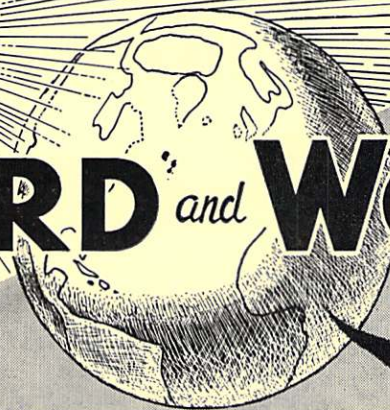


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# THE WORD AND WORK

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## Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

### Baptized devils?

E. Stanley Jones once said, "Three-fourths of all church members have never been reborn." We can't vouch for the accuracy of his estimate, but a similar concern was expressed at the closing afternoon session of the Louisville Christian Fellowship Week about seven years ago. Several brethren voiced concern over the fact that a large percentage of the members of their congregations showed no signs of spiritual life. Readers of Jimmie Lovell will recall that he often made reference to our churches' being infested with "baptized devils." Where such a condition exists, there are going to be problems.

The basic problem is the presence of the enemy in the camp. Imagine an army in which every other man is an enemy soldier in disguise, taking orders from a foreign government! That is exactly the situation in many churches. "What concord has Christ with Belial?" How can light and darkness coexist? How could there be manifest the unity of the Spirit when the many have never received the Holy Spirit?

Think of the opportunities this affords Satan. When church affairs—selection of elders or a minister, disbursement of funds, or other decisions—are decided by majority vote, you know who swings the election. Satan knows how to direct matters to maintain "a name that you are alive" even when "you are dead." From the outside, everything looks good. The services can be beautiful—even "reverent"—but there is no manifestation of the life and power of God.

No, it doesn't have to be a complete take-over by Satan. All he needs are a few agents strategically placed. The genius of it is that most of Satan's helpers don't even realize that they're working for him. Many of those who "think they're saved" or "hope to be saved" have never in fact been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness—and they don't know it. What real fellowship can God's saints have with such as these? Can a body really function as a body when half the organs are artificial?

## **"We preach Christ . . ."**

What is responsible for such a widespread condition as this? What perpetuates it? In my judgment, it is primarily due to church-centered preaching, where it should be Christ-centered. Salvation is given a man-centered presentation ("four steps and you're in"), while Scripture says, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." It is His work, sovereignly bestowed through the Holy Spirit—not a bottle of pills for us to dispense at our pleasure. There was a time (Acts 5:13) when no man dared take it upon himself to "join the church." Such an atmosphere is not ours to create, but we can desire it and ask the Lord to produce it. We can present salvation as His work, and we can similarly present the church as His project and not ours.

For centuries attempts have been made to weed out the "tares." Usually, these attempts have taken the form of a creed. Some churches require new members to sign a "church covenant" which may include such things as a pledge not to smoke or drink. And other church renews the licenses of its ministers every year, requiring them to sign—every year—a detailed doctrinal statement. But can these precautions guarantee spiritual life to a church or ward off the intrusion of false disciples? It hasn't worked in the past; correct doctrine is not enough. "The devils believe (doctrinal facts) and tremble."

The only valid basis for fellowship (man to man, or man to God) is life. The parable of the vine tells it beautifully. "If ye abide (or continue) in me . . ." This "abiding" is simply the continuing flow of His life into me, and this (plus the husbandman's care) produces the fruit. But the fruit is not the focal point—except in America; we Americans worship anything that gets results. The fruit comes from the life of the vine, and not vice versa. The life is the thing, and yet Bible commentaries give it scant notice.

Let's magnify the Source. If the Lord Jesus is exalted among us as He should be, sinners will be converted—not merely churched. Furthermore, the atmosphere in our assemblies will acquire an odor of life to those who are being saved and an odor of death to those who perish (2 Cor. 2:16). This is an automatic filter that will separate out much of the chaff. Our Lord's personal ministry had the effect of repelling the unbelievers and attracting to Himself the believers. Will He—in our midst—do anything differently today? Only one thing, then, is needful—Christ Jesus in our midst. Yes, just Jesus—acknowledged, honored, worshiped as Lord.

"But I fear lest by any means—as the serpent completely deceived Eve in his craftiness—your minds should be corrupted from the singleness (and the chasteness) which are due unto Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). We stumble at simplicity, don't we?

# Hope

Asa Baber

Read Romans 5:1-11

If there is one thing that the Devil would like to take away from Christians, it is their hope of eternal life. Webster says hope is "desire with expectation of attaining that which is desired, or belief that it is obtainable." We often use the word wrongly, meaning, "I wish it were true but do not expect it to be." Such a meaning is not in the Bible.

Hope is intermingled so thoroughly in Scripture that it is surely one of the basic underlying truths. It is one of those truths not obtainable by an intellectual study but rather one revealed by the Holy Spirit. It is important because our security depends on it. "And thou shalt be secure because there is hope, yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety" (Job 11:18).

Happiness depends on hope. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose help is in the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:5). There is joy in hope. "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing in prayer" (Romans 12:12). The reason of our hope is that we expect to share in the fruits of that labor. The Christian's hope is a special kind of hope—a living hope. It is spiritually discerned and comes by spiritual growth. It is a better hope, compared to anything ever had previous to this age.

Hope is full of assurance, "and we desire that everyone of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Hebrews 6:11). "That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which entered into that within the veil" (Hebrews 6:18, 19). It is called the blessed hope by Paul in Titus 2:13. It is sure, without any doubt, stedfast, unmovable.

This hope will cause you to live pure lives. It will cause you to work and watch while waiting for Christ to come for us. It is comforting to all who have lost loved ones that have gone on to be with Christ, for it will be a great time of reunion. It will be a time of separation; those who are not Christians will be left for the judgment of God. Paul said it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the just God.

Look at Hebrews 9:28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He came once at birth, He will come the second time for His church, which will be looking for Him. This appearing is only to those who wait for Him. This appearing of the Lord is different from His return, at which time every eye shall see Him. Are you waiting for your Lord to come?

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## Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



**Will heathen people who have never had a chance to hear the gospel be lost?**

Every *responsible* person who does not accept and follow Christ as Savior and Lord will be lost. The New Testament does not offer any salvation except through Christ. We simply cannot avoid the plain meaning of many Scriptures. "He that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John 5:12).

It is around that word *responsible* that the interest centers, however. Who is responsible? Many Christians believe the Word makes an exception of children until they reach an age sometimes called "the age of accountability." This is not clearly set forth in Scripture, but it is true that Jesus speaks of the children in terms that indicate they are not under condemnation (Matthew 18:1-6; 19:13-15). Until the child can know what sin is, who Jesus is, and can exercise faith, we assume, on the basis of this rather weighty evidence, that sin is not imputed or else the cleansing of the Lord is imputed.

In the same way we may raise questions concerning the person who has never grown up in mental capacity. We do not believe God holds responsible those of whatever age who have never possessed the mental capacity of believing. (Those who have lost sanity after having capability and opportunity to believe are surely in a different situation.)

With the same reasoning some would hold that those who have never heard and therefore have not had a chance are not responsible. The cases are not exactly parallel, however, for to normal persons moving toward adult status, there comes a consciousness of sin. It is universally true that very unenlightened people develop a sense of right and wrong, thus of sin and a consciousness of having sinned. Certainly the untaught are not *as* responsible (cf. Lk. 12:47-48) as those of us who have had many opportunities, but it is not possible to see them as safe, either. Under the old covenant God seems to have allowed for such ignorance, but the early proclaimers of the Gospel declared that day past (Acts 14:15-17; 17:30). Even those who have never heard the Gospel are not without the testimony of

nature, and hence, are "without excuse" (Acts 14:17; Romans 1:20-21). Romans 2:12-16 seems to suggest judgment for such ones on the basis of how well they have lived by their own innate standards, but even so, the passage speaks of perishing (v. 12), not of salvation.

It seems to me that God has not fenced Himself into a corner with respect to such ones and He does not clearly say what their final status is to be, but neither have we any real reason for dismissing them from responsibility before God or ourselves from responsibility for carrying the gospel to them. Of this much we may be sure: Christians are under orders to carry the Gospel to every person in the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). We must not hold back on the grounds that those who have never had a chance will be saved. We do well to regard it as a life and death matter.

**The Bible teaches that Christ was tempted in all points as we are. Some teach that He was unable to sin in any of those temptations. If this is so, how could He be tempted?**

I agree that where there is no possibility of sin there can be no temptation. Such is the nature of temptation that it must find a possibility of response in the one tempted. Even in sinful man certain specific sins may not be very tempting because the individual has little desire for that particular evil. Yet, in one sense those who insist on the inability of Christ to sin are right. The problem is the same one we meet all the way through the Gospels and arises any time we consider the perfect presence of both God and Man in one Being. God cannot sin. Man can sin. A Being who can sin is less than God. A man who cannot sin is not perfectly man. Combine manhood and God and you have a problem. Finite minds are never quite satisfied with the explanations, never quite understand the God-Man. Seeing this is all the doing of God, however, we need not be too surprised we do not understand it. There are many facets of His being we do not and cannot understand.

Our God neither slumbers nor sleeps, but Jesus slept. Our God is not circumscribed by infirmities of the flesh; Jesus hungered, thirsted, grew tired, and wept. God cannot die, but Jesus died. Some would use these paradoxes as "proof" that Jesus was not God, but nothing could be further from the truth. He was God, but He was God in human flesh. It is to be expected that on earth among men we often see the human side of Him. Many of the Gospel accounts seem to show more of His human characteristics than of His characteristics as Deity. God took on Himself human flesh for a purpose and accepted some of the limitations that a human body imposed.

As God, Jesus could not yield to the temptations of Satan; in fact, He was not even tempted. Had Jesus yielded He would have



shown Himself to be an imposter and one less than God. But as man, He was sorely tempted and was kept from sin, not by a mechanical impossibility, but by His resisting. As contradictory as that seems, it is, nevertheless, true.

It is my conviction that Jesus met Satan's temptations in His role as Perfect Man. He refused to perform a miracle or call for angelic help. He resisted with the same equipment Adam had for resisting—the revealed and known will of God—and He was successful. He went into the arena with Satan with human power to show that man did not have to fall. Moreover, He knew by experience the power of temptation because as a man He experienced desire and could have yielded. If as a man He could not have sinned, then there was no temptation and He did not learn by experience so as to be touched with the feeling of our infirmity. Yet this is one of the very reasons for His temptation (Hebrews 5:1-10; 4:15).

Sometimes, especially when dealing with God, we can only accept both apparently contradictory sides of a truth and wait for the time when we shall no longer know in part (1 Corinthians 13:9-10).

#### **Why was Jesus baptized?**

Certainly Jesus was not baptized for the remission of sins, because He had none to be remitted or put away. Some, opposed to baptism for the remission of sins, try to make a point of this. But it is just as equally true that He was not baptized *because of* remission of sins (that is, because His sins had already been put away, as some contend the purpose of baptism to be). He had no sins that had been put away. Jesus' baptism, in the very nature of the case, was unique. In one sense He needed not to be baptized at all. John recognized this purity and the lack of the need for baptism, therefore "John would have hindered him" (Matthew 3:14).

Jesus Himself gave the reason: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Our Great Example, though He needed it not at all, was baptized so as to provide us the right example. None can ever hold back "because Jesus was not baptized." Can you imagine the number of times human beings would have rejected baptism on this grounds, seeing the multitudes who reject it even after He was baptized? His baptism marks the beginning of His public ministry and affords us an occasion for further being taught in His will.

Those who reject baptism for the remission of sins cannot find support for their position in the example of Jesus nor in the teaching of the New Testament.

# Problems, Possibilities, and Pointers

*"Sciunt plerique omnes, sed non omnibus noc venit in mentum."*  
—Epicurus

"Almost everyone knows this but it has not occurred to everyone's mind." Epicurus was pointing out that a thought you have or an idea may be well known to you but not to others.

The whole purpose of this column is the exchange of those ideas. Take just a few minutes and share some of the ideas that you have. What are some of the successful methods that you have been using? Share them!

The problem that you may be having, others may have conquered. If you will respond with a problem, a possible answer, or a pointer numerous readers could benefit.

## I. Problems

"In response to your "Problems, Possibilities and Pointers," the article now appearing in the *Word and Work*, I'm sending a problem we have faced here and others may have faced elsewhere. We would appreciate response from the various readers. This is the problem: There are in our congregation some who have been divorced and remarried while their spouse is still living. These ones have committed adultery and we are interested as to which areas of service they can render in the church. In a congregation deprived of quantity as well as quality of men who is to lead? They're adulterous men who have come back to the Lord and stated publicly their desire to serve the Lord having recognized their sin. Can we use them in any of the following areas: Sunday School teacher, Sunday School Superintendent, the Lord's Table, Trustees, Chairmen of certain committees, Song Leader, benevolent works? Thank you for your interest in this problem. We will be looking for your answers."

2. "Throughout the duration of my ministry I have had to deal with the problem of being depended upon too much. The problem that seems to face the church in this regard is that of shifting responsibilities to the preacher. What are some of the methods or techniques that other ministers or elders have used to cause the congregation to assume their responsibilities more appropriately? I can illustrate the problem in the following way: There will be at least a 20% decrease in attendance in any particular meeting of the church if the congregation is aware that the preacher will be absent. Most Bible students understand that the presence of the preacher is not necessary in order that members of the congregation be edified. What can be done to change the ideas that we are using and practising?"

## II. Possibilities

The problems listed above come to us from two separate churches. Please consider the matters that have been brought to the fore-

front and after careful, prayerful thought, respond with your ideas. We understand that these are only possible answers. Your idea, however, may be like a seed. A 16th Century poet, James Thompson, penned these words: "Delightful task! To rear the tender thought, to teach the young idea how to shoot to pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind!" Your ideas or seed thoughts may be sufficient in the mind of another and it could grow into a solution.

### III. Pointers

#### *Publicity Possibilities of the Telephone*

Probably the most valuable tool which a minister possesses outside of his Bible is the telephone. Properly organized, your telephone will enable you to reach every member of your church within the space of a few hours and you yourself need speak only a few words to one individual to get the ball rolling.

The "Telephone Brigade" is organized as follows: A Brigade Commander is appointed who is responsible for the efficient operation of the Brigade. When a message is to be relayed to the membership, the minister simply phones the Brigade Commander and gives her the message and latest time when it is to be relayed. Because such messages are better understood if the Brigade Captains have the message in front of them, the leader gives the message in written form. (There is one Brigade Captain to each 20 families to be contacted.)

In the event that it is preferred to handle the entire matter over the telephone, the Brigade Commander relays the message by phone to the Captains and they in turn relay the information to the members.

Here are some valuable ways in which the Telephone Brigade may work:

1. To announce or remind of meetings or activities of the church.
2. To obtain birth dates of all members of all families so that all such members may be remembered on their birthdays.
3. To obtain volunteers for special duties within the church.
4. To obtain the names of prospective members by inquiring of each member of the troop whether they know of friends or neighbors who do not attend church regularly.
5. To inform members of attendance drives.

Other ways in which the Telephone Brigade may be utilized will readily be apparent.

There may be in the column this month a matter that you have considered. Please respond with your thoughts. Others may find them very helpful. Please send all correspondence to:

Michael T. Sanders  
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Louisville, Kentucky 40218

# PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

## What Lies Ahead? (3)

Willis H. Allen

### Israel

The greatest miracle of the ages is the preservation of Israel as a distinct people in the world. Without a national government for more than 25 centuries, and deprived of a national home for more than 18 centuries; scattered among most countries of the earth, Israel has remained a separate and distinct people, with ethnic, social, and religious similarities to those of ancient times. And since May 14, 1948 Israel is again a nation among nations, with diplomatic relations with the leading nations of the world. To students of the word of God, this development did not come as a surprise, for Israel's regathering into her native land is a distinct fulfillment of numerous promises of God in the Bible. We shall give attention to only a few of them here.

As the Israelites were nearing the land of Canaan at the close of the forty years of wilderness wanderings, they were warned by God's faithful servant of the calamities that would befall them if and when they should turn away from God. They would be scattered among the nations, "whither Jehovah shall lead you." Moses further predicted: "From thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou searchest after him with all thine heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice" (Deuteronomy 4:27-30; read the entire context, vs. 25-31). Thus, at the very beginning of Israel's national history as the chosen people of God, the Lord predicted briefly what lay ahead for them. For our present purpose we shall confine our study largely to the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who prophesied just prior to, and during the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

Let us note some declarations from the 36th chapter of Ezekiel. Here the "mountains of Israel" are addressed as symbolic of desolation and barrenness, the subjects of ridicule and scorn on the part of the nations who had taken possession of them (see vs. 1-7). But this condition is to be changed, according to the holy purpose of God. "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; For they are at hand to come . . . and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited, and the

waste places shall be builded; . . . they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more bereave them of children" (vs. 8-12).

Now drop down to v. 22: "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land." Note: "take you from among the nations, and gather you *out of all the countries.*" This certainly looks beyond the return of the remnant from Babylon under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. See on this, Isaiah 11:11-16, noting particularly that the Lord will "set his hand *again the second time* to recover the remnant of his people that shall remain" (emphasis ours). Also, "he set up an ensign for the nations, and will gather the outcasts of *Israel*, and gather together the dispersed of *Judah* from the *four corners of the earth.*"

### The dry bones

Passing now to Ezekiel 37 we note these truths again brought to the attention of the prophet in two significant figures—the vision of the valley of dry bones, and the parable of the two sticks. Read vs. 1-14. Ezekiel is transported "in the Spirit of Jehovah" and set down in the midst of a valley which was full of dry bones. He was not left to view them from one spot, but was led around about them so he could see all of them. He noted particularly two things: (1) "there were very many in the open valley;" (2) "they were very dry;" no sign of life could be in them. The prophet was asked, "Son of man" (an appellation applied to Ezekiel some 89 times), "can these bones live?" The prophet's answer shows that he was a spiritual man; he replied, "O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest;" that is, "Only thou dost know." Now, with your Bible open, follow verse by verse, step by step, and note that as Ezekiel prophesied according to the Lord's instructions, accompanied by the great noise of an earthquake, the bones came together, "bone to its bone," sinews came upon them, then flesh, which was covered by skin; but as yet there was no breath. Then the prophet was commanded again to prophesy (and this is significant), saying, "Thus saith Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live . . . and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (vs. 9-10).

What does all this mean? We are not left to guess, theorize, or speculate; for the Lord Himself says: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel" (v. 11). Israel's hope is not lost, as many of them feared; they are not "clean cut off." "I will open your graves" (used here in a figurative sense) "and cause you to come up

out of your graves, O my people: and I will bring you into the land of Israel." Language could not more clearly set forth Jehovah's intention to restore the national existence of His people. This is the word of the Lord. Let us, with Abraham, be "fully assured that what he has promised, he is able also to perform" (Romans 4:21); and with Paul, who said when he was comforting the distressed sailors in the shipwreck, "I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken" (Acts 27:25). "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7).

### **The two sticks**

Before making further observation on the fulfillment of these predictions, let us take a look at the second figure in Ezekiel 37. Read vs. 15-25. Following the death of Solomon the nation of Israel had been divided into two parts, the northern kingdom going by the name of Israel (frequently Ephraim, who was the younger son of Joseph), and the southern kingdom by the name of Judah. That distinction continued until the dispersion of both peoples. But when God again restores them to Himself, the two houses of Israel will be united in one, never again to be separated.

This is the lesson God would have Ezekiel to set before the people in the passage immediately before us. The prophet is told to take two sticks: one is to be engraved, "For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions;" on the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions." He is then told to approach the people, holding both sticks in one hand, and explain their meaning to the people. Thus God promises again to gather them from the nations, make them one nation in their own land; and one king shall be over them all. In vs. 24 and 25 the Lord explains who that king is to be—"my servant David"—and the nature and extent of his rule. We do not understand this to mean, as some have thought, that David himself will be raised from the dead and caused to dwell on the earth as king. When other scriptures are considered in connection with this (for example, Luke 2:32), the implication is clear that He who came as David's son, according to the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is to be the King, and thus David's throne will be re-established. But into this subject we cannot further enter now; perhaps, at a later time.

### **The regathering of Israel**

It should be pointed out that the present state of Israel, referred to in our opening paragraph, did not come about through a religious movement, but through a nationalist, political movement known as Zionism, which had its beginning near the turn of our century. Its founder, Theodore Hertzl, was not a religious man. In fact, he is said to have been an atheist, as were many of its leaders. It began to take definite form during World War I, at the signing of

the British Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, which provided for part of Palestine to be set apart as a homeland for the Jews. At that time the number of Jews in Palestine was estimated to be about 25,000. Jews began pouring in in ever-increasing numbers from many parts of the world. In 1947, a year before Israel's declaration as an independent state, the number was said to be about 500,000. Today, its population approximates 3 million. The regathering is still going on, but the Jews are there in unbelief. We believe that this is all of God, but it is not to be thought of as the final and complete ingathering, when they will receive and acknowledge Jesus Christ, whom they formerly rejected, as their Messiah and Savior. This will not happen until the coming of Christ (see Matthew 24:29-31).

Israel still has much to suffer before her final glorification. She must suffer "great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21; read the entire paragraph, vs. 15-28). "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7). Here in this chapter of Jeremiah the day of Israel's redemption comes into view (read the entire chapter). But it comes through suffering. The Lord asks: "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?" (v. 6). The extent of Israel's suffering, and the reasons for it are brought out by the prophet in vs. 12-17 of this chapter. "For, thus saith Jehovah, thy hurt is incurable, and thy wound is grievous," "I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy . . . for the greatness of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee."

But eventually Israel will be saved out of it. "They that devoured thee shall be devoured; and they that despoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wound." Then, but not till then, will be realized the goal of Daniel's seventy seven-year weeks (ch. 9:24-27): "To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (v. 24). Even now Israel is the target of surrounding nations, who are preparing to pounce upon her. The stage is set for the catching up of true believers in Christ, the revealing of the "man of sin"—the "son of perdition" (2 Thes. 2:3), and the ushering in of the seventieth seven-year week of Daniel's prophecy. In the last half of that period the evil forces of the world, under the leadership of the dragon (the Devil), the beast, and the false prophet, gather themselves together in the valley of Megiddo (Armageddon), for the final onslaught (see Revelation 16:13-16). They will be summarily dealt with by the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, with the armies of heaven, who smites

the hosts with the sword of His mouth, and the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, and Satan himself is bound for a thousand years (See Revelation 19:11–20:3).

Then will Israel, after she shall have been brought through the fire of tribulation, acknowledge the Lord Jesus as her King and Savior, and serve Him for ever. But here we must stop. For a description of Israel's final glorification, read Isaiah, chapters 60 and 66; Amos 9:8-15; Zechariah 14:8-11. There are many others.

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**Is it really difficult to understand?**

## **Symbolic Language**

Stanford Chambers — 1945

“Who can understand symbolic language, such as makes up the book of Revelation?” Sixth grade pupils in school may take fright at algebraic symbols, but later they come to realize what a great help they are in mathematics. The things symbols stand for are real, actual things. Paul's “thorn in the flesh” speaks of something very real. The thorn is symbol, but the buffeting not so. When he wrote, “Shall I come to you with a rod?” the Corinthians understood that the effects of his exercise of apostolic authority, if made necessary, would be a very real something they did well to avoid.

“Chains of slavery” symbolize something very real, likewise “the oil of gladness.” When we say, “Wycliffe was the morning star of the Reformation,” no one mistakes the meaning. If we read of the devastating Nazi flood which swept over Russia even unto Stalingrad, no one misunderstands. Someone is called “a Quisling,” and the one word conveys more than a whole paragraph without the symbol. The angel lays “hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan,” and there we have the character of our great adversary given us in small space.

Give some careful thought in reading and rereading key passages such as Revelation 17, and let the Book give the meaning of the outstanding symbols it uses. Let us not be hiding behind symbols. They are for the illumination of God's people, who are supposed to have spiritual discernment. To the world and the carnally minded they will be obscuring and *should be*. Fake fulfillments would be more easily palmed off, were the future forecast altogether in common speech. Let us be appreciative of our Father's careful choice of words and seek to understand Him.

If I say of a certain conference, “It turned out to be a Munich,” I have told you in one word what it would otherwise take many



words to say. When Jesus said, "Tell that old fox . . ." He gave in one word the outstanding attribute of King Herod. Jesus is called the Lamb of God. There we have the gospel truth of His sacrifice and atonement for our sins. But He is also the Lion of Judah; in that word you have a function He is yet to perform. When Ignatius, being carried to his martyrdom by Roman soldiers, writes, "I am chained to ten leopards," we get his point. If a certain woman is called a "Jezebel," you know her character without a paragraph of description. If a nation is spoken of under the term "beast," you know the character of that nation as God sees it, and if the head of that nation comes to be called "the beast," you as easily know his character and that he has become the government of the beast-nation (as, for instance, Hitler, who said, "I am Germany."). And if the beast has horns, don't take such fright as to fail to note the Lord's own explanation of what the horns are. (Do we not speak of a certain law as having teeth? See Rev. 17:12.) Many have been surprised to discover how few symbols there are which the Book itself does not explain. Consult your concordance.

"Will Jesus rule with a literal rod of iron?" Did anyone have difficulty understanding Theodore Roosevelt's reference to "a big stick"?

"Is Satan to be bound with a literal chain?" No more and no less than the everlasting chains in which the fallen angels of Peter and Jude are held until the judgment. Likely the "pit" is not different either, and it is not likely just "the truth turned upside down and therefore bottomless"—as some have charged.

"Is the first resurrection a literal resurrection?" Those who raise this question point to the fact that John saw "the souls of those who had been beheaded"—not their bodies. Does anyone mistake the meaning of the account of Pentecost, "There were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." "And Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh . . . threescore and fifteen souls" (Acts 7:13, 14). No, John did not see disembodied souls on thrones and reigning!

"But what about the symbolic numbers?" Yes, there are symbolic numbers. But just because the number seven is often symbolic, it does not follow that it is always so. It was prophesied that the Jews should be in captivity seventy years and it was so. Abraham's seed should be sojourners in a foreign land, and be evil treated 400 years, and it was so. "Time, times, and half a time" are interpreted in Scripture as 42 months and also 1260 days; what is wrong with that? What inspired writer ever laid down the rule that a day in prophecy means a year in time? Not one. Uninspired men have given such a rule. As to the thousand years, what need is there to make it less or more? Show us from Scripture that it means something other than a thousand years and we'll say Amen.

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



## *Viewing the News*

IN THE LIGHT of what the government has made the cigarette manufacturers say on the packages they sell, I wonder how the makers of alcoholic drinks can be left alone any longer after the recent pilot studies conducted by doctors at the University of Washington in Seattle. Those studies reveal a pattern of serious birth defects among children born to alcoholic mothers. The doctors, according to a news dispatch, found that babies born to chronic alcoholic mothers tended to be stunted in physical growth, intelligence, and motor development; they also tend to have small head size and heart defects, and subtle abnormalities of the face and limbs. Some months ago I also reported that other doctors had found that the first drink of an alcoholic beverage begins damage to the brain.

THE CHRISTIAN BEACON, in its August 16 issue this year, revealed that "Back to the Bible Broadcast," which originates in Lincoln, Nebraska, has been dropped from the Lincoln station on which it started 34 years ago. The station vice president wrote to a listener who objected, "We decided that it was in the best interest of all of our listeners if we discontinued the program," but this is undoubtedly the result of the present drive by the FCC to force fundamental preaching off the air. If the "fairness" doctrine of the FCC applied to all sides of the religious and political picture, most stations would need such broadcasts as Back to the Bible, but the doctrine has not, to my knowledge, ever been applied to the political left wing or to the religious "liberals." I hope that this is not a full picture.

MANY political commentators are now beginning to say that the emphasis on the Watergate bugging is not simply to cut down the president but to destroy the power of the presidency. If that is true, then the political left will have made its first step in the drive to tear down our present form of government. I say this in spite of knowing that the president now has much too much power to be good for any man or any government.

DID YOU SEE the AP dispatch dated August 1, 1973, in which Bill Niekirk revealed that after top finance ministers of the major powers met in Washington late in July, Niekirk felt that a new world money system could be expected to dominate the economics of nations within eight to ten months? I saw it only in *Christian Crusade Weekly* for August 26 myself, but I have been expecting this to happen now that the political and economic union known as the Common Market is so close to reaching its intended size. Watch for the results to be announced of the Annual International Monetary Fund Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in September. You might soon see the dollar just a minor currency and for gold to be phased out of the monetary system when, and if, this international system develops.

CONSEQUENCES of our country embracing Red China and turning against Nationalist China are still showing up. Recently, for example, the Seventh Annual Conference of the World Anti-Communist League was scheduled to be held in London, but it had to be cancelled because the British government would not allow

official representatives of Chiang Kai-Shek's Free China (Nationalist China) to enter the country.

**THE CRAZE** for "transcendental meditation" that is sweeping over the country, especially in universities, is rather amazing. Basically TM is nothing but Hinduism and its teachers wear Hindu style beards and clothing. As barren of any worth as any man-made religion, it is being pushed in schools (now even in high schools in many places) where even the name of the Bible or Christ is anathema. Warn people against it as you would any false religion.

**FOR 1976**, one of the interesting things to remember about Nelson Rockefeller is that he was Assistant Secretary of State in 1945. At that time J. Edgar Hoover sent agents to Rockefeller with top secret FBI reports on Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White, identified communists who were helping form the United Nations. The Herald of Freedom for August 17, 1973, says that "Rockefeller later admitted he destroyed both reports." It would be interesting to think what would have happened if the communist work of Hiss and White had been made public. I believe it would have kept the United States out of the U. N., something that would have been of great benefit to us.

**THE ONLY** Christian church building in Afghanistan has been demolished by the government of the city of Kabul. By law Afghans were not permitted to attend. You might contrast this work done by Moslems to the fact that the third Moslem mosque in this country is now being planned, a \$2.5 million one in Hollywood to add to the ones in Washington, D. C. and Detroit.

**SOME GOOD NEWS:** Fifty thousand delegates are expected to the Mid-America Sunday School Convention in Detroit October 25-27 . . . The president of the Republic of Liberia is such a staunch Baptist that he recently preached in First Baptist church in Dallas, Texas . . . Dr. Clyde M. Narramore says he discovered sixty Bible studies regularly being conducted at West Point Military Academy when he spent three days

there recently . . . Peloubet's Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons is now sending out its one hundredth anniversary volume. In those 100 years the notes have had only four editors.

**A COMMISSION** of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan recommended on August 9 that the denomination open its ministries to admitted homosexuals and allow church buildings to be used by homosexual groups, thus joining with several other professedly Christian groups in ignoring all that the Bible says against homosexuality. They also will ignore the 27 deaths in Houston by a homosexual. Apparently they will never face up to reality, either in the Bible or in life around them.

**AN ARTICLE** in the Tulsa Herald on September 14 by Elliott Wright, an RNS staff writer, tells of a joint effort being made by Lutheran and Catholic scholars on the subject of Peter. The first study, called "Peter in the New Testament," has been finished and will be published by the Augsburg Press and the Paulist Press. Both sides made concessions in the study. The hope seems to be that they can draw back together again. I doubt there is that much time left in this dispensation, the way things deteriorate so fast these days!

**MISS BLACK AMERICA**, Miss Arnice Russell, is a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is getting favorable publicity for her religious emphasis. She works as a fashion designer in New York City, but her home is Indianapolis and she still retains her church membership there.

**GOOD NEWS BROADCASTER**, published by the Back to the Bible Broadcast, has a very fine news column entitled "Significant Religious News." Here are a few samples from the September, 1973, issue: The first interdenominational and evangelical seminary in Germany was scheduled to open in September. Called the Secheim Theological Seminary, it will stress Biblical inerrancy . . . The Cuban government, in spite of its communist character, recently accepted an offer of 10,000 Bibles and 5,000 New

Testaments to be distributed there. Churches in Cuba are said to be filled with young people, it also reports . . . The Wycliffe Bible Translators are beginning one new tribal language project every 13 days and are now at work among 550 tribal groups . . . In Ethiopia, in response to comments by the government, the Sudan Interior Mission has changed its name to Society of International Missionaries . . . Christian Science is losing ground rapidly over the country. In California many churches are quitting and selling their buildings. The Christian Science Monitor lost \$5 million last year . . . A new series of films for "religious edu-

cation" in the public schools is being made in Tallahassee, Florida. I agree with the GNB editor that this does not mean good for Christianity. Most likely Christianity will be presented as one of the many religions of the world, classing it with false works-based world religions.

MANY THANKS again for your help in collecting the materials for this column. Keep the clippings and questions coming to

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# Missionary Messenger

*"Greater things for God"*

Mack LeDoux lives in Saigon, South Vietnam. This is a part of his letter of August 7.

## "OUR HOUSE IS PACKED FULL OF GUESTS"

Oh, for grace to be able to speak this language. I am trying to study at least 2 to 3 hours every day and all day long I practice on everyone. All my classes, which are sometimes four or five a day, are in what we call *Venglish*. Can you figure that one out? A mixture of Vietnamese and English. Peggy too is studying but at a lesser pace. And this is good for her, because our house is packed full of guests. Praise the Lord, that's why we're here.

How the Holy Spirit has been moving here! Joy unspeakable; everywhere. Seems that seed planted a year ago, or even two years ago, is now coming to fruition. For example, yesterday at various times we had at least fifteen people come by to study. Or if they did not come by to study, they ended up studying. One of our young pilots, Nhat, who became a Christian in the states, taught his beautiful young wife. Her name is Viet. Viet came to Jesus a month ago . . . gloriously! And since that time she and Nhat have brought three people to Jesus and helped bring another one. Right now they are teaching about five more. Some are really under conviction. How God works! They are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit makes up the lack of knowledge, doesn't He. What a thrill to see them work. Nhat and Viet practically live with

us. She is teaching Peggy Vietnamese (I have a different teacher) and I am teaching both of them Bible. So when they are not teaching others, I am teaching them. What a joy to serve Jesus!

Sunday when we got to church there was a family of five, a mother and four little children sleeping in the street—no father, no house, no clothing, no money. She was trying to go back to Long Vinh, now completely in communist hands, we found out. She was trying to find her mother-in-law, the only family she has. This family lived in caves like animals for two months in the siege of An Loc, B-52 bombs dropping on them. The oldest child, 12 years, still suffers terrible headaches from the experience. They were filthy beyond measure. We brought them home with us, washed them real good and bought some new clothes for them. How thrilled they were! Of course you can imagine what Viet is doing—working toward appropriating those new white robes of righteousness for them! They are living with us now until we decide what to do with them.

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Nena Laguisan, a member of the Manila church, has been a missionary among primitive tribal people in the Philippines for over two years. A few months ago, she spent a number of weeks back in Manila—for rest and additional training in linguistics. Below she tells what she experienced at that time and after her return to the field. Please pray for her health. She is carrying on a full schedule of evangelism and teaching in her village, but the doctor has restricted her from hiking at present due to her physical condition. —Alex Wilson

### HE GOES BEFORE

“Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:8).

As I begin another period of living with the Ilongot tribe, I feel excitement and fear. As I think of the responsibilities ahead of me, I'm afraid I'm not capable to do the work. My knowledge of God's Word is not enough. I have to learn more.

While getting things ready to leave Manila for the field, a time of testing came. I thought, “How about my family? Do I have to leave them again? How long will I have to be away from home and family?” These questions troubled my mind. Before returning to Ilongot-land, I paid a short visit to my family in the province. I then was almost tempted to stay home and just give up missionary work, but God showed me that that was only my selfish desire. I was reminded of His word, “He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me . . .” (Matthew 10:37). Also, “Who-soever he be of you that forsaketh *not all that he hath*, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). To give up everything you have is the hardest thing a person could do but God wants our *self*

to be fully surrendered to Him. I know that when He gave us His only begotten Son, He counted not the cost.

Then I went again to Ilongot-land, but a different village from before. God had prepared that field for me. I saw the faces of new people. Their warm welcome made me feel at home at once there. Then I thought, "When I left my home, God prepared a home for me here in the tribes. I'm glad I already know their language and culture this time. Surely the Lord is good and He knows what is best for me."

The Lord continually teaches me more about Himself from His Word and establishes me more in faith. He helps me teach in the language of the Ilongots' own heart. Making charts and reading books for beginners is really inspiring as I see their interest and the progress of our literacy classes. Pray that the children will keep attending these classes regularly. I praise God because half of the group of children I taught formerly are now enrolled in a grade school, to learn more. The schoolhouse closest to our village is *several hours' hike* for them but still they are willing to go. Pray that they will soon be reading God's Word translated in their dialect.

Experiencing life in the field as a missionary is hard, but "hardships are easy to endure if we are in the center of God's will." I'm glad that in every circumstance, He enabled me to overcome fear. He helps me in my responsibility to win lost souls among the tribes for Him. I find comfort from His Word when He says, "Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9). Now He gives me a burning desire to do my work as a missionary. Wherever He leads me I will follow. He gave me real concern for the lost as I yielded myself completely to Him. God cannot work through us unless we yield to Him.

In the midst of pain and spiritual battles, what a comfort to know that whatever we do or wherever we go He always goes before us. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:4).

Have *you* heard the Good Shepherd's voice and followed Him?

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### LET US NOT RUST!

Oh, let us not rust out—let us not glide through the world and then slip quietly out without having even blown the trumpet loud and long for our blessed Redemer. At the very least let us see that the devil holds a thanksgiving service in Hell, when he gets news of our departure from the field of battle. —C. T. Studd

John  
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
John

Summary of a sermon preached by ~~John H. Stott~~ Stott ~~for All Souls on September 29, 1950~~

## Christian Maturity

*Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil . . . (Colossians 1:28, 29 RSV).*

This verse is of great importance in itself, because it brings into sharp focus the nature of the apostle Paul's ministry and the objectives by which his life was directed and inspired. It is also important because of the urgent need in the contemporary church for the Christian maturity of which it speaks. The pressures of modern life are so great, and the enticements of the world, the flesh, and the devil so subtle, that only mature Christians can stand against them.

### The goal Paul set

Paul's whole ministry, his proclamation, admonition, and instruction, his toiling, striving, and praying, were all directed to this great end, to "present every man mature in Christ."

This is immediately striking because we are accustomed to think of Paul as the pioneer missionary, the evangelist, the intrepid traveller, who journeyed over sea, swamp, and mountain to win converts, found churches and move on. But no! Paul's overriding purpose was not to bring people to Christ and then abandon them, but to present them mature in Christ. It was not that through the new birth men and women should become and remain babes in Christ, but that they should grow into adult Christian maturity. This is a message for us who are known as evangelical Christians, who believe, love and preach the biblical gospel. We should not be more interested in evangelism than in edification, in converting sinners than in making saints.

But what is Christian maturity? There is a difference between the maturity which may be expected of people as human beings, and that which belongs specifically to Christians. There is such a thing as human maturity which is attainable by people who are not Christians. It is perfectly possible for such to mature physically (in stature), mentally (in wisdom), emotionally (becoming stable, integrated people) and socially (forming adult relationships) without having come to know God through Jesus Christ. This is possible because of God's common grace, His continuing care for human beings as their Creator, by which children are born and then grow up both physically and psychologically.

But in addition to human maturity, there is such a thing as Christian maturity, which is maturity in relation to Christ. It in-

cludes growth in the knowledge of Christ, in faith, love and holiness. It is possible because of the special grace of God, His continuing care for His redeemed people as their Savior, by which they are born again in Christ and then grow up into spiritual and moral maturity. The result of such ripeness of Christian character is steadfastness or stability, so that we are unmoved by the violent pressures of temptation, adversity and false teaching.

### **The means by which the goal is attained**

*"Him we proclaim . . ."* If Christian maturity is maturity in Christ (in knowing, believing, loving and obeying Him), then it is essential to know this Christ in relation to whom we become mature. So Paul proclaimed Christ.

A summary of his proclamation of Christ is given in the verses preceding my text. Jesus Christ is set forth as "the image of the invisible God" (who entered time, space and flesh in order to make God's invisible nature visible) and "the firstborn of all creation" (its source and heir, beginning and end). For, Paul continues, all things were created through Christ and for Christ, and hold together in Him, their principle of cohesion. Further, He is the head of the Church as well as of the universe. It is God's will that Christ should be pre-eminent in everything, for "all the fulness of God" was pleased both to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things by the cross.

Thus Paul passes in a majestic survey from the unique person of Jesus Christ to His unique work as the one and only divine agent in both creation and redemption. The Christ Paul proclaimed was no "gentle Jesus meek and mild," no harmless little ethical teacher, no ignorant Palestinian carpenter, but the supreme revelation of God and the ruler of the universe and the Church.

This vision of the greatness of Jesus Christ is essential for Christian maturity. The meaner our view of Christ, the meaner our Christian lives will be. The loftier our vision of Christ, the more mature in Christ we shall become. When we see and know Him, as He is proclaimed in the pages of the New Testament, we shall see the folly of disbelieving or disobeying Him, and our faith, love and obedience will blossom.

So sure was Paul that the proclamation of Christ was the means of reaching maturity in Christ, that he gave himself without reserve to the task, using both warning and instruction, "toiling and striving" with the self-discipline of an athlete, willing to suffer (he was in prison at the time) and to labor in ministry and prayer. He set a high standard for every Christian minister and lay leader. Responsibility for the pastoral care of the church does not rest with the ordained ministry alone, nor does it consist of public teaching alone. There are other ministries than public teaching (both group work



and individual counseling) and other people than ordained ministers. Indeed, Christian care is the responsibility of every Christian.

### The people for whom Paul was concerned

Paul had no favorites. There was no small elitist group on whom he concentrated, in his desire to present people mature in Christ. On the contrary, he makes this abundantly plain by his threefold repetition of the words "every man": "warning *every man* and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that we may present *every man* mature in Christ."

The historical reason for this emphasis is the particular heresy which was troubling the Colossian church. The false teachers were evidently Gnostics, who taught a form of religious exclusivism. They distinguished between faith (which was elementary) and knowledge (which was advanced). The common herd of Christians were mere believers, they taught, but there was a small and aristocratic group who had been initiated into knowledge and were thus "mature."

Paul vigorously denies this pernicious teaching. Maturity is not restricted to a minority of initiates; it is open to every Christian believer. Everyone who is "in Christ" should become "mature in Christ."

We must apply this first to *our own maturity*. Of course we are all different. Some have particular handicaps of body, mind, temperament or circumstance. And in any case full maturity is unattainable in this life. Only in the next shall we be freed from all our handicaps and limitations, and be made perfect in Christ. Indeed, Paul's verb to "present" every man mature in Christ looks forward to that great day. Nevertheless, we must set this goal of maturity before our eyes and not accept spiritual mediocrity as a norm or lapse into complacency. It is easier to lower our standards to match our performance than to raise our performance to reach our standards. The fact that complete maturity is unattainable in this life is no excuse for giving up the quest. As Bishop Ryle wrote: "There is more of heaven on earth to be obtained than most Christians are aware of." Still towards the end of his life Paul was confessing that he had not attained or become mature, but was pressing on to make Christ's purpose his own. Then there is the *maturity of others*. We all know that it is our responsibility to bear witness to Christ. Are we equally clear of our calling to serve believers in their spiritual pilgrimage and quest? We *are* our brother's keeper, must bear one another's burdens and care for one another in love.

We should, therefore, set this goal of Christian maturity before both ourselves and others, and above all seek to know Christ better, in whom alone Christian maturity may be found.

—Used by permission

# The Concubine of Beth-lehem-judah

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

## A tragic crime

"And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the farther side of the hill-country of Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah" (Judges 19:1). So begins the story of a shameful event in the time of the judges of Israel that, with its aftermath of war, runs through three whole chapters of the record. It shows the depth to which some of God's people sank when they had no good leader. At the end of the account one verse is significant (Judges 21:25), "In those days there was no king in Israel : every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This would seem to explain it; left to himself man naturally goes downward. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man but the end thereof are the ways of death." For "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." When Israel had no good man to lead them under God, they always fell away. But even in the time of Moses, their greatest leader, they did their own way (Deuteronomy 12:8).

This story of the concubine of Beth-lehem-judah ably depicts the wickedness of the times. However, this woman brings to mind the nation of Israel, committing adultery against God, as pictured in the life of Hosea (Hosea 1:2; Judges 19:2); God seeking and finding her and speaking comfortably unto her (Hosea 2:14; Judges 19:3) and promising to bring her back; the dispersion of the Jews, spiritually dead, into all nations; and their coming to life again (when the tribes of Israel were aroused against Benjamin) like the dry bones in the valley (Ezekiel 37).

## Times of the judges

Certainly the times of the judges were very dark in places. But so were the times of the kings in great measure. The phrase, "the land had rest" so many years appears four times in the book of Judges and the total of these periods of rest was three hundred years or thereabout. This, not counting the years of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, nor the short terms of many others during which no incident, good or bad, is recorded. The times of rest were years of God's favor. When the people turned from God to idols, He sold them into the hands of their enemies. The tribe of Dan is especially noted for its idolatry (Judges 17-18) and Ephraim apparently was as bad as Dan if not worse. (This may be significant in view of the fact that these two tribes are the only ones not mentioned in the 144,000 of Revelation 7.) But when the idols were put away and the people turned back to God He always raised up a faithful leader and gave the land rest. The years of rest far outnumbered the years of servility.

## A praying nation

Even when this terrible thing happened to the concubine of Beth-lehem-judah (at a time when there was no human leader at all) the people rose as one man and demanded that the tribe of Benjamin give up the guilty ones. This they refused to do and the other tribes prepared for war. But first they prayed. "And the children of Israel arose, and went up to Bethel, and asked counsel of God; and they said, Who shall go up for us first to battle against the children of Benjamin? And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up first" (Judges 20:18). The first two battles were won by the Benjamites to the dismay of Israel. After each of these defeats the chagrined nation sought to the Lord for counsel (20:23-27), the second time with fasting and burnt offerings and peace offerings. On both occasions they wept before the Lord. And God heard, for in the third battle the tribe of Benjamin was not only defeated, but almost exterminated by the fierceness of the onslaught. When they, the nation, humbled themselves before the Lord He answered abundantly. But the troubled nation now faced a new dilemma. The tribe of Benjamin was in danger of becoming extinct. *Again they appealed to Jehovah* for a remedy for their predicament. He gave a solution to the problem (Judges 21).

A nation on its knees is not a dark picture. It reminds us that *God* ruled in the time of the judges—that He said to Samuel when the people had demanded a king (1 Samuel 8:7), ". . . They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not be king over them." Also that Gideon said, when asked to rule over them (Judges 8:23), "I will not rule over you, neither shall my sons rule over you, *Jehovah* shall rule over you." Jephthah depended upon God. So did others. The tragic events of those times are portrayed so vividly that we are prone to overlook certain statements that would lighten the picture. Moreover certain good things happened in the days of the judges. These are usually noted but are not allowed to relieve the whole picture. The story of Ruth is one of them, the family of Manoah is another and Elkanah and Hannah lived in the time of the judges for their son Samuel was the last judge and a good one.

## Conclusion

The fact that the children of Israel, when apprised of the dastardly treatment of the Levite's concubine, "*arose as one man*, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent . . . we will go up against it (Gibeah) by lot . . . according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. So *all the men* of Israel were gathered against the city; *knit together as one man*"—this fact, together with their utter dependence upon God for guidance, speaks for itself. Their hearts were not hardened; they could be stirred to life to avenge wrong and put evil out from among them. Even in those times, as in the time of Elijah, there were hearts true to the Lord. Why then does it say that "every man did that which was

right in his own eyes"? The explanation of such men as Boaz, Manoah, Samuel and others whose ways were right in God's sight must lie in this: there were always some who were able to discern between good and evil and to follow the Lord in simple hearted faith even when leaders failed or there were none. What was right in their own eyes was what they knew would be pleasing to God. God always has a remnant of faithful ones, but in the time of the judges there seems to have been more than a mere remnant when a nation could wait and pray and act as one man before God.

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**"When Christ is my life, how can I live without him?"**

Meet the hate  
~~Meet~~ Bakht Singh - of India

### **(1) His testimony**

In my youth I was very bitter against the Gospel of Christ. Once I had a beautiful Bible given to me. I tore away the contents and kept the cover because of the beautiful leather binding. But I was very orthodox in my own religion and spent many hours in the Sikh temples observing all the religious rites.

In September, 1926, I reached England and joined the Engineering College in London for the Mechanical Engineering Course. For the first three months in England I remained faithful to my religion. I kept my long hair and beard because the Sikhs never get their hair cut from any part of their body. Then I lost faith in keeping a long beard and hair. When I became clean-shaven I became an atheist, a socialist and a free thinker.

#### Goes to Canada

In 1928 a party of students was going to Canada on a holiday trip. I joined them on the ship, determined to show that I could do whatever they did. There was a big party on board and I began to take part in all the amusements. I saw a notice showing that a service would be held in the dining salon. I had never been to a church before. But I said to myself that I had been to picture palaces, and to dancing and drink saloons, so I thought a Christian place of worship too would do no harm. I went and occupied one of the back seats.

When they stood up to sing hymns I stood up too; when they sat down I sat down too; and when the preacher began to preach, I went to sleep, as I did not want to listen. When the sermon was over they all knelt down to pray and I was the only person who kept sitting in his chair. I wanted to go out, but I found one man kneeling on the right and another on the left, and it would not be right for me to disturb them. Still I could not kneel.

Then I began to say, "I have been to Mohammedan mosques and Hindu temples. I have taken off my shoes and washed my feet to show my respect for those places. I must honor this place too out of courtesy. So breaking my national pride, intellectual pride, and religious pride, I knelt down.

This was the first time I attended a Christian service. I had never read the Bible, nor had anyone spoken to me about salvation. When I knelt down I felt a great change coming in me. My whole body was trembling. I could feel divine power entering into me and lifting me. The first change that I noticed in myself was that a great joy was flooding my soul. The second change was that I was repeating the name of Jesus. I began to say: "Oh, Lord Jesus, blessed be Thy name."

The name Jesus became very sweet to me. Before, I used to despise the very name, and during discussions and conversations I had made fun of it.

In the city of Winnipeg I said to a friend of mine, "Could you lend me a Bible?"

He looked very much surprised and said, "You, a Hindu and an Indian, want to read the Bible! I have heard that Hindus do not like the Bible."

I said, "You are right. These very hands have torn up a Bible. These very lips have blasphemed against Christ, but now I have a great love for the Lord Jesus."

#### Receives New Testament

He put his hand into his pocket and gave me his pocket New Testament. I brought it to my room and began to read from the Gospel of Matthew. I kept on reading till three in the morning as I became engrossed in the Word of God. In the morning I found the whole ground covered with snow and I remained all day in bed, just to read.

On February 4, 1932, I was baptized in Vancouver, B.C. and after baptism I was going on from place to place, giving my testimony.

#### Returns to India

April 6, 1933, I arrived in Bombay after seven years absence. My father and mother came to meet me. When I came down from the ship, the first thing my father said to me was, "Only your mother and I know about your conversion. Will you please keep it a secret and call yourself a Sikh for the sake of the family honor? You can read the Bible and go to church, but do not tell anyone that you are a Christian."

I said, "Can I live without breathing? When Christ is my life how can I live without Him?" I told him that I had given my whole life to Christ.

He said, "If you cannot keep the matter secret, you cannot come home." So my father and mother left me in Bombay, and I began to do some Christian work there.

## (2) As a missionary to America

"The indigenous churches of my country have a great burden for America just now. We have a burden for the whole world and God has sent His Word from India to Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Pakistan and other nations in the Orient. Now we have a special burden for America and are praying that God will visit your country with revival."

These words were spoken by Bakht Singh at Calvary Baptist Church in New York. In every sense of the word he has come as a missionary to America.

Brother Bakht Singh went on to say how great was the burden of prayer in India. Many of those in indigenous churches are spending whole days and nights in prayer, prevailing before God to bring revival and new spiritual depth to churches in America. Some of the Christian assemblies in India have set aside specific days of the week when they meet together in groups to pray for the world, and just now for America, in particular.

### Walking in the Light

"I have not come to America to ask for money," said this man of God. "You feel sorry for us in India because of our poverty in material things. We who know the Lord in India feel sorry for you in America because of your spiritual poverty. We pray that God may give you the gold tried in the fire which He has promised to those who know the power of His resurrection.

"Our work in India is not dependent on foreign funds. Never in the years that God has been raising up these indigenous assemblies have we ever asked for a cent from America or any other foreign country. Yet in the poorest nation in the world we have never lacked. God is able to give; we must be able to receive.

"In our churches we spend four or five or six hours in prayer and worship. Frequently our people wait all night on the Lord in prayer. In America after you have been in church for one hour you begin to look at your watches. We pray that God may open your eyes to the true meaning of worship.

### Spiritual Soundness

"Here you have great dependence on posters and advertising and promotion, and the build up of a human being to attract people to meetings. In India we have nothing more than the Lord Himself and we find that He is sufficient. In India we never announce who the speaker will be before a Christian meeting. When the people come they come to seek the Lord and not a human being or to hear some special favorite to speak to them. We have had as many as 12,000 people come together just to worship the Lord and to have fellowship together. We are praying that people in America might also have a hunger for God and not merely for some form of amusement or to hear choirs or the voice of any man."

# Henceforth—

## A Deeper Devotion to Christ

J. B. Rowell

Meditating on Calvary impresses the truth that even the least sins require the precious blood of Christ to make atonement.

“Without shedding blood is no remission.” Not only is there no remission of great sins without shedding of blood, but the same is true of so-called lesser sins. Every vain or lustful thought, every conceited desire requires the precious blood of Christ for cleansing.

Even a “small” sin estranges the heart from God, steals away spiritual joy and makes it impossible to hold sweet fellowship with the Lord. It creates a gap between the soul and God.

Sins that the world considers of no consequence are counted great by a holy heart. Our Lord called the wanton eye and lustful glance adultery (Matthew 5:28). Hatred is murder in reality: “Who-soever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15).

God’s Word warns us of the consequences of doing wrong for some immediate gain. The story of Achan (Joshua 7) emphasizes this fact. The sin of one man brought defeat to all of Israel. God charged Israel in these solemn words, “Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also” (verse 11).

Does not this Scripture teach that the sin of one believer may be as a dead weight on an entire church and be the great hindrance to fullness of blessing?

Achan confessed his sin because he was found out. When his sin was discovered he said, “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” (verse 21). Here in a few words is the history of a calamitous defeat, and this for the sake of a little paltry gain. “I saw . . . coveted . . . took . . . and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent.”

The story of Gehazi’s sin (2 Kings 5) is another case in point. For two talents of silver and two changes of garments he became a deceiver and a liar. The leprosy of sin in his heart became manifest in the leprosy in his flesh as God’s judgment fell.

Thousands of Christians have in like manner forfeited fellowship with God and joy in His service for the sake of some transient pleasure, some fleeting possession. Confession of sin brings God’s forgiveness, and by His enabling we can put right what caused the transgression. His promise is our great encouragement: “If we

confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Some forfeit God's favor in other ways. They shun the ignoble sins that would disgrace them or cause loss of prestige. They avoid outward sins because of the results. At the same time they are guilty of sins that are no less base in the sight of God: sinful thoughts, waste of time, subtle insinuations that bring detriment to others.

In the light of these considerations—the atonement of Christ—what shall our lives be *henceforth*?

"He died for all, that they which live should not *henceforth* live unto themselves, but *unto him* which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

May our determination henceforth be to live not unto ourselves but unto God!

Such a life is not possible in ourselves. Resurrection power is needed to mortify even the least sins.

Resurrection life unto holiness is diametrically opposed to all *secret sin*. The one who lives unto Christ can never tolerate secret sin. We have an example of what our attitude should be in the experience of the psalmist who cried out to God the longings of his own soul: "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love" (Psalm 119:113). Those whose hearts love the Lord, His will and his ways always regard secret sin with abhorrence.

God's Word is replete with examples to show God's will for His own. Joseph was tempted to secret sin, but he took sides against it, exclaiming, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

The presence of God was more real to Joseph than the presence of the tempter. The opportunity to be faithful to God in the burning test meant more to Joseph than the opportunity to sin, even though in secret and with little likelihood of detection. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13).

God's warnings are written deep in the bitter experiences of others. Through the ages men and women have paid a terrific price for their temporary enjoyment of the pleasures of sin, and multitudes have suffered with them and on their account. Our responsibility is to learn from the past.

Apparently David sinned with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, because he thought he could sin secretly without being exposed. However, the Lord God of Israel said through Nathan the prophet, "Thou didst it secretly," but it was exposed "before all Israel." David sinned in secret but the results were calamitous. God said: "Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Samuel 12:14).

How imperative then that we abstain from the very appearance of evil! Secret sins grieve the Holy Spirit; therefore let us heed



the admonition, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

Love for God constrains us to live holy lives (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Commenting on this thought Calvin observed: "If we be not harder than iron, we cannot refrain from devoting ourselves entirely to Christ, when we consider what great love He exercised towards us, when He endured death in our stead" (*Commentary by John Calvin*).

Neander, as quoted by Lange, expressed the truth in this way: ". . . ever since he became conscious of the saving love of Christ, a new principle of conduct had entered his heart."

Let us pray the Lord to create in us this "new principle of conduct" by meditation on the love and purpose of Christ on the cross, that we may share the deep experience of Paul as expressed in *The Student's Commentary*, "For the love of Christ overmastered him."

Paul was *constrained* by the love of Christ; that is, he was held to the one purpose, shut up to the one soul-absorbing devotion. All other claimants must be dethroned "that in all things (Christ) might have the preeminence." Behold Christ on the cross to know His love. That Calvary love reigning in the heart will lead to an ever-deepening devotion to Christ.

Spurgeon emphasized one thought especially when he wrote: "That He may dwell in your heart, that best room in the house of manhood; not in your thoughts alone, but in your affections; not merely in the mind's meditations, but in the heart's emotions."

O child of God, let me urge you to give yourself time to meditate on the Word of God, to commit this precious Scripture (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) and these choice lines from Tersteegen to memory, and then, with the blessing of the Lord, you will surely come to the experience of spiritual victory in Christ.

*Wouldst thou know if Jesus loves thee?*

*If He loves thee well?*

*See Him suffer, brokenhearted,*

*All the pains of hell—*

*Smitten, bearing in thy room*

*All thy guilt and all thy doom.*

*Unto me, the base, the guilty,*

*Flows that living flood;*

*I, Thine enemy, am ransomed*

*By Thy precious blood.*

*Silent at Thy feet I lie,*

*Lost in love's immensity.*

—In *The Alliance Witness*

# NEWS AND NOTES

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

**Iroquois Church, Louisville, Ky.:** As we look back we are happy to see 15 baptisms, 17 transfers of membership, and several rededications of life. Also our first Vacation Bible School in which we averaged 95 for 8 days, and our Summer Bible Camp program which included 35 campers for a total of 52 weeks. Our highest attendances were 125 in VBS, 109 at our closing service of VBS, and 102 last Easter. We are presently averaging around 60 on Sunday morning and 40 to 50 at our evening meetings.

Four class rooms have been added and 2 new classes have been started. We obtained and remodeled 12 pews to fit our auditorium and added a refrigerated drinking fountain in our kitchen. For the first time in 19 years a full-time minister has been supported. Our building fund has grown and there have been discussions of late in regard to a \$50,000 bond program to erect a new building on this site.

Our bus is used for almost every meeting besides a trip to Woodland Camp with 35 senior campers. The adult Bible class has paid the bus expenses which included installation of another engine.

Everyone has cooperated in a wonderful way, and last Sunday the brethren in our business meeting, along with Brother Clark, committed themselves to support this work for another year, if the Lord wills. Some who began with us last year have left us, but our Lord continues to bless with others. We praise our great God and Father, the "Giver of every good and perfect gift" through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for a wonderful year, and, should He tarry, many more blessings will be ours as we labor together for Him.

**Rangeland Church, Louisville, Ky.:** Many visitors were in our assembly

Sunday, Sept. 9, of which several came as a result of listening to the radio program, "Words of Life." (A few weeks ago, a minister of one of "our" churches in Indiana called to report a visitor in their assembly as the result of "Words of Life.") It was encouraging to have some of these back with us last Sunday, Sept. 16, plus many visitors from the local area. As a result, our Sunday morning worship attendance was the largest in 11 weeks.

**S. C. C., Winchester, Ky.:** The "gay nineties" fair is reported to have been a success. It was held September 22 on the campus. The Bible faculty this year is: Cecil Garrett, Robert Gill, Alex Wilson, Billy Ray Lewter, Victor Broaddus, Howard Loveland.

One person was baptized into Christ before the end of the first full week of classes. Miss Lucilla Chan, a sophomore from Macao, China, was buried with Christ in the college swimming pool the night of September 6. Miss Chan is a business major who has also developed a keen interest in the Word of God and is eager to witness and share her love of Christ with others.

**Jacksonville, Fla.:** The Lord truly blessed in last Sunday's services. Our hearts rejoiced as Jack Davis made the good confession and was buried with his Lord in baptism. Bro. Johnny Adams' morning message was very timely and uplifting. Also the young men who participated in the evening service did an excellent job in presenting the nation of Israel and its past and present. We are looking forward to further studies along this line this Sunday night as Brother Johnny and Brother Green continue with the "Signs of the Times" but as related to the church.

Our revival meeting begins in about two weeks with T. Y. Clark doing the preaching.

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