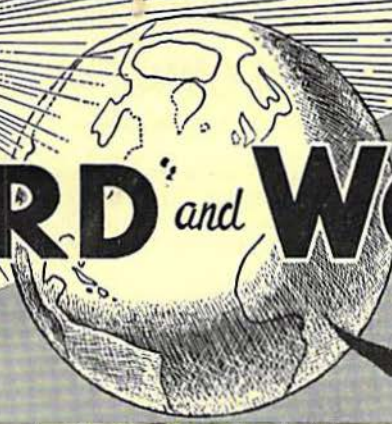


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Robert Held is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



God's Family

W. R. H.

IDENTITY CRISIS

"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."—Gal. 2:20

Student counselors and family advisors are prompt to tell us the need of each individual to feel his own identity, in order to be successful and content in this competitive age. Normal maturity demands that each person see himself as a whole unit in the structure of society. Recognizing our individual worth and assuming our individual responsibilities opens the door to healthy personality development and a challenging, fruitful life. A good identity becomes personal character, and bears fruit all through life. Nor is it something that should be changed betimes. We read of God, that "morning by morning thou art the same; great is thy faithfulness." As children of God, we should reflect His unchanging character by our own worthy manner of life.

The identity crisis of youth is settled victoriously when we begin to stand and be counted in things worthwhile. If we are honest, industrious, gentle, studious, pure, joyful and friendly, people will soon know us by name. Paul said to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." What a glorious identity follows this personal prescription! It is a motto verse that is for all of us.

CHURCHES ALSO HAVE IDENTITY CRISES

There are church groups today with various identity crises. Some have unsavory financial practices and do a disservice to the name of Jesus. Others develop political power and seek to bring forth a mere social gospel for mankind. Some deny the supernatural, while still others even deny the deity of Jesus. Such names as Jones(town) and Moon(ies) are ample reminders that so much has been taught in the name of religion that there needs to be some serious identity examination. I remember that once Bro. Jack Blaes and I were seeking a vacant lot upon which we could pitch Bro. Don Carlos Janes' tent and hold a revival meeting. We found a lot, and then traced down to whom it belonged. When we asked permission to use it, the first question was "What church is behind this effort? Who are you with?"

When we answered: "The Portland Ave. Church of Christ" the permission was immediately granted. No cost was even suggested. And I, for one, was much impressed as to the importance of identity.

What a privilege it is to be identified with those who stand on solid rock! To stand where you can read and accept all of the scriptures at their face value. Be it the grace of God, the blessed hope, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, miracles, healing through prayer, or grappling with the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies—what a thrill to hear the exposition of the various truths of God's book.

OUR ACTIONS AND OUR IDENTITY

The early Christians were known as those "who turn the world upside down." (Acts 17:6). The rulers and elders of the Jews took knowledge of the early believers, "that they had been with Jesus". The Holy Spirit so empowered and emboldened these saints, that they were acquiring a new identity. They were called "the Way" and "Christians" by their contemporaries.

Whenever our country has been at war, then the Christians who are in the military service have an identity crisis. Some feel conscientiously opposed to killing of fellowmen, and so state at the time of their induction. A considerable number of questions are asked, and some testing of faith usually comes, before the true identity is established. Some are tempted to repudiate their stand, while others, still serving their country, become more scrupulous than ever.

But there are equally honest and devout Christians who are not opposed in the same manner, having a different understanding about the place of carnal warfare. These also have an identity to be established, and it *will be* established—perhaps with more testings than the conscientious objectors face. And so it continues into civilian, business life, also. The identity of the believer is seen in the daily manner of life, as we reflect before men the glory of Jesus as He indwells us.

IS THE CHURCH LOSING HER IDENTITY?

Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one for another." (Jn. 13:35.) I would judge from this word that it is impossible for the church to lose identity as long as we possess brotherly love. I am speaking of our identity as disciples of Jesus—students at the feet of Jesus. This identity will include the teachings of Jesus. All of them.

There may even now be slightly different identities among the various congregations of the body of Christ. There were certainly seven different identities among the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2, 3.)

The church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1) had a name that it lived (identity) but it was dead. The real test of our true identity is how we appear in the holy light of God's eyes. That is where identity really counts. "Many will come unto me in that day and say, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and in thy name cast out demons, and do many mighty works?" Then will I profess unto them, "I never knew you." This is a real and tragic identity crisis. We can avoid it.

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



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Saved Without Works"

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather hath found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. (Romans 4:1-5, ASV.)

I hope that you will read the first five verses of Romans 4 several times before reading this article. The central truth of this passage is so contrary to human ways of doing things that we need to keep reminding ourselves of it to keep from losing it. One of the church fathers of the second century said that he had the book of Romans read to him every week lest he forget it. He had a great point to make there, for the human mind, unaided by the Holy Spirit, cannot devise nor can it easily remember the central truths of Romans, the book of salvation by faith.

Abraham is one of the most admired men that ever lived. Jews and Muslims join with us in speaking highly of him. In the midst of an unbelieving, idol-worshipping land he believed God and did what God told him to do without even knowing where he was going to and what he would do when he got there. He was content to leave such small details in the hands of God. It was simply his place to obey. O that we might be truly "sons of Abraham" in such faith. Just think of how many mental hospitals would be empty and how many doctors would be without a practice if all could trust in God for everything in the future as well as in the present.

But this passage is saying that Abraham was not justified, declared righteous, by what he did. He simply believed God even in a matter that was clearly impossible from the human viewpoint and God then reckoned ("put down to one's account, place on deposit, credit to one") that faith *for* righteousness. That faith was not righteousness, for righteousness is right action toward others, but God reckoned it for righteousness. God looked at Abraham's complete trust of Him and counted Abraham as if he was 100% righteous.

Please note the completeness with which the Apostle Paul eliminates any works on Abraham's part (or on our) to have that righteous standing before God. He declares that if Abraham had been justified by works he would have something to boast about. But he immediately points out that before God Abraham had nothing worthy of any boast for Genesis 15:6 had stated that God had simply looked at Abraham's faith (on this occasion faith in believing that God would do the (humanly) impossible by making Abraham at his advanced age to be the ancestor of as many children as the stars of the heavens—not a literal counting of the stars but the fact that they would be uncountable (pardon the word) like the stars because of there being so many of them) . . . and God had then placed Abraham before Himself as righteous, as one whose every action was perfect. As you can see here, faith is not a meritorious work but a trust that makes it possible for God to bestow righteousness on one, as He did on Abraham here.

Verses four and five of this passage are really startling to the carnal mind. Four by itself, of course, is just a routine statement that when one works for something what he gets for it is not considered as a gift but as what is properly due, a debt to be paid. But having established that in your mind then read verse five again and see how completely God wants us to rid ourselves of any thought of earning our salvation. He says it in the negative sense of "worketh not" or "doesn't work" and makes sure that you understand what faith is when he says, "believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly." If you have any conception that God looks for some small item of work to expand into a saving thing, then you haven't yet got to know God as you ought nor to trust Him as you ought. It is the faith that believes exactly what God says about this that gives God the opportunity to declare you righteous. Believe Him, I pray!

Have you ever truly pondered on how much God spent to save you? He sent His Son into the world to become a man, to live with human limitations but apart from sin, to be ill-treated by men and even put to death by sinful men, to forsake Him on the cross so He could die being made sin on our behalf. And then He raised Him from the dead and offered salvation to men, whose sin had nailed Him to the Cross. Believe Him, put your trust in Him, come to Him as He tells you to—and then you will love Him and serve Him through whatever works come at hand, but those works will not produce one iota of your salvation. It is your faith that God reckons for righteousness. Faith is not righteousness, but God has made it so He can righteously reckon your faith for righteousness. Praise His Name!

Could This Be Said of Your Church?

My name must remain anonymous, I suppose, not for my own sake but for the best interest of my church and all concerned. The experience of which I write came about quite unexpectedly in a routine interview with a high school boy in my study. Had I fore-

seen the outcome I am not certain that I would have had the courage to go through with it. When it was over I felt for a while that I had reached a new low in the black pit of discouragement. Doubtless every pastor has experienced a few such dark hours.

The boy really had nothing against me personally, I am sure. It was I who asked the rather casual question, "And by the way, I'm not trying to probe, but how are you getting along spiritually?"

His frank reply quite jolted me. He readily acknowledged that he was not getting along well spiritually at all. As he himself put it, he had "just no interest in spiritual things whatsoever." He further admitted that he came to church only because his parents insisted on it, and he assured me that there were other young folk who felt as he did. As far as he was concerned, he said, he could better spend his time at his homework. I detected no trace of insolence or sarcasm as he spoke. There was only an intense earnestness in his remarks.

Maybe I should have dropped the subject then and there, but my conscience pushed me into asking the next question: "But why? *Why* do you feel this way?"

I almost wish I could forget his answers, but probably that would be akin to the ostrich hiding his head in the sand. The boy went on: "Well, I no longer simply accept everything I'm told. Sure, I still believe the Bible and all the basic things I've been taught. But *I just don't see too much around our church that is genuine and real.* I'd like to see Christianity *really* work for somebody, and then maybe I would give it a try.

"I count the people each Sunday night, and it's the same old crowd week after week. No one cares two cents about bringing in the unsaved and helping our church to grow. We're quite content if we just hold our own. To my way of thinking, that's not real Christianity. If our people had anything on the ball they would be out after new families and showing real concern for the building up of this church. They may *say* that God is first in their lives, but I can't say that I see much proof of it in actual practice."

He continued. "You know, it seems to me that if Christian people really were concerned about the work of the Lord, they would all be pulling together instead of each family heading in different directions. Somehow I feel that true Christians ought to be able to get along better together." I did not ask him for specific illustrations to prove his point. I could already think of too many.

"Oh, I know the conduct of other Christians doesn't excuse me, but what I have observed hasn't influenced me in the right direction, I assure you! Really, pastor, I often wonder how you can stick around a place like this. I know that I wouldn't if I could help it. Oh, I'm not blaming you; our church has been this way for years, and every pastor has found it so. I would think the ministry ought to be a rewarding experience with growth and blessing and progress. But *this must be a mighty discouraging place for you to serve.*"

These were his statements, as I recall them. Of course I am not so naive as to think that everything the boy said was entirely right.

However so much of what he said *did* make sense that I am still quite shaken by the interview.

Just where to go from here I really cannot say; for in the boy's own word's, "I'm sure I don't have the answer." How to awaken a local congregation to the absolute necessity of witnessing is a problem of the first magnitude. The double curse of indifference and stagnation is not too readily recognized, nor is it removed with ease.

It is no comfort to be reminded that there are other churches just like mine. I know the real answer is for the pastor and the people alike to accept their share of the responsibility. We must seek God for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a revival and a genuine concern for the lost. —from *Alliance Witness*, June 10, 1964

Carl Kitzmiller is minister of the Oakdale, Louisiana Church of Christ and writes the Sunday school lessons for Word and Work Lesson Quarterly.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Is it wrong for a church to have a savings account, C D's or a large bank account?

A church, like an individual, should be a good steward of the Master's goods, whatever that involves. Since there is a good bit of disagreement about what constitutes good individual stewardship, it is not very likely that all of us will fully agree about what constitutes good stewardship for a church in every instance. The scriptures are remarkably silent about the specifics of handling the Lord's money. We have to be guided mostly by principles rather than specific rules. We know some of the legitimate uses of church finances—caring for widows, ministering to the needs of poor saints, fellowship with missionaries, honoring those who labor in the word—but there are some uses that are only inferred by the fact that the work is to be done. We are taught more concerning the matter of giving than how the given funds are to be used. It would appear, therefore, that the Lord has left the handling of the funds largely to the sanctified good sense of the leadership He provided for the church. In this matter more rules have been laid down by human beings, sometimes those with an axe to grind or a pocket to be filled, than by the Lord or His word.

Likely one reason the Lord has not specified more exactly concerning the handling of funds is the fact that conditions in the world change. Even our own immediate age has witnessed a situation where funds once readily available at a nominal interest rate now can be

obtained only at almost prohibitive costs. The wise course to follow under one condition is not necessarily the wise course to follow under another. Needs in one type of society or culture are not necessarily the needs of another type. Specific rules could easily have become enslaving, but principles enable us to be guided under a variety of changing conditions and cultures.

There is a danger in wealth, both to individuals and to congregations. It is the danger of feeling an independence of the Lord, the development of an attitude that "we can take care of ourselves." The church at Laodicea is a good example of the dangers of a materialistic outlook. It is very easy in our age in this country to put too much emphasis on fine church buildings, plenty of space, the latest and best of equipment, etc. The progress of a church is too often judged by its accomplishments in material things. In our answer to this question let it first be stated that in the paragraphs to follow we do not intend to give approval of or encouragement to a selfish use of church funds, undue emphasis on having the latest and best, or neglect of those responsibilities given by the Lord. A selfish hoarding of funds that does not allow a church to see beyond its own doors and allows good, solid works to perish for lack of support is *sinful*. If a store of funds occurs because of a lack of vision, a lack of spirituality, a lack of commitment to the work of the Lord, then it is evident that is wrong. If we simply want to glory in the nice nest-egg that will carry us through even if God doesn't come through, then our faith is seriously misplaced.

There may be a time, however, when a wise handling of church funds will mean a savings account, C D's, or a relatively large account. The key word is stewardship. How do we best use the funds for the benefit of our Master? Quite frankly I was thrilled to read in a report by one of our churches that a fund being gathered for a certain missionary, which would not be needed until a given date, was put on short-term C D's at a good interest rate. My own personal judgment is that that was good stewardship, especially under prevailing conditions. When a church exercising good spiritual judgment decides that a new building or a new addition is needed, or that some other sizeable project should be undertaken, is it wrong to gather some of those funds beforehand? Personally I do not see how it is better stewardship to borrow such funds at high interest than to foresee the need and at least get a portion in a more economical way.

True, the church is not in the banking business. The Lord has arranged for His work to be supported by *giving*, and that is the basic way of financing His work. This I believe and preach. There is something "cheapening" about the selling of this gadget and the serving of that kind of meal in an effort to "raise money for the church." This is a sort of disguised way of asking the people of the world to help support the church. Generally speaking, churches have no business operating businesses as a subsidy for the church. They should not seek some kind of endowment that will help carry the load. These things do not represent our calling as a church. Does that therefore mean that in the exceptional situation that a church is given a business it would have to turn it down because "that's not our work"? Might not good stewardship suggest operating the business until it could be

sold? If a church finds itself in a situation where a parsonage is temporarily vacant, is it better to let it sit empty than to rent it for a while and receive the rent? There is a difference between a church buying houses to rent as a business and the temporary renting of a house obtained for a different reason. Again, I believe the key word is stewardship.

One problem created by a fund in the bank is that it tends to become a bone of contention. Zealous promoters of new projects want it. That money "just lying in the bank" would get their pet project off the ground (Never mind that the project in some cases is of questionable worth or lacking in solid scriptural foundation). The professional church bums want it. After all, the church is supposed to help the poor and unfortunate (Of course, the money is about all the help these want! None of that preaching to us). The "If-you-have-it-spend-it" folks want to get rid of it. They don't believe in saving a dime in their personal life and they are especially that way with the church. I know of a church which built up a few thousand dollars surplus, largely due to being without a preacher to support. It was kept to help meet moving expenses for a new man, etc., but that did not materialize. In the hands of less capable leaders it could have become a very destructive situation. But, as good stewards of God, were those leaders obligated to give the money to the first cause that came along with a hand out?

Perhaps this is a good place to mention that a church's support of a missionary, a project, a special work, etc., ought to rest on better grounds than "we have a little extra in the treasury, so let's give it to them." This writer believes wholeheartedly in sending and supporting missionaries as well as cooperating to establish and maintain certain good scriptural works that one congregation alone could not support. That church which is without missionary zeal either locally or world wide is lacking in one of the things which characterizes the N. T. church. Nor do we wish to injure in any way the reputation of those good men and women who serve and have served faithfully. But at the risk of being considered a heretic, we dare to propose that not every missionary or prospective missionary who seeks our support is worthy of it. Some are not well-grounded in the faith they ought to proclaim. Some will injure the cause of Christ more than they will help it. In other words, not every slick operator with a glib tongue and an understanding of promotional psychology is doing a great work. Good stewardship requires that churches exercise some discernment as to the worthiness of the particular men and works they help support. Just because these men or works request our help and there's some extra in the treasury is hardly a good enough reason for getting that money out of the bank! You see, God has not given all the wisdom to those who initiate and propose such works; all the spirituality is not necessarily lodged with a few. It is not altogether a bad thing that there are some folks looking over our efforts and asking whether our zeal is according to knowledge.

Our question was provoked by a certain statement in a religious article. It is not our purpose to reveal the article nor the writer. We

mention it only to point out that such statements are broader in meaning than they were meant to be sometimes. Preachers and others may sometimes generalize in discussing a matter and may not speak of the exceptions. One cannot always take the time or space to detail the exceptions or to suggest that in such and such a case the conclusion might not be true. For example, every time we rebuke missing the church services, we do not always stop to specify that, of course, there are those who might do so righteously because of sickness or something else the Lord will honor. A protest against a church with a sizeable bank account might in such a case be meant only to protest the unrighteous misuse of such an account, not necessarily a blanket condemnation of every such account. Whether this is the case I do not know, but as a writer and preacher I fully understand how it can happen.

In summary, I would suggest that we ought to be more concerned for the motivation than for the amount of dollars in the account. And we might even need to withhold judgment (condemnation) in those cases where the decision of good Christian men does not exactly agree with our own probably less informed judgment.

Jack Blaes preaches at the Antioch Church, Frankfort, Ky. and teaches at the Portland Christian School in Louisville.



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

ONE OF THE MOST ENLIGHTENING ARTICLES I've seen on the subject of modern Humanism appeared in the September, 1981 issue of the *American Opinion*, by Alan Stang. Stang begins his article by showing from Humanist's writings that God is treated with utmost contempt. "Since the Humanist slogan (God is Dead) perversely affirms God, the question arises of what the religion of Humanism really is. Believers have recently been counterattacking, and they need to know that the Humanist religion is not a joke, and is definitely not just an ineffectual cult whose practitioners believe in massage and hot tubs. It is a conspiracy—a Satanic conspiracy, if you will—whose goal is a governmental monopoly on belief, a federal church that replaces all others. Proof of the

conspiracy appears in the writings of the Humanists themselves. Even the alias they use is deceptive, in that it tries to establish a connection with such Renaissance Humanists as Erasmus, who, far from being an atheist, brought the Bible to the people and laid the groundwork for the King James Version of today."

STANG POINTS OUT THAT THE MOST FAMOUS and influential of all Humanists is still John Demey whose Humanist philosophy set the mold for what is called public education today. Quoting from the *Social Frontier* of November 1935: "Teachers first should recognize that unless they choose to follow the older educational philosophy of neutrality, they must accept a point of view consonant with the requirements of the new America. They must

then influence their students, subtly if necessary, frankly if possible, toward acceptance of the same position."

EVIDENTLY THE HUMANIST REALIZED that to achieve his purpose he must begin with the child through the system supported by the unsuspecting-tax-paying parent. In *Social Studies for the Seventies*, Kenneth Kenworthy warns the teachers: "One last word of warning . . . all records which teachers have of children should be kept confidentially and placed in a safe place where no one can find them . . . Attention to this . . . can save teachers many a bad moment and in some cases their jobs." Another such suggestion comes from one Larry Palmatier in an article entitled "How Teachers Can Innovate and Still Keep Their Jobs": "Keep the doors closed. Use a special vocabulary parents will not understand. Gain students agreement that they will not ask other teachers why they do not do what you are doing."

ONE FINAL QUOTE OF MANY FROM this fine article: Paul Blanshard is quoted: "I think that the most important factor moving us toward a secular society has been the educational factor. Our schools may not teach Johnny to read properly, but the fact that Johnny is in school until he is sixteen tends to lead toward the ELIMINATION OF RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITION. The average American child now acquires a high school education, and this militates against Adam and Eve and all other myths of alleged history."

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AND THIS CONTROL OVER EDUCATION continues as long as a pupil is under the influence of any public educational institution—through the highest graduate level—and, unfortunately, most private schools on the university level. The *Nashville Banner* of Nov. 2, 1981 has a column by Frances Meeker, Religious Editor in which she discusses a three-day conference scheduled at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

The purpose of the conference was to take a "close look at the new religious right." The article zeros in on one of the four conference speakers, Mrs. Sheila Collins. The *Banner* noted that, judging by the promotional material, the conference was to treat the "new religious right" as "a narrowly-theocentric ideology" and "the most serious distortion of Christian faith in recent years." No representative of the "new religious right" was invited to speak. Mrs. Collins is the wife of John Collins a Methodist minister who spoke last July at a conference in Nashville dealing with liberation theology. She is represented in the article as an executive with the United Methodist Church. I am not sure how this qualifies her to be prominently featured in such a "religious" conference, but two years ago Mrs. Collins attracted national attention among church folks when she related to a conference on "woman and religion" in St. Paul, Minn., the details of an abortion she had after she got pregnant by a man who was not her husband. She was quoted as telling the 350 women attending that conference that after the abortion she felt a tremendous healing and that "next to my childbirths . . . this I can truly say is the holiest experience of my life." She is on record as charging Christianity with giving women a raw deal. But the Collinses are not only put out with traditional Christianity, They don't like what they call "the war-mongering U.S.A., and its economic and political attacks against the American people." They had prominent parts in a meeting in New York in April 1979 which was described by newspaper columnist Alice Widener as a "new united front of socialists and communists in our country."

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE DIVINITY students where such public programs are held are being taught in the formal daily schedules? This is Humanism pure and simple. And there is an indissoluble union between Humanism and Communism. Gus Hall: addressing the Humanist Society of Metropolitan New York in late 1976: "I represent another Humanist association, the Communist Party. We who are communists definitely believe in Humanism, and in

the concrete building of the brotherhood and sisterhood of mankind." He urged his fellow Humanists to vote Communists, because such votes are "votes for Humanism." He should very well have known, as should his audience that Karl Marx had said the following: "Humanism is the denial of God and the affirmation of man . . . Humanism is nothing else but Marxism."

FROM MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA
A sixteen-year-old male high school pupil was charged with the strangulation death of a fourteen-year-old female pupil. After the body was discovered, it came out that the alleged slayer had shown the body to a dozen or so fellow students of the local school, but not a one of them had reported to either parents or authorities about the crime. Authorities are as much puzzled about this reaction of those young people who knew about it and kept quiet as about

the crime itself. People act upon what they believe. They believe what they have been taught. Standards of life come from the daily teaching. I do not wish to judge the whole school by the acts of these few, but we should judge the philosophy which is producing this and so many other inhumane traits in our society today.

THANKS FOR YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT. I appreciate your contributions of clippings and ideas. I do hope that we will be seeing the need for much prayer for those who are leaders in all levels and positions and all places around the world. We can expect the terrible judgments of the book of Revelation to be poured out on the rebellious earth very soon now. The news is not good for unrepentant humanity. Pray that many will accept the gift of repentance and turn in faith to the blessed Son of God.

Alex Wilson is a missionary in the Philippines.



UNWANTED BROTHERS

Alex V. Wilson

Have you ever felt like this: "I wish God had saved me by myself and then left me alone, instead of putting me into a spiritual family, the church. If only He dealt with me as an isolated individual, without all those troublesome fellow-believers! Or why doesn't He at least let me choose my own brothers and sisters, so I could weed out some of the weirdos" (or fuddy-duddies, or radicals—or all of the preceding!) "Will He mind very much if my friends and I form our own holy huddle of think-alikes/act-alikes, and let our fellow-saints go their own sweet way?"

Yes, He will mind terribly much if we adopt such attitudes. His Word makes that clear. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable" (1 Cor. 12:21, 22).

We do need each other. Some of our brothers and sisters strengthen us by their inspiring lives and fervent service. Others

strengthen us by providing us opportunities to exercise patience and forgiveness toward them. Whichever way, we find opportunities to grow.

Sticky Questions

Who is my brother in Christ? And how should I treat him? What if he differs from me? Can I have fellowship with him if he is amillennial? charismatic? believes "once saved, always saved"? uses a piano in his worship-meetings? has a different sign-board from ours on his churchhouse? What if he voted for Carter or Anderson? has long hair? used to be on drugs? has been divorced? What if he thinks the world of Billy Graham or Oral Roberts or Jerry Falwell or the Pope? What if he has or believes *all* of the above? Can a person like *that* be our brother in Christ? And if he is, do we have to *admit* it, and *treat* him like one?

Yes, God's grace is great enough that He can save, keep, and use a person like that. If not, how do I know His grace can save, keep and use me? If this man has received Christ as Lord and Savior, then God has received him as a son (John 1:12), and that makes him my brother. "Receive one another, as Christ has received you" (Rom. 15:7). Christ received me with all my faults, failings, sins and errors. So I should receive other people with all their sins and errors too. That doesn't mean I have to be happy about their shortcomings: Christ isn't happy about mine. But He receives me, and then starts using His chisel and sandpaper to make me what I ought to be. He'll do the same for His other followers.

Some Basic Scriptures

Passage after passage in Scripture (besides ones we've already mentioned) show the importance of Christian unity and fellowship. Romans 14 shows that differing beliefs had arisen among the saints in Rome, related to matters of diet and of observing holy days. Thus there were potentially four denominations there: the pro-meat pro-holydays church; the pro-meat anti-holydays church; the anti-meat pro-holydays church; and the anti-meat anti-holydays church. How did Paul deal with this touchy situation? Study the passage for yourself; it's an important one. Just summarizing, we observe that he says, Don't look down on or condemn those who disagree with you. (After all, they *may* be right. And even if not, perhaps they are better Christians than you in spite of being mistaken on this opinion. And even if that is not so, they need your help rather than your condemnation.) Second, he urges them to have their own convictions on these matters: to study for themselves and reach their own beliefs based on what they think the *Lord* teaches and desires. (Obviously then it must be possible to respect those you disagree with and yet not be a wishy-washy Charlie Brown type.) Third and most important of all, he exhorts that they act with brotherly love. Remember that Christ died for that brother you disagree with; that makes a difference, doesn't it?

The passage says more, but those three main points serve as guidelines that can help us relate Biblically to brethren with whom we differ. Another basic passage is Ephesians four. It calls on us to be lowly,

meek, patient, and forbearing in love. It tells us that all real disciples of King Jesus already possess the unity of the *Spirit*, but ought to seek for the unity of *the faith* (3, 13). That means we already are one in the Spirit, for the same Holy Spirit indwells every saint. But we must "maintain" that unity. Such maintenance work means we must remind ourselves of the unity which exists. Remember that you and I and all real believers have the same Father-God, the same saving-Lord, the same Comforter-Counselor. We share n the same body, and hope, and faith, and baptism (4-6). So let's act on this sevenfold unity, and demonstate it visibly and practically! As we do so, we can make progress toward attaining unity of *the faith*. That is, we will grow in knowledge and understanding of "the faith," the truths God has revealed for us to believe. *Doctrinal agreement* is thus portrayed *not as something we must begin with, but as a goal to attain*. We shall never reach 100% doctrinal agreement in this life, for "God washes all our hearts on earth, and in heaven He will also wash our brains," as an old preacher said. But we can make significant progress toward the goal, especially if we seek to do so in the unity of the Spirit. (I recommend John May's explanation and application of Eph. 4, found in August 1978 *Word and Work*).

Other Passages

A number of other passages also stress the importance of loving unity and fellowship among all God's people: Christ's prayer for oneness, John 17; Paul's horrified rebuke of sectarianism or denomination-alism, 1 Cor. 1; his plea for humble harmony, Phil. 2:1-11. He lists dissension and factions among the poisonous "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:20). Then John, in 3 John 10, condemns arrogant Diotrephes, who "refuses to welcome the brethren, and also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church." Factionalism or sectarianism was obviously a problem even in the days of the apostles.

It's true there are times when professing Christians *should* be dis-fellowshipped. But the New Testament seems to give only three grounds for such drastic action: 1) living in moral evil, 1 Cor. 5:2; 2) denying the saving truths of the Gospel: that is denying basic facts about who Christ is and what He did for our salvation, Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-5; 1 Jn. 2:18-23; 2 Jn. 7; 3) factionalism, or splitting up God's people, Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10. Unless a Christian is guilty of any of those evils, he should be welcomed into our fellowship, for Christ has already welcomed him into His (1 Jn. 1:3).

Let us carefully, constantly teach sound doctrine based on God's Word. Let us have our convictions about His Word and stick to them until someone shows us from Scripture that we are in error. But at the same time, let us remember that one teaching often repeated in Scripture is the need for God's people to offer loving fellowship to *all who are in Christ*, even if they disagree with us on many points. (Questions for thought: Does the mythical person described in this article's fourth paragraph qualify Biblically for fellowship in my church? Would my church receive him?)

(Next month: Lessons from History)



STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

What About Gethsemane?

MATTHEW was there, and gives his account in Matt. 26:36-46. MARK, an "understudy" of Simon Peter (Acts 12:12; I Pet. 5:13), began his missionary work under Paul, and later with Barnabas, (Acts 13:5, 13; 15:37-40). In later life Mark was sent for by Paul, who considered him useful (2 Tim 4:11). Paul received a Special Revelation of the life and work of the Lord Jesus from the Lord Himself (Gal. 1:12). Mark must have learned much from Paul as He travelled and worked with him. So, with such a background, Mark must have been thoroughly equipped for writing what we know as the Book of "Mark!" (His account of "Gethsemane" is in "Mark" 14:32-42.)

LUKE the "beloved Physician" did extensive research, having travelled with Paul throughout most of Paul's mission work, wrote both the Book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. His "Gethsemane" account is to be seen in Luke 22:39-46.

JOHN omits the account (see John 18:14).

(All of the story of Gethsemane recorded by the writers, of course, was inspired by the "Living Word", the Lord Jesus. See Rev. 19:13.)

The Garden of Gethsemane really came "alive" to me as my wife and I stood taking pictures there. One outstanding sight was an olive tree at least four feet thick at the base of the trunk. It must have been many centuries old. As I stood there I could visualize eight of the faithful Apostles of the Lord Jesus asleep under such a tree as this one. Then Peter, James and John a little farther up the hill, also asleep. Then, "a stone's throw" farther up hill our Blessed Lord Jesus fallen on His face, with big drops of blood-like sweat rolling down His face, as He cried out in anguish of heart, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He, himself was wrestling with the greatest problem of all eternity—the problem of the world's sin! His anguish of heart was near the breaking point. His Father knew this, and so He rushed an angel down to comfort His Eternal Son! Even so, no man ever suffered like Our Lord Jesus suffered there in Gethsemane!

Twice Our Lord Jesus arose from the ground and walked down the hill to His disciples, and both times He found them sound asleep. He awakened them and said, "So you men could not keep watch with Me for One hour?" "Keep watching and praying, that ye may not enter temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak".

He went back up the Hill and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done!" His Father did not answer Him.—"Why"? (we may be thinking). The answer was that "There was no other way". Remember the words of the song: "I must needs go home by the way of the cross: there's no other way but this", and; "The way of the Cross leads home". Either the Lord Jesus must go through with it, or, where would you and I spend eternity? Either He must "swap places with us" and get a horrible taste of what it means to be lost, or forever we'd be paying, and paying, and never be through paying for our sins! "He made Him who knew no sin to *be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor. 5:21)

Now imagine the Father's attitude while the Gethsemane experience was taking place. Heretofore His Father always heard Him and answered Him—but not *this* time. "Heaven was silent."

His Father seemed to "turn a deaf ear" to His Beloved Son! But "WHY?" Again: "There was no other way." God's will and God's wonderful Love as expressed in John 3:16 tells the story! How could He love us so? And how could He see His Eternal Son suffer so? And how could The Son our Beloved Lord Jesus Christ go through with it all, for didn't He Himself say, the next day, on the way to the Cross, "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?" (Matt. 26:53, 54)) And do not discount His own love for us? For, "The Love of Christ which surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3:19) and "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13:1).

"Well, now it's all over, He's through suffering; He's paid the bitter price, so He can lean back, and 'take it easy', for He's not to ever suffer any more". Is *THAT* what we think? A thousand times. *NO!* He is *NOT* "taking it easy," as men say! He is extremely *Busy!* "But, at *WHAT?*" "What's His 'occupation'?" "What's He doing?" "Didn't He *sit down* at the Father's right hand, when He got back home to Heaven?"

The Truth is, He is alive forever more, and He is keeping His eyes and ears open, never leaving nor forsaking us! Remember what He said to Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:4: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And Saul's response, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (That persecutor became Paul the Apostle!) It cut the Lord Jesus to the heart when any one of His own suffered persecution! Again, Christ, the Lord, stood at "attention", when His beloved Stephen was about to be murdered (Acts 7:58-60). And it must have been a happy welcome from the Lord's lips when Stephen got "home", for he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

What else is our Lord doing with "His time"? Oh, but His time is our time—He's spending it on us and for us! "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25) And, "Christ Jesus

is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also INTERCEDES FOR US." (Romans 8:34)

Remember, in Gethsemane, He went up higher on Mt. Olivet to pray; and He left His beloved disciples down below, asking them to "watch and pray"—and they failed him, on that occasion!

Now, He's gone up higher—even to Heaven itself, to PRAY; and He is asking us down here at the "foot of the Mountain." to "Watch and to Pray". It was night there on Gethsemane; and it's Night down here—"The night is far spent—the day is at hand". (see Rom. 13:11-13) "And what I say unto you I say to ALL, WATCH." (Mark 13:36, 37)

WATCH WITH ME

Sit ye here at the foot of the hill,
While I go to the top of the Mound.
Close not your lids, nor cease to pray,
Till I return from the higher ground!
I'll not slumber, nor will I sleep;
Do watch with me—the while!
No telling how soon I'll come again:
So, stay awake, My child!
You watch for me—I'll watch o'er you;
I'll guard the steps you take;
And keep you from the evil one;
But you must stay awake!

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How Prophecy Validates Jesus

Dr. David R. Reagan

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days. (Micah 4:2-3)*

So wrote Micah the prophet some 700 years before Jesus was born in the small, insignificant village of Bethlehem. Was it coincidence or supernatural inspiration?

HISTORY'S PIVOTAL QUESTION

As we approach the annual Christian celebration of the birth that

occurred in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years ago, I think it is appropriate for us to pause and consider the question: Was Jesus who He said He was? Was He really God in the flesh?

I began this essay with a quote from the prophet Micah because I believe that Bible prophecy offers some of the strongest proof I know of that Jesus truly was divine.

A PROPHETIC LIFE

The Old Testament contains more than 300 prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus. Every aspect of His life was prophesied hundreds of years before He was born—the nature and place of His birth, the nature and place of His ministry, the nature of His death, and the triumph of His resurrection.

The very first prophecy in the Bible predicts that the Messiah will be born of a virgin. It is contained in Genesis 3:15, where God says that the seed of the serpent will be defeated by the “seed of woman.”

The entire lineage of the Messiah is prophesied in the Hebrew scriptures. The prophets said the Savior would be born of the descendants of Abraham, the heritage of Isaac, the children of Jacob, the tribe of Judah, the family of Jesse, and the house of David. That's why the gospel of Matthew begins with such a long listing of Jesse's family tree. Matthew is trying to show his Jewish readers that the lineage of Jesus fulfills the predictions of the prophets.

THE RESPONSE OF SKEPTICS

Some people shrug their shoulders at all these prophecies and say “It's all a coincidence.” Coincidence! The fulfillment of more than 300 prophecies?

“Well, he purposely fulfilled them,” says another. But how can a man purposely fulfill prophecies concerning both his birth and death?

Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. The prophet Zechariah made that exact prophecy 500 years before Jesus was born! (Zech. 11:13) How could Jesus fulfill that prophecy purposefully? And could its fulfillment really be just a ‘coincidence?’

THE TESTIMONY OF MATHEMATICS

Peter Stoner in his book *Science Speaks* has calculated the odds that just 8 of the prophecies concerning Jesus could have been fulfilled accidentally in the life of one man. The odds are one in ten to the seventeenth power! That's the number 10 with 17 zeros after it!

To illustrate these mathematical odds, imagine filling the State of Texas knee-deep with silver dollars. A plane flies over and one silver dollar is dropped with a black check mark on it. Bulldozers move in and mix the silver dollars thoroughly for a couple of years. A man is then blindfolded and turned loose in this sea of silver dollars. The odds that he would reach down and pick up the marked dollar on the first draw are the same as 8 of the Bible's prophecies about the Messiah being fulfilled in the life of one man accidentally. So let's not talk about coincidence.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

The powerful testimony of fulfilled prophecy in the life of Jesus is the reason that the gospel writers constantly appeal to it in their writings to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah. It is also the reason Jesus appealed to it in His teachings to the masses (Matt. 5:17-18). It's also the reason Jesus emphasized it in His post-resurrection teachings to His disciples (Luke 24:25-27, 44-45).

Likewise, the apostles constantly cited prophetic fulfillment in their sermons to verify the identity of Jesus. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter focused his remarks in that first gospel sermon on the prophecies of David which Jesus had fulfilled (Acts 2:24-35). Peter utilized prophecy again in his second sermon at the Temple (Acts 3:18) and in his sermon to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:43). In his second epistle, Peter cited prophetic fulfillment as one of the major proofs of the divinity of Jesus, together with His transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16-19).

Philip used prophecy (Isa. 53) to convert the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Paul referred constantly to fulfilled prophecy in his preaching of the gospel (Acts 17:2-3). In fact, when Paul wrote his famous definition of the gospel, contained in 1 Corinthians 15, he stressed that all the major events in the life of Jesus had happened "in accordance with the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

THE REASSURANCE OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

Fulfilled prophecy proves that Jesus was who He said He was. Fulfilled prophecy also proves that the last prophecy of the Bible, a prophecy yet to be fulfilled, is one that we can rely upon. It is contained in Revelation 22:20, and it was spoken by Jesus Himself: "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

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GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles



IT MAY BE AT MORN

It may be at morn when the day is awaking,
When sunlight thro darkness and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,
To receive from the world His own.

It may be at midday, it may be at twilight,
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight,
Will burst into light in the blaze of glory,
When Jesus receives His own.

While hosts cry Hosanna, from heaven descending,
With glorified saints and the angels attending,
With grace on His brow, like a halo of glory,
Will Jesus receive His own.

Oh, joy! O delight! should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying,
Caught up thro the clouds with our Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives His own.

O Lord Jesus, how long ere we shout the glad song,
Christ returneth! Hallelujah! Amen, Hallelujah! Amen.

—H. L. Turner

THE JOY OF SINS FORGIVEN

The forgiven man is always a humble and thankful man. The grace of God has taken all pride and self-righteousness out of him and now he boasts only in the Lord. He has joy in his heart. Like the psalmist he sings, "Blessed the Lord, O my soul . . . who forgiveth all thine iniquities." He has peace—peace with God, which means to be at peace with ones own conscience. "Being therefore justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," says Paul. Because he had been loved he loves in return. He forgives, because he has been forgiven—and when he forgives he forgives even as the Lord forgave him: as freely and gladly and wholeheartedly. He is ready to do, to serve, to sacrifice, for he realizes in the depth of his heart that henceforth, with all that he is and has, he belongs to the Lord.

—R. H. Boll, in *Words in Season*

HE LIVES

He lives triumphant from the grave,
He lives eternally to save,
He lives all glorious in the sky,
He lives exalted there on high,
He lives my hungry soul to feed,
He lives to help in time of need!

—Samuel Medley

WE PRAISE THEE O GOD

We praise thee, O God, For the Son of Thy love,
For Jesus who died and is now gone above.
We praise, Thee, O God, For Thy Spirit of light,
Who has shown us our Savior, and scattered our night.
All glory and praise To the God of all grace,
Who has bought us, and sought us, and guided our ways.

All glory and praise To the Lamb that was slain,
Who has borne all our sins, and has cleansed every stain.

Revive us again, Fill each heart with thy love;
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.

Hallelujah! Thine the glory; Hallelujah! Amen!

Hallelujah! Thine the glory; Revive us again.

—William P. Mackay

JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD

The lamb has always been a symbol of innocence, meekness, and gentleness. But to the Jewish mind a lamb was connected with sacrifice. It was so understood as far back as Abraham. (See Genesis 22:7, 8.) The Passover Lamb was ever present in the mind of Israel (Exodus 12:2-7), and every year a lamb was slain for a memorial. To call Jesus "the Lamb of God" was to speak of Him as God's Sacrifice on our behalf. In the book of Revelation the Lamb is mentioned 27 times.

—Selected

Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

Seeds of Greatness

Grace Ferguson

In every human being there are seeds of greatness. Small, but they are there. Can you think of yourself as being great? Rather frightening isn't it?

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Last, "God created man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

The life in us is God breathed. It is God's breath in us that is tremendous!! Part of God in us.

No wonder all humanity has a hunger in his soul to worship.

Regardless of where you are on the face of the whole earth, you will find mankind with a hunger to worship. It has been suggested that man seeks to recapture what he lost in the garden. What did he lose? Fellowship with God.

Down through the centuries God has been very patient with the human race. He has sent them prophets to teach them His laws and His will. Then God sent Jesus, His only begotten son, to teach us of His Father and our Father. Not only that but in John 1:10-14 we read:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name. Who were born, not of

blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

If you are a Christian, you were born of God. Your faith in Jesus brought you into contact with God, you were literally born of God. Oh, Praise God, we are children of God. Seeds of greatness!! A child of the only true God—A child of the great Creator who spoke the world into existence. Almost too great to comprehend.

All children of God are indwelt by the God Head, which is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-23.

To think mortal man indwelt by the God Head—No wonder man has seeds of greatness within him. But the sad truth is very few ever know about it.

God's word reveals many great men, but compared to the number of men that have lived, that is very few.

Noah was a great man; Enoch, Samson, Samuel, David, Joseph, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, Ezekiel, Joel, and all the prophets both major and minor. What made those men great? Their love of God, and their faith in God, and their obedience to God. Their qualities are all in easy reach of every child of God.

Read God's word daily, pray to God daily, witness to God's faithfulness and watch your spiritual growth. God is looking for girls and boys, men and women who will love Him, believe Him, and obey Him. Will you be one?

Proverbs 22:4 tells man how to become great. "By humility, and fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life."

Every great man in the Bible was humble, and feared the Lord.

Think of Abe Lincoln, a very humble unique man, yet a man of faith. Born in the hills of Kentucky, without any opportunities of education, advantages, or even comforts, yet he became president of the United States. His foundation was that his mother read him the Bible every day, and instilled into him a hunger for understanding. He would walk 7 miles to borrow a book to read, and walk 7 miles to take it back—would you?

Grandma Moses became a famous artist in her latter years. George Washington Carver became known for his work with the peanut.

What is your talent? Your desire? God has a work for you to do. Will you seek to know God's will? Would you obey if you knew it? How much do you love God? How much do you trust God? This determines your greatness.

REPRINTS:

The Nature of the Christian Life

R. H. BOLL

The Christian life is much more unlike a life of worldly morality than is generally thought. Its principle is incomparably higher. The

conduct, when the Christ life fully expresses itself, is unearthly, clear beyond the scope of the world's conception of goodness. Its virtues and good works are of a different quality and timber. Its morality is different in motive and object. The one life is of the earth; the other, of heaven. The one is of the flesh; the other, of the Spirit of God. The one is of human power; the other draws its productive force from the Vine and brings forth fruits of righteousness "which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." The one consists in the improving of the carnal life to its highest excellence; the other is the manifestation of a life imparted and implanted from heaven. The one shows human nature in its glory; the other is the outshining of the divine nature. The one is the exhibition of self; the other, of "Christ in you." The one cultivates the flesh; the other mortifies the flesh and lives by the Spirit. The heavenly life is a stranger on the earth. It is like an exotic plant brought from a far, foreign coast, and it is not known nor appreciated. Many a man has shaken his head at such principles as, for example, those announced in Luke 6:27-38, or at such teaching as that conveyed in Eph. 3:14-21 or Rom. 8. These are high—who can attain unto them? Indeed, it is not to be attained; but it can be obtained. Such a life is not the result of the working of human strength and effort, but it comes by union with Christ, by communion with God, in and through Him. It is the result of the invoking of the powers of the world to come. And every one may have the grace and power to live this life; every one who surrenders himself to the Lordship of Jesus, who abides in Him and claims the promises and the sustenance of grace by obedient faith.

—R. H. Boll

The Christian and Good Works

by R. H. Boll

June - 1924

There is much that goes by the name of "good works" among men; and in view of all the evil in the world we would be far from disparaging anything that is at all kind or lovely or honorable or of good report. But God judges not only the action and its immediate effect, but its source and its motive. If the source is tainted the work that springs from it cannot be pure. A corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. It may be *relatively* pure and good, as men judge things; but not before God. The flesh—the fallen human nature—cannot perform a God-pleasing work. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The doing of good works is therefore committed to a class of people who have been specially prepared for that end. Their preparation includes the following:

1. A NEW CREATION. The old creation is vitiated; but here is a people composed of "new creatures," God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus *unto good works* which God before ordained that we

should walk in them." Except, then, they were created anew; and except God had first performed His work upon them they could not do good works. But for this very purpose God created them and fashioned and fitted them that they might do good works.

2. A CLEANSING. "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." (Tit. 2:14). Until redeemed from all iniquity and purified they were in no position to produce good works. "Who can bring forth a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Our conscience has to be cleansed "from dead works to serve the living God" by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14).

3. A TEACHING. "Concerning these things (the doctrine of the grace of God in the verses preceding) I will that thou affirm confidently to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works." (Tit. 3:8). Manifestly therefore, the earnest teaching of God's grace produces such results, and is necessary thereto.

4. A FURNISHING. "All scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof; for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). This therefore is also indispensable.

5. A NEW MOTIVE. The good works are of faith, of hope, and of love—motives from above, implanted in our hearts through the gospel by the Holy Spirit. We read of "the work of faith; the labor of love; the patience (steadfastness) of hope." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." (Gal. 5:6). Now "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." (Heb. 11:6). In fact it is faith that clears the heart of impure motives (Acts 15:9); and it is love that labors unselfishly. (1 Cor. 13). But hope inspires to steadfast continuance. "Wherefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58).

Finally—seeing that God has committed to His people the monopoly of this great thing, and has made and fitted and equipped them, and them alone for this; and seeing that His glory and the blessing of mankind depends on the faithful exercise of this function, His children are solemnly warned and exhorted: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12, 13). It is indeed by grace that we are saved, through faith; and not by the merit of our works. Nevertheless judgment is by works because these alone furnish reliable evidence that faith was genuine and operative in us; that grace was not bestowed in vain (1 Cor. 15:10); that God's free gift was really received and kept in our hearts. The works done afford the surest and most unanswerable proof of the new birth and the new nature, and of salvation by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

Aug. 17th

Just a note to say how much the inspiring lessons in the *Word and Work* mean to us here in Africa. Our souls are uplifted and we are encouraged to do more for our beloved Master as His coming is drawing nearer each passing day. Thanks to each one who contributes the articles in *Word and Work*. May God keep it going forth until He comes again is my prayer. God bless each of you with all things needful to glorify His name each day.

Please continue to pray for the Christians in Africa to become more interested in serving Christ at work, at home and elsewhere. Let us be zealous Christians in actions as well as in name, for God looks on our hearts and only what we do to His glory will last throughout eternity.

Please also pray for the students taking Bible correspondence courses that the seed sown will bear fruit. Thank you so much for your prayers.

Greetings to all the workers at the Word and Work office.

MATTHEW:

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

The Sins of Scribes, Pharisees, and Christians

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

The decisive contrast between the spiritual conditions of the scribes and Pharisees, on the one hand, and genuine believers, on the other hand, is very tellingly set forth in the passage before us in this study. At one end of the spectrum stood the scribes, the men who had devoted themselves to the study of the Law of Moses. From the day that Ezra the Scribe took the Book of the Law and read it to the nation, after their return from captivity to Jerusalem (cf. Neh. 8:1-8), the study and teachings of the Law became the greatest of professions in the land. The study of the Law was committed to the men of the Great Synagogue, and the scribes were the men whose business it was to study Moses' Law.

By the time they finished their work, more than fifty volumes were needed to contain the great mass of regulations they set out. The

Pharisees emerged as a sect about the time that Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria attempted to introduce Greek customs and religion in Israel (ca. 175 B.C.). The name means *Separated Ones*, for these men dedicated their lives to the careful, meticulous observance of every rule and regulation that their friends, the scribes, had worked out. Thus, they were dedicated legalists and also men who were desperately earnest about the practice of their religion.

As is always the case, however, legalism bred in unregenerate hearts is the Pelagian hope of redemption by human effort. The hope of building our own ladder to heaven, however, turns out to be a tower of Babel, for no man can save himself. This leads, in the case of some, to the compromises and hypocrisy that are the cover-ups of failure. In the case of others, it provides the necessary preparation for grace. "No man can save himself: this was Paul's great discovery," one of my teachers wrote. "A drowning man does not want a lecture on the art of swimming; he wants a rope to cling to."

The scribes and Pharisees, legalists that they were, proved to be the epitome of the evil of legalism, and its fruits of pride, arrogancy, and hypocrisy were spoken loudly through their lives. It is to these evils that our Lord so boldly and awe-inspiringly spoke in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. These religious men, for they were truly dedicated to their cause, are perfect examples of the Christian doctrine of total depravity. What is meant by the term *total depravity* is not that men are as evil as they can be, nor that they are necessarily evil at all in the sight of men. What is meant is that their whole being, even when righteous, religious, and admirable in men's eyes, has been warped by sin. The good things that they may do do not arise from a desire for the glory of God, nor from a biblical trust in Him, but from a desire for self-gratification, or for merit before God or men. In the light of this description of the truth it is clear that the scribes and the Pharisees, referred to by our Lord, were totally depraved (cf. 23:3-7).

On the other hand, we have the disciples of the Lord Jesus, some of whom had been of the number of the scribes and the Pharisees. They were still sinners, so far as their condition was concerned, but by grace they had come to the realization of the impossibility of self-redemption and of the other side of the coin, namely, that "salvation is of the Lord." They had believed and now stood before the Lord of all the earth as *justified sinners* (cf. Rom. 3:21-26). Now their feeble efforts were directed to the pleasing of God who had done so much for them. They had new life, new motives, and new goals, culminating in the glory of the redeeming God. "The Law is given," said Augustine, "that grace may be sought; grace is given that the Law may be fulfilled." This delineates the change that had come over the Lord's little band, Judas excepted (cf. Rom. 8:1-4). Far from perfect, they were now, at least, on the right highway.

Thus, in the section before us one may see the remarkable difference between the religious man and the Christian man, one still in his depravity and sin, the other still with sin, but redeemed and growing in holiness.

The context of the passage is set in the midst of the final days of the Lord Jesus upon the earth. The choice of the leaders, made a long

time ago (cf. 11:1-19), has run its course for a lengthy period. The culmination of their opposition in His death is fast approaching. The gentle Jesus at this point turns to anger and wrath. "They have determined to destroy Him, and He publicly denounces them," Alfred Plummer comments. What makes the following words so terror-filled is that they were spoken by one who was characteristically meek and lowly in heart. "It is seldom in literature that we find so unsparing and sustained an indictment as we find in this chapter," is the observation of William Barclay.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

The time (23:1). This discourse, which is addressed "to the multitude, and to his disciples," is the last public discourse recorded by Matthew. The Olivet Discourse, which follows shortly, was given only to the disciples (cf. 24:1-2).

The "then," with which chapter twenty-three begins, would seem to say that it was given near the end of "The Day of Questions," after a number of the Pharisees and scribes had drifted away from Him, unable to ask Him any further questions.

The place (cf. 21:23; 24:1). In comparing 21:23 and 24:1 one comes to the conclusion that the utterance was given in the temple. It was not out of character for the Lord Jesus to beard the lion in his den! The temple was familiar territory for the scribes and Pharisees, as well as Him, too.

A WARNING TO THE MULTITUDES AND DISCIPLES

The attitude of the Pharisees (23:2-4). If one consults such passages as 9:3, 11, 34; 12:2, 14, 24; 15:1; 16:1; 19:3; 21:45-46, and 22:15, it is clear that the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees to the Lord Jesus has been growing. It is, therefore, not surprising that He should break forth in this severe condemnation of their attitudes. The major point that He makes is that their application of the Law of Moses was a burdensome thing to the people of Israel, and that their practice of the Law was contrary to the things they were demanding of the people. The latter aspect is beautifully expressed by the clauses, "they say, and do not" (cf. v. 3).

Again, it must be emphasized that not all of the Pharisees in our Lord's day were of the type that He castigated. Some of them were friendly, such as Simon, who invited Him to dinner" (cf. Lk. 7:36). Some of them were solicitous of Him, such as those who warned Him of impending physical danger (cf. Luke 13:31). Others admired His spiritual understanding (cf. Matt. 22:32-34), and some, of course, came to faith in Him (cf. John 3:1-13; 19:38-39).

The Talmud distinguished seven different kinds of Pharisees. First, the *Shoulder Pharisee*, who was meticulous in his observance of the Law, but wore his good works upon his shoulder. Second, the *Wait-a-Little Pharisee*, who could always produce a good excuse for procrastination. Third, the *Bruised or Bleeding Pharisee*, who was so strict in his fear of having contact with a woman that he would shut his eyes, while walking down a street, so as to avoid looking upon a woman. Thus, they bumped into walls and buildings, bruising and wounding themselves. Fourth, the *Pestle and Mortar Pharisee*, or the

Humped Pharisee, who walked in such ostentatious humility that they were bent like a pestle in a mortar. Fifth, the *Ever-reckoning*, or *Compounding Pharisee*, who was always counting up his good works and putting God into debt to him. Sixth, the *Timid*, or *Fearing Pharisee*, who was always in fear of divine punishment. And seventh, the *God-fearing Pharisee*, the Pharisee who truly loved the Lord, finding his delight in obedience to the Law. Thus, there were six bad types and one good, which indicates that even the Jews thought of the majority of the Pharisees as religious, but not necessarily spiritual.

The Lord begins his discourse by commenting, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat" (cf. v. 2), the verb "sit" suggesting self-assumption. It may be rendered, *have taken their seat*. There is, however, no outright condemnation, and we must avoid too severe a judgment here. The sitting in Moses' seat probably referred to a special seat assigned to the most famous scribe of the community. The inception of the practice of synagogue study and worship is probably to be traced to the time of Ezra (cf. 7:6, 25-26).

The "therefore" of verse three is not intended to justify the actions of the scribes. Lenski has it right, "Therefore means: under the circumstances thus described." The point of the statement is not that the scribes should be obeyed, no matter what they say or teach. It means that their obligation of obedience holds only as long as they agree with Moses' words, that is, faithfully interpreted him. The scribes did believe in the divine decree, in providence, in human responsibility, in the resurrection of the body, in the existence of the angels, and in other sound doctrines.

In a brief but pointed comment the Lord tells His listeners why they should not do as the scribes and Pharisees do. He puts it this way, "they say, and do not." As Morison has it, "There was war between their words and their works. They preached one thing and practised another. Their voice, as Matthew Henry remarks, was the voice of Jacob, but their hands were the hands of Esau."

We are reminded of the sharp words spoken by the Prophet Amos to the ten northern tribes of Israel in the days of Uzziah and Jereboam, the son of Joash. In biting sarcasm Amos attacked the northern kingdom for its entanglement in the Bethelite heresy, kind of self-made religion. Assuming the style of a priest in his exhortation, in a brilliant piece of ecclesiastical parody he scores their ostentatious parading of piety, "Enter Bethel and TRANSGRESS; In Gilgal multiply transgression! Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days. Offer a thank offering also from that which is leavened (not permitted by the Law of Moses), And proclaim (cf. Matt. 23:5, "to be seen of men") freewill offering, make them known. For SO YOU LOVE TO DO, you sons of Israel, declares the Lord God" (4:4-5). The last lines were uttered with the prophet's lips dripping with sarcasm.

The "heavy burdens" are referred by some to the legitimate teachings of the Law of Moses, and it is thought that the Lord is simply emphasizing the burdensome attempts to keep the Law in human strength (cf. 11:28-30 (the same Greek word is found in v. 30, and the

verb form is used by the Lord in v. 28); Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; Col. 2:16). Others see in the words a reference to the unauthorized additions to the Law, made by the scribes. The former view seems better, since it may be said, in general, that the scribes did live up to the legalistic additions they invented. The exact sense may be lost to us, but the point that the Law is something imposed upon men, while Christianity offers us the Lord living *within*, applies to either interpretation.

The aim of the Pharisees (23:5a). The aim of the Pharisees is expressed in the words of verse five, "For all their works they do TO BE SEEN OF MEN." These religious men not only lacked sincerity and sympathy, they also lacked humility. They were showmen, and as the Lord said at a later time, "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (cf. John 12:42). Cf. 6:1, 2, 5, 16. All of their good deeds were done theatrically.

The actions of the Pharisees (23:5b-7). Some illustrations of their actions are now given by the Lord. "They make broad their phylacteries" refers to the first item. "By "phylacteries" are meant the small leather cases, boxes, or capsules holding written passages from the Law (cf. Exod. 13:3-10, 11-16; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21). One of them was fastened to the forehead, the other to the left arm, to be near the heart, during prayer. Members of the orthodox Jewish body still observe the practice. The Pharisees wore specially big ones to demonstrate their exemplary piety.

The "borders" were large tassels (cf. 9:21; Num. 15:37-41; Deut. 22:12). The fringes commanded by Moses were like tassels and were intended to remind the wearer of the commandments of God. They are perpetuated today in the tassels of the prayer-shawls which the pious Jew wears when he prays.

Finally, they loved the uppermost places at feasts and the chief seat in the synagogues. The most honored seats in the synagogues were in the front, the seats of the elders that faced the congregation. There everyone could see him, and he could dissemble as much as he wanted, knowing that all would observe his pious actions. There is an old story of a drummer who called at the country variety store on his monthly sales visit. "Where's the boss?" he asked of a long, tall young boy, upon whose lip a little "goose down" was just beginning to put in its appearance. The boy squawked an answer, "The boss ain't in. I'm the whole cheese!" Eyeing the boy with some deserved disdain, the drummer said, "Boy, when the boss comes in, tell him he is about out of cheese!" Beware of the arrogance of pride in spiritual things.

A WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES ONLY

Their actions to-be (23:8-10). The Pharisees loved to be addressed as *Rabbi*, a word that meant *my great one* literally. They even liked to be called *father*, just as Elisha called Elijah (cf. 2 King 2:12), claiming that they were responsible for the spiritual life of their pupils just as their natural parents were responsible for their physical life. It is to these pretensions that the Lord addresses Himself in these verses.

First of all, He says, "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers" (v. 8, NASB; the AV text here is probably not genuine). It seems clear that He means that no mere man should ever be given a title that suggests that he is our guide in teaching concerning spiritual conduct. That office belongs to the Holy Spirit.

Second, He says, "And do not call anyone on earth your Father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven" (cf. v. 9, NASB). The Lord refers to an ultimately authoritative father in the spiritual realm, not to a physical or earthly father. There is only one real giver of life, our heavenly Father.

Third, He says, "And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ" (cf. v. 10; NASB). No mere man is to be their guide of life in teaching, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Perhaps, then, we are to see the special works of the Trinity in the three titles, but that may be seeing too much in the designations and statements.

A question may be raised about the words of our Lord here. For example, does not Paul call himself a father of the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15) and of Timothy (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2)? It is likely that we are to understand the apostle to be speaking of his work as an apostle under the supervision of the Lord. For example, he calls Timothy his "genuine child *in faith*," a faith given by God. It is "in Christ Jesus" that the Corinthians had been begotten by the gospel. He claims only to be a follower of the Lord, when he calls upon them to follow him (cf. 11:1).

It may be, however, that some of our human titles, in which we are tempted to glory, are violations of our Lord's words. Should we not avoid the title, "Father," when we are speaking of human priests? The word "Pope" is our corrupted way of pronouncing what the French call *Pape*, and the Italians *Papa*. Even in the Greek Orthodox Church the parish minister is called *papas*, meaning *Papa*. Does not our Lord speak against this? And what about our other titles that we love to bestow upon men, such as "D.D.," "Th.D.," and others? To what extent should we use them?

Their attitude (23:11). The attitude of the genuine disciple is the attitude of a "servant" (cf. 20:26-28; John 13:12-17; Phil. 2:5-11). "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," said Solomon (cf. Prov. 16:18). Thus, our Lord warns the disciples against the attitude of a Sennacherib (cf. 2 Chron. 32:14, 21) and a Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan. 4:30-33) and encourages them to have that of the centurion (cf. Matt. 8:8, 10, 13) and of the Syrophenician woman (cf. 15:27-28). He Himself, of course, is the greatest example of all.

Their aim (23:12). With a change from the second to the third person, giving His utterance the flavor of a proverb, the Lord says, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." "The lowliest will be the loftiest," Morison remarks, adding, "But he who seeks to be the loftiest will be the lowest. The way up leads down. The way down leads up."

Jesus Himself ascended in a descending way." An old godly Puritan has said, "When God intends to fill a soul He first makes it empty; when He intends to enrich a soul He first makes it poor; when He intends to exalt a soul, He first makes it sensible of its own miseries, wants and nothingness." Self-exaltation has produced the great Pope and a lot of little popes. May their breed perish!

It is in the sins of pride and hypocrisy that the scribes excelled, but it is often in these sins, too, that Christians fail. "I am by birth," said a converted Hindu, when addressing a number of his fellow-countrymen, "of an insignificant and contemptible caste, so low, that if a Brahman should chance to touch me, he must go and bathe in the Ganges for the purpose of purification; and yet God has been pleased to call me not only to a knowledge of the Gospel but to the high privilege of teaching it to others. My friends, do you know the reason for God's conduct? It is this: if God had selected a learned Brahman and made him the preacher, bystanders might have said it was the amazing learning of the Brahman and his great weight of character that made him a fruitful soul-winner. But now, when anyone is convinced by my instrumentality, no one thinks of ascribing praise to me; and God, as is His due, has all the glory." May the Lord enable us to remember what we really are.

Test Your Knowledge of Bible Prophecy

by Dr. David R. Reagan

- 1) _____ The first prophecy in the Bible.
- 2) _____ The last prophecy in the Bible.
- 3) _____ The oldest Man-given prophecy in the Bible.
- 4) _____ The prophecy that gives the timing of the Lord's first coming.
- 5) _____ The prophecy that gives the timing of the Lord's second coming.
- 6) _____ The test of a true prophet.
- 7) _____ Where we are exhorted to treat prophecy with respect.
- 8) _____ Where we are told that angels desire to understand prophetic mysteries.
- 9) _____ Where God identifies His knowledge of the future as one of His unique attributes.
- 10) _____ Where prophecy is compared to a lamp shining in a dark place.
- 11) _____ Where Jesus is identified as the focal point of prophecy.
- 12) _____ The chapter in which Jesus is referred to specifically as both a Lion and a Lamb.
- 13) _____ Where we are told that all of creation is yearning for the return of Jesus.

- 14) _____ Where we are told that the nation of Israel will be reborn in one day.
- 15) _____ Where we are told that the Eastern Gate in Jerusalem will be closed and will remain closed until the Lord returns.
- 16) _____ Where we are told that the Dead Sea will become alive.
- 17) _____ Where the modern scientific principle of "uniformitarianism" is prophesied. (This is a concept that is contrary to the Bible's teaching of special creation and cataclysm.)
- 18) _____ Where the modern technological explosion of knowledge is prophesied.
- 19) _____ Where the principle of "progressive illumination" is taught. (Meaning prophecy will be more fully understood the closer we get to the time of its fulfillment)
- 20) _____ A prophecy in the Old Testament regarding the first coming of Jesus for which no fulfillment is recorded in the New Testament.

Dr. Reagan's answers to this test will be published in the next issue of *Word & Work*.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Dear Sir,
I do enjoy and appreciate the *Word and Work* magazine, and get a lot of inspiration from it; and thank you very much for sending it on to me.

Yours in Christian love,
(Mrs.) J.R. Stewart-Brown

The *Word and Work*,

I must include this word of appreciation for your continuing to edit and publish the *Word & Work*, and to keep its contents so excellent. The contributors, including yourself, have such a fair and unbiased attitude toward truth of a spiritual nature, and the realities of things eternal and heavenly, that we, as readers, are always uplifted and encouraged and built up in our faith. You have continued the work of R. H. Boll, E. L. Jorgenson and J. R. Clark, your predecessors. For this I am very thankful.

Where my wife and I worship, the

leadership has a lack of understanding of the reality and work of the Holy Spirit, and a very definite prejudice against the future kingdom of Jesus Christ on the earth. The church and the kingdom are made synonymous, which is of course a great error.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

In His glorious Name,
Wilbert M. Winter

Found!! Bible left at Highland Church during recent meeting of "Brothers in Christ". On Presentation Page--To: Walter Viney Date: Father's Day 1962

The people at *Word and Work* really appreciate the fine contributions and thanks in response to various articles. We also are grateful for the renewals and new subscriptions--THANK YOU!

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