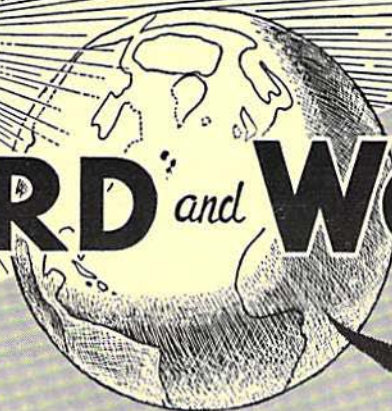


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The **WORD** *and* **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of life."

AUGUST, 1975

The Prosecution of King Josiah

p. 228

The Happy Christian

see p. 232

Tischendorf, Church Fathers, and the Codex Sinaiticus—

how God has preserved His word against error and decay

By W. A. Criswell, p. 248

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 11 - 15, 1975

DAY SESSIONS—Portland Avenue Church of Christ, 2500 Portland Avenue

EVENING SESSIONS—Highview Church of Christ, 7701 Fegenbush Lane

Theme: WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHY. 1 Peter 3:15: "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear."

MONDAY

Chairman, H. E. Schreiner

EVENING SESSION

- 7:00-8:00 Congregational Singing
8:00-9:00 "Successful Living" —Billy Ray Lewter

TUESDAY

Chairman, Duval Means

DAY SESSION

- 9:00-10:15 Bible Exposition: Acts —Howard Marsh
10:30-11:30 "What the Bible Teaches About God" —Richard Ramsey
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:15 Lunch Time
1:30-3:00 Sharing What We Believe
Speakers: Noble Bibb, Richard Shanks, F.G. Yarbrough, Emory Grimes

EVENING SESSION

- 7:00-7:45 Youth Conference
"What We Believe" —Buford Smith
8:00-9:00 Congregational Singing
"People Who Know Their God" —Earl Mullins, Sr.

WEDNESDAY

Chairman, H. E. Schreiner

DAY SESSION

- 9:00-10:15 Bible Exposition: Acts —Howard Marsh
10:30-11:30 "What the Bible Teaches About Man" —Richard Ramsey
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:15 Lunch Time
1:30-3:00 Sharing What We Believe
"What Makes Baptism Essential" —Charles Beatey
"I Went Through a Conversion Experience" —Fred Bowser
"Youth Work in Kenya" —Manoah Wituka

EVENING SESSION

- 7:00-7:45 Youth Conference
"Why I Believe in Jesus" —Stan Broussard
8:00-9:00 Congregational Singing
"Missions" —Mac LeDoux, missionary to South Vietnam

THURSDAY

Chairman, John Pound

DAY SESSION

- 9:00-10:15 Bible Exposition: Acts —Howard Marsh
10:30-11:30 "What the Bible Teaches About Salvation" —Richard Ramsey
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:15 Lunch Time
1:30-3:00 Sharing What We Believe
Speakers: Jesse Bibb, Bill Heid, Eddie Hoagland, Herbert Ball

THE WORD AND WORK

"A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God."

GORDON R. LINSOTT, Editor—Publisher
WM. ROBERT HEID, Missionary Editor

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The Editor is a guidance counselor at a public school in Louisville.



Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

Nicodemus '75

Nicodemus is one of the most prolific reporters on the current religious scene. He contributes to most "Christian" publications, and his favorite topic is church growth. "The church in Afghanistan is dying out," he might report. "Church membership in the U.S. is barely holding its own, over a ten-year span. The fastest growing church in the world is in Brazil." Nicodemus is good on facts and figures. He can tell you in a jiffy how the growth rate for your church compares with the national norms.

But Jesus says, "Nicodemus, you (plural) must be born again." I think He is saying—along with other things—"Nicodemus, they are not all Israel, who are of Israel (Rom. 9:6). Having the proper label does not qualify people to be counted as belonging to God. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly" (Rom. 2:28).

The primary thrust of that statement is individual and personal. I want to draw attention to some collective aspects of it.

Judging a book by its cover

It is important, I think, for Christians to have a somewhat realistic view of what God is doing in the world. To see what God is doing means discerning the difference between what is "born again" and what is not. It also means looking at the facts in the light of the Word—"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Nicodemus ('75) strikes out on both of these scores; he calls everything "Christian" that has the label, and he does not take into account that the supernatural working of God is invincible and may at times be invisible. Moses endured, "as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). Many a saint of God has been strengthened by that same sight. Paul prays for the Ephesians that the eyes of their heart may see (Eph. 1:18).

When anointed eyes read reports by Nicodemus, the "born again" measure is applied. Take for example the fighting between "Christians" (Catholics and Protestants) in Ireland. While it may

be possible that a few believers are involved in the conflict—having lost the sense of their heavenly calling—we know that the church of Jesus Christ does not become embroiled in warfare of this sort. We read that “Christians” are fighting Moslems in Beirut, Lebanon; again, we have a political conflict—not a case of persecution of genuine believers. Lebanon was originally formed to be a “Christian” state, and the majority of the population is called “Christian,” identified with the Maronite church. This doesn’t necessarily indicate any kind of spiritual relationship to the Lord of glory.

Sometimes believers will judge the spiritual condition of the whole world by what they can see in their own community. Elijah had this problem, “Lo, I alone am left!” But the nation was not in such a hopeless state as he had imagined: “I have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” People who bemoan the lack of response to gospel preaching (a world-wide condition, to hear them tell it), evidently do not know about the thousands in India who are turning to the Lord. Those who see the whole church as lukewarm are not aware of what the Lord is doing in Korea—and in many other places.

Spiritual myopia

This works the other way, too. There are believers who are so snug in a cozy little local fellowship that it never dawns on them to shed a tear for earth’s perishing millions—or for isolated believers scattered across the world who need encouragement. These have not learned to “lift up your eyes and look on the fields.”

It is rather obvious that few—if any—of God’s saints are going to be fully informed of His work in every place. If this is so, then just how much information do they really need to have? It seems to me that the crucial thing is having the right perspective, rather than having a certain quantity of information. The word of God is more important than the newspaper. Back to Nicodemus again, the needed thing is “born-again vision.” It is not so much what we see as how we see it. Knowing all about the size of the field is not as important as noting that it is white unto harvest. More important yet is knowing the heart of the Lord of the harvest.

Important it is, too, to have caught a glimpse of His glory and majesty. News from Nicodemus (or elsewhere) will sometimes be encouraging and sometimes discouraging. Regardless of that, Jesus is Lord; He is ultimately in control of events. All power in heaven and on earth has already been placed in His hands. Neither force nor guile can wrest that control from Him. Whether we praise Him or not, He is Lord. Whether the news is gloomy or good, Jesus is still Lord. And the best part—whosoever will may say with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!”

Was King Josiah Saved?

A. Christianson

It is easy to prove that a man cannot be saved in this New Testament era unless he is baptized. A number of other verses could be used, but for our present purpose Acts 2:38 is sufficient. Here is our proof:

(Step A) Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Step B) Mr. X has not been baptized. (Step C) Mr. X's sins have not been forgiven and he does not have the gift of the Holy Spirit. The case seems watertight. There is no possible refutation or loophole.

But wait a minute. By the same process we could prove that Josiah, king of Judah, was not a saved man, at least for the first seventeen years of his reign. Here is our proof. (Step A) Numbers 9:13 says, "The man that . . . forbearth to keep the passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people (by excommunication, or perhaps, by execution); because he offered not the oblation of Jehovah in its appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." (Step B) Josiah did not keep a passover until the eighteenth year of his reign (2 Chron. 35:1, 19). (Step C) Therefore, Josiah was not a saved man during his first seventeen years as king, but was a guilty sinner, under God's condemnation, and should have been cut off from God's people.

That case seems watertight too, does it not? But the conclusion is entirely false. For 2 Chronicles 34:1, 2, summarizing the entire life of Josiah, says, "He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." Likewise, 2 Kings 23:25 says, "Like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to Jehovah with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

Confusing, is it not? Which was he, a sinner deserving to be cut off because he disobeyed God's command to keep the passover, or a righteous man walking wholeheartedly with God? God's recorded verdict is the latter.

Since our "proof" in the case of Josiah turns out to be disproved, could it be possible that our "proof" in the case of unbaptized Mr. X might also be inadequate? Might our verdict on his standing with God be wrong? Maybe our formulae prove too much. Maybe we are overlooking something important. Perhaps God's logic does not square with ours. Maybe he is more willing to allow exception to his commands on the part of those whose hearts are right but whose minds are not fully enlightened, than we think.

But how could such a thing be possible? Does not God give his commands to be obeyed? Of course he does. We may not pick and choose among his commands and obey only the ones which

appeal to us, may we? Certainly we cannot, if we are Christians indeed. Perhaps we can solve our dilemma by examining the life of Josiah more closely. We discover from 2 Chronicles 29-35 that ignorance of God's law was widespread. Idolatry was common. The temple services had declined and the temple itself had fallen into disrepair. No observance of the passover is mentioned between the reign of Hezekiah and the feast instituted by Josiah, perhaps a century later. The Lord made allowance for this ignorance. He judged Josiah not for his omission but how he responded to the truth he knew. Chapter 34 reveals how zealous and obedient the king was when the opportunity presented itself.

God still reads not only men's actions but their hearts. He knows the ignorance and misinformation about baptism. Will he not react today as he did in Josiah's time? There is not one ounce of comfort in this for the person who knowingly, and wilfully disobeys the Lord. But I believe it should cause us to be more hopeful and charitable than we often are toward those disciples of Jesus who are unimmersed.

Who is a Christian?

This is a vital question. How we answer it will profoundly affect our attitudes and actions. Who is my brother in Christ? Where should I draw the line of fellowship? Various answers are given to these questions within the restoration movement. (1) At one end are those who say, "Only those who belong to the restoration movement (or our segment of it) are saved, for we are the New Testament church." For example, one preacher remarked, "Baptists are just outside the door, and Catholics are far from it, but both are outside, so what difference does it make?"

(2) The middle view says, "People in other churches are saved too, if they trust in Christ and are immersed." (3) At the other end of the spectrum are those who say, "all who truly repent of sin and trust in Christ, turning to him as Savior and Lord, are Christians even if they are not immersed (although they should be immersed)."

Though doctrine is not decided by beliefs of men, even great ones, but by the inspired word of God, yet it is profitable to notice what various leaders in the restoration movement have believed on this issue. It is remarkable that Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, Benjamin Franklin, Isaac Errett, and David Lipscomb all disagreed with the first view listed above. Not one of them believed that only members of the restoration movement are members of the body of Christ.

Most of them, if not all, straddled the fence between answers 2 and 3. For while they taught baptism is for the remission of sins, and that immersion is the only valid form of baptism, at the same time they taught there were truly saved persons among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians (those who were unimmersed because inadequately informed). Here are a few typical quotations.

Alexander Campbell: "I suppose there are many consecrated, moral and Christian Presbyterians; and that, although our Savior has no Presbyterian church in heaven or earth, yet I doubt not but that he has had many, very many that loved and honored him in that worldly church, whom he will honor in the world to come." "I will be asked, How do I know that anyone loves Christ but by obedience to his commands. I answer, in no other way. But mark, I do not substitute obedience to one command for general obedience. It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as it is known. John Bunyan and John Newton had very different views of baptism; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did obey the Lord in everything." (This second quotation is only a small part of the "Lunenburg Correspondence" in which Campbell discusses at length the question of unimmersed disciples. The entire correspondence is important. It may be found in *Attitudes and Consequences*, by Homer Hailey, pages 116-131.)

David Lipscomb: "There are persons in the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches who were baptized to obey God rather than to please the sects. In this they rise above the sectarian spirit, despite the parties in which they find themselves. They ought to get out of the sectarian churches, but they see so much sectarianism in the non-sectarian churches that they think they are all alike."

Isaac Errett: "Corruptions crept into the church because of popery, and have scattered the people of God into various sects. Our plea is for a reunion of the people of God. While our plea does not recognize these sects as of divine origin, yet it recognizes a people of God among them. We are compelled therefore, to recognize as Christians many who have been in error on baptism, but who in the spirit of obedience are Christians indeed."

What say the Scriptures?

The Bible itself contains two lines of teaching which need to be held in proper balance. The first line consists of such facts as these: (1) In the great commission Christ commands us not only to make disciples but also to baptize and teach them. (2) Romans chapter 6, plus the Greek words for baptize and baptism clearly show that baptism means immersion. (3) Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26, 27, etc., show there is a relationship between baptism and salvation. (4) There were no unimmersed Christians in the primitive church, so there should be none today.

The second line of Bible teaching is seen in the following facts: (1) Repentance and faith have always been essential for salvation in all ages, from the time of Adam until now, but the outward expression of these has differed from one era to another. (2) A man's heart-attitude toward God may be right even if the outward expression of it is unknowingly deficient. "If a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? . . . For he is not a real Jew

who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly and real circumcision is a matter of the heart" (Romans 2:26-29).

(3) God gave Cornelius and his household the gift of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized (Acts 10:45-47; 11:17). Even though that was an exception to his usual practice (according to Acts 2:38), surely the Lord is free to repeat the exception as he sees fit. We realize exceptions do not overthrow a general rule. But if God's word records that he has made exceptions to his rules on a number of occasions, we do well to realize that fact also.

Here are some examples of his exceptions, besides those of Josiah and Cornelius. Rahab the harlot (Joshua 6:25 versus Deuteronomy 20:16-18); Naaman's religious practices (2 Kings 5:17-19); the conditions for keeping the passover in Hezekiah's day (2 Chronicles 30:13-20 versus Numbers 9:1-13); God's forgiving David though he committed adultery and murder, each of which deserved the penalty of death according to God's law (2 Samuel 11 versus Leviticus 20:20 and Numbers 35:30, 31); David's eating the temple showbread (Matthew 12:1-7); and such passages as Isaiah 1:11-15, Amos 5:21-24, and Malachi 1:10, where the Lord decries and condemns the feasts and offerings he had commanded the people to observe.

Turning to church history we notice a number of people who loved God, repented of sin, trusted in Jesus as redeemer, and demonstrated in their lives the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit, although they were never immersed. Think of Luther, Whitefield, Wesley, Finney, Moody, Livingstone, and Hudson Taylor. These were mighty men of God. Think of John Newton, Horatius Bonar, Fanny Crosby, and others whose hymns of warm devotion we love to sing. For us to consign such followers of Christ to outer darkness because they were not immersed seems the equivalent to accusing Josiah of great wickedness because for years he kept no passover. Will not God's verdict contradict ours?

Conclusions

In the light of these things, especially the two lines of Biblical teaching, I distinguish between what I practice and what I recognize. I *practice* immersing without delay those who repent and trust in Christ, upon their confession of faith in Him as divine Lord and Savior, for such is the Bible's command and precedent. At the same time I *recognize* there are a number of unimmersed disciples of Jesus who are Christians, for they trust in him, seek to obey him and to the extent of their knowledge do obey him in everything.

In teaching followers of his who are not baptized it is not necessary to try and prove they are lost. I find the best passages to use with them are Matthew 28:19, 20 (Christ's command that they should not only be baptized themselves but also baptize their converts); Acts 10:47, 48 (Peter's command to Cornelius after he had received the Holy Spirit) and John 14:15 ("If you love me, you will keep my commandments"). This seems to be a valid approach.

—In *Mission Messenger*

Alex Wilson is a missionary in Manila.



The Happy Christian

Alex V. Wilson

"If it Feels Good, Do It!" urged the bumper sticker.

"It tastes so good, it must be sinful," said the little old lady the first time she tasted ice cream.

Two extremes. Both equally false. Thus again we are reminded of the difficulties confronting us as we try to be "blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation" (Phil. 2:15).

Should Christians enjoy ice cream? And good *music*, and pretty *clothes*, and entertaining *literature* and *drama*, and delicious *food*, and nice *homes*? What about *parties* and *social life*? John the Baptist shunned such things, but Jesus enjoyed them (Matt. 11: 18-19). What about *humor* and *comedy*? A recent biographer of the great missionary Hudson Taylor, upon reading his letters plus what his friends wrote about him, discovered that Taylor had a keen sense of humor. Yet the standard biography about him for the past seventy-five years omitted all mention of that fact, apparently considering such a trait to be unspiritual. How sad. Humorists and satirists like Mark Twain and Will Rogers considered themselves to be reformers of sorts, trying to challenge and change public opinion by poking fun at evils or absurdities. Yet the average TV ha-ha show contains lewdness and blasphemy, and the wise-cracking funnyboys promote an attitude far different from the balanced sober-mindedness which Scripture repeatedly tells us to cultivate (1 Thess. 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 2:2, 5, 6, 12; sometimes the word is translated "sensible"—RSV, or "self-controlled"—NIV).

What about *sex*? Should a Christian husband and wife really enjoy their physical relationship? "Rejoice in the wife of thy youth," counsels the inspired wise man; "let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished with her love" (Prov. 5:18-19). Do such words embarrass us? Do we sort of wonder why God stuck Song of Solomon in the Bible? Of course we disagree with Augustine's statement, "Nothing is so much to be shunned as sex relations," and yet we have not fully escaped its influence. What about

sports? In 1900 any respectable American was ashamed to admit that his son was a professional athlete. "Horrors—spend all your time playing games? And want to be paid for it, to boot!" But with the increase in mechanization and leisure time and affluence, the tables turned long ago. Sports stars now stand at the top of the status-symbol totem-pole. That is not necessarily wrong, mind you, but it does call for the Christian to evaluate his goals and interests carefully. Also his use of time and money. Participating in athletics can be helpful in several ways: learning self-discipline, teamwork, good sportsmanship, etc. Yet there is more to be said. *Eternity* magazine ran an article claiming that sports is the current golden calf, at whose altars most Christian men habitually present their offerings. It can get a tight grip on you, just as many other innocent interests can. It seems sadly true that many folks spend Sunday afternoons—a time when much good work for Christ could be done—as sports spectators before the TV set.

Enjoy yourself—yes or no?

It takes no great discernment to observe that we live in a man-centered, pleasure-addicted world. *Playboy* is popular and influential. "If it feels good, do it" is not just a slogan but a way of life for millions. Living in such an atmosphere, the Christian must beware of creeping materialism and self-indulgence. It's hard to live with eternity's values in view, and to realize we are called to be disciplined soldiers of Christ engaged in a fight to the finish. Millions are starving to death; are we gluttons? Billions have never been offered the water of life eternal; are we playing around? Observing that most residents of Hong Kong jump at any chance to emigrate to the U.S., missionary Betty Allen remarked, "Most people here are more interested in the high living standard we left behind than in the Gospel we brought."

I was struck by an advertisement that proclaimed, "Jesus wants you happy!" It was promoting a book entitled, "Jesus Wants You Well." Well, does He or doesn't He? It depends a lot on what you mean by "happy." If it means a pleasant, sheltered life, then look at 2nd Corinthians again. And if "Jesus wants you well" means that dedicated Christians should never be sick, then check out Phil. 2:25-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20; Gal. 4:13 plus 2 Kings 13:14 and the book of Job. Our thinking is desperately fuzzy if we seek or expect as Christians to be always happy and well, comfortable and secure. Christ renounced not only sin but also ease and luxury; shall we not do the same? Are we willing to sacrifice not only harmful things but also innocent and good things for His sake?

The other side of the coin

Now let's look at the problem from the opposite angle. H.L. Mencken defined a puritan as "somebody who is deathly afraid that somebody somewhere is having a good time." Too often we dis-

ciples of the Lord are indeed that way: sour and grumpy and bleak in outlook, quickly condemning those who enjoy life. It has been said that people need two conversions. First we need to turn from natural, man-centered life to spiritual, God-centered life. But then many of us need to be converted back to natural human life, i.e. to rediscover the natural life from a spiritual viewpoint. If we don't have the second conversion we easily slide into some form of monasticism, asceticism, or Pharisaic isolationism.

The deepest word that can be spoken about sanctification is that it is a progress toward true humanity. Salvation is, essentially considered, the restoration of humanity to men. This is why the slightly inhuman, not to say unnatural, streak in some forms and expressions of sanctification is so far removed from the true work of grace in the soul. The greatest saints of God have been characterized, not by haloes and an atmosphere of distant unapproachability, but by their humanity. They have been intensely human and lovable people with a twinkle in their eyes. One has only to read the biographies of men like Moody, or Spurgeon, or Hudson Taylor, to see how true this is. Some people take themselves so seriously in the Christian life that they become unnatural and stilted, and the natural reaction that comes unbidden to the mind is: 'If only they would unbend a little!' (James Philip, *Christian Maturity*, p. 70).

Another writer gives some current examples. "John Stott watches birds. Billy Graham golfs. Francis Schaeffer skis. Hal Lindsey is into photography. Christian discipleship does not call us to be always taut as a violin string with pious passion. Young Christians often think so and begrudge themselves the leisure, the hobbies, the humor that would make them seem more human and more real" (Stephen Board in *HIS Magazine*). This reminds me of an experience my mother had years ago. She had to take my older brother—who was perhaps a first-grader then—to the doctor's office. Lots of other people were waiting to see the doctor too, including Brother Boll. For maybe two hours the preacher enthralled a little boy (and his mother) who otherwise might have been fidgety and fussy, as he told one fairy tale after another. Are you disappointed? Does that seem unspiritual? Should we change the script to read "Bible stories" instead of "fairy tales"? No, there's no need.

Conclusions

Paul was a great soldier of the cross. No one knew more discipline or sacrifice than he. And yet how balanced he was. He urges Timothy, "Endure hardship like a good soldier of Christ Jesus." Yet he also warns him against an overzealous asceticism taught by "hypocritical liars . . . They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe . . . For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer"

(1 Tim. 4:1-5). Again, in a passage warning against materialism, he interjects an important balancing statement: "Command those who are rich in this present world not . . . to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Tim. 6:17). So it's true: God *does* want us to be happy! He *does* enjoy seeing us enjoy life! But He also knows there is much more to life than that. And He knows that it is happier to give than to receive (Acts 20:35); do we?

In conclusion, here are some enlightening quotations to help us steer safely between extremes. First, some doctrinal guidelines:

To argue for total self-expression of our desires is to forget the doctrine of the fall. To argue for total self-suppression is to forget the doctrine of creation.

Because of creation we must accept what we are. We are not cold fish; we are human beings made in the image of God, endowed by God with unique capacities—for love, moral indignation, sympathy and compassion, joy and sorrow, imagination and artistic creativity. God has made us like that and we are not to deny these capacities. That is the doctrine of creation.

But because of the fall, we cannot accept everything we have become, because our mind, emotions, and will are all corrupted. The good capacities God has given us easily degenerate: love into lust, joy into frivolity, indignation into malice, sorrow into self-pity.

See then our paradoxical position. We must not reject or suppress ourselves totally, because we are creatures of God. But we must not accept and express ourselves totally either, because we are fallen creatures of God. (from a message by John Stott)

Finally, some wise observations by A. W. Tozer. Warning against becoming spiritually lopsided, he lists these errors: "When we seek to be serious and become somber. The saints have always been serious, but gloominess is a defect of character and should never be equated with godliness. Religious melancholy may indicate the presence of unbelief or sin, and if long continued may lead to serious mental disturbance. Joy is a great therapeutic for the mind. 'Rejoice in the Lord alway' (Phil. 4:4)." Another error: "When we mean to be conscientious and become over-scrupulous. If the devil cannot succeed in destroying the conscience, he will settle for making it sick. I know Christians who live in a state of constant distress, fearing that they may displease God. Their world of permitted acts becomes narrower year by year till at last they fear to engage in the common pursuits of life. They believe this self-torture to be a proof of godliness, but how wrong they are" (*That Incredible Christian*, p. 55).

Are you enjoying your life as a Christian?



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Don't you think Christians should always be open to new truths?

All people should always be open to truth, new or old. Jesus spoke of Himself as truth personified (John 14:6), and real truth will always lead men into a fuller, closer relationship with Him. Real truth will never contradict the writings inspired by the Spirit of God. So if the question is concerned about that which will stand the test of time and eternity, that which is a part of the very character of God, that which is truth indeed, then we should always be open for a fuller understanding of truth.

Unfortunately, some things get to be called truths which may be at best only half-truths or even outright falsehood. When some people talk about "new truths" the emphasis is more on the "new" than upon the "truth." It is sometimes assumed that the present age has more light and more wisdom than any preceding one and that the conclusions reached in our day are therefore the best. We do have some advantages in being heirs of the wisdom of all past generations and able to communicate that as never before. But it does not follow that everything which gets promoted as new truth is necessarily even new, much less truth. Satan has a way of dressing up old sins and old lies in new garb and deceiving gullible people. We see this in some of the religious fads which wax and wane over the years.

It is possible for a man to be, as the little squib says, like concrete—all mixed up and set hard. His mind is closed to any new thought or new idea. On the other hand, there are those who are never settled about anything, never sure about anything. They are, in the words of scripture, "driven by the wind and tossed." It seems to me a much healthier attitude is the one which says, "I keep an open mind, but I keep a screen over it to keep the flies out." Everything that wants my attention is not truth, and I need some safeguards against just receiving anything and everything.

Truth is not always new. It is often old and has stood the test of time. God's word is truth, and it is not new. I may come to a new comprehension of it, but the old truth has been there all along. Moreover, one can be certain of those things and take a

stand on them. Openness to new truths must not become an excuse for not believing the truth already established.

Should churches be obligated to be obedient to elders who do no work except to make occasional decisions relating to the church?

The problem of elders who do not assume their responsibility as elders is by no means a problem limited to one or two congregations. In many cases the work of elders (overseeing, shepherding and feeding the flock) has been left to others or remains undone, and the elders are mere business officers who exercise varying degrees of control over the business affairs of the congregations. Several factors lead to this kind of situation. There has often been a lack of training, so that men get appointed as elders who really do not know what an elder's work is or how to go about it. In some cases the men chosen do not really have the gifts needed for the work and were selected mostly because they were good men, faithful in attendance, and "the best we have." In some cases, no doubt, men who like the spotlight manage to get chosen, and they like the power and position but not the hard work. Our modern, busy way of life takes its toll so that many otherwise good men get too busy in their own affairs to do a decent job of serving as elders. And, being older men, age and physical infirmity sometimes slow down those who have once been active. Some men, we suspect, fail mostly because of pure laziness. Whatever the cause, we realize many elders are not doing an outstanding job at being spiritual leaders and counsellors, true shepherds of the flock. It is evident that this kind of service does not evoke the respect and the high esteem of the congregation. Elders are to rule primarily by example rather than by decree (1 Pet. 5:3), and when they are not setting the example of service, obedience to decree is less willing.

Nevertheless, two wrongs do not make a right. Our Bibles do not teach obedience of children to parents only if they are doing a good job, or submission of wife to husband only if he is all he ought to be, or obedience to secular authorities only if they do everything right. There needs to be someone in control, and bad rule is generally preferable to anarchy. If the elders have been duly appointed as such over the church, then it seems to me we have a responsibility to be as obedient as we can to such ones. If their demands do not run contrary to the will of God, we must submit. This does not mean we cannot work in righteous ways to prod these men into fulfilling their responsibilities or that a congregation is never justified in encouraging the appointment of additional qualified men who may be true pastors. Perhaps elders need to be reminded of the heavier judgment they face and of the fact that they must give account (Heb. 13:17) for the souls in their care. But God also knows how prone the flesh is to rise in rebellion against authority of any sort, and He does not let us

easily off the hook so far as our responsibility to obey is concerned. There is an informative passage in Matthew 23 which introduces a series of "woes" on the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus told his disciples that such ones sat on Moses' seat, i.e., they were the responsible leaders under the Mosaic law, then in force. Therefore the disciples were to do whatever those leaders required, but they were not to do as they *did* (Matt. 23:1-3)...*The lesson* for us is obvious.

Should elders be appointed for life?

The N. T. never designates how long a man is to serve as an elder. It gives the qualifications but does not state any given term. We are left simply with the necessity of using sanctified common sense as to what practice to follow.

So far as I am aware, most of "our" churches seem to accept the appointments as being for life. There are some reasons for this and some advantages. If a man is qualified, the long term appointment gives time for developing a richer and closer relationship with the flock he is shepherding. He himself can well grow into a more capable man for the job. The passing of time does not need to disqualify him in any way. There is a stability that the long term appointment tends to promote; programs do not need to wait for the "new election of elders." Moreover, his position is not so much a matter of popularity and "politics." If terms are set (e.g., one year, two years, etc.) then the expiration of his term may come in the midst of a congregational crisis, which may result in the ousting of a very qualified man who ought to have been in authority at the time of crisis. It does not seem appropriate that the good man who is doing his job for the Lord should be deprived of that work as a result of a popularity rating. If God has called him for the work (Eph. 4:11) and supplied the gifts for it, then it does not seem appropriate for him to keep on year by year trying to establish that fact. Even if deprived of his title, would not the man who in the eyes of God possesses the capability need to continue the work for which God has equipped him?

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages. Men sometimes get appointed as elders who turn out to be disappointments for one reason or another. Some deteriorate spiritually and serious spiritual flaws begin to show under pressure; some sit down on the job and wear the title without the works; some deteriorate physically or mentally so that they are no longer capable of fulfilling their task but do not seem to realize it. Removing such a one without creating big problems is often not too easy. It is not too rare to hear the quiet comment that the only hope for some church lies in several trips to the cemetery.

Because of these problems or perhaps influenced by our own democratic secular government, some churches elect elders for

stated terms. There are some advantages, especially if the appointments are continually made on a high plane as to who is qualified and faithful to the Lord rather than becoming, as we have indicated, a matter of politics and popularity. I personally have some reservations about how well the average congregation will uphold the high standards over the long run.

Apparently not all N.T. appointments were for life, however. Philip moved from being a deacon (Acts 6:1-6) to being an evangelist (Acts 8). We recognize that an elder moving to a new location did not and does not automatically move his authority with him. Some suggest that having become an elder or a preacher one can never resign, that to do so is to "look back" (Luke 9:62), but such is a misapplication. To discontinue some work we are doing is not necessarily to discontinue following Christ; it may well be to follow Him more fully.

To summarize, I have known of churches appointing elders for life and others appointing them for shorter terms. I have no real basis for telling either one that their practice is in and of itself unscriptural.

7110 Bruton Road, Dallas, Texas 75217

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

June 28

Lord willing, this coming Sunday young Christians from Mwata will go with the students to Mwiita village for worship and afterwards singing together praises to God with 5 congregations who are planning to gather at Mwiita. This will be Aaron's last Lord's day with the young Christians of Mwata, as he and his family are transferring to Namwala where he will work with a building contractor. Aaron has met with the Mwata young people each Lord's day afternoon for an hour's singing, and often they go out to encourage others in the way of the Lord and to teach them new songs of praise. We shall miss them very much, however, we know the Lord will use Aaron and his family for a blessing wherever they go to serve the Lord. (Aaron is one of our older boys.) Some of the village churches have made wonderful songs of praise which we hope to learn and perhaps someday include in the songbook, for they praise God from their heart, expressing it in their own language.

Please continue to pray for us. Communist terrorists continue to terrorize the northeast of Rhodesia. Inflation and devaluation in the American dollar make things difficult, but our God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Our Salisbury African churches of Christ brethren visited the sixth new congregation since we returned! It was at Goromonzi. Some one of them are going every Sunday to establish it firmly in God's word. Bro. Machingura, a policeman in the area, actually began the work.

Our car has been giving trouble, but Bob is so busy at Mufakose, building the church there, that he doesn't have time to fix it. A Mufakose brother brought a girl to be baptized Sunday while we were at Highfields. He also delivered a fine sermon on laziness.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

June 18

The Lord has been wonderful to us in spite of our unworthiness. I love Him so much. Last Sunday Daddy Brown went out to Tafara and 7 responded to the invitation. In 3 months there have been 49 responses there. Some came to confess sin in their lives and others came to be baptized into Christ. Surely God has blessed at Tafara.

The ladies' Bible class meeting in Sister Rachman's home is doing well. We are finishing the book of Ephesians this week. Our subject for Wednesday night meeting is Prayer—(for 4 weeks). Tonight is the third lesson. How we need to be awakened to our *privilege of prayer*.

Leonard Bailey

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

June 18

Over Easter weekend the brethren had arranged a special meeting at Plumtree. Bro. Velapi, Bro. Brown, and I went with two vehicles and took some of the brethren and sisters from Magwegwe, about 15 were there from Sikoveni, having travelled by bus and train about 90 miles. We appreciated their effort to be there. We hope the time spent together was encouraging to all. The next meeting is here in Bulawayo at Magwegwe in July.

Bro. Velapi and I visited Mutjolomotji one Lord's Day recently, there were not many present. The leader was away and it seems very few attend if he is not there. There was a women's self help club meeting that day. The congregation appears to be entirely women and girls. The leader tells us about eighty attend when he is there. He has been to see us several times recently as he is looking for work in Bulawayo, last Lord's Day I met him at Magwegwe.

Several have been baptized in Bulawayo this last two months. One was a young man whose home is at Siwazi and we knew him from our visits there. He is now living in Bulawayo and Bro. Vel-

api studied with him for some time before he was baptized. A young man who helps us around the place was also baptized.

On May 28 Mabel and Sister Ann Kidwell of the Queens Park congregation and three African sisters from Magwegwe journeyed out to Nswazi for the day. On the way out they picked up two women from the Sikoveni congregation and left Bro. Velapi there to visit some of the Christians for the day. They arrived about 9:30 and found Bro. Vimba had already brought seven women from Edweleni. He soon returned with seven more from Stanmore. Three women caught the bus from Dadata, about 25 miles away. Before 10:00 they began studying and singing. Sister Kidwell, Sister Vimba, and Mabel taught lessons, Mabel used Titus chapters 1 and 2 in her lessons. After lunch at 12:30 (each lady had brought her own and the Nswazi ladies served tea, bread and butter, and roasted peanuts) a number of different ladies brought a short message until 3:00 p.m. when they all left for home. Mabel feels it was a very worthwhile effort and several of the women have already asked when they can meet again. There were 40 present altogether.

The work on the addition to our house is coming along quite well, the builders have finished the walls and the roof is on. There is still inside work to do; this we will do as we have opportunity.

Thomas W. Hartle

Capetown, South Africa

June 17

Along with other of the men within the congregation, we are very busy with cottage meetings, and scheduled film strip classes in new homes.

I have not been too well of late, due to a nervous upset, which comes on periodically; but I have been to the doctor; he has given me tablets. Up to the time of writing I feel much better, but on his advice I have to go easy. Well, I'm trying and I must. Hope to be showing a series of filmstrips entitled "How We Got the Bible" to the patients at the City Chest hospital, Lord willing; it's the same hospital where I conduct a service on Mondays.

Pray that whatever mediums we are using to reach the lost, be it tracts or otherwise, that its ultimate end might be fruit-bearing. All I can say is, we are trying to be practical. I still have to visit a few families, as soon as I feel a bit better. There are three in all, plus the man in hospital.

Our building project is still in the making. All are excited about it, and just cannot wait to see the actual start.

Dennis Allen

Hong Kong

June 25

Brother Dale Garrett arrived on schedule on June 4. He is fully dedicated to the Lord and it's a blessing to have him with us. He is living with a Chinese family by his own choice, but is taking most of his meals here with us. He has set to with a will to learn Cantonese and is making very good progress. He is using some of our materials and language tapes and spends most of his time at

this. He has also done some visiting. I think this hot weather has not been very easy for him to adjust to. Makes us all feel wilted. At first it was raining every day, but the last week the rains have stopped. However, with no rain it is much hotter. The young people here have responded to him well. He is very eager to use what he has learned.

In two days we are expecting Brother Forcade to arrive from Africa. His last letter was mailed from Malawi and said that last week he managed to get captured by Frelimo terrorists but they were released after about an hour after explanations were made. He should have a lot of interesting things to tell us. He plans to be here until July 14, then he will go on to Manila.

The girls are now finished with their exams so that is a big relief. The boys are in the midst of theirs now but should be finished in a couple of days. The girls are doing some sewing they had been wanting to get at for a long time. We still have not sold the flat here but hope that something will develop soon. We hope to find a more suitable location for the brethren to meet in to continue the work after we leave. As we have time we have been packing and sending some books. Shipping charges are so expensive now that this time we decided to send by parcel post.

We have been having special meetings on Sunday afternoon the past three weeks to study Scripture teaching concerning the church and talk over some of the problems they will be facing. We hope Brother Forcade's ministry will be of help to them in this respect also.

Our main purpose in going back at this time is to take care of my father, but other than that we don't know what we will be doing or where we will be living. However, we feel sure the Lord has a will in the matter. We hope to finish up things here so that we can leave by the last of July, as we need to get settled in the States before school starts.

We appreciate your faithful prayers and gifts during the time we have been here. The Work will have some testings and siftings but we do not feel discouraged about it. Those who have a real relationship with the Lord will continue to grow.

Winston Allen

Eagle River, Alaska

July 1

We have received definite word from Dr. James and Dr. Lyon that Irene does not have the degenerative disease we had suspected. Though some symptoms remain, she is improving. We are grateful for the prayers of many Christian friends.

Last Sunday, June 29, around 55 were present for Sunday school, the morning worship service, and the farewell dinner for the Ralph Javins and Richard Holdeman families. They will be greatly missed.

Dr. Forcade may be with us for several days of meetings in August, and Dennis and Betty and their children may also be here for several days next month on their return trip to the South 48.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Message to Laodicea

Dr. Van Eaton

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Rev. 3)

I wish to give you a prophetic outline of what I believe. This is not what you must believe, because it would do no good to tell you that you had to. But I believe this about the book of Revelation; I believe the messages to the seven churches have a prophetic value in that these seven churches represent seven stages of church life. This is a personal view, and it is not one that I wish to offend you with if you do not wish to accept it.

I believe that the seventh and last of those stages—the Laodicean age—is when the Lord comes back to this earth. His coming will close the age that is described in the message to the church in Laodicea. The message to this church is a message to the age in which we live. I find in our age and in the churches of today exactly the same things that are outlined here.

First of all, the church of the Laodicean age finds Christ knocking at the door trying to get in. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me." It is an appeal to a single individual inside the so-called church of God to open that Christ may come in and have fellowship. It is not the knocking at a heart's door, as many an evangelist would have you

believe—although this could be true if applied in a general sense. In the closing days of this age, Christ will be outside of the church trying to get in. He will be knocking at the door on the outside, asking admission to the fellowship that is supposed to honor and exalt Him as Saviour and Lord.

Because that is true, we find that before He comes, the church is characterized by the word *without*. Read the passage and note that this church is without anything. See if the details don't fit the age in which we live.

They are without *knowledge*. He says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, etc., and know not that these things are true." The church of the latter days is a church devoid of biblical knowledge. We find a church without a knowledge of the Bible and without an experiential knowledge of a living Christ in their midst.

It is also a church without *labor*—that is, spiritual labor. The churches of America today are more than ever involved with social activity. But social activity does not change the world; it is the labor of the gospel in carrying the message of Christ. Instead of this, we see growing programs to meet the physical needs of man—to put food in his mouth, clothes on his back, and a nice place to live. We see a church involved in labor, but not the labor that glorifies God in the winning of souls.

We will see it as a church without *power*. You will remember that Peter was at the beautiful gate when the man asking alms lifted up his hands for help. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." The church in the last days will say, Here is some gold; go get what you need. It won't have the power to cause him to exercise faith or to experience the depths of the spiritual life.

He says it is a church without *clothing*. Clothing, in the Scriptures, is always a sign of what God does for one who works for Him. Here is a church without any service in the sense service should be rendered. It is clothed with no works of righteousness. It is a church without.

He says, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind"—without *sight*. This church will have no vision; they will not be able to see spiritual truths nor to plumb the depths of the spiritual needs of mankind. It will be an organized religious body, tied together for the betterment of the flesh and to the detriment of the spirit—and blind to such an extent that it cannot even see its own need.

When Jesus comes at the closing of the age of grace and knocks on the church's door, He will find a church without knowledge, without labor, without power, without service, and without sight. He enumerates every one of them right here in this verse.

Let's look at it this way, what happens when Jesus knocks? First, He will come unannounced. When He comes in power and glory,

this is another matter, but when He is knocking on the door of that church, He is unannounced.

He not only comes unannounced, but He comes unexpected. A church in this condition—and when I say church, I mean organized Christendom—will not be looking for nor expecting the knock of the Saviour. No one opens the door to invite Him in.

He knocks unrefreshed. He says, "If any will open the door, I will come in and sup with him." Therefore, He desires refreshment, spiritual refreshment. The church in the last days will not open the door, and Jesus stands outside unrefreshed.

Isn't it a terrible thing to think that the church which was founded by the Lord Jesus Christ will apostatize into such a condition? If this is what happens when He comes, and the church is without, then consider the judgment to follow. Let him that hath a hearing ear hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches. Here is the warning; the church will not go unrebuked. He says, "As many as I love, I will rebuke."

What is the application for us? Why tell us the sad news of what is to be? He says, "To the one who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."

The appeal of the Lord is not to the masses, but to the individual. He can't get into the church, but the individual He can get into. The secret of victory in the latter days will be the appeal of the Lord, not to the organized religious body, but to the individual.

—Condensed from a message given at the Byron Bible Camp near Huron, South Dakota, in October 1972.

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



Viewing the News

I AM SORRY that somewhere last month an error crept in and had me saying that Vanderbilt University had a woman head. It should have read "Vanderbilt Divinity School."

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the "Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, has stirred up a lot of articles on the

trial by Darrow and Bryan. It was a peculiar trial, with the defendant never called to testify (and he later said he never taught that section on evolution) and Darrow not giving any sensible justification for that unscientific theory but rather attacking revealed religion. At one point he said to Bryan, "You insult every man of science and learning in the world

because he does not believe in your fool religion." Now, of course, a man must teach evolution as fact most places when it is an unsubstantiated theory which has been proven false by scientists and the Bible must not be taught for the Truth that it is. We are living in a world that is giving itself more and more to serving the "God of this world."

AS I BEGAN to write this column (July 17) the Apollo and the Soyuz were docking in space, and the United States, which once was the symbol of freedom for the world, and Soviet Russia, the leader in trying to take away all freedom in the world, are moving together in space. Thus the oppressed people of the world have another blow to their hopes that they might receive some help from this country. Why they could continue to hope when from the early twenties under the influence of Herbert Hoover, this country began saving the Soviet government by massive shipments of food and while talking against them we have moved closer and closer toward their form of government while saving theirs from falling through wars, food, money, equipment, etc. Not that the people of this country want to help communism, but the "elite" who run the country do not consult the average man in their decisions. I thought that when former President Eisenhower gave the Russians the green light to suppress the Hungarian rebellion by the most oppressive means ever seen the people of the world would turn against us, but many have hoped that light would break through and this country would return to its former interest in freedom. This, by the way, is personal opinion, as all of my columns are, based on many years of study but not intended to be a statement of policy of this magazine. If you disagree, let me hear from you and I'll print what I can of your disagreement if you are a Christian.

JEB MAGRUDER, former White House aide convicted in the Watergate scandals, has been named vice president of Young Life. He and his wife have been active in the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., since his release.

CHARLES COLSON'S conversion in prison is better known than Magruder's earlier conversion, perhaps; he is now working to encourage Chris-

tian fellowship in prisons. More people are converted in prison than most Christians realize. If you are interested, contact Chaplain Ray, P.O. Box 63, Dallas, Texas 75221. I don't think Colson is working with Ray, but I know Ray's address and that he is spending his full time in prison evangelism and Bible teaching.

DID YOU KNOW that people now making up to \$18,000 a year are eligible for food stamps? Or that the next planned addition to welfare is clothing stamps? Or that one of the ways Vietnamese have been made acquainted with American life is that in at least one refugee base those wanting abortions may have them free? Or that many crops, according to farmers, are threatened by the prohibition of the use of many pesticides by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)? Or that you can become a constitutional lawyer without having ever read the commentaries written when the constitution was made, The Federalist Papers? (Come to think of it, apparently you can become a Supreme Court judge without knowing anything about those papers!). Or that Harry Bridges, an American union president, recently made a visit to Moscow as a guest of the Soviet trade unions (according to the communist daily paper in this country)? Or that the Lansman-Milam petition filed before the F.C.C. would freeze all applications for all religious radio and TV stations on non-profit educational channels (the decision is due in a few days after I write this)? Or that fewer American military personnel died in Vietnam during the first three years of our direct involvement in that war than were killed on American school property between 1970 and 1973? Or that Congressmen and Senators do not contribute to the Social Security System? Or that 44 countries containing almost half of the world's population are now held in slavery by the communist rulers? (four of them went under this year). Or that pastors in Southeast Asia are now being placed in work camps and their church members required to work seven days a week, with no meals allowed on the Lord's day if they take time out to worship?

THE RECENT drive against the CIA has results that may not have been intended. I have no love of the organization, of course, since it

has helped with many left-wing causes, but it is our only means of keeping tab on other countries that are trying to undermine us. The drive against it has dried up sources of information, of course, but among the "unexpected" results is that missionaries in many countries are being looked upon as agents of the CIA by the governments. This is making the work of many missionary organizations more difficult. Many missionaries may be asked to leave.

DID YOU SEE James J. Kilpatrick's column on "Ohio Against Its Parents"? It was a report of the prosecution of 15 parents in Greenville, Ohio, who are members of the "Dunkards" or Old German Baptist Brethren, and have taken their children out of the government schools because of their religious beliefs and placed them in a Christian school which does not conform to the Minimum Standards for Ohio Elementary Schools. The first amendment works only one way now, or have you read it lately?

BEN L. KAUFMAN reported last month that the United Presbyterian Church "scored highest among mainline denominations last year in the per capita giving of its members, but they gave less than a third of what each Seventh-Day Adventist contributed to his and her church." Among the non-mainline denominations that Kaufman reported in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* as giving more than the mainline ones are: Free Methodist Church of North America, Evangelical Mennonite Church Inc., Evangelical Church of North America, Evangelical spending more than the government takes in in taxes. Printing more money and distributing it through the private Covenant Church of America, Church of the Nazarene, Church of God (Anderson, Ind.), Baptist General Conference, United Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Church—The General Conference, North American Baptist General Conference, Christian Union, Assemblies of God, Mennonite Church, Evangelical Covenant Church, Conservative Congregational Christian. Compared to the Seventh-Day Adventist average of \$453.69, the Disciples of Christ gave \$99.38, Southern Baptists Convention \$98, and the Churches of Christ and the independent Christian Churches are not listed.

DON'T EXPECT your dollar to be-

come worth more until Congress quits spending more than the government takes in in taxes. Printing more money and distributing it through the privately owned Federal Reserve Bank system simply lowers the value of the money, a fact quite well documented in history. Recently I read that the amount of money is being increased by 7.1% each year. Incidentally, Britain and many other countries are having much greater inflation than we are. It is a world-wide epidemic apparently.

ANOTHER FIRST: The first black man ever to be nominated to be a 4-star general in this nation's history is former Air Force fighter pilot Daniel James, Jr.

OF ALL THE silly things being pushed by the Women's Lib zealots and many others, the push to act like there is no difference in boys and girls is probably the silliest. Sensible psychologists join with others in condemning the educators and others who are trying to say that there are no "boys and girls, men and women, just children and adults." I hope your school superintendent hasn't gone that silly.

IN 1776 there were 3000 churches in eight denominations in the colonies. 749 were Congregational, 495 Presbyterian, 457 Baptist, 307 Quaker, 240 Lutheran, 201 German Reformed, 127 Dutch Reformed, and 56 Roman Catholic. Quite a change since then in number and in distribution!

THERE IS now a Religious Broadcasters Hall of Fame (for people who should not be, and usually are not, looking for fame!). The first four inducted were Clarence Jones, co-founder of HCJB; John E. Zoller, the oldest living religious radio broadcaster; and two posthumous awards to Charles E. Fuller ("The Old Fashioned Revival Hour") and Walter A. Maier, first speaker on the Lutheran Hour.

FIRST BAPTIST Church in Tapa-chula, Mexico, had a world's record of 10,000 in VBS for 1974. The church has only 500 members, but it sponsored 53 VBS sessions last summer.

MANY THANKS to the three who sent clippings this month. Keep them coming and send any questions you may have to Ernest E. Lyon, 2629 Valletta Rd., Louisville, Ky. 40205

The Word of God— Revealed and Preserved

W. A. Criswell

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Is the Bible we hold in our hands the Word of God as God delivered it through the prophets and the apostles? How can we know? How can we be sure? Hundreds of years before the invention of the modern printing press the holy books were copied by hand. Did the scribes mutilate the text? Did they add to or take away from it?

The assured results of scholarly inquiry indicate that the end of Mark is lost, that the Gospel of Mark stops in the middle of the story of the resurrection at verse 8 in chapter 16. Scholars also say that the story of an angel coming down at stated intervals to stir up the water at the pool of Bethesda, recorded in John 5:4, is certainly spurious; that a copyist wrote the explanation on the margin of the book he was copying, and the next scribe placed the note in the text itself. The passage about the Trinity in First John 5:7 is also an interpolation, they say.

If these passages are glosses, what about other passages? If some are false, how shall I be able to pick out the true? I must have an answer to these questions or else I have no foundation upon which to build faith in the revealed Word of God. I must *know* that the Word is God's Word.

We have a sure and certain answer. The same Lord God who inspired the holy prophets and apostles to write the Word also was careful through infinite and multiplied ways to preserve the true Word. That we possess the true text is demonstrable fact.

The scientific study of the preservation of the true text of the Holy Scriptures is called textual criticism. It is one of the most blessed and rewarding fields of inquiry in the theological world. Nothing could be more interesting or more pertinent for the student of the Bible.

The first New Testament in Greek was published by Erasmus in 1516 and for two hundred years his edition, the *Textus Receptus*, was supreme in the world. In the year 1611 the English King James Version was made from that text. It is not a bad text; it is substantially correct. But it was based on later manuscripts and left much to be desired.

Among the scholars of the theological world there arose an intense desire to find those manuscripts that went back many hundreds of years to the very beginning of the Christian era. Surely somewhere the Bible texts used by the early fathers were preserved and in existence. Where were they? Thus began the long and patient search for the ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures. That story is one of the most romantic among the chapters of textual criticism.

At first each New Testament book was a roll in itself and was circulated separately in the place to which it was inscribed and for whom it was written. For example, there are some scholars who think that Matthew was written for the Palestinian and Syrian Christians and that it was circulated especially by the Christians at Antioch. They say that Mark was written for the Christians at Rome and was circulated by that local church. They say that Luke was written for the churches of Greece and was circulated by the churches of Macedonia and that John was written in Ephesus and was circulated especially in Asia.

As the years passed and the churches began to exchange Gospels and Epistles, our New Testament was finally brought together.

The change from a book roll to a codex, a leaf book, is dated about A.D. 300. Because Christians needed to find a passage quickly the roll was cut up and the leaves were put together so that they could be easily turned one after another. It was only after the codex supplanted the roll that a complete New Testament was available.

The codex was written in large, even, capital letters called uncials. In the seventh century another kind of Greek script began to appear. It is called the minuscule, or cursive, a running hand written in much smaller letters. By the ninth century there were no more uncials. In our search for ancient manuscripts, therefore, scholars seek those written in large, capital letters.

Into this search great Greek scholars through the last several hundred years have poured out their very lives. They paid untold prices in toil and suffering in order to find the true and original Word of God. Some of them lived in poverty, like Samuel Tregelles, whom England allowed almost to starve to death and who went blind deciphering the ancient documents.

Other scholars have been like Tischendorf, who was sponsored by the German and Russian governments. He was a professor at Leipzig University and regarded himself as an instrument in the hands of God for the discovery and publication of ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.

Possibly one of the most interesting stories of all time is Tischendorf's discovery of *Aleph*, the alphabetical designation for *Codex Sinaiticus*, which he discovered in a monastery at the base of Mount Sinai in the deserts beyond the Red Sea.

Tischendorf had been traveling throughout the East, searching all the old libraries for texts of the Scriptures. In 1844 he came to the Monastery of St. Catherine located at the foot of Mount Sinai. In the hall was a basket full of parchments which were used for starting fires. He was told that two similar basketfuls had already been used for burning.

Tischendorf looked at the parchment leaves and recognized them immediately. They came from a copy of the Old Testament Septuagint (a translation of the Hebrew into Greek), and

they appeared to be from the most ancient manuscript he had ever seen. Unable to conceal his joy, he aroused the suspicions of the monks and, though the lot was destined for the fire, the monks refused to let him have the codex, thinking it might have value of which they had been unaware. They finally gave him forty-three sheets.

In 1859, this time sponsored by the Russian government (and therefore having an easier entrance into the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Catherine), Tischendorf went back to secure the rest of the leaves. But this visit seemed destined to be a complete failure. The codex had simply disappeared.

In despair and disappointment the faithful scholar was again turning away empty-handed. However, on the evening before he was to depart Tischendorf was walking on the grounds with the steward of the monastery, a gracious person who asked him into his cell to share some refreshments.

As they talked the monk produced a bundle wrapped in red cloth. To Tischendorf's unutterable and indescribable delight he found in the bundle not only the leaves he had seen before in the wastebasket, but other parts of the Old Testament and the complete New Testament, the only such ancient manuscript containing all the New Testament that had ever been found. Tischendorf said that when the monk placed those sheets in his hands he knew that he held the most precious Biblical treasure in existence. It had been made around A.D. 350, about the time the codex came into being.

Tischendorf brought the manuscript to the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg and named it *Aleph*. On December 24, 1933, *Aleph* was purchased by the British government from Russia for \$500,000 and placed in the British Museum.

But by no means is *Aleph* the only ancient codex that has been discovered. Codex A, Alexandrinus, is almost as old. It is called *Alexandrinus* because it once formed a part of the library at Alexandria. It was presented to Charles I in 1628 by Cyril Lucaris, the patriarch of Constantinople.

Another significant Greek manuscript is Codex B, also called *Codex Vaticanus* because it is in the Vatican Library at Rome. It was written about the same time as *Aleph*.

Still another and most interesting manuscript is Codex C, named also *Codex Ephraem*. It was brought from the East to Florence, Italy, in the sixteenth century and a few years later deposited in Paris, where it has remained ever since. This codex is a palimpsest, a parchment used twice. Someone noticed that under the top cursive Greek script there were traces of writing in the uncial style. About the twelfth century someone had taken the parchment and scraped and rubbed it to clean off the old writing, then a common practice to save parchment. The skins were then used to write down the discourses of Ephraem, a Syrian

father of the fourth century. What he had to say was not one one-thousandth as valuable as the ancient writing, because the first writing was the New Testament.

Since impressions of the old, uncial script, however, still were to be seen, the parchment was sacredly and earnestly kept. About seventy-five years ago chemicals were discovered which, when applied to the old manuscripts, would revive their ancient form. It was thus that fragments of each book of the New Testament were brought to light in the palimpsest Codex C.

In our search for the verification of the true, exact Word of God we not only have these ancient Greek codices but we also have the many, many quotations from the sacred Scriptures by the fathers of the Early Church.

Years ago a group of scholarly men met around a dinner table in England. During the conversation someone in the party put a question no one present was able to answer. Suppose the New Testament had been destroyed and every copy lost at the end of the third century: could it be collected together again from the writings of the fathers of the second and third centuries?

Two months afterward one of the company called upon Sir David Dalrymple, who also had been present at the dinner. Pointing to a table covered with books Sir David said: "Look at these books. Do you remember the question about the New Testament and the fathers of the Church? As I possessed all the existing works of the fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search. I have found the entire New Testament except eleven verses."

The Early Church fathers such as Polycarp of Smyrna, Papias of Hierapolis, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, were marvelous expositors of the written Word. They quote long and extensively and accurately from all the books of the Bible. Through their eyes we look upon the pages of the Scriptures as they were in their original form and text.

Likewise the many ancient versions of the holy books translated into other tongues witness to the exact wording of the original text. There are thousands of ancient manuscripts of the Bible in Latin, Syrian, Coptic and other languages. Every one of them helps to verify the true and exact Word of God.

No more startling evidence of the true text of the Scriptures has ever been found than that unearthed by the spade of the archaeologist. The ancient cities of Egypt, with their grand palaces and dismal rubbish heaps, were buried and hermetically sealed by the drifting sands of the desert. Digging beneath the sands and into the graves and cemeteries and ash heaps and streets of long-perished civilizations, the scholars unearthed contemporary records of the daily life of the people. Among other things they found that the people wrote on thin, flimsy sheets called papyri, made from the stalk of the papyrus plant, which grows profusely along the banks

of the Nile. Elsewhere in the world these papyrus sheets decayed and were destroyed, but in Egypt under the sands, protected from the ravages of the elements, they were perfectly preserved.

Reading these bits and fragments from the pens of those ancient peoples, the scholars made an astounding discovery. It was once thought that the language of the Greek New Testament was a special, holy, different kind of language used just in the Bible, but not to be found in any other literature of the world.

The papyri changed all that. To the joy and delight of the archaeologist it was discovered that the common, ordinary, everyday language of the people was the language of the Greek New Testament, now called Koine Greek. The discovery served to explain many of the idioms of the Bible. But it did far more. As the scholars continued to unearth these ancient papyri manuscripts from the waste and rubbish heaps of the cities of Egypt they found many parts of the sacred Scriptures and many verifications that the Greek words used in the Gospels and the Epistles were current in everyday life. The Bible became even more a living, pulsating book.

Thus from the tombs, from the rubbish heaps, from the libraries, from the writings of the fathers, from the various versions, there comes evidence piled on top of evidence for the authenticity of the text of the Word of God.

The multiplication of these ancient manuscripts is unbelievable. They come from every part of the ancient world, and they cover every portion of the New Testament and the whole Bible. For example, one scholar estimates that there are 4,105 ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. It has also been variously estimated that there are as many as fifteen to thirty thousand Latin versions of the Holy Scriptures. Besides these, there are at least one thousand other early versions of the sacred Word. When all those thousands of documents are checked, compared, combined, grouped and studied we have a certain and final answer regarding the text.

With complete and perfect assurance I can pick up my Bible and know that I read the revealed Word of God. The God who inspired it also took faithful care that it be preserved through the fire and blood of the centuries. When Jesus went away He said to His disciples: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:25-26).

The same blessed Paraclete, the Holy Spirit of God, who brought to the remembrance of the disciples the spoken word of Jesus that it might become indelible in the written Word, also preserved the sacred writing from mutilation and destruction.

John sealed the last page of the sacred Scriptures with these awesome sentences: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the

words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

The Ancient of Days has through the centuries kept the holy books as they were written. Where there have been the slightest additions or changes we know it and can easily separate the glosses from the true and inspired text. Each line, each letter, each syllable, has been kept for us even as the holy men of God spoke and wrote, "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

—In *The Alliance Witness*

What is a Home Without a Bible?

What is home without a Bible?
It is a place where daily bread
For the body is provided,
But the soul is never fed.

What is home without a Bible?
It is a place where day is night,
Starless night, for over life's pathway
Heaven can shed no kindly light.

What is home without a Bible?
It's like a vessel on the sea,
Compass lost and rudder broken,
Drifting, drifting aimlessly.

What is home without a Bible?
Listen, ponder while I speak.
It is a home with Bibles in it,
But not open once a week.

Monday comes, Tuesday goes,
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, too,
Saturday and even Sunday,
The Book untouched the whole week through.

So you've lost the Bible, lost its teaching,
Lost its help each day in seven,
Lost to live by, lost to die by.
Lost? What's lost? The way to heaven.

Memorized in 1917 by Brother Noble Bibb and recited by him at Brother Claude Neal's request at a chapel program of Portland Christian School in 1924.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

MY BROTHER IN THE FLESH AND IN CHRIST

O. D. Marsh was the firstborn of our family of three boys. I was the third boy and youngest. O.D. was fourteen when I was born. Naturally, he did a lot of taking care of me in the few years before he married and left home. O. N., the second, remained around for a few years longer. All of us had much in common on a small farm in Harrison County, Kentucky near the Salem church where we all became Christians.

O.D. has now been called home at the age of 82. He was a man of great faith and full of good works, both for his family and for his Lord. I doubt if there is another person to be found who did as much for South-eastern College as he did. He spent much time in labor and supervision of the buildings when the college opened in Winchester. He has also given thousands of dollars to the school since the beginning. He was a board member of the Sellersburg Home and has given liberally to this work. He was a man full of good works and almsdeeds which he did. He now rests from his labors, but surely his works will follow with him.

As a younger brother, I owe much to O.D. We were together in the home when I was a child. We were later together in business in Winchester, Kentucky, and we have been together in many works of faith in the church of our Lord. I shall cherish his memory, not only as a brother in the flesh, but also as a brother in Christ. May the Lord bless and comfort his family and may they seek to maintain the good works in which he was engaged. I am truly thankful to have had a brother like O. D. Marsh. —Howard T. Marsh

Sellersburg, Indiana: Our hearts are made to rejoice in the coming of four more of our young people to be baptized into their Lord. When they start out at such a tender age, we see great things in store for them . . . many opportunities to be of service

to their King! We also see many temptations ahead for them, and we should love and care for our new brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for them and work with them: Paul Hutchinson, Eddie Berendzen, Lana Collings, and Robbie Campbell.

During the entire week of "revival" we had a total of 24 of our members to come forward and rededicate their lives to God. There were also five who indicated that they desired to be soul-winners. For these we praise God!

Rangeland congregation, Louisville: The following young people were baptized into Christ at Woodland last week: Riekey and John Riney, Kim Kiser and Todd Carney. When the invitation was extended last Sunday morning, these came forward to publicly identify themselves with us at Rangeland. Homecoming at Rangeland will be Sunday, August 17.

Portland Avenue, congregation, Louisville: Sydney Simpson, former student of P.C.S., was buried with his Lord in baptism, July 6 at the evening service. We rejoice at the working of God on his behalf.

Buechel congregation, Louisville: Good reports from senior week of camp at Echo Valley have come in with 2 rededications and 2 conversions. We find this very encouraging.

Mrs. Lillian Gallagher placed her membership with our church family this past Sunday. She has long been faithful in her attendance.

Brother Sanders was in a revival at Fisherville June 24-30. The hospitality was lovely and the fellowship was encouraging. Although there were several prospects there were no public responses to the Lord.

HENRYVILLE CHURCH MAKES FINAL PAYMENT ON DEBT

A few years ago, eleven to be exact, a small band of Christians banded together in Henryville, Indiana and started a new congregation of the church of our Lord. Our first Lord's Day meeting was on Febru-

ary 16, 1964 in a double garage which had been re-modeled into a nice room 20 x 28 feet. In a very short time it was necessary to add another 20 feet to the rear of this room. At this time, we sent out a request for help. It was not for financial help, but for the prayers of other congregations of Christians. Today, we praise the Lord and thank all of those who joined with us in prayer. Five years ago, we were much in need of more room and since the work was becoming established with some good men of leadership, it was decided to construct a new auditorium. With the construction of this building, the

purchase of additional lots and a residence which became available next door, the total cost came to about \$32,000. In May of this year, the last note of \$1,000 was paid on this debt. We give praise to our Lord for His goodness and blessings. Many souls have been won to Christ, the congregation has given regularly to missions and all the works of faith of the brotherhood. Recently, a man of the Roman faith, 68 years of age, was baptized into Christ. We give thanks to our Lord for His help and look forward to doing greater works for Him. —Howard T. Marsh, Minister

Abishag the Shunammite

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

Very little is told us of this fair young virgin, wife of David, who so far as the record shows was all of her life a virgin. That cannot be claimed for any other married woman whose record has been given us in the Book of books. Mary the mother of Jesus is no exception.

Abishag was very fair—fair enough to attract Adonijah, one of the sons of David. He was older than Solomon, but the throne had been promised to Bathsheba's son Solomon, long before Adonijah set himself up as king. His reign ended before it was really started and Solomon was made king in his father's room. After that Adonijah made the mistake of asking Solomon's mother to approach the king with a request that he give him (Adonijah) the fair young maiden Abishag to be his wife. It proved a fatal mistake for Adonijah.

For some unexplained reason this little virgin wife must have been connected with the kingdom; for Solomon was furious. He said to his mother, "Ask for him the kingdom also!" and Adonijah lost his life that day. There may be a side warning in this for us, i.e. the fact that Adonijah appealed to the king through the king's mother. In connection with the answer Jesus gave to His mother at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:3-4) the supposition is not at all far-fetched.

One may wonder why King David at the age of seventy was so decrepit that he could not keep warm. The idea of his age is derived from the addition of his age when he came to the throne (30 years) and the length of his reign (40 years). But he was

still around for some time (how long we cannot tell) after Solomon acceded to the throne. It is hard, in view of the ages called "old age" in those times to think of David as "old" at seventy. Eli was "an old man" when he died at the age of ninety-eight years. This would not prove anything as to the length of the interim between David's death and the time Solomon ascended the throne. David gave to Solomon the plan for the temple which he had received in writing "from the hand of Jehovah" (1 Chron. 28:19). He also gave counsel concerning certain men who were worthy of death but had been spared during David's reign and certain other who had earned rewards were also noted. The former were not to be allowed a natural death (1 Kings 2:1-9). None of this in itself gives an answer to the why? of Abishag, the Shunammite. Many of David's wives or concubines may have passed away. But Bathsheba had not and there may have been others. Why, then, a new wife to keep the king warm? She apparently was already established in her novel position before Adonijah asserted himself and his claim to the throne. God has hidden some pictures and even lessons in His matter-of-fact record written for our learning. (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 8:5; 10:1; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). So we look for one here.

David's reign was typical of this age of the church, as Saul's was of the law dispensation and Solomon's of the coming kingdom of the Messiah. There will be a clean up period after the Lord comes, judgment on those who have, though worthy of death, been graciously spared until His coming (Matt. 13:36-43) in order that they might repent. But there comes a time when the time of judgment replaces the day of grace for those who refused to repent. Therefore offenders during David's reign were executed by the order of Solomon. There seems to be no mention or picture of The Great Tribulation as such, as elsewhere set forth clearly unless these executions could be construed as a miniature type of it. But rather they seem to suggest the weeding out of His own people who had been unfaithful stewards of the talents given them (Matt. 25:24-30). The verses 31-46 seem to have reference to the Lord's judgment of the attitude of the peoples toward His "brethren" during that terrible time.

But what has all of this to do with Abishag the Shunammite? Perhaps nothing, but it may be that she represents those saved out of the tribulation (Rev. 7:14). They bear no fruit to the Lord but have a place in His bosom close to His heart.

These thoughts are suppositions of course, but Abishag is mentioned by name, the peculiar position she had with reference to the king is set forth in the record. Therefore these are plausible inferences consistent with God's over all purpose.

EVENING SESSION

- 7:00-7:45 Youth Conference
"Why Follow the Leaders" —Ken Stockdell, Sr.
8:00-9:00 Congregational Singing
"The Church's Problems—Whose Problems?" —Ken Lawyer

FRIDAY

Chairman, Chester LaHue

DAY SESSION

- 9:00-10:15 Bible Exposition: Acts —Howard Marsh
10:30-11:30 "What the Bible Teaches About the Church" —Richard Ramsey
11:30-12:00 Prayer Time
12:00-1:15 Lunch Time
1:30-3:00 Sharing What We Believe
"Why I Should Become a Leader" —Jim Conyers
"Christianity in a Real World" —Dr. Arnn

EVENING SESSION

- 7:00-7:45 Youth Conference
"Why I Believe the Bible to be Relevant Today"—Jack Weatherford
8:00-9:00 Congregational Singing
"Where to From Here?" —Robert Boyd

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Tuesday: Sylvania, LaGrange, Shawnee, Jeffersontown, Jefferson Street, South Louisville, Fern Creek.

Wednesday: Kentucky Avenue, Ormsby Avenue, Highview, Buechel, Community, Utica.

Thursday: Cherry Street, Highland, Sellersburg, Iroquois, Henryville, Waterford.

Friday: Fisherville, Portland Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Rowan Street, Eastview, Rangeland, Eighteenth Street.

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