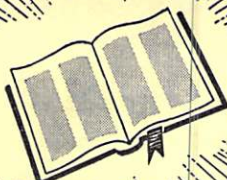
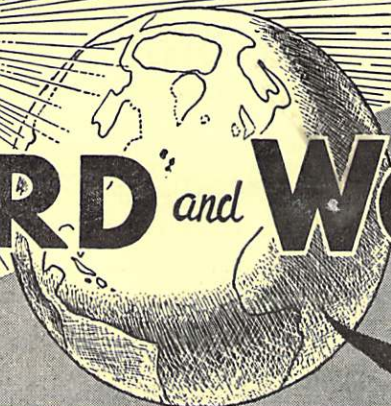


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The **WORD** and **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of life."

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THE WORD AND WORK

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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.

REGENERATION AND THE NEW BIRTH

Recently I received a letter from a beloved missionary brother in Africa, enclosing also an article for publication in Word and Work, for the purpose of correcting some false impressions that had been disseminated in our May issue. I appreciated the letter and the article, and we are printing the article elsewhere in this issue. However, I believe that there is a reason for the conflicting presentation of truths, and part of the reason is in the use of terms that are of a more flexible meaning than either of the writers seem to allow. For example, one asked the question: "What is it to be born again, to be born from above, to be regenerated?" The point seems to be that all three words mean the same thing and are accomplished at the same point of time. And yet, the three references that are given to define regeneration are John 1:13, "who were born (Gr., begotten) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (2) I Peter 1:23, "having been begotten again, through the Word of God." (3) Eph. 2:5, "made us alive together with Christ."

There needs to be a more explicit definition of terms, if the time element is going to become the issue. Webster gives the meaning of regeneration as a new birth or conversion. If we accept this definition, then I would like to introduce the word "begotten" into the discussion. This Greek word, *gennao* which is really at the base of the entire study, has two distinct meanings. When dealing with the male, it denotes begetting. When used in a feminine setting, it means to give birth to. Who would deny that, at least in nature, there is a time gap between the two?

WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

In the courts of the United States, there has been posed a vital question: "When does life begin?" Biologically, we believe that it begins at the time of conception, and this has brought up the controversy about the "right to life" of the unborn. But on the other hand, for legal records and tax status, the date of birth is the time point. Are not both to be considered? The real issue becomes, "what point in time are you wanting to talk about?" For example, a man is acknowledged to be the father of a child long before it is born. Even the stillborn are buried with the name of their father on the records. This is all to say that begetting is a distinct occasion, and the forerunner of birth. Some of the passages that we group together loosely as teaching "the new birth" really should be considered in the sense of

"Begotten again." And it is interesting to see the various places where the American Standard version uses the word "begotten." There are eighteen of them. I will list only a few:

"That which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." "The Holy thing which is begotten, shall be called the Son of God." "... gave His only begotten Son." "Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." "Begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." "he that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him." "he that loveth Him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of Him." "whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not."

In First Peter, 1:23 we read that we are "Begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." The first step into the grace of God, is when the living Word is presented by the written word or the spoken word. This is what we call hearing the gospel. Jesus calls it the drawing, by the Father. James (1:21) says that we receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls. This definitely puts the receiving ahead of the salvation but it is just as evident that the word genders salvation. Let us cite Hebrews 4:2:

"For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they; but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard." This reminds us that many seeds, both in plant and animal kingdom, never are properly received to bear fruit. That the word is active in our salvation is evident from Eph. 5:26, "having cleansed it (the church) by the washing of water with the word." Church members, then, were cleansed with water in the manner set out in, and in obedience to, the words that led them to such obedience.

BEGOTTEN OF THE SPIRIT

Surely, it is God's Holy Spirit that begins the entire process. "He, when he is come, shall convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

Jesus said, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how."—Mark 4:26, 27.

Those who hear the word and receive it are begotten of the Word, that is, begotten of the Father. Some time (as we sleep and rise night and day) is needed, and who is to say how much time, before fruit is borne? Evangelists everywhere report their meetings, often saying, "No visible results were to be counted, but the seed was sown." Just so. Paul sowed, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase! If we likened the seed to the word, we may also liken the watering to the soft penetration of the Holy Spirit. He has not put Himself into any sort of box, so that He cannot work until He indwells an obedient believer.

All of this writing is to point out that we ought not try to settle at what point of time "regeneration" takes place. If you mean being "begotten by the word" that is one point of time; if you mean "Being raised to walk in newness of life (what else but "new birth"?)", then that time has already been labeled for us in Romans 6:1-6. "If any

man is in Christ, he is a new creature" 2 Cor. 5:17. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ" Gal. 3:27.

There is a being begotten, and there is a new birth. And they come in that order. Sleeping and rising night and day, we "know not how." Thank God that we can and have accepted both by faith.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Is it a sin to smoke?

This question deals with smoking tobacco, of course—not marijuana or other mind-altering drugs. While we are dealing with this, we should also treat the use of tobacco in ways other than smoking and whether or not it is right to grow it. Surely if it is wrong to use it, then it is wrong to grow it or traffic it.

The whole question of tobacco is a bit like some of the questions asked of Jesus in an attempt to trap him. I do not mean that the one asking this question intended to trap me or put me on the spot, but it is evident that there is a good chance of alienating some people with the answer. With quite a few people, the whole issue lies not very far from a sensitive nerve. All I can do is give the answer that I believe to be correct and hope that those who have honest differences with it will be big enough to allow me that privilege. The answer is mine, and I can only guess to what extent it is endorsed by the editor or other contributors to this magazine. I have not discussed it with them.

I have never used tobacco in any form, but I grew up on a farm where it was raised and where in lean years it provided the largest and almost only cash income we had. Some of my memories include the hard work and almost utter exhaustion of harvesting it and the cold and damp weather in which it was "handed off." It has put clothes on my back and helped with my education. If I were farming today in a tobacco-raising area I would find some other crop to serve as a cash crop, but I relate the background to say that I am not totally unfamiliar with the uncritical acceptance of this product by many people. I have lived long enough to know some fine Christian people who used, raised, or trafficked in tobacco. Some of these have done so with honest convictions that there was nothing wrong therein. Others have been victims of habit which they wished to defend or a financial need which they thought justified their actions. They are not altogether comfortable with their practice, but they rationalize that it is not too bad.

In some measure the answer to the question involves opinion. There is no specific "thou shalt not" which can be recited. We can point out, of course, that a Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit or the importance of a good example, but we cannot point out a specific, direct prohibition as to tobacco. That can be said for a number of other things as well, however—things which are clearly wrong. We must be ready to make an honest attempt to apply the principles God gives. The Christian ought to be concerned with what is Christ-like, what glorifies and honors Him, and what love for Him and His people decrees.

I am aware of the danger of a righteousness determined by the clothing we wear, the length of our hair, the food we eat, etc. We can be so concerned with certain external issues that we fail to stress the "weightier matters" (cf. Matt. 23:23). The word declares that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking (or by inference, external things), but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). If I had to choose between a tobacco user who manifests a deep love for and joy in spiritual things or a non-user whose chief attainment is in what he does not do, then I'd choose the former. But that dodges the issue. If something is wrong and represents the devil's work in my life, then whatever else may be right, the wrong does not belong in my life as a Christian. We must quit trying to trade off a good point for a wrong or allowing ourselves questionable things because we have strong points in other areas.

In the light of modern medical and scientific discovery and experience, it is very difficult to excuse the tobacco habit as one without physical significance. Yes, I know there are those who have used tobacco and lived to be a hundred. They are the fortunate ones who escaped either because of moderate usage or a physical heredity that left them largely unaffected. But I have also seen men literally gasping for breath because of emphysema or people dying of cancer—both caused by tobacco. Some of these will be quick to tell you that they sinned against their bodies and that they would like to be able to go back and change that portion of their life. As a rule, we do *not know how destructive the tobacco habit will be with us until it is too late to do much about reversing the damage.* To destroy the temple of God, a Christian's body, is a sin (1 Cor. 3:17). The chances that we are doing so with tobacco are too great to risk. Yes, we may destroy that body in other ways—which are no less sin. There is intemperance, overindulgence, undue stress, etc. Tobacco has the distinction of not being needed at all, however. No one contends that it does anything good for us. It is a filthy, expensive habit without merit.

Whether we like to face the fact or not, the use of tobacco tends to hinder the Christian's testimony. There are multitudes of unregenerate people and plenty of nominal Christians who sense that the real-honest-to-goodness Christian ought not use it. I confess a certain disappointment myself when I see an otherwise good Christian indulging the habit. I know that a smoking preacher or elder is less effective, at least with some people. Even if the usage falls short of outright sin then, it is a matter of concern in dealing with the weaker

person. Paul renounced things not wrong in themselves when they caused stumbling, and he admonished us to do likewise. This alone, it seems to me, is a sufficient reason to cause the Christian to abstain from tobacco.

Not everyone who uses tobacco is as offensive in its use as some, to be sure, but there is a grip the habit has on people (the need for a bit of nicotine) which tends to utter selfishness. I have been approached by beggars whose story was that the body needed milk, but the father had a package of cigarettes in his shirt pocket or the mother pulled one out of a purse. Yes, the baby will go without milk before the addict will give up his habit. Many of us have seen the devious ways those on food stamps manage to get tobacco. I recently witnessed a woman flaunt a "No Smoking" sign in a hospital, blowing fumes in the face of others, including sick babies. We all know these things are not much of an exception to the common practice. Regulations are coming to the aid of the non-smoker, but many smokers tend to regard their fouling of the air as a right not to be denied.

Is it a sin to smoke? For me it would be. I cannot do so by faith. Moreover, I am probably alive today (aside from the purpose of God) because I never smoked, surviving complications from surgery because I had very healthy lungs. With my understanding of the effects of tobacco on the average human body and the effects of the habit on others, I believe I would be sinning to use (and, therefore, to grow or traffic in) tobacco in any form. If that makes me a weaker brother (per Rom. 14 or 1 Cor. 10) then so be it. I do not really believe it does.

On the other hand, I know there are Christians who are not persuaded their usage is sin. They see this as no worse than drinking a cup of coffee or a coke. To some of these the concern is regarded as a petty thing, not worthy of attention. Now we know some things are sin regardless of one's outlook on it, but there are other things which are sin solely because of the way we regard them. The use of tobacco for some people may fall into the latter category. I myself doubt that the use of tobacco under the usual circumstances is the kind of thing which keeps people out of heaven. It does not necessarily speak of the failure of faith. Because of God's grace and their faith, I certainly expect to see some tobacco users in heaven—no longer spitting on the streets or fouling the air, but saved!

It may be that for some this is not a distinct sin, but a *weight*. In Heb. 12:1 we are admonished to lay aside those things which hinder us in the Christian race—every weight, along with the sin which besets us. I cannot conceive of tobacco as making us better Christians. If it is not a sin, is it not a hindering weight? Many growing, maturing Christians tend to lay aside the use of tobacco. Why? Is it not that they realize it is a hindrance and possibly a sin? I try to be tolerant in the matter, knowing there are more serious issues. I want to see people drop the habit, not because of my convictions, however, but because of theirs. I try to discourage young people from forming the habit because I know it is hard to break and that non-use is the best thing for them and because I am convinced this is not God's will for any life. But in the final sense, let each one be persuaded in

his own mind—not from human surmises or wishes but from the pattern of life laid down for the Christian in the New Testament. To his own Lord each one will have to answer.

113 N. 6th St., Oakdale, La. 71463



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

EDUCATION IN THE FALL OF 1983 WILL BE the primary activity of more than 60.2 million Americans according to Secretary of Education Terrel Bell. Nearly 3.3 million people will be employed as classroom teachers while 300,000 will be acting in administrative and supervisory positions. This year the bill for education is expected to reach \$230 billion which is up from \$215 billion last year. The Federal government is expected to pay 9 percent of this bill with 39 percent coming from state government and 24 percent from local governments. Tuition and fees, endowment earnings, and private gifts and grants account for 28 percent. What happened to "free public education?" Don't get me wrong—it is worth everything it costs to teach Johnny to read. But is that what we are getting for the education dollar?

REMEMBER ZBIGNIEW BREZINSKI, PRESIDENT CARTER'S National Security advisor? Speaking on Mr. Carter's sanctions on the Soviet Union after the invasion of Afghanistan, the former advisor said: "... the sanctions involved across-the-board sacrifices by American athletes, American businessmen, and American farmers. No one group was singled out, but all of it accumulatively reflected American determination to discourage aggression. What is truly distasteful is Secretary Block crawling on his knees to Moscow." This administration, however, is determined to send grain to the Russian pilots who are expert at destroying unarmed planes filled with civilians. So, it was not surprising that the pres-

ident and his representatives were someplace else than at the Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. when grieving friends of Congressman McDonald met for a memorial service for this arch conservative and anti-communist.

AUTHOR ROBERT MOSS REPORTS THAT the prosperity of the Cuban exiles in South Florida is a bone in Castro's throat, and that he has sworn to destroy that community. A year or so ago he had a videotape made of this community, and he passes some of the time he finds sleep escaping him in the night watching and fuming over it. He refers to these fortunate Cubans as *gusanos* or "worms."

REMEMBER THE SNAIL DARTER? By court order, work on the Tennessee Valley Authority's Tellico Dam was post-poned for more than two years because of testimony of environmentalists to the effect that the flooding of the river might damage the habitat of the tiny snail darter, which reportedly was dangerously near extinction. By an act of Congress the Tellico area was exempted from the endangered species law. Now, it has been found, that there are so many darters in other areas of the state that the fish has been removed from the endangered list. Taxpayers, the postponement was quite costly, and who, do you suppose, foots the bill? Not the tiny group of environmentalists who caused it all, and are free to pull the same shenanigans over some other stupid falsehood. Will those who are shouting for Secretary Watts' hide now call for the muffling of these troublers?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Guy Bluford the nation's first black astronaut to journey into space was asked whether he has ever considered his race to be an obstacle. "No indeed," he said, "I can't really say I had any obstacles. If I had any obstacles, they were self-made." Now, this guy really blew it. No self-respecting liberal reporter will try to talk to such a "square." Sounds like he'd make a good replacement for Watts, should the liberals get their way about him.

"IN MOST COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD," says Miguel Bolanos Hunter, "people would call a group like the Sandinistas Communists. But the Sandinistas have this mask, this cover, that they are not Communists and that they are building a pluralistic democratic Society. They are not doing that. It is just a mask. It is in fact the new strategy for introducing Communism into Latin America." Until May, 1983, Miguel was the counterintelligence officer of the Sandinista General Directorate of State Security responsible for the campaign against the U.S. Embassy. Unfortunately, Congress has a record for not seeking the kind of information available through these defectors which have held high places in the Communist regemes; it usually makes friends of the Communists who remain to carry out the Satanic plans which must have been hatched out in Hell itself.

IRISH REPUBLIC SHOWS THE WAY. By a two-to-one margin, voters back a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. Abortion, except to save the mother's life has been illegal in Ireland since 1861, but proliferated the rights of the unborn spelled out in the Constitution. The total vote of 841,233 to 416,136 was on the following amendment: "The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother guarantees in its laws to respect and, as far as practicable, by its laws to vindicate and defend that right."

SHE COULD NOT BE AN ASTRO-NAUT WITHOUT SUPPORTING feminist causes. Appearing before the South Carolina chapter of the radical National Organization for Women (N.O.W.), Sally Ride told the conference: "I don't think N.O.W. needs a message from me. My just being here is a message."

Which was the same message given by the presence of radical activists Jane Fonda and her husband Tom Hayden as invited guests at the Challenger Space Shuttle launch carrying Dr. Ride into space, June 18.

WHERE DOES THE FLAT-RATE TAX STAND? Right now, it is being debated to death. Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina discerning that present debate is focusing on the differences of the various proposals, rather than their similarities, has introduced Senate Resolution 205 to place the Senate on record as favoring the general concept of a flat-rate tax. Helms idea would have the Senate go on record in favor of a flat-rate arrangement based on six principles: 1) the tax should be "simple, understandable, and evenhanded"; 2) "No income should be taxed more than once"; 3) "All individual income subject to tax should be taxed at the same rate, and that rate should be as low as possible"; 4) "the tax base should be as broad as possible, with few, if any special tax breaks in the form of credits, deductions, and exclusions"; 5) "Personal exemptions should be provided so that the poorest households would pay no income taxes"; 6) "the overall amount of tax collected should be no greater than under the current system." I'm sure your Senators would appreciate hearing how you feel about such a plan.

Someone has put it this way: **COMMUNISM WILL NEVER BE A SUCCESS UNTIL... "UNTIL WHAT?"** an interested bystander asked... **UNTIL MORE PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO GET INTO THE SOVIET UNION THAN ARE TRYING TO LEAVE IT.**



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Identification with Christ"

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"—Romans 6:1-3, ASV

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"—Romans 6:1-3, NKJV

The last half of Romans 5 set forth the wonderful truth that while we by nature were identified or connected with our ancestor Adam and became sinners with him, all we who are Christians are now identified with Jesus Christ in His death for sin. We can now reign as kings in life. The last half of verse 20 of chapter 5 seemingly brought to Paul a question that he knew was being asked by those who heard his teaching. That half verse had said, "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." Those who have not gone on with Paul stop at this to ask, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Apparently the more sin the more grace and grace is a good thing, so why not act to have more? Paul then launches into what is the real subject of the wonderful chapter six—We are identified with Christ. When He died, we died; when He was buried, we were buried, when He arose to newness of life, so did we. God does not see us in ourselves or in Adam, but when He looks at us He sees His Son. Let us now look at how thoroughly Paul sets forth our identification with Christ in His death in this chapter.

Verse 2: "We . . . died to sin." In verse three Paul will show that this death was in Christ. Let us note here, however, that the word "died" is in a Greek tense that we do not have in English. It is the aorist tense. I do not know Greek, but those who do know it tell me that the aorist tense sets forth a definite past fact. It may not seem reasonable, and by human reasoning it is not reasonable, to say that we died in 33A.D., but let us remember that we are here speaking of what God recognizes. The present, the past, the future are all present before Him. When Christ died He knew that you would believe on His Son and so He accounted you as dying with Him. That may be a fact too wonderful to believe, but that is the essence

of faith—believing something because God said it, not because it seems reasonable.

Verse 3: “We were baptized into His death.” Paul points back to the second step in their public confession of Christ. Their verbal profession of faith was followed by being buried in the baptismal waters, a very fitting symbol of being buried as a consequence of having died.

Verse 4: “We were buried with Him through baptism into death.” Paul enlarges on the matter of burial showing forth death. When Christ was buried God looked down through the centuries at our faith resulting in baptism and counted us as having been buried with Him. We were identified with Him in His burial.

Verse 5: “We have become united with Him in the likeness of His death.” I like Conybeare’s word about this verse: “The meaning appears to be, If we have shared the reality of His death, where we have undergone the likeness” (in baptism). It is not part of our present subject, but please note now that this verse is setting forth that therefore we shall be identified with Him in resurrection. The greatest pair of events that ever occurred were the death and the resurrection of Christ, and we share in those things, we are identified with Him in both.

Verse 6: “Our old man was crucified with Him.” Our old selves, all that we were in and from Adam, was crucified with Christ. In speaking of believing this, William R. Newell well says, “Perhaps no more difficult task, no task requiring such constant vigilant attention, is assigned by God to the believer.” Our whole being cries out that this could not be. But it is so, for God says it is so. Note also that we are not told to crucify the old man but that God did that for us at the Cross. It takes humility also to realize that all we are by nature had to be crucified, it was totally rejected by God. God does not call on us to improve that nature—He crucified it. Though not our immediate subject, note in the rest of this verse that this was so the “body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” We belong to God, to Christ, not to Satan.

Verse 7: “He that hath died is justified from sin.” We will stress this in a later article, but note now that he does not say, “justified from sins,” but “justified from sin.” We have been cleared from the thing sin itself, declared righteous by God. That does not mean “sinless perfection,” but something utterly different and infinitely far beyond that. We stand before God exactly as His Son.

Verse 8: “We died with Christ.” The Holy Spirit wants to drive home to us that this is no unimportant thing and that it is a vital, living truth. We died with Christ.

Verse 11: “Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin.” It is important that we realize exactly what our position is. While in the flesh we will have an enemy seeking to drag us down. The victory will be clearer and fuller if we count ourselves to be what we are, dead unto sin.

Verse 13: “Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.” We have passed up references to our identification with Christ in life in order to stress the great subject of our identification

with Him in His death, but the consequences of dying with Him is that we live with and in Him. And we should so present ourselves to God to be used by Him. We are no longer "dead in trespasses and sins" but "alive from the dead." Take our proper place before God, Christian, that He may use you to His honor and glory.

Christian, if all this seems strange and unbelievable to you, then prayerfully read chapter six through many times until the Holy Spirit can impress upon you your true position before God in Christ. Unbeliever, how sad that you are still "dead in trespasses and sins," headed for eternal condemnation, eternal separation from God. He does not want you to continue that way. He loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son to bear your sins on the Cross so that you might have life in Christ. Come to Him and be saved.

ON TARGET

Haddon Robinson

Eight times in the broad expanse of Scripture we hear the command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The commandments to love God and to love our neighbor put the whole law in a capsule and sum up the basic ethic of our biblical faith.

Somehow, the command to love fails to get through to us. While we may confess that we lack a strong faith, seldom do we admit to a deficiency in love. Perhaps we feel we're as loving as the next fellow and a little bit more. After all, we're sensitive to the hurts of other people. We don't enjoy our morning newspaper where we read reports of molested children and battered wives in our community. We shift uneasily in front of our television sets when we catch glimpses of babies sobbing in hunger or sitting in silent despair beyond crying. If we hear the clatter of lives breaking in lonely rooms, nursing homes, alleys or prisons, we care to the point of feeling uneasy and a little guilty.

But deep inside we know that genuine caring reaches beyond feeling to action. Love is not something we give like an armful of flowers. Love is a force inside us that motivates us to give other things. Caring, like steam or electricity, isn't worth much unless something happens as a result of it.

Just before he died, Oscar Hammerstein penned a bit of verse for Mary Martin to sing:

A bell is not a bell until you ring it.
A song is not a song until you sing it.
Love in your heart is not put there to stay.
Love is not love until you give it away.

Hammerstein hit the truth on the head. We don't care if we don't act. Love not expressed in deeds doesn't really exist just as talent not expressed in creative ways doesn't exist. Neither caring nor talent is a state of mind or a feeling. Both must have expression in performance or they are a myth.

Like a talent, caring is an ability to be cultivated. Just as you learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to ski by skiing,

you begin to care as an apprentice and then give it constant practice. Some people develop ulcers because they practice hating. They see evil in other people's motives and actions because they constantly look for it. Caring too starts as an act of the will, a determination to make it a skill and a style of life. As in learning any skill, it is well to start simply. Usually people who try to be all things to all men end up being nothing much to anyone. Since they can't do everything, they don't do anything. Don't take on the needs of the world. Forget about trying to start a Jericho Road Mission Society and begin caring by pouring in oil and wine and bandaging the wounds of one suffering neighbor.

You can't do everything. Settle for that. But you can do something. What you can do, you should do and determine by the grace and power of God you will do.

Caring is easier in the company of others. That's the advantage in linking your life with a local church. Wholeness resides in the body, not in the individual parts. A church can do through all of its members what no single Christian can do alone.

In a congregation of any size at all, there will be varieties of concern and ministry. We can learn from one another, pray for one another, support one another, care for one another as we discover how best to communicate Christ's love to the world.

In a world that "couldn't care less," Christians are the people "who couldn't care more." As John put it long ago, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

Beyond Bethlehem's Manger

"Jesus Christ was born in the meanest circumstances, but the air above was filled with the hallelujahs of the heavenly host. His lodging was a cattle pen, but a star drew distinguished visitants from afar to do Him homage. His birth was contrary to the laws of life. His death was contrary to the laws of death. No miracle is so inexplicable as His life and teaching. He had no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for 5,000 and have bread and fishes to spare. . . Three years He preached His Gospel. He wrote no book, . . . had no money back of Him. After 1,900 years, He is the one central character of human history, the perpetual theme of all preaching, the pivot around which the events of the age revolve, the only regenerator of the human race. Was it merely the son of Joseph and Mary who crossed the world's horizon 1,900 years ago? Was it merely human blood that was shed on Calvary's hill for the redemption of sinners, and which has worked such wonders in men and nations through the centuries? What thinking man can keep from exclaiming, 'My Lord and my God!'"
—Selected



Faith And Regeneration

Robert L. Garrett, Sr.

The May 1983 *Word & Work* arrived here in August and as usual I immediately and eagerly skimmed through it. Then as the days went by I studied it more carefully. My delight in many good things was spoiled by the commentary on John 2:23 - 3:3 by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., specifically his teaching on the new birth in the last paragraph on page 158 and the following paragraph on page 159. I felt constrained to write this rebuttal of what I believe to be erroneous and dangerous teaching. Mr. Johnson would have done greater service to the understanding of the new birth had he limited himself to his remark "We may not be able to explain everything that transpires in the event (regeneration), but it is a fact of Christian experience." His teaching is not only astonishing but appears to come from a gross misreading of Scripture.

He states that the Bible teaches that the new birth, or regeneration, comes first, then, *after* one has been born again, one is able to believe and repent! It is, Johnson affirms, *an error of satanic deception* to teach that faith comes before regeneration! He makes the astonishing statement that "in John 1:12-13 the apostle has already stated that the *birth from God* is the *basis* for their faith and reception of the Lord Jesus, and for their *consequent installation in the family of God as His children.*" (emphasis mine). In other words a person is *first* born of God, *then, and then only*, can that person believe and accept Christ and then be installed into the family of God! This flies in the face of the simple reading of the passage concerned and the whole consensus of New Testament teaching on the subject.

Surely the reception of Christ and belief in Him are synonymous. The apostle contrasts those who rejected the Christ in verse 11 with those in verse 12 who received Him. Why did the rejectors reject Christ? Obviously because they did not believe in Him. Why did some receive Him? Because they believed in Him. This reception prompted by belief RESULTED in their being born of God. Not the other way around. The N.I.V. puts it "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born . . . of God." Mr. Johnson seems to think that being a child of God is not the same thing as being born of God. Surely if one is born of God he is at that instant a child of God, part of God's family.

He makes much of I John 5:1, stating that "the following perfect tense making it clear that birth issued in the consequent believing." And then as if to quash all doubt, cries triumphantly "Could it be put any simpler?" To which I would reply, "Yes brother! Why have you muddied the waters so?" Surely this is a case of taking a fragment of scripture out of context and building a doctrine on it in violence to the sum of New Testament teaching! I am no Greek scholar and cannot debate the fine points of Greek grammar but I looked the passage up

in my *NEW TESTAMENT FROM 26 TRANSLATIONS* and none of them give Johnson's reading! I discovered also that he was less than accurate in stating that the passage is literally "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ HAS BEEN BORN of God." "Everyone BELIEVING that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God." (Emphasis mine). That puts a different complexion on the matter. The expression "Everyone who believes" could possibly be taken as meaning someone who does not yet believe but may come to believe. That seems to be how Johnson is taking it out literally it is the present participle, it is "everyone BELIEVING."

Johnson has failed to consider the elementary question of to whom are these words spoken and what is their basic purpose? It should be obvious that the apostle is not trying to give the order of events in the new birth. He is not writing to unbelievers telling them how to become children of God. He is writing to believers, those who have been already begotten of God. Furthermore, he is not trying to remind them of the sequence of events surrounding the new birth they had all experienced. He is forcefully explaining the consequences and responsibilities of the new birth. If one reads the whole passage (I John 4:19-5:5) it should be clear that his subject is that of loving God. Surely the time frame here (having been begotten of God) is more with reference to the observer. Is he not saying in effect "Brother, when you look at your fellow-believer you are looking at one who has been begotten of God and if you love God you will love His Children because they partake of His nature."

Again his treatment of Romans 8:7-9 shows similar confusion and he misses the whole point. Surely Paul is NOT contrasting the unregenerate with the regenerate, the child of the devil with the child of God. He is contrasting the carnal Christian with the one walking by the Spirit, or rather he is contrasting the two natures of every Christian. His carnal nature which he got from Adam and his spiritual nature via the new birth. Otherwise, how to explain verses 12, 13 "Therefore brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." The whole context begins with chapter 6. Johnson's treatment of this passage would reduce these three chapters (6, 7, 8) to the idea that if one is in the flesh one is not born again. Paul is NOT trying to teach the necessity of the new birth. He is trying to impress upon those who have already been born again the necessity of their living according to their new nature! Surely it is not Paul's intention to tell us that unbelievers cannot please God. We already know that! He is telling CHRISTIANS that if they live in the flesh they cannot please God! Verses 7-9 have nothing to do with the unregenerate—except perhaps by extension of principle. Paul is NOT saying that "we cannot please God until an operation has been performed upon us by the Holy Spirit." NO! But he is saying that *we who have already been operated on by the Holy Spirit* cannot please God unless we walk by the Spirit! He is not saying that we cannot please God unless we are born again. He is saying that we who *are* born again cannot please God unless we live according to the

new nature. That conclusion is in accordance with the whole sweep of these three chapters, whereas Johnson's idea is at gross variance with them.

He concludes his article by appealing to the reader to "come to Him for the Spirit's gift of new life, repentance, and faith. He saves sinners. Come!" This is confusing. How can you come unless you believe? Johnson has already taught that one cannot come to Christ unless he has the new life! That one must be born again before he can come, believe, and repent! Surely the sinner will reply, "I will gladly come once God has done His work of regeneration in me." Thus resulting in an extreme Calvinism where a person is predestined to heaven or hell and there is nothing he can do about it. After all what can a dead man do?

Jesus said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:16) Johnson seems to say, "Whoever is born again shall believe and be saved."

The Holy Spirit through Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your Sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). Johnson says in effect, "You who have been regenerated must repent and your sins will be forgiven."

The apostles and brethren said, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18) Johnson is bold to say that is a satanic deception! That they should have said, "God has granted to the Gentiles to be born of God that they might repent." Or, "God has granted to the Gentiles new life unto repentance."

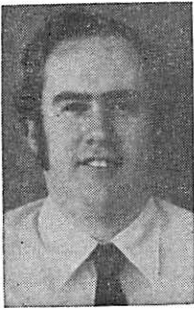
Johnson's teaching is that one must be born again before he can believe and repent that his sins might be forgiven. So one is born of the Spirit while yet retaining his sins! His statement that "dead men do not assist in their own resurrection to life" has nothing whatsoever to do with the issue. It is sophistry. It is false human logic in an attempt to set aside the plain and simple teaching of the N.T. on the new birth. With the same false human logic one could say that Stephen was deceived by Satan because it is impossible for dead men to resist the Holy Spirit! (Acts 7:51) Or that dead men cannot refuse to come to Christ that they might have life! (John 5:40)

Johnson teaches that men who are spiritually dead cannot repent. This makes nonsense of Paul's statement to the Athenians in Acts 17:30, 31. Paul did NOT say, "God commands all who have been regenerated to repent." He said, God . . . commands *all men everywhere* to repent." Those "*all men everywhere*" are those dead in sin, yet are capable of repenting. God has not given them an impossible command! *There is a working of the Spirit with the word upon the unregenerate heart to bring conviction, belief and acceptance of the Gospel. Johnson's error is to mistake this working for the new birth, but they are not the same. This working of the Holy Spirit may be and is often resisted (Acts 7:51). If not resisted it will lead to the new birth but is not itself the new birth.* (Acts 2:37-41).

I confess I cannot understand all the aspects of the new birth, but I will not quarrel with my Lord when He says, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). I would not

dream of trying to make that, "Whoever is born again will believe and have eternal life."

Why is it that men cannot accept the Lord's word and invitation at face value. Why is it that many a modern preacher—after showing man's need of salvation and the wondrous provision God has made for this through the death of Christ on the cross—why is it that they then refuse to use the invitation of the Lord they profess to serve, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved."? Why refuse to use the Holy Spirit's words, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgotten. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"? Why muddy the waters with philosophizing and categorizing and mis-explanations of the new birth? Only Satan can be the victor and much loss of souls result. No one will be lost by taking the Lord's word at simple face value. But there is no salvation guaranteed to those, for example, who deny the water of John 3:5. They might instead find condemnation. "Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar. (Prov. 30:5, 6).



GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

JOSEPH AND CHRIST

JOSEPH

1. Sent forth by his father on a mission.
2. Hated by his brethren.
3. Sold for 20 pieces of silver.
4. Cast down into a dungeon.
5. Exalted to be the chief Lord of Egypt.
6. All things given into his hands.
7. Became bread lord to Egypt and to all the world.
8. Pharaoh would not deal with people direct—went to Joseph.
9. Married an Egyptian woman.

CHRIST

1. Sent by His Father on a mission.
2. Hated by His brethren
3. Sold for 30 pieces of silver.
4. Went to the cross and tomb.
5. Highest exaltation. Name above everything.
6. All things given to Him by the Father.
7. Matthew 28:18-20.
8. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."
9. A Gentile bride is being chosen out for Christ.

10. She occupied a place closer than even his brethren.

10. Church occupies a position of special honor not enjoyed by Israel.

—R. H. Boll

THE BODY OF CHRIST

That institution which separates from the world, and consociates the people of God into a peculiar community; having laws, ordinances, manners and customs of its own, immediately derived from the Savior of the world, is called the congregation or church of the Lord. This is sometimes technically called the mystical body of Christ, contradistinguishing it from His literal and natural body. Over this spiritual body He is the head, the king, Lord, and lawgiver, and they are severly members of His body, and under His direction and government.

—Alexander Campbell, in *The Christian System*

SPEAK AS THE BIBLE SPEAKS

We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible the idea which it represents is not there; and always confident that the things taught by God are better taught in the words and under the names which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated, than in the words which man's wisdom teaches.

—Alexander Campbell, in *The Christian System*

TWO TEACHERS

"I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chatted all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For she had all to say.
"I walked a mile with Sorrow
and ne'er a word said she,
But, Oh, the things I learned from her,
When Sorrow walked with me."

—Robert Browning Hamilton

"EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS"

Christ Jesus travelled from the eternal throne of God in heaven, down to the depths of Calvary's cross. He came from all the glory of the former into all the shame of the latter, in order that He might conduct His redeemed people back with Himself, and present them faultless before the very throne which He had left on their account."

—C. H. Mackintosh

THE CHURCH ETERNAL

As God foresaw Eve in Adam, so He foresaw, foreknew, and chose the church of Christ, before all the ages. The church was conceived in eternity, manifested in time, and destined to shine in eternal glory. Thus is the church represented in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Christ's love for her is spoken of in three tenses: past, for He loved the church before it existed, and gave Himself for it; present, He sanctified it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the

word; future, when He shall present the church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Where is this church of which such wonderful things are said? Can it be found today? Could I, even I, be a part and member of it?

—R. H. Boll, in *Word in Season*, 1949

Brother Jim Atwood is presently ministering at the Church of Christ, Allensville, Ky

Denominational Believers: An Appeal For Re-evaluation

Jim Atwood

I would like to begin by posing and answering five important questions:

1. What is the basis of salvation? It is the doing and dying of Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb. 9:11-14).
2. What is the one word used in the New Testament to describe man's response to the doing and dying of Jesus? Faith.
3. Is salvation dependent upon our having "perfect" understanding? No!
4. Can we describe our friends in the various denominations as "believers" in the doing and dying of Jesus? My answer is yes. To do otherwise would be a gross injustice to their integrity and their sincere intentions to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. Do these denominational "believers" practice some form of baptism? Most do, although their views are quite different from ours.

Now it is my firm conviction that most of the denominational teaching on baptism is wrong. I maintain and uphold the view that baptism is immersion in water; that it is to be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; that it is for the forgiveness of sins; and that it was practiced by every New Testament believer. This is what I teach and practice.

However, on the basis of the questions mentioned above, I am compelled to re-evaluate the spiritual condition of those people who hold a view different from my own. Since salvation is not dependent on our having perfect understanding, is it essential for one to have perfect understanding of baptism before he can be saved? It has been noted that, for the most part, denominations consist of "believers" in the doing and dying of Jesus. It has also been noted that most of these people have been baptized, though not necessarily in accordance with our understanding of the scriptures. The urgent question before us is this: Does imperfect understanding of baptism negate genuine faith and therefore doom this "believer" to eternal condemnation? Remember, we are not dealing with unbelievers or even the unbaptized, we are dealing with believers who have been baptized, yet their understanding and methods are not the same as ours.

I believe that our whole concept of salvation needs to be called

into question. Paul says that we are saved by grace through faith as a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). The need for salvation based on grace implies imperfection on the part of the ones being saved. At best, our work, our righteousness, our understanding, and even our faith, are feeble and imperfect. But thanks be to our God who is willing to save the imperfect through their faith in the doing and dying of Jesus Christ.

It would be dishonest for us to bind upon the denominational world that which we are unwilling to bind upon ourselves—namely, perfection. We both have our areas of misunderstanding. If we claim the promises of grace to overrule our ignorance, why can't we afford them the same tolerance of grace? Is God's grace available to all "believers" or just to those who have been perfectly baptized? Who really knows if he has been perfectly baptized? The truth of the matter is that we are not saved by perfect baptism anyway, but by the perfect work of Jesus on the cross.

Let it be well noted that I am not asking anyone to compromise the truth or to accept an unbiblical view of baptism. On the contrary, I am encouraging the Biblical view of patience and forbearance toward fellow "believers" with whom we have disagreements (Eph. 4:2-3). It is our task to preach the truth in love. We must get out of the business of passing wholesale condemnation on other religious groups and let God decide who is and isn't saved.

I realize that not everyone can agree with my assessment of these questions. We are severely handicapped by the traditional views of our upbringing. It is extremely difficult to change a position that we have held all of our lives, especially if the change will be as unpopular among our brethren as this one. I am merely asking for a re-evaluation. May we be open to new possibilities and not slaves to tradition. May our highest interest be in seeking the truth and not in maintaining a popular doctrinal position among brethren. Let us continue to promote the Biblical view of baptism, but at the same time give room for the grace of God to forgive our imperfect understanding. May God bless our feeble attempts to seek His will in this matter.

—P.O. Box 144, Allensville, KY 42204

"GOD TELLS THE MAN WHO CARES"

from A. W. Tozer

"Christian expectation in the average church follows the program, not the promises. Prevailing spiritual conditions, however low, are accepted as inevitable. What will be is what has been. The weary slaves of the dull routine find it impossible to hope for anything better."
"We need today a fresh spirit of anticipation that springs out of the promises of God. We must declare war on the mood of nonexpectation, and come together with childlike faith. Only then can we know again the beauty and wonder of the Lord's presence among us."
"Faith is a decision to trust what someone has said. The discovery of truth about anything always follows a step of faith."
"Joy is the most infallible sign of the indwelling presence of God."

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Timothy Nakahara

Shizuoka City, Japan

August 25th

As for us, my wife has been suffering from the repeated bladder infections ever since my surgery in last March, and has been on a strict diet prescribed by a specialist in Tokyo, to whom she is to go and see once every month. So far there hasn't been any drastic change made, but she hasn't felt any worse than before. I myself have been pretty well and able to carry on the daily routine just as I used to, for which I'm indeed grateful. Our son, Michiya, 18 yrs, old, has been in Sapporo, Hokkaido, an island farthest north of the country, ever since the beginning of August, when I was asked to hold a 4 day Gospel meeting there. He seems to be enjoying doing many things which he'd not done before, such as cutting wood for the winter, camping by the lake-side, making a trip to the other side of the island to help one of the church members with his work. Bro. & Sis. Hasbrouck, missionaries to Japan, working with the small congregation requested him to stay until the close of the summer vacation for the purpose of learning English conversation as well as getting used to the American home life, so he's been staying with them all this time. They thought it would help him as he came to the States to study.

While having our Bible camp at the Lake Motosu in Yamanashi Prefecture about 2½ hrs. drive from here, the No. 5 typhoon, strongest we ever had this year was sweeping across our area with a torrential rain which lasted for more than 3 days in a row caused land-slides in many places on the mountain sides. Bro. Funayama, a blind preacher as well as a chiropractor, whose house stands on a mountain slope was victimized by a wash-out. There were only four living at the moment when a gushing stream of muddy water carrying huge rocks and countless number of logs were tumbling down toward them in the total blackness of mid-night. Three out of four are all blind and Sis. Furuya, the finest Christian lady I ever saw, the very first fruit of the Gospel meeting I had held many yrs. ago there, having committed herself to the services to the blind ever since, led them out to a safety-zone that night. She described this way about the situation of the night. She felt the rain drops as if the bullets coming through the clouds and when they got out of the house through the back door the mud was waist-deep everywhere and they heard rock and logs tumbling down towards them. They all felt that that's the end of everything, but Bro. Funayama cried out to God for help momentarily and a very strange thing took place, she said. For about two minutes they couldn't hear any more of the rocks and logs rolling down with a ghastly sound, so they took the chance of working their way through it. Upon reaching a safety-zone, they began to hear the roaring noises

once again. They all had a very narrow escape. For about a week most of the main High-ways and by-ways were closed and we had no access to his place, and finally on 23rd some of us went to help them cleaning. They've lost almost everything except for the things kept in higher places. We try to go and help as much as we can. Please pray for them, too.

David Brown

Scottburgh, South Africa

Sept, 19th

May I just give a word of appreciation for the *Word and Work*. We appreciate *Word and Work*, and the emphasis it gives to spiritual matters. Thank-you for your work in the matter of Editor. May the Lord encourage your heart and continue to use you in this way to be a blessing to many.

I am enclosing in this a short news item. Something I don't often get around to doing. I presume it is alright for me to give a news item occasionally. Before I do so, could I ask that you and others who will, pray for us in the work God has called us to do. Thank-you Brother!

* * * * *

The whole of Southern Africa has been experiencing a serious drought. In our part of the country, water has been rationed for some months. The ration has been 400 litres per family a day, and further restrictions are going to be applied if rain doesn't fall before long. This coupled with the middle East events, and other world shaking events in recent days, serves to underline the great fact that Jesus is coming soon!

The Lord has given us an open door to work in Zululand. We are working with Ron and Cindy Elerick, however they are in the U.S. at present on furlough. At present we spend two days a week in Zululand, and carry on our work in Scottburgh the rest of the week. We anticipate a move to Zululand the end of the year, after the school year ends. Zululand is a two and half hour drive from Scottburgh. That helps you to know better where it is I suppose. At present we are concentrating on the work among the Indian people at Intumeni. The majority of Indian people there are Hindu. Pray for our labors at Intumeni that souls might be saved, and a strong New Testament church might be established there. Pray for the handful of believers there, and especially for Bro. Runga and his family who are the responsible family in that work.

In the new year, if Jesus tarries, we will concentrate on learning the Zulu language with the goal of planting churches among the Zulu people. The need is great as is the challenge to Christians. Brethren, pray for us.



"DEFRAUD YE NOT..."

Mrs. Paul W. Knecht

"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency" (I Cor. 7:5). Such was Paul's admonition to the church at Corinth. It has reference to the basic relationship of marriage.

This writer has never heard a sermon or Bible lesson on this intimate subject. There must have been a need for such an admonition in Bible times and perhaps is a need today. In marriages where stress and tension build to violent levels, it may be that defrauding is a contributing factor (These thoughts were prompted by the tragic death of a young husband, who left his bed at midnight to walk off tensions; his murdered body was found after a search the next day.).

In verse four, Paul has just said, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." To defraud is to withhold one's body from the partner to whom it belongs without that partner's consent.

Marriage partners can think of reasons for defrauding: fear of an unwanted pregnancy, fear of the pain of childbirth, fear of added responsibility and expense, barriers between the marriage partners. Sometimes a partner will give or withhold the body as a means of getting the other partner to do what they want. Then the exalted concept of total and unconditional acceptance is debased to the level of the marketplace. Whatever reasons might tempt to defraud, the Bible admonition above is clear and positive and should be carefully taken into account.

Equally challenging is the reference to "*giving yourselves unto prayer*". That sounds as if both partners feel a need so compelling that they would agree together to forego intimate fellowship with each other for a time, so as not to be distracted from intimate communion with the Father. It may be that many of us know neither the intimate human fellowship nor the intense prayer life that are referred to in this passage.

Edited by Dr. Horace Wood

MATTHEW:

Discipline in the Church

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Matthew 18:15-20

It is exceedingly rare to find a subject upon which the entire evangelical community agrees, outside of the basic facts of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Within that community of believers there are those who are premillenarians and there are amillenarians. In

polity there are congregationalists, episcopalians, presbyterians, and others. There are non-charismatics and charismatics. There are intellectually-minded believers who love biblical doctrine, and there are emotionally stirred believers who love "devotional" truth. There are Calvinists and, sad to say! Arminians. And this is not to mention that we frequently disagree over such questions as civil obedience, capital punishment, divorce, abortion, evolution, and other ethical matters.

There is one thing, however, upon which almost all of us agree. It is that the church today stands in desperate need of spiritual growth. The standards of life found in too many of our churches are not distinguished by biblical holiness. Say what one will about the Puritans, they had yearnings for holy living that mark them out as a different breed from their spiritual descendants. "I have had a deep conviction for many years," the godly Bishop Ryle wrote some time ago, "that practical holiness and entire self-consecration to God are not sufficiently attended to by modern Christians in this country." The bishop wrote about Great Britain, but the same condition surely prevails here.

Bishop Ryle traced the lack of holiness to politics, controversy, party-spirit, and worldliness, and these are important conditions of the present spiritual malaise. I would like to suggest another problem, the problem of the neglect of church discipline. We have lived through a half-century of racing apostasy in many of the large religious bodies that profess the faith of Christ. The apostasy has been able to proceed at such a rapid pace largely because the believers, when the ugly departures from the faith first raised their heads like serpents in gardens of Eden, did nothing about it. Failing to exercise biblical discipline, they have had to learn by sad experience the truth of the apostolic admonition, "A little leaven leaveneth the WHOLE lump" (Gal. 5:9). There is hardly a major denomination in the country that is not a living illustration of this. And the unfortunate experience has been repeated in countless individual local churches. If discipline had been exercised at the first signs of departure from the faith, the purity of the body might have been continued.

And this is all the more remarkable in the light of the great emphasis that the Scriptures place upon church discipline. In addition to the present passage, there are important contributions to the subject in Romans sixteen, I Corinthians five, II Corinthians two, Galatians six, I Thessalonians five, II Thessalonians three, 1 Timothy five, Titus one and three, Hebrews thirteen, II John, III John, and others. The very volume of biblical instruction on the point is itself a strong and vivid warning to the church of the importance of discipline. It is, therefore, with a solemn sense of gravity of the topic that we turn to Matthew eighteen, verses fifteen through twenty, which contains the initial teaching of the New Testament on the subject.

THE PROCEDURE OF THE OFFENDED

The private rebuke (18:15). The Lord has just warned the world not to offend one of the little ones who believe in Him, promising to such as to a judgment far worse than physical death (cf. v. 6). He has further admonished them not to "despise" one of them, for they are the objects of angelic care, of the Good Shepherd's seeking and

saving love, and of the Father's determinate will that they not perish (cf. vv. 10-14).

But, is it not possible that the one who offends one of the little ones is a believer? Why yes, of course. In that case, then, great care must be taken not to treat them as reprobates. The believers have responsibilities of discipline toward erring brothers. That seems to be the connection between the preceding section and this new one. Here is the way we are to respond when wronged by a fellow believer.

The first step in response to a trespass against a believer is the private conference between the two parties involved. As the Germans put it, the discussion is to take place *unter vier Augen* (lit., *under four eyes*)! This is excellent advice, for it is so easy for the offended to sin by gossip and to fall by rejoicing over a brother's misfortune. As Paul puts it, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are SPIRITUAL restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, CONSIDERING THYSELF, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). Thus, the rebuke is to be *private*. And the subject of it is the believer's sin, not our suffering by virtue of it.

It should be private, too, because it will be more likely at this stage to win the brother over. That would seem to be the point of the remainder of the verse (cf. Jas. 5:20).

The plural rebuke (18:16). If the private rebuke does not produce repentance, the Lord instructs the offended one, "take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." The order is based upon the principle set forth in Deuteronomy 19:15, a passage referred to several times in the New Testament.

The public rebuke (18:17). Finally, if there is a refusal to listen, then the matter must be referred to the church. The word "church" must refer in this instance to the local church, since the informing of the invisible, universal church is beyond the capacity of the offended and the witnesses!

The use of the term "church" is the second time we have seen it in the Gospel of Matthew (cf. 16:18). In what sense is the church to be apprised of the matter? In a public meeting? Privately in the presence of the elders alone, as representatives of the church? The Lord does not specify, and we can only reason on the basis of the general teaching of the New Testament. For example, when at the so-called Jerusalem Conference a decision was finally reached over the question of circumcision and salvation, Luke speaks of it in this way, "Then it pleased THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS (note the order), with the WHOLE CHURCH (note the subordinate relationship suggested), to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas..." (Acts 15:22). It would seem from this that decisions in the local church were reached by the apostles and elders, and that they were made known to the whole church, who identified themselves with the mind of their leaders. In other words, the "authorities," to use Hendriksen's word, took the lead. In my opinion, our Lord's words, "tell it unto the church," mean that the matter is to be referred to the elders for their consideration.

The decision, having been reached, should be made known publicly to the church, in order that there may be unity of action against the offender by the whole body. The rebuke here, then, is an official one. The penalty is expulsion from assembly privileges. Expulsion from assembly privileges is not excommunication from membership in the local church. That would be contrary to biblical teaching, and out of harmony with the doctrine of the security of the believer. It would imply that one may be saved and then lost. No, the expulsion is from the privilege of partaking of the elements at the Lord's Supper, the visible representation of the unity that exists in the body of Christ.

That the offender should be treated "as an heathen man and a tax collector" does not contradict Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." The latter passage has to do with the first step in discipline, the personal one.

It should be emphasized that the spirit in which the discipline is to be carried out is the spirit of love, with the prayer upon our lips, "Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone."

The passage in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15 is an important parallel passage, and it must form a part of any complete doctrine of discipline. The "withdraw" of verse six is defined by the two terms of verse fourteen, "note that man" and "have no company with him." Apparently involved in the first word, "note," is a public naming of the individual who is being placed under discipline. The second word, "have no company with," does not mean to ignore the brother, but rather to refuse to have free intercourse with him, which surely includes the Lord's Supper. It occurs again in 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11, where it is strengthened by further prohibition.

Finally, the personal appeals, suggested by the words of the apostle in verse fifteen, characterized the continuing attitude of the believers toward the brother under discipline. Restoration is always the aim of discipline, not excommunication from the fellowship (cf. v. 14, "that he may be ashamed").

THE POWER OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

The Godward side (18:18). The opening words of verse eighteen, "Verily I say unto you," indicate that the Lord regards discipline to be a very solemn matter.

We come here again to the "binding" and "loosing" of matters upon the earth (cf. 16:19). The terms, as we have noted previously are technical terms used by the Jews for the teaching of the rabbis. To bind was to forbid, and to loose was to permit (cf. 23:4).

The plural "ye" (cf. 18:1), in contrast to the singular of the preceding verses, directs attention to the body of believers in their disciplinary pronouncements. The point of the verse is that the judicial decrees of the church, when carried out in harmony with the directions from the Word of God, have the support of heaven. Hen-

driksen comments, "Note in verse 18 and again in verse 19 the combination 'earth . . . heaven.' In both cases there is perfect harmony between that which by a conscientious church is done on earth and that which takes place in heaven, the former action preceding the latter."

There is a beautiful illustration of the application of this procedure in 1 Corinthians 5:3-5. The case is that of the person guilty of the wicked sin of incest. The Corinthian church had failed to take disciplinary action; in fact, they had continued in their proud condition (cf. vv. 1-2). The Apostle Paul, in view of their failure to exercise discipline, writes that he had in spirit carried out disciplinary action. His words are, "For I verily, as absent in body but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed" (v. 3). Then, in words reminiscent of the Matthaean passage, he speaks of being gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus (cf. Matt. 18:20), "with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ," words closely related to the promise of Matthew 18:20, "there am I in the midst of them." It would appear from a comparison of the two passages that Paul was thinking of the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18 as he in spirit acted out the disciplinary requirements of the Lord. He speaks of gathering in His name and of His presence in power. And he writes as if he thinks that heaven stands behind the action of delivering the offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. To sum up, when discipline is necessary, it should be carried out (1) in the name of the Lord, (2) with all assembled together, and (3) the assembly may count on the power of the Lord being present for the effectiveness of the discipline.

The manward side (18:19). This statement merely emphasizes the human side of the carrying out of discipline. Agreement on earth in harmony with the Word finds support in heaven. The Father assumes responsibility for the effectiveness of the discipline.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD THE SOURCE OF POWER

The twentieth verse has often been thought to be a definition of a local church. That is, when two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is a church, since He is present. This, of course, is not true. The local church is a congregation of professing believers in Jesus Christ, meeting regularly in one locality under the oversight of elders, with deacons and gifted men observing the ordinances and continuing in the apostles' doctrine.

The twentieth verse, in the light of the context, has to do with church discipline. The Lord is simply emphasizing the fact that, when the church meets to carry out discipline according to the requirements of the Word of God, they may count upon the support of heaven in the judgments that are pronounced.

There may, of course, be some general applications of the verse that are appropriate to informal gatherings of believers for study of the Word of God, for prayer, or for worship, but the principal point has to do with church discipline.

The text certainly represents the proper attitude of the church

when they gather on Sundays to meet for ministry and for worship. We do not meet in the name of any human leader or minister of the Word; we meet in the name of the Lord, that is, under His direction and protection and with the impartation of His strength and consolation.

The expression, "there am I in the midst of them" is a beautiful promise. It suggests that, regardless of our feelings, if we meet in His name, He is there. His presence does not depend upon our attitude, but simply upon whether we meet "in His name." "The Jews," Tasker points out, "believed that the Shekinah or divine presence rested upon those who were occupied in the study of the law. Christians are here given the assurance that Christ is present with those who are diligently concerned with understanding His mind and will."

CONCLUSION

First of all, we mention again the relevance of this teaching for the church today. If we are to continue in faith, discipline must be exercised when departures from faith, either in doctrine or practice, appear among the saints. It constitutes a warning for the saints also emphasizing that they must keep close to the Lord, cleaving to Him and His Word, that we may not have need of discipline.

H.A. Ironside has told the story of a man who wanted to hire a coachman. He lived in a mountainous region, and the road to his house ran along a steep precipice. A number of men applied for the position.

To one of them he said, "Tell me, are you an adept at handling fractious horses?"

"Yes, I am," he said.

"Can you drive a six-horse team?"

"Yes."

"How near can you drive to edge of the cliff without going over?"

"I have a steady hand and my eye is pretty true; I can get within a foot of it and not go over."

"You step outside," said the man, and he called another and asked him the same questions. He said, "I am an expert at handling horses; I can drive right along the edge and not go over."

"Step outside," and he called another and asked the questions.

"If you want a man to drive on the edge of the precipice," said the last man, "you do not want me. When I drive, I keep as far away from the edge as I can."

"You are the man I want. I will take you," said the employer.

Dr. Ironside added, "Christian, be careful of the edge of the precipice." That precipice is both a moral and doctrinal one, we might add.

Finally, let us never forget in all our talk about discipline that the aim of discipline is not judgment, but (1) restoration to fellowship (cf. Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:5-11), (2) the maintenance of the purity of the church (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 1:6-9; 3 John 9), and (3) the maintenance of the testimony of the church to the world within (cf. Acts 5:11) and without (cf. 1 Thess. 4:9-12).

May the Lord help us, as individual believers and as an assembly of the Lord, to keep the importance of holiness in thought and life before us constantly.

A VOICE OUT OF THE PAST

Baptism in the Light of the Cross

K. C. Moser, 1940

This entire study has been based upon the proposition that every doctrine of Christianity must be understood in the light of the cross. Of the truth of this proposition there can be no reasonable doubt. It follows, therefore, that the elements of Christianity have not been arbitrarily chosen. Repentance, for example, is naturally indispensable. To save from sin one who is impenitent is an impossibility. Likewise to save the unbeliever is just as impossible. To save one who is impenitent would be to save one who still loves sin and who is rebellious against God, and to save the unbeliever in Christ would be to save one without a Savior.

The conditions of salvation are, therefore, just what the nature of salvation demands. As long as one loves sin, he will live in sin; hence, the need of repentance. And as long as one is without faith in the sense of trust or reliance, he is without a Savior. Likewise, baptism, as to its meaning, must be considered in the light of the cross. Turning away from sin and trusting in the Savior exhaust the meaning of all that is possible for one to do in seeking salvation. Now, if baptism has a place as a condition of salvation, it must signify repentance or faith or both. To think that Christ would select some act wholly foreign in its nature to the end in view is to charge Him with foolishness. For example, *food* is to be *eaten*. Eating is nature's way of appropriating food. Now, suppose that, in addition to eating, the Lord would arbitrarily choose another act which in its nature would have no connection with eating, and make this act indispensable to physical life! This would imply that something besides food is essential to life, or that some other act besides eating is necessary to the appropriation of food. Just so, if baptism is to be considered apart from repentance and faith, which are naturally required by the nature of salvation, then it is implied that something besides turning away from sin and trusting in a Savior is necessary to salvation. And if such an implication is founded upon fact, then something besides the blood of Christ is needed to save man from sin. If, then, justification is based upon faith in Christ crucified of one truly penitent, baptism as a condition of salvation must look to faith and repentance, and through them to the cross.

Accordingly, baptism is associated with repentance or faith, both being necessarily implied. See Acts 2:38; 8:12, 13; Mark 16:16; and many other examples.) This fact implies that baptism is connected with the cross or with Christ crucified. For example, Peter (Acts 2:38) commanded the Jews to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." If he had simply commanded them to be baptized as a condition of pardon, then any connection between Christ as a sin offering and pardon would have been precluded. But the phrase, "in the name of Jesus Christ," connects baptism with the Savior. This phrase

signifies faith in him as preached by Peter. From a study of baptism in other places it can be seen that it has been selected as the embodiment of both repentance and faith. (See Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27).

The function of baptism as embodying faith and repentance is naturally suggested by the act itself. Baptism is a burial and a resurrection in some element. Water is the element named in the Scriptures. Now, Christ as a sin offering is Christ crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. In repentance and faith one enters into the very meaning and participation of his death and resurrection, and baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" as the embodiment of them is most appropriate. As to its meaning, it is identical with faith and repentance. Hence, it is not another condition implying the insufficiency of faith and repentance, and hence of the blood of Christ but an act looking back to faith and repentance and toward the cross, and saying to the world that sin has been forsaken and Christ crucified relied upon for salvation. Thus considered as the embodiment of faith and repentance, there is no such thing as the baptism of one who is impenitent or of one who does not believe on Christ. Infant baptism falls along with the baptism of impenitents. And since the meaning of baptism depends upon its relation to faith and repentance, and the significance of these in turn upon Christ crucified, baptism looks to the cross for its meaning; and so baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" naturally assumes the meaning of faith and repentance.

Being the embodiment of faith and repentance, and thus connected in a very definite way with Christ crucified, baptism cannot be considered as to its function apart from faith and repentance. That is to say, it cannot be regarded as having any significance or meaning beyond faith and repentance. If it did have a significance apart from and beyond them, it would logically become disassociated from Christ crucified. Thus disconnected from the cross, it would stand alone in the divine scheme of things. It could be no more than a *legal* enactment chosen for some other reason than to express faith in Christ crucified. If such an act thus standing alone could in any sense imply faith in Christ, it would be faith in him as having mere authority to command, and not faith in him as a sin offering. Peter preached him as "both Lord and Christ." He is Savior, not simply because he is Lord or King and hence has the right to rule over man; but he is Savior or "Jesus" because he died for our sins on the cross. He is "Lord and Savior." Hence, his commands that are conditions of salvation must relate to his work as Savior, or else he makes his own death void! As King, Christ is sometimes represented as having the right to name the conditions of salvation. Certainly, but even Christ is limited to such conditions that relate to his sacrificial death. Would he suffer so much for our salvation and then command something on man's part which would have no connection with his death? Just as certainly as he saves from sin, repentance is essential to salvation; and just as certainly as he saves by his blood, faith in the sense of reliance is likewise necessary. And even the Lord himself would have no right to substitute something for them and save the impenitent and the unbelieving. He has "all authority"; but only such authority exists in "heaven and on earth" as would justify him in calling upon man to

do things to be saved that would have direct bearing upon his death for sins. Certainly, then, he has not forgotten his own death and commanded man to do something to be saved that has no connection with the cross. The cross determines the power of Christ.

But one might insist that baptism has been selected because to man there seems to be no sense in it. No such indication is found in the Bible. So far as revelation goes, no one ever thought baptism a foolish act. It was "Christ crucified" which was foolish with the world. (1 Cor. 1) Baptism is not a *trial* of faith but the *embodiment* of it. The acid test for man is found in faith itself, just as in the case of Abraham. Turn right here and read Rom. 4:16-22. Believing unwaveringly that God was "able" to keep his promise, and that he would do it, even though nature indicated otherwise, was test sufficient. The application: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and raised for our justification." (Rom. 4:23-25) Faith that is a condition of justification is not confidence in the *integrity* of the Lord simply, but reliance upon his shed blood for salvation. Such a faith looks backward to Calvary, to what Christ has *already* done for us. Hence, the relation of baptism to faith is that of an *embodiment*, not of a *trial*.

(In the light of this study, how inappropriate the idea that faith, repentance, and baptism constitute a "plan of salvation" chosen arbitrarily by Christ. Rather *He* is the "plan." The merit to same is in *Him*.)

PAPA'S BLACK BOOK

"... A whisperer separates close friends." "For lack of wood the fire goes out; and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases." "... Gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not." (Prov. 16:28, 26:20; I Tim. 5:13)

My papa George Ecos was a small but very determined Greek immigrant. He was a cobbler by trade, and his special magic was turning ordinary leather into beautiful shoes.

Papa had plunged into English and soon learned to converse freely and earnestly with customers about civic affairs. But when gossip and back-biters came into his tiny shop, Papa suddenly seemed to become deaf to English phrases.

As the conversation turned to blackening words or harmful tale-telling, he would pull out a small black book. "Please write all that down as you mean it," he would say. And then would add, "Please also sign your name to it. You know I don't speak the English too good. I want to study what you write."

When the customer hesitated, Papa would say quietly, "If you cannot write it in the black book, then maybe it should not be said."

Papa has long since retired from his little shop. But his black book rule is still very much a part of the community. Frequently, when conversations turn to idle gossip, someone simply smiles and reminds, "Don't forget Papa's black book." —Georgia Ralston

Study; Approved; Divide

Grace Ferguson

II Timothy 2:15, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

This is a scripture that is quoted many, many times, and if heeded, will bring marvelous results in a person's life.

Paul was writing to Timothy whom he was instructing how to be a good minister, and how to guide the church in the way of righteousness, and if Timothy needed it, so do we today.

In the same letter Paul again refers to the scripture:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. —II Timothy 3:16-17

If these two scriptures were actually, honestly believed, and heeded, the churches would never lack Godly leaders, teachers, evangelists and ministers. Why? Because God's word would be honored, obeyed, and feared.

Churches have a responsibility before God to provide classes for instruction for their members in expanding the scripture. They likewise, have a responsibility before God to take the Gospel to the poor and lost. But foremost are the children of God that need to be taught the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the fear of God, and the grace of God. A study program continuously is needed for every congregation, and especially if new converts are being made.

If new converts are not being added, then something is wrong, and the church needs to go to its knees, and stay there, until God reveals the reason or reasons.

Back to II Timothy 3:16-17—Do we believe the scriptures are inspired of God, and that children of God may be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?" If we don't believe that, then we don't believe the Bible. Because the scriptures say:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The fault lies in the lack of instruction in the various avenues of life i.e. doctrine, reproof, correction in righteousness and perfection.

Whose responsibility is it to give these instructions to God's children or believers? Elders, deacons, teachers, and ministers.

May the children of God rise up and demand classes be conducted in God's holy word in their congregations.

Now to II Timothy 2:15, every believer has a responsibility before God to study the Word for himself, and to ask God's help for understanding on how to rightly divide the word of truth. This is a sobering thought that we, as God's children are commanded to study

the scripture so that we won't be ashamed because we rightly discern, divide and believe the scripture.

This takes time, but it is of utmost importance, because we shall have to give an account to God, if we don't.

May we as individuals and churches get busy. It is far past time.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

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