditorium to overflowing. They come for simple Bible study lasting one and one-half hours. Baptisms in the Pacific Ocean have included as many as 500 converts. Like their European peers these and other American youths are attracted to the new life that Jesus Christ offers.

But the true source of revival is not man's activity. In some places years before the international press publicized the United States Jesus Movement, Christ-centered youth ministries had spontaneously sprung up in Europe. Ivo Krieg, 23, a worker with young Christians in East Berlin, said that he met a large group of East German Jesus people who trace their movement to a tract found along an autobahn.

Surely the prime originator is the Holy Spirit seeking to fill empty, searching hearts. In Europe souls who have never heard the plain and simple Gospel are ripe for salvation. But they are also open to false doctrine and the cults. New doors are open to evangelicals. Let us pray and then go out and claim this opportunity for the Lord.

—In *Pioneer*

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Borrowing tools opened a door for salvation

We are so thankful for the prayers that have ascended on behalf of my wife, who has had a spell of arthritis for a month now. She is feeling much better.

Our attendances at regular services are still commendable, and already for 1973 we have had families opening up their homes for cottage meetings and probably film strip classes, too.

At the first two cottage meetings, the attendances have been wonderful and we are indeed looking forward to many surrendering their lives to Christ. At the opening of our Children's Bible School, for 1973 last Lord's Day, we had 3 additions; what a blessing!

Praise God in every way, the congregation here is endeavoring to reach the lost through the medium of cottage meetings in their areas as well. We know that Bro. Chrissop is missed tremendously, because of his present state of health, by Steenberg, Bokmakirrie, and Grassy Park. He has to be at home for 6 months.

Rejoice with us! A family who has been living near our church building at Woodstock for a few years have had their home and whole life made anew. It happened that one evening I went to the hall to do a bit of cleaning up, and took a boy that works in our flat to assist me. The broom handle broke off the broom, and I went to borrow a hammer and a plier from the husband of this family. Through this I was able to enter the home and discuss with the family; after the film strip lessons, they were convinced of the truth. The husband said, "I have been looking for the truth and for security far above this world. *Now I have found it!*" So it was that last Lord's Day morning, the 21st of January this family, a Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Wagner, were baptized into Christ. They have five children. May God bless our brother and sister as they step out into this new life. —*Thomas Hartle, Capetown, South Africa, January 24.*

Red tape complicates furlough arrangements

Nena Laguisan has been here in Manila the past few days. It's been good to renew fellowship with her, and hear and see slides of the Lord's work. She will continue working among the Ilongots in '73, but at another place. Her co-worker this time will be a Canadian lady, rather than the Filipino family she was with before. So now she'll be straddling three cultures: Canadian, Ilongot, and Filipino-lowland! Nena is a real gem, and we praise God for her.

Your prayers mean much to us during these months of hectic preparations and deadlines and harassing red tape. Pray especially

for decisions re: people and work during our absence here. The Lord is trying to teach me more about trusting and rejoicing in the midst of battle. I'm still in the first grade, but some day I'll be all the way like Him. Glory! —*Alex Wilson, Manila, Philippines, January 15.*

E. A. Rhodes returns to States

As you know, Brother E. A. Rhodes left Japan on the 15th of this month for the States. He came to Japan in 1919 and since then he has been a continuous blessing to us all. God used him mightily for His own glory.

This move was due to his son's transferring to the head office of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York from its military banking facilities in Japan. I believe he is now 87 years old, if I am correct. He needs our prayer as he is not too strong now. For a time being, we can reach him at his second son's home: Mr. Erroll F. Rhodes, 90 Riverside Avenue, Riverside, Connecticut 06878. Surely we all miss him very much and ask our Father to sustain his health.

Our work is slowly but steadily progressing for His glory. Among our materially minded people, preaching the Word seems almost an impossibility at times, but we know He is strong and He will win victory in spite of our short comings. Your December issue of the WW was a blessing, especially the precious reprint of F. M. Mullins, and I want to thank you for it. He was a great man, indeed. —*Motoyuki Nomura, Tokyo, Japan, February 19.*

A Bible Hall for Athens

You know we serve the Lord by faith. We trust Him for everything. God supplies thus far what we need to pay for His work.

Now we are planning to raise the necessary funds to purchase the Bible Hall. The total amount needed is \$60,000. But we can start purchasing one piece at a time. The first piece is worth \$15,000. We are praying for it. If the Lord's will is to buy it, He will provide the money. —*George Galanis, Athens, Greece, January 16.*

One new Christian reaches 11 others

Leonard made a trip recently in answer to a letter he received from a young man they met on their long trip in September. He and Velaphie went out and found he had taught nine people including his wife the way of Truth. While they were there two more decided to follow Jesus so they witnessed the baptism of 11 souls. This man has not been a Christian long himself. He began studying a denominational correspondence course and was also receiving Rays of Light, which Brother Short publishes. From it he learned the Truth and we pray he may continue to be faithful and active. —*Mabel Bailey, Bulawayo, Rhodesia, December 27.*

Terrorism on the Zambian border

Terrorist activities continue in this part of Africa and the border between Zambia and Rhodesia was closed last week. That is far enough away that there is very little danger to us, but one never knows what will happen next. We would like to drive our car

to Malawi as soon as we can be relieved of our responsibilities in this home. But unless things improve a great deal it is too dangerous to make the trip on account of land mines. We can fly, the Lord willing, as it is comparatively safe yet. So far we have only had one hijacking in this immediate area.

There are more opportunities for teaching the word of God than we are able to get to. On January 25th I have been invited to speak at the "Preachers' Workshop," held in Sinioa street. One of the African brethren spoke to me this week about teaching in a leadership meeting during the Easter holiday. Last year I spoke to more than 500 at Harari on Easter Sunday. But this meeting that they are planning may be restricted to men to make it more convenient for us to teach what they need. During the rainy season, which is in progress now, it is not so convenient to hold meetings for the African brethren as they usually sleep outside. The rain did not seem to dampen their spirits last year, but we hope for a more favorable time this year. The interest of the African Christians in teaching and in learning is unusual and one cannot help but be stimulated by it. Some of the Africans have a good education and can learn rapidly. —J. M. Forcade, Salisbury, Rhodesia, January 4.

Problems, Possibilities, and Pointers

There are well over a 1,000 readers of the Word & Work. The resources of such a crowd are fantastic. The combined effort of such experience and wisdom could prove invaluable. Such is the purpose of the column.

"Let's put it all together!" Note the problems listed. Have you ever dealt with something similar? Do you have a thought that could help? Jot down your idea and put it in the hat with the others. This provides a source for consideration.

I. PROBLEMS

A. *Last Month's Problem*— "How can I improve this situation? My Sunday School class, (about 40 adults) meets in the auditorium. When the students begin coming into class they sit down in the rear and fill the pews from the rear forward. To worsen the matter others will even sit on the other side of the aisle. Many of these are late-comers. What would you do with this situation?"

B. *This Month's Problems*—

1. Very few of my Sunday school class members prepare for the class. We use a quarterly and the Bible together for our material. Only 3 persons are prepared with any degree of regularity. My class has 25 or more young married people in it. I have tried "preaching" to the class of the need with no results. Have you some suggestions or methods that have worked for you? (BR)

2. I feel the need for daily Bible reading in my own life! Likewise, I am sure that each member of the Lord's body needs such daily sustenance. The members of our congregation take such too lightly. In addition to fervent prayer and public ex-

hortation regarding the matter, what has been done in other congregations to improve the study of God's Word on a daily basis? (an elder) /

II. POSSIBILITIES

A. *Last Month's Problem*—

1. As the teacher, you move to the rear in one corner or the other with the class. They won't move to you. Go back to them and allow only about 5 or 6 pews for them to sit on.

2. Always start promptly!

3. One teacher was having a similar problem with early-comers rather than late-comers. Many early-comers to the worship hour straggled into class thus disturbing it often during the last 15 minutes or so. What was done? He shut the doors and the early-comers waited.

4. Tactfully and lovingly reprimand the late-comers. Have you ever told the late-comers or the class as a whole what you would like of them. For instance— "Beginning next Sunday we will all meet in the rear of the auditorium and sit on the right side. Please do not sit across the aisle. Make every effort to be prompt. Although, tardiness is understood once in awhile, habitually it shows gross manners and lack of concern. Let's cooperate together and make our class as efficient and fine as possible." (EH)

III. POINTERS

A. *The Church Bulletin*— "Recently a fellow preacher saw a little idea of mine that he thought should be passed on to the other brethren, especially those who have anything to do with bulletin publishing. One of the most obnoxious things about working with duplicating machines is the messiness of ink handling. The use of an ordinary mustard or ketchup plastic dispenser greatly reduces this messiness." (copied)

B. *Prepare for Worship*— The short period between Bible study and worship service in our congregations can become a time of confusion if not controlled in some manner. One suggestion is to make Bible School announcements about ten minutes before the worship is to begin.

Give the total Bible school attendance, announce 100% classes or classes who have reached their goals. An additional idea involves having various classes take turns from week to week in singing a song, or reciting Bible passages. Remind the audience that the worship service is to begin in a few minutes.

"The first song will be number ---. Please turn to this number and meditate upon the thought of the song in preparing our hearts for worship." (Jule Miller)

Thank you again for your response. Please send your ideas in this month and make them available to all of us. Your correspondence should be addressed to:

Michael T. Sanders
2107 Buechel Bank Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40218

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Back about Thanksgiving, I attended a weekend meeting in East Texas at Pine Cove retreat. The topic was "Christian Living in the Last Days," as taken from the book of Malachi. The two speakers were Bill McRae and Dr. Ed Blum, the latter a professor at Dallas Seminary. These four messages were outstanding. They will be carried here in the order of their presentation. —Ed.

Malachi: Christian Living in the Last Days

Bill McRae

The book of Malachi portrays the last days of the Old Testament dispensation and the condition of the people in those last days. A prophet appeared in the midst of those last day conditions and he calls upon the children of God to do certain things. As we look at the book of Malachi we are going to see something of an analogy to our condition, because as Malachi represents the last days of the Old Testament era, so you and I—from every indication—are living in the last days of this dispensation.

First of all I would like to give you some introduction to the book of Malachi. For seventy years the children of Israel had been in captivity in Babylon, and it is in those seventy years that the book of Daniel is unfolded. Now the seventy years have come to a conclusion and in the year 536 B.C. Zerubbabel leads an expedition back to Jerusalem. Their purpose is to rebuild the temple. The story is told in the book of Ezra, chapters one through four. The temple is begun, but it isn't very long until the people of God become very despondent, very discouraged, because of opposition from without and some dissension within. The building of the temple is stopped, there is a temporary lay off, and the hammer and chisel are laid down. It is at that time that two prophets appear upon the scene by the names of Haggai and Zechariah.

Their ministry is to urge the people of God to complete the rebuilding of the temple, and they do it with some very outstanding promises and some very strong exhortations. As a result of their ministry the rebuilding of the temple is completed, and that brings us to the year 516; that account is given to us in Ezra, chapters five and six.

Now after the temple is completed, some thirty-three years later, there comes the very familiar story of Esther. She has not returned to Jerusalem; she has remained in the land of captivity; she is back in Persia. The story of Esther fits in chronologically between chapters six and seven of the book of Ezra. Now twenty-five years after the beginning of the story of Esther there comes a second expedition

returning from the land of captivity to the city of Jerusalem. This is led by Ezra. The story is told in Ezra chapters seven through ten. And Ezra, because of his spiritual leadership, is involved in calling the people of God back to the law, and a spiritual reformation takes place. That brings us to the year 458.

Shortly after Ezra there comes the third expedition back from captivity, and this is led by Nehemiah. It is in the year 444 B.C. that Nehemiah returns from the Persian kingdom to the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah's first term as governor in Jerusalem is terminated, a twelve-year term: He returns to Persia and shortly will return to Jerusalem to begin his second term as governor. It is after Nehemiah leaves Jerusalem, concluding his first term of office as governor, and returns to Persia—in that short interval—that Malachi appears upon the scene.

The appearing of Malachi is about the year 433 B.C. It is after the twelve-year term of Nehemiah which began in 444 B.C. The reason for dating this we will give very simply. One of the most obvious reasons is that Malachi calls upon the people of God to respond to the law, and that presupposes the ministry of Ezra. That is one of the major reasons why we put Malachi at this time. The other good possibility is just before Ezra.

Malachi appears in the last days of the Old Testament. He is the last prophet of God, he is the last word from God through a man until John the Baptist appears upon the scene. When Malachi's voice is silenced, heaven will be shut for four hundred years, and there will not be another word from God. Malachi is the last prophet of God in the Old Testament era. He appears in the last days of that era, and we are saying that there is a close analogy between Malachi and our situation. What he encountered is going to give us many common denominators for what we are encountering in our present day.

So having put Malachi at that dating, the second thing that we would want to note is its author. If you look at Malachi 1:1, you will note that it reads, "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi." Now the word Malachi means "my messenger." The Hebrew word for messenger is *malach*, and the "i" at the end of it is the personal pronoun, my.

The name is very significant for through the book we are going to come upon a number of messengers. In 2:7, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." This is the first sequence of a series of messengers. The priests were ordained to be the messengers of God, but we will note that the priesthood in this book is so decayed, so unspiritual, that the priesthood no longer functions as the messengers of God. And so a messenger is raised

up by God. His name is Malachi, "my messenger." In the midst of all the decay of the messengers in the priesthood that were so unspiritual that they were not functioning as His messengers, the messenger, my messenger appears upon the scene. In 3:1, "Behold, I will seek my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple." This is a prophecy of John the Baptist that we will study, and John the Baptist is going to become "My messenger." He is going to be the last in the prophetic line. And he is going to appear as the messenger of God, preparing the way for the coming of the Lord. The last of the same verse, "even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

So in the book of Malachi there are four messengers. There is the priesthood that has ceased to function as messengers from God. God has raised up Malachi as my messenger. There is going to come the greatest of all those Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist; and he is going to be my messenger who will prepare the way of the Lord. Then when the Lord comes He is going to become the messenger of the covenant. So the name of the book is rather significant and it fits in perfectly with the development of the book as we are going to notice.

As Malachi appears upon the scene he has a very specific purpose. His purpose essentially is to call the people of God to repentance. I think you will note from the word that is used at the beginning of Malachi that there is a certain emphasis in this book Notice the second word. It says, "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi." Now that word "burden" is a very significant word. It comes from the Hebrew word which means to carry or to bear or to lift. And when it is used in the Old Testament it is always an introduction to a very burdensome, toilsome message. It introduces a message of judgment. You find this through Isaiah and through many of the prophets, "the burden of the Lord against Edom," "the burden of the Lord against Babylon." It is the sentence of God. So that word that is used at the beginning of Malachi is a clue concerning the whole nature of the book.

The children of Israel had returned from captivity, they have been in the land now for a hundred years, but they are still under the bondage of other people. Their temple is in disarray spiritually; they are spiritually indifferent. There is a cold formalism about their spiritual life. There is an externalism that is really the budding or the seed that is going to come to full bloom in the Pharisees in the days of the New Testament. And now Malachi appears upon the scene to call Israel to repentance—to turn from their indifference and their externalism to a real heart relationship with God. The burden aspect of the book is, if you do not, the judgment of God will fall upon you. Malachi is a solemn book as well as a book of

real hope as he lifts his voice as a messenger of God, appealing to them to repent from their spiritual indifference. As he does that he has the most peculiar style of nay of the prophets in the Old

**“His style really revolves
around three words”**

Testament. He has a most unusual way of approaching his message to the people. Freeman, who is a scholar in the Old Testament and on the prophets has suggested that his style really revolves around three words; first of all he begins with an *affirmation*, then there is an *interrogation* and then there is a *refutation*. The style is simply this—the prophet makes a statement; there is the affirmation. Then the people of Israel question that. They interrogate Malachi; they ask a question, and that question is almost always introduced by the words, “and ye say.” In response to their question, God unleashes a withering refutation so that they are completely speechless before God in the light of the charge that He has raised against them.

There are eight occasions through the book where that style develops. Turn now to Malachi, 1:1,2. “I have loved you, saith the Lord.” This is the first affirmation. “Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us?” That is the interrogation. “You love us, Lord? Come on, get off that stuff. Wherein have you loved us?” And then comes the refutation on through verse 5.

Now the second one begins in verse 6. “A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I am a father, where is mine honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.” There is the affirmation. “And ye say, wherein have we despised thy name?” And then comes the refutation, “You offer polluted bread upon my altar.” And there is the second sequence. Now that refutation raises another question, and so the third one comes. Here is the affirmation, “You offer polluted bread on my altar.” The interrogation, “Wherein have we polluted thee?” “Give us a little evidence, what do you mean we have polluted your name?” is the response from the children of Israel. And then comes the withering refutation from the prophet in those next few verses. Now the next one which will be number four brings us to 2:14. In verses ten through thirteen the affirmation is made and they are accused of a variety of things. In verse fourteen, “Yet ye say, Wherefore?” “What do you mean? Give us the evidence; we doubt that.” They interrogate him. And then comes the refutation. “Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.”

In verse 17 we come to the fifth one. “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, wherein have we wearied him?” The

refutation, "In that ye say, every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah and he delighteth in them or where is the God of justice?" In 3:7 is the sixth one. "From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you saith the Lord of hosts. But ye say, wherein shall we return?" And the refutation follows. That refutation gives rise to another series; verse 8 is the seventh one. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee?" And the withering refutation comes in the following verses.

Now you can see the style that the prophet is going to use. He is the messenger of God, called upon to call the people of God to repent from their indifference, their shallowness and externalism, their formalistic way of life. As he does so he makes the charges which they challenge. What does he mean by that? Then the prophet comes on with his proof and the evidence and that is the whole style that you will follow as you come through the book of Malachi.

Malachi divides basically into two major sections, chapters one and two, and chapters three and four. In chapters one and two the prophet appeals to the people of God to repent in view of the Lord's past love for them. The love of the Lord is developed in the first five verses of chapter one, the appeal follows from verse 6 through chapter two. He appeals first of all to the priests; then he appeals to the people. The second major part of Malachi is another appeal, but this time is based upon the future day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is coming, says the prophet. In view of the day of the Lord, repent, turn from your sin and your indifference and have that vital relationship with God.

**"Malachi develops around
two major themes: God loves
you, therefore repent."**

Malachi develops around two major themes: God loves you, therefore repent. Malachi's appeal in the first two chapters is in view of the fact that God loved them in the past.

God speaks to Israel through His last prophet in the Old Testament, and the first thing that He says is, "I have loved you." The love is declared. Now of course comes the interrogation, "Wherein hast thou loved us?" So they are doubting God's love. Now the reason they were doubting God's love is obvious. They have been back in the land for a hundred years and they are still under the bondage, under the yoke of heathen powers that are round about them. God loves us? What are you trying to tell us, Malachi? They doubted God's love also because there was a time of great economic stress in the kingdom. They were in a time of great

destitution and poverty. There was famine in the land; they were starving to death. And they turn to Malachi and say, "God loves us?" And perhaps the main reason why they doubted the love of God was because Haggai and Zechariah had urged them to rebuild the temple because the Messiah couldn't come until the temple had been rebuilt. That was the great message of Haggai, it was the great motivation of Zechariah. You must rebuild the temple because the Lord when He comes will come to the temple, and He will not come until the temple is rebuilt. With great motivation they had completed the rebuilding of the temple, and the Messiah hadn't come. Here they were, still in terrible poverty, still under the yoke of Gentile forces. They had every reason to question God's love. That was their response, "Malachi, God loves us? Wherein has He loved us? Just give us one little bit of evidence!" And then comes the refutation. God Himself is going to speak, and He is going to demonstrate the fact that He has loved them.

God demonstrates that by two major points. First of all by His sovereign election of Jacob over Esau. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau." God sovereignly elected Jacob and his descendants. This took place even before Jacob and his twin brother Esau were born (Genesis 25:23). The election of Israel is used as the proof of God's love in Romans 9. Malachi says, "You are questioning God's love just because the Messiah has not come, just because of your poverty, because of Gentile domination. Here is the greatest demonstration of God's love for you; He chose you. You are His elect." God is saying here, "I have chosen you. You are mine. All the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, with all of the privileges of being my mouth-piece and producing the Messiah and possessing the land and all of the other blessings given to Abraham and through his seed. I have loved you and I have loved Esau less."

The first great demonstration of God's love for Israel was God's sovereign election of them. The second is the fact that He had, by a mighty desolation, desolated the Edomites, who were the descendants of Esau (Malachi 1:3-5).

The introduction to Malachi really lays a very important foundation. It is, "Israel, I love you." Now it is going to be on that foundation that Malachi is going to roll up his sleeves, and he is going to go up and down through the land. In chapters one and two, he is going to say, "Therefore repent." The declaration of God's love is given, it is doubted, and then it is demonstrated by the sovereign election of God and the desolation of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau.

Now the question is, what does all this mean to us? What is the application of it?

(Continued next month)

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



Viewing The News

SERGEI KOURDAKOV, the Russian KGB (secret police) defector who became a Christian and was going about in this country telling of the atrocities perpetrated by the Russians against Christians, was found dead on February 1. It was made to look like a suicide, as he had warned it would be, but the authorities found too many discrepancies in the picture to accept that verdict after a good look. Kourdakov had warned friends that he had been threatened and that he expected to be killed in such a fashion.

I WAS SORRY to read that Billy Graham took part in an ecumenical service that was called an official part of the inauguration of President Nixon in news stories. A Jewish Rabbi and a Roman Catholic Priest and Billy Graham had ten minutes each to speak. I wonder how Graham could defend his action in view of the church-state implications of the occasion and his sharing a preaching pulpit with one who denies Christ and one who prays to Mary. I will preach anywhere I get the opportunity so long as I do not give sanction to a false religion in doing so. I presume that Graham felt this was the case, but those who read the story carefully and those who attended must have felt that it was a different matter.

A RECENT ISSUE of The National Laymen's Digest (January 15, 1973) contained a lot of food for thought. It pointed out that anti-war activists in Pennsylvania went so far in December as to pour concrete into railroad switches which served lines leading into a factory which manufactures casings for bombs that were

being used at that time in Vietnam. It gave the good news that the state of California might lead the nation in demanding equal representation for the divine creation view as opposed to the evolutionary theory. It gave the sad news that some Federal Government bureaus are attempting to "whip into line" private colleges and universities that don't receive federal government help by threatening to have their tax exemption removed. It tells the sad story of an Anglican church that now has a beer hall open after church services with the "rector" saying, "I have believed that the social life of a congregation is as important as their worship."

RELIGIOUS COLUMNS in newspapers are including enough interesting material these days for at least one reader to mail me quite a few. In recent weeks I received clippings that showed some interesting sidelights. For example, one article commented on "genetic engineering," which is the use of technology to affect the unborn by altering inherited characteristics. The very definition should chill your bones, but many scientists seem to be working on trying to determine in advance the kind of people that will be born. At last one of the columns found that "bogus holy men" (mainly Asian religionists in this article) are getting rich off of "some gullible Americans." The strange religions are multiplying and their stronger varieties of priests are getting quite a bit of money in many places. An interesting headline over one article recently read "Bizarre Religion Fadism Has Become Widespread"—but the "bizarre religion fadism" had mainly to do with those people who believe that Satan is

a real person because the Bible says so. Included in those who taught such things according to that column were Billy Graham and the pope of Rome! And the debate continues over whether it is a service or a dis-service to God to teach His Word in schools as simply great literature. What do you think?

INTERESTING ITEMS: Edward Zigler, of the Office of Child Development in Washington recently made official that a prediction I made here sometime ago has come true. He is quoted as saying: "Children do not belong to the parents." . . . The effort to get government money for "non-public schools" is continuing unabated . . . The Russian birthrate is so low that a decline in population has set in . . . 150 of the 450 USA deserters in Sweden have fled the country because of its "unendurable socialism." . . . For some time now many people have been working for "metro" government to be run by "experts" and take the local government farther and farther from the people. Now a drive has started in Washington to take the influence of state governments even farther away by dividing the country into ten Federal Regions . . . A news item says that acupuncture now has been declared tax-deductible! . . . In case you are worrying about DDT and favoring the ban put on it, ponder this: The means of testing that found DDT in the livers of certain faraway fish were used on sealed soil samples that were packaged long before DDT was invented and DDT was "found"! At least a news story told me that . . . Two good (or bad) bird stories: The "bird-watchers" worrying about the natural habitat of Alaskan Eagles have stopped economic progress and added to the fuel shortage by stopping the Alaskan pipeline. And a Macaw worth \$1,800 was stolen from a pet shop recently. If you are offered a Macaw cheap, watch out!

PEACE OR SURRENDER? That could well be the title for any article about the recent cease-fire agreement with North Vietnam. Many Americans, happy that our soldiers are coming home, have overlooked that the North Vietnamese soldiers in South Vietnam (estimated at from 140,000 to 300,000) are not going home. Happy that prisoners of war are to be released, they overlook that the North

Vietnamese have admitted to only a fraction of the POWs that we think they have. That would follow the precedent set by the surrender to Korea, where thousands of American soldiers were never released after the so-called peace there. Happy over the prospect of a true peace in South Vietnam, they overlook the fact that the communists have broken every single pact they have made as soon as it stood in their way of carrying out their determination to subject all the earth to their evil rule. My one plea to you is for you to examine all sides of the news before giving thanks for the apparent successes. Give thanks that God is over-ruling and will work all things together for the good of those that love Him, but remember that our country does not love Him!

THE SUPREME COURT continues on its merry way in spite of a few crumbs to the conservative constitutionalists a few months back. Now they have legislated on both sides of the capital punishment question (I said "legislated," because what they have done is legislation, not judicial action). They have stated that under present laws, capital punishment is wrong for the convicted killer, rapists, etc., but that capital punishment for the unborn child who has committed no crime is all right. Like everything else in this column, that is personal opinion, but many scientists and other scholars agree with that judgment.

HIJACKING seems to be the excuse that will be used for our country to receive the Cuban slavemasters back into their good graces—even while Cuba is continuing to build up its offensive weapons to use against us. Look over the coming months for a continuing buildup of propaganda for recognizing Cuba so we can settle the hijacking situation and have hijackers returned here for trial. The price this country will probably pay will be in the lives of those who attempt to escape from that slavery—we will be asked to return all such to Cuba when they reach this country.

HAVE YOU SEEN in your newspapers the new item recently distributed among a few that the "Catholic" dissenters in Northern Ireland (the IRA or Irish Republican Army, which has been outlawed in the free Re-

public of the South also) have been using Russian-made rockets? I doubt that your newspaper carried the story, for the mass media have ignored anything that would make it look like that what is going on is not a religious war. What do they have to hide by keeping this news from their readers and viewers and listen-

ers?

Many thanks again for your help in putting out this column. Continue to send your questions (too few have come) and news items (more are coming and more still are needed) to

Ernest E. Lyon
2629 Valletta Road
Louisville, Ky. 40205

He made a strange selection . . .

The Judge's Hobby

W. G. McCartney

A number of years ago while driving west on Randolph Street in Chicago I stopped at a nursery to purchase some small evergreen trees to plant around our home. I knew the owner of the nursery fairly well and he asked me if I had ever met Judge ---. I said I had not, but would like to very much.

He introduced me to the judge who was selecting various types of foliage, plants and evergreens. We talked for a little while and then the judge noticed I was looking at the type of foliage, etc., he had been selecting.

The judge remarked, "I notice you are looking at the selection I am making."

It differed a great deal from the selection I was making. I was selecting nice-looking, well-shaped evergreens but he was picking out all kinds of shrubbery no one else would seem to want.

Then the judge told me the following story:

"I have a summer home on one of the lakes in the northern part of Michigan and often I come over here to pick out shrubbery and trees like these. I take them up to my summer home, plant them, fertilize them, care for them and direct their growth. I get great pleasure watching them develop into good looking plants and trees.

"You see," said the judge, "this is my Hobby. I would very much enjoy your coming up to my summer home sometime and allowing me to show you some of the finest looking plants and trees grown from the type of shrubbery you see me selecting now."

When our little visit was ended and I had told the judge how much I had enjoyed making his acquaintance, I got into my car and started for home.

I had not driven very far until I felt the tears fill my eyes. The judge's story had taught me a spiritual lesson I was not going to forget soon. I thought of the many saints I had never visited; never sought to bring comfort to them from His Word; or helped to restore those who had wandered away into sin.

Had I neglected my duty which afforded more joy than any earthly hobby? I thought of the Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ Who laid down His life for the sheep and Who through His servant John said, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Often in my mind's eye I would see the judge on his summer estate. What would he be doing? He would be watering the plants, raising up some that had been trampled down, splicing and binding up a broken branch or bracing up a tree that had been bent over by a storm. He knew what to do in every case. "He was a workman that needed not to be ashamed" and he had a heart and a joy in doing it!

The hymn writer who wrote the following words entered into what it meant to be a true shepherd of the sheep:

*Oh, give us hearts to love like Thee—
Like Thee, Oh Lord, to grieve
Far more for other's sins than all
The wrongs that we receive.*

—In *Together*.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

East Jefferson Street Church, Louisville, Ky.: The Lord continues to bless our efforts made in His Name. We rejoice as we realize we are small in number but there was one for rededication and one decision for baptism.

We would like to have more workers for the Lord to come and work with us and worship the Lord with us. We always praise the Lord for those faithful ones who stand with the Lord.

We are expressing our appreciation for the congregations and individual Christians who have responded to the car fund for Brother Thomas Hartle, a missionary to Africa. We would like to see these funds come in so he can purchase this car that is needful in the work of the Lord. You can send your offering c/o Billy Christian, 3716 Woodruff, Louisville, Ky. 40215, or to me and we will forward the funds to the Missionary office. Pray for our work. —James L. Wilson

Highview Church, Louisville, Ky.: Many of the churches have had "The Horizons" to sing for them at different times and enjoyed their musical message. Now on Wednesday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m. they have scheduled "The Genevans" of Pennsylvania for Highview. There are to be fifty

voices singing a capella.

On February 25, a taped message from Mack LeDoux, in Vietnam, will be given at the evening service.

PORTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Our cafeteria recently underwent its semi-annual health inspection. We were awarded the coveted "A" rating! The faithful ladies who staff our lunch room 5 days a week, 40 weeks in a year rate a word of commendation and thanks.

Work on the Industrial Arts building goes along well under the hands of Brother Gene Schreiner and his faithful work parties who give their time on Saturdays that the high school boys may have industrial arts. "Interested Christians may donate hand tools for this course if they will. Especially needed are hammers, all kinds of saws, steel squares, screwdrivers, steel tape measures, and nails and screws of all kinds. Phone Brother Earl Mullins, 778-6114, or (evening) Jerry Overman, 897-2831."

Sylvania Church, Louisville, Ky.: On February 25, there were 28 for Sunday school, and three responded for rededication. The work looks encouraging, and the possibilities are tremendous.

Christ's Teaching on Prayer

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R. H. Boll, a Bible scholar, goes straight to the gospels for the answers to effective prayer. Do you need these answers?

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Maranatha!

Our Lord, Come!

1 Corinthians 16:22