

# THE WORD AND WORK

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

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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## *God's Family*

W. R. H.

### **WHAT PRICE IGNORANCE?**

Every thinking person who has been hearing the news this past week, has really done some soul-searching, as to why 912 people would be so constrained as to commit mass suicide. What was the background of these persons, and particularly of their leader, Rev. Jim Jones? And what kind of attraction or persuasion has induced them to cast their lot with a group that would claim their possessions and even their homeland, exporting them to a foreign shore to live out their days?

Most of all, to me comes the question: What can I or others do in our daily lives that would forestall those who know us from becoming involved in such a spiritual "Pigeon-drop" as was experienced here.

First of all, we need to be reminded that this whole scheme was foisted upon these people in the name of religion, even the Christian religion! Nor was it an easy and careless kind of relationship, but rather one the most demanding and austere, demanding not only the worldly possessions, but separation from loved ones, censorship of mail and other communications, and loyalty (to a mere man) unto death!

No doubt, we discern from reading the various accounts, these people had some sort of church background, but it was insufficient guard against this particular work of Satan. (May I say, right here, that I feel this whole episode was a victory for Satan, even though many of the victims might have been heirs to salvation personally. I do not say, however that the Lord cannot work good out of this great evil. Any tragedy that has so captured the attention of society, is bound to have some impact. May we all pray the Lord to work it out for some good, or some timely warning, to the masses of humanity.)

### **COMMUNISM IS NOT THE ANSWER**

Communism can only be a blessing when those in the commune have been guided by the Holy Spirit. Too many people read the account of the early church having "all things common", and take the words out of their context. There the Holy Spirit was guiding all to provide for each other, as any man had need. There were plenty of needs, and so the gifts were used as they were received. No mention is

made that any of the funds were credited to any one person's account for any kind of reserve against the future. And when the Jerusalem church was scattered by the persecution that erupted, we read no more of any such arrangement. It was for a time and a place; and it may be so again some time in the future; it is not the norm for the church through all the age. We have teaching in both the Testaments about stewardship, and the apostle Paul gives admonition to the rich, the poor, the masters, and the servants. A candid look at the sum of God's word on this subject of "communism vs. possessions" will show us we should not regard any of our possessions "as our own". (This even includes our health and our very lives.)

### THE CLOISTER IS NOT THE ANSWER, EITHER

Just getting off to ourselves, so that we can "let the rest of the world go by" is not God's plan for the believer, either. "No man is an island," and we ought not be so selfish as to crave such personal seclusion. Yes, I know how it is to wish that you and yours were somewhere on a small island, out of the reach of wars and diseases and laws and taxes. But this is not the way God has ordained the social order for any of us, particularly not His people. Even back as far as the call of Abraham, he was called, and blessed in order that he might in turn be a blessing. And the children of Israel have been just that, despite all that Satan could do with them. Jesus called on his followers to be the "light of the world," not hidden under a bushel nor within cloistered walls or a jungle commune. It is basic selfishness that tells us we should get away from all the world's ills and merely please ourselves.

### IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

Who among the adherents of Jim Jones would have believed how things were going to turn out if one dared to suggest trouble ahead? But, could they not detect the dictatorial attitude that told them how much to give, how to congregate, how to regard their kinfolks, and how to think? With Hitler and Stalin so recently on the stage, how could the older ones so quickly forget that socialism is not the path to freedom? Like the Galatians, they must have been bewitched (literally) to give up Christian freedom for a yoke of bondage.

If people shun the word of God, there is no measuring their spiritual ignorance. If they have heard some things, but refuse to meditate thereon or to apply them to their own case, the "evil one will snatch away that which hath been sown in their hearts." We must get very serious about this business of proclaiming the Word of God to a dying world.

### LOYALTY TO WHOM?

You might admire people who would go to death for their leader, but I prefer to withhold my admiration until I know more about their leader. Blind loyalty can be most expensive, when the leader is fallible. This is equally true in the spiritual world, because the stakes

are eternal. Our faith is not to rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

In war, there are countless men who have given their lives in loyalty to their leader, and ultimately, their government. The leaders and the government try to earn and deserve this loyalty, by keeping perspective of freedom and honorable government. But in these days of change, how can we feel as loyal, even to our United States Government as we should? But there is One to whom we can ever be loyal, whose kingdom is not of this world at present, but will be set up and spread over the whole earth. His dominion will be an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom one whose sovereignty will not be left unto another. How glorious, that we can be loyal to Him!

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## *Viewing the News*

Jack Blaes

PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY of Jamaica, a known Marxist and one openly sympathizing with the Marxist movement, as one of the major speakers at the World Council of Churches last world meeting called for the churches of the world to unite — “to utterly destroy the capitalistic system which is the great enemy of the people in the Third World and the masses of the people around the world.”

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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES special program to combat “racism” which is a cover to fund, among other things, Communist terrorism in Africa has during the last eight years spent in excess of \$3 million with more than half going to black “freedom fighters” in southern Africa. The so-called Patriotic Front in Rhodesia, for instance, has officially received \$230,000. And the terrorists in South West Africa known as S.W.A.P.O. has been given \$498,500. The W.C.C. admits that it has no control over the way grants are spent, but, they explain, “We don’t believe it will be used to buy guns.

We have known the Patriotic Front for many years and we believe they are responsible people.” But the religious body refrains from telling us for what they are responsible. They leave it to **To The Point International** to inform us: “They hack pregnant women to death with panga knives. They slit the throats of babies. They peel the skin off an old man’s face and leave him to die in the blazing sun, impaled on a barbed-wire fence. They plant land-mines that rip off civilian arms and legs. They leave bombs in hotel lobbies or prowl around with AK47 weapons to kill innocent villagers. They cut off lips and gouge out eyes.” And, you must have read elsewhere, how, that with the aid of Sunday School money from America, the Patriotic Front, friend of the World Council of Churches, Andrew Young, and others of his ilk, also butcher missionaries.

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BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. Noting that the World Council of Churches has endorsed the terrorists masquer-

ading under the title "Rhodesian Patriotic Front," and that the Council has spent huge sums of money for their support, the Salvation Army has announced suspension of its membership in the World Council.

Tell your friends at work who belong to churches which support the World Council of Churches what the Council is doing with their contribution, how the Salvation Army has reacted, and strongly suggest that they do likewise.

**GEORGIE MARKOV OF BULGARIA** who defected from that Communist country earlier this year was jabbed in the leg with an umbrella recently in England. Scotland Yard experts have determined that Georgie was indeed murdered. The presumed fatal instrument is an ingenious device that leaves almost no trace, with only a tiny pellet being found under Markov's skin. The pellet is an alloy of rare metals, 90 percent platinum and 10 percent iridium. It is one-fifteenth of an inch in diameter. Two holes, each one-thousandths of an inch deep, had been drilled into this pinhead at right angles to each other. Detectives found an unidentified substance in these holes, noting that it could take months to complete tests to determine what it is. The intelligence community in Great Britain is convinced that the killer was an agent from the Soviet bloc, perhaps the K.G.B., the Soviet secret police.

**LAST MONTH ANOTHER BULGARIAN** defector and journalist, Vladimer Rostov, was hit in the back as he was mounting an escalator in the Paris Metro. A pellet identical to the one found in Markov's leg was found in Rostov's back after he became alarmed. He survived the attack.

**NEWS FROM PANAMA.** Panama's new President is Aristides Royo. One of Aristides' first acts was to appoint Adolfo Ahumada as Minister of Government and Justice. Ahumada was Minister of Labor and personal advisor for General Torrijos. He is a formal member of the Communist Party and participated in the Panama Canal treaty negotiations, representing the Communist Party. He is described as having been a Marxist agitator since his student days and is much respected by Marxist youth groups. The Pana-

ma case is not over yet, but the November elections, in many cases at least, did not reflect much concern with the way many Senators voted to surrender the canal to the Marxists.

**SENATOR WILLIAM PROXMIRE OF WISCONSIN** exposes waste of taxpayer's money. It seems that the National Institute for Mental Health granted two professors \$97,000 to study the ethnic and class relationships of the mountain people of Peru. One of the professors, all in the interest of science, we (foolishly) presume, went all the way down to the small Andean village of San Tuti, where he spent twenty nights doing research in a Peruvian brothel at the taxpayer's expense.

"WE WILL CUT DOWN ALSO ON GOVERNMENT regulations and we will make sure they are written in plain English for a change," President Jimmy Carter. Later: "On May 19, 1977, I determined to accept the determination of those Commissioners making no determination of injury to the monochrome television receiver industry as the determination of the Commission and to accept the determination of those Commissioners finding serious injury to that portion of the industry producing sub-assemblies as the determination of the Commission," Jimmy Carter.

I am determined to make no comment on that one.

**GLAGOLEV, FORMER SOVIET SALT OFFICIAL** warned: "Once the Soviet Union has increased its SALT-guaranteed strategic superiority over the U.S., the Soviet leaders will say so openly and will use that superiority to blackmail the Free World."

General Daniel O. Graham, retired head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, observes: "The Soviets have not built up their forces, as we have, to deter a nuclear war. They have built up their forces to fight a nuclear war."

**A REPORT FROM BRUSSELS** states that N.A.T.O. has asked the U.S. to comment on reports that American aircraft parts, the designs of which are subject to secrecy, are being transported to N.A.T.O. partners in Europe on cargo ships of the Soviet Union and

Communist East Germany. It was confirmed by N.A.T.O. circles in Brussels that N.A.T.O.'s General Secretariat is alarmed by reports that General Dynamics, the U.S. manufacturer of the latest F-16 combat aircraft, entrusts shipments for N.A.T.O. partners to Soviet and G.D.R. freighters because they are more than 30 percent cheaper than Western ships. The F-16, which costs about \$5 million and is considered to be the most up-to-date U.S. aircraft of its kind now operational, is the successor to the Starfighter, which is deployed in Bel-

gium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and West Germany.

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Thank you for many kind expressions regarding our efforts in these pages. I appreciate much your prayers as I very much profit from them. Continue to remember to pray for our country, and for the peoples of the world. Less of the world's peoples have freedom to hear the Gospel than had it five years ago. Communism is killing millions who are dying without Christ. Pray for the people of the world.



## THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

### THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

“For therein is revealed God’s righteousness from faith unto faith; as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.” Surely no one is surprised to notice that the righteousness that God bestows upon us is brought to us by means of faith. Scholars discuss the exact meaning “from faith unto faith”, but let us instead note these things: The righteousness that we receive is brought on the principle of faith and is given to sinners who receive the righteousness by faith. Also it is received by those who continue to believe. The proclamation of the gospel also produces faith. With that summary let us turn our attention to the little quotation with which Paul ends his introduction to the book of Romans: “The righteous shall live by faith.”

That quotation is from Habakkuk, a minor prophet whose days are not exactly defined in his book but who obviously lived very shortly before the Babylonians defeated Israel and took them into captivity. The quotation is taken from the latter part of verse four in chapter 2. Habakkuk is properly listed as one of the “minor prophets”, but here we find how God takes something men call “minor” and makes a “major” out of it. This little statement He made to Habakkuk is quoted and serves actually as a key to three of the most important books in the New Testament: Romans (1:17), Galatians (3:11) and Hebrews (10:38). Reducing the minor variations in the way the quotation is given in each book to the shortest statement (“the righteous shall live by faith”) there are only six words in developing three major portions of our Scriptures.

Romans emphasizes the first two words, "the righteous." In this letter we find what the righteousness is and how we get it and many other things about it. Beginning with the very next verse after this quotation (1:18) Paul lays a background that shows all the way through 3:20 that no man can on his own attain to the righteousness he must have to stand before God. Beginning in 3:21 he shows that righteousness comes to all who have faith in Jesus Christ, being thereby cleansed of all our sins by the grace of God. Beginning with 5:12 he shows that God also deals with the sinful nature of man in giving us His righteousness, burying us into Christ's death so we can walk in Him in resurrection life. The work of the Holy Spirit in giving us this is clearly shown in chapter 8, which is so often called "The Holy Spirit Chapter". This, of course, is not even a summary of all that Romans reveals about that righteousness, but it is enough to show that when we understand Romans we know what Habakkuk was being told when God said "the righteous" or "the righteous one."

In the letter to the Galatians Paul takes up the middle words of the quotation to show what it means "to live" by faith. The Galatians had been saved by faith, the Holy Spirit had begun His work in them by giving them new life. The Judaizing teachers, who hounded Paul everywhere, had come in and were telling them that they had to follow up that work of the Spirit by their own efforts. Paul pointed out the foolishness of that idea in chapter 3, pointing out that if they couldn't even make a start without the work of the Spirit, how could they journey all the way through life without his help, help that could come to them by faith and only by faith. Two verses that every Christian should memorize are in that chapter: "Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:11, 12). It is evident, then, that any system of "living the Christian life" that calls for it to be done by human effort is a false teaching and that it is only by faith that we can so live.

The quotation in Hebrews comes at an unexpected place, between one of God's great red lights to the believer in 10:26-31 and the wonderful "faith chapter", chapter 11. The Holy Spirit in verses 37 and 38 of chapter 10 guides the writer of Hebrews to rephrase Habakkuk 2:3,4 to fit the occasion and gives the quotation we are interested in as "My righteous one shall live by faith." Throughout the Hebrew letter the emphasis has been on faith. The greatest of the results of faith in Christ is shown by contrasting His greatness with angels, prophets, Moses, Melchizedek, etc., and by the greater results to those who believe, especially the much greater covenant we have working for us. To show even a small portion of the ways Hebrews shows what the faith is like would require an exposition of the entire book, so read it for yourself and then go back and read Romans and Galatians again and rejoice that God can condense so much into six wonderful words, "The righteous shall live by faith." Get life by faith, continue in it by faith, faith which is in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

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## Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

*Should we pray for the dead?*

At least one great religious body believes in and promotes prayers for the dead because they believe in purgatory, a sort of half-way place where it is supposed people go who are not yet good enough for heaven (most of them) and from which it is supposed they can ultimately be delivered by enough good works attributed to them. The prayers are not necessarily directly a plea for the dead, but it is believed that these and other good works can avail to change the status of the dead.

Prayers for the dead are a part of the ritual of some religious groups and may be engaged in for that reason. The ritual may set forth things not truly believed by many of the members, but the practice is perpetuated by the rituals. Then there are form prayers – “May the Lord have mercy on his soul,” “May he rest in peace,” etc. Some praying for the dead occurs, no doubt, as a result of vague and ill-defined ideas of God and of the future life. The praying is done in the hope that somehow God may be influenced to be more merciful than He might otherwise be. The prayers may be little more than wishes directed toward God by distraught mourners or they may be offered in the hope that something might be done.

Whether the concepts are systematically well-formed or whether they are vague and uncertain, it is evident that the purpose of prayer for the dead is an effort somehow to influence God and His actions toward those who have gone from this life. Is there any reason to believe that prayers for the dead can avail anything?

In all of the Bible there is no instance of prayer for the dead, no clear example and no precept teaching it. Some have supposed that Paul offers prayers for a dead Onesiphorus in 2 Tim. 1:18, but this is not necessarily the case. We do not know whether Onesiphorus was dead or alive when this was written. He may only have been away from home. It would be a tragic mistake to try to base a doctrine on a situation as uncertain as this. It is likewise true that there is no Scripture support for the teaching of purgatory. There is just nothing in the Bible to warrant prayers for the dead.

But, someone may ask, is there anything against praying for the dead? There is no specific prohibition in so many words, but there



is that which suggests the futility of it, even the error of it. What would we hope to accomplish? As already mentioned, the purpose is to influence God in His actions toward the individual. Yet the person's death settled his destiny. As to Christian loved ones, why would we need to pray for them? They have gone, not to purgatory, but to be with the Lord. They are with Christ (Phil. 1:23), at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). They have entered into rest. They need nothing our prayers could supply. Even their rewards will be based on their works, not ours. We do not have to plead with God to give what He has already given.

But what about those who were not Christians, or about whom we are uncertain? Might we not influence God in some way in His dealings with them? How? Shall we ask Him to set aside the need for Christ's shed blood and not require salvation of certain ones so they can be eternally blessed? Do we envision God as a Being who is swayed in His administration of the universe by an emotional plea that He show favoritism? Those who step out into eternity without Christ are lost. There is no hint of a "second chance." God has given this present life as the time of salvation — "today," not tomorrow. In Luke 16:19ff we learn that the petitions of the unsaved themselves cannot avail. The rich man's pleas were all denied.

Before most prayers for the dead are uttered or can be uttered, the dead are already either in blessedness or in torment. If we hope to influence God in some way or have individual lives somehow touched by God, then the time to do our praying is in the present, while they live and not when they have gone. Even for the present life we must not ask God to set aside His ways in favor of ours, but that we or those for whom we pray may become aware of and subject to His ways.

Aside from the futility of it, there is something unhealthy and dangerous about praying for the dead. It suggests a less-than-desirable understanding of the gospel of Christ, of the infinite mercy of God offered to mankind, and of the certainty of His promises and purposes in the present. It falsely suggests that maybe there is a short cut that others can provide for us to exempt us from obedience to Christ. Pray for the living! The need is not for changing God, but for changing man. That is done in this present dispensation of grace.

*Are there not some sins which call for special help more than just God's forgiveness if we are to overcome them?*

There are some sins which can have a stronger hold on us than others. There are besetting sins, i.e., sins which take advantage of a particular weakness we have. You and I may not each be tempted by the same things and what for you might seem to be an easy sin to conquer may be for me much more difficult. Again, perhaps there is a habit-forming possibility in most sin, but there are those things which seem to fasten on us as evil habits more readily and strongly than others. So we can agree that the drug-users, whose bodies may have formed a dependence on the drugs, may have a tougher fight than the

person who has fallen into the habit of not attending church services. We must be very, very careful, however, about deciding that our sin problem is basically a medical problem, or a psychological problem, or that in some way there are complications which make God's provision for our forgiveness and victory somewhat lacking. There is a growing tendency in our day to consider some sins as simply diseases, inherited weaknesses, or a deficiency for which we are not responsible.

Now the drunk may have to be sobered up before there can be much done about his sin. While he is under the influence he may cry, declare he will never commit such sin again, and yet not even remember his concern when he is sober. Generally speaking, he cannot repent while he is drunk. A person might so destroy his mind with drug abuse that he is not able to give intelligent consideration to the gospel or make any other spiritual decision. In time there may be enough mental recovery, of course, to enable him to make a decision. While our Christianity is not alone an intellectual matter, it does involve making choices. One of the serious things about certain sins is the way they destroy or limit our decision making ability. And there is a difference between the person who never possessed the capability of making a decision and the one who has squandered his capability in his choice of wrong-doing.

There is no doubt that stronger Christians are to be supportive of those who are weak (Gal.6:1). Active interest, encouragement, showing concern, etc., may be enough to make the difference between failure and victory for some. So if we are saying that real Christian fellowship is important, along with other provisions of God, then there can be no denial that this "extra" may be very desirable.

Mankind is always looking for an excuse for sin, however. There are times when people want to hide behind such excuses. We cannot consent that some sins are just too big to overcome even with the Lord's help. In fact, the best and most lasting "cures" from drunkenness, drugs, homosexuality, and such like are not achieved by medicine, by psychiatry, or by humanistic programs but by religion (especially true Christian conversion and commitment). This should tell us something. Of course, we cannot be selective and repent of part of our sins. God's way calls for drastic dealing with sin in every area of our life. But the sin is not too big nor are we too small if we will avail ourselves of God's promise and provision for victory.

A remarkable thing is written about the church at Corinth. Paul did not write to say how sorry he was that there was not a good psychiatrist in town, or that a chapter of AA's had not been organized, or that the medical knowledge of the day was limited. There were drunkards and homosexuals, along with others living after the flesh. He could write, however that "such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11). Note the past tense. What had happened? Had the Grecian philosophers come up with a way of radically changing these life styles? Not at all. Instead these people had been "washed...sanctified...justified in

the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” The victory over these sins had come in Christ.

We serve the same God today; we have the same gospel and the same promises of overcoming power. There is no sin too big for the Lord. Of course, no one said it would be easy nor that there would be no more temptation. We would not insist that these Christians never for an instant slipped back or never were again guilty of any of these things. We do say, however, that they did not have to and that that they were not doomed by birth, by genetic makeup or inheritance, or some other impossible barrier to continue in sin.

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## BROADCASTERS NEEDED

Alex V. Wilson



Our churches are diminishing in number. There are fewer congregations, not more, than there were around 1960 — at least if a report by Richard Ramsey several years ago was accurate.

What can be done to stop and reverse this trend? First and most important is to pray. We need to intercede for revival, for more workers, for deeper love, daring faith, enthusiastic sacrifice, and practical wisdom.

Some years ago an evangelist from India, Bakht Singh, visited the U. S. I'll never forget his saying, "You in America are sorry for us in India because of our material poverty. But we Christians in India are sorry for you in America because of your spiritual poverty. In the most poverty-stricken land on earth, God always meets our needs. We do not have the educated preachers, expensive buildings, elaborate equipment, and many books that you in the U. S. have — but *God gave everybody two knees*, and we have learned how to use our knees!" In every American church I have visited, the prayer-meetings are the poorest attended and least lively. But in India we love to pray. We often pray for hours. We pray for you in America."

God help us all to use our knees.

### *Evangelists*

One thing to pray for specifically is that the Lord will raise up evangelists. By this we don't necessarily mean men who hold large crusades like Billy Graham (though thank God that he and some oth-

ers are confronting multitudes with Christ and His claims). Rather we mean men whose major work is to preach the gospel by any means to the unsaved, and then gather converts together to form a church.

Paul says in Eph. 4:11 that Christ "gave gifts to men; he appointed some to be *apostles*, others to be *prophets*, others to be *evangelists*, others to be *pastors* and *teachers*." Apostles and prophets were God's inspired spokesmen, to give the Scriptures to men and lay the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20).

Evangelists are to preach to the lost and thus plant churches. Pastors are to lead the churches thus established, and teach and train the members. Note the difference between preaching and teaching. We today speak of men preaching sermons to Christians in church week after week, but Scripture doesn't use such terminology. In the Bible, "preaching" is addressed mainly to unbelievers, and "teaching" mainly to believers. In general, evangelists preach and pastors teach.

Literally, preacher means "herald." In ancient times men had no TV, radio, newspapers or magazines. How then did they learn of current events and new laws and decrees? Heralds were appointed to walk through the city and announce such news. This is what the preacher is to do: proclaim God's love, announce the good news of His peace-terms offered to men. Present-day equivalents for "preacher" might be "broadcaster, announcer, news-reporter," although the preacher goes beyond the broadcaster by seeking a verdict, a decisive commitment to the One he proclaims.

Thus in Scripture "preacher" usually refers to evangelists, and "teacher" usually refers to pastors. The same man might sometimes be both a preacher and teacher; Paul was (2 Tim. 1:11). But usually some men are more gifted in evangelism and less gifted in pastoring, while others are the opposite. The evangelist plants the seeds of the gospel among the unconverted, as Paul did when he went to Corinth. The teacher then waters the plants that grow up, as Apollos did among those who were converted there (1 Cor. 3:5ff). To change the analogy, the evangelist is like a carpenter that constructs a building and then moves on to build elsewhere. The pastor/teacher is like a caretaker who works in the building, tending it regularly.

Or to borrow two analogies which Carl Ketcherside often uses: The evangelist is like a promotional director trying to enroll students in his school; the pastors are like the teachers who instruct the students. The promotional director would be foolish to spend most of his time stirring up the students. They are already convinced and enrolled. He needs to go out among the unschooled and persuade them of their need for what his school offers. Or again, the evangelist is like a recruiting officer seeking to enlist men in the army. The pastors are like the officers who train and lead the soldiers after they have signed up. The former has no business trying to train civilians, nor the latter trying to enlist the already-enlisted.

Of course *every* Christian is to witness for the Savior as opportunities arise. Evangelism should not be restricted to occasional times and just a few men. Gospel-preaching may take place in formal situations, like Paul's preaching in a synagogue, but it should also take place in informal times and places. Believers (but not the apostles) "went about *preaching the word*," gossiping the gospel (Acts 8:1,4). We should do the same today. But while that fact is important, it is also true that only some men are called to be evangelists in the fulltime sense. God gives them special abilities to reach the lost and establish new churches.

#### *Examples from the Past*

Among our churches, Stanford Chambers was an example of a man highly gifted both in evangelism and teaching. From 1924 onwards, most of his time was occupied in teaching at Portland Christian School. But for a number of years before then, he gave himself to gospel-preaching. During that period he helped establish many new congregations in Indiana and Louisiana – fifteen or twenty of them. Later, during the 1930s and 40s, J. E. Blansett pioneered perhaps twenty or more churches in Texas. My dad-in-law, Jesse Wood, has told me how Brother Blansett was especially gifted in going into neighborhoods where Christians were very few. He could easily arouse the interest of unbelievers, present Christ to them and appeal to them to become disciples. Then he would form a local assembly. Not very long afterwards, he would try to get someone else to take the leadership there while he moved on to other virgin areas.

A few other men could also be mentioned. All of these used various methods—open-air meetings, tent meetings, Bible classes in homes or schools or rented rooms, and personal visitation. But whatever methods were employed, their supreme calling and vision and burden and gifts were aimed at reaching out to pioneer areas and establishing new churches. Like Paul, their ambition was to preach the gospel where Christ was not known or at least well-known (Rom. 15:20).

#### *Our Present Situation*

We now have a number of men who are pastoring churches, of course. They are needed—in fact, more are needed. But to my knowledge (correct me if I'm wrong), for the past ten to fifteen years we have had no one in the U. S. giving themselves primarily to church-planting. (In the Philippines also our work is much stronger in pastoring/teaching than in pioneering.)

The *Words of Life* program has provided an outreach to many lost people, but Brother Boyd has lacked the time he desired for sufficient follow-up. In a few months he will give all his time to that ministry, Lord willing, and this is encouraging. Yet more evangelists are needed.

How shall we get them? First, by praying the request Christ

clearly told us to make, that the Lord will raise up workers. Second, by looking around. We may discover in our midst already men who are gifted in evangelism. Perhaps now their gifts are not so evident because the men are tied down with other duties. Perhaps some who are now pastoring local churches (and doing a fair job of it) are actually more gifted as Church-planters. If such were sent forth and their gifts developed, they might become far more effective than they now are as "local preachers". Third, such men naturally will need financial backing if they are to have sufficient time to plant new churches. Just as local churches help support foreign missionaries, they should also support pioneer evangelists in the homeland.

### *Multiply by Dividing*

But in the meantime, we need not sit back idly waiting for such evangelists to appear on the scene. Even now, larger churches (or smaller ones working together) can plan to reproduce new congregations. Church splits *can* be very good, if they are lovingly, prayerfully, planned!

While in college I visited a strong church which had already split once and hoped to do it again and again! The goal they had set for themselves was to reproduce a new congregation every five years. Prayerfully they had picked a community which had no Biblical church. Then they chose some of their members to penetrate that community — by visitation and home Bible classes — while the rest of their members concentrated their activities on the home church and its neighborhood. Finally, after a number of conversions had occurred in the new area, some of the pioneering families returned to the "mother church" while other pioneering families stayed on permanently as leaders and teachers for the "daughter church". Having successfully achieved their first five-year goal, the original church was working on its second reproduction when I visited them.

The conservative Christian Churches and also Southern Baptists are quick to plant congregations as near as possible to new housing projects, apartment-building complexes, etc. Thus they seek to reach down elsewhere. This approach often proves to be successful.

May the Lord raise up evangelists among us, may we support them, and our congregations also be willing even to sacrifice some members and leaders, if need be, in order to plant new churches. And may we use our knees more, that we may experience the Holy Spirit's leading and empowering — to the glory of Christ.

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## **AT BILL AND BETTY'S**

### **NO EASY ANSWER**

I had four 'girls' from the Wives' Group in to coffee the other morning, and had quite an interesting chat.

'I can't believe it's nearly Christmas again', Sylvia said. 'It doesn't seem five minutes since I made last year's cake'.

'I'm getting to hate Christmas', Sally confided. 'Ron and I always argue deciding where we shall go — his parents or mine, and if we could please ourselves we'd have a Christmas in our own home anyway'.

'You're lucky to have two homes to go to', young Mrs. Pitman said quietly. 'My Mum and Dad got divorced and married again when I was eight, and I've never had a proper home since'.

'It's not going away that's the trouble with us', Sylvia said, 'It's having people to stay. There's Auntie Madge who's stone deaf and has an ulcer, and Grandma Billings who isn't really our Gran at all, but just an old lady who lived next door to us before we moved here'.

'At least you feel you're doing something', I pointed out. 'I can remember the time when you complained about having Christmas on your own'.

'I must be mad', Sylvia said. 'I know it sounds marvelous when you talk about it. Makes me sound like a wonderful "do-gooder", with a built-in halo as well. But it isn't like that really. Aunt Madge and Gran Billings fight like cat and dog, and Gran screams into Madge's deaf aid, and then pretends it is quite by accident. And now there's Gladys Coats and her husband. They haven't any family at all, and she's hinted once or twice that they hate spending Christmas alone'.

'I suppose it's not much fun for Pam', I said slowly. (Pam is Sylvia's nineteen year old daughter.)

'Pam's going too have tea and supper at her boy friend's house', Sylvia said, a little bitterly, 'And I don't blame her'.

'What does your husband think?' Sally asked curiously.

'Threatens to leave home', Sylvia said gloomily.

'It's awfully difficult when you're really trying to live as a Christian', young Mrs. Pitman put in. 'After all, the Bible does say that we should *love our neighbors as ourselves* and I must say I'd hate to be all on my own at Christmas, wouldn't you?'

'But some people won't make an effort', Doreen objected, 'They sit back and expect everyone else to do the "loving" and chuck it back at you if you don't. Surely it's not right for Sylvia to make her own family miserable just so that she can pander to a couple of old miseries who just won't bother to help themselves'.

'Some people would say one was a fool, Sylvia', I agreed, 'But wasn't it Paul who said Christians must be prepared to *be fools for Christ's sake*?'

'He also said *Wives submit yourselves to your husbands*', Doreen said promptly. 'Sylvia isn't doing that if she's going against Ken's wishes!'

'Isn't there an Evergreen Club or something?' Mrs. Pitman asked. 'I thought they entertained old people for the whole day'.

'Madge and Gran don't like Clubs', Sylvia said, 'They feel they're being patronised'.

'I can't see there's any easy answer', I confessed. 'I suppose in the end you've got to do what your conscience dictates. But I do think you've got to look at the problem from every angle, because one's own family has certainly got the right to expect some consideration'.

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## Reflections On The Restoration Movement

Larry Miles

### **ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: Proclaiming The Ancient Order-1816-30**

Thomas and Alexander Campbell and the little band of saints at Brush Run were just a few short years removed from denominationalism. They had come a long way in their journey from the tenets of Presbyterianism. Concerning their pilgrimage toward the Apostolic Faith, Dr. Robert Richardson, Alexander's physician and biographer, had these things to say in his book *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*,

In seeking for the 'old paths' they had thus far found each new truth to lead them to another still obvious, as a single track often guides the traveler lost in the forest to a pathway, which in turn conducts him to one still more wider and more easily pursued. The necessity for unity brought them to the Bible alone; this led them to a simple primitive faith in Christ; and this, in turn, had now guided them to the primitive baptism as the public profession of that faith. The full import and meaning of the institution was, however, still reserved for future discovery.

As we said in the previous article, the events that Sunday morning on August 30, 1816 at the Cross Baptist Church had caused a great stir in the Redstone Baptist Association. To Elder John Pritchard, the minister at Cross Creek and the other sectarian minded preachers in Redstone, it meant heresy. Alexander Campbell had preached that the Old Covenant was not binding on the Christian and that we had to look to the New Covenant Scriptures for our instruction. This revolutionary teaching caused so much controversy in the Redstone that many of the pulpits that were once open to the Campbells were now closed. The next few years proved to be stormy years.

We want, at this time, to look ahead a few years and see the result of the persecution that the Reformers received from the Pharisees of their day. In August of 1823, Alexander Campbell and about thirty



members of Brush Run left to start a new work of faith in Wellsburg, Virginia. The Wellsburg congregation was accepted as a member in the Mahoning Baptist Association. This association was located in Northeastern Ohio, which was then known as the Western Reserve. It was in this fellowship that the reformers were to have the success in preaching the Primitive Gospel. This whole association was to virtually come into the Restoration Movement in masses. The leaders of the Redstone Baptist Association were planning to make the next meeting of the Association the time that they would expell Alexander in shame. Alexander found out about the plot against him and employed some excellent strategy. Partly because of this and also to spread the Gospel the Wellsburg Church was established. When the clerk of the Redstone Association called out the names of the messengers of the Brush Run Church, the name Alexander Campbell was missing. Asked to explain to the Association why he was not a messenger, Richardson cites him as replying, "The reason that I am not a messenger from the Brush Run Church is that I am now connected with the Wellsburg Baptist Church which is not a member, and will never be a member of the Redstone Association." Returning home, he told his wife Margaret how his actions seemed to surprise the leaders of the Redstone. Richardson quotes him as saying, "Never did hunters on seeing the game unexpectedly escape from their toils glare upon each other a more mortifying disappointment than that indicated by my pursuers on hearing that I was out of their baliwick, and consequently out of their jurisdiction. A solemn stillness ensued, and, for a time, all parties seemed to have nothing to do."

We want to review some of the other events of this period (1816-1830). In 1818, Alexander established Buffalo Seminary in his home. He enlarged his home by adding a two story addition to the west and a one story ell in back of it. It was during this time that Thomas Campbell returned from Burlington, Kentucky to Pennsylvania to assist Alexander and his sister Jane McKeever in the seminary. Thomas reassumed the pulpit of the Brush Run Church. In 1822, Alexander closed the school because he realized that it was not serving its purpose. Those attending had no desire to make the Lord's work their vocation.

It was during this time that Alexander Campbell held three of his five major debates. Although the Baptists viewed Alexander with suspicion about certain teachings, apparently they believed that he was orthodox enough on imersion. In 1820, in Mount Pleasant, Ohio, he debated Rev. John Walker, a Seceder Presbyterian Minister. The theme to be discussed was the subject and action of Baptism. Campbell brought out the fact that Baptism was by immersion and that according to the Bible, it was to be administered only to those who could believe. This meant that infant sprinkling was without warrant in the New Testament Writings. In discussing the aftermath of this debate, James DeForest Murch, in his Book *Christians Only*, had this to say,

Prior to the debate a large number of pedobaptists around Mount Pleasant had been immersed following a Baptist revival. Indeed, this is what precipitated the debate. Now another large company requested immersion. So depleted were the pedobaptists churches that after they had recovered some aplomb they began a search for one of their most noted preachers who might meet Mr. Campbell and retrieve their fortunes.

The next few years (1823-30) were to be the years that Campbell published the *Christian Baptist*. The title was decided on after consultation with his Father and with Walter Scott. The nature and aims of this paper were found in the prospectus. It read as follows,

The **Christian Baptist** shall espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting that ancient sect 'called Christians first at Antioch.' Its sole object shall be the eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice. The editor acknowledging no standard of religious faith or works, other than the Old and New Testaments, and the latter as the only standard of the religion of Jesus Christ, will, intentionally at least, oppose nothing which it contains and recommend nothing which it does not enjoin. Having no worldly interest at stake from the adoption or reprobation of any article of faith or religious practice having no gift nor religious emolument to blind his eyes or to pervert his judgment, he hopes to manifest that he is an impartial advocate of truth.

The first issue appeared on July 4, 1823. At the top of each issue were the following quotations,

Style no man on earth your father, for He alone is your Father who is in heaven; and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only one Teacher: neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only one Leader—the Messiah. Matthew 22:8-18.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. —Paul the Apostle.

Alexander's next major debate was to be held starting October 14, 1823. His opponent was Rev. W. L. McCalla, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Kentucky. The debate was held at Washington, Mason County, Kentucky. Alexander rode over three hundred miles accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, then the minister of the Baptist Church in Pittsburg. It is sad to report that in a few years Rigdon was to affiliate with the Mormons. The theme here was the same as with the Walker debate. It was in this discourse that Alexander realized that Baptism was for the Remission of sins. The result of the debate was a rout for the Baptists. Alexander's popularity increased in Kentucky because of these meetings.

On October 22, 1827 Alexander's wife Margaret died. They had been married for sixteen years. He was left with five daughters. His wife died of consumption, a disease that was to plague the Campbell family. On July 31, 1829, he married Selina Bakewell. They were to be married for thirty years. She survived Alexander.

In 1829, he held the last of his major debates of this period. His last two were to be in 1837 and 1843. At this time the teachings of infidelity were rapidly spreading around the world. In this country, the atheist Robert Owen was proclaiming that Christianity was the cause for the worlds problems and issued a challenge for some minister to debate him. None responded so Alexander Campbell decided to accept the banner to uphold Christianity. This debate was to be held

in Cincinnati, Ohio starting April 13, 1829. Alexander defended Christianity from the standpoint of the New Testament. He showed that the teachings of Christianity were responsible for the good of the world. He showed that anything that sounded good from Owen was taken, in reality, from the Scriptures. So, thus Alexander Campbell was recognized as the Champion of Christianity.

These fifteen years brought great strides for the Campbells. Many were hearing the Word preached. The *Christian Baptist* was widely read. In our next article we will be going into more detail concerning the work of restoration in this period. We will be focusing on Walter Scott, whose evangelistic work in the Western Reserve did much to promote New Testament Christianity. May we ever strive to uphold the Bible and try our best to fulfill the words of Jesus in Matt 28:16-20: *But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Until next time, MARANATHA.

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## GOD'S RECOMMENDED RELIGION

( A study of Colossians 2:1-3:4)

Tooger Smith

The wonderful God of this universe (praise be to His Name) has made us and provided for us in every way. One of these ways is the religion He has given to us. He has told us about it in the written word. I suggest to you that we need to re-evaluate our religion with what we read in the Bible. I want to share with you some thoughts about God's Recommended Religion. God's Recommended Religion is simple, spirit to spirit, satisfying, and superhuman-superangelic. I God's Recommended Religion is Simple.

I am intrigued by mankind's refusal to "let it be". I refer to the American way of taking most anything and then to complicate, intricate, develop, and/or microscopically examine it. What farmer remains satisfied with that new piece of equipment. It's already complicated but he must add to it. The sports craze has taken essentially every sport possible and "refined" it to the point of absurdness. Volumes are written on a single, isolated aspect of a single sport. And who goes fishing with just a willow branch, a piece of cotton string, a hook, and a can of freshly dug worms?

I am saddened because God's R.R. has suffered the same fate at the hands of man. It is all right to add to another man's ideas, but to add to God's thoughts is desecration. This is, of course, nothing new.

Paul said, "... I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his coming, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ," or "... from the *simplicity* that is in Christ." Again he says, "Christ is the substance." God's R.R. is Christ.

The Bible may say only a few words, but after we are done with it, we have expanded and complicated and contaminated it into volumes. We are doing what Jesus condemned when he said, "you search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." We are scripture searchers. But the Bible is not God's R.R., it is the *means* to The End... to The Omega... to The Lord Jesus Christ. But how we love to study and expound and complicate and examine the scriptures when we ought to be concerning ourselves with Jesus and People. We've got the mint, dill, and cummin complex, only we search the scriptures and leave the weightier things undone. Assemblies have met and studied the scriptures 50 years and have never once took the Lord Jesus Christ to the people next door. God's R.R. is simple... it is the Lord Jesus Christ and People.

God originally did not want all the system of sacrifices and ritual... the whole prescription was simply "obey Me", but that was too simple for man. Jesus said that what the law prescribed was summed up in two simple statements: "Love God, Love your neighbor." The complications came by man. An example is that God said, "Remember the sabbath. Keep it holy." But by Jesus' time on this earth, some 20 volumes had been written about what God meant by those simple words. Jesus said the sabbath was made for man, but man had changed it into a monster to rule over him in the form of a sabbath day. Man did it. Not God's R.R.

Before we condemn the Jew to harshly, examine what we have done to GRACE! Paul told the Colossians something like this, "Jesus cancelled the bondage—set it aside, nailing it to the cross. Therefore, don't let anyone trap you with complications beyond Jesus Christ!" But the volumes we have added to the wonderful grace of Jesus. What sin to contaminate the grace of Jesus!

Perhaps the worst contamination is to replace Jesus with something else. I read a deed to a tract of land. The land was given on the condition that no church could use this property if they used instrumental music or held bazaars. Is this number one on God's R.R.? Where is the Lord Jesus Christ? Where is the Cross? The Blood? The resurrection? The return? If we must attach some conditions, are music and bazaars what the New Testament writers concerned themselves with?

I suggest that by the time the New Testament writers were writing, man had already come up with all the basic deviations that could be made to God's R.R. Since there are essentially no new additions, subtractions, divisions, or multiplications of God's R.R. today, we need

to concern ourselves with fighting the real evils and teaching and preaching the real R.R. from God. Quickly go back through the New Testament writings from Acts to Revelation. Note what is condemned and what is preached and taught. The emphasis is summed up in Colossians 2:1-3:4. God's R.R. is the Lord Jesus Christ. Is our religion like God's R.R.? *Against* what do you *teach*? *For* what do you *preach*?

## II God's Recommended Religion is Spirit to Spirit.

In our complicating of God's R.R. we have gotten off the Center, Jesus. In doing this, we have moved to the mechanical-material instead of the personal-spiritual. We seem constantly to struggle to avoid the simple and the personal. One breeds the other. The more complex, the easier to avoid a personal meeting with Jesus or other human beings. The New Testament writers cried Christ and People, we cry a sanctuary and the Bible. (Read again Colossians 2:1ff.)

One of the relationships in God's R.R. of spirit to spirit is that of mankind to Godhead. Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." Everything else is on the outside of this center method of worship. My spirit to God's spirit. Yet in the "normal" Church of Christ group worship, the Spirit can only get two songs and a prayer and a sermon. We walk in like mechanical tin soldiers and are taught to dare not make a sound. By the time we are adults we have the method perfected. I suggest we have exchanged a spiritual worship for "dignity". I'm not suggesting we cavort about the building like little ponies, but where is the Spirit??

Another aspect of the spirit to spirit is that of one spirit to The One Spirit. James says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us. The Hebrew writer says, "He will draw near to you . . ." How sad to see the spiritual turned into material and to employ a human being as our intercessor. We don't need a priest (preacher). God's R.R. is my spirit to The Spirit – DIRECT!!!

Another relationship in God's R.R. of spirit to spirit is that of mankind to mankind. God's R.R. is eye to eye, hand to hand, face to face. James says simple (pure, unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated) religion is to help people. Jesus said the same thing more than once. You visited me, fed me, clothed me . . . or did you not! God wants us to be a "factory outlet store". *Direct* sales and service! But usually we choose the second-hand method (if any) of service to people. Example: A group in an assembly will do a project to raise money to send to someone else who is trying to reach people who don't really know Jesus. That is alright, of course. But it is second or third hand service. God's R.R. is **FIRSTHAND!** How much greater a blessing for this group to be directly involved. Are there no hell-bound people in their area? Are there no jailed, no naked, no hungry people? God's R.R. is for me personally to be involved. *Direct Sales!* (How sad we pay a middleman. We know, of course, who gets the most profit in the business world.)

God's R.R. sees one to one, spirit to spirit, to *all* people. A soul is a soul, no matter the condition of the body. A human being is precious to God to the point of the death of Jesus!

### III God's Recommended Religion is Satisfying.

We have all talked with people whose religion brings no internal satisfaction. People coming out of buildings of idol worship never smile. The world is constantly crying – crying because there is no peace, no hope, no joy. But God's R.R. is not that way! God's R.R. *satisfies!* There is the fulness of life in Christ, God's R.R. There are several reasons found just in Colossians 2:1-3:4 why R.R. of Christ is satisfying. There is satisfaction in Christ because:

A. God dwells in Him. The Creator is the head of my religion. If He made me, can't He satisfy me? I like the sign near an assembly's building in Jennings, La. It says simply, "Christ meets every need." Amen!!! The God who made us with an innate spiritual need can fulfill that need the best. Praise the Lord! Now that is satisfaction!

B. He is the head of all rule and authority. This follows A, that the Creator is also all-powerful. Colossians 1:17 says He is the Glue! Ever feel like you're coming apart? God's R.R. is Christ. Here is the offer of The Glue that holds the universe together . . . available to us. How satisfying to be able to trust Him to hold it all together for us. Don't you at least want to say "Amen"?

C. Of the new birth in Christ. Man needs regeneration in a most desperate way. Man is on a collision course with God, and man will lose. But God's R.R. says, "He that believes on me has passed out of judgment into life." Here is peace. Not complacency, but security. Security of heaven so we can be busy here on earth for Christ.

D. The substance is in Christ. Sometimes it feels we are the victims of planned disintegration. Nothing seems to last. Change, decay, rust, etc. all around I see. Oh, for the one who changes not . . . God's R.R. is the substance. How satisfying to know He'll last an eternity!

E. Christ is life! "For me to live is Christ." Sometimes, we say something like, "That man lives to eat," or "That man lives to watch football games." As and until Christ becomes our life, our reason for getting up in the morning, true satisfaction will avoid us and evade us. Christ is fulness of life.

### IV God's Recommended Religion is Superhuman-Superangelic.

God's R.R. is *not* human nor angelic. It is Christ. God's R.R. is above (super) humans and angels. It's above what man has contrived or what Satan has given to us. Notice some five religions of man Paul warns against. The R.R. of God is above all these! Examine again Colossians 2:1-3:4.

A. There are the religions of the philosophers. There are the *human* traditions (we are imprisoned by a host of these), the *human* precepts, and the *human* doctrines. The false teacher of the day

wanted to *add* to the Christ. How sad to place the same emphasis upon *our* traditions as upon what the *Word* says. We have generated *doctrines* out of traditions from men! How horrible to equate The Christ with my tradition!

B. There is the religion of the law. Man again. The religion of man is to observe food and drink and day regulations. Man's religion designates festivals, new moon feasts, and sabbath observances. Just as the sabbath was made for man, so religion was made for man, not man for religion. Christ is God's R.R. He came to help us, free us and give us life! He did not bind us and enslave us to rituals and rules. As Paul put it, circumcision or uncircumcision does not really matter, what matters is faith that works through love. Now that is God's R.R., Christ, in action!!! It is not how many days you've observed, it is your relationship to Christ and to people.

C. There is the religion of the body. Man says religion is rigor of devotion, self-abasement, and severity to the body. But God never said that. Those He did impose were only until Christ came! But man makes the body take the place of Christ. "See how good I control my body. I am good enough to be saved." Instead the body is to die. Control and discipline of the body definitely, but God's R.R. is Christ, not body worship.

D. There is the religion of the angels – Satan worship and the associated occults, cults, astrology and the like. It is, of course, a *real* religion. It is powerful, but the price one pays is often hidden until too late to recuperate. This is man's religion, aided by the power of Satan.

E. There is the religion of the immoral. "Do your own thing." That is immorality! This religion is the opposite of the Body Religion. Here the body (and soul) are given complete freedom. Whatever the body wants the body gets. This is not God's R.R. This Christ-less religion ends in Hell.

Conclusion:

God's R.R. is *simple*. It is as deep as the Christ, but as simple as the story of Jesus. It is not complicated by the trivial. It is Christ, nothing else.

God's R.R. is *spirit to spirit*. God to me. Me to God. Me to man. Direct spirit to spirit worship. Direct person to person service.

God's R.R. is *satisfying*. The Creator is our head. He made us so He and He alone can satisfy. He is our life.

God's R.R. is *superhuman-superangelic*. Man's religion binds, imprisons, and destroys. God's R.R. frees and builds up. It is Christ, not man-made traditions.

How does your religion compare to God's R.R.? Has the trivial and peripheral overshadowed the Substance and central? Is it mechanical and impersonal, or spiritual and direct? Are you grasping for the temporary when the Eternal is available? Have the written word and Spirit been your instructors or man?

# UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

## The New Heaven and the New Earth

W. J. Johnson

The New Heaven and the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-22:5)

There is indeed a blessing for "He that reads and they that hear the words of the book of this prophecy and they keep the things written therein" (Rev. 1:3), how that we see that Christ Jesus reigns until the last enemy, Death, is abolished, (1 Cor. 15:24). At the white throne judgment the last enemy, Death, is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Then the Son becomes subject to the Father that he may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Before the face of the Father the heavens and the earth passed away, and there was no place for them (Rev. 20:11). But according to the promise of God we look for a new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13).

In each of his letters to the seven churches in Asia, Jesus Christ made promises to the overcomer. It is in order to mention it now as we are thinking about the new Heaven and the new Earth to call attention to the churches. In the church at Philadelphia were faithful children of God who would be kept from the hour of trial which will come upon the world to try them who dwell upon the face of the earth. But Jesus Christ made a promise to him that overcometh, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name (Rev. 3:12). This promise is great. Nevertheless we should not overlook a promise Jesus made His Apostles in John 14:1-3: "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also."

In Revelation 21:1 to 22:5 God reveals for our benefit the New Heaven and the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. For this reason we should believe that God has created them for us to enjoy after the old heaven and the old earth have passed away. In them dwells righteousness. They are not polluted with sin. To think of them as something real, we enjoy the full meaning of God's word. For faith gives assurance that the things not seen are real (Heb. 11:1). For faith is the victory that overcomes the world" (1 John 5:8).

Let us read Revelation 21, verse 1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea. (vs. 2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (vs. 3) And I heard a great voice out



of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (vs. 4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

There is joy and happiness in the reading that there will be no sorrow, pain, crying, or death in the new heaven and the new earth and in the new Jerusalem and that God will dwell among men and be their God, and they His people. Our faith which comes by hearing that Christ assures us that these things are real – not a myth or dark saying that must be spiritualized to fit the church age. Nevertheless, “he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, (John the beloved apostle), Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev. 21:5-7).

Do you not enjoy reading, hearing, and keeping the words of the book of this prophecy? Nevertheless, read carefully what is written in verse 8; noting each word, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:9-11).

Abraham, living in a land not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heir with him concerning the promises, wavering not in faith. Nevertheless he looked for a city which had foundation whose builder and maker is God. About 4,000 years have passed since then, yet it may be that many more years will pass before the holy city Jerusalem, comes down from heaven. For it will rest on the new earth which is after the 1,000 years and the white throne judgment. To Abraham, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). In other words the city was real, existed and he would be permitted to enjoy a home in it.

The design and beauty of this holy city is surely the work of God. For man with all of his skill and knowledge is not capable of designing and building a city like it. It is the work of a master mind. The words of Paul (Romans 11:33) rightly express the idea, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

Since limited space does not permit quoting Revelation 21:9-22:5, only a brief sketch can be given here. However we can imagine a city four square, each side 1,500 miles long, the length, breadth, and height equal. It was a wonderful sight to John as he saw her "coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." A wall great and high; twelve angels at the twelve gates; each gate made of one pearl; three gates on each of the four sides. The twelve gates had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Each of the twelve foundations of the wall was ornamented with a different kind of precious stone from that of the others.

Kings brought their glory into the city. And the nations walked in the light of it.

No unclean thing, or abominable thing shall enter the city. Only those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

In Revelation 22:1-5 John was showed a river of water of life which came from under the throne of God and of the Lamb, which flowed down the street bright and clear as crystal. I believe this to be a literal stream of water and not spiritual water of life mentioned in other passages of scripture.

In Rev. 2:7 Jesus promised to him that overcomes the right to eat of the tree of life. And again, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. There shall be curse no more. Therein things belong in the new heaven and the new earth, and not to the present age of the church. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein and his servants shall serve him. They shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no need of lamp or the sun. God shall give them light and they shall be his servants forever and ever.



Alvin Hobby

Livingstone, Zambia

October 6th

The Mitchells are enjoying the house they rented in town; and we are glad to have them here, less than a mile from us. They can feel safer, and they *are* safer, than they were living near a "freedom fighter" camp. The new missionaries, the Harrises, are also trying to find a place to rent in town.

Recently I read and checked a Tonga typescript of Job, and a part of the book of Genesis.





cannot now give great revivals, or will not give great revivals as He once did.

But such faint-hearted Christians should make a study of the great revivals in Bible times and they would find that these revivals came in most cases in the midst of wickedness as great, and apostasy and false religions as prevalent as those we face today. It is a most heartening study to observe some of the great revivals in the Bible and see how, against amazing odds, God used one person or a few in each case to turn a whole nation back to God.

As an example, I call to your attention the revival in Nineveh under Jonah. However unwilling was the evangelist until God worked him over, the revival at Nineveh was one of the greatest in the history of the world. And it is a good example to prove to us that in any circumstance of wickedness, of idolatry, of false religion, of the impending doom and wrath of God—revivals are possible if only God can have workers who will pay God's price for revival!

Nineveh was not a city of the Jews, but a heathen city. We suppose that it was one which had never heard the gospel. We suppose that the only worship there was idolatry. We read that they worshipped the fish god. Be that as it may, here is a city so idolatrous, so violent, so wicked, that God said to Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jonah 1:2).

The city seemed almost past hope of redemption. Yet when God got one man ready to preach to the city, the king, the nobles, and the people repented in sackcloth and ashes and pleaded for God's mercy, until the Lord repented of His plan to destroy it, and would not destroy it.

It is significant here that Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh and preach. I dare say that this is simply an illustration of the thing the Savior so often said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matt. 9:37), and, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal" (John 4:35, 36). The trouble is not with the harvest, it is with the laborers!

God's trouble about revival is not with the world, but with the church! And His trouble is not with the sinners, but with the saints! Anywhere God can get Christians who will pay God's price, God can have a revival! And so God could have and did have a mighty revival in Nineveh, as soon as He could get Jonah ready for it!

Will you consider the message of Jonah? It was what modernists and many weaklings would today call "a negative sermon." He preached, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." It was a message that appealed to fear, a message of judgment! It proclaimed the wrath of God, not His mercy. Yet God used that message to bring revival!

That ought to remind us that if men are willing to preach as God tells them to preach, preaching His righteousness, His hatred of sin, His solemn warning, His judgments, the certain eternal destruction of Christ-rejecting sinners, God can use that kind of preaching to bring a revival in the most distressing and wicked and most unpromising situations.

If God could give a mighty revival in Nineveh with no better worker than Jonah and with no more gospel than he preached, God can have a revival in any wicked city in America, with proper prayer and power and testimony and preaching of the Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we can have revival now, surely, since God could have a revival in Nineveh!

If ever there was a gospel-hardened city, it was Jerusalem after the crucifixion of Christ. Here John the Baptist had preached like a flaming fire! Spirit-filled John, mighty in the Scriptures, had called men to repentance and had baptized multitudes in the river Jordan.

Then the Savior Himself was announced and began His public ministry. He had preached and baptized (through His disciples) more disciples than John. He had worked mighty miracles. He had raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany just outside Jerusalem, and everybody in the city knew it. He had opened blind eyes, cleansed the lepers, stilled storms, saved a maniac, wrought all kinds of miracles.

He had ridden into Jerusalem according to the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, "upon a colt, the foal of an ass," and the multitudes had thrown their garments before Him and littered the road with palm branches as He made His triumphal entry. He had boldly claimed to be the Messiah.

He had driven the money changers from the Temple. He had warned of the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Many were saved, but the Jewish leaders were not. They hated Jesus with an unreasoning hatred, and they set about to kill Him.

And now consider the shameful state of His disciples. When He was arrested, His disciples all deserted Him. Judas had betrayed Him for the price of a common slave. Then this treasurer of the little band hanged himself.

Let that defeated, unreliable, immature bunch of disciples re-assemble and try to have a revival now in Jerusalem! Let Peter, who cursed so loudly a few weeks ago and denied that he even knew Jesus, now try to preach Christ to these multitudes! What chance have they for a revival in Jerusalem?

But they had it nevertheless! They waited in an upper room for ten days. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the power of God came upon them. They were filled with the

Holy Spirit, as Jesus had been filled at His baptism. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness and power.

God stretched out His hand to give miraculous confirmation of their message. Sinners were cut to the heart, and there was a great repenting, and three thousand people were saved in one day and added to the church! Then multitudes of others were saved day after day, in the mighty initial revival, the sample revival which God gave early in the age, for all of us to know what He could do, and wanted to do, in revivals!

If God could give a revival in Jerusalem at Pentecost, He can give one anywhere! Never a city, never a country in the world where people have hated Christ more than they hated Him at Jerusalem.

God's great lack is not power enough to save sinners, not sinners enough who can be saved, not circumstances that are favorable. No. God suffers for lack of workers, and He earnestly pleads with us, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

The trouble is not with the world, but with the church! The trouble is not with the sinners, but with the saints! The revival problem is a Christian problem! We can have revival now—if we want it enough to do God's will about it!

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## NEWS AND NOTES

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

**S. C. C. News:** Billy Ray Lewter has returned to teach Bible, Psychology, a course in Attitude Awareness, and also teaches and preaches at the College Church. His classes are quite large.

Ted Hardin is now the minister at Fisherville Church near Louisville, Ky. Besides going to graduate school in Cincinnati, he also drives to Winchester to teach Bible at S.C.C. one evening each week. We appreciate very much his dedication and extra effort.

The new school year is off to a good start with total "head count" enrollment at 124 (compared with 100 last year). A good many of the additional students are part time, which makes the increase for "full time equivalent" not quite as dramatic. Nevertheless, we are thankful for the opportunity of having contact with so many more people.

We thank the Lord for each of you who continue to back up this work with your prayers and gifts. Inflation keeps eating away at the value of the dollar so that it takes more each year just to keep even. Pray with us that the Lord will provide.

A Christian lady who recently filled in at S.C.C. as girl's-dorm supervisor for a week was pleased with the attitudes there. She reports that many of the young ladies are really seeking to live for Christ, and have a spirit of prayer that is encouraging.

Two students were recently baptized. Also one of the men students gave a thrilling testimony in chapel of how Christ delivered him from the depths of drug-abuse and other sins.

A permanent supervisor is needed for the girl's-dorm.

Eagle River, Alaska: We have signed a contract, with a new FM radio station in Anchorage (KHVN) to broadcast the "Words of Life" program each Saturday evening.

Our main ministry just now is with children and young people. Most of these children are from broken homes where there is little spiritual help and encouragement. We need the enabling of the Holy Spirit in bringing to them the Written Word and the Living Word.

Fall is in full swing here now and winter is on the way. Alaskans feel the pressure of getting ready for what is ahead. Yet, comparatively few take to heart the spiritual message which the weather conveys: get ready for eternity. This past summer we had the opportunity of hearing Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, author of the book *Things to Come* give a message regarding the Antichrist. Near the close of the message he said that the Common Market nations of Europe (9 at present) have set the year 1980 as the target date to select their leader. Many Bible scholars believe the man selected will be the Antichrist. The midnight hour approaches.

Each Christian should be personally involved in obeying the Lord's Great Commission while there is still time and opportunity. So far as work is concerned, it has been said that there are three classes of people in church: (1) those who make things happen, (2) those who watch things happen, and (3) those who ask "What happened?" At the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be rewards given for works of faith and labors of love.

Appreciation is expressed to each one who has manifested interest in the work here in the Northland.

Linton, In.: Bro. John May just completed preaching a 4-day revival meeting for us. It was an outstanding effort. There were 18 responses, 14 for prayer and rededication, 3 for baptism and 1 placed membership. Another has responded since the meeting to be baptized also, making 4 baptisms. We praise God for the meeting and also for having such a capable evangelist as a member of the congregation. It is a great example of the body ministering to itself. —Dick Lewis

I have been a subscriber to the W&W since 1907. Have enjoyed reading it. I appreciate the stand that the editors and publishers of it have taken for the truth of the scriptures.

I shall be 97 years old the 29th of this month, and wish to thank you for giving me space in W&W.

—W.J. Johnson

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Louisville, Ky: The Annual Thanksgiving Service for the Louisville Area churches was held again at the Atherton High School auditorium, with some 800 persons in attendance, on a rather rainy day. But the weather did not dampen the spirit of praise and worship that prevailed.

Chorus selections were presented by the choruses of all three schools in the area: Highview Christian Academy, Portland Christian School, and Southeastern Christian College.

Brother Hall Crowder gave an edifying message on a text taken from the second chapter of the Song of Solomon: "He brought me into the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love."

The offering, to be shared by the three schools, totaled something over \$8100.00.

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#### "MESSIAH" WEEKEND

The weekend following Thanksgiving day, was again designated "Messiah Weekend" at S.C.C., for the gathering of singers, intensive rehearsal, and coordination with instruments for the presentation of Handel's oratorio "The Messiah" on Saturday evening at 8:00 at the College auditorium. Former head of the music Department at S.C.C. Dr. Dale Jorgenson, directed the presentation in the superb manner for which he has been remembered through the years. Both older and younger singers of this oratorio joined in the chorus of some 45 members.

The auditorium was quite well filled, with many coming from Lexington and Louisville for the occasion. After the concert, which lasted nearly two hours, there was a fellowship time that was most enjoyable. Bro. Gale Price, who assisted the college administration in planning the event, and all of the loyal singers, past and present are to be congratulated.