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JULY, 1973

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Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

The normal family

That's what the schedule said: "9:30—Interview of Normal Family—Gus Napier." Dr. Napier and the eight members of the family being interviewed sat in a tight circle with the observers (about 50 of us) in a large circle around them. Here are some of the things we heard. The Smiths (fictitious name) are a sophisticated, educated family—but you'd never know it by the language they use. Mom and Jeanie (29) can hardly speak a civil word to each other. Dad left the family (via suicide) in 1964. Lana (23), just finishing her Master's degree at WKU, is on the verge of suicide. That is what brought the family together—what can we do about Lana? Everybody in the family blames everybody else for Dad's suicide.

After about an hour and a half the Smiths were dismissed and we proceeded to discuss what had taken place. The same question was on several lips, "Why were the Smiths billed as a 'normal' family?" The answer, "To make the point that there is no such thing as a 'normal' family any more." Does this sound like an overstatement? Consider these observations by James and Jongeward in *Born to Win* (p. 77):

Currently . . . the tendency is toward a dwindling sense of community and a weakening family structure. We find:

People turning to government for assistance rather than to their families,

Offspring no longer taking care of aging parents,

Children, parents, and grandparents so separated by distance—either physical, emotional, or intellectual—that they have difficulty even spending holidays together,

More young people becoming involved in social and political commitments.

No doubt there are yet other factors that put the modern family under stresses not known in other times. Sometimes we on the outside are not aware of the stress a family is undergoing until the unit begins to fly apart—a divorce suit is filed or a child winds up in juvenile court. The existence of a "problem child" is usually a clear signal of serious conflicts within the family structure—but the

parents are the last to wake up to the fact. There is a natural tendency to resist help from others.

The Christian family

Where Christians are involved—and this is our primary concern—there are possible far-reaching spiritual consequences. Children will be more influenced by the feelings and attitudes of their parents than by all the teaching they get in Sunday School (thank the Lord, there are exceptions to all this!). The spiritual life of the parents may be at such a low ebb that they become a negative influence in the congregation; and yet, on the surface, everything may appear to be normal. On occasion, family troubles may come to the surface and contribute to controversy or gossip; I have seen church splits that originated within the problems of a single family. The least damage comes from a family that is merely rendered useless to the Lord when they might have been vessels unto honor. How can a brother lead in prayer when he has just been cut in little pieces on the way to church by an irate wife? How can a sister teach a Bible class if getting the kids ready to go was a screaming battle with five demons? This is not fiction, and some of you could add to it from your own experience—things that other folk at church would never suspect . . . since yours is a normal family.

The church as a family

How can Christian families acquire the stability that in earlier times derived from being surrounded by aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents? I believe God's answer is the local church, and I don't believe that correct doctrine alone is sufficient. I am convinced that most churches have dealt superficially—if at all—with the need of real fellowship between the members. Church picnics and fellowship dinners are fine, but they can't fill the whole bill. I don't see in the Bible a cut-and-dried pattern that every church should follow. However, in visiting about, I do find that in some churches there is a real sharing of personal joys and problems—a sharing that gives evidence of genuine warmth and concern, in an atmosphere void of judgmental advice-giving.

The New Testament doesn't, as I recall, speak of the church as a family; yet it is obvious from the early chapters of Acts that such it was. They frequently ate together and they went on to have all things in common. In the years since then, many a believer has been cast out of his family for the Lord's sake, but other Christians have typically provided for such persons a family fellowship of a better kind. In our society the need is every bit as urgent—but the need is not so easily seen. Maybe this is why so many Christian families are left to thrash out their troubles by themselves. May the Lord grant wisdom to fill the need more adequately.

Attainment or Atonement?

Frank Bertram Miller

Many people are not clear what comes first in spiritual experience: attainment or atonement. In their concept of salvation good works have more importance than Christ's dying for their sins on Calvary's cross.

The story of the rich young ruler is a masterpiece illustrating this confusion. His experience reveals the vast difference between human attainment and Christ's work of securing for us a right relationship to a holy God.

The young man came to Jesus Christ in his self-righteousness. "All these things (laws) have I kept from my youth up," he boasted to the Lord. He was a religious egotist.

Study reveals, however, that in fact he did not truly keep any of the laws of the Old Testament. By loving his riches and himself more than God, he fell short of the underlying principle of all the Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Far too many people today mistakenly think they become acceptable to God by keeping the Golden Rule or through their own so-called deeds of goodness. They pin their hopes on baptism, church membership, gifts of money, Sabbath-keeping.

Like the young ruler, they put confidence in their stores of good works. And like him, they miss the true riches in Christ, who said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

Make no mistake of this: spiritual life and salvation precede spiritual achievement. Sin must be taken care of. When atonement through our Lord Jesus Christ is actually accepted by sinners as the answer for their sins before a holy God, attainment follows.

The apostle Paul established this in Romans 5: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (verses 10-11).

To atone means "to supply satisfaction for, expiate, make amends." Atonement is "the reconciliation of God and man through the death of Jesus Christ." Man is changed from alienation from God to fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

The sacrifice for sin, shown in the Old Testament prophetically, symbolically and typically, refers to full atonement through Jesus Christ. The New Testament writer of Hebrews brought out clearly this relationship when he wrote: "Having therefore, brethren,

boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh . . . let us draw near" (10:19-20, 22).

Christ's atonement is commemorated in the right observance of the Lord's Supper. He spoke of "my body, which is broken for you . . . my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

We can therefore say that the Old and New Testament writers, and Christ Himself, teach that the only way of salvation is the one divine means of atonement in Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This message needs to be given out today most clearly and positively to those who face eternity, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12-13). Any preacher or teacher or religious worker who fails to make this message clear and plain is guilty before God.

Many persons seek God's approval through attending church services or hearing sermons over radio and television. Yet they do not personally receive Jesus Christ as their atonement. Therefore they cannot have the reconciliation with God He achieved for them on the cross. As a result they do not experience genuine new birth. These people must be shown that it is not any human attainment but solely divine atonement which brings peace with God.

What about so-called good works? Where do they come in?

The Bible does have an answer: worthy deeds follow after salvation. Indeed, they are so much a part of it they are said to accompany the experience of new birth in Christ. Hebrews 6:9 reads: "We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." The very next verse explains what those "things" are: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love."

This work of love is an all-important part of one's Christian life; it gives evidence of salvation. It is found among the twenty evidences cited by John as indicating true regeneration. Jesus said: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. . . . I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (John 15:5, 16).

Even so, the Christian must understand that all this activity also must be through the Holy Spirit. This Person of the Trinity works out in the believer that which God has worked within him. Thus we read in Philippians 2: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (verses 12-13). Many other verses as well show that genuine good works are a part of the individual's life after the experience of the new birth.

Salvation, then, is the *root*. Good works are the *fruit*. This salvation is indissolubly related to the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and all the rest follows closely. As Isaac Watts wrote:

Alas, and did my Savior bleed?

And did my Sovereign die?

Would He devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?

Once salvation is settled in heaven and on earth beyond all doubt, then the believer is ready to give himself to a work of love for God. Indeed this must follow, for the relationship between attainment and atonement is one not of conflict but of sequence. Watts concluded this in his final verse of that great hymn of praise to God for the atonement:

*But drops of grief can ne-er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee;
'Tis all that I can do.*

—In *Alliance Witness*

Last month we failed to note that "Prayer Has Many Sides" by A. B. Simpson (on p. 190) was reprinted from **The Alliance Witness**. A. B. Simpson was founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

They Repented Not

Richard Ramsey

"And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." (Revelation 9:20-21).

God is always calling men to repentance. Noah preached to the people of his day before God destroyed them with a flood. Lot vexed his righteous soul daily trying to get men of Sodom to repent. The prophets of olden times urged repentance. The Lord Jesus and His apostles proclaimed salvation to those who would repent. Even now "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:8). Every day that our Lord delays His return is one more day given to sinful men for an opportunity to repent.

The longsuffering and goodness of God is designed to lead men to repentance, see Romans 2:4. But men despise His mercy as indicative of weakness, and do not return to Him. A future day is coming in which God will attempt to bring men to repentance, not through grace, but through wrath. The ninth chapter of Revelation, in which our text for this article is found, describes some of those terrible afflictions which the Lord God will send upon mankind.

And with what result? In spite of unbearable pain and wholesale death and destruction everywhere, men will refuse to repent.

In the future days described in Revelation 9 there is a system of world government in rebellion against God. Individuals can still be saved, as witnessed by the fact that there are in the earth those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (Revelation 9:4). The governments of the world, however, are in the hands of wicked men, and these wicked men will not repent. We feel that the situation described in our text, Revelation 9:20-21, implies a government controlled, government directed policy of sinful defiance against God.

Now let us examine the specific sins of which these world leaders will not repent. What are the government sponsored programs that they promote in defiance of the true and living God?

First is idolatry, described as "the work of their hands," "worship of demons," and "idols of gold, silver, etc."

The visible image merely represents the invisible power, whether that power be a "god," a demon, a spirit, or ideology. In ancient times the nations worshipped idols. In our enlightened age, idolatry has been largely relegated to backward countries. But the revival of idolatry is indicated here. And God has always hated idolatry, perhaps more than any other sin, because He will not tolerate a rival, nor give His glory to another. Again and again God has challenged the false gods, met them in combat, and defeated them (as in the case of Elijah and the priests of Baal), but the attraction of idolatry is so great that men still cling to their idols.

The next sin of which the organized governmental rebellion refuses to repent is murder. Today our courts have ruled out the death penalty for murder, relegating murder to the category of a minor offense. Organized murder by terrorists is glorified into a wonderful, heroic thing to do. Arab terrorism, Irish violence, American snipers in big cities, etc.—such acts are today looked upon with admiration, and this is but the beginning of the horror to come on the earth. Extermination camps operated by Hitler set the pattern for future murder on mass scale. A particular form of murder now legalized in the United States, called abortion, is killing more human beings per year than all the wars of this entire century have killed. And this form of murder is glorified as the right thing to do, to prevent the earth from becoming overpopulated, etc.

The next sin is called sorcery, or in modern translations, witchcraft. In Old Testament times this sin was punishable by death. In the New Testament it is listed among the sins that will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven and consign him to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Thirty years ago intellectuals scoffed at witchcraft as ignorant superstition from the dark ages; now witchcraft is openly practiced on college campuses as well as in backward dens of ignorance. The book of Revelation shows the future invasion of the earth by untold numbers of evil spirits, and

already their activity is being felt in the earth with increasing significance.

Fornication is always listed as one of the chief sins of mankind. Under certain conditions in Old Testament times it was punishable by death. When Gentiles started becoming Christians in large numbers in New Testament times, their permissive sex practices ran counter to strict Jewish regulations, so much so that special instructions had to be given to Gentile converts to avoid this particular sin. Our modern day has seen this sin become so common that it is even advocated by many religious leaders of the new morality movement. Many universities have coeducational dormitories where boys and girls may visit in each other's rooms without supervision, in other words a guarantee of privacy for fornication with the blessings of the institution. Everything in our social order tends towards acceptance of this sin, it being further promoted through X-rated movies (now being shown on TV for home consumption!) and nudity in public. The world seems fast moving towards a social order in which sexual promiscuity will be the order of the day, but that the production of children shall be on a computerized basis, matching male to female for improving the stock, similar to the controlled breeding of livestock.

And the last sin here mentioned is theft. Not private stealing, as condemned even now by our laws, but public take-over of private property. If a man invades my house at night and steals my money he is regarded as a thief; but if he comes in the day time as a member of the Internal Revenue Service and takes the same money, he is merely a tax collector. In our nation we still do lip service to the ideal of private property, but we still drift rapidly towards a state owned, state controlled system in which everything belongs to everybody. Already we have seen hippies take over public parks, public beaches, abandoned houses, without prosecution by the law. This outright stealing is defended in courts by lawyers paid by various organizations claiming to represent freedom, rights, etc. God's word tells us that the earth is the Lord's and that He entrusts portions of it to individuals, that we should work and support ourselves, that anyone who will not work should not eat. Already we see governments defying God, stealing from Him the earth and the proceeds thereof.

Thus the Bible prophecy tells us of events already shaping up in our day, that the world governments are going into such outrageous defiance of God that they will not turn back even under terrible wrath from heaven. We dread to think of the horror of those days to come, but let us remember that God's people, as always, will be able to find the strength to stand even in those days. Furthermore, those who are ready when the Lord comes to take the saints out of the earth shall escape this wrath which is to come upon all the world. It behooves men to repent now while the day of God's grace is still in effect, not only to escape this day of wrath upon the earth, but to escape eternal hell and to live in glory with God forever.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Should I use my income before or after taxes as the basis for figuring my tithe?

The tithe, strictly speaking, belongs to the law of Moses and is not the rule for Christian giving. Tithe means “tenth” and was required of those who lived under the law, along with freewill offerings. Although there was then no tax corresponding to the income tax of our day, there were some taxes, frequently oppressive when levied by enemies. One does not get the impression that the tithe was figured “before taxes.” There seems to have been no provision for deductions, corrections, etc.

Although it is not the best usage, some people today use the word “tithe” to speak of percentage giving—whatever the percentage may be that they have chosen. Since New Testament Christians are to give as they have been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2), percentage giving is often a good practice, though not necessarily the only way one could give as prospered. In most cases it provides a good guide as to how well we are following the “as prospered rule. We need to be careful that we do not adopt percentage giving and reject other pertinent New Testament teaching—that of cheerful giving, liberality, etc. (2 Corinthians 9)—but many good things are subject to abuse.

It is my opinion that one’s giving should be based on “before taxes” income—in fact, on “before deductions” income. I am aware that some people count only “take home” pay as their income, just sort of ignoring what is withheld “because I never had it anyway.” But the various benefits—hospitalization insurance, investment plans, retirement pay, etc.—really are a part of one’s prospering. And, as painful as income tax may be, it still goes toward providing certain benefits that the taxpayer himself enjoys. We may not have much choice in the matter, but we really are buying certain important things for ourselves as well as for others. Add the fact that not everyone has the kind of income from which tax is withheld. Some of us must make our own tax payments, provide our own hospitalization insurance and retirement pay. How do we figure our giving? And if we are to take out certain things first, why not also deduct the house payment, the grocery bill, and a few other things? Pretty

soon we will have given on the basis, not of prosperity, but of what is left when we are done spending.

The matter is not so important except as it may be misleading. A man may think he is giving 20% (figured "after taxes") when he is only giving 15%, 12%, or 10% (figured "before taxes"). If we will simply make the percentage high enough, it will not likely make a great deal of difference at which point we figure our degree of prosperity. Of course, if we feel under obligation to a legalistic 10% and want to be sure of not giving any more than is "necessary" to meet that obligation, it is easy to see how one might want to figure it only after as many deductions as possible have been made.

I have met some people who seem to object to the wearing of a cross as a piece of jewelry or to its use in a church building. Are these things wrong?

Some things are wrong because of *what* we do; that is, the act itself is commanded or forbidden. Whatever our motivation, we still should have done or not have done the act. Other things are wrong because of *why* we do them; that is, our motivation for the act and not the act itself is wrong. The matter mentioned in this question falls in the latter category.

In the minds of some people the cross used in such ways as suggested by the question is a sort of badge that belongs to Catholicism and related groups. Of course it is possible virtually to worship a cross or to attach too much significance to the object itself. Some wear the cross as jewelry much in the same way another might carry a rabbit's foot—a good luck charm or an object of superstition. Generally the cross figures prominently in the buildings of those who have altars, a practice that has no support in New Testament teaching (cf. Hebrews 7:10, especially 7:26-27; 9:11-14; 9:24-26; 10:11-12). We ought to avoid the use of the cross for any of these reasons.

I can see no wrong, however, in the intelligent use of the cross as a symbol of Christianity. We may be offended by that which is gaudy and excessive ornamentation, whatever the nature of it, but a simple small gold cross such as is sometimes worn as a necklace need not be wrong. The best badge of Christianity, to be sure, is holiness and good works performed in love. The wearing of a symbol or its use in a building will not replace the need for that. The symbol can, however, be an honorable confession as to one's identity. We repeat that *why* is the main issue.

I have been terribly disappointed in churches and in Christian people, and I'm wondering if I would not be better off just to worship the Lord at home? He knows why I would be doing so.

Of course He knows. But I cannot refrain from asking: Are you sure that you know? There are occasions and circumstances in which I believe the Lord is very pleased with a home or small group wor-

ship—or even with an individual consciously and regularly pausing to worship Him. I believe there are also occasions when the Lord is highly displeased with such a separated, isolated worship. The simple truth is that such a practice can easily be a factious, divisive, selfish sort of thing, showing a great deal more concern for the individual(s) involved than for the glory of God. A virus of self-expression and rebellion exists today which does not minister health to God's children.

Sometimes in seeking out truth for ourselves and others we may find it necessary to break away from the crowd. It may sometimes be to the glory of God and to the advancement of truth for a congregation to be formed which will provide for the teaching, in the right spirit, of what we believe to be right. In any case, this certainly calls for considerable caution and a careful consideration of the motives involved. However, if I understand the question being posed, this is not what is in view. Instead, there is just the intention of withdrawing into a shell, away from the disappointments and frustrations of dealing with others, continuing to worship the Lord but only in private as an individual.

There are several reasons why I would not advise such an arrangement except in those cases of seclusion where no other solution is possible. For one thing, the devil sees to it that such home or private worship tends to degenerate pretty rapidly into *no* worship, or into abbreviated, incomplete, or infrequent worship. Then, this solution implies a difficulty in getting along with others, in exercising some of the healthy give and take of life in the world. Since churches and Christians are mentioned, apparently this is not the problem of a "shut-in," a prisoner, or one living in a remote area. Of course there are limitations on what we can fellowship and participate in; but when we can tolerate only ourselves, something is quite wrong. After all, who can imagine running off to a corner of heaven in a pout, unable to get along with the other children of God there?

Let me stress a third reason for not advising the private worship. It is simply that the New Testament shows a need for corporate worship also exists. (Corporate worship is that from a body of people—group worship.) Private worship does not meet the entire need of men. True, we are to enter our inner chambers to pray (Matthew 6:6), and we must maintain our private devotions. There is definitely individual responsibility. But much New Testament worship presupposes the gathering of God's people into units where the various parts can perform as a functioning whole. Not all have the same gifts and abilities. The Lord did not intend for us to function alone primarily. The figure of the body used in the word to set forth the *worship and work* of the church is no accident, and its implications should not be missed. The church could more nearly be described as a symphony orchestra than as a host of self-centered soloists. Some acts of worship largely lose their meaning except as corporate acts. For example, observing the Lord's Supper by oneself may allow for fellowship with God, but where

is the fellowship with others or any declaration of its meaning? It is noteworthy that Christians under severe persecution are often willing to face severe difficulty and death in order to assemble together in clandestine meetings for worship and mutual encouragement.

Not only is incomplete worship involved in the "worship at home" plan, but this also tends to cut one off from the labor and service for the Lord which belongs in the Christian life.

Let me be careful that I do not despise what God has made a definite part of His will for men. We do not live alone.

7110 Bruton Road, Dallas, Texas 75217

If only we could return to the apostles' time and see . . .

When the Mists Have Rolled Away

Ed Ransom

They shrouded the hills and covered the valleys with their soft grey haze. Farther and farther we went with scarcely a break. Suddenly the mists lifted and there in front of us was a tiny green valley. There were people—young people with small children and old people and what we would call teenagers. They came quietly and with smiles on their faces. The greetings were warm and personal—A family approach, it seemed. They were unhurried and stood in small groups talking and laughing. Then without anyone telling them to, each one disappeared inside a building of some sort. It might have been a large one-room school or a place where a village forum might have taken place. No sign outside advertised either the people or the place or what was about to happen inside.

The inside was as plain as the outside. No such thing as a clock was in evidence to tell the time (or overtime). No scoreboards to tell the amount of money collected or the size of the crowd. Someone began to sing and others joined in. I don't remember how many songs they sang but it was more than three. Sometimes they mentioned the hope of glory and some were prayers to God the Father to lead and guide. Some sang of Jesus—their redeemer and friend.

The singing ceased and someone began to read a letter. It was from one of the apostles of the Lord to one of the churches. He sat down and another read from another letter. Another read the words of the Master to his people. Some read from the front but most simply read from where they were. After a great deal of reading from these letters and books of Scripture (the readings were familiar enough but I could not recall when I had heard that much Scripture read) someone stood up and began to talk about what had been read.

Then followed others and the last one who spoke was careful to ask if there were others who would share what was in their hearts. All of this was done calmly and by taking turns.

Then someone said, "Now is the time for the freewill offering." In a quiet and unhurried manner, a young man passed what seemed to be sort of woven basket down one side of the assembly and up the other.

On a small table at the front was a loaf of bread and a cup of wine. Both bread and wine were unleavened. After giving thanks, they passed the loaf among the people. They did not seem to pay any attention as to whether the "right" people were eating it or not. It was an atmosphere of complete humility—they seemed to be thinking of their own selves and not of judging others. And they appeared to be considering the Christ whose body they insisted was spiritually the bread that was being broken. After the loaf was passed—it seemed to have been prepared by loving hands and had consistency more like that of real flesh—that is, it was neither brittle or noisy when one broke it—the cup likewise was passed. They all drank out of the cup and indicated by the thanksgiving which preceded the passing that it was the spiritual blood of God's Son being poured out. I later noticed the Christians on either side of me. They appeared to be exceedingly healthy as well as happy.

Then they began to pray. No one said, "We come in the most humble manner we know how" and yet they kneeled. I had been accustomed to one ritual prayer in which the people were told to stand and remain standing for the song after the prayer and yet I was not too surprised when one brother prayed another brother began when he had stopped and the prayers continued and the second brother said what was in his heart. When the prayers were finished, I heard many strong "amens."

The worship then seemed to be over and a brother arose and said there were some matters to be considered. One of the brethren who devoted much of his time to preaching and teaching was in that section of the world and would come and work with them for a season. They needed to make special plans. Then there was the matter of appealing to the government in behalf of the conscience of a young Christian. They had no intention of being other than good citizens but they must try to get the powers that were to see that their allegiance to God was more binding than the demands of Empire great and powerful though it was. They left in a sober and thoughtful mood. It seemed to me they never thought of that morning as a duty but rather as a privilege. Being what they were and feeling as they did they simply could not have done other than worship God. As far as I could tell there was no showing-off—no false pride and no exalting of one above another. I believe they actually thought the whole operation was God's doing and not their own. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could actually go back through the mists of time and see how the disciples of Christ came together and worshipped God? Well, I never did that and can not tell you everything I might find. But this account is of a worship that really happened. Last Sunday morning! —In *The Truth*

Christian Priorities

John R. W. Stott

The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers. Above all hold unflinching your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practise hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters the oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:7-11)

In these five verses the Apostle Peter paints a beautifully balanced picture of the Christian life. He opens a window for us into the life of an ideal Christian congregation, and because we stand on the threshold of the church's autumn programme it may be helpful to consider what he says.

But first we must note the context in which the exhortation comes: "the end of all things is at hand." These words were written over nineteen centuries ago, but there is no need to conclude that Peter was mistaken. The end of all things *was* at hand; it still *is*. The New Testament suggests that God means the Church in every age to live in constant expectation of the end. It is this awareness of the approaching end which gives urgency to Christian life and work. Are we conscious of any staleness or slackness in our lives? Do we detect the paralysing influence of complacency? Are we settling back into ease and mediocrity? Then we must hear again this word of God: "the end of all things is at hand." There are many signs in the world today, which point to the near return of Jesus Christ; and when He comes in power and great glory, the end of all things will have come. Supposing the last hour were to strike today, would we be ready? Would we shrink from Christ in shame at His coming, or rise up joyfully to meet Him?

Peter tells us how to prepare for His coming, the kind of life which we should be leading in view of the approaching end.

I. Our prayers

"Keep sane and sober for your prayers" (verse 7 RSV). We notice that our duty to God (prayer) comes first, and must not miss the "therefore." It is because the end of all things is at hand that we are to keep sane and sober for our prayers. The best way to prepare to stand before the throne of God on the judgment day is to kneel before His throne every day. If we meet Him daily, we shall not fear to meet Him then.

Peter assumes that the Christian is a person of prayer, who not only seeks to abide in Christ, but sets aside fixed times at which to

pray. We are called to live a godly life, that is a God-centred and God-oriented life, but it is impossible to do so unless we seek God, turning our whole being towards Him in worship, at set times. One wonders if the powerlessness of the Church today is not largely due to its prayerlessness. I have myself been convicted in recent weeks of lack of prayer; how is it in your own life?

Moreover, it is necessary to "keep sane and sober for our prayers." We need to avoid anything which dulls our spiritual alertness. Disciplined habits of mind and life are indispensable to prayer. Sometimes our mind is so preoccupied that we cannot concentrate in prayer. Sometimes our life is so cluttered up with other things that we have no time to pray, and, if we do find time, we have no inclination because of fatigue. But we must not plan our lives first and then squeeze prayer in somewhere; we must plan our lives in order to have adequate time for prayer. Is this impossible and unpractical? I think not, if we recognize the importance of prayer.

II. Our love

We turn from our duty to God to our duty to each other, from prayer to brotherly love: "above all hold unfailing your love for one another." The word translated "unfailing," or "fervent" in the A.V., means literally "stretched out." It is used of the taut muscles of an athlete. It seems to indicate both the intensity and the endurance of true Christian love. Love believes, bears, hopes and endures all things; love never fails. Do not let us give up loving one another, however much we may feel our love to be rebuffed or unacknowledged. The fires of love are in constant danger of dying down; we need to keep rekindling them. There are two practical consequences of such love.

First, *love covers a multitude of sins*. This means not that love can cover our own sins, but that it is determined to cover the sins of others. There is a terrible tendency of the evil human heart not to cover sins, but to uncover them, exposing them to the condemnation of others. It takes a hundred subtle forms, and one is gossip. Tittle-tattle about the sins and shortcomings of others can poison a whole community. But Christians need to be, as the Psalmist says, "like a man that is deaf and dumb," deaf in that we refuse to listen, and dumb in that we refuse to spread what we may accidentally have heard. God's love has covered our sins in forgiveness; if we love others, we also shall want to cover their sins.

Secondly, *love practises hospitality*. "Practise hospitality ungrudgingly to one another" (verse 9). The Greek word for hospitality means literally a love for strangers. In those early days, when Christians travelled, roadside inns were not fit for them to stay in; it was necessary for fellow-Christians to put them up. Still today there is a great need for hospitality to strangers, offering them not only shelter, but food and friendship. In a City Church like ours there are always strangers and visitors. We should be on

the alert, looking out for them at mid-week meetings, speaking a word of greeting to such if we sit next to one in church, and inviting them back to our home for a meal. Such hospitality must be "ungrudging." We must not complain how tired we are or how unappreciative they are, or how expensive it is, but simply let our love issue in hospitality.

Thus Christian love is a covering and a hospitable love. It cares for people in their need, especially sinners and strangers, covering the sins of sinners, and extending a welcoming hospitality to strangers.

III. Our service

'As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (verse 10). The first word of the Greek sentence is "each." Every single Christian has received a gift. The gifts are different, but all emanate from God's grace, which is described as "varied," literally "many colored," a word that was sometimes used of woven cloth or embroidered material. It is a mistake to suppose that these gifts are all miraculous like healing, prophecy or tongues. They are all supernatural in origin (because God gives them), but not in character. On the contrary, they may be very ordinary. One example which Peter gives is "he who serves." This suggests that a spiritual gift is not necessarily an ability; it may be simply an opportunity without any ability except God's all-sufficient strength.

Whatever our gift may be we are to use it "for one another" and as "stewards of the varied grace of God." Every church member should be a church worker. I do not say that all church work should be "official," as many do unofficial work in witness, hospitality, and in other ways. Nevertheless, there are more jobs to be done in the work of the church than there are people to do them, both in Commissioned Work, in the Guild of Help and in other ways.

Peter gives two examples only: "he who speaks" and "he who serves." The one uses his lips, the other his hands. The one labors in the limelight, the other in the background. But they are brought together here, for all service is equally important if God appoints to it. And in both there is a "gift" to use. He who speaks must speak from God, proclaiming the "oracles of God," that is the Scripture. He who serves must serve with the strength which God supplies. Both speaker and servant are "stewards" of what God has given. It is a beautiful and encouraging assurance that, whatever our task, God can supply our need.

This passage concerns our duty to God, to each other, and in service to those outside as well as inside the fellowship. We are to be praying, loving and serving Christians. And if the context in which we thus live is the conviction that "the end of all things is at hand," our motive is "to the end that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (verse 11).

—Reprinted by permission

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 13 - 17

* Theme: "In thy light shall we see Light" Psalm 36:9

MONDAY, AUGUST 13.

Chairman, Chester LaHue

7:30-8:00 P. C. S. Chorus
8:00-8:45 "What hath God wrought!" C. V. Wilson and Glenn Baber
(50th Anniversary Portland Christian School)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14.

Chairman, Bob Morrow

9:00-10:15 **Bible Exposition: Prophecy for Our Times** Victor Broaddus
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:30 **Radio Work** Robert B. Boyd
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:30 "The Adequacy of Jesus" Charles Knecht
2:30-3:30 "Is the Church Relevant to Our Times?" Howard Sawyer
7:30-8:00 Singing (What part does it have in worship?) . Eugene Schreiner
8:00-8:45 "The Rejoicing Church" John Adams

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15.

Chairman, Jim Rowe

9:00-10:15 **Bible Exposition: Prophecy for Our Times** Victor Broaddus
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:30 **Homes** Joe Blansett & Howard Marsh
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:30 "Christ vs. Current Pessimism" Kern Sears
2:30-3:30 "Lord When did we ?" William Reed
7:30-8:00 Singing Michael Sanders
8:00-8:45 "Missions: Is the End Near?" Alex Wilson
(Offering for Missions)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16.

Chairman, Kenneth Lawyer

9:00-10:15 **Bible Exposition: Prophecy for Our Times** Victor Broaddus
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:30 **Education and Recreation** Earl Mullins
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:30 "Methods to Meet Changing Environment" Michael Sanders
2:30-3:30 "New Congregation Evangelism" James Stout
7:30-8:00 Singing Nathan Burks
8:00-8:45 "How Great Thou Art" J. F. Kurfees

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17.

Chairman, H. E. Schreiner

9:00-10:15 **Bible Exposition: Prophecy for Our Times** Victor Broaddus
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:30 **Missions** Robert Garrett
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:30 "Principles of Christian Growth" Paul Knecht
2:30-3:30 "God's Will in Caring for the Flock" Howard Wakefield
7:30-8:00 Singing Bobby Ott
8:00-8:45 "Life's Most Amazing Realization" J. L. Addams

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE:

Herbert Ball, 1807 Elmwood Drive, Clarksville, Ind. 47130; phone (812) 944-7188
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Reprint:

Forty-two Lads

R. H. Boll — 1940

Few incidents in the scriptures have given occasion for more criticism of God's word and ways than Elisha's curse upon the lads that mocked him at Bethel and the subsequent slaying of the lads by the bears from the forest (2 Kings 2:23, 24). We may be sure that this sort of divine vengeance does not come within the gospel-conception of things. That was an age of law and judgment; this is a day of grace and forbearance. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to you-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Also God, through Christ, has extended world-wide reconciliation, "not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Until this day of grace ends—which needs it must—God suspends His judgments. Grace reigns and mercy and loving patience is shown to sinners, if by any means they may turn and be saved.

The sons of Zebedee who wanted to call down fire from heaven upon the villages of the Samaritans because they closed their gates against Jesus, were reproved by Him for their vengeful spirit. But in the circumstances of the days of Elijah such an act of God was perfectly appropriate.

An irritable old man??

Let's look at the facts. We have not here, as some may think, the act of a vindictive, irritable old man. If it had been that, then God would not have endorsed it. (See Jonah 4 for His attitude toward Jonah.) This was not an uncalled-for stroke, but there was a salutary, if severe, justice in this punishment.

Note first the irreverence of the lads (they were not "little children," but young men). Such impudence as theirs was common then, as it is now, among boys of that age. It is none the less reprehensible. God's word was, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man." That much is due to any old person. It is a foretoken of national ruin when "the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable"—a thing too prevalent in our country (Isaiah 3:5).

In the second place, this was irreverence against a prophet of God, well-known to be such to those lads. Elijah was known everywhere, and Elisha had been his constant companion for years. "Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" asked Jehovah of Aaron and Miriam (Numbers 12:8). It is a serious

matter to treat with contempt a representative and messenger of God's word. It is often done, apparently with impunity, but God's judgment will one day take that into account. If the people had no respect for God's prophet, then their ears would be closed to his message. It was necessary to inspire such respect and reverence, and to put the fear of God into the hearts of the people.

Thirdly, the judgment that fell upon those lads was even more a judgment upon the parents than upon them. Those parents had allowed, yea, perhaps had taught, their children to have such disrespect for the prophet. More than likely they had encouraged them in this particular hooting. For Bethel was from the days of Israel's first king, Jeroboam, a stronghold of idolatrous worship (1 Kings 13). There a true prophet of God would be held in scant honor, and the gang of boys that came running out of the town to mock Elisha were probably not doing so against the wishes of their elders. Their mocking cry, "Go up thou bald-head," had more significance than that of mere rudeness and rowdiness. The lesson to Bethel that day was in order and went far to establish Elisha's authority in idolatrous Israel.

We are living in an era of grace and forbearance, and God bears patiently with many an evil deed. Even we, all of us, owe our salvation to the longsuffering of God. But when God rises up to judge—as some day He will and must—men shall give account of all the idle and blasphemous words they have spoken of God, His word, His church, and His servants. The terrors of His retribution will not be slight.

Somewhere, in Southeast Asia,

Two Thieves Fall Out

Bill Charters

Li and Jang loafed on a bench, picking up snatches of early morning gossip at the busy market. A better dressed woman browsed along the stalls, intent on buying meat and vegetables.

"The boss comes home today," she ventured to the meat seller. "I've got to prepare a royal reception for him. If all goes well, he may even bring enough cash to see us through the rainy season," she added unwisely.

At this hint of wealth Jang's ears pricked up. If he had in his pocket all the money he owed, he'd be a rich man himself. Not that he ever meant to pay his debts! All he cared about was opium and drink and a brief good time. Human life meant little to him.

Li so far had never killed a man. But opium addiction was expensive. Smaller crimes were more in his line at present. Still he longed to escape his way of life.

Jang knew no such longings as he and two others waited that afternoon for the bus. Hidden in the shadows he nervously fingered his gun. On one side of the road thick jungle led down to the river. The other side had open rice fields. Then the bus came down the dirt road.

The boss sat on the board seat, fondly patting his bag of money. His jovial mood vanished suddenly when two men stepped out to stop the bus. He leapt out the door, only to meet Jang's gun. Drunk and angry, he struck at the bandit. Then the gun roared and he fell.

Calmly Jang collected the bag of money, the dead man's watch, ring, and even his new shoes. He and his helpers robbed the other passengers, then ordered the bus to return to town. Soon the police reported this, Jang's eighth killing.

About that time Tong Dee, a young criminal, accepted the Lord. Eager to reach his home village for Christ, he soon returned with the gospel. Li and Jang heard him, their minds deeply enslaved by opium.

Li reacted to the message with wistfulness, reminded again of his yearnings to be free. Jang desired to be rid of opium. He was coldly aware that a mounting group of people sought his blood in revenge, and that an addict was helpless against them.

At Tong Dee's invitation my wife, Rosemary, and I also visited the village. Its peaceful appearance, as it nestles next to the River Wang, dispells any suspicion of violence.

Our first meeting drew numbers of tough-looking men. I learned later that many fingers twitched on their triggers. Yet the meeting seemed peaceful enough at the time. But convincing these men of the ability of the gospel to change their own lives proved very difficult.

Li failed to see how faith in Jesus could free him from opium. Though deeply impressed by Tong Dee's conversion, he had many questions and objections. We wrote home to those we knew would intercede for him and his friends.

Finally Li, Long, and Pimoon professed faith. Even Jang prayed. But I felt troubled about him and suggested that he go to the police. This, I argued, would prove he was repentant. God would teach him His new life even in prison.

Jang only laughed. "Do you think I want to get killed?" He continued on in his old ways, believing he had chosen wisely. Two months later he was dead. One of his victims had been avenged.

Li, however, was baptized. He rejoices in his new freedom from opium. He loves to discuss the Word of God.

Much united prayer produced these few souls for Christ. How much more effort is needed to bring into life a strong church? And that is only one village. What about all the other villages in Thailand, Laos, Viet Nam, and Cambodia?

—In *Worldwide Thrust*

Light

Fred C. Renich

Let there be LIGHT! And in response to the fiat of God, primordial darkness reeled, beaten back by the presence of Him in Whom there is no darkness—Who is Himself LIGHT, and against Whom the darkness has no power at all!

To those who know something of the inky darkness of their own hearts, no less an intrusion of God is required to bring light to that mysterious and little known inner world of themselves.

“It is God that said: Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

There is a form of mental enlightenment that a study of the letter of Scripture brings. But this is in no way the same as that mighty work of God in the soul spoken of by Paul. The mind can be filled with the letter of the truth, while the heart remains dark, cold, hard—unmelted and unmoved. But God, breaking into human consciousness by a Divine intrusion, floods the darkened soul with light, and brings man broken, contrite, yet trusting to fall in adoring worship of Jesus Christ as God. He now sees with his inner man the glory of the infinite God shining out from the person of Jesus Christ—now his Lord and his God!

So many rest content with a knowledge of Scripture truth and the ideas about Jesus Christ and God which Scripture gives. They stop short, far short, of that personal and on-going experience with God of which Paul speaks and which made him the dynamic servant of Christ that he was. Here was the source of his double motivation: “Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”—and—“The love of Christ constraineth us . . .” Paul did not arrive at this dynamic awareness through much study. It was rather the inward illumination of his heart by the Spirit that caused him to know by experience that Jesus Christ was God, and knowing Him in this way he “served with fear and rejoiced with trembling,” while at the same time his heart was filled with the love of God poured out upon him by the Holy Spirit.

To be a missionary or a minister of the Gospel of Christ, a good mind, persistent study, memorization and meditation of the Scriptures, while good in themselves, are far from sufficient. The letter alone of Scripture kills—just as effectively as the tables of stone at Sinai killed—for the letter gives no life.

God must take the truth of which the letter speaks, and by His creative Spirit shine Himself within man’s darkness and death, and in the shining bring light in the darkness, life in the death.

You ask, “How shall this be?” The answer has always been . . . “Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for me with all

your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). The Scriptures speak of God and point to Christ, but He must be known personally and continuously according to his own promise in John 14:21 ". . . he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and *will manifest myself unto him.*" No person can have Jesus manifest Himself to his soul and not know it. This is a reality in experience, not just doctrine to be believed.

In our crisis hour when the church lies seemingly helpless, even though Bible-taught, could it be that we have deeply grieved the Spirit by presuming on His presence and power? Have we assumed that a mental grasp of Bible truth is identical with the knowledge of God? Has our Lord withdrawn Himself that we might discover our need? Has He left us to ourselves, our plans and programs, and our own strength until—"we acknowledge our offence, seek His face, and *in our affliction, seek Him earnestly.*"

What Do We Stand For?

—when we ought to be running!

Ben Rake, Jr.

Probably the most worn passage in many a Bible is that which contains the Great Commission. We read it, we preach it, and we seem even a little concerned about it—occasionally. We stand upon the truth of God, and like to think that while we are not perfect, we stand nearer the truth than most other fundamentalists. Do we?

Before this article is too misunderstood, let me strongly affirm the teachings we do hold to, and I would not intentionally waver for anything. God's Word is True—100% True. Let me quote a worn-out description of a well-known evangelist: "This (the doctrine we hold to) is fine, as far as it goes, but it just does not go far enough."

We hear criticisms of a congregation which may vary in detail from our chosen stand a little. One characteristic of the congregation is that they are growing in leaps and bounds, however. "Oh, well, the wayward group always was more popular than the one following the truth," we hear, and sit back awhile longer, thankful that our few are "faithful." Faithful to what? A doctrine or an empowering Savior?

Are we really teaching the Truth if we fail to emphasize growth and the reaching of souls for Christ? If there was ever a day for Christians looking for the return of our Savior to reach out for souls, this is it! Students and scholars coming to national recognition are

saying essentially what we have said for years! Today the return of our Savior is preached over nation-wide television. What an opportunity! There will never be a better day for our congregations to reach out and grow!

It would seem, in a study of the book of Acts, that the early church nearly got into a lazy slump. They enjoyed the fellowship of their own, and practiced this fellowship to a greater extent than we do, necessarily. Did the early church get nearly to the point of being happy with those who had been won, and content not to try and reach others? In Acts 2 and 4 we read of 3,000 souls, then 5,000 men reached for Christ. The growth rate seems to have settled down some as we read on. Seemingly, persecution was needful to spur the growth onward and outward. They had the Great Commission. Was it necessary for our Lord to allow death of some Christian leaders to shake the new Christians out of their spiritual negligence? Yes, growth was that essential in that day, and growth is every bit as important in our Savior's estimation today, for where there is growth, there are souls won.

We may surmise that there is a great temptation among groups of Christians to "close in" and become more of a social club (however few the activities may be) than a growing part of Christ's living Body. This temptation should be diligently guarded against.

For years I was convinced that we were grossly Laodicean in our attitudes and actions. Is it not true that we all too often resemble Sardis? It seems that a tremendously important area of doctrine which we have overlooked is the necessity to literally *live* and *grow*, spiritually speaking. Can God be pleased if we, in an era free of persecution, do not care enough to dedicate ourselves to the growth of His called-out People? Yes, there is a name . . .

We have made an endless list of excuses, too long to enumerate here. One congregation, however, has quit making excuses and has far more than tripled in size in less than three years, in spite of its location in a pleasure-seeking resort area. Another has set a goal of 50% increase in Bible classes per year. Presently, there is a 40% increase consistently. Others are reaching out in foreign missions. Some are recognizing the desperate need of scriptural training of area children—the best and most effective prevention of juvenile delinquency plus eternal salvation. Buses are being purchased and used effectively. Brethren, *growth is scriptural*. Excuses for lack of growth are no more acceptable to our Lord than excuses for any other spiritual neglect.

Brethren, how do we use the matchless gift of His Grace? Never was grace intended as a blind excuse for neglect. Grace's lesson does not teach "Sit back and take it easy. We're right. That's why our churches are not growing." Quite to the contrary, due to His grace in His willingness to empower the weak and to speak mightily through the slow of tongue, let us seek His Power and move forward in His will. If we believe what we teach others, this is by far the time of opportunity for our Lord to work through us. Never has it been so easy to "give a reason for the hope" which is in our hearts! Brethren, in the blessed Name of Jesus, Let's Grow!

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



Viewing the News

PARDON ME if you are tired of Watergate, but so much has been left out of the papers and the hearings that I thought a few comments would be in place. In no part of the mass media have I seen a word about the fears of authorities that the Weathermen would plant a bomb in the auditorium during the Republican Convention and that many felt that they would contact the Democrats and reveal their plans. Nowhere in the papers and t-v have you heard a word about the rumored financial support for the Democratic candidate last year by Castro. Such things have been privately stated as making those who did the bugging frantic for information. Nowhere have I seen much of a comment on the sad fact that such buggings have been commonplace for a long while. Senator Goldwater says he was so bugged when he was a candidate for president that each morning when he arose he said, "Good morning, Lyndon." And in the midst of all this hullabaloo over the Watergate affair could you please tell me why the same mass media did not think it criminal when James Boyd, ex-employee of the late Senator Dodd, systematically burglarized the Senator's office and Drew Pearson published the stolen documents? Or why Daniel Ellsberg stole documents and is a hero to the media? Or why the media said nothing when the Anti-Defamation League accepted documents stolen from the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade to try to defame the Crusade and Dr. Schwarz? I do not by any means condone what was done at Watergate, but who among the accusers is "without sin," let him "cast the first stone."

NOT MANY people seemed to think it unusual when the Black Panther

Party Chairman, Bobby Seale, got 35 percent of the total vote for Mayor of Oakland, California. Yet the Black Panthers are an avowedly Marxist, Mao-oriented group.

Another example of our jury system going astray came to my attention recently. Communist Angela Davis was a featured speaker at the founding conference of a new communist front, the National Defense Organization against Racist and Political Repression, and one of the audience applauding Davis' speech was Mary Timothy, the foreman of the jury that acquitted Davis of charges that she furnished some of the guns used in a 1970 court shoot-out and kidnapping which resulted in the death of four persons in California, including the presiding judge. Timothy stayed in Chicago with Bettina Aptheker, one of the Communist Party's central committee members, according to my news source.

IN CASE you have thought I was being silly in opposing UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), you might note this item I recently saw reprinted from the May 15, 1973, **Indianapolis News**: "Some \$3 million would be used to expend current aid to Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. Offers of assistance to North Vietnam and the Viet Cong would increase the total outlay to \$30 million. Neither Hanoi nor the Viet Cong terrorists, needless to say, are especially noted as administrators of children's aid." Note that the North Vietnamese communists and the Viet Cong communists would get nine times as much as Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam together. Since those two communist groups have slaughtered many innocent children (there are

confirming pictures in case you haven't heard about this), you can imagine what they will use the money for. Remember that next fall when innocent children come around collecting for what they think is a good cause.

ALSO IN CASE you thought I was exaggerating the dangers inherent in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, you might ponder this report brought by Dawson Mathis, Representative from Georgia: He says that the OSHA is now moving into regulations for farming. "A prime example of the complete irrationality of these regulations is that in one case where workers cannot enter a field for 2 days [after a certain insecticide is sprayed], the Food and Drug Administration regulations state the fruit grown in this same field can be eaten within twelve hours after the application of the named pesticide." Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina is reported as saying that proposed OSHA regulations would require farmworkers in tobacco fields at certain times to wear a gas mask or respirator as well as coveralls or other body coverings including gloves, hat, and shoe coverings. The image of a tobacco farmer covered from head to toe and wearing a gas mask in mid-July points out just how ridiculous and unreasonable these occupational safety and health regulations can be." I have no brief for tobacco (and haven't time to crusade against it, for there are more important things to do) but this picture brought me a good laugh!

THE UNITED NATIONS is trying to get control of the seas of the world for economic exploitation. If our country (this is being proposed in Congress now) should have a part in giving the measureless wealth of the seas to the UN, we would be setting up the unlimited money needed to make the one-world socialist government that the majority of UN supporters and workers seem to want.

"LAND USE PLANNING" is the latest move in the direction of having our government control all the land of the country. Bit by bit local and state and federal government units are forbidding industry in certain places and expanding those "certain places" almost to the point of stopping expansion. The Virginia State Legislature, for an example of expansions

on this idea, has been considering a bill which would require a government permit before anyone could "break ground of any kind" on parcels of land over 15,000 square feet (a lot 150 by 100). If that bill passed and you had an extra foot in your lot you would have to get government permission before you planted your flowers or your tomatoes! Maybe you read the national magazine story of a teenager whose dad was fined because his tree house didn't meet the local building code, but wait till some of our "big brother" planners get some of their laws through and you will see freedom eroded to the point of disappearance. And, to make it centralized, a Citizen's Advisory Committee recently gave out a report urging as of "major importance" the concept that "henceforth 'development rights' on private property must be regarded as being vested in the community and its well-being rather than in the fact of ownership. It further urged regulation of "development in a degree at odds with traditional commercial practices." That is gobblegook for a takeover of your backyard. It is the fascist idea of control without taking over ownership.

AN INTERESTING article in the April, 1973, issue of *Mission* magazine put forth the argument that the contemporary expression of the American civil religion is professional football. Richard T. Hughes' article is well worth your reading if you can get a copy. Incidentally, he feels that until 1954 the public school was the expression of that religion.

THE FUEL shortage has been caused by the government through policies that made it unprofitable to drill new wells, policies that have prevented the building of a single new petroleum refinery during the past five years, and policies that prevent the building of needed oil pipe lines. Misguided civilians have added by objecting to the building of new generating plants and other needed facilities.

ANOTHER WATERGATE commentary was recently made by Edward Hunter, the brilliant author of *Brainwashing*. He says it helped the media cover up the Prisoners of War stories of their sadistic treatment by the communists. It is also interesting to note every person displaced by the

scandals has been replaced by a member of the Council on Foreign Relations or one that they trust. If you want to read some of the news behind the news, then take note of what is not said by the media. The left-wingers have not talked about a military takeover since Gen. Haig was put into such an important job. That means they like him! Incidentally, he has been for three and one-half years an aide of Henry Kissinger.

SOME HAVE ASKED that I have fewer items each month, so I tried this month having largely the political situation in view. If this seems a good idea I'll have next month more of a viewpoint on the religious situation if enough news comes across my desk. Keep your questions and clippings coming to

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The church in the city had only one problem—

Jezebel of Thyatira

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

Like Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, King of Israel, this Jezebel in The Revelation (2:18f) influenced the children of God to follow a wrong course. Many times when women do go wrong they go to extreme lengths of evil and lead others with them. This is often too easily done.

In four verses in this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira Jezebel's pitiable story is told. One minister remarked, "This is the only mention of a woman preacher in the Bible." Whether or not this is true we want to consider what God has to say of her.

A church, the only one commended for its love (v. 19), was reprimanded because it tolerated this evil woman. Church leaders have a solemn responsibility before God to tend His flock (1 Peter 5:1-3; and to the members: Hebrews 13:17). They should deal with those who would hide the leaven (Matthew 13:33) of false teaching (?) in meal that is food for their congregations. But Jezebel seems to have been unrestrained in her nefarious teaching and seducing of God's servants. At least the church (through the angel of that church) was reproved for having put up with her. This much was held against the whole church. She called herself a prophetess—and she may have been one like Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14) who was lined up with the enemies of the Lord to hinder His work. She taught His servants, seducing them "to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29; 1 Corinthians 10:20).

Apparently her work was either acceptable to the church leaders or they felt helpless to do anything about it. The works of the church were known of God, its increasing works, its love, faith, ministry, patience. Though He calls them "*thy works*" (v. 19) and "*her works*" (vs. 21, 22) when He is speaking of the evil works, He says "*my works*" in verse 26 when He speaks to the individual over-

comer. Nevertheless, the implication is that He approved of the works of the church except those of the wicked Jezebel and her followers.

What more could even God want than the attributes mentioned in verse 19? What a perfect picture of many churches today! But He found fault. His perfection is infinite; His perception also. Many contemporaries of that time must have thought this a perfect church. It had love, which is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:14) but it was far from perfect as a church. The evil in it was sufficient to blacken the character of the church as a whole in God's sight. It had love and Paul had told the Corinthians that without love they were nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-2) and John said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). They are the words of Jesus.

In Thyatira the woman Jezebel had carried her teaching and practice on love to an extreme—and to a *low* level. She probably began by compromising truth in the name of love. This writer heard a young minister say some years ago, "If I have to choose between love and the word of God I choose love." But no such choice is either necessary or desirable. No such choice is open to the Christian. The same God who said through John the verse quoted above said also through the same apostle, "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments" (1 John 5:2-3). (See also 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

Love and the word—both incarnate in the Lord Jesus—are inseparable. *Truth* is to be spoken in *love*. When love transcends truth it degenerates to something far less than the love of 1 Corinthians 13 and other passages in the Bible. This must be what happened at Thyatira. Jezebel reminds one of the parable of the woman who hid leaven, which has an evil significance, in three measures of meal until all was leavened (Matthew 13:33). Jezebel had not gotten that far but she was well on the way when this message came.

Even to this woman who had sunk so low dragging others with her God gave time to repent, but she would not. Those who followed her could not hide behind her. They reaped the same judgment. To the overcomers verses 24-29 are precious promises. Each individual who kept aloof from this evil—"he that overcometh, and he that keepeth *my* works unto the end to him will I give authority over the nations . . ." (v. 26-29) .

So ends the sordid story of Jezebel. Whether that was really her name we may not know. It may have been used because she was like the Jezebel of the Old Testament, wife of Ahab.

Love is all God said it is if it is the kind of love He was talking about. He knows all about love for He is love. And John whom we call "the apostle of love" wrote, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

"A man may live with Buddha, but when he dies, he dies alone"

I know you will want to praise God with us. So many prayers have been lifted up to God about Peggy's recent major operation, we believe God has given us victory as a result of your prayers. Peggy has made a remarkable recovery and soon will be her normal self again.

Many of you have been writing and asking about the conditions in Vietnam now. In Saigon, it is terribly noisy as usual, but quite peaceful. We never hear the roar of the bombs around Saigon now and only recently have we been hearing the big guns ten or twenty miles from Saigon. So there is peace in Saigon and most folks are far more concerned about making a living than about the war. However, the Vietnamese soldiers and the pilots with which we work, know that there is still war almost everywhere in the countryside, and they are called upon to supply and support soldiers in hundreds of skirmishes throughout the country almost daily. When one is wounded or killed in battle, we usually know about it quickly through a telephone call from one of his friends who knows us, and I join the family, meeting the body as it comes to Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

Recently, I was trying to comfort the mother of a pilot who studied with us in America. He considered Jesus but never embraced him as Savior and Lord. Oh! it was a sad day for his old mother. Her only son was dead and now no hope or assurance from Buddha. You know a man may live with Buddha, but when he dies, he dies alone, because Buddha is not there. He is alone in darkness with all his sins and his guilt. Only a Christian can truly say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." As all of us looked on, the helpers took the body of her son out of cold storage and began to place it in a plain wooden coffin and then poured scented leaves over the body and nailed the top down. As they placed the picture of the young man and an offering of food in front of the coffin, the old mother began beating upon my chest and crying, "My only son! My only son! Why did God take my only son?"

Now in contrast to this, last week we witnessed the hope of the righteous. There was a fierce battle at Quang Tri, about two weeks ago. The son of one of our native preachers was killed. Brother Nguyen Din Bao and his wife grieved very much, but it was not the sorrow of those that had no hope. Their compassion

and trust in God was a testimony to their faith and hope in Jesus. Incidentally, as we stood there at the beautiful National Cemetery, northeast of Saigon, we could count at least 45 more flag-draped coffins to be buried that day in one cemetery. And so, although there is peace in Saigon, there is still war in Vietnam.

At our Wednesday night prayer service this week Brother Than Van Can gave a moving testimony of God's care and protection for his son at Cong Thuom in the Central Highlands. After the VC had made a daring suicide raid upon his position and all of his men were either killed or captured, Brother Can's son was lost in the jungle for three days and he wrote to his father that only his knowledge of the Bible and his faith in God sustained him in his fear and hardship. Also, last Wednesday night a young Christian man attended our service and told of God's protection in the Delta area. He is assigned to political warfare work for the government, we call it pacification. On the Mekong River, in this little sleepy hamlet of only 400 people, he lives in a house next door to a village chieftain. In that house, also lives the wife of the VC commander for the area. Man says he always knows when the VC will raid the hamlet and the safest place to be is in the house of the commander's wife. At night the VC flags are out, and in the day time the government flags. Crazy, mixed-up world, isn't it!

We really praise God for providing us a more convenient home and actually closer to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, and also for providing funds to purchase a small used car for our work. After nine months of riding bicycles and taxis, it's a real blessing. Also, we want you to remember us to God as we are involved in concentrated language study. I am trying to study four hours every day. We know our ministry will be much more effective when we learn to speak well, the national language.

Brethren, I do believe that Vietnam's darkest hour is approaching, yet less than one-half of one percent of the people here know Jesus, and there are at least six ethnic-minority tribes in the mountains of Vietnam whose language has never been written. And so, they have never heard the sweet story of God's love in their language. Keep that in mind the next time you are tempted to be bored with the Gospel. If we believe that the night is fast passing and the day is at hand, let us remember that for millions there will never be a day, only eternal darkness, with sorrow and regret and the abode of demons—because we did not love their souls enough to care.

It is a great strength to us to hear of your continued prayer-support and interest in our ministry, and to know that you are back of us is a great encouragement.

Recently, a heart-broken young Vietnamese mother came to Peggy and me and requested that we take her two sons. Her husband was killed in the war, she is expecting another child, and she had no way to feed them—no family, no means of support. I am sure you agree that no mother should have to make such a choice. With part of the compassionate and benevolent funds that you have made available, we were able to meet some of her immediate needs

and help her to keep her children. Then we directed her to more permanent help. For all of these things and more we know you will want to praise God with us. Our hearts have been especially gladdened recently with the obvious increased faith and commitment on the part of some of our young men and women at the church here. Pray with us that they will be strong and true and no matter what they face in the future that they will be able to stand.
—*Mac LeDoux*, Saigon, South Vietnam, May newsletter.



In Capetown, a new car

Our cottage meetings and film strip classes show interest, and we are looking forward to witnessing many baptisms, Lord willing. I am also praying and hoping that the series of filmstrip lessons I am showing in a home in Bridgetown may result in souls being saved. The attendance has been very encouraging.

Our regular services Lord's Day mornings and evenings remain commendable. Praise the Lord, there is a thirst after righteousness, and thank God for the active men we have within the congregation, who are the positive answer for growth.

At the moment we are all excited awaiting the official plans from the architect for our new building project at Hanover Park, a very large built up colored township, indeed ready for harvest!

Our prayers are that in the same manner the congregation at Steenberg, where Brother and Sister Chrissop are assisting, shall also have the privilege of obtaining ground to erect their own building. Speaking of the Chrissops, may God at this time bless Brother Chrissop, who has not been too well with his heart complaint of late.

At this time I would like to ask that all who read *Word and Work* might share in their prayers for my wife, who was admitted to the hospital last week for gall stones, that everything may go well with her, enabling her to walk side by side with my family in labouring for the Master.

Finally, our deep appreciation to all those who contributed and made it possible for me to obtain the new car—"Ebenezer." God bless them abundantly. May God continue to undertake that the monthly installment may be met. We are thankful and patient. —*Thomas Hartle*, Capetown, South Africa, June 12.



Leadership meeting in Rhodesia

I am sending you a picture of the men who attended our special meeting (lectureship) which we held over the Easter weekend at the Gatooma church. The subject of the meeting was "Leadership," which is a subject very badly needed not only here in Africa among the churches but in America as well. The Lord needs Spirit filled leaders to direct the work of His church everywhere. —*W. L. Brown*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, May 16.

Believer travels 1600 miles to be baptized

Since I wrote last we had a wonderful experience. You remember that we visited friends in Durban last year. We took this friend to church there, and we talked with her about being baptized (she believed in Christ). She wrote quite occasionally and seemed to be attending many of the meetings there. Well, she surprised us by walking into church here at Waterfalls a week ago! She drove 1600 miles to be baptized—though she could have been baptized at Durban she wanted to come here. He baptized her on Tuesday afternoon. She went on her way rejoicing early Wednesday morning.

Then there was another baptism we were so thrilled about. Mrs. Coleen Edgar was baptized here at Waterfalls recently. She is an Australian married to a Rhodesian. David baptized her. We all feel she is a very fine person and now she is a new creature in Christ. David did baptize another young woman recently; these are all white people. The Europeans are harder to reach than the African, as so little has been done for white people by our group.

The African churches are planning a big camp meeting on the 6-7-8-9th of July. They asked Daddy B. to speak on Sunday morning. They really do well managing their own meetings now. —*Addie Brown*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, June 13.

Speaking tour and furlough

One of our trips in May was to the remote Tuli area near the South African border. We also visited there last October.

Brother Velephi and I went around by Brother Nyembesi's place for him to go with us. He understands the Venda language which is used in that area. The children at one place sang a song saying the gospel is sweet or beautiful in five different languages.

We were out for ten days and visited four different congregations. We had very good meetings with many visitors, twenty-one were baptized.

Lord willing we leave Bulawayo on the 21st of June and will arrive in Winnipeg, Canada on the evening of the 22nd. We are looking forward very much to visiting our families and friends in Canada. —*Leonard Bailey*, Bulawayo, Rhodesia, June 13.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Austin, Texas: The Word and Work is one of the best balanced publications I know of among the Restoration heirs. Please keep up the good work. While many of your readers may not share your views on prophecy, we share your love of Jesus and appreciate your efforts at sharing it with us. —*Larry C. Jackson*

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: We are still encountering problems in building our new house of worship but are relying on God and pressing on. Our building bond program begins June 3 with a \$55,000 issue at 7½%. Anyone interested in helping through investment should contact our church office.

We praise God for the decisions recorded since our last report. Five have made decisions for Christ, four baptisms and one transfer of member-

ship. Continue to pray for us as we labor for Him. —*Vaughn A. Reeves*

Highland Church, Louisville: Our Revival Meeting is July 22-27, with Orell Overman preaching.

Abilene, Texas: We miss the fellowship which was so readily available in the Louisville area. The Lord has abundantly blessed us, though there are some difficulties here, but the Lord has revived the work somewhat and the potential is tremendous. "Lazarus," the old P.C.S. bus, has served faithfully this past year with little trouble, and there is the possibility, Lord willing, that we'll purchase a V.W. van as an additional bus. The youth work is among bi-linguals and tri-colors, and there has been some progress among Mexican adults, finally. —*Ben Rake, Jr.*

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