

# THE WORD AND WORK

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

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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## God's Family

W. R. H.

### DECEIVING AND BEING DECEIVED

*...but evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. —2 Timothy 3:13.*

It is one thing when a person is in error because of inability to understand what he is seeing or hearing, and so his opinion is based on a group of mistaken evidences. But it is an entirely different thing when we find ourselves being deceived because someone has purposely perverted the information that they give to us. In either case, the outcome for the erring one might be the same, but woe to "that person through whom the occasions of stumbling come."

I think particularly of the way the major news media operate in our nation. Evidently somewhere (perhaps in New York) there is a small clique of men who set themselves to shape the thinking of the citizenry of the U. S. We must needs be saturated with reports and interviews that show the failure of the administration and a constant barrage of statistics proving that our government is now aimed toward helping the rich to get richer at the expense of the poor. Spiraling inflation, which is the fruit of socialism in our last several decades, is now become a monster that demands more and more of subsidies, grants and exemptions. An avalanche is an irresistible force, and where are the immovable persons who are able to stop it?

But today's style of information-slanting is not new to mankind. In Eden, Satan challenged the integrity of God in a like manner. First, it was: "Hath God said" (as to any restrictions). Then it was "Ye shall not surely die" (flatly denying God's truthfulness). Finally, he gave his own slanted information, "That it was desired to make one wise, as well as being a delight to the eyes." (Appealing to human will and self-pleasing.) It is amusing (if it were not so serious!) to listen to news commentators after the President gives an address. First, there is the telling of what he said (sometimes, what he is going to say!), with their own interjections, so that we (the little people) can grasp it properly; then there comes some challenges to some of the statistics and statements; and finally a dissertation upon "what he *did not* say", so as to give the final slant of the news media to the speech, and in a manner where there can be no response or rebuttal.

In one of his films of the series "How shall we then live?", Francis Schaeffer graphically showed how the filming of an event could either be shown as a riot against law and order, or edited and arranged to make of it a strong case of police brutality. Pictures, like figures, can't lie, but those who edit and arrange them can certainly falsify the truth, and it is done of purpose. We are being fed a prescribed diet. A good portion of the food is pre-digested for us. We are like a controlled group in an experiment. Robbed of the privilege of meditation (by concentration upon the Tube), we can soon be programmed to kick hands and feet like a jumping-jack or puppet, whenever the string it pulled.

Since we deem these days to be "last days," we can expect evil men and imposters to wax worse and worse. We have witnessed a considerable breakdown in morality, but those who transgress God's ways do not feel as transgressors, but rather as free thinkers. Satan has continued asking; "Has God said?" and then proceeds to tell why it is better not to follow the Judeo-Christian pattern, but to put mankind on the throne and worship him as god. Humanism would say: "Why be dedicated and sacrificial, when instead you can be "rich, have gotten riches, and have need of nothing?" (Rev. 3:17). I believe the church in our Laodicean age will have this attitude because there has been a slanting of the truth and evidence, by the power of Satan himself, working through the evil men aforementioned.

We who are parents and grandparents, forget that the younger generation is getting a stronger dose of flattery, propaganda, and lies than was coming our way when we were growing up. The fountain-spring of truth that used to flow from the church, the home, and the school has now been polluted in many instances by rank unbelief and modernism in religion; unfaithfulness and divorce in the family, and evolution and permissive morality in schools. All of this adds up to an unmistakable and irrefutable sign of our times. We cannot expect a reversal, since it is predicted to get worse and worse.

### *WHAT THIEN ARE WE TO DO?*

Malachi 3:5 gives a ray of hope. "And I will come near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearer, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of Hosts. For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." We need to heed the counsel of the Lord Jesus to the angel of the church at Laodicea: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, . . . and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see."

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## THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

### “Faith in the God of the Impossible”

“For this cause *it is* of faith, that *it may be* according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before whom he believed, *even* God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were” (Romans 4:16, 17 ASV).

Have you ever tried to see if you could possibly phrase words that would praise God in true keeping with His greatness and His kindness to us? It is almost frustrating, because our little finite minds simply can not think in terms worthy of the eternal, all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing Creator of all things Who loved us and gave His Son to die for us. But Paul here gives a phrase that at least hints at one of the things that is so great about Him. The latter part of verse 17 has been translated very well this way: “God, making alive dead ones, and call things not being, being.” He is indeed the God of the impossible—impossible to us, that is, but simple and easy to Him Who inhabits eternity, Him Who created all things and sustains all things, Him Who had no beginning and will have no ending but created all things that have both. When Isaiah said that He inhabits eternity, he was reminding us that God knows all that has ever happened just as if it were happening today, knows all that is happening now, and knows everything that will happen in the future. He sees it all as present and thus can “call things not being, being.” Now can you think of words that will give all the praise due to such a One as that?

Paul gave that last half of verse 17 in explanation of God calling Abraham “A father of many nations” and said He had made him that even before Abraham had one child. That called for real faith on Abraham’s part. The actual wording from which Paul is quoting is probably the one in Genesis 17:4, but back in 15:5, the verse immediately preceding the famous “And he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him for righteousness,” God had said, “Look now toward heaven and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” Next month we will consider

how completely this passage illustrated faith, but let us leave it this month by the simple statement that this shows Abraham truly knew by faith that God was not only the God of the impossible, He was the One Whose Word is always true exactly as given, and unlike most men, He can use the languages of men to say exactly what He wants to say. He had already made childless Abraham the father of innumerable children even before conception of the first child.

That should give us, then, the background to have a true understanding of verse 16. God's promise, God's salvation, comes to man not by man keeping any kinds of requirements but simply by his believing what God says is true even if it contradicts our every sense and has not yet come to pass. By that means, that of doing nothing to deserve anything but magnifying God by believing what He says, what we receive from God is by grace—by unmeritable favor, not by payment for “the job done.” Allow any other thing to bring salvation to us and you put us then under the obligation of perfectly doing that thing. But God made it by grace through faith so that “the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham.” If law enters then we can never be sure, but now we can be sure and appreciate that which John said about his first letter: “These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God” (I John 5:13). Place your faith in Him and know you have eternal life with Him.

We should not leave these two verses without noting the close of verse 16: “Abraham, who is the father of us all.” Many read that and wonder how then Jesus said to call no one father except our Heavenly Father. This is very simple; Abraham is the father of the household of faith, the one whose example of faith shows us the way. In I Corinthians 4:15 Paul calls himself the father of the Christians in Corinth because he was the one God used to win them to Christ—thus they were born again. Now these two are simply fathers of relationship, as someone has expressed it, but the real Father of life and reality is God, our actual Father, Who begat us by the Holy Spirit through His Word. Let us close then as we began by praising His Name. And if you are facing eternity without Him, place your faith in Him now and receive eternal life. To show more about faith I have asked Editor Heid to re-print next in this issue a fine statement of contrasts of faith and unbelief by John Bunyan. Please read it—and believe God so it can be “reckoned unto you for righteousness.”

**Correction:** In the February “Thoughts From Romans” the typesetter skipped a line in the second paragraph. The entire paragraph should read as follows:

“Now the principle of law that Paul is speaking of is simply that the person who is under a law is to be punished if he breaks that law and be considered right if he keeps whatever requirements the law has. So what Paul is saying here is that the promise to Abraham was not given because he did what was required but simply because he trusted, had faith in, God—in other words he believed it simply because God said it. To put it another way, it was not because Abraham was a good man but because he believed God was able to do whatever He said and would do it exactly as He said He would.”

18. Faith will show us more excellency in things not seen than in them that are, but unbelief sees more of things that are than in things that will be hereafter.

19. Faith makes the ways of God pleasant and admirable, but unbelief makes them heavy and hard.

20. By faith Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possessed the land of promise; but because of unbelief neither Aaron, nor Moses, nor Miriam could get thither.

21. By faith the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea, but by unbelief the generality of them perished in the wilderness.

22. By faith Gideon did more with three hundred men and a few empty pitchers than all the twelve tribes could do, because they believed not God.

23. By faith Peter walked on the water, but by unbelief he began to sink.

Thus might many more be added, which, for brevity's sake, I omit, beseeching every one that thinks he has a soul to save or be damned to take heed of unbelief, lest, seeing there is a promise left us of entering into His rest, any of us by unbelief should indeed come short of it.

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## Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

*Please comment on dancing and revelling.*

Dancing is not a new issue. We have dealt with it in past articles. Interest in something that can be said in the way of instruction, especially to maturing young people, continues, however. Parents of small children whose life style does not include dancing tend to pass lightly over what is said on this topic. But then when those youngsters become teen-agers and begin to wonder why dancing is wrong or they begin to want to participate in dances, the subject takes on new meaning for the parents. Of course there are also other things which may make repetition on this theme needful.

First of all, let's distinguish between dancing and revelling. The two may very well go together—often do, in fact—but some distinction needs to be made. Several Greek words are translated “revelling,” depending on the translation or version used. Generally they all carry the idea of drunkenness, carousing, and the wild parties that we associate with drinking and drugs. In the passages which speak of revelling,

# CONTRASTS OF FAITH AND UNBELIEF

John Bunyan

(In his commentary on Romans (*Romans Verse by Verse*) Wm. R. Newell quotes the following passage from Bunyan's book *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, contrasting faith and unbelief. I have brought the verbs up to modern use and otherwise quotes exactly as Bunyan wrote. E. E. Lyon)

Let me here give the Christian reader a more particular description of the qualities of unbelief, by opposing faith unto it, in these particulars:

1. Faith believes the Word of God, but unbelief questions the certainty of the same.

2. Faith believes the word, because it is true, but unbelief doubts thereof, because it is true.

3. Faith sees more in a promise of God to help than in all other things to hinder; but unbelief, notwithstanding God's promise, says, How can these things be?

4. Faith will make thee see love in the heart of Christ when with His mouth He gives reproofs, but unbelief will imagine wrath in His heart when with His mouth and word He says He loves us.

5. Faith will help the soul to wait, though God defers to give, but unbelief will snuff and throw up all, if God makes any tarrying.

6. Faith will give comfort in the midst of fears, but unbelief causes fears in the midst of comforts.

7. Faith will suck sweetness out of God's rod, but unbelief can find no comfort in the greatest mercies.

8. Faith makes great burdens light, but unbelief makes light ones intolerably heavy.

9. Faith helps us when we are down, but unbelief throws us down when we are up.

10. Faith brings us near to God when we are far from Him, but unbelief puts us from God when we are near to Him.

11. Faith puts a man under grace, but unbelief holds him under wrath.

12. Faith purifies the heart, but unbelief keeps it polluted and impure.

13. Faith makes our work acceptable to God through Christ, but whatsoever is of unbelief is sin, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

14. Faith gives us peace and comfort in our souls, but unbelief works trouble and tossings like the restless waves of the sea.

15. Faith makes us see preciousness in Christ, but unbelief sees no form, beauty, or comeliness in Him.

16. By faith we have our life in Christ's fulness, but by unbelief we starve and pine away.

17. Faith gives us the victory over the law, sin, death, the devil, and all evils; but unbelief lays us obnoxious to them all.

there is often also a mention of the related sins of drunkenness and wantonness. Now it is a fact that dancing is often a feature of wild or drunken parties, but there can be such a thing as dancing which does not take place under such conditions. In fact, there are those who would not defend dancing associated with reveling, but they insist that it can be cultured, dignified, and associated with the good life. Even so, dancing is often associated with night clubs, taverns, and bars, where alcoholic drinks are sold. As a rule it keeps very bad company, and one of its evils is that it tends to prepare a person for acceptance of these other evils. We concede that there can be certain limitations put on it and that drinking can be excluded. Not every dance is a revelling.

In order to keep the issues clear, we point out that revelling is a strong word. A gathering of people to have a good time, to laugh and enjoy each other, to play innocent games, etc., is hardly to be classed as revelling. While Christians ought to be a sober people, aware that ours is a sin-cursed world, it is a mistake to suppose that laughter is necessarily sin. Filthiness, foolish-talking, and the jesting associated with these are forbidden (Eph. 5:4), but what some might call a party is not. Some such festive occasions are wrong, of course, because of the excesses allowed, but this is not a blanket condemnation of every social occasion. When the occasion is marked by the excesses and is better described as a wild party or orgy, then it is wrong whether there is dancing or not.

Now, as to dancing. A number of different activities are so described. We may so describe the happy, excited cavorting of a child or the "jig" performed by the person with a musical inclination. There is tap dancing, folk dancing, square dancing, interpretive dancing, ballet dancing, and possibly other categories. Now some of these may have features which make them morally objectionable (very brief clothing, suggestive body movements and positions, excessive familiarity between the sexes, etc.), but the dancing that is of concern to most people asking about it is the mixed dancing involving the pairing of male and female in close embrace or other sexually stimulating activity or contact. While some modern dances do not involve the close embrace of the older ballroom dance, there is still in the movements and contact a definite potential for sexual arousal. It is the mixed dancing which we shall primarily discuss.

We do not mean to dismiss other forms of dancing as always acceptable or desirable. On our TV's we often have art mixed with seduction. Filmy or revealing garments and suggestive positions are meant to tantalize and stir. Football cheerleaders have a legitimate function, leading in cheering a team on, but it would take a dodo to fail to realize that their "dances" are performed for a very different reason as well. The problem for many Christians with reference to these, however, has more to do with whether to watch than with involvement in participation. Some forms can possibly be enjoyed for the sake of the art involved without impure thoughts. Even so, some heart searching is in order concerning the less offensive forms of dancing.



Is it wrong to appreciate the rhythm of music and to express this in bodily movement? Not necessarily, of course. Some of our Christian songs may set some feet to tapping (though we ought not mistake rhythm for spiritual content and expression). Graceful movement in response to music is not of itself wrong. However, the music may have a message of which we are not always consciously aware and may have some influence on our thoughts. Consider the eerie drama with mood music to create tension and anxiety. Movie and TV producers well understand how music can convey messages to our emotions. "Easy listening" music can relax us, put us in a dreamy mood. Martial music brings yet another response. Certain forms may have us sitting on the edge of our chairs, figuratively speaking. The moods created by the music used for mixed dancing needs to be considered as a factor in evaluating this activity. Both the dreamy, relaxed kind of music and the jungle beat found in a lot of contemporary music in their own way tend to break down inhibitions and remove the restraints. Temptation may be less easily overcome.

The chief factor which is of concern in the mixed dance is its ability to arouse the sexual nature. While we need to learn how to control our emotions and thoughts, we need to avoid temptation. It is foolish to stick one's head in the lion's mouth.

Now there may be young people who because of immaturity, sexual innocence, or other causes, are not unduly stirred initially. They want to be like their peers. They see primarily the good times and the supposed sophistication that has sometimes been associated with dancing, and they do not quite understand why it should be forbidden to them. And, being intent on participation, they are not too eager to discover any wrong. Many a young person who has grown up in a good family relationship has said to his/her parents after marriage, "Now I know why you did not want me doing this or that." As radical as it may sound to some young people, good parents generally do know what's best in such cases, and even some mediocre ones have a sounder judgment in such matters than the inexperienced youth. Many a person in more mature years can look back and say, "I'm glad for the restrictions my parents imposed. I know now that I might not have been able to handle some situations."

There are others, however, who cannot plead innocence or being unaffected (probably a much larger group than those who can). Some who protest that "dancing does not cause me to have any unholy or impure thoughts" are (to be very plain) just simply lying. Some are deceiving themselves. Some are so set on being "like the nations about them" that they are doing some wishful thinking. So much information is available today and we are so confronted with sex via the media that young people are very early conscious of their bodies and of the opposite sex. The physical contact that is a part of much mixed dancing cannot but arouse the senses. In many cases it is hard to believe that anything else could have been intended.

If such dancing were done only with one's own husband or wife, then the aroused feelings could be satisfied in a legitimate way. We know, of course, that is not generally the case. Unmarried people

dance together, and aroused senses lead to fornication. Married people dance together, but usually with someone else's husband or wife. The married people can hardly plead innocence. There are unholy thoughts, which are often followed by unholy deeds and jealousies, broken homes, and all the pain that goes with these. It has been observed that familiarities are permitted—yes, even expected—in the mixed dance which would be considered a gross offense in most other contact between people unmarried to each other.

Let us suppose that a person, for whatever the reason, truly is not aroused by the physical contact and the seductive music. Can that one be sure that he/she is not provoking wrong thoughts, wrong fantasies, etc., in the others he/she dances with. It is not only wrong to sin ourselves (and the thoughts can be sinful, Matt. 5:26), but it is also wrong to be the occasion of sin to others.

Many of those who want to know what's wrong with dancing already know. It matters not that some churches may sponsor mixed dancing. You will probably find that these stand for (or have fallen for) a lot of other false things, too. If it leads me, or through me leads others, into sin, then it is wrong. Our sexual appetites are not wrong when satisfied in the way God has ordained, but it was not meant that we should play with fire.

Can a man take fire in his bosom,  
And his clothes not be burned?  
Or can one walk upon hot coals,  
And his feet not be scorched? Prov. 6:27-28.

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## Let Each Be Persuaded In His Own Mind

Alex V. Wilson

How should we regard those disciples of Jesus Christ who belong to other churches? To what extent, if any, can we cooperate with them in the work of the Lord?

One time the apostle John told Jesus, "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him because he was not following us." Our Lord replied, "Do not forbid him . . . For he that is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:38-40). How can we apply these words to our present situations?

In his interesting booklet, *A History of the Premillennial Churches of Christ* (1963), LaVern Houtz contrasts three different "restoration

movements," all of which sought to return to the New Testament pattern of church practices.

With the Sandemanians there was little concern for others. They were apparently smug and satisfied to monopolize their orthodoxy in their own little corner. They were in the main content merely to exist without recognizing any obligation to promote the Gospel among others. They had no mission field.

The Haldanes had a fervent missionary spirit. Like the Sandemanians they made little effort to proselyte those already professing some form of Christianity, but were vitally concerned about the heathen who had never heard of Christ. They recognized in them a vast mission field.

The movement inaugurated by the Campbells and Stone embodied an objective not present in the other two. To these men the concept of the unity of all Christians upon the New Testament pattern was a chief objective. By the 1830's . . . the unity objective drove them to consider their first mission field as the vast number caught in the grasp of the many denominations. Having since subdivided into a number of warring factions, we take similar delight in proselyting each other. Certainly our "unity" objective, desirable though it be, and certainly through no fault of the pattern of the New Testament, has been a complete failure. Somewhere we have failed, and perhaps our greatest error has not been this failure, but the fact that, being preoccupied with the unity objective, we have failed those who have made no profession of faith in Christ.

Though those observations are true in general, we have seen that there also have been broad concepts of fellowship practiced or at least proposed through the years. In 1845 Alexander Campbell recommended that the churches support a Bible society run by the Baptists. He even recommended that the believers among whom he ministered give financial backing to a missionary-sending agency which the Baptists had begun. In 1866 some Churches of Christ in Virginia met in conference with some Baptists Churches to consider grounds upon which they could unite! No union resulted from this, but it did create a better spirit between those churches. In 1871, another group of Baptists discussed cooperation and even unity with Churches of Christ. "There was some exchange of pulpits among the preachers of the two groups, but beyond this nothing came of this effort" (Hailey, *Attitudes and Consequences*).

Coming to more recent times, we saw last month that R. H. Boll not only called upon men from other church-groups to lead in public prayer, but he also preached and taught classes in other kinds of churches. Stanford Chambers and the Camp Street Church in New Orleans sponsored evangelistic meetings in which a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance preached the gospel. They were not sponsoring the C.M.A., but they used an evangelist who was not from "our" churches. Frank Mullins, Sr. at times preached the gospel at Youth For Christ rallies. And during the 1960's and early 70's, at least, some men from the Christian Churches spoke at our Bible conferences, and vice versa, as well as sometimes exchanging pulpits in the churches.

### *Options Regarding "Others"*

If we come right down to it, there seem to be about seven options in our relations to professing followers of Christ outside our churches. 1) Consider them unsaved, and thus have *no Christian fellowship* with them but try to convert them. 2) Consider them as saved persons and

thus have fellowship with them as *individuals*, but have no fellowship with their congregation or their denomination. 3) Consider them saved and also their *congregation* as basically sound (in fundamentals at least), so have fellowship with them on an individual basis and a congregational basis, but not on a denominational level. 4) Consider their entire *group of churches* as at least basically sound and true to the gospel, and thus be willing to cooperate in some kind of *inter-group projects*. 5) Consider their group of churches as sound and therefore seek not only to cooperate in some projects but even to *merge into one fellowship of churches*. 6) Consider *all* churches as good or at least worthy to work with, and therefore apply to the World Council of Churches! 7) Somewhere between position #2 and #3 above is another one: Working together with believers not on an *inter-church* basis (like #4 and #5) but on a *trans-church* basis. That is, Christians from various churches cooperating in what are sometimes called *para-church* organizations (“alongside” the church), such as the Gideons or Youth For Christ. Such organizations usually specialize in one field; for example, Bible distribution, youth work, tribal missions, etc.

I presume that none of us agrees with approach #6, the ecumenical movement, or with #1 if by “disciples” we mean repentant, immersed believers. I include those approaches just to represent the whole spectrum of varying viewpoints. But what about positions #2-5, and #7?

### *Some Examples*

As an instance of approach #2, I know a preacher who meets weekly with the preacher of a Christian Church in his town. They enjoy individual fellowship in the Lord, praying and studying Scripture together, but to my knowledge their congregations have never worked together in any way.

As examples of position #3, there are some congregations which join with other kinds of churches in community-wide meetings for occasions like Thanksgiving Day or the local high school’s baccalaureate service. If that is practised, then why shouldn’t congregations which are clearly Evangelical also *cooperate in series of meetings on subjects of common need*? Thus, if your church holds meetings stressing family life, why not invite other churches in your area? If a Christian Church has a man especially gifted in holding teacher-training seminars, why not take advantage of his knowledge and experience? If the Baptist Church in your neighborhood invites a speaker with a profound understanding of prophecy, why shouldn’t we benefit from it too? Or if a local “Bible Church” or a “Brethren Assembly” brings in a man used by the Lord to promote greater holiness of life and church renewal, do not we as well as they need such blessing?

Still thinking of approach #3,—cooperation among the Evangelical churches in the same community—what about concerted *action*? The preceding paragraph mentions only meetings for teaching. But the Lord’s people need to *do* things, not merely talk and listen! Would it be good or bad for various churches in a neighborhood to join to-

gether in common pursuits like establishing an outreach to drug addicts, or opposing pornography in the area.<sup>5</sup> In such cases, groups of believers can sometimes accomplish goals which cannot be attained by an individual here or there crying out like a voice in the wilderness. However, in projects like these, it often seems better if interested *members* of churches work together rather than the congregations officially setting up a project. This avoids possible organizational problems. In effect, it would mean taking approach #7 rather than #3.

Approaches #4 and #5 differ from #3 in that they go beyond cooperation between differing congregations in a *community*, and include harmony and working together of many churches in *many areas*. These two approaches seem impractical usually, because of congregational autonomy—a basic Biblical principle. However, there might be times when the almost-miraculous would happen, and elders of a number of our churches feel convinced that it is right and wise to cooperate or even merge with a number of other Bible-based, Christ-honoring churches! After all, it did happen in 1832. That is when the group of congregations led primarily by Alexander Campbell merged with the similar-but-distinct congregations which looked mainly to Barton Stone for leadership. All of them united into one fellowship of churches, and yet strongly emphasized and practiced the independence of the local congregation.

Viewpoint #6, the ecumenical movement led by the W.C.C., we reject because most (not all) of its members and leaders reject the Bible as their supreme standard of faith and conduct. The movement is dominated by doctrinal infidelity and political radicalism—even terrorism is supported!

### *Para-church Organizations*

Approach #7 furnishes a means for individual believers to be actively engaged in concerns which are dear to their hearts but which some other members of their church might not feel free to participate in. Some of our folks, for example, have had their vision and faith enlarged through serving as short-term missionaries under Operation Mobilization. Others in our churches are active in the Friends of Israel, which seeks to evangelize Jews. Many people have learned vital lessons at the Basic Youth-Conflicts Seminars of Bill Gothard. Some of our ladies have grown in Biblical understanding through the nationwide Bible Study Fellowship. Some of our men participate in the Christian Business Men's Committee, finding it a useful channel for evangelism. Some of our young people studying in secular colleges have had their faith stretched and their witness enhanced by being involved in Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship or the Navigators.

Other members of our churches feel that such involvement is compromising or at least dangerous. And no doubt there *are* dangers. People may become so engrossed in the activities of para-church organizations that they *slight their duties to the local church*. But the local church is paramount in God's plan. Another danger is that members who are not well-grounded in the Bible may *become confused or misled doctrinally*. Some may even become *church-tramps*, hopping

from one church to another in their shallow search for entertainment or popularity, etc. Yes, such involvement can be dangerous, especially to the immature.

But are there no dangers in limiting our fellowship to Christians of our own stripe? How easily shibboleths develop and turn into *party-lines to which leaders demand conformity*. Thus "the freedom of simple Christians" (Brother Boll wrote a great tract with that title) gets lost. In extreme cases, mini-Inquisitions even are set up (review the quotation from Brother Olmstead in last month's article). Also, if we avoid fellowship with saints from other churches, *we rob them of Biblical insights* God has given us, and *cheat ourselves of spiritual treasures* God has given them. How impoverishing if we miss out either on truths the Lord has revealed to our brethren from various backgrounds, or on fellowship with those brethren themselves. Also, we may *cripple the Lord's work* if we restrict our cooperation to "ourselves" only. Several churches working together, or some members from those churches using teamwork, can often accomplish results far exceeding what any one church can achieve by itself.

### Conclusions

So, what about the various approaches to fellowship and cooperation mentioned earlier? How shall we decide? Obviously, on a case-to-case basis. For situations differ from one church to the next, from one community to another, and at one time from other times. That is why neither "open" or "closed" policies regarding fellowship should be maintained merely because they were so practiced in a former time. A good church may become heretical, or a bad one reformed. Conditions change, and prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God is essential.

Again, Romans 14 tells the fundamental principles we must apply, under the Lord's leading. 1st, the brother who practices wide fellowship must not condemn the brother who does not feel free to do the same; and vice versa. Each must respect the conscience of the other. 2nd, each should study God's Word for himself and reach his own conclusions on these matters. Then he should stick to those convictions and not compromise them (though at the same time be open-minded and willing to consider differing views). "Let each be persuaded in his own mind." 3rd, act with brotherly love. Christ died for that brother you disagree with. If He went to Calvary for him, can't you accept and bear with him?

May we weigh well these words sounded out so often by Carl Ketcherside:

Tolerance is not endorsement of error. It is the acceptance of the person who holds the error in spite of that error.

But I am asked, "Shall we accept brethren in error?" Certainly so. There are no other kinds of brethren. No one knows it all. No one is infallible. If brethren accept you they will have to do it in spite of your error. You do not accept the error because you accept the brother.

Wherever God has a child, I have a brother or sister. They are my brothers, not because we share the same opinion but because we share the same Father.

We may honestly differ among ourselves in opinions and decisions related to specific practices of our fellowship and cooperation. (E.g., should I attend that seminar at the Christian Church? Should I be active in the Friends of Israel? If my son wants to join Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, should I encourage or discourage him?) But at least one general principle is indisputable: We must strive to promote fellowship and unity among all genuine Christians. Be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit." "Receive one another as Christ has received you." Thus says the Lord!

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## Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

ALL NEWS ISN'T BAD. Edward and Cynthia Crowe call it a miracle on 42nd Street. Mr. Crowe, a merchant seaman, lives in Venice Gardens, Florida. He and his wife had gotten off their plane in Newark, New Jersey and onto a bus for Manhattan. When Edward reached into his pocket to buy subway tickets, he discovered his wallet, containing identification, credit cards and \$1,140 in cash was gone. They reasoned that he'd apparently left it on the bus when they got off at the Port Authority Bus Terminal on 42nd Street. Except for some change in Cynthia's purse and their return airplane tickets, they were broke. About all they could do was cancel their credit cards and return home to Venice Gardens. They were certain they would never see nor hear of that wallet or its contents again. But—Mrs. Crowe says now, "miracles do happen." Just a few days later the Crowes received a phone call from Louisville. The caller identified himself as a Dr. William Karp, who lives on West Ormsby in Louisville, and he told them, "I have your wallet and am sending it to you by mail." I suppose you can't blame the Crowes for "being a bit skeptical," but the letter arrived the next day and inside was Dr. Karp's personal check for the full amount they had lost.

A letter informed them that he had indeed found it on the floor of a Port Authority-Newark bus on Saturday morning. The good doctor made a confession that the temptation was strong to keep it, but he says, "I was glad that honesty and conscience reigned." I'm sure that both parties are richer for the experience, but as a "Viewer of the News" I am sure that Dr. Karp gained more, by far, than the Crowes.

DOCTOR MILDRED JEFFERSON HAS ANNOUNCED her intention to run for the Senate seat now held by Senator Edward Kennedy. She gives as her reasons for seeking that office the following: First, the lack of representation that the citizens of the Commonwealth have had in Senator Kennedy. The fact is that his elitist focus has been on the things that would get him national recognition rather than on what would do most for the people of this Commonwealth. Equally important is to put the people back into control of their government. Our model of government, based on individual responsibility, was an exciting and daring experiment at its founding. But there has been a drift away from that model towards the socialist scheme. This has been one of our principal failings as

a nation, and I think the senior senator has been entirely too active in pushing us toward socialism. Mildred Jefferson is the first black woman graduate of Harvard Medical School, has engaged in the private practice of general surgery at the Boston University Medical Center, and is a diplomate of the American Board of Surgery. She is one of the founders of the National Right to Life Committee and served three terms as its president. She is running on the Republican ticket.

**BUT IT DIDN'T DISTURB PERI.** When the morning mail arrived in time to interrupt her breakfast, it brought a special letter from the national head-quarters of the Selective Service System in Washington instructing her that she must register for the draft within 30 days of her 18th birthday or be guilty of a federal crime. Why was Peri Shaplow not disturbed? Well, she is only three years old.

**LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE LIFE OF THE UNBORN** child is introduced by Senator Jessie Helms (R.-N. C.). The bill defines human life as beginning at conception and would prohibit any Federal agency from performing or paying for abortion except when the woman's life is threatened by continuation of the pregnancy. Senator Helms by this proposal includes unborn babies as "persons" deserving of protection under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution, and also disallows the use of Federal funds for abortion-technique training, research related to abortion, and experimentation on aborted children. Protection from being discriminated against for anyone associated with a federally funded institution who either oppose abortion or refuse to counsel or assist in an abortion is included in the proposal.

**SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY** (R.-Iowa) is concerned about the Bankruptcy Act of 1978. It seems to be in serious need of reform. The law as it now stands has stripped retailers of protection offered through good credit practices because "ability to file bankruptcy is no longer related to ability to repay debts." Debtors are now allowed to retain assets worth thousands of dollars after declaring bankruptcy. So

many debtors legally avoid repayments as a matter of convenience rather than necessity.

Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, the May Company, and J. C. Penney have reported that their losses due to bankruptcy rose more than 100 percent in 1980 over 1979. If these and other such companies are to remain in business, they must pass this increased cost of doing business on to the persons whose conscience requires them to pay their honest debts. More power to Senator Grassley to get some sanity and integrity into the laws of the land.

**RICHARD ALLEN'S REPLACEMENT** on the National Security Council has been busy purging the N.S.C. staff of the conservative and policy analysts left by Allen. He passed the word that he must "reorganize" the N.S.C. and hire "technicians" to replace the ideologues." William Clark, Allen's successor, has hired two well-known consultants: Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller.

**A CONGRESSMAN ASSESSES THE CONGRESS.** Congressman Larry McDonald of Georgia has maintained a very consistent record for voting for lower taxes, returning the government to the people, and providing adequate security for the nation and our homes. He notes that of 435 Members of the present House, about eighty-five favor a "totally socialist order", achieved either by evolutionary or revolutionary means. A smaller group of maybe fifty or fifty-five favor traditional values. These are working to restore Free Enterprise and our military forces. The largest faction consists of about three hundred, and they are outside ideology; or rather, their ideology amounts to nothing more than doing whatever will assure re-election. McDonald pointed out that after the last election, "the middle crowd began leaning toward tradition" because they saw a trend. The purpose in sharing this observation is to lend encouragement to those who would seriously want a genuine change in the actions of the federal government. He says that an overwhelming victory in November is not required to continue progress. What we need is only a reasonable growth in Conservative strength. If hard work in the precincts could reduce the socialist contingent in the house to sixty, the Members in the



middle would be impressed.

**THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING OFFICE REVEALED** recently that the federal government owns one-third of the land within the United States, as well as 405,147 buildings with more than 2.6 billion feet of floor space.

And this is just the tip of the "ice-berg." There is legislation before Congress to determine what is surplus, and offer it for sale at market value with the income going to reduce the national debt of the United States. Can't think of a valid reason for a single negative vote on that one.

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## REPRINTS:

### High Improbabilities

R. H. BOLL

The revelations of the Lord's word in time past were generally high improbabilities. What could have seemed wilder to Noah, for example, than that God told him of the condition of the world, the nature of its impending doom, the way of salvation (what a grotesque contraption that Ark must have been in human eyes and to human judgment!) and how highly improbable that thought that of all the teeming millions that populated the earth, only the few souls that should seek refuge in the Ark should be saved! All that seemed perfectly ridiculous. Yet so it was and so it came to pass, even as God had said; and blessed was the man that believed His word.

How absurd it must have seemed to Abraham, old and as good as dead, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude! How insane it must have seemed to an eighty-year old shepherd with nothing in his hand but a rod, that he should bring his nation up out of Egypt! How perfectly inconceivable it must have seemed in the eyes of Israel that in David's house, of David's flesh, a babe should be born whose name should be the Mighty God! Or that the Messiah should be a man, subject to death, yet would live and reign for ever! How wholly incredible seem to the ears of men today the predictions of Christ's personal return from heaven and all the prophecies of its attendant circumstances! But as God has spoken so will He do; and as He has declared, so shall it be, whether it seem plausible or impossible to man. Believe Him, trust Him all ye people. He will bring it to pass.

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### Co-operating With Denominations

R. H. Boll — 1926

Very frequently we receive various letters, circulars, containing appeals to assist in all manner of joint denominational endeavours, or to join in with federations, councils, associations, etc. Some of the ends proposed seem very good in themselves, the the real question is not that of the relative merits of these activities, but whether a congregation of Christ can at all co-operate on equal terms with the denominations. If the church of Christ were simply a denomination among the denominations—even if it were conceded to be the best and purest of

them—it could with perfect propriety engage with the rest in joint efforts, and go into partnership with them on all matters of common aim. But the very existence of an undenominational church is in itself a protest against denominationalism. It was because it was seen that every man may today belong to the one and only church, the church of the New Testament, on precisely the same terms as men became members of it in the beginning (the Lord Himself adding us to it); and that being such we need no denominational tag, nor ought we to wear one—it was because these truths were seen and felt, that many believers went back to this original ground, and declared for the simple New Testament foundation, and the one and only church there spoken of, the church of the Lord, the church of Christ, the church of God, the body of Christ. They may not always in the practical outworking have been true to the Divine principle they had adopted, but it is one thing to adopt and profess the truth and to fall short of it in details, and quite another never to have aimed at it. These churches of Christ may lack a great deal of the Divine ideal of the church as set forth in the New Testament, but they are wholly committed to the ideal and stand only for that and nothing else. There may be, and is room for reform within the church of Christ, but no room to change its position. If ever His body should be content to be numbered with the denominations of Christendom as one of them, it loses its right to exist. It should then disband not only to cooperate with, but to join the denominations already existing. For why should there be yet another denomination? And why should a religious body continue to exist which surrendered the ground of its existence?

It is manifest therefore that the church of Christ can never join with the denominations on equal terms, or co-operate with them as one of them. It would not only be an inconsistency, but an abandoning of its vital principles. The church of Christ is by its very nature and constitution hostile to all denominations as such. If the truth for which it stands were universally accepted all denominations would break down and cease to exist. By its very name and object it can have no truce with other churches. If the principles of denominationalism prevail, the simple church of the New Testament will perish from the earth. But if the truth concerning the New Testament church prevails, denominations must go. And this fact is tactility known and felt by the very people who would invite us into co-operation with them. Their invitation, though kindly enough meant, really amounts to this: "Will you cease from your absurd contention, and be one of us along with us?" For two cannot walk together except they be agreed. When we are ready to say that a man cannot be simply a New Testament Christian, but he must join one of the existing sects; and that the simple New Testament church can have no corporate existence on the earth, and only denominations are possible, then we shall also admit that we must enter in with church federations, and fall in with inter-denominational and joint denominational efforts.

In saying this we are not disparaging any good thing any of the denominations may have and hold: nor denying that among them are men and women of faith and piety, and some who by virtue of their

gospel-acceptance of Christ Jesus are truly members of His church having been added to it by Him. Nor do we say that the simple congregations of Christ, and all the members of such congregations, do always measure up to the Divine standard. But we do say that it is possible for a man today to be a simple Christian, and that congregations of the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament pattern can exist now; and that it is the will of God that this should be, and that He is not pleased with aught else.

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## Will the Ark of the Covenant Be Found?

Dr. David R. Reagan

It was 6:00 am in Jerusalem when I was jolted awake by the telephone. Assuming it was my wake up call, I lifted the receiver and mumbled "Thank you."

I was surprised to hear a familiar voice on the other end. "Hello, Dave, I'm calling from Texas!"

"From Texas!" I replied. "All the way from Texas?"

"Yep," answered my friends, "and guess what? They've found the ark!"

"The what?"

"The ark!"

"Noah's?"

"No, dummy. The ark of the covenant."

Needless to say that statement really woke me up.

### A STARTLING DISCOVERY

My friend proceeded to explain that he had just read in the *Dallas Morning News* about the discovery of the lost Ark of the Covenant. It had supposedly been found on Mount Pisgah (Mt. Nebo) in Jordan by a religious group from Kansas.

It all sounded a little far out to me. I suspected that someone had lost touch with reality after having seen the movie, "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Nonetheless, I rushed down to the hotel lobby to get the latest copy of *The Jerusalem Post*. Sure enough, there on the front page was the story. The writer evidently shared my skepticism because the headline read: "Thar's An Ark in Them Thar Hills!"

### A SUSPECT DISCOVERY

The story was right out of Alice in Wonderland. Some end-time sect from Winfield, Kansas, calling itself the Institute for Restoring Ancient History International, had issued a statement claiming to have

discovered the Ark in a sealed passageway inside Mt. Pisgah. They offered no evidence, even though they claimed to have taken photographs. They also refused to reveal the exact location of their find.

The leader of the group, who has a reputation for being anti-Semitic, said he was going to prove his good will toward the Jews by turning all his evidence over to David Rothschild. When asked why he had selected Rothschild, he replied that he considered Rothschild to be the leader of the Jews (an old anti-Semitic attitude!). He also explained that he felt Rothschild had the power to help his group in dealing with the Jordanian government and the Vatican.

### A PROVOCATIVE DISCOVERY

The headlines have since subsided. The Kansas group has returned to its anonymity in the wheat fields. And the movie, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," continues to set box office records.

But the incident and movie have motivated a lot of questions, some of which relate to end time events. What was the Ark of the Covenant? What happened to it? Where is it now? Will it be found again? Is it essential for the rebuilding of the Temple and the reestablishment of sacrificial worship?

### THE BIBLE AND THE ARK

The origin of the Ark is to be found in Exodus 25:10-22. God ordered the Ark to be built to house the tablets of stone on which He had written the ten commandments. The Ark was a box approximately 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet high. It was made of acacia wood and was overlaid with gold inside and out. Its lid was called the mercy seat. It was made of pure gold. Two gold cherubim were mounted on the lid, one on each end. The cherubim faced each other and their wings were spread out, overshadowing the mercy seat.

According to Hebrews 9:4, two other items were later added to the contents of the Ark. One of these was a pot of manna. The other was Aaron's rod that budded.

The Ark was housed in the Holy of Holies, the innermost chamber of the Tabernacle. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest entered that Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood on the mercy seat to make atonement for his sins and the sins of Israel (Lev. 16 and Heb. 9). Because God had promised Moses that He would commune with Israel "from above the mercy seat" (Ex. 25:22), the concept developed that the Lord of Hosts was enthroned on the cherubim of the Ark (See I Sam. 4:4 and Isa. 37:16).

### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ARK

Much has been made of the symbolism of the Ark, and rightfully so. Suffice it to say that every aspect of the Ark pointed to Jesus. The acacia wood symbolized our Lord's humanity. The gold overlay denoted His deity. The Law inside the Ark pictures Jesus with the law of God in His heart. The pot of manna speaks of Jesus as the Bread of Life or our life sustainer. Aaron's rod that budded obviously prophesied the resurrection.

The mercy seat is also a type of Christ since it is representative of the covering of the law with mercy. It illustrates how the divine throne was transformed from a throne of judgment into a throne of grace by the atoning blood sprinkled upon it.

### THE ARK'S PILGRIMAGE

The Ark went before Israel in the wilderness "to seek out a resting place for them" (Numbers 10:33). The Ark was carried into Canaan when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and it was instrumental in their victory over Jericho (Josh.6). During the 400 year period of the judges, the Ark was probably kept most of the time at the religious center of Shiloh (1 Sam. 3:3).

The Ark was sometimes taken into battle to assure the presence of the Lord, and on one such occasion it was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4). When calamities began to afflict the Philistines, they decided to return the Ark (1 Sam. 6). It was first taken to Bethshemesh on the border between Philistia and Judah. But when misfortune came upon the men of the area, they urged its removal. It was then taken to Kiriath-jearim, just northwest of Jerusalem. It remained there for many years in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam. 7).

David finally brought the Ark to Jerusalem, an occasion for great rejoicing (II Sam. 6 & I Chron. 16). David placed the Ark in a tent on Mt. Zion where it remained until his son Solomon built the Temple. The Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple became the final resting place of the Ark (I Kings 8 & II Chron. 5).

### THE LOST ARK

No one knows for sure what happened to the Ark. Most assume that it disappeared during the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Some believe it was simply destroyed when the Temple was burned. Others believe it was captured as a prize of war, taken to Babylon, and probably melted down for its gold.

But the strongest tradition is that it was taken out of the Temple by Jeremiah and hidden. Some are convinced he hid it in the ground on the Temple Mount. But most who hold to the Jeremiah rescue theory believe he either hid the Ark in a great cavern beneath (known today as Solomon's Quarry) or that he hid it somewhere near Mt. Nebo in the modern day nation of Jordan.

The latter theory finds support in the apocryphal book of II Maccabees. In chapter 2 of that book it says "the prophet, warned by an oracle, gave orders for the tabernacle and the ark to go with him when he set out for the mountain which Moses had climbed to survey God's heritage. On his arrival Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling, into which he brought the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, afterwards blocking up the entrance." (II Macc. 2:4 & 5)

Another theory regarding the fate of the Ark is that it was translated or raptured, being taken up to Heaven to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Chaldeans. This theory is based upon a reference to the Ark in Revelation 11:15. This passage is a flash-forward to the end of the Tribulation when Heaven opens and Jesus returns in wrath. The writer states that when Heaven was opened "the ark

of his covenant was seen within the temple.” (Rev. 11:15) Those who reject this theory argue that the ark seen in Heaven in this passage is the heavenly reality of which the Ark of the Covenant was only an earthly shadow or copy (See Heb. 8:5 and 9: 23).

### THE FORGOTTEN ARK

Regardless of what happened to the Ark, the scriptures suggest that it will never be found again. This comes as quite a shock to some Christians who have assumed that the Ark must be found before the Tribulation Temple can be built and animal sacrifice reinstated. Others have simply assumed that the Ark would be replaced in the Holy of Holies when the Millennial Temple is built.

But Jeremiah says point blank that “the ark of the covenant shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or be missed. Nor shall it be made again.” (Jer. 3:16) The context of this passage is the Millennial period, so it does not rule out the possibility of a discovery prior to that time. Conceivably, the Ark could be discovered and Satan could use its discovery to incite the rebuilding of a Temple where an apostate sacrificial system would be reinstated. But I personally doubt that this will happen.

The rediscovery of the Ark is not essential to the rebuilding of the Temple. After all, the Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel following the Babylonian captivity, and the ark had already been lost by that time. Nor is the Ark needed for the Millennial Temple. For one thing, Ezekiel 40-48 makes it clear that the Millennial Temple will not even have a Holy of Holies.

Jesus has already entered the Holy of Holies in our behalf (Heb. 4:14-16). He has torn the veil that separated us from God, and He serves as our High Priest, giving us access to God through Him. Thus, during the Millennium, there will be no need for a Holy of Holies or a human High Priest or an Ark with a mercy seat. Jesus will continue to function as Mankind’s High Priest, just as He will continue to serve as Humanity’s mercy seat.

### THE TRUE ARK

With regard to this concept of Christ as our mercy seat, let me add a penetrating insight which I recently picked up from John MacArthur, one of this country’s greatest preachers. He pointed to a simple historical verse that contains a profound truth about Jesus being our mercy seat. The verse is John 20:12. Speaking of Mary looking into the empty tomb of Jesus, the verse says “she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.” What Mary saw, Mac Arthur observed, was the new mercy seat, the perfect mercy seat.

Consider again what Mary saw. She saw two angels sitting at each end of the slab which had held the broken body of our Lord. Cherubim hovering over the blood splattered seat!

There is no more need for the Ark. Jesus has fulfilled all that the Ark stood for. He was deity who took on flesh. He rendered complete obedience to the law, being made perfect and becoming the source of our salvation (Heb. 5:8 & 9). His blood was shed for our

sins, and His victory is attested by the fact and the power of His resurrection.

Just as the Ark was designed to be a symbol of the presence of God in the midst of His people, Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's love and care and presence. He is our Ark. He is our Law. He is our Manna. He is our Budded Rod. And, thank God, He is our Mercy Seat.

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## Studies in the Book of Acts

Larry Miles

### Introduction to the Book

All of the Word of God is profitable for study. We want to encourage all who read these words to be like the Bereans in the seventeenth chapter, who searched the scriptures daily to see whether the words the Apostle Paul spoke were truly from God. So, we encourage all to have your Bibles with you when you read these articles. Let us study together. Remember, God has told us to study His Word.

In this introductory essay, we are going to give an introduction to the book. We are going to relate to you the facts about the time setting. There will be some remarks on the author. The Book of Acts is the bridge that takes us from the Gospels to the Epistles. Jesus Christ, in Matthew 16:18, promised that He would build His Church. Nowhere in the four Gospel's do we find the establishment of that Church. Only after the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus could there ever be a Church. Jesus lived and died under the conditions set forth under the Mosaic Law.

It is in the Book of Acts that we see the establishment of the Church. The Book of Acts is a book of beginnings. Tow Thurman, minister, of the Mason Church of Christ in Mason, Ohio wrote the following,

Acts: The Genesis of the New Testament. Now what does that mean? Well, Genesis means, 'beginnings.' That's what the first book of the Bible is—a book of beginnings. It tells about the beginning of the church, of Christian benevolence. It relates about the first church hypocrites, the first church election, and the first Christian martyr. The beginning of the Holy Spirit's working in the church is described. So is the conversion of the first Gentile, the sending of the first missionaries, and the first great controversy in the church. Paul's first work in Europe is explained in Chapter 16, and elsewhere in the book we get to meet the first mixed-up preacher and the first church sleeper! We can also read about Paul's first sermon before royalty and his first view of Rome.

At this time we want to give a brief introduction of the book. Unless one is familiar with the events in Acts, the events in the Epistles will not have much meaning. The Book of Acts tells us of the advance of the Gospel. It tells us of the spread of Christianity from the Day of Pentecost until Paul's first imprisonment in Rome that is recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter.

J. Vernon McGee tells us that the key verse is Acts 1:8. This verse gives us a division of the book also.

Chapters 1-7	The work in Jerusalem.
Chapters 8-12	The work in Samaria and Judea.
Chapters 13-28	The work to the uttermost parts.

The author of the book is not mentioned by name. Dr. Luke is presumed to be the author. Post-apostolic writers, as far back as the second century ascribe the book to Luke. One thing we know is that the writer of the book was with Paul, in what we call the "we" passages. These are as follows:

Acts 16:10-17	Troas to Philippi (second missionary journey)
Acts 20:6 - 21:18	Philippi to Jerusalem (third missionary journey)
Acts 27:1 - 28:16	Voyage to Rome.

Luke was the only non-Jewish writer of the Bible. He is mentioned just three times in the New Testament Scriptures. The three places are (1) Col. 4:14; (2) II Tim. 4:11; (3) Philemon 24. Col. 4:14 tells us that his occupation was that of a physician. The book was written to Theophilus. Who was this man? He was, in all probability, a high ranking Roman official. His name means lover of God. In the Book of Acts, Luke is continuing the narrative he began in his gospel. He was telling Theophilus the old, old story, of Jesus and His love.

What was the date of the writing of the Book of Acts? The most common dates to be suggested have been between A.D. 62 and 64. Why these dates? At least three reasons seem evident.

1. If the writer had known the outcome of Paul's trial, don't you think he would have mentioned it. The imprisonment that Paul mentioned in II Tim. 4 is not the same as the one in Acts 28.
2. No reference is made to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem that took place in A. D. 70.
3. No mention is made of the persecution of Emperor Nero. It is believed that Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome in the time of Nero.

In the forthcoming essay, we hope to deal with the events that took place in the first chapter. We ask that you read through the chapter. Be with us next time when we continue our study into the Book of Acts. **MARANATHA!**





# FORGIVENESS

Grace Ferguson

More and more I realize that God's people do not know how to live this life, because they do not believe God's word.

God's word teaches Christians to "be kind to one another, tender hearted forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4:32.

Just this one verse if taken literally would transform many lives, because people would actually get rid of all their unforgiveness! Is there someone that you have not forgiven because of something they did several years ago? If so, please face it and with God's help forgive. Also, let the other person know that they are forgiven. Don't be stubborn. "Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1 Samuel 15:23.

God never asks us, or requires of us, something that we can't do. Christians say of other Christians, "I'll never forgive them for this or that." "Christ died for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:8. And if Christ loved us that much, surely now that we are Christians, we can love God's people enough to forgive them regardless of what they have done to us.

And when you stand praying forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.  
(Mark 11:25-26)

What could be more plain than the above scripture? If you want God to forgive you, then you get busy and get rid of all the aughts, and any sin in your life.

As Christians, we can not have hard feelings, grudges, or act in a spiteful way, and be pleasing to God. Neither can we be grouchy, ill-tempered, quick tempered or peevish. All these are of the flesh. It is not of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. Learn to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)

Remember, God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Eph. 4:32) Forgiveness is there for you if you will forgive, but if you have an unforgiving heart or spirit, God's word says that God will not forgive you. (Mark 11:26)

Surely forgiving others is a small price to pay for the forgiveness of our sins.

Christ freely forgives us, and what a price He paid for our salvation, so let us walk hand in hand with all Christians being "tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32)

Our walk will become one of peace joy and happiness, as we learn how to become more Christ-like.

# Assured or Depressed?

Mike T. Sanders

Unhappy Christians are numerous. Many are disillusioned, unfulfilled and have decided, "This must be all there is to the new life".

Others are watching the Christian. The unhappy saint does not portray the best example. Besides the poor witness, the unhappy Christian suffers needlessly, like the teen who wonders, "She loves me; She loves me not. She loves me . . ." Settling with less than joy is a mistake.

There are many causes for unhappiness in the Christian. Here we will consider just one—God's acceptance of me.

God does approve of the Christian.

There are seven different proofs (blessings of position) in Romans 5. These substantiate the truth that God accepts, endorses, sanctions or approves of me.

I. The Christian (one justified by faith) has peace with God (because of what Jesus has done).

II. The Christian has access to God's grace.

III. The Christian has hope.

IV. The Christian knows tribulations are for his strengthening.

V. The Christian is aware of God's love for him.

VI. The Christian's knowledge of God's love is assurance of salvation.

VII. The Christian has joy because he is reconciled to God.

Careful thought is needed to appreciate these seven.

If you are not convinced of your position with God, you will experience doubt, fear, loss of hope and unhappiness.

Realize how well that suits Satan. You are unhappy. Your witness is not impressive. Your work is below par. The Devil is delighted.

Deliberately examine II Timothy 2:15. This very cause of God's approval is Paul's point. When the Accuser attempts to dissuade you of your holy standing, Paul advises study of the word of truth, rightly dividing it. In so doing you reconvince yourself that you are approved in God's sight.

Some will read these words and disregard the potential in Paul's counsel. These will continue in less than an abundant experience. See John 10:10. Such will not become the workmen they could have been.

Others will want to act. Consider some action steps. First, admit that your joy in Christ is lacking. Acknowledge to yourself and God that you have a joy problem. Then, prayerfully, begin a "study" of the scriptures to show yourself that you are approved of God—100% innocent in His sight. Such "diligence" is disciplined effort. Your minister should be able to discuss the appropriate passages ("rightly divide") with you in a helpful manner. Finally, take *yourself* in hand. Refuse to tolerate wrong thinking. See Philippians 4:4-9.

Strongly refute the Liar with Holy Writ. See Luke 4:1-13. Stay assured of your standing and thereby experience the joy of your salvation.

# Missionary Messenger

*"Greater things for God"*

J. R. Stewart - Brown

R. S. Africa

January 2nd

I wish to advise you again of my change of address, as my first letter may have gone astray.

10, Poplar Street  
Bellair Estate  
7530 Bellville  
R. S. Africa

We really enjoy the *Word and Work* book, it also gets passed on to others, especially an invalid friend, who gets a lot of comfort from it; thank you again for sending it on. We pray God to bless this little book, and the sender of it.

May God bless your every effort.

David and Colleen Brown

Natal, South Africa

February

We experience almost constant pressure and opposition. I don't know if this is a trend that is world wide for those who are Christians, standing on the whole counsel of God's Word, or if this is something peculiar to our area. Most, if not all of the opposition comes from religious leaders and people in what are known as the historic denomination. To give one instance, I had been asked by a group of people who are interested in the Prophetic Word, to speak in the Town Hall on the Second Coming of Christ. Once this month and once on each of the two coming months. I did speak on that subject in the Town Hall past Monday morning, but even before that, there were forces at work to stop it. These same forces have succeeded in stopping the further lectures. They are A-Mill. and do not want the Pre-Mill. coming of Christ to be expounded. In this instance it was primarily the church of England.

Our son Stanley, who has been going to College in Dallas, is now with us. He returned the end of January, and has been a big help in the work. We are hoping that he will stay on for at least a year. Our daughter Mary is in Nurses training at Addington Hospital in Durban. She started in January.

The Steward Cooks, who are laboring in Johannesburg, visited us recently. It was refreshing to have fellowship with them. Christians surely need to encourage each other in these days.

We want to thank each one who has been praying for us and standing with us in The Lord's Work. The Lord richly bless you.

This report has two main purposes: One is to thank you for your response with readiness as well as willing joint-participation in missions in Shizuoka, Japan by contributing a large share to our need. You may not know how much we've been encouraged by the report we received from Bro. Oehlschlaeger, Jr., treasurer, on the responses he had obtained from a greater number of the individuals and churches in the States. And we, the Nakaharas and the church as well, are rejoicing as much as the Elders at Piedmont church in Dallas over the blessings of God showered upon us in response to the letter sent out previously. So, this is to express our extreme gratitude to you for such wonderful support we've received.

Here is an interim report on the work here in Shizuoka.

You may be able to hear more about it later this year hopefully, but at present time we have at least 11 non-Christians with whom we're dealing personally with much prayer. We'd asked the Lord to send 10 people who are interested in and concerned about their own spiritual needs this year. That's our target for the year, and surprisingly enough, He's raised 11 for us to deal with. I can say honestly that this is part of the result from our continued home-visitation program carried on for the last two years. You can join us in prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for those souls drawn with some interest and concerns for their own needs.

We're going to choose men and women who can share in taking responsibility of performing duties of the church, such as man for evangelism for the old folks, man for home-visitation program, head for the church committee, secretary, possibly a woman whose chief duty is to keep the record of the church business meetings and of communication, and ushers who are to sit with any visitors coming to services and to help him or her feel at home during the services.

In March we're going to conduct our annual spring meeting in which we spend most of our time in studying the Word and prayer together. They've asked me to preside the meeting and lead the study instead of having someone else come. The given subject is "What it is to you to Worship!". I believe it is very important and necessary for all of us to fully understand what it means to worship. This is the basis upon which our Christian life stands. This is going to be a great time for all of us. We wish you could join us!

Joy Garrett

Salisbury, Zimbabwe

March 3rd

We are grateful to the Lord for the peace we now have here. There are many open doors for the gospel.

Mother Garrett has recovered from her fall and is teaching scriptures in 3 schools five times a week. Eric Charles, who grew up in the Children's Home and wants to be a preacher, drives her to the schools and takes the older children. When mother is unable to go, I teach them. At one school there is between 50 and 60 - 5 and 6 year olds of whom only half can speak English. Teaching them is not easy.

I am teaching the Hatfield Ladies Bible Class on Monday nights.

When we finish Ephesians, we hope to study the second coming. In these last days the subject is very important.

The African sisters have told me that whenever I can find time to teach them, that I am welcome. Thus far whenever I plan to go something happens, but I pray I'll be able to take them up on their invitation. I've spent over 5 years teaching women in most of the local congregations. We are grateful to God for raising up sisters who can teach others and the Ladies Bible Classes go forward.

Thank you for your prayers.

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## GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

### GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

The history of the Church has always been a history of grave difficulties to overcome. The devil hates the Church and seeks in every way to block its progress, now by false doctrine, again by diversion, again by inward corruption of life. But by prayer a clear way can be made through everything.

Prayer will root out heresy, allay misunderstandings, sweep away jealousies and animosities, obliterate immoralities, and bring in the full tide of God's reviving grace. History abundantly proves this. In the hour of darkest portent, when the case of the Church, local or universal, has seemed beyond hope, believing men and women have met together and cried to God, and the answer has come.

—R. A. Torrey

### THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

But not as the Son of God did He face temptation and defeat the tempter; but it was as man, one of us, our Kinsman-Redeemer, that He championed our cause and met humanity's great Enemy. When He laid aside His divine glory and emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6, 7) He took upon Himself the lot of man, and in every respect took He place as a man. Now a man's place before God is that of dependence, of faith, of obedience. This our Lord fulfilled perfectly through all His life and down to His death on the cross. He had to face all the difficulties of the human life. He obtained His health and strength from God by prayer. In all His works and words He waited for the Father's will. Of Himself, He did nothing. He walked by faith. When He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, it was by the Father's appointment. And He faced the Arch-enemy with no more of supernatural power than a true man in dependence of God could obtain from Him—a fact of supreme importance.

—R. H. Boll in *Words in Season*

### USE OF THE BIBLE

Study the Bible with a heart to learn. Consider who speaks, to whom he speaks, and for what purpose. Take it for what it says

(interpret literally) unless there is necessity for regarding portions of it as figurative, and do not regard the figurative expressions as meaning nothing or meaning something not in harmony with the context. Accept it all; believe it fully; practice it faithfully; enjoy it richly; and let it lead you surely and safely into the haven of eternal rest.

—*Don Carlos Janes*

### THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Few relationships of man are dearer than the family relationship. What grand idea of peace, security, love, and contentment we associate with the home. Ephesians 2:19 shows in very eloquent fashion how God has gathered the homeless, the separated, those with almost nothing in common, and made them a family. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." What a beautiful expression this is, that partakes of all our precious memories and builds upon them a picture of a home that will never know sin or sadness, an eternal home filled with unfailing love and unending happiness. It is ours, now, in the church!

—*Robert Shannon*

### FOUR FOR'S IN ROMANS 1:16-18

1. For I am not ashamed of the gospel:
2. For it is the power of God unto salvation . . .
3. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God . . .
4. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

—*R. H. Boll*

Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

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## HOW SHALL WE PRAY?

Stephen Neill

In the nineteenth century prayer for missions was recognised as being one of the great tasks of the Christian believer. Most earnest Christians had their favourite mission; many prayed by name for a number of converts whom they would never see. Now this whole area of intercessory prayer has become dim for many Christians; does it do any good, other than providing a number of Christians with a rather spurious feeling of virtue? Even assuming that it can do some good, is it not more sensible to confine intercession to the near and the familiar, so that prayer can have clear and definite content and can be related to what is known and keenly felt?

The Christian answer is that this is another case of both-and rather than of either-or. One who is praying earnestly for what is near is likely to find his mind soaring, and his concern enlarged far beyond the limits of his own immediate needs. Prayer for missions is not a separate thing; it is part of that enlargement which is not content with limited and local horizons. How, then, should we pray today?

## THOSE WHO NEVER HEAR

The first fact to be borne in mind is that even today at least a third of the earth's inhabitants have not yet so much as heard the name of Jesus Christ; many of them in countries in which political situations have made access to the Gospel almost impossible for them.

When I was young, we used to pray for the opening of Nepal to the Gospel, not I am afraid with any great expectation that our prayers would be heard. Yet in 1952, following a change in political organization, Nepal was opened up to the Gospel; active missionary work is now being carried on under the forms of educational, medical and agricultural service.

Only rarely have I heard prayer offered for Christians in China; they still exist, though probably in greatly reduced numbers. Even if China is opened up again to missionary work, the basis of what is to be done must always be the existing church, which is holding on under difficulties unimaginable by us who have never lived under an all-embracing communist domination. Surely this situation presents a demand on the whole church for ceaseless intercession for that Christian remnant and for the opening of the closed doors that will make it possible again for us to have fellowship with those from whom we are now cut off.

## GREATEST NEEDS

What group in the third world more than any other needs the continuous prayers of Christian people? The new national leaders of the churches. How many Christians have stopped to consider the loneliness of these men, in many cases thrust into these positions of leadership with little training, and with few colleagues in whom they can repose complete confidence?

Far more than any missionary they are exposed to all the pressures of family and tribe and people. They are called to move confidently in intricate situations of the relationship between the churches and the State in newly independent countries, and of the adaptation of age-old custom to Christian purposes. They have to give ruling on perplexing questions of doctrine, worship and discipline. At times they are the objects of bitter criticism from those whose wishes they may not have been able to satisfy. When burdens are so many, how and where are they to find daily renewal of peace of mind, that inner fellowship with Christ without which the ministry becomes no more than a serving of tables and an insistence on rules?

## MISSIONARIES TODAY

Most Christians know personally at least one missionary; very few have any idea at all of what it is like to be a missionary today. Most missionaries are doing work other than that to which they believed themselves to be going, when they accepted the missionary call. Many find themselves submerged under deadening routine. They all know that there is a group in the church they serve which feels that they ought not to be there at all and would be glad to see them go. Situations arise in which, if they speak, they will be accused of arrogance and interference, but in which if they keep silent they will feel that they are betraying the cause of Christ. It is no easy thing to be a

missionary today; can the burden be at all lightened by prayers of others who have their own burdens but perhaps are not called to carry burdens quite as heavy as these?

Christians who are in a minority in a mainly non-Christian country are carrying all the time on their shoulders the burden of the non-Christian world. It is very hard to explain this to those who have never experienced it. England can hardly be called a practising Christian country today. Yet its whole culture has been penetrated for centuries by Christian ideals.

### WITCH DOCTORS

In a country where there has never been a Christian tradition, everything is different. Ways of thinking and living, standards of conduct and of human relationships, are differently based. The whole time, suggestions from this non-Christian world are seeping into the minds of the Christians. Was a death due only to natural causes, or may there be something in the affirmation so confidently made by the non-Christians that magic and witchcraft have been at work?

Foreigners, even those who have lived long in the country and know the language well are almost exempt from this influence. They do not hear the whispers, they are unaware of the almost unspoken suggestions. But the Christian, especially the young and immature Christian, is exposed to this all the time; this is the atmosphere which the Christian minister breathes and in the midst of which he has to do his work. Can they, like Atlas, bear up the skies alone?

*O Lord, cleanse and defend thy church* is a petition that takes on wide meaning for those who know anything of the cause of Christ in the world, and of the intensity of its conflict in a world which is still full of principalities and powers, of world rulers of this present darkness, and of spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

(From *News Extra*.)

## NEWS AND NOTES

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

### SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

We are pleased to publish the article on page 90 from the desk of Michael T. Sanders, director of the School of Biblical Studies.

Mr. Sanders, the director of the school, also teaches Romans - Galatians on Tuesday nights at Buechel.

Word and Work plans to publish other articles submitted by each of the instructors, as follows: Dennis Allen, Vernon Lawyer, Ben Rake, Jr., Buford Smith, and C. V. Wilson. —Editor

I hope I'm not too late—I'd hate to miss an issue. Thank you.

Robertta Koll

"My uncle, Dr. Ray Young, went home to be with the Lord. The funeral was in California. He was 86 years old."

—Dr. Horace Wood

I enjoy reading **Word and Work** and learn something new in every issue.

After reading each issue I save them for future reference.

Thanks a lot for such a fine publication.

Mrs. Ralph Coan