

THE WORD AND WORK

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

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December for \$4 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address \$3.50, by the Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40212

Vol. LXXVI

OCTOBER, 1982

No. 10

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God's Family

W. R. H.

IT'S TIME TO WAVE OUR BROOM

About the year 1934, there appeared in the *P. C. S. BROADCASTER*, a story of an old peasant woman living in an impoverished country that was being overrun by soldiers of a neighboring power. Although she was powerless to present any semblance of resistance, she went boldly to the front porch of her hut, with her broom, which she brandished at each of the invaders as they passed by her house. Though she knew her efforts to be futile, she would at least go on record as protesting what was going on.

A PET PEEVE

I am sure that there are such things as personal aversions, and I admit to having such irritation by the TV commercials that are interspersed with the daily newscasts. But one within the last week tops them all, in my estimation. Suddenly there burst upon my ears the full orchestration of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," as the background to an ice cream commercial! Before I go further may I assure you I like ice cream, and am especially fond of several of the flavors that Baskin-Robbins has produced. But there is something basically incongruous in plugging for the sale of ice cream--even the best--with such a spiritual classic as the Hallelujah Chorus. To me, their advertisement is in the poorest taste (no pun intended). Surely none of man's hymnody is more sacred than this particular selection. (I personally think that the entire score of Handel's Messiah was given to him by God Himself, as historians tell us that the entire work was composed in 24 days!) This Hallelujah Chorus is probably the most glorious praise to our Lord that has ever been sung, and it is now so well-known that its words hardly escape even a casual listener.

TIME TO ACT

Yes, it is time to act! I feel, within me, that I need to make some sort of recorded disapproval, if only to myself, when the commercial is run. If the message isn't gotten to the Ice Cream makers, who knows how long this "blasphemy" (it is in my book) will continue? It may even be the beginning of a trend that could touch any number of sacred hymns. Think for a moment, and the possibilities become frightening. Why not telephone the local outlet for Baskin-Robbins each time we hear it, and why not refrain from patronizing for a while?

But, I fear that there is something worse than the commercials that we must bear with, and that is "slanting" of the news itself. "Slanting" is presenting truth from a particular angle that may make it look grotesque at the same time that it hides other truth. The communists are masters of this art, and have many disciples over the world. For example, they have much to say about atrocities everywhere except where they have caused them. They decry human rights infractions in Lebanon, Israel and South Africa, while they exterminate masses in Angola, Afghanistan, and Siberia. To hear them, the U. S. is a war-monger for selling tanks and planes to Israel, but they do no wrong in supplying Syria, the P.L.O., Iraq, and Egypt.

Recently I called one of the editors of **THE LOUISVILLE TIMES**, because of a particularly Devilish cartoon depicting our President. The editor responded that indeed they did pick cartoons, from everywhere, that agreed in spirit with the philosophy of their newspaper. I already knew that, but it was rather sickening to hear him admit it!

But to whom can you write, or who call to challenge the philosophies of the major TV networks? Who sets their policy, edits the reports, and splices the films? Whoever are those "power that be", they wield a powerful influence upon us all. None are so wise among us that we cannot all be manipulated to a greater or less degree. When the word "Reaganomic", for example, is continually presented as some violent or fatal disease, people are being taught to tie their problems to the man whose name has been thus ridiculed. But when the Dow Jones Industrials are climbing, it is called a bull market. What about Reaganomics when the interest rate and the inflation rate is reduced?

WILL IT COME TO MORAL ISSUES?

If we succumb to political manipulation, then moral manipulation will naturally be Satan's next move. Jesus said (John 16:2) "yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service to God." You may think that it will take considerable manipulation of minds in this country for such a time ever to come. But, given godless men in proper places, the insidious power of manipulation can work havoc. Only the power of the Holy Spirit will be adequate. Let us give place to Him before such evil days come.

And let us stand up and wave our broom!

SEQUEL WITH REFERENCE TO TV COMMERCIAL

Reader may be glad to know that a phone call was made to the Louisville office of Baskin-Robbins and a letter was invited to be sent to the regional office, in Evansville. Later the same day a phone call response reported that the regional office had received a considerable number of complaints, and that the offensive commercial was to be removed from the air, nationwide, within 48 hours. From my listening post, I believe this has been done. —Editor

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

Going in the Wrong Direction

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly . . . But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us . . . For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:6, 8, 10, New King James Version)

The three verses quoted here from Romans 5 are given this way to show something of the terribleness of the condition of man by nature with four expressions or words that indicate the hopelessness of man's efforts to "pull himself up by his bootstraps", or, to be more theological in expression, to justify himself. Let us look at the four times Paul indicates our condition outside of Christ.

The first of these is very properly translated by two words in the NKJ text given above and by the one word "weak" in the ASV that many of my readers have used (as I have) for years. I like the NKJ expressions because it literally tells us what Paul is pointing out here: By nature we had absolutely no strength to move us toward God. We were as helpless as, or maybe more than, a new-born baby is to provide for itself.

Paul very quickly goes on to the next expression that shows some progression in strength but in the wrong direction (maybe we should call it "regression" instead). We were "ungodly", yet Christ died for us. The Greek word for "ungodly" has a good many definitions, all pointing out some feature of the obvious meaning of the word, being unlike God. It is generally defined as "lack of reverence toward God, impiety," but, as I said, that is only one of the many definitions given. Those who have no reverence for God have too much "reverence" for themselves. So from being without strength we "regressed" to the point of doing things contrary to God. But even when we were in that condition Christ died in our place, for our sake, on our behalf.

In verse eight Paul uses his third expression for us, this time again in one word only, "sinners." A sinner may be said to have some strength, but it is the wrong kind. He does that which is displeasing to God. May I remind you of John's rather fundamental definition

of sin in 1 John 3:4, "Sin is lawlessness." Sin is a refusal to be controlled by God, a substitution of our own will for His. So a sinner is one who refuses God's will for his life, one who substitutes what he wants to do for what God wants. And Paul says that by nature we were all that way. And again he repeats his assertion that while we were in that condition Christ died for us. He did not wait for us to straighten up ourselves and then die for us. Just so today He does not wait for us to "turn over a new leaf" and earn the right to be saved before His blood cleanses us from all sin. Christ Himself said that He came into the world to save sinners—and you may be absolutely certain that what He came into the world to do, He did. So He saved us. What we need to do now is to accept that, receive His gift. We show our trust in Him by confessing His name after we believe on Him, by turning from our sins, by being buried with Him in baptism; but nearly 2,000 years ago He died for us and our early lives proved that we were just like all men in Paul's day: we were sinners by nature. That shows how great God's love was that He would send His Son under such conditions.

The last word Paul uses of us by nature is the strongest of all the words and the greatest of the condemnations of mankind of the four—we were enemies of God. I presume that you realize that a lot of people are enemies to others without realizing it, so don't try to tell me that couldn't be true of you because you never "felt" at enmity with God. Simply take God's word for it! In spite of our being enemies He is the One Great Friend, for He took the lead in reconciling us to Himself. Since we were without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, we were in no position to move in the right direction. He stepped in and provided our needs in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope that all this thrills your heart and you are moved to great thankfulness for what God has done. If not, then what is wrong? You must still be without strength and need to come to Him for help. Do it today. "Whosoever will may come" is a true statement. Won't you do it today?

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



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE RUMOR. The following is taken from the *Union Signal*, July, 1982. "Last January, a friend sent me an anonymous let-

ter and a petition she had received. The letter protested the filming of a movie portraying Jesus as a 'swinging homosexual.' It warned that the film would

be shown in the United States unless the outcry is great. The petition which accompanied the letter, was addressed to Attorney General Scott of Illinois. It asked him to stop the production of the film by **Modern People News** in Chicago.

"This is a false rumor, which began in 1977, and is still being circulated. **Modern People News** stopped publication in 1978. Attorney General Scott left office in 1978. . . There is no film. Nevertheless, the Attorney General's office in Illinois receives 1,000 letters a day from outraged citizens. Every year the Attorney General issues a press release exposing the hoax, but still the rumor persists.

"Now there is a new twist. Someone in Florida is trying to turn the rumor into a money-making venture. You may receive a letter reviewing the rumor. The letter implies an affiliation with Moral Majority and asks for money to stop production of the supposed film. A card is enclosed requesting a check for \$50 to \$1,000.

"This letter is a hoax. It is zeroxed, not printed. It is anonymous and the address is a post office box number. Forewarned is forearmed."

AGAIN, FROM THE UNION SIGNAL, BY THE SAME FRIEND: "Why does a four-month-old daughter have to grow up without her mother, an eleven-year-old son grow up without his mother, a loving husband endure hours of loneliness, parent suffer the loss of a daughter, and friends lose the support of a friend? In His correct time we know the Lord will answer these questions for our family as we struggle to adjust to the loss of Sandra Quinn, who died at the hands of a drunken driver, two weeks before last Christmas.

"Current statistics show that 70 Americans die each day due to a drunken driver—at this rate, how long will it be before your family is affected by the death of a loved one to a drunk driver, or affected once again?

"The family of Sandra Quinn would greatly appreciate your show of concern and love by helping our society to deal with this problem. There are things we can do to change this suffering:

1. Write to Senator Bob Dole, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcom-

mittee on Courts, 2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D. C. 20510

2. Write to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th S.W., Washington, D. C. 20590

3. Write a letter to the editor of each paper to which you subscribe.

4. Write to each senator and congressional representative.

5. Write to each of the state legislative representatives from your area.

"In your letters, ask for prompt efforts to strengthen law enforcement and for thorough education of the public concerning the inappropriate use and abuse of alcohol. We can act; we must act now, before one of your family members becomes the next statistic—one of these 70 each day!"

NOT TO TAKE AWAY ANY OF THE THUNDER OF THE ABOVE.

The Justice Department tells us that as dangerous as the highways are, an American family is more likely to have one of its members attacked in a serious violent crime (such as rape, aggravated assault, or robbery) than to be injured in an auto accident or home fire. Last year 30% of the households in the U. S. were hit with a crime of theft or violence. A report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics comments: "The kinds of households that were the most vulnerable to crime in 1975—black households, higher income households, and households in central cities—remained so in 1981."

ACCORDING TO HENRY HAZLITT:

"Governments two indispensable functions: (1) to protect the nation against aggression from any other nation, (2) protect the individual citizen from the aggression, injustice, or oppression of any other citizen. Every extension of the function of government beyond these two primary duties should be scrutinized with jealous vigilance." That is my understanding of the purpose of government, and the reason I have in reporting the type of government activities which I do. I am not interested in the political functionaries of government, or what party they represent. Men of either party may give us good or corrupt government, but it is up to the citizenry to watch with prayer and discrete actions to maintain blood-bought freedoms for which we should be eternally grateful.

IF FOR NOTHING ELSE, THE NAMES OF MOST ROCK groups is enough to turn Christians off. One such which calls itself The Grateful Dead was at one time supported by a wealthy patron, Augustus Owsley Stanley III. This man was said at one time to have single-handedly produced half of the world's supply of LSD. Though he eventually went to prison, the relationship between drugs and the Grateful Dead are obvious, to wit: "A well-known ingredient to the traveling circus of Deadheads is drugs; illegal substances at Dead shows are as common as hot dogs at the World Series."

"WE CAN DO THAT IN THE SECOND YEAR OR THE THIRD YEAR," Tony Randall, referring to parts of the TV show "Love, Sidney." Clearly a production to promote sexual deviation, we do well to be warned of its pernicious presentation. Swoosie Kurtz, who stars with Tony Randall in the show, now admits that the public is being set up to accept more and more of the queer message. "You know, Sidney will have a date. Some guy comes by to pick him up. We get in our little references here and there. We have our small victories. You throw into the script three or four absolutely out-

rageous things that you know are never going to make it. You deflect their (the censors) attention. The other ones that are more subtle get by, or else you get a trade-off."

YOUR HONOR? In 1979, U. S. District Court Judge Barrington D. Parker of Washington, D.C., ruled that the army must grade the less-than-honorable discharges of some 10,000 former Army veterans who had in the early seventies failed to pass an urinalysis given to try to stem the increasing use of illegal drugs. The judge said this violated the drug user's guarantee against self-incrimination. The same Judge Parker recently applied that notion to 12,000 former members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Their "general" and "other than honorable" discharges, awarded because of drug abuse, may now be upgraded to honorable.

THE CONSERVATIVE (?) REAGAN ADMINISTRATION has decided to extend credit to Red China (via the Export-Import Bank) totaling \$68,425,000. According to Congressman Ron Paul of Texas "This is a tragedy and disgrace." Congressman Paul is a member of Mr. Reagan's party.

Listening in Prayer

by Barry W. Tetley

Paul describes the normal Christian and the normal church in these words:

"...holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and *knit together*... grows with a growth that is from God." (Col. 2:19).

Just as the nourishment for the body comes from the Head, so too the body is *knit together* with the Head. The head and the body are interconnected. The word Paul uses here implies communications between two parties. Some commentators explain this by describing a man who was estranged from his wife. Then they begin to communicate with each other again, and are once more knit together.

Modern words such as communications, or even intercom, mean the same thing, and the thought that springs to our minds is prayer. For prayer is the means by which a Christian communicates with the Head, who is Jesus Christ. And prayer must be an essential part of a Christian's daily life.

Prayer is more correctly understood as "communication" than as "asking." The word "intercom" which is short for "intercommunication" is even better. For communication involves two parties in contact with each other, and this is what Paul means in his illustration from the human body. There is contact to and from the Head, and true prayer is just like that.

Prayer is not necessarily long periods of talking to God. A man is praying just as fervently when he is saying absolutely nothing, but when his mind is engaged with God. He is praying if his mind is open and listening to God—following along a path of instruction, engaged with God in working out a spiritual problem, or planning a spiritual activity.

Prayer often begins with words of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (A.C.T.S.), but it may continue in silence as a man or woman enjoys intercommunion with God by listening, thinking, meditating, or mulling. We don't understand the Lord's Prayer if we just rush through the headings that Jesus gave us.

We should allow each of the headings, one at a time, to lead our thoughts, guide our minds or move our hearts. They are only the signposts to lead us into deeper communion with God, into further worship, confession or supplication. This may be in the quietness of our hearts, in ways that we are unable to put into words. Prayer is not, therefore, the ability to talk to God for long periods of time. Prayer is when a man's mind is engaged with God. It is in that engagement that intercommunication takes place.

When the design of the mercy seat was given to Moses, God said, "And there will I meet with thee and I will commune with thee." (Exod. 24:22). And when the mercy seat was dedicated, and Moses went in to speak to God, we read, "Then he heard the voice of one speaking to him from the mercy seat" (Numbers 7:89).

As the book of Hebrews emphasizes, through Jesus Christ every Christian may now enjoy the kind of communication and fellowship that Moses enjoyed with God. This is the true purpose of prayer. This is the pattern of true prayer. It is two-way communication and fellowship with God.

Paul prayed like this constantly. Every remembrance of his friends in the presence of God was a prayer. He didn't need to recite their names. The thought of them and his desire for their blessings was a prayer already. Many times he would not be able to find privacy for prayer. Privacy for prayer is a luxury that Paul, Jesus Himself, and many other Christians have comparatively seldom been able to enjoy. Nevertheless, whenever Paul turned his mind to God, whenever he lifted his eyes to God in prayer, whenever he consciously and mentally entered the presence of God, he was praying.

It is true that Jesus did teach His disciples to pray in private if they could, but this was in order that they should avoid the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. It is very evident that neither He, nor the busy missionary apostles, were able to routinely use a closet for prayer during the course of their active ministries. But many times in the course of a day, moments of quietness would overtake their minds

and they would engage in thought and spiritual intercourse with God—and they were indeed praying.

Very often the Lord and His disciples did use specific prayers of request, supplication and worship. When they met together, they prayed together. They sang psalms, many of which are prayers. Also, if they were alone, the believers would pray specifically and definitely. But the times when they would pray, and the places, and the posture they would adopt in prayer, all these varied from situation to situation.

We can read that Jesus prayed on a mountain, and again in a garden. These are mentioned because they were exceptional prayers. When and how did Jesus pray in the normal course of His day's work? Perhaps it was in the silence of the morning and evening hours; and in the pauses between talking with people or teaching sessions. While He was walking between the towns, He would pray. Many times a day He would engage His mind with God's, and enjoy communion and communication with Him who is His and our Father.

Man communicates with God in prayer, both with words and Godward thoughts. There is also a variety of ways in which God communicates with us through prayer, and some of these may be understood from the way that "knit together" or other English equivalents of the Greek word are used in the New Testament.

In I Corinthians 2:16, Paul asserts that only the spiritual man can understand the things of God. In fact, he says, a Christian has the mind of Christ. Using an Old Testament quotation, Paul asks a rhetorical question: "Who has known the mind of the Lord, who will *instruct* him?" Here the word we are studying (which in the Greek is *sumbibadzo*) in translated as *instruct*, but equally well we could use the translator's alternative choice as follows: "Who has known the mind of the Lord, who is *knit together* with him? But we have the mind of Christ." Or, using our own translation: "Who has known the mind of the Lord, who will communicate with him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Whichever translation we may prefer, it is the Christian's experience that through prayer the mind of Christ becomes the pattern of our own thinking. This happens as we speak to God in prayer, but even more in the listening and thinking aspect of prayer.

If the average Christian finds that his periods of prayer consist more of listening and thinking, he should not feel guilty. Some even complain that their thoughts wander when they pray, to such an extent that they forget what they are talking to God about. Is this wrong?

I do agree that the devil would like us to think about unworthy things instead of praying, and this is where discipline is required. But if in prayer we discover our minds roaming to the project on hand, to the problems of the day, to the people who disturb us, to the letters we must write—then let us not fret. For this is often the way in which God will communicate his assistance in the project, his answer to those problems, his attitude to those people, his approach to that letter.

It is in these moments that the mind of Christ is knit with our minds and God communicates with us and directs us in His will.

During the Civil War Abraham Lincoln originated a gigantic plan—called the Sanitary Commission—to care for the sick and wound-

ed soldiers. It proved very successful. When Dr. John D. Hill, a prominent Buffalo physician and member of the commission, later complimented the American President for conceiving such an idea, Lincoln replied:

"You must carry your thanks to a Higher Being. One stormy night I tossed on my bed, unable to sleep as I thought of the terrible sufferings of our soldiers and sailors. I spent an hour in agonizing prayer to God for some method of relief, and he put the Sanitary Commission in my mind, with all its details, as distinctly as though the instructions had been written out by pen and handed to me. Hereafter, always thank your heavenly Father, and not me, for this organization, which has eased so much pain and saved so many lives."

The translators use yet another English equivalent for the word we are studying when they encounter it in Acts 16:10. Here they light upon "assuredly gathering." The whole verse reads, "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, *assuredly gathering* that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them." Obviously it couldn't have been translated "knit together" here, but it could have been translated "it being communicated . . ."

How well this illustrates the way in which, through prayer, God does communicate His will to us. In prayer, as we mull things over with the Lord, we do come to conclusions as to His will. We "assuredly gather" the path that God wants us to tread.

In Acts 9:22 the word is translated "proving." In Ephesians 4:16 the word is translated "compacted." And in Colossians 2:2 and 2:19 it is translated "knit together." Taking the context of the word in all its appearances in the New Testament, as we have done, we gain a picture of Paul's intention in Colossians 2:19. The body is knit together with the head by the communication from the head in prayer. It is not always verbal, but rather it is a sharing in the mind of Christ.

Through this we sometimes receive a convincing or proving persuasion. Perhaps it is a moving of the emotions, as in Colossians 2:2. Because God is also the author of the Word of God, all such convictions that we receive in praying will be in agreement with the Word of God.

Through prayer the Christian is knit together with the head and experiences intercommunication with God. And this is an essential spiritual quality of the normal Christian man.—*Reprinted by permission from EVANGELICAL THRUST*



Elaine Brittell Is Murdered

Just as we are preparing to go to press, word has reached us that our Sister Elaine Brittell, long time missionary to Northern Rhodesia was

found murdered. A call to the Lester Brittell family gives us the following information.

Date of death was apparently during the night of October 16, as she was found in her bed, on Sunday morning the 17th. She had been stabbed twice in the throat by an unknown assailant, who left the knife in the second wound. The motive for the crime was evidently not theft, since only her passport and keys were thought to have been taken. It is thought that the assailant broke into the house, where Elaine lived alone. A young preacher who was to take her to a service on Sunday, was the first to learn of the tragedy. Until the present, we have not been able to get any direct word from her sister, Gladys, who lives with her family in the same area.

Elaine and Gladys went to the mission field with their parents, Bro. and Sister J. A. Brittell, in 1946, and they have stayed on the field ever since, being 36 years. Elaine was 60 years old at death.

Recently, she has been working in the translation and printing end of the Lord's work, with Bro. Eugene Perry, and in helping to train young evangelists along with Bro. Lloyd Henson. In the immediate future, any monies that would be received for Elaine, are planned to be channeled to these two works that were so much in her heart.

Our brotherhood has lost a staunch soldier of the cross, in the passing of this dear servant of the Lord Jesus. May some of the young lives that she has touched, rise up to carry on the work so needed in the dark continent. —Editor

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

October 7.

This is such a beautiful day which the Lord has given us. Also He has given this quiet time to sit down and finally let you know you are often in our prayers and thoughts as we go about our daily tasks. Praise God, He hears every whispered prayer and gladly begins to answer it according to His good will. Thanks be to God for His great love and kindness day by day, hour by hour and minute by minute!

Let me share with you some of the blessings God has given through answering many prayers of brothers and sisters from many parts of the world.

Christians meeting in Prison. For many years we have been teaching the prisoners through Bible correspondence courses. Many have accepted the message of Christ and asked to be baptized into the family of God. Finally in August this year, the Lord made possible that an extra large bathtub could be put in the large assembly room where all can witness the power of Christ in a person's life, as his sins are taken away as he is buried in baptism, and he rises a clean child of God. Oh the joy that fills their hearts and the tears of joy as they speak of their Saviour and Guide and Friend. Also the Lord has laid it upon Levv, Amos and Joseph's heart to take up the responsibility of meeting with the Christians in the prison each Lord's day. To give their time sharing the Gospel with these brothers in Christ is a great joy and challenge to these young Christians, as they fulfill our Saviour's

last request to His children, "Go...preach the gospel...teaching them". More and more of the Christians are speaking to their friends in prison so nearly every week new students are enrolled. Some of the 60 christians are released and have gone home to share the Good News of Jesus with their families and friends. May God continue to keep His saving words alive in their hearts so that many will come to know the way of life. May I share with you the reaction of the Gospel upon some of their lives? It reminds me of the question men and women asked on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

(Bruno, before he became a Christian.) "I am a member of the Catholic church which I have now realized (through your lessons) has formulated doctrines that are not backed by the Bible. The Catholic church has ignored this factor. I have taken your lessons with unreserved seriousness and would like this newly acquired light to be extended to my wife. May I know if it is possible for my wife and other members of my family to receive your soul healing lessons? I would like to see you personally over this. I am due for discharge on 20.10.82 and would like to continue with all your lessons. May I know if this is possible? I would like to discuss a few points with you concerning the above and other related issues."

I went to visit him soon after this and promised, Lord willing that soon a big bathtub would be available so he and others could be baptized. On August 28th he became our brother in Christ. His wife is now taking the Bible course which changed his life through the message of the Gospel.

(Matthew, before August.) "Since I have started this course I have proved that all my heart has turned away from evil thoughts that I had. But now madam the problem is that I was baptized by sprinkling which is not true baptism. How can I do in order to have a true baptism? I came a long time and still in prison for a long time." Now he is a happy servant of God telling his friends of Jesus, his greatest Friend.

(Patson, after August.) "Dear Teacher, I am thankful to have learnt a lot through your Bible lessons. I am now baptized and I am happy to be called God's son. Please keep on sending me Christian books such as *Power for Today* and *20th Century Christian* books to add to what I have achieved. God bless you. Do you have 'Is the Holy Spirit for me?' by Harvey Floyd?"

Most of the prisoners beg for something to read about God. I did not have this book to give him. I wish I did.

"Thanks to God for the light you provide. Me and fellow convicts spend much of our valuable chance on studying the Bible." (Patrick) "Teacher, assist me any book for reading about God." (Solomon) "Dear Teacher, Why these day you are not send stories of Christ? Please, please send one. Your in Christ." (Gilbert)

Now he is a new babe in Christ. "My teacher, please send a pencil if you have got." (Levy)

My thanks to each of you who have sent Christian books, tracts, pencils, Bible courses, Bibles, clothing and gifts to share with many seeking souls. And your prayers have strengthened us day by day to continue to serve in His harvest field with renewed joy. Please con-

tinue to pray for the Christians in prison that all may go onward in the Christian way of life and be faithful to the end.

Zambia Bible Training Centre. Brother and Sister Lloyd Henson and son Mike have given their lives providing this blessing for student-preachers who *learn* God's word and weekly *go forth and teach* others' in the suburbs, villages, etc. Praise God for Amos, a student, who meets with the Christians in prison. Other students who have completed two years are out in different areas preaching the word and the Lord is adding souls as He has promised. Please pray for the teachers and students that God will supply all things needful to carry on this great work. If you would like to have a part in training these souls for the Lord, please send your gift to Hensons at P.O. Box 60641, Livingstone, Zambia, Africa. May the Lord send "Showers of Blessings" upon the school is my daily prayer as more and more go forth proclaiming the precious words of life. The *Off-set Printing machine* still puts out many Bible lessons, tracts, booklets, etc. to reach the lost. Lord willing, I may learn to help in this work someday.

The New Chitonga Bible translation program is still moving onward hoping to complete the New Testament by June, 1983 as the teams faithfully go onward.

Praise God, the brethren in Livingstone have begun to have Bible studies in the suburbs hoping to reach their neighbors. May more congregations be established next year, we pray.

Thanks be to God for my good health and many blessings He daily sends with opportunities to serve others. And you dear ones for your filling my needs, your prayers and love shown in so many ways, I humbly thank you. Your letters make our days brighter and encourage us to "press on toward the goal" in Christ. Thanks be to God I can still see quite well, trusting God to use my eyes to His glory.

Till next time, Romans 15:13 is my prayer for you.

Joy & Robert Garrett

Harare, Zimbabwe

September 20.

Yesterday we visited Aroturus Mine for the first time since our return. It is a gold mine employing 400 men working three shifts down to the 26th level.

Two Harare brethren regularly go out to visit this small congregation that meets in a school room. One of them, Bro. Peter Phiri of Hatfield church went with us. It is about 20 miles from Harare and forty miles from our home.

The road into the location twists around past the hills formed by the mine dumps and the mine shafts and buildings into the school yard.

After Robert's message on the Judgment, two girls came forward to be baptized. Robert had to make a couple trips to get us to the nearest river about two miles away where Bro. Peter immersed the new converts. We sang while waiting for our turn to be "ferried" back.

On our return trip we pulled off under a shady tree and had lunch. We thank God for the many opportunities we still have for spreading the Gospel here.

I wish to advise you of my new address. My husband passed away on the 24th of August and, as I am now all alone, my son and daughter came down to Cape Town, and brought me back here to stay with them.

I do enjoy and appreciate the *Word and Work* magazine, and always get a lot of inspiration from it. Thank you very much for being so kind, for sending it to me, and pray God to bless this little book, and the sender of it; it also get's passed on to others. May God bless your every effort.

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Alex Wilson is a missionary in the Philippines.



Ancient Predictions and Current Events

Alex V. Wilson

In a recent letter, a friend of mine wrote, "I have no doubt that you and I are living in the season of our Lord's return. All the signs point to it."

My friend may be right. Many exciting events have recently taken place. Many trends are developing which might be of great significance in God's plan for the endtime—as we shall mention later in these two articles. But still I'm a little disturbed by the letter-writer's expression, "*I have no doubt.*" I wish he would say instead, "*It seems very probable. . .*"

Why do I say that? Because many devout, Bible-believing Christians through the centuries have felt certain that Christ would return very, very soon. For example, the English reformer John Wycliffe thought the world must come to an end before the close of the 1300s, because of the occurrence of earthquakes and widespread epidemics.

During the 1500s, Martin Luther wrote, "It is my belief that the day of judgment is not far off." And in 1888 a Bible teacher named Gratton Guinness stated, "Intelligent students of prophecy understand that the end of the present state of things *must be close at hand.*"

An Evangelical leader, Charles Trumbull, made the following observation: "The difference between this day and earlier generations, when some of God's people have mistakenly supposed that the Lord's return was at hand, is simply this: in our generation for the first time

since Christ ascended to heaven, ALL the predicted major signs of the end of the age are synchronizing. One or more of these signs have occurred in earlier generations; never before have they all occurred simultaneously, as we see them today." But Trumbull wrote those words in 1937! Over forty years have passed, and our Lord has not come back yet.

Many other examples could be given. We mention these, NOT to cast doubt on the certainty of Christ's return, or its possible nearness, but rather to show how important it is to be cautious and humble when interpreting biblical predictions and the signs of the times.

Mistaken Guesses

It is good to study the prophetic parts of God's Word, for "all Scripture is inspired . . . and profitable." But it is bad to be dogmatic or sensational in our preaching of prophecy. An American evangelist held a series of meetings in Manila some months ago. One of his sermons was entitled, "The Present March to Armageddon." He advertised that his message would reveal what the Bible teaches about the crises in Afghanistan and Iran.

Let us hope that the evangelist did not fall into the trap which once snared the outstanding preacher and writer, Harry Ironside. In a book published in 1930, Ironside gave three pages of evidence that the Italian dictator Mussolini was fulfilling prophecy. But we know now that Mussolini had no prophetic significance at all.

Over and over such speculations have proved to be mistaken. Dwight Wilson, in his book *Armageddon Now!* says that almost every major world crisis of this century has been proclaimed by at least some prominent Bible teachers as the doorway to Armageddon. Examples include the war between Russia and Japan in 1904; World War I; World War II; the war for Israeli independence; and Arab-Israel wars of 1967 and 1973. Six false alarms! Also "among possible candidates for Antichrist, they listed Mussolini, Hitler, and Henry Kissinger, to name a few." Even Jimmy Carter has been given that distinction. Let's be more prudent.

Quite a few Evangelicals believe that Ezekiel 38 and 39 picture a Russia invasion of Israel, which will end with the Lord destroying Russia's armies in the mountains of Israel. The idea is that these events might happen any time now. I once saw a booklet entitled, "An Open Letter to Nikita Khrushchev" (who was then the premier of Russia), warning him what would happen if he attempted to attack Israel in this way.

Now, who knows? Maybe Russia *will* invade Israel soon. Even if it does, I personally cannot see how that would fulfill Ezekiel's prediction, nor how that passage can possibly apply to our *present* world situation. For in 38:11 Gog the aggressor nation says as he plans his attack, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages. I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without gates and bars."

How in the world can present-day Israel be described as "a peaceful and unsuspecting people" (NIV), or "them that are at rest, that dwell safely" (KJV)? Israel today has many high-powered weapons

and a fine army that is always on the alert since the land is threatened from almost every side. (Notice too that Rev. 20 puts the Gog-Magog war *after* the millennium, not before it.)

In these chapters Ezekiel mentions Rosh, Meshech and Tubal (38: 2, 3; 39:1). The widespread interpretation mentioned earlier believes that these refer to Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk (a city in the U.S.S.R.), respectively. But other Bible scholars disagree, even pre-millennialists.

For example, George Beasley-Murray in the *New Bible Commentary* says, "The equation of Meshech and Tubal with Moscow and Tobolsk, and Rosh with Russia, is unsupportable." And J. O. Buswell gives more details: "The root of the Hebrew word *rosh* is not the same as the root of the word *Russia*. To identify Meshech and Tubal with Moscow and Tobolsk is to be guilty of philological folly." (Philology is the study of linguistics.)

So once more we see the need for caution and open-mindedness as we study prophecy, especially the more obscure passages.

Will Christ Come Soon?

Now let's turn from the negative side of the subject to the positive. Having seen that we should avoid abuses of prophecy, let's go back to our opening question. Are there indications that our Lord's return may *perhaps* (or even *probably*) be very soon? Yes, there seem to be such indications. Here are some of them.

The book of Revelation describes some practices which used to seem fantastic and unbelievable but now sound strangely up-to-date. Chapter 9:13-19 portrays the killing of one-third of mankind, probably as a result of war. Such a prediction seemed laughably impossible in former generations. But nobody is laughing now since the era of nuclear weapons began in 1945.

The same chapter mentions sorcery and witchcraft as being common in the last days (as I understand Revelation). And people are described as worshipping demons and even Satan (9:20; 13:4). These practices seemed incredible, at least in the West, until the last fifteen to twenty years brought a boom in occultism. Now some universities even offer courses in magic and witchcraft! And "churches of Satan" are found in a number of cities.

Of course these trends don't prove that the King is coming back right away, but they fit right in with the Bible's description of common conditions at the time of His return.

Israel

Frederick the Great, monarch of Prussia during the 1700's, once asked his court chaplain to name one thing that proved the truthfulness of the Bible. "The Jews, your majesty," replied the chaplain.

Several ancient prophecies about Israel have been amazingly fulfilled. And they are even now in the process of fulfillment. First, it was foretold that because of their disobedience they would be scattered worldwide (Deut. 28:64, for instance). Second, they would be bitterly hated and persecuted (Deut. 28:37, 65-66). Third, in spite of repeated tribulations they would never be wiped out nor disappear

(Jer. 31:35-36). History has verified all three of these forecasts during the 2,500-3,300 years that have passed since they were made.

A fourth prediction was that the Almighty would restore them to their *land* and to *Himself*.

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. And you shall be clean from all your uncleanness. A new heart I will give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes... You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people and I will be your God. (Ezek. 36:24-28).

Notice that there are two parts to this promise. First, God would bring them *back to their land*, *permanently* and prosperously. Second, they would repent and He would *transform them spiritually* and morally. Many other passages are similar: study Jer. 23:5-8; 32:37-42; Amos 9:14-15; Zech. 8:1-8 & 10:6-12; Rom. 11:25-27. These passages show that the Jews' return from captivity in Babylon did not fulfill the predictions. The promises still await consummation.

The second part of the prophecies just mentioned—a new heart by God's regenerating Spirit—has never yet come to pass, except for those few Jews through the centuries who received Jesus as their Messiah. But many Bible students believe that the first part of the prophecies—restoration of Israel to its homeland—has been taking place before our eyes!

On May 14, 1948 a Jewish national state was established in Palestine for the first time since 70 A.D. At present the vast majority of Israelis reject Jesus, but perhaps soon the prophets' visions will be completely fulfilled. God will bring awesome chastening upon Israel and bring multitudes to faith in the Saviour (Zech. 13:8-9; 12:10-13:1).

Paul wrote in Rom. 11:26, "And so all Israel will be saved." Commentator F. F. Bruce explains that the expression "'all Israel' need not mean 'every Jew without a single exception' but 'Israel as a whole.'" He further explains verses 25-29:

All Israel, not a faithful remnant but the nation as a whole, would see the salvation of God... If their temporary stumbling was prophetically foretold, so was their ultimate and permanent restoration. The new covenant will not be complete until it embraces the people of the old covenant. Temporarily alienated for the advantage of the Gentiles, they are eternally the objects of God's electing love because His promises, once made to the patriarchs, can never be revoked.
(Romans)

Are You READY?

The world bristles with terrible weapons that can easily kill a third of mankind. Occultism has boomed and even Satanism has emerged. Israel is back in its land, though many nations bitterly oppose it. These conditions seem to fit the Bible's description of the days when our Lord will come again. So let us echo John's prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

But let us also take John's advice: "And now, abide in Christ, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming . . . Every one who hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 2:28; 3:3).

(To be Concluded)

Larry Miles, a member of the Portland Avenue congregation, is working in Cincinnati and has taken classes at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.



Studies in the Book of Acts

Larry Miles

The Choosing of Fellow-Workers

THE CHOOSING OF THE SEVEN: ACTS 6:1-7

Luke tells us that this was a time when the Body of Christ was growing by leaps and bounds. In verse 1 we have the first mention, in the Book of Acts, of the word Disciple. Verse 1 also tells us that there arose a dispute between the Hebrews and the Hellenistic Jews. Who were these groups? First of all, the Hebrews were the native born Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The Hellenistic Jews were the ones who had been born in or brought up in places where the Greek language was spoken and the Greek culture was predominant. These also had come to Jesus as the Lord in their life. Luke tells us that the widows in this group were being neglected in the daily serving of food. We are not told why just that they were.

We are told that the twelve called the people together. The Twelve informed them that they did not have time to wait on tables themselves. It was their ministry to be in prayer and teaching the Word. Verse 3 gives us the qualifications for, what some have said, is the office of deacons. It does not say here that they were deacons. It is interesting to note that the qualifications for a deacon as found elsewhere in Scripture, are not the ones that are mentioned here. R. J. Kidwell, professor of Bible at the Cincinnati Bible College, gives us this insight,

"The men chosen in Acts 6 were selected for a 'particular' need in a 'particular' city at a 'particular' time and the word 'deacon' does not appear in the text. Since there are no 'elders' in the church at this time, if these men were actually deacons, it would mean that this office was established before the eldership. The qualifications for these 'seven' are not the same qualifications set forth later for the office of 'deacons.' It is also observed that when we read of these men later they are not serving in Jerusalem as 'deacon' but some are preaching evangelists in far cities from

Jerusalem. Note also when one of them is referred by Luke in Acts 21:8 he is not called a deacon but rather 'one of the seven.' This phrase may well be the best way to designate them: 'the seven.'

What were the qualifications for "the seven?" (1) Men of good reputation; (2) Full of the Holy Spirit; (3) Of Wisdom. The apostles said that the ones chosen would be put in charge of the task of serving the widows in the daily serving of food. Verse 4 gives us who the church in Jerusalem chose as "the seven."

Verse 6 tells us that the apostles, after prayer, laid their hands on the seven. In verse 7 we are told that the Word of God kept spreading and that the number of the Body kept increasing in Jerusalem. Also many priests came to know Jesus as the true Messiah of Israel.

THE MINISTRY OF STEPHEN: ACTS 6:8-15

Of the seven who were chosen to serve the church in Jerusalem, only Stephen and Philip get further mention in the Book of Acts. We will be mentioning the ministry of Philip later in our studies. At this time, and in the next chapter, we are going to center our thoughts on Stephen, who became the first Christian martyr.

Verse 8 informs us that Stephen was doing great works and performing signs and wonders. This would be as result of the laying on of the hands of the twelve. But he came upon some persecution in verse 9. It says that some from the Synagogue of the Freedmen were debating and arguing with Stephen. The verse also informs us where these men came from.

Verse 10 tells us that the Jews were unable to hold their ground with Stephen. These Jews were from provinces where the Greek culture was predominant. We are told that he was speaking with the backing of the Holy Spirit. Verse 11 reminds us of the trial of Jesus Christ. Just as the authorities could not find anything to condemn Jesus, they could find nothing against Stephen. So, we are told that they brought in false witnesses to twist the truth. They brought in people who were willing to lie about what they had heard the Christians preach and teach. Does not that remind you of the trial of the Lord of Glory?

Verse 12 tells us that the ones from the Synagogue of the Freedmen were the ones who stirred up the people. Then they dragged Stephen before the Sanhedrin on the trumped up charges of blasphemy. They accused him of preaching things contrary to the Mosaic Law. Verse 11 says they accused him of blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Verse 13 tells us that the false witnesses came forward and lied about what Stephen had taught. In verse 14 we're informed that they were misquoting Stephen's words. Just as they twisted the words of Jesus Christ, they were twisting the words of His servant Stephen. Stephen was accused of preaching that Jesus was going to destroy the temple and alter the Mosaic Law. The concluding verse in the chapter says that the Council, as they gazed on Stephen's face, saw Stephen's face as that of an angel.

Please read the 7th chapter of Acts. We will be seeing how this man of God handled his defense before the Sanhedrin. The title of

the next lesson will be "Stephen Gives The Sanhedrin a History Lesson." Be with us next time. Maranatha!



STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

How is Your Prayer-Life?

How would you grade yourself? Would you give yourself a "high" or a "low" mark? Do you thrill over joys received from the Lord because you brought your burdens and problems to Him in fervent prayer? Did you, in your earlier walk as a New Believer, pray regularly and daily, but then, gradually began to slaken-off, until your prayer-life began to give way to "other activities" in the busy whirl of things and events that really don't satisfy the hungry heart?

If you have given yourself a "minus" instead of a "plus" grade, may I offer some suggestions that may help? (I'll try)

First, may I ask, "Where's your Bible?" Is it on the shelf sandwiched in between a "lot of other books?" Have you opened it, today, seeking comfort and guidance? Do you just "flip it open," at random, and read a few verses, just to try to satisfy your conscience, or have you sat down and read it, praying, first, for the Lord to give you understanding and appreciation for what He has for you? Do you become discouraged, thinking, "AW, I can't make 'heads or tails' about what I'm reading", and then just close it and put it back on the shelf? I remember that the inspired Apostle Paul, wrote to the young student, Timothy, saying, "Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give Thee understanding." (2 Tim. 2:7)

Secondly, do you go to where other Christians gather to share in the reading and study of the word, together? Bible study groups, commonly called "Sunday-school" can be of great assistance in coming to a clearer understanding and appreciation of God's message for you. Wednesday evening "Prayer-Meetings" where the Bible is studied and discussed, can be most rewarding. Sunday night gatherings with fellow Christians, add immeasurably to your growth both in understanding and love for the Author of the Book of Books. Once I glanced into a friend's Bible and noted that He had written on the fly-leaf the words: "With love, from God". Indeed, God so loves us, that He has sent us a "Love-letter, saying, "I love you"; and He so loves you and me, that He yearns to share, endless eternity with us, in unspeakable Joys and Pleasures that only He is able and desirous of providing.

Remember that there are two Beings competing with each other for our attention and obedience. One, (the infinitely greater) is our

wonderful, loving God. The other is God's enemy, Satan, (and this is also *our* miserable enemy). There is no one more determined to wreck our faith and love for God than Satan. Satan does not love us, nor care for us. Rather, he knows that if he can destroy our faith in our Lord, he can "break God's heart." Oh, how he tried to discourage our Lord Jesus from accomplishing our salvation! (see Matt. 4:1-11). But, one Day, our God will destroy him "for keeps" (Rev. 20). In the mean-while, Satan wins "too many victories"—He is blinding the minds of the "unbelieving" (2 Cor. 4:4). And he is trying to keep you and me from keeping our eyes and ears attentively set on our "Rock of Ages"—the Lord Jesus Christ!

If Satan can just keep us "out of that Book," and "up, off our knees" praying to our God, robbing us of peace and joy, how he must gloat and grin with satanic glee.

"Seek ye out of the Book of Jehovah and read."—(Isaiah 34:16)

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
—(Psalm 119:105)

"I will not forget Thy Word."—(Psalm 119:16b)

May these three suggestions assist you in your determination to regain the joy you once had when you first "fell in love" with your Lord Jesus:

1. Daily "feeding on His word."—See Job 23:12b.
2. Daily prayer to our mutual Lord.—I Thess. 5:17.
3. Association with fellow-Believers—Heb. 10:19-25.

Spiritual Renewal

Graham Scroggie

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

This is a very remarkable passage, and cannot be studied too carefully or too often. The subject is Spiritual Renewal, and three things are said about it: the *blessing* of it; the *method* of it; and the *condition* of it.

Take a look at this as a whole, and then contemplate each part.

The Blessing of Spiritual Renewal. "Though our outward man is wasting away, our inward (man) is being renewed day by day."
(v. 16)

The Method of Spiritual Renewal. "For the momentary lightness of our affliction (tribulation) is working-out for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."

The Condition of Spiritual Renewal. "(So long as) we are not regarding attentively the things that are seen, but the things not seen, for the things seen are transient, but the things not seen are eternal."

THE BLESSING OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL (v. 16)

It is shown, first of all, that spiritual renewal is a *great reality*. When Paul speaks of our two men, the 'outward,' and the 'inward,' he does not mean the 'old' and the 'new,' nor the 'flesh' and the 'spirit,' but the 'body' and the 'soul.' The 'outward man' is related to the seen

and the temporal, and the 'inward man,' to the unseen and eternal. The former is yielding to a gradual process of decay, and soon must pass away; but the latter, the regenerate personality, is rising, through successive stages of renewal, to yet higher life.

Our outward man is perishing, as we all well know. We begin to waste as soon as we are born, and what we can best spare is the first to decay. This fact should never be forgotten, and should keep us humble. But so far as the Christian is concerned this is only a part of the truth, and the least important part. While our outward man is perishing our inward man is being renewed, and the former promotes the latter.

Bengel, near the end of his course, said to a friend:

"When our spiritual lamp burns dimly it is often because its wick needs retrenching, and retrenchments are made from time to time upon the 'outward man' by sickness and affliction."

The wearing down of the body works (or should work) the upbuilding of the soul. We eat, and sleep, and work, yes, and decay, for the sake of the soul. Physical waste may and should promote spiritual growth.

The next thing we are told is that spiritual renewal is a *gradual process*. All growth is progressive, and the finer the organism, the longer the process.

It is from measure to measure: thirty-fold, sixty-fold, a hundred-fold. It is from stage to stage: 'first the blade, then the ear, and after that, the full corn in the ear. And it is from day to day. How varied these are! There are great days, days of decisive battles, days of crisis in spiritual history, days of triumph in Christian service, days of the right hand of God upon us.

A further thought is here, and it forms a climax: spiritual renewal is a *glorious triumph*: 'though . . . yet.' These words are of frequent occurrence. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.' 'Though he were dead, yet shall he live.' 'Though now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice.' 'Though the fig tree blossom not, nor fruit be in the vines; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet will I rejoice in the Lord.

In this way the inward defies the outward. But it also employs it. All life is fed by death. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." "He saved others; and himself he cannot save."

If the outward man did not perish, the inward man would not be renewed. The more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows.

And this further—just because the inward defies and employs the outward, it outlives it. The body is only the tent, but the soul is the tenant, and the tenant continues after the tent is blown down.

THE METHOD OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL (v. 17)

Spiritual renewal is by affliction, from which no Christian is exempt. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." "I have refined thee, but not with silver. I have chosen thee in the furnace of afflic-

tion." Paul knew what he was talking about, for he was a great sufferer. Read 2 Cor. 4:7-11, and 11:23-28, and then hear this man say, "Our light affliction."

None of us can escape affliction, but it is terribly possible for us to miss its meaning and benefits.

Affliction rightly borne is a converting energy—it worketh glory. The purpose of affliction is to make a crown out of a cross. It is after we have suffered awhile that we are made perfect. Affliction is not an inevitable evil, after enduring which we shall be recompensed with glory, but, rather, it is the ladder up to glory.

Let us remember, then, that the affliction which is preparing glory for us, is also preparing us for glory.

The more spiritual we become, the more shall we regard afflictions as both 'light' and 'momentary'; the light producing weight, and the momentary, the eternal.

O Joy, that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I climb the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.
O Cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

But our passage has one more thing to say, about

THE CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL (v. 18)

It is not a matter of course that the afflicted are better for their painful experiences. Many, indeed, are the worse for them. Affliction worketh glory *so long as* we do not fix our attention upon the seen, but upon the unseen.

Two sets of objects are ever competing for our attention; on the one hand, the temporal and material, and, on the other hand, the eternal and spiritual; and to one or other of these we must direct our attention.

We cannot concentrate on both these objects at the same time, for they exclude one another as objects of devotion. The unregenerate person regards attentively only the temporal and material, but every Christian should have as the objects of his desire and devotion the eternal and spiritual.

Eternity is not an extension of time, but is now; and whether we are looking at things seen, or at things unseen. If we are looking at the wrong thing, our outward man is perishing, and we are not being renewed; but if with the eyes of faith and love we are occupied in time with the eternal, and in the midst of material things, with the spiritual, then what the text affirms is our experience, for we are carrying with us a standard which dwindles the duration and lightens the pressure of the most crushing sorrow, and turns every pain into gain. Here lies the profoundest secret of the Christian life.

THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS

Trevor Mabery

Thanksgiving appears between seasons as a holiday with a mood all its own.

“Thanksgiving comes,” observes Emily Dickinson, “a little this side of snow and that side of haze.”

For many of us in our society, Thanksgiving is a happy time featuring footballs and butterballs—a word applicable both to the consumed and the consumer. As we sit as spectators in the world’s events, however, our mood tends to sadden. The recession lingers, and the peace weakens. Solzhenitsyn gives us a few years at most before nuclear war.

Cronkite says, “We exist in a leaderless world.” Israel’s Prime Minister Begin once told the Knesset, “The ultimate answer to the pressures of our current situation is for the Messiah to come and rescue us.”

We would do well to remember Abraham Lincoln’s words in his Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863.

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us. We have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

May God give us the grace and humility to heed these words and those of the psalmist who said, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving. Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand” (Psalm 95:2, 7 NASB).

As we review our blessings at this special time of the year, friendships are remembered among the choicest of them . . . and particularly friendship with God, available because of the death and resurrection of Christ for us.

If you have not done so already, this Thanksgiving would be a perfect time to enter into God’s friendship by accepting His offer of the gift of eternal life. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

That’s an offer that deserves our acceptance and merits our gratitude. As the Bible says, “Thanks be unto God for His indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

ACTS: THE GENESIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now what does that mean? Well, Genesis means, "beginning." That's what the first book of the Bible is—a book of beginnings. But the Book of Acts also qualifies as 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 confusion 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.

—Tom Thurman: Minister, Mason
Church of Christ in *The Chronicle*

THE TABLE OF THE LORD

Christ . . . is sacrificed for us. (1 Cor. 5:7).

Between creation and the incarnation of Christ there is one small but important object, and altar of sacrifice. Between the first coming and the second coming is another small object, the table of the Lord.

The altar of sacrifice refers back to the creation and the fall of man and forward to the incarnation and the cross of Christ. Every victim that bled upon the altar reminded men of their sin, of Adam's fall, the disaster that overtook the race. It also pointed forward to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world.

Likewise the table of the Lord has a double reference—backward to the cross, forward to the coming of the Lord. Every time we sit down at the Lord's table the body and blood of our Lord, represented in the bread and the cup, point back to his cross and forward to His second coming.

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

—A. T. Pierson in *The Alliance Witness*

POEM: MARAN-ATHA

Christians in olden times would greet
Each other with the word so sweet,
Which cheered them as they would repeat—
Maran-atha.

And we today need it as well:
Oh, way we to each other tell
The joyous news like silvery bell—
Maran-atha.

The days are darkening, chill and drear,
"Twill calm our hearts and dry each tear,

And give to us good hope and cheer-
Maran-atha.

“Twill lend new vigor to our life,
And quicken us amid the strife,
Make us with faith and courage rife-
Maran-atha.

Behold, He cometh! Soon we'll hear
The trumpet call so loud and clear,
And we shall see our Saviour dear,
Our Blessed Lord.

We'll rise to meet Him in the air,
Like Him, we'll be so wondrous fair,
And with Him, too, forever there-
So saith His Word.

Oh! glorious hope, Oh! watchword grand,
Our coming Lord is now at hand!
He'll gather all the ransomed band
For whom He died,

And place them where, in garments white,
They'll shine in glory pure and bright,
For evermore in heavenly light,
Close by His side.

Behold, He cometh! Every day
Let us walk softly, watch and pray,
Upon our hearts His promise stay-
Maran-atha.

Then if the days should darker grow,
We will not fear, but onward go,
Rejoicing, for we surely know-
Maran-atha.

—Alan E. Redpath

THE MIND OF CHRIST

(A study of Phil. 2)

1. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, has a mind, as God, to empty Himself, and, as man, to humble Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Verses 5-11.

2. Paul, an apostle, manifested the mind of Christ in his willingness to be “offered upon the sacrifice and service” of the Philippian brethren’s faith. Verse 17, 18.

3. Timothy, a preacher, had the mind of Christ. Of him, Paul said, “For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.” Verses 20, 21.

4. Epaphroditus, a brother, had the mind of Christ. “For the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me. Verses 25, 30.

The Son of God, an apostle, a preacher, and a brother all had the same sacrificial mind. Most assuredly every Christian is included in Paul’s admonition to have the mind of Christ. —J. R. Clark

Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

MATTHEW:

Human Tradition vs Holy Scripture

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Matthew 15:1-20

The extensive healing ministry of the Lord Jesus had now come to the attention of the leaders in Jerusalem, and it became necessary for them to do something drastic to stop the growing attraction of the people to the prophet from Nazareth.

The attack against Him, therefore, becomes organized, vicious, and heated. Pharisees and scribes came up from Jerusalem in order to find fault with Him and his teaching. In this way they hoped to destroy His influence.

These hypocritical and offensive leaders soon find the issue they want. They raise the question of ceremonial hand rinsing before meals, for it appears that the disciples did not honor such traditions of the elders. Thus, the issue of the traditions of men versus the commandments of God is raised, and the battle is joined. The conflict will persist amid deepening enmity all the way to the crucifixion at Jerusalem.

The present-day application of the conflict is manifold, because our age is characteristically an age of religious externalism, filled as it is with church-going, sermon-listening, tithe-giving, choir-singing, candle-lighting, and other religious activities. One of the older rabbis, Rabbi Nathan, once said, "If the hypocrites were divided into ten parts, nine would be found in Jerusalem, and one in the world beside." Perhaps he was right, but the same thing could be said of the Gentiles in many Protestant lands today. The traditions of men have become more important than the Word of God, and service of God with the lips has taken precedence over the service of the heart.

THE QUESTION REGARDING TRADITION

The paragraph opens with the coming of the Pharisees and the scribes from Jerusalem. Finding occasion for criticism, they say, "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread?" (15:2).

Now, it is true that the Old Testament contains a great deal of instruction that concerned the washing and bathing of the parts of the body. For example, the people were to wash their garments before the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai (cf. Exod. 19:10-11). The priests were to bathe before performing various priestly duties (cf. Lev. 15:5-27; 16:26-28; 17:7, 8, 19), and Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands before accomplishing their duties in the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 30:17-21). And, finally, under certain circumstances the Law prescribed hand-washing for the people in general, namely, when coming in contact with corpses and certain diseases (cf. Lev. 15:11; Deut. 21:6). Nowhere, however, is there any commandment

that prescribed hand-washing *for everyone, nor in connection with every meal*. The Pharisees, however, made this human injunction a matter of strict emphasis (cf. Mark 7:3-4). Thus, they had added to the law of God laws of men.

There was a great body of teaching that had gradually been added to the teaching of the Law of Moses. It had to do with the application of the Law to particular situations, and it contained exposition of the important texts of the Law. This material called the *Mishnah* (from a word meaning *to repeat*; the material was taught by repetition). Since the *Mishnah* itself needed elucidation, commentaries on the *Mishnah* were written, called the *Gemara* (from a word meaning *to complete*). Finally, rabbinical schools at Jerusalem and in Babylonia combined the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara*, producing the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds (from a word meaning *to learn* and *to teach*). The Babylonian Talmud is much larger and is considered more authoritative than the Jerusalem Talmud. The result of this work aided in the transformation of biblical Judaism from a system of grace by God to prepare for the coming Messianic King, into a system of legalism, by which men gained merit before God by acts of piety not prescribed by the Word of God. Outward conformity to the traditions of men was substituted for inward glad obedience to His word.

We may wonder how it is possible for tradition to attain such a place among the people of God, but it did, and it still does, as we shall see. Some of the rabbis said, "The words of the elders are weightier than the words of the prophets." And the Talmud says that Moses received the oral Law at Sinai and handed it on to men of the Great Synagogue through Joshua, the elders, and the prophets. The men of the synagogue commanded three things, "Be deliberate in judgment; raise up many disciples; and make a fence for the Law." The fence consisted of a vast number of precepts and prohibitions to supplement and protect the written Law.

Some ridiculous ideas were allowed to become a part of the human tradition. For example, it was supposed that there was a demon by the name of *Shibta* who "sits upon men's hands during the night, and if any person touches his food with unwashed hands, then that demon sits upon his food, and makes it dangerous."

The traditions of men become mixed with the commandments of God in every age. The pity is that often they are given equal status with the Word of God by church dogma. The Council of Trent claims for the Romish traditions that "they are to be held with the same pious affection and reverence" as the Holy Scriptures (sess. 4, decr. 1). To add traditions that come from men to the holy Word of God, however, is like putting paint upon a diamond. Martin Luther has compared the interpretation of Scripture by tradition to the straining of milk through a coal sack.

THE RETORT OF OUR LORD

The accusation of transgression (15:3-6). The reply of the Lord is designed to turn the tables on them. In effect, He says "My disciples are transgressing, it is true, but they are not transgressing the Word of God, only the traditions of men. You are transgressing also,

and your transgressions are against something infinitely more important, —the Word of God.” The “ye also” refers to the transgressing, of which both are guilty. His answer is an aggressive attack. As Luther says, “He answers their bolt with a counterbolt!”

To illustrate His charge the Lord refers to the commandment of the Decalogue to honor one’s father and mother (cf. Exod. 20:12), the fifth commandment. It is clear that to honor one’s parents involved more than just respect; it involved support of them when they were in need. But the Pharisees and scribes had devised a wicked way by which children might avoid giving them aid. If the parent expressed need for something possessed by their children, all the children had to say was, “It’s a gift,” meaning by that phrase that it is dedicated to God. He was, then, released from the requirement of honoring his parents by giving them aid. Of course, the material things were not really given to God. They were simply promised to Him. In the meantime he could keep them for himself.

One can then see why the Lord adds, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (v. 6b). Hendriksen adds, “That this was no exaggeration is clear from the passage in the Talmud, ‘To be against the words of the scribes is more punishable than to be against the word of the Bible.’”

The result of this shuffling of words was that one was bound by his words of sacred dedication, irreverently and malevolently offered, to withhold assistance from his parents. He must keep his word, of course. But, and this is the evil of the tradition, he was not bound to fulfil his vow to God and hand over the goods to the treasury of the temple! One of the old students of Judaism has written, “He was not at all bound by these words to dedicate his estate to sacred uses; but not to help his father he was inviolably bound. O EXCELLENT DOCTRINE AND CHARITY!”

The documentation from the Word (15:7-9). When people, under the guise of piety and religion, teach others to evade the Word of God, then they deserve the sharpest words of condemnation for their hypocrisy, and that is precisely what Jesus gives them. He cites Isaiah 29:13 in the form in which it is found in the Greek Old Testament, finding in the prophet’s judgment of the nation in his day the same propensities for departure from the Word. They regarded their outward form the Lord in the way that pleased them, not in the way in which He had prescribed in His Word. They regarded their outward form of spirituality as sufficient to please God, even though in the inner man they had not love for him. Thus, they were “hypocrites” (v. 7). And their worship was “in vain” (v. 9), that is futile. It did not honor God, nor did it benefit them.

As Matthew Henry put it, it was “piety, but from the teeth outwards.” One of the older commentators said that the power of petition is not found in the roof of the mouth, but in the root of the heart. He referred to the same thing that Henry did.

THE ADMONITION OF THE LORD

The principle declared (15:10-11). After the rebuke of the Pharisees and the scribes, the attention of the Lord is turned to the multi-

tudes. He turns from the critics, who were nearer Him, to the crowds and asks them to come closer. He felt that He had something of importance to say to them, so He said, "Hear, and understand" (v. 10). It was something that had to do with the very essence of spiritual truth.

In the earlier part of the section the Pharisees had suggested by their remarks about the rinsing of the hands before eating that, if ritual cleansing had not taken place, then defiled food entered the eater. In other words, that which came from outside defiled the man who ate. The Lord contends for the opposite. It is not that which goes into a man that defiles him, it is that which comes out of the man. Defilement, therefore, comes from the heart (cf. vv. 18-19).

The Lord places the emphasis where it belongs. Moral defilement, not ceremonial defilement, is the important thing (cf. 5:3, 4, 6, 17; 9:13; 12:7, 50). And, as far as the Old Testament ritual is concerned, even there it was obedience from the heart that really counted. The outward ritual obedience was vain, if there was not obedience from the heart.

William Hendriksen has suggested that there may be a word here for the environmentalists, who warn, and justly, against air and water pollution. Perhaps mouth pollution and heart pollution is a more ominous peril.

The offence to the Pharisees (15:12-14). At this point the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" (v. 12). Evidently they refer not simply to the preceding word in verse eleven, but to the preceding section as a whole. The immaturity of the disciples is seen here, for they seem to be offering Jesus advice, suggesting that it was not wise for Him to offend the Jewish leaders. It is a testimony to the boldness of the Lord that He did not hesitate to do just that, if the testimony to the Word of God demanded it. The disciples were more concerned for the feelings of the leaders than they were for the purity of the Word of God. Later, after the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, they, too, shall act with the boldness of the Lord Himself. Immaturity shall be replaced by maturity.

The statement of the Lord in verse thirteen, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," is one of those strong statements of the Lord Jesus that affirm His belief in the doctrine of UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION. The Father is pictured as planting a plant, a figure that refers to those who belong to Him, who are saved by Him, and who are kept saved by Him. Those growths not planted by Him shall be destroyed, that is, lost. We are reminded of previous passages in the Gospel, such as those that refer to the tares (cf. 13:25, 39; cf. 11:25-27). The figure, then, affirms that there are two classes of people and that the salvation of some is of the Lord.

In the fourteenth verse the Lord Jesus warns the disciples against those whom the Father has not planted, the Pharisees. The warning itself is expressed bluntly, "Let them alone." One is reminded of Hosea's great word, "Ephraim is joined to idols; (you, Judah) let him

alone" (4:17). It is a call to SEPARATION FROM EVIL AND EVIL DOCTRINE. Loyalty to God must not be compromised. Tolerance may be high treason to the Most High, so no complicity with evil can be allowed. Is this what Paul means when he writes, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel" (2 Cor. 6:14-15)? At times, in order to preserve the purity of the flock, it is better to "thin the ranks"!

It is the literal interpretation of this word of counsel, "Let them alone," that produced the Reformation.

The section concludes with a judgment passed upon them, that is, the Pharisees. They are blind leaders of the blind. Only the blind follow them, and both shall fall into the ditch.

The principle explained (15:15-20). Jesus now received a response from the spokesman of the Twelve, the Apostle Peter. He asks for an explanation of the aphorism of verse eleven about defilement.

The reply of the Lord contains, first of all, a rebuke for their failure to grasp the significance of His saying about the preeminence of moral defilement over ritual defilement. That the Pharisees should be blind may be understandable, but that they, the disciples, should be without understanding, that is surprising. Cf. John 14:9.

Then, second, the Lord Jesus points out that everything that enters the mouth is ultimately eliminated from the body. Modern science can find nothing in our Lord's statement to fault. The heart is not touched by foods, and the person, therefore, cannot be defiled by them. On the other hand, the words that fall from man's lips have their source in the heart, the core and center of our being. If these are evil, they defile the man.

The point is made more strongly in verse nineteen. Jesus says, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts (cf. vv. 4-6!), murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The depraved heart is the source of evil, not human practices that touch the body only.

The last verse of the section concludes with an implied exhortation to pay attention to the things that really matter rather than the ritualistic trivialities of the traditions of men.

We should not close without pointing out certain obvious truths in summary.

First, the Lord stresses the sinfulness of man-made traditions that are not anchored in the Word of God. They shift authority from God to man. They exaggerate the human self and direct attention away from God. And they substitute stress on the hand for the heart. John Flavel once said, "He that pins his faith on another man's sleeve knows not whither he will carry it."

Second, that leads naturally to the obverse of the preceding, namely, the supremacy of the Word of God over the tradition (cf. vv. 3, 6).

Third, the passage has the greatest significance for the Christian

church today, for it calls upon all who profess allegiance to Jesus Christ to test their doctrines and practices by the Word of God.

What shall we say of the Mass? The Confessional? Papal Infallibility? The Immaculate Conception? The Assumption of Mary?

And what shall we say of Protestant ecclesiasticism? Of Lent? Of the tithing? Of the pledge system? Of the altar call? Of the policy of the great majority of our churches? Of the nature of the church meeting?

It is sickness of the heart that leads to the stress upon the outward rather than upon the inward, that pays more attention to the words and taboos of men than to the Word of God. And it is blindness that fails to discern that the source of evil and defiling wickedness is not in the things that enter the mouth, or in outward practices, but in the heart. The heart! The heart! May God answer our prayer, "Let MY HEART BE SOUND in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."

NEWS AND NOTES

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

OBITUARY

SISTER ENA COVEY ALLEN

Portland Avenue Church lost one of its oldest members, in the home-going of Sister J. D. Allen, on September 30.

Having had a short stay in a Louisville hospital in the treatment of a fractured shoulder joint, Sister Allen had gone to her daughter, Roberta's home near Brookville, Indiana, to recuperate. While there, she developed other symptoms, and was taken to a local hospital, where she died of heart failure. Those at her bedside reported that she slipped away peacefully, during conversation, without a sound.

Surviving and honoring her are her four daughters, Roberta Kranz, Louise Wells, Allene Houtz, and Sara Jean Browning, and three step-sons, Argyll, Winston, and Dennis Allen, together with 11 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

I recall that when Brother Tona Covey died in 1952, one missionary said that he was one of the "lights along the shore that never grow dim." Well said! And Sister Ena was part of that light, and hers has continued to shine until now. May the Lord bless her memory to all of us who had the privilege of Christian fellowship with her.

—Robert Heid

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Brethren have been more than generous with us in the matter of helping with medical expenses. In the same day's mail which brought the September issue of **Word and Work** we received funds forwarded by the Southeast Church which **totally** met our obligations. Since that issue carried a copy of a letter they had sent out, we wanted the readers of the magazine to know that, barring some prolonged future need, we no longer required help. Because of the time lag in the appearance of the news item and the fact that

some might be reading of the matter for the first time, we thought it good to send this note.

We would also like to use this means to thank each individual and each church which has so generously responded. Whatever weaknesses may exist among us, it cannot be said that there is not a great measure of love and concern. We have been overwhelmed by the Lord's goodness through His people.

Sincerely in Him,
Carl & Phyllis Kitzmiller