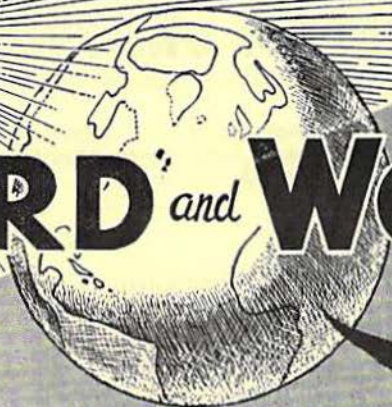


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SEPTEMBER, 1981

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Robert Held is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



God's Family

W. R. H.

"I Will Bless Them That Bless Thee"

When God first made His covenant with Abram, before the nation of Israel was ever known to man, He also gave the great promise that titles this page. It is as timeless and irrevocable as the faithfulness of God Himself, and it is free to all who will avail themselves of its broad scope. It was coupled with God's promise to bless Abram and to make him a blessing; then the loving heart of God reached out to all in the world who would some day befriend this chosen people, pronouncing a like blessing upon us.

Since the Jews as a nation are the chosen people of God, it is little wonder that Satan has constantly stirred up trouble against them. In a very real sense, they have brought their trouble upon themselves by their backslidings, and particularly their rejection of their Messiah when they cried out "Give us Barabbas. Let him (Jesus) be crucified." Furthermore, they said, "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." To this extent, they invited upon themselves all of the woes that have befallen them from Calvary until now.

But this does not relieve the guilt of those who would persecute them. The Pogroms in Russia under the Czars, and the antisemitism of Hitler and Mussolini prior to World War II were but continuations of the hatred for Jews that Satan has stirred up through the ages. It is little wonder, then, that radicals in the Arab countries today have vowed to exterminate Israel, vowed to push them into the sea, etc. Satan inspires these enemies to think that their cause is justified—yes, even a sacred mission—and so they rage against the Israelis with what they consider a holy zeal. This infectious hatred for the Jews has spread to many other lands. I recall that there was jeering and harrassment of them in Louisville Male High School as far back as 1931, and that was just a straw in the wind. Only godly leaders who truly believed the Bible and taught it so, have stayed the tide of antisemitism from invading our churches. Thank God for such teachers as R. H. Boll, who continually stressed (as did the apostle, Paul) our indebtedness to the Jew, and God's great promised restoration and

elevation of Israel at this end-time age (which we are now witnessing, as God's fig-tree begins to bud and blossom). If in our hearts today we have a love for that People, it is only because of our contact with the Word of God.

But the blessing is still there for us. Great Britain and the United States have been two nations that have, somehow, found themselves on the side of Israel now for many years. We thank God that it is so, and our constant prayer is that our leaders will continue to thus stand, and even become stronger in their blessing toward this people. If our tie with Israel rests only upon the promises given in the Bible, so much better! Personally, we may not be able to see that "the right" is always on their side in a given campaign, but the word of God stands nevertheless. How good it will be, as God's judgment of the nations begins to fall, for us to be in a land that has the promise of this blessing. There is no armament or other insurance that our nation can seek that is as sure and important.

At this point I quote Isaiah 54:17. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the inheritance of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness is of me, saith Jehovah." This passage indicates that God will use His almighty power to fulfill his word in the salvation and preservation of His people. We may be in a quandary as to whether or not the U.S. should sell the AWACs to Saudi Arabia. I would judge that it won't really make much difference to Israel whether we do or whether we do not. But our *reason* for selling them or not selling them could become to the U.S. a matter of curse or blessing, and that is why some fifty senators are going to take a long hard look at this transaction. It would be to Russia's good, if they, too would consider this statement that no weapon that is formed against Israel shall prosper. Some of their arms-race money might be saved, if they would believe this.

In Zechariah 2:8 God tells Zion that he who touches them, touches the apple of his eye." This word-picture is an expression of that which is most cherished by a person. It is like the thought in Isaiah 49:16; where God said concerning Jerusalem: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." God loves Israel to this extent, with an everlasting love, and has many glorious promises in store for them after they have turned unto Him. This turning unto Him has certainly not occurred yet, but it is sure to happen. "Then shall ten men, from all the nations, taken hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, and say, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. 8:23). We are fast approaching that time.

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Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Please give me some instruction concerning the Lord's Supper.

Those who have "grown up" in the church or who by reason of age and experience have long been exposed to teaching about the Lord's Supper may easily forget that not all have such a background. For this reason, and because we judge this to be the concern of this question, we will try to touch on several basic facts dealing with this act of worship.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself on the night before His death (Matt. 26:17, 26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). He was gathered with His disciples in an upper room where they observed the Passover, a Jewish feast. In addition to that observance He proceeded to institute the new observance. The observance of the Lord's Supper was continued in the early church, and from their example as well as from direct teaching we learn some things about this institution.

The elements used in the Supper are unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. In the symbolism of the Supper these fittingly represent Jesus' body and blood. Jesus took bread. The only bread available at a passover feast was unleavened bread. All leaven was to be put out of their houses on this occasion (Exod. 12:15. etc; cf. 1 Cor. 5:7-8). Controversy has existed over the fruit of the vine, whether it was fermented or unfermented grape juice. We can not here deal with the details of the argument, but we will point out that unfermented grape juice meets the scriptural requirement of being "fruit of the vine," avoids any problems as to leaven and fermentation, and avoids a stumbling block for those who are tempted by alcohol. No other elements are properly a part of this Supper. While details of observance are not minutely given, there is nothing in the N.T. to suggest that the worshipper did not receive both elements in his observance.

Controversy has also existed over the purpose of the Supper and what happens to the elements. Some have held that the elements are transubstantiated (the substance actually changes) into the body and blood of Christ. Others have insisted that the elements are unchanged but that the body and blood of Christ are substantially present. While the Lord is present in all true worship, it is much

more likely that Jesus meant these elements to be only symbols of His body and blood. When He said, "This is my body," He had not yet died. The sense of the statement is: "This represents my body." In any case, the purpose of the Supper is that of a memorial (1 Cor. 11:24-25—"This do in remembrance of Me"). It is not a repetition of His death and sacrifice but a reminder of the once-for-all sacrifice. It is not a reenactment but points to that death now almost two thousand years ago. It is a memorial, a remembrance of the Lord's great act of mercy for us. As we participate we are to be aware of the symbolism, partaking reverently and thoughtfully, recognizing the truth portrayed, and worshipping in gratitude for His love.

The frequency of the Supper is indicated by the example of the early church and by our Lord's requirement that "as often as ye drink it," the act must be done in remembrance of Him (1 Cor. 11:25, 26). Various denominational groups have adopted very limited observance—once a year, once a quarter, once a month, or simply once in a while at irregular intervals. The observance of the early church was every Sunday (Acts 20:7). This was a regular part of the worship of the N.T. church (Acts 2:42). A common objection offered against weekly observance is that frequent observance tends to make it common, its use routine, and worshippers careless. Yet the very objection could be used with singing, prayer, or any other act of worship. It is the Christian's responsibility to see to it that none of these acts of worship become mechanical or routine. The truth portrayed by the Lord's Supper is so great that a weekly observance is much to be desired, even if we did not know the practice of the early church. While the early church met each first day of the week and this was obviously the normal or usual time for this observance, there is no specified time on that day set, nor is the observance limited to Sundays. The instituting of the Supper certainly did not take place on a Sunday. Jesus said simply, As often as you observe it, do it in remembrance of Me.

Who is to participate? This is urged on all Christians, is a part of the worship of the church. Of course non-Christians have no part in this. It is inconsistent for such a one to remember the Lord's death in this way when he has not embraced that death in faith, repentance and baptism. Those professing Christians who do not partake worthily should not partake of the Supper (1 Cor. 11:27-34). This speaks of the manner of partaking, so that there is thoughtlessness, no discernment of the truth portrayed, unfitting conduct, etc. Those in known but unconfessed sin, in rebellion and unrepentance, or other such spiritual uncleanness should know that no worship is acceptable to God from such unclean hands (Matt. 5:23-24). The real solution in these above cases is not continued non-participation but repentance and obedience. Otherwise, this observance is for all Christians. "Closed communion," in which observance is limited only to certain Christians, is not in the spirit of the N.T. It is a serious responsibility to deny any true child of God a place at His table. Note in the passage in 1 Cor. 11 that responsibility for judgment in this matter rests upon the individual (v. 28).

A number of other points have been raised concerning the Lord's Supper. We shall give attention to these in future articles if there seems to be interest or profit in a discussion of them.

Who will build the temple mentioned in 2 Thess. 2:4, and when will it be built?

That the temple will be rebuilt is evident, not only from 2 Thess. 2:4 but from other passages as well (e.g., the offering of sacrifices per Dan. 9:27 indicates a temple; Rev. 11:1-2 speaks of a temple in Jerusalem). It appears that the Jews will have a restored temple worship which will be taken over by the Anti-Christ when he breaks his covenant with them. So as far as I know there is nothing in scripture which tells us who the rebuilders will be. It is logical to assume that the Jews themselves would do this, even if the finances or the impetus should come in great measure from some other source(s). This was the case with the temple of Ezra's day. The Jews would certainly have some definite requirements of any temple such as could be sanctified for their use. That they must be the rebuilders, however, is purely assumption, and it could be that it will come into existence in some other way.

With the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., there has been no temple in existence to this day. The Dome of the Rock and the al-Aksa Mosque, Muslim structures, stand today on the temple site. There have been various unsubstantiated reports that the Jews are gathering materials for the rebuilding of the temple, but in any case these structures pose a problem. Their destruction would bring international repercussions. We do not know what the Lord will do or what He will allow Israel or even some others to do to make this site available for the rebuilding of the temple. The possibilities are many and it is useless to speculate.

When will the temple be rebuilt? It will be in existence early in the period of Daniel's 70th week. Modern building techniques are such that actual construction would not require a long time. It may be that the rebuilding will come only after the rapture of the church. On the other hand, this is not a necessity. Israel will be in unbelief when it is built. It would be desirable as a symbol of unity, etc., even to atheistic members of the nation today. Except for the nonavailability of the temple site, it is reasonable to suppose that rebuilding would begin at once. Who knows what events might precipitate the rebuilding even before the rapture?

Please note that while the details of the rebuilding are uncertain, the fact is not.

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

THE SCANDAL OF THE UNIVERSE

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in His blood, to show His righteousness because of the passing over the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26, ASV).

The three verses quoted above are truly the finest short setting forth of the great truth of the gospel in all the Bible. In the immediate past articles we have tried to set forth something of the greatness of what God has done for us in Christ, doing this by discussing and re-translating the 24th verse and half of verse 25. Last month, I hope that you saw something of the wonder of what God did when He publicly "set forth" ("exposed to public view") Christ as the propitiation ("wrath removing sacrifice") for our sins. Now let us look briefly at the rest of verses 25 and 26.

God has carefully and fully shown in His Word that He is holy, that He hates sin, that He has announced that "the soul that sinneth it shall die." And yet we find countless examples of people in the Old Testament who sinned and who are counted among the saved. That is why I chose the term "The Scandal of the Universe" for the title of this discussion. By that title I am assuming that both evil and good spirit beings had noticed that God did not send David to torment for his adultery nor for his murder. Maybe He didn't do it, but I can imagine Satan trying to make this out to show that God was not telling the truth about His wrath and His judgment against sin. Verse 25 shows that that could have gone on through four thousand years until the Lord Jesus Christ took our sins upon Him on the cross and thus took the wrath and the judgment for our sins there.

The latter part of verse 25 states that God was in this showing, or demonstrating, His righteousness in "passing over" sins done before the cross of Christ. He was still being righteous, still acting right toward all, still expressing His holiness in His actions in not bringing condemning judgment upon those who sinned "aforetime"—before Christ died for their sins. J. Vernon McGee well calls this "salvation on credit."

God took the faith of David and others in the past and called them His own even several thousand years before His wrath against the sin was poured out upon those sins on the Cross. Truly God demonstrated His right actions in letting those sins pass without condemning the sinners. How very thankful we ought to be that God did let His wrath be poured out, unmixed with grace or mercy, against the sins that were placed upon Christ on the Cross. That is the only place in the universe where that has happened. If you have not come to the cross of Christ, do so now, so your sins can be completely forgiven and you might be truly a child of God.

Verse 26 then applies all this to us. I am not personally righteous, as anyone who has known me over a good portion (or, possibly, even over a very minute portion) of my life can testify. Yet God has declared me righteous (justified me). To see the problem here, let us imagine someone standing before a human judge. The lawyer prosecuting him demonstrates very thoroughly the guilt of the accused. The lawyer for the defense has nothing to say to counteract the accusation. Then the judge gives his decision and says, "Not guilty." We would declare such a judge an unrighteous one, wouldn't we? We would think (unless we were the accused!) that the judge should be put out of his office and a righteous judge appointed to take his place, one who would make his decisions according to the law and the evidence. But that is exactly what a superficial glance at my case would look like. I am unrighteous. God declares me righteous. How can He be righteous and do that? It is very simple yet very profound—The judgment for my sin had already fallen on Christ. He took my sins to the Cross and suffered in full all the penalty that was due for it. "How can I but love Him, the old hymn rightly asks. And how can you turn down His love by refusing to take the gift of salvation provided for us by the Father, and the Son and brought to our hearts by the Holy Spirit through His Word? Come to Him, the Holy One, and receive a full forgiveness. No wonder David could cry, "Hallelujah"—"Praise the Lord."

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

IN THE "GOOD OL" DAYS. A bit of history regarding American financier and president of U.S. Steel Corporation. At the time of the incident U.S. Steel

had a mill manager whose men were not producing their quota of work. Mr. Schwab asked this very capable manager what was the reason he was not

able to make his mill turn out what it was capable of. "I don't know, I've coaxed, pushed, cussed, threatened, them with being fired, but nothing works." It happened to be the end of the day, just before the night shift came on. Schwab asked for a piece of chalk. Then, turning to the nearest man, he asked: "How many heats did your shift make today?" "Six," came the reply.

Without another word Charles Schwab chalked a big figure six on the floor and walked away. The night shift came in, and, seeing the big number on the floor, they wanted to know what it was all about. "The big boss was in here today. He asked us how many heats we made, and we told him six. He chalked it down on the floor." The next morning Schwab walked through the mill. He found the night shift had rubbed out the "6" and replaced it with a big "7."

"So, the night shift thinks they are better than the day shift, do they? We'll show them! And when they walked out that evening they had left behind them an enormous, swaggering "10" on the floor. In a very short time, this mill which had been lagging in production was turning out more work than any other in the company. "The way to get things done," said Mr. Schwab, "is to stimulate competition. I do not mean in a sordid, money-getting way, but in the desire to excel."

THE ABOVE EXPERIENCE could never be repeated in a socialist country. It is not being done in America today, but, if America is to survive the economic set backs of these days, labor must produce to its greatest capacity. But "coaxing, pushing, cussing, and or threatening "will not get the job done. Just some good, healthy American "competition" is all we need.

"ONE OF THE MOST PATRIOTIC COMMUNITIES in all of Texas." Old Glory, Texas, naturally. People from all over the U.S. begin some time in May sending mail to Old Glory to be cancelled with, of course, "Old Glory" stamped on their Fourth of July mail. This West Texas town was originally called Brandenburg but was renamed in 1917 by its German settlers who did not like being indentified with Kaiser Wilhelm.

THE EDITORS OF THE RICHMOND NEWS LEADER, reminding us that our Founding Fathers were anchored to the truths of the past by an abiding religious faith that kept them from being demagogues, described them thus: "They did not promise an end to poverty. They could not have conceived of free food stamps, government subsidies for special interest groups, deficit spending, confiscatory taxation, or affirmative action. The level of political discourse since the 1930s would have dismayed the men who bequeathed to America history's preeminent documents of liberty and free government." America's founders sought "simply to provide men with the means to govern themselves and to maximize their freedom," the editors emphasize, that "in our race to satisfy insatiable appetites, we have created in Washington a federal power that threatens to sunder our liberty—hence our goodness and our diversity."

MEDIA INSTITUTE'S FINDING ON TV. In a recent five-month study of the content of the top television shows, Media Institute reports that "big business ladder is populated not by productive economic leaders, but by ruthless criminals. Over half of all corporate heads on television do something illegal, ranging from fraud to murder." Columnist Ralph De Toledano says "This is easy to understand since the writers and producers of these programs were taught in college that business—and therefore the businessman—is essentially pernicious and the making of money beneath contempt. That these writers and producers get rich at their work is never discussed... But big business climbs all over itself to subsidize TV's relentless attack on itself." (And this is only a step away from a beginning, at least, to an understanding of why some have seen strong evidences of a conspiracy at work.)

PARENTIAN CONCERN IN PLANO. A concerned parent in Plano, Texas, has written the New York Times to complain about secular humanism in the Plano and other public schools. She says her 'extensive research into curriculum K-12 in the Plano Independent School District... found a great number of exercises that are a waste of time, forms of 'sensitivity training,' and an invasion of privacy." Mrs. Sarah

Pyle, the parent, cited the incident that caused her to investigate. Her 10th grade son had complained that he was forced to answer "weird" questions in a business communications course. Two examples: 1) "Which of these three things would you least like to do: Get a girl pregnant and have to marry her, date a person of another race or be hooked on hard drugs?" 2) "Which of the following would you most easily give up: Political freedom, economic freedom, or religious freedom?" Mrs. Pyle noted that curriculum guides do not have "Secular Humanism" printed on them; therefore parents should watch for such tell-tale terms as affective; self-actualization; and self-determined life style. She also points out that under secular humanism "individual thinking is neglected in favor of group consensus. Sex education is not a simple study of the reproductive system but an indoctrination program. Patriotism is downplayed in favor of 'global interdependence.'"

GENERAL LOUISELL REPORTS DRUG ABUSE AFFECTS READINESS. According to the Pentagon, 36 percent of U.S. military personnel use marijuana or other illegal drugs. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Brigadier General William Louisell, testified before a House Committee investigating the Nimitz incident: "It is clear that

drug and alcohol abuse is a serious problem that impacts our people and affects readiness."

THE IRAQ NUCLEAR REACTOR.

The degree of enrichment of the uranium is the key to whether a reactor is meant to produce electric power or nuclear weapons. Three Mile Island was not a potential atomic bomb. The Iraqi nuclear reactor destroyed by Israeli jets was not an electric power reactor. The 3.5% enriched Uranium used in light water power reactors is useless for bombs, and it would be utterly inept to get plutonium from what little accumulates in the hot fuel rods. Iraq's reactor was built to run on highly enriched uranium, which can be used as the initial charge to breed, for evermore, plutonium from plentiful (unenriched) uranium 238. For much more complete information on the subject of nuclear energy write for publication information to Dr. Peter Beckman, Box 2298, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

NOW HEAR IT FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE BETTY I. HOXSEY. "A segment of the population that has attached itself to the E.R.A. have motives of their own. The homosexual movement, socialist and communist groups. One of the things that scares me is that many people who support E.R.A. have within them a personal vendetta. They basically hate men."

Why Are The Laborers Few?

Vincent Brushwyler

For some time we have been deeply concerned about the diminishing number of young people applying for foreign missionary service—a situation which I have found to be nearly universal. Why?

Is it because missionaries are no longer needed? Hardly! The world population is growing at the rate of nearly 50 million per year . . . of whom 45 million are being added to non-Christian lands. The missionary enterprise is not even keeping up with the increase, much less making imprint on the vast masses of unevangelized.

The lack of volunteers may be due in part to some false conceptions regarding missionary work.

1) Some people believe that in this day of increasing nationalism, missionaries may be more hindrance than help and that the national

church must do the evangelizing. It is true that the well-trained national can always do a better job among his own people than the stammering "foreigner" with his odd customs. But someone must win and train those nationals!

2) Some think that doors are closing so rapidly that in a short time all missionary work will be over. This is less than a half-truth. Some doors *have* closed. But other lands are still wide open: South American, Africa, Japan, Formosa, Philippines, most parts of Europe. These areas need thousands of additional missionaries.

3) There are some who think the most talented people are needed at home and should not "waste" their talents in foreign missionary work. This indicates lack of understanding in missionary service. If there is any area where the highly talented and consecrated are needed, it is in foreign missionary service. In fact, the work taxes every true missionary beyond his natural capacity and throws him hard upon the grace of God. At the same time, missionaries testify that no work utilizes *every* talent as does missionary service.

4) Many Christians have a false concept regarding the "call" for missionary service. They think they can "choose" a profession in the homeland, but must have a special "call" to go overseas. The Bible recognizes no such distinction. All life for the Christian is a sacred trust. No Christian should consider entering any life-work without a "call" from God.

5) *Many young people have an "unregenerated" sense of values in life. They do not see clearly the difference between the essential and the non-essential, between the temporal and the eternal.*

The Bible teaches that all men outside of Christ are lost, and that there is no way of salvation except through Jesus Christ. How can we face these solemn realities without making sure that our own lives are invested for eternal values?

6) Many would-be missionary volunteers have let *marriage* interfere with their call to missionary service. We all recognize that marriage is a God-created institution, designed to bring blessing and joy to our lives. Yet hundreds of young people who volunteer to go to the mission field never get there because they permit themselves to fall in love with someone who does not share their convictions about missionary service. During my years as a pastor and mission director I have listened to the heartbreaking experiences of scores of people who said they felt called of God to foreign service but their marriage interfered with the divine call. Casualties of this type are countless.

7) Although few will admit it, *this country's high wages and comfortable standard of living have held back many in subtle ways not easily recognizable.* Many young people who have full intentions of completing their necessary academic and theological training must take a job "for a while" to earn the required funds. Accustomed to financial independence after a bit, they become unwilling to give it up in favor of more training for Christian service—and the call of God is stifled.

8) The *lack spiritual discipline* often eats slowly into the soul of young people until they are made almost unusable in God's service. This often comes so slowly and so unconsciously that they themselves are not aware of it. The way one disciplines himself in his studies, the choice he makes in this acton, his reaction to that situation—all of these leave an indelible impression. And if a man or woman makes the wrong choices, these can eventually produce a kind of spiritual "creeping paralysis."

9) Perhaps the greatest reason the laborers are few is that we do not follow the command of Christ. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." If we would spend even two minutes a day *praying for laborers*, this would have its effect upon our own lives. No one can honestly pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers without a willingness to do his part.

No Christian has a right to personalize the promises and privileges of the gospel without personalizing its obligations and responsibilities. Thousands of Christians have been assured of salvation by putting their own names into the whosoever" of John 3:16. By the same token, we should put our names in the "go ye" of the Great Commission and ask God to lead us to the exact part we should have in world evangelism.—In *Missionary Mandate*

Who Dares Handle A Rebellious Kid?

by Will Longenecker with Brad Longenecker

"Do I *have to go along*?" sulked our 15-year-old as he dragged his feet across the floor. "I want to stay home with my friends. Besides, the car will be full, and who wants to drive 600 miles folded up like a pretzel in a stupid old car?" The scene was not really a familiar one. Our relationship with our oldest had not been had down through the years. Oh, there had been scrapes, and we had to spend time talking with him and disciplining him, but firm discipline with love had been our modis operandi, and it had seemed to work quite well to that point.

However, his display of smoldering anger now pinpointed a growing problem which had plagued our relationship recently. Deep down, my heart confessed to an increasing resentment toward Brad. I didn't like his friends nor the way he wore his hair, and I felt especially sick about the music he was into. His lifestyle acutely polarized us, and communication between us had begun to be strained.

The travel episode occurred pre-Easter 1976. As a missionary family, we had been asked to share in meetings in the Toronto area. Since Easter vacation fell on that week too, our whole family could go to minister, sing and play instruments. As parents, Rhoda and I enjoyed having our five children minister with us, for the message seemed to have more impact when it came from our whole family.

Brad unwillingly accompanied us, and somehow we scraped through the week. But when we got back home, we found ourselves, as parents, on our knees before God. "Lord," we prayed, "we know only too well that this could spell real disaster, and not just for Brad. Surely others will be hurt as well if he continues on in rebellion. We will not let him go on like this. *God, you have got to give us the answer,*" we demanded. "Please show us."

I was hardly prepared for God's answer. He focused His searchlight on my heart attitudes, and that which had been shadowed for too long suddenly became painfully evident. "As long as you choose to reject, resent, and condemn Brad, My hands are tied," God said to me. "You are standing in the way of My touching your son. You are the real problem."

"Oh, God," I groaned in consternation.

He continued searching me. "When I accepted you in My Son, Jesus, did I demand that you become holy and righteous before I accepted you? Were there not yet many things in your life which displeased Me? Yet, I enfolded you in My love and acceptance for My Son's sake."

I fought hard with His next words. "Will you now go to your son and confess your wrong attitudes and resentment, criticism and rejection? Will you ask his forgiveness for your sin against him?"

"But Lord," I remonstrated, "*He is rebellious and he is wrong!*"

"I am aware of that, my child, and I have a remedy, but you are the greater problem. What about it? I can wait as long as you make Me wait, but if you refuse to break, I can't promise that you won't lose your son."

As I struggled with God's proposition, the issue became excruciatingly clear, and while I had no promise as to what would happen in my son, I understood what I, his father, had to do. God wasn't asking me to accept my son's rebellion. He was asking me to love and accept him genuinely and unconditionally, as he was, and not as I wanted him to be. While the humbling was very painful to me, suddenly I became too afraid to not let my will be broken. The consequences for Brad and for me would simply be too heavy to bear. I knew then that God was waiting for me, not for my son.

As we found ourselves in each other's arms, tears washing away my built-up resentments against Brad, an amazing thing happened. Brad, too, began to weep and with a broken heart acknowledged his rebellion and asked forgiveness. Then, turning to his mom, and embracing her, he wept out his wrong attitude toward her and asked her forgiveness.

Two years have passed since that day. So deep was God's work at that time that even though I have failed in many ways since then, yet Brad has moved steadily onward with the Lord.

God says He will not despise a broken and contrite heart. And who can tell what will happen in lives when His powerful, redemptive love finds us a channel? No glory to the channel—but the power of that Love is dynamite!

Whatever Happened to the Fear of God Among Us?

Ben Rake

Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, has always deserved a position of deep reverence within the hearts of men. The Creation account, the greater part of the book of Job, many Psalms, Proverbs, and the Prophets all bring this truth out vividly, as do also many passages of the New Testament. Jesus told His servants, "... the very hairs of your head are all numbered." We might define "fear of God" as "Our awareness of His awareness of us."

Isaiah pens the words of the Lord when He says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways." Our Lord is fully aware of our actions, our attitudes, our thoughts, and everything about us. This is tremendously comforting when we seek to please Him in all of our ways.

I must confess that, as a child, my behavior was occasionally somewhat different when I knew that my parents were not around, but, at the sound of adult footsteps, I had a strong tendency to straighten up quickly. Jesus speaks of our becoming like little children in our concepts of the relationship we enjoy with our Lord. This is, in fact, a necessity, according to Matthew 18. We need to see our sins and weaknesses in light of this analogy, also. We must recognize the Lord's continual awareness of everything about us.

How it must grieve our Father when He hears us verbally crucify one of His children! Jesus has given loving and proper steps of action to take when my brother sins. These steps (Matthew 18:15-17) are not optional. If Jesus is my Lord, then His Word is my command. How emphatically I defend "scriptural truths" (which happen to agree with my personal habits) and how viciously I slaughter the reputations of those who differ slightly—not from scripture, but from my habits! No, I am not speaking of our slandering "the denomination", although we have no business doing that, either. Our Lord is painfully and fully aware of such presumptuous behavior among His children. He cannot, and will not, look over our acting like spoiled brats. As a human father, I am very weak and fall short in many ways, but when my children rush to me with juicy news of something "wrong" that a sibling has done, they soon learn that there is dishonor coming from the tattler before there is correction for the offender, if any.

When our Lord was about to be crucified, an apparently profane and unspiritual leader within the Roman empire quickly recognized that "... because of envy they had delivered Him (Jesus) up." None of us would exalt Pilate as a man of great spiritual insight, but it seems that his perception was clearer than that of some of us today! How shockingly similar our actions and attitudes are to those of the scribes and pharisees!

Without "preaching", let me suggest that each of us stop and participate in some self-evaluation—SELF-evaluation—in light of our

Father's awareness of our every word and our every thought. Consider the content and the practicality in OUR OWN LIVES of the following brief passages: John 17:20-23; Matthew 18:15-35; Matthew 22:39; Matthew 7:1; I Corinthians 11:23-32; Galatians 6:1-5; Philippians 4:5-9; I Thessalonians 5:16-22.

Let me humbly suggest that we repent, ask personal forgiveness of brothers or sisters, and yield more fully to our Lord's desires for us.

If I John 4:18 brings doubt as to our need for fear of God, let me suggest that if we participate in any of the previously mentioned sins, our love is not "perfect" or complete.

What Is Your Verdict?

When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God it was no idle boast. Even the Jews accepted it as a serious challenge to their law. "For this cause the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18). When Pilate rendered his verdict, "I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." (John 19:6, 7)

The question Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" must be answered by each one of us. If our answer is, "The son of David," the answer of the Pharisees, Jesus will ask a second question: "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?"

"If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?" Matthew 22:41-45; Psalms 110:1) It is evident that the one David spoke of was both his son and his Lord. (Jesus was both the Son of Man and the Son of God.) Paul settles this question for us in Romans 1:3, 4 "concerning his (God's) son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord,".

The Old Testament writings predicted the coming of Christ, his birth, his death, his resurrection, his Lordship and his personal return. The four biographies of Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) give us multiplied evidence of the truthfulness of what is written and the trustworthiness of the writers. The New Testament epistles help to confirm the Messiahship of Jesus. The book of Revelation gives us a graphic picture of what to expect in these last days.

You have everything to gain and nothing good to lose by accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The more you study the Bible the deeper will be your conviction that the great person it presents is indeed Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, your Savior and mine. So the question remains. "What is your verdict?" Is Jesus the one he claimed to be or the one his enemies accused him of being? Your decision has eternal consequences.

—Dr. J. Miller Forcade

A SPECIAL COOPERATIVE MEETING
INVESTIGATING
THE TOPIC
BROTHERS IN CHRIST

OCTOBER 30 AND 31
FRIDAY EVENING AND SATURDAY

LOCATION
HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

SPEAKERS
DALE JORGENSON
J. ROBERT ROSS
EARL C. MULLINS, SR.

SPONSORED BY
SOUTH LOUISVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

The South Louisville Church of Christ is happy to announce a special meeting this fall. The theme of the meeting is *BROTHERS IN CHRIST* and we would like for many of our brothers and sisters in Christ to join us.

The four-fold emphasis of this meeting is:

- 1 the Lordship of Jesus Christ
- 2 the message of the gospel
- 3 the diversity of the body
- 4 the heritage we've received

These four subjects have been selected because of our interest in encouraging a broader fellowship between brothers in Christ. We have experienced the blessing of living with, learning from and growing with Christian brothers and sisters who represented a diversity of interpretations and convictions. We know first hand the temptation to draw lines of fellowship more narrowly to protect and promote our own personal convictions, but also know the rich blessings gained from the loving input and rich fellowship these brothers and sisters have brought to our body. Our heritage included a call to all Christians who would desire to allow the Bible to be their single creed while allowing their brothers to come to their own interpretations. We want to analyze this stand once again and have invited Bob Ross, Dale Jorgenson and Earl Mullins to speak to specific points central to this subject. We hope that others will join us as we are challenged to re-examine this subject.

Squeezing this investigation into a single weekend meeting was a real challenge. We are holding the meeting at the Highland Church of Christ to take advantage of their location. They can offer plenty of parking spaces and are located within two blocks of seven restaurants. These advantages are very important for an all day Saturday meeting and we will hold the Friday evening meeting there too.

MEETING SCHEDULE

FRIDAY EVENING (October 30, 1981)

7:30 pm "Jesus is Lord" — Bob Ross

SATURDAY MORNING (October 31, 1981)

9:30 am "Faith of our Fathers — Part 1" — Dale Jorgenson

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45 am "Others May — You Cannot" — Earl Mullins

11:45 - 1:30 Lunch Break

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

1:30 pm "The Gospel Re-examined" — Bob Ross

2:30 - 2:50 Break

3:00 pm Open Forum moderated by Terry Morrison

4:30 - 7:30 Free time for fellowship and supper

SATURDAY EVENING

7:30 pm "Faith of our Fathers — Part 2" — Dale Jorgenson

THE PRAYING CHURCH

John Stam

Not long ago I was stopped short by this striking paragraph tucked away in a rather technical theological volume, Ethelbert Stauffer's *New Testament Theology*:

"Intercession is the fundamental basis of missionary activity (Col. 1:9ff; 4:12ff). Preaching and intercession belong together. For it is only the praying Church that finds the right word to speak. And the preaching church will always be thrown back, with ever-increasing intensity, upon prayer . . . So it is no accident that the thanksgiving at the start of Paul's letters should regularly end up in intercession (e.g., Phil. 1:3ff). The labours of a missionary are an acted prayer. But they must also be a praying act." (p. 194).

As I read those words I could not help but ask myself how many of us really understand their profound truth. Or whether I, as a missionary, really believe them or dared face up to their radical implications. "Intercession is the fundamental basis of missionary activity." If that is true, it can only mean that if our missionary endeavor is not based on intercession, it has no solid basis whatever. It can be abiding only to the extent that it is cemented in the solid foundation of prayer.

Again, if it is true that intercession is the fundamental basis of our activity, that can only mean that intercession must, imperatively, be given a new and central place in our missionary strategy. It is so fatally easy to forget that "without me ye can do nothing," so easy to be so wrapped up in our frantic doings that we experience sadly little of His marvellous, divine doings. It is so easy to push prayer into a neglected corner of our daily schedule, and thereby cut out from under our work its one enduring foundation.

Another conclusion that follows from the thought under consideration is this: if intercession is truly the all-important foundation of our entire work, then you at home who pray with us and intercede for us are fulfilling a ministry in God's work as vital and indispensable as that of the busiest missionary in the most demanding situation. No one would belittle the labors of those whose work involves the foundation itself! And so as you at home pray for us, you are constantly re-laying and re-enforcing the foundation of our work, its all-important intercessory basis.

In the paragraph we have quoted there is one point whose truth the missionary finds easy to recognize, that as we seek to serve the Lord we are constantly thrown back upon prayer. How often it has been true that, for our prayerlessness, our message has not rung with that "right word," the living, powerful, penetrating, incisive Word of God. In a foreign language, finding the "right word" is that much more difficult. Missionaries need prayer for special grace to forget themselves when fraught by inevitable grammatical and phonetic dif-

faculties, and to trust the Lord to speak in power *through* them. It is the *ecclesia orans*, the praying church, the praying mission, which God uses for the preaching of His Word in the power of His Spirit.

How well then, might we all follow the example of the first missionaries and "give ourselves continually to prayer." How wonderful if we could all repeat the words of Paul when he said, "We do not cease to pray for you," or duplicate the intercessory ministry of Ephraim, "always laboring fervently in prayer," Perhaps the secret of the world-shaking power of the early church may be discovered in their prayer meetings, as described by Tertullian: "We come together in a meeting and congregation as before God, as though we would in one body sue Him by our prayers. This violence is pleasing to God." It is an undeniable fact that such prayer has always been the fundamental basis of missionary activity.

The Lord would have us realize anew the fundamental importance of intercession. Oh, that all of us together might "sue Him by our prayers" and reach out with the arms of intercession to grasp for lost multitudes who need God's saving Word to them in these days.
—from the *Latin American Evangelist*, 1959.

Praying Toward God

J. Richard Lewis

One speaking to another looks in their direction and usually their body is turned somewhat toward them. Without these bodily accommodation the one spoken to will feel that what is spoken is of little importance or even that he is held in contempt by the one speaking. Much has been said in recent years about the importance of "body language" . . . what one is saying by their action.

The ancients felt body language was important in their relationship and communication to God. It was not reduced to a formalistic documented study. Far more importantly, body language was practiced with God.

The ancients faced God at their altars. They bowed down toward God at the altars. They prostrated themselves toward Him or some manifestation they considered from Him, e.g. angels or visions, etc. With the coming of the tabernacle every Israelite tent door was to face it (Num. 1:5-154; 2:1-43). Even more specifically the very presence of God in their midst was in the Holy of Holies above the mercy seat. Lev. 1:11 is interesting in that it instructs the animal to be offered to be slain on the north side of the altar "before Jehovah." Keep this in mind as comment will be made later concerning it.

With the coming of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem a permanent place for the presence of God was established on earth (I Kgs. 8:27-30). The Tabernacle or Temple both were to be constructed in a specific relationship to the four points of the compass. The entrance facing east and the articles inside in a specific place. With the establishment of the Temple, a direction for prayer was established—"toward

this house." (1 Kgs. 8:29-30) This is why Daniel (6:10) opened his windows *toward* Jerusalem—he was praying *toward* that place (Temple) where in Solomon's prayer one was to face when communicating to God. This is why today the wailing wall is so important a place of prayer for the Israeli people—they are praying *toward* that place—*toward* God Who said He would hear and answer when they prayed *toward* that structure. This same thing was true for the Gentile. Note as Solomon's prayer continues (1 Kgs. 8:41-43), the Jew as well as the Gentile was to pray *toward* God at this place.

As to a place on this earth to pray *toward* God, the site of the Temple seems better than any other. This may be emphasized by the fact of the future temple of Ezekiel (40-44) is to be at this same location.

Jehovah God cannot be contained in a building or even to this sphere called earth, as Solomon recognized (1 Kgs. 8:27). The Lord emphasized this in His remarks of Matt. 5:34-35. Is there a location off this sphere that might be *toward* God?

Remember the Lev. 1:11 passage mentioned earlier? The animal was to be slain on the north side of the altar "before Jehovah." It would seem it should read "westward" because the ark of the covenant and mercy seat were west of the altar; but it says northward "before Jehovah." Job 37:22 says, "Out of the north cometh golden splendor. God hath upon Him terrible majesty." This, at least, ascribes the northern reaches to have some special association with God and His presence. Furthermore consider Ezek. 1:4 that the visions of the Lord God came "out of the north" and that fact is reinforced in Ezek. 8:1-5.

Consider the heavens themselves. It is remarkable that the North Star is the primary reference point of the night sky for finding direction on this earth. There is an emptiness in that part of the night sky so the Polaris stands out and is easily found. It is almost as though God in this way directs the attention of every traveler, who finds his way by the sky, *toward* Himself Who is the Chief Reference Point for all things.

For any growing in prayer and wanting their "body language" to be improved upon as well as their desires and intents of the heart, employ positions other than the bowed head, standing or kneeling at a chair or bed. Kneel upon the floor and bow the head to the floor or prostrate the body before God. In the interest of the direction in which the presence of the Lord may be, consider the earthly area of Jerusalem, where the Temple was and will be, and also consider the celestial area of the polestar. It is fully in keeping with His majesty that the primary point in the night sky that gives directions in the dark would also be the place of His presence from whence come spiritual direction in the spiritual darkness of this present world.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of life will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

THE WONDER OF CALVARY

Behold! *The Judge of all becomes the Judged of all.* Adam in Eden blamed God for his sin. So has every sinner. God says, "Very well, I will take the blame!" The Judge steps down and invites sinners to judge Him. And judge Him they did. He was arrested at midnight as if He were a wild animal. He was arraigned before corrupt courts, abused, spat upon, derided, lashed, crowned with thorns. When Pilate invited men to choose between Jesus, the Son of God, and Barabbas, the murderous robber, they overwhelmingly called for Barabbas; as if to say, "Barabbas is a very saint compared to Jesus." He was judged as if He were a snake, a poisonous snake, unfit to live on this planet. "Away with Him!" they cried. "Let Him be crucified!" And so He was led forth before the rage of an infuriated mob to die a most cruel and shameful death.

The mystery of *human sins* is that *they hated Him "without a cause"* (John 15:25). But greater yet is the mystery of *divine love*, that *He could love them without a cause.* The blacker the night, the more brilliant the stars. His love for sinners became stronger and stronger as they hated Him more and more.

He was lifted up from earth on the cross because earth had refused her King. And not only earth but Heaven too, for He was now the sinner in the awful reckoning of God.

The awful sense of being separated from God forced from His parched lips the awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The answer is in Romans 3: "*Because there is none righteous, no, not one.*" But we may now cry, "My God, my God, *why hast Thou accepted me?*" And the gospel answers: "*Because there is One righteous, yes, just One.*" God promised Jeremiah that He would spare Jerusalem from the Babylonians if he could find one righteous man in it (Jer. 5:1). But more amazingly, God covenanted to save the world for one righteous Man. Christ chose to be that one. Said Luther:

Our most merciful Father, seeing us to be oppressed and overwhelmed with the curse of the law, sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying: 'Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; Adam that sinner which ate the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and be thou the person who hath committed the sins of all men. See therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them.'

Here now cometh the law and saith: 'I find him a sinner, such a one as hath taken upon himself the sins of all men, and I see no sins else but in him; therefore let him die upon the cross.' And so the law sets upon him and kills him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins, and so delivered from death and all evils. Now sin and death being abolished by this one man, God would see nothing else in the whole world, especially if it did believe, but a mere cleansing and righteousness.

—Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians

On the cross, Christ exhausted the penalty of the law and provided a pardon. He reconciled the prerogatives of justice and mercy. Two things were accomplished: the integrity of God's law was upheld, and salvation was provided for sinners. The object of the atonement

was not only redemption for the fallen race, but that the divine law and government might be maintained and vindicated. As Flavel, that great Puritan author, said, "Never was the law of God more honored as when the Son of God stood before its bar of justice to make reparations for the sins of men." The cross enables God to justify sinners without detracting from the dignity or claims of His righteous law.
—Author unknown; taken from PRESENT TRUTH magazine.

There Is A Time For...

Carl Kitzmiller

Probably no book of the Bible requires an understanding of its viewpoint and purpose more than Ecclesiastes if we are to understand it. Statements taken out of context may seem to teach things that run counter to other Scriptures. In 2:24, for example, here is a statement of what is later known as Epicurean philosophy (cf. 1 Cor. 15:32). The book is a record of Solomon's search for meaning to life, for values worthwhile. He had the gift of wisdom and the means to follow almost any pursuit that might offer an answer. A phrase appearing frequently in the book, "under the sun," helps us to understand many of the viewpoints. Solomon was not an atheist and did not pursue his answers wholly apart from God, but he did take a good look at things from a purely human point of view. He considered things "under the sun." He tried to find satisfaction in several ways—wealth, labor, learning, pleasure—before he came to the conclusion that these are all vanity and do not satisfy, that the real answer is to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13). Some of the statements in the body of the book, then, are tentative conclusions, true only under certain circumstances or only if God is left out of the reckoning. From time to time he does include some things he knows about God (as in vs. 11-15 of chapter 3), which lead him on to an answer, and many of these statements are quite obviously true.

Because of the nature of the book, it is not generally a good source of truths which are not in evidence elsewhere in Scripture. Various human philosophies may be mistaken as statements of truth. In fact, misguided souls with an axe to grind may use its statements as "proof texts," even though other Scriptures do not support them. Those who wrest the scriptures may find some statements much to their liking. In recent years, "there is a time . . . to dance (vs. 1, 4) has been used to justify almost any kind of debauchery. The entire first 8 verses of today's lesson offer the believer in situation ethics what he may regard as support for his belief. It is very much in order that we exercise care to be sure we get the message the Holy Spirit meant for us to have.

THERE IS A TIME

Timing is a factor in human life. Timing may well make some things right or wrong for us (Do not confuse this with situation ethics,

which denies that there are any absolutes, those things always wrong or those things wrong because God declares them to be so). There are those things of life that have their place and serve us well when kept in their place. But let them occupy too much of our time or energy or require too much of our attention, and they become evil to us. There are those areas of life where maintaining a right balance is needful. All work and no play may be almost as bad as all play and no work, etc. Jesus understood that there was a time for physical food as well as for spiritual food (Matt. 15:32). Paul understood that there is a time for helping those in need and a time for refusing them (2 Thess. 3:10). Getting the priorities of life right (Matt. 6:33) is one of the great needs of mankind and certainly one of the needs of the Christian. Solomon is surely right then in declaring that "there is a time for every purpose under heaven."

Let us not draw wrong conclusions, however. These matters are not open to just any interpretation we choose to place on them. "A time to kill" does not free me to an unlimited exercise of my own judgment as to when that is. A time to kill may refer to the judicial action of a government—the power of the sword—not to individual vengeance. It does not excuse what some people might call sufficient provocation. "A time to dance" is contrasted with mourning as an expression of joy. It is a far cry from saying that any and every form of dancing is sometimes good. "A time to embrace" is hardly to be used to justify fornication or adultery. "A time to hate" should not be set against such scripture as Matt. 5:22. There are things we are to hate, but this is not a license to exercise this emotion in any way we might choose. "A time for war" is hardly to be used to justify a Christian's unconditional acceptance of war. Indeed, God has a time—and we might add, a place—for just about everything in this world. Heaven knows how to use evil to praise His name. Our concern is for discovering the right time and place for these things in our life.

THE VANITY OF LABOR

One of the avenues of happiness Solomon pursued was labor. But such a course of life "under the sun," without reference to the will and purposes of God, is not satisfying. Such a one may amass considerable fruit from always being busy, working, pursuing gain. However, he must soon die and leave it, and he may have to leave it to some unworthy person (cf. 2:18-23). Solomon returns to the theme in 3:9-10 and sees it as a way of life without profit so far as purpose in life is concerned. While labor is honorable in its place, multitudes today relentlessly pursue the same unworthy goal that Solomon tried. But too soon life is over, and what has it accomplished of eternal worth?

"I KNOW . . ."

Solomon reveals some basic knowledge of God and of His works with man (vs. 11-15), a knowledge that he did not so much discover as a knowledge that he used to reach his conclusions. These are basic truths about God, not difficult for the average person to understand.

"He has made everything beautiful in its time." We live in an ordered universe, even though sin has disrupted it. God's wisdom is manifested in the design and interrelation of all of life.

"He hath set eternity (ASV) in their heart." Man even apart from God's revelation has a consciousness of being more than a mere animal. There is a restlessness which can be satisfied only in God.

"Whatsoever . . . it shall be forever." God is a being of eternity. There is nothing new with Him. Man's life may move in cycles, but God's acts are eternal in nature. He is a being who ought to have reverence from man.

Also in these verses is a conclusion concerning man (v. 13). It is not Solomon's final statement (cf. 12:13), but he sees a great deal of rejoicing in the life committed to doing good and enjoying the fruit of one's labors. A good life in the present is the gift of God.

—from the *Word and Work Lesson Quarterly*, September, 1981.

ROMANS:

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

NO STUMBLING BLOCKS THROUGH CHRISTIAN LOVE

Chapter 14

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

In this section of Romans Paul deals with the non-essentials, that is, the things that, while important, are not necessary for salvation. Specifically, he has in mind questions troubling early believers concerning their responsibilities, if any, to the food laws and festivals of the Old Testament, as well as perversions of them by the Judaism of their day. The apostle alludes to these things in verse two, five and six, and seventeen. By modern commentators and Christians they are called by such terms as, "Doubtful things," or "debatable things."

In contemporary evangelical life Paul's counsel is usually related to such matters as whether Christians should go to movies, or to the opera, whether Christians should drink wine (the Bible, of course, speaks strongly against drunkenness), use lipstick, play cards, work on Sunday, use tobacco, look at television, especially at football games on Sunday, etc. The list of "taboos" current in evangelicalism is varied, often different in different parts of the country. That which is "verboten" in the South may be acceptable in the North, and vice versa. How should we go about finding an answer to such matters, matters on which the Bible does not speak specifically?

The apostle in his opening comments has made some important points as general principles of guidance (cf. vv. 1-12). He has spoken of those who understand Christian freedom as "the strong," and of those who have scruples in such things as "the weak." The latter evidently, at least in Paul's mind, do not fully and clearly comprehend

the freedom that believers have from the food laws and festivals, because they do not understand the radical nature of the doctrine of justification by faith alone (cf. v. 17).

Paul said that the strong are not to despise the weak, however (cf. vv. 1, 3, 10). And the weak are not to judge the strong, as if they are living licentiously in their supposed freedom (cf. vv. 3, 10). And the apostle reminds both that they live in a slave-lord relationship. We are each servants of the one Lord, and He is the one who shall evaluate His servants. Who are we to judge another man's servant (cf. v. 4)? It is to his own master that he must render an account. The apostle refers to the fact that judgment is in the hands of the Son of God (cf. John 5:22; Acts 17:31), and all believers shall be judged by Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ, for their attitudes to one another, for their personal conduct, and for their service (cf. v. 10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

In his work, *On the Freedom of a Christian Man*, Luther said, "A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none." But he also said, "A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all." "Subject to none" in one sense, and "subject to all" in another sense, it is around these ideas that Paul gathers his thought in this section, it seems to me. We have freedom in the Christian life, but our freedom should not be the occasion of offence to a brother whose conscience is weak. In other words, our freedom is to be limited by Christian love. That is the clue to the section that we now study.

AN EXHORTATION AGAINST INJURING WEAK CONSCIENCES

A decision not to come to (Rom. 14:13a). The background, as we mentioned above, against which Paul writes was the Jewish food laws and the ancient festivals and days observed by the nation. But the background also includes some Gentile types of scruples, for the Jews had no problems with the drinking of wine, and yet Paul mentions that here (cf. v. 21). The Jews, of course, could not eat pork, and other meats could not be eaten unless properly prepared. No blood could be eaten. When Jewish persons became Christians, naturally they had to face the question of freedom regarding these old laws and customs. And it was likely that there was considerable emotion involved in their reaction to their new freedom. It would have been interesting to be present when Paul was offered his first bacon, or ham sandwich.

The Jerusalem Council had to deal with the matter, and in its conclusions it called upon the believers to deal gently with the Jewish scruples. That was only proper in the light of the Jewish character of the early church. Paul in one sense is only following their views. In the letter to the Gentile brethren of Antioch and Syria and Cilicia they asked, "that ye abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well" (Acts 15:29; cf. v. 20).

It would have been difficult for the Christians to buy meat in the butcher shops of the ancient eastern world that had not been dedicated

to some deity. Therefore, the questions arose concerning eating such food, and some of the believers had scruples about it. Paul's words are designed to give counsel to them.

The apostle, first of all, in some words that probably pertain to both groups, says, "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more." This general exhortation is to be borne in mind by all.

A Decision to come to (Rom. 14:13b-c). But Paul goes on to say, "but judge this rather: that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." The word "judge" is used by antanaclasis in two ways in this verse. In its first occurrence it means to *criticize*, while in its second occurrence it means to *make a determination, to decide*. A play on the word is intended. Fundamentally the word means to *come to a decision*, and with this meaning it is suitable to express both ideas Paul has in mind. The word rendered by the AV, "an occasion to fall," was used of the baitstick of a trap. It was, thus, a deathstick, something that proved fatal for the one who took the bait (the animal, of course). Paul, therefore, looks at the matter as a very serious one. To cause a professing believer to stumble has solemn consequences (cf. vv. 15, 20-21).

SOME ARGUMENTS FOR LOVING CONSIDERATION

The statement of Christian freedom (Rom. 14:14). The principle of freedom is stated by Paul in the opening words of verse fourteen, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." Nothing could be plainer. The Christian is free from the scruples touching food and days. What he says here is confirmed both in his other statements and in the statements of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Tit. 1:15; Mark 7:14-19).

This principle is contrary to the traditions of orthodox Judaism, and it is from this fact that the controversies often developed.

The principle of Christian freedom, however, does have limitation, not a theoretical one, but a very practical one. The apostle continues his comments in verse fourteen by saying, with the weak brother clearly in mind, "but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Thus a man's conscience concerning right and wrong before God is important. To violate one's conscience, one's convictions concerning that which is right or wrong before God, is to act in rebellion against that which he regarded as God's will. It was a sinful act for the weaker brother to violate his convictions. Later Paul says, "And he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (cf. v. 23).

The principle of love (Rom. 14:15). The principle that bounds the application of the principle of freedom is love. Paul writes, "If thy brother be grieved with thy food, now walkest thou not in love. Destroy not him with thy food, for whom Christ died." There are several points of interest in his statement.

In the original text the words begin with a *for*, relating the words of verse fifteen to the last clause of verse fourteen. Paul says, in effect that there is good reason for mentioning the words about the weak brother's convictions, for our freedom may at times grieve such brethren.

ren. The grief referred to is the grief of the weak brother, who sees one of the strong doing something that he thinks is contrary to the will of God.

Perhaps Paul's most interesting statement is the last one, "Destroy not him with thy food, for whom Christ died." The problem of the security of the believer is raised, the divine side of the perseverance of the saints. In fact, some consider the statement a clear proof of the fact that it is possible for a brother to lose his salvation. That, of course, would be contrary to many plain statements of the Word of God (cf. John 10:28-30). But what is the purpose of this admonition? As all of the admonitions of the Word to the saints, it is designed to aid in the preservation of them in the faith. The threats and warnings of the Word are means to the accomplishment of the unconditional promises of God. They are aids in preserving us from apostasy.

The admonitions also serve as serious warnings to the professing company of persons, those who claim to be Christ's but are not. They announce to them that continuance in a certain form of activity will lead to ruin. And here, if a brother performs in such a way as to grieve a professing saint, it is possible that such action may lead to the ruin of the professor. Hodge comments, "Believers (the elect) are constantly spoken of as in danger of perdition. They are saved only, if they continue steadfast unto the end. If they apostatize, they perish. If the Scriptures tell the people of God what is the tendency of their sins, as to themselves, they may tell them what is the tendency of such sins as to others. Saints are preserved, not in despite of apostasy, but from apostasy." Shedd comments further, "To encourage a fellow disciple to violate his conscience, and thereby to fill him with remorse, will end in his ruin, if persisted in. But it does not follow that it will be persisted in. On the contrary, see verse 4."

John Murray's view is that the word *destroy* does not really refer to eternal perdition at all, but simply to the tendency of the course of action of the strong. He writes, "But here likewise (he refers to 1. Cor. 8:11) it would be beyond warrant to think of apostasy. Furthermore, the destruction contemplated as befalling the weak should not be construed as eternal perdition. All sin is destructive and the sin of the weak in this instance is a serious breach of fidelity which, if not repaired, would lead to perdition. It is upon the character of the sin and its consequence that the emphasis is placed in order to impress upon the strong the gravity of his offense in becoming the occasion of stumbling. It would load the exhortation with implications beyond this intent to suppose that the weak believer by his sin is an heir of eternal destruction. It is a warning, however, to the strong believer that what he must consider is the nature and tendency of sin and not take refuge behind the security of the believer and the final perseverance of the saints."

The point of Paul's thought is simply this: One should not think more of his food than Christ has thought of the life of the brother. Murray comments, "It is the contrast between what the extreme sacrifice of Christ exemplified and the paltry demand devolving upon us

that accentuates the meanness of our attitude when we discard the interests of a weak brother."

The influence of the heathen (Rom. 14:16-18). The apostle in the sixteenth verse speaks of the effect of disputes and contentions among Christians upon the unbelieving world. He says, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." The meaning of the expression, "the good," is debatable, some referring it to the believer's Christian liberty, others to the Christian church, and still others to the Christian faith, or the gospel. I like the last view.

The apostle refers in verse seventeen to the motive for avoiding the reproaches of the world, writing, "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." The expression, "the kingdom of God," refers to the realm in which God's will prevails. Over that realm the Messianic king, the Lord Jesus Christ, reigns, having established it by virtue of the sacrifice that confirmed the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenant promises. That kingdom has been established and shall become visible in our society at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.

The new theocracy, Paul says, consists of inward objective facts, not outward rites and material things. The righteousness is that which believers have through the merits of a crucified Savior, made available to them through faith. The peace is also that made by the cross between God and His rebellious people (cf. 5:1-11). And the joy is the joy of the possession of the righteousness and peace.

It is in this way (taking the singular as the correct reading; the AV has, "in these things") that one serving Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men. Shedd comments, "God takes pleasure in one who serves Christ in the evangelical manner described. The legalist is not well-pleasing to God, because 'whatsoever is not of *faith* is sin' (verse 23)."

Concluding words of exhortation (Rom. 14:19-20a). The apostle concludes with an exhortation to seek to find a way of solving the problems of differing views over doubtful things. The strong are to forbear and lead the weak to a more scriptural and satisfying view of Christian liberty, while the weak are to keep the strong from licentiousness by reminding him of the fact that his liberty is to be practiced before God with a good conscience.

FINAL WORDS TO THE STRONG

Sin arising from examples (Rom. 14:20b-21). The figure of the edifice is retained, the apostle reminding his readers not to tear down the work of God for food. All things indeed are pure (he again affirms that the strong are basically right), but the strong sins if he eats in such a way as to be offensive to the weak. Reformed men differ over the interpretation of the words, "with offense" (v. 20). Some think the offense is a reference to the sin of the weak in eating something that is contrary to their real convictions due to the liberty of the strong and the example that they provide. Others think that the reference is to the sin of the strong in injuring the weaker brother by his actions in freedom. The latter view seems more in accord with the chapter,

which has spoken of the offense given by the strong in the exercise of his freedom before the weaker brethren.

Verse twenty-one seems to confirm this, for the sin of the strong is referred to there.

Paul's point, then, is this: the stronger brother is right, but his freedom should be exercised in the context of Christ love. It should not be used to provoke weaker brethren who do not yet understand the extent of Christian liberty.

The line of reasoning of the apostle does raise some questions. Are the strong always to refuse to indulge their liberty? "I think it is a healthy thing for a Christian who has liberty in some of these areas to indulge it on occasion. The cause of Christ is never advanced by having every strong Christian in a congregation completely forego his right to enjoy some of these things. What happens then is that the question is settled on the basis of the most narrow and most prejudiced person in the congregation. Soon, the gospel itself becomes identified with that view. That is why the outside world often considers Christians to be narrow-minded people who have no concern except to prevent the enjoyment of the good gifts God has given us."

Sin arising from doubt (Rom. 14:22-23). Paul tells the strong, who have the faith of belief in their liberty in Christ, not to parade the faith. They should rather have it to themselves, and remember that it is to be exercised "before God." The last phrase inhibits any tendency toward licentiousness that might arise.

The final words of verse twenty-two, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth," apply to both the strong and the weak. In effect, it means that the person with a good conscience in these matters is a blessed man.

The paragraph concludes with some words directed to the weak, admonishing him that he must not eat, or do anything concerning which he has scruples. Doubt concerning the act is enough to mean that the believer should not do it. One must act from faith, because "whatever is not of faith is sin." The last words touch on the nature of human sin; its essence is unbelief of the Word of God, which leads to rebellion and issues in acts of immorality.

Paul's words mean, then, that it is wrong to do anything we think is wrong, although it is not always right to do what we think is right.

There are things to remember from this chapter. In the first place, it is a great chapter on the deity of Christ. He is the Lord (vv. 6-8); He is the Judge who has dominion (cf. vv. 9-10); He is Yahweh (cf. v. 11). In the second place, it is a great error to make sinful what is in fact innocent. Love does not require this. Christian love does not require the sacrifice of truth, although it may demand the sacrifice of our liberty in the truth under certain circumstances.

The word to the weak is this: Never act from doubt, but from conviction. Incidentally it also includes an implicit admonition to study Christian liberty, in order that the weak may advance to strength.

The word to the strong is this: Be free, but free in love, remembering that believers are free to say, "no," just as much as to say, "yes." We are free to give up our liberty for a good cause, the desire to avoid offending the weaker brother. May it be so of us!

DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY

Dr. Horace E. Wood

One of the first evidences of genuine conversion to Christ is the desire to make Him known to others. A Christian's chief concern about a lost soul should not be to fill his stomach with food, nor to place clothes upon his back; nor should he be concerned about educating him. Putting first things first, he should be apprised of the fact that he is lost, and that Christ died for him.

The last words of our Lord were, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.)

Some there are who deny that we of the church age are to act at all on this commission as given here, insisting that it was intended for a Jewish testimony in the coming era of the great tribulation. This is fanciful in the very extreme. Far more important than any quibbling as to the exact character of this commission is the truth of our responsibility to carry the story of redeeming love to all men everywhere. It is given, not alone to those we may think of as official ministers, or specially designated missionaries, but to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, to endeavor to make Him known to others and so to win as many precious souls as possible while the day of grace is continued. This is the first great business of every member of the church of the living God. All are called to be witnesses, according to their measure.

It is ours to "go" (Mat. 28:19), to "pray" (Matt. 9:38), to "help send forth" (Acts 13:3), and to sustain those who are able to leave home and friend as they hasten forth into distant lands to carry the gospel to the regions beyond (3 John 6-8).

Granting that you who are reading this are a born again person, let's consider you for a moment. What comes naturally for you? Is it being at the top of your business? Is it selling more insurance than the next fellow, thus getting your name on the honorable list? Is it seeking pleasure day after day, week after week, year after year? Are you hungry? It is a known fact that a hungry person is a healthy one. This is so true in the physical, ah, but also true in the spiritual. Are you hungry for the things of the Lord? If so, you are a healthy Christian. Do you find it difficult to talk to a person about the Lord? There are times when we must answer in the affirmative. Could this momentary condition be due to a lack of spiritual appetite? Too much candy will dampen the appetite for strength foods. So will too much worldly contact dampen our keen appetite for the things of God.

For many years a dental salesman who is a Jew has been coming to my office. This man lives in the New England states. He makes the journey to Dallas about four times a year. We have learned to look upon this man as a good and true friend. Some time ago, late one evening, he came by my office. During the conversation I asked him how he felt, as his age was advanced. His answer was, "I am tired and sick. My heart is playing out, and I am not well." Now, as I stated, he had for years been visiting my office with supplies, and I had never thought of telling him about Christ. He was a Jew; it wasn't the thing to do. This was such a poor excuse; but in weakness I used it to ease my conscience. On this particular occasion the Holy Spirit had other plans for me. I said to this man, "Ed, I wish that you had my friend to help you." Immediately he came to attention and asked who this friend was. I answered him, "The Lord Jesus Christ." "Oh," he said, "I am a Jew." "Yes, Ed, but you need Him just as badly as I do." He then proceeded to tell me that he believed in God, and that "We Jews do this and that." I said, "Ed, do you believe that the Messiah is coming?" "Oh yes! We Jews believe that He is to come." "Ed, when He comes, do you believe that He will remove your sins?" "Oh yes, we Jews believe that." Then I said, "Now let's just suppose for a minute: Is it possible that He has come, and you didn't know about it?" He thought for a moment and answered in the affirmative. "Now, if Jesus has come, and you didn't know about it, and when He comes He is to take care of your sins—what kind of shape does this leave you in, Ed?" He answered, "Pretty bad."

I had in my possession one of Brother R. H. Boll's little pamphlets entitled, "How God Forgives Sin," which is a most marvelous writing. I asked this Jew if he would read it. He replied that he would be glad to read it.

Several months passed, and he returned. I asked him if he had read the little pamphlet. He said that he carried it with him and had read it over, and over and over again, and that it was the finest thing he had ever read. I discussed the Lord Jesus further with this Jew; and as he started to leave, I told him that I was not interested in leading him to a church, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that there is no name under heaven given among men, "Whereby we must be saved."

Recently, while passing through Baltimore, I called his home and talked with his wife. She was most cordial. No doubt Ed had told her of our conversation. I have sent him several religious books; and he is reading, searching, I trust, for "My Friend."

Mine and your little world may be small, but Jesus said "Go." He didn't say how far. It could be only a few feet. When the commanding officer speaks, a loyal soldier has but to obey. It is ours to act upon His instructions. The blessing of God has always rested in a very special way upon the individual or the church that was missionary-minded. None ever lost out by obedience to our risen Lord's command, by doing that which comes naturally to a true soldier.

—from *Good Tidings* magazine, 1955

Wanted . . . MEN

- Men who are not for sale;
- Men who are honest, sound from center to circumference, true to the heart's core;
- Men with consciences as steady as the needle to the pole;
- Men who will stand for the right of the heavens totter and the earth reels.
- Men who can tell the truth and look the world right in the eye;
- Men who neither brag nor run;
- Men who neither flag nor flinch;
- Men who can have courage without shouting it;
- Men in whom the courage of everlasting life runs still, deep and strong;
- Men who know their message and tell it;
- Men who know their place and fill it;
- Men who will not lie, shirk or dodge;
- Men who know their business and attend to it;
- Men who are not too lazy to work nor too proud to be poor;
- Men who are willing to eat what they have earned and wear what they have paid for;
- Men who are not ashamed to say "NO" with emphasis and who are not ashamed to say, "I can't afford it."

God is looking for men. He wants those who can unite together around a common faith—who can join hands in a common task—and who have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. **GOD GIVE US MEN!**—Frank Carlson, former U.S. Senator from Kansas, via Amite bulletin.

P. S. In our day when there is so much opposition to using the term "men" in the generic sense, we may need to point out that we need **WOMEN** of a similar sort!—from the *Oakdale Messenger*, 1980.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

I want to let you know that (J. D. Phillips) my husband departed to be with the Lord on April 3, 1981. We enjoyed reading your valued labor of love. My new address: Edith Phillips, Southmoor Apt. 5, W., Midwestern Pkwy and Southmoor Sts., Wichita Falls, TX 76302.

May the good Lord bless your every efforts.

In His Name,
Edith Phillips

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