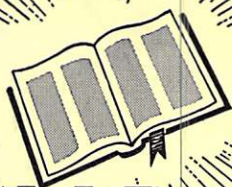
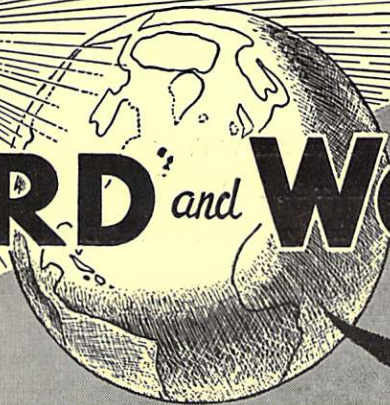


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

OCTOBER, 1983

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION**(Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code)**

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I Certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signed) Wm. Robert Heid

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"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.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

It was a serious question, and one that deserved more time in answering it than I was able to give when the young soldier asked it. It was Sunday noon, right after the conclusion of the morning meeting. He had found it in his heart to make the good confession, and was still wet-haired from being buried with His Lord in baptism. I was told that he also wanted to take of the Lord's supper (which had just been observed before the baptism), so I brought the emblems to him personally so that he could commemorate the Savior's death. The young Christian was to go back to his camp the next day, and expected eighteen months of overseas duty to come next.

"What am I supposed to do?" he asked, as I served the unleavened bread to him, his eyes saying more than his words, to indicate a desire to know what was the approved pattern for this new experience. I was instantly touched by his straight-forward attitude, and then was made to wonder how many members of the body of Christ might well ask the same question.

ROOTED IN THE PASSOVER

There are several memorials mentioned in the Old Testament, but there was one that *must* become re-fashioned to commemorate the New Covenant. It was most fitting that after the Passover supper a new memorial should be instituted. The true Passover Lamb was now being offered, and His blood, applied to the door-posts of the sinner's heart, would enable God, in righteousness, to pass over, no longer requiring the sinner's life for his sins. Just as Israel was to keep the passover and remember how God had preserved them alive when He dealt judgment to the Egyptians, so the Lord Jesus told His followers that they were to eat the bread and drink the wine, which two elements of food carried over from the Passover feast, were assigned to represent to them and to us the sinless body which was pierced and broken upon the cross and the crimson flood of His atoning blood that, by faith, cleanses us from all sin.

Thus the loving rite was established by Jesus Himself, taking the elements of the feast that were at hand, and simply elevating them to the highest place of symbolism—the representation of the sacrificed, atoning body of Jesus, the God-man of Salvation! Without any pomp or fanfare, but rather in the setting of the large upper room, Jesus simply set forward the emblems, gave thanks to the Father, and then

distributed them among the disciples. As they partook, He gave them the simple command: "do this in remembrance of me." and further stated that He would no more take of these emblems until the day when He will take it new, with us, in the Father's kingdom.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

What are we to remember? Whom are we to discern? Too many in our day who preside at the Lord's table try too hard to help us! Sometimes we cannot remember Jesus because of inappropriate and lengthy recitations. Usually we just don't have enough time to remember very much at all. We get concerned with the mechanics of passing the emblems and then rather unconsciously mark time for the servers to re-gather at the front only to realize that we have been caught up in the trapping rather than in the worship. O that we could have a few moments of silent meditation after the emblems have been received! There are so many and various things that we need to recall.

I CAN'T REMEMBER THEM ALL

The communion period is too brief for more than just a few memories, but here are some that will help us discern the body: The glorious virgin birth of the Son of God; The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him as He began His ministry; His Power over death; His love for the sinner and the outcast; His conduct of life; His victory over the temptations; His teachings and parables; Gethsemane; the Trial before Pilate; The mockery; The crown of thorns; The crucifixion; Compassion for the thief on the cross; The seven utterances from the cross; "It is finished!"; The convulsion of the earth; The entombment; "He is risen!" "Lovest thou me?"; and "Go ye into all the world!".

WHAT TO DO?

How can we tell someone else how they ought to commune? But again, how can we keep silent in the face of such a question? The answer must be gathered from the Word of Jesus and the inspired apostles. "Drink ye all (everyone) of it." "This do, in remembrance of me." "As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death, till he come." "Discern the body." But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

The Lord's table is a fine place to make matters right with the Lord Jesus whom we are remembering. Remember that the cleansing blood is there to be applied. And remember again that "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

“Are You Dead to Sin?”

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, New King James Version)

Shallow minds, especially those looking for an excuse to carry out the lusts of the flesh, could read the last two verses of Romans 5 and conclude that it is a good idea to sin, for the more sin the more grace. Paul, guided of the Holy Spirit, knew that some would say such things, so he anticipated them and asked the opening two questions of this chapter (making up verse 1). He answers his own question in the strongest language that he could use in verse 2, translated in the NKJV “certainly not!” The ASV translates or paraphrases as “God Forbid!” I believe it is Newell that uses an expression for this that I like—“Banish the thought!”

To show why he is so emphatic in answering verse 1, Paul concludes verse 2 with another question that answers itself, “How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” When a human body dies no longer does that body live in relation to all the things that it had formerly moved among. We know that the body goes into the grave and the person that inhabited that body goes, soul and spirit, to be with the Lord if he was a Christian. That person is obviously very active there, participating in the things of another world but having no relationship to the things of this life. I could walk near his grave, even lie down on it, but there would be no joint participation in this life regardless of the nearness of space. Paul, then, is here saying that we who have died to sin have no relationship to such things anymore. We could not plan, if we are truly dead to sin, to abide continually in it (the meaning of “continue” in verse 1).

As you see from what I just said, Paul is not saying that a Christian living in this world, surrounded by its temptations and still having the “old man”, the old nature, with us, must therefore be sinless. What he is saying is that “such ones as we” (a correct translation of the simple word “we” in the opening of his answer in verse 2) who had died to sin could not possibly plan and carry out a life in sin. That death to sin was a once for all thing. In fact to translate “Such ones as we who once for all died to sin” would be absolutely correct by the original language. The regeneration of a Christian is a very radical

thing, as many passages in the Word of God point out, and it is not something that we keep repeating after periods of being back in the old state. May I point out, then, that if you desire to live in sin you certainly ought to examine what you call faith and see if you have really died with Christ, been born again, been washed from your sins, or whatever term you want to us from the Scriptures to describe that marvelous change that comes to the one who in faith answers Christ's call, "Come unto Me." We can't come half-way and be in Him!

Now notice the implication of verse 3—some of the Romans, Paul thinks, may be ignorant of this wonderful truth. Or maybe he is being hypothetical again to give more force to his points at this time. Regardless of that, he points out a significant truth here by showing that when they came to Christ and answered His call to believe and be baptized, they died to sin whether they knew it or not. Have you ever met a person who, when his conception of the grandness of Christian baptism came to him and he realized that he did not know the fulness of the meaning of baptism when he was baptized, wanted then to be baptized again? Many have done this and Paul would tell each one, "When you were baptized all that baptism meant became true of you whether you knew it or not. Baptism as a response to faith is a grand and wonderful thing and I personally don't expect to know all the grandeur of it until I am with the Lord. I wouldn't debate the subject of baptism for anything, but I wish that I could impress upon everyone what it has meant already to me and have them share in it.

Verse 3 also points out what baptism is into—Christ's death. Here is that identification that I spoke of in my last article. Christ died on the Cross nearly 2000 years ago and I was baptized in the 20th century, but I died with Christ. That is difficult for my little brain to grasp, but God is not bound by the smallness of my sight or understanding. He knew before He made the earth all about the Cross and all about me, so I died with Christ there. I hope you did too. And I hope that all the wonders of identification with Him as shown in this chapter are yours too. Nothing in the world is worthy to be compared to being identified with Christ in the sight of God. When I look at myself I know this couldn't be, but when I look up to God then I know with great certainty that it is so. Praise His Name!



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Why don't men leave the Bible alone and quit bringing out another Bible every few years? Men should not be guilty of changing God's Word.

It is supremely true, of course, that men should not be guilty of changing God's Word. This is a serious offense. The warning against adding to" or "taking from," as found in Rev. 22:18-19, apply in principle not only to the book of Revelation but to all of God's Word. Those who accept the Bible as the inspired word of God realize that to change His word in any way is to attack the very wisdom of God who gave it. It is right for us to guard this treasure which God has committed to us and to protest vigorously any and all efforts to "give us another Bible." If Satan could somehow destroy the Bible by changing it to suit himself, he would have struck a blow against God's people of immense proportion. So it is good to see people who care and are alarmed at man's "tinkering" with the Word.

Christians must be fair and honest, however. We must be careful of ignorantly pressing charges which are not true. We must not allow our zeal to defend what is true to cause us to use untruths in doing so. Most Bible translations are not an attempt to give us another Bible; instead, they are an effort to give us a better translation of the Bible. Not all translations are of equal value. Some do a much better job than others. Some may have some glaring errors. The purpose which motivated them was not necessarily a change of the Bible, however.

Most of us could not read the Bible as it was initially given by the Holy Spirit. The original books were written in Hebrew (for the Old Testament) and Greek (for the New Testament). In order that most of us may be able to read and understand the Bible it has to be translated into our present-day language. For many of us that language is English. For others it might be Spanish, Swahili, or Chinese. There are still some lesser known languages of our day into which the Bible has not been translated. Into some languages there may have been only one translation. In English there have been a number of different translations and versions of the Bible. The appearance of a new one does not automatically mean someone is trying to give us another Bible.

I am always a bit turned off by some preacher (almost always I hear these on the radio) ranting about those who use another version of the Bible than that which he uses, implying if not actually saying that others are not faithful to God because they use "another Bible." Such men are either displaying their own ignorance or trying to capitalize on the ignorance of others to establish a following. No one English version or translation can lay claim to being the Bible exclusively.

The King James version is widely used and has stood the test of time. It is one of the early (but not the earliest) translations into English, completed in 1611 A.D. Its availability, familiarity, and beauty of language make it a favorite with many. It certainly represents a faithful attempt to give us the Bible in English. With the passing of time, however, some of its expressions are a bit outdated. Language changes slowly, and words taking on different shades of meaning. Meanwhile, that translation, now nearly 400 years old, has not changed. Hence, many people find the King James version

hard to read and understand. Some of its expressions are needlessly hard to understand.

Moreover, in that span of years since the King James translation was made, there have been manuscript discoveries and studies which give us a more accurate idea of the originals. We do not have today the original gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We do not have Luke's copy of the book of Acts or the original letters written by Paul and the others. We have copies of the originals, or, more accurately, copies of copies. Manuscript study is too complicated to discuss fully here, but more recent translators have had better manuscript authority on which to base translations. This does not affect much of our Bible, but it must be said in honesty that some more modern readings (that is, more recently discovered) are more accurate. We need to remember that in claiming inspiration for the Bible, it is the originals which were inspired. Any effort to clarify just what words or forms of words appeared in the original is an attempt to get closer to inspiration, not an attempt to destroy it.

The American Standard version, which came about the beginning of our present century, is widely hailed for its accuracy. It was not a new Bible in the sense of adding to or taking from the King James; it was a faithful attempt to give us a better translation of the Bible. Because it changed the readings in the King James only when considered necessary for improvement, it retained much of the older style language and now has the weakness that some of its expressions are harder to understand. Many of us use it and love it for its accuracy, but to ears trained in the King James version it sometimes sounds different. It is not now readily available at those places selling Bibles.

Many translations and versions have followed. Many of these have been an attempt to give us the Bible in modern speech. Some have been designed for people with limited vocabulary. Other honorable purposes have prompted some of the translations. On the other hand, some have had an axe to grind and have reflected a particular doctrinal bias on the part of the translators. Some translations have reflected the liberal views of unbelief on the part of the translators. In short, there have been both good and bad translations. Some have had high motivation and represent an honest attempt to give us a better rendering of the Bible in our language—not another Bible. Others have not proposed to give us another Bible but have done so poorly in some areas that this could be the effect, at least in those areas. A few, perhaps, have been so prejudiced and sectarian that the effort must be rejected. The point here is that we must not reject a new effort to give us a translation as an attempt to give us a new Bible. Each translation should stand or fall on its own merits.

More dangerous, in the eyes of this writer, is the wide acceptance of paraphrases and condensed versions of the Bible. The Living Bible has gained wide popularity and is highly readable. It is an attempt to put the Bible in words more easily understood, which has required that much of it be given in *other words*. The author has said, in effect, here is what this passage means, not specifically what it says. We call

this paraphrasing. It is a translation of ideas rather than a translation of the specific word given by the Holy Spirit. So far as I know, the author had a noble purpose in mind and tried to be faithful to give what he believed the passages meant. The weakness of this type of work, however, is that the paraphraser must interpret rather than translate. His work becomes more of a commentary than a translation. If those who use the Living Bible are clearly aware that it is a paraphrased work and maintain contact with a more literal version of the scriptures, then the danger may be minimal. Any "in depth" study, however, where the exact words of scripture might be important, should not rely on this work.

The Reader's Digest Association has more recently come out with a condensed version of the Bible. Reader's Digest has maintained a higher standard than many magazine and book publishers, and for this we are grateful. They are accomplished at the art of condensing books, this is not an ordinary book which they have undertaken to condense, however. The condensed Bible poses a serious threat to those who are not aware of what it is or if it becomes accepted as containing all of the Bible that is needed. I do not know what the public response has been to the purchase of this work, but I hope and pray that they will fall flat on their face on this one. I hope it proves to be a financial disaster to them. The purpose, I suppose, is to make the Bible more readable, taking out repetitive passages or what is regarded as unessential, to shorten it into something requiring less time. Man, whether the editors of Reader's Digest or any other, acts rather high-handedly when he decides which part of the scripture to omit. The Spirit has declared all of the Word inspired and all of it profitable. A condensed Bible substitutes the judgments of men for the wisdom of God as to what man needs to read.

I will agree that we seem to have a surplus of Bible translations in our day (in English), but insofar as they represent reverent and scholarly attempts to give us a more accurate Bible we should be glad. Any of several available translations must be considered very good works, and we will not err in any matter of consequence in using them. Rather than insisting on a particular version we will do well to take one or more of the good ones and spend our time knowing the word of God more perfectly through their use.

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



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO MILES per gallon. Jim Sawyer, president of Ronal Research in Fraser, Michigan, used principles of aerodynamics to improve the gas mileage of his 1972 Honda to get 172 MPG. Can you imagine anyone finding fault with this discovery? Just wait.

WHO IS SURPRISED AT MR. WATT'S RESIGNATION? You know what he said, so I'll not repeat it. One member of the commission to which Mr. Watt referred said, "I did not find the remarks to be funny. I don't think race, sex, religious affiliation, or physical disabilities are funny." Dr. Walter Williams, a black, an author, and a professor of economics, finds that statement "incredible." The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the Justice Department, the Health and Human Services Department, and literally hundreds of government agencies throughout the country, Dr. Williams reminds us, "think race, sex, and physical status are crucial. They harass companies, school districts, and colleges for not having the right number of blacks, Jews, women, and crippled people." James Watt has been driven from office by special-interest radicals who, fearing his public-policy position, were out to get him. They used his ironic satire of Affirmative Action as a pretext. Mr. Watt believed from the day of his appointment that he would have to resign before his term ended. "I realized that if I were to bring about the changes that America demanded we would accumulate over time hostilities of the special interest groups that have such selfish interests and that we would have to make a determination when our usefulness expired."

LET US CLOSE THE WATTS CASE WITH THIS. The Massachusetts-based

Coalition of Handicapped People, whose chairman is John Carlucci, made this response to the media uproar about Watt's statement.—The members agree that the statement was unfortunate, even inappropriate, but say it was not demeaning. They object to the "illegitimate and disgraceful use of handicapped people and their interests to further far-leftwing causes." Chairman Carlucci says that while the remarks made by Secretary Watt did not deeply offend his members "the actions of those who have used us to attack Mr. Watt do offend us. For far too long, leftwing radicals have used their version of disabled rights to achieve their own ends rather than to benefit disabled people. . . With our voices joined together throughout the land, we shall, once for all, end the calculated and illegitimate use of handicapped people to serve far-left purposes."

ABC NEWS SPECIAL BROADCAST REGARDING WHETHER the United Nations should be welcome in the United States. After the broadcast a poll of the audience was taken. 125,340 listeners said that the U.N. should be removed from our shores while 60,979 felt that we should continue to host it. You will recall Ambassador Lichenstein's polite suggestion made to those Soviet grumblers about being denied landing rights at civilian airports. As a true-blue American Mr. Ambassador said: ". . . if in the judicious determination of the members of the United Nations they feel they were not welcome and treated with hostile consideration that is their due, the United States strongly encourages member states to seriously consider removing themselves and this organization from the soil of the United States. We will put no impediment in your way. And we will be at dockside bidding you a

fond farewell as you set off into the sunset."

• • • • •
MAYOR EDWARD KOCH OF NEW YORK CITY SAYS THAT THE United Nations is a "cesspool," but, he says that it should remain in New York "because every country needs a cesspool."

AND WHAT ABOUT THE BOYCOTT AGAINST SOVIET PLANES because of the shooting down of a Korean airliner over the Sea of Japan on September 1st? The Soviet press agency Tass, just twenty days after the announcement of the boycott, is bragging that most of the world's major airlines are flying into Moscow again. Tass says that "Ronald Reagan's latest sanctions against the USSR have exploded "like the rain bubbles that are bursting these fall days on the tarmac of the Moscow airport."

• • • • •
DR. PETR BECKMANN ON THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE Korean airliner which carried 269 civilians: "What was so surprising and shocking was the number of people who found it surprising and shocking. Are you surprised and shocked that a viper has venom in its fangs? Only if you do not understand the nature of vipers. One who understood the nature of the Soviet viper unusually well was a passenger on the plane: Congressman Larry McDonald, M.D. He knew that you don't punish a viper, you don't invoke sanctions, and least of all, you do not negotiate with it; you take protective measures, you deter it, you arm against it, and you make sacrosanctly sure that if it should attack nevertheless, you are

most certainly able to kill it. Understanding the Soviet viper means diligent study, not blind, emotional hatred."

• • • • •
KATHRYN JACKSON McDONALD, WIDOW AND MOTHER of two small children is asking the voting citizens of Georgia's 7th District to elect her as their representative in Congress to replace her patriot husband who was assassinated by the Soviet regime which thought nothing of destroying 268 other defenseless human beings to get to a most hated enemy, Congressman Larry McDonald. She has come in first in a field of at least 20 who were seeking the office. The Atlanta newspapers, the "liberal" wing of the Democratic party, and leftists of every stripe have pulled out all stops in their effort to defeat Mrs. McDonald and prevent her from carrying on her husband's work. This may give you some idea of her qualifications to do just that. From reading her expressions of the situation the free world is facing, I am convinced that she is well qualified to continue the work which the Soviet terrorists tried so desperately to discontinue. Mrs. McDonald has to face—I don't know how many in a run-off to see if the people of her district want her.

• • • • •
THE REDS ARE DOUBLING EFFORTS TO JAM foreign radio reports coming into Russia. They mean to do everything possible to blackout the Western version of the Kremlin's shoot-down of the Korean Airliner September 1st. This jamming is costing the Soviet Treasury at the rate of \$140 million per year.

Power For Your Youth Group

Timothy W. Ayers

The future of any congregation lies with its youth. These kids will mature physically and spiritually to accept the positions of leadership and responsibility that are the backbone of church structure.

How do we meet the spiritual needs of our youth in order that they might reach their potential and become responsible leaders in the coming generation? Will an occasional message on the problems of growing up do the job? Can their growing hunger for fellowship be met by sporadic meetings with other young people?

Church leaders face a difficult situation. The world has got its hooks into our kids through TV, radio, magazines, school and peer

pressures. It is sucking them down and trying to mold them into its image. What can be done?

One answer is for the church or assembly to have an effective youth work that reaches into all facets of teen living. We need youth programs that feed the teen both spiritually and socially. Such programs are balanced with fun, teaching, responsibility, Bible, prayer, and evangelism. They have at their center, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word POWER has become an acrostic for the five guiding points of our youth program. We have found that these five points are the keys that give POWER to our youth group. We want to share them with other assemblies for the benefit of those who will be the building blocks of the assemblies (congregations) of tomorrow.

Prayer is the first necessity in giving your youth group power—by the youth leaders for the group, and prayer by the group for its own needs. Psalm 105:4 says “Seek the LORD, and his strength; seek his face evermore.”

There is power in prayer. Proper teaching on prayer as well as practical use of it will demonstrate lasting principles that can carry a teenager through a serious situation to a conclusion that builds him up spiritually.

In our own group, we have a prayer meeting before the regular social part of our get-together. Those desiring to pray or offer requests gather in a designated area.

During the week, phone calls are made to find out if there are any particular requests, especially requests that might not be brought out in a meeting. These calls are fruitful in making personal contact between the teen and the youth leader. Their expression of the leader's love and concern can build a personal relationship that reaches far beyond the group relationship into warm bonds of Christian fellowship.

Nothing can be more frustrating to a teen than to switch off his favorite TV show, climb into a car and travel all the way out to an assembly activity, only to find both the youth leader and the activity in a state of total chaos. Nothing can be more frustrating to a youth leader than to try to lead an activity and have absolutely no concept of what he is trying to accomplish with the young people entrusted to him.

These problems lead to a common ailment of youth workers today—early burnout. This is often caused by the “one-man ministry” or “single-leader” syndrome.

Organization can alleviate this and other problems commonly faced in youth work. Our organizational activity begins with a planning meeting of several older members (ages 19-25). They design the program with the desires of the total group in mind. Out of this, a calendar is prepared listing events for the next several months. We then divide the activities among the leaders, assigning responsibility for organizing and running each event.

The calendar is adjustable, but it establishes a basic description of coming activities. It serves to attract the attention of young people.

So it should be well-designed in its graphics, as well as in its events, and then posted in a conspicuous place. The use of clip-art helps to produce interesting, thought-provoking calendars.

The division of responsibility among willing, mature members lifts an intolerable burden from the director's shoulders, freeing him to minister more personally to the young people in more basic areas of need. So we assign responsibilities to various members of the group, including such things as arranging for refreshments.

Our third key to power in our youth group is the Word of God. The Bible gives us hope (Romans 15:4), tells us of salvation in Christ (1 Cor. 15:3), makes us wise (II Tim. 3:15), and reveals what God has for all men (II Peter 1:21). The Holy Scripture is the authority for our teaching, discipling, and method of dealing with our group members. The Bible is precisely what we need in our modern society to sustain and fortify us against the evil one.

To properly instruct on the Word, our youth group holds a Bible study after the general activity. This study is an in-depth look at the Scripture, examining deeper truths, and feeding the members desiring meat.

For our regular activities, we schedule speakers much like an assembly does. We attempt to deal with topics that are relevant to a teen growing up in the midst of our social conditions.

On occasion we plan a special series of messages. "Know Your Elder" was a series in which the assembly elders spoke, sharing for a time and then fielding questions. These questions gave the group members an opportunity to form an open line of communication with the assembly leaders. Another series has dealt with the Fruit of the Spirit.

Be prepared to juggle your plans to use visiting missionaries or talented speakers on a short notice. Consider the home assembly's numerous talents and draw from this tremendous resource. A regular emphasis of each message should be the great salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and another should be a solid commitment to Him.

James says in his epistle, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (1:22). So it is necessary for the teen to see his faith operating in his environment. To accomplish this goal, certain programs have been built into the schedule to give group members the opportunity to come alive in their faith and testify of the Lord Jesus by their actions.

A youth worker should be seeking activities where the group can learn the reality of ministering to other people's needs. We include a monthly outreach activity in our calendar.

One way for young people to exercise their faith is through evangelism. If today's leaders desire tomorrow's leaders to participate actively in the Great Commission, then we must be teaching the "hows" of evangelism. To do this we have used a training course that has international recognition as a reputable, proven teaching tool, and incorporates an active field ministry as well. We have also used such activities as a 5¢ car wash. We have found this to be a tremendous way to present the Gospel. During the car wash we offer cool drinks

inside our fellowship hall, where we present those who come in with the Gospel. During our last car wash we saw three people confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

All our planned activities are submitted to the elders before they are put into action. We bring problems and rough situations to them for counsel and guidance. The elders are there for the purpose of oversight and we as youth leaders must submit our position of leadership to them. We have learned to make good use of their advice. This helps us avoid potential problems.

Every program has its tremendous successes and its horrendous flops. This is inevitable. Possibly the events leading to the flop were not easy to foresee. More likely, our poor planning or lack of foresight was the major factor in the fiasco.

No matter what the reason, a review of your past program can bring to light the mistakes to be avoided and the successes to be repeated.

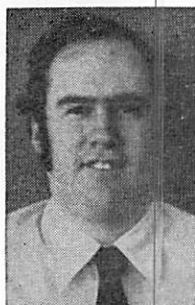
We review our programs as they take place, and then again at the planning meeting. This gives us insight into which ideas work and which ones hit the circular file.

Never neglect reviewing the needs of your group, and the needs of the individuals within it. We deal with each teen as a person that has feelings, problems, loves, crushes, skills, gifts, and interests.

All these reviews help us plan our upcoming calendar.

Through these five steps, Prayer, Organization, the Word of God, Exercise, and Review, we have given POWER to our youth group. That power returns to our total assembly in the form of dedicated spiritual workers that have made decisions to go on for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Give your youth group *POWER!*—from *INTEREST* magazine



GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Occupation with our state will never bring us one whit nearer the Lord; it will only distress, cast down, and enslave our souls. Occupation with Christ will produce any moment increasing conformity to His image. The true remedy, therefore, for a bad state is Christ so completely filling our vision—Christ in what He is and in what He has done—that self cannot be seen in the light of His glory. State is not

everything; and in proportion as we learn this lesson will our state meet His mind.

—J. N. Darby

WAITING FOR GOD

The reader of God's Word cannot miss the emphasis of this phrase. It occurs many times and with a peculiar insistence, over and over again. I believe that it is the needful word for our day of restlessness, impatience, distress, unbelief, in which many are tempted to go off at a tangent. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." "My soul, wait thou in silence for God only." "I wait for Jehovah: my soul doth wait and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for Jehovah more than the watchmen waiteth for the morning—yea, more than watchmen wait for Jehovah." "None that wait for thee shall be put to shame." "It is good for a man that he should hope and quietly wait for Jehovah."

—R.H. Boll, in *Words in Season*: 1931

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

"He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). "God put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). This is a greater and more wonderful conception, surpassing even that of the spiritual Temple. The head and the body constitute a living whole, not only an organization but an organism. To Him who sits on the right hand of God, far above all principality and power and every name that is named, the humble church is united by a vital bond, even as a man's body is joined to his head, sharing the same life and the same Spirit which animates both head and body; and whatever affects the body affects the head—yea, chiefly affects the head. Saul had the first intimation of that on the road to Damascus, where the Lord of glory spoke from heaven and said unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The persecution of the church of God was felt by the Head in heaven, as a thing done unto Him; nor can any good or ill be done to Christ's church without doing it to the Lord Jesus Christ. As His body, the church is also His instrumentality for doing His work in the earth. The work He would do, the work He wants done, in the world He must do through the church, and can be done by the church alone.

—R. H. Boll, in *Words in Season*: 1949

THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

The church of tomorrow will be much less denominational. While it may keep the denomination as a method of getting work done, it will transcend utterly the notion of any denominational self-sufficiency.

The church of tomorrow will be one in which the local church is a small theological seminary. It will be a place where what we have called laymen will learn and study and prepare for their witness in the world. The week days will be more important than Sunday.

—Elton Trueblood

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FAITH AND OPINION

The distinction between faith and opinion was one of the most important principles of judgment and action developed by this reformation (Stone-Campbell), making the former imperative and the latter a matter of private liberty.

—C.L. Loos

ARE WE AFRAID OF ENTHUSIASM?

A great many people are afraid of enthusiasm. If a man is enthusiastic they raise the cry, "Zeal without knowledge!" I should rather have zeal without knowledge than knowledge without zeal. I can't understand how any man can realize his standing before God and not be on fire three hundred and six-five days in the year.

—D.L. Moody

MY FIRST NEED

My first need is to acknowledge that I can know nothing definitely of the mysteries of God until I am taught by the Holy Spirit; but if my Spirit and the Spirit of God are in union, the first proof and fruit of it will be that the Spirit will take the things of God and show them to me.

—A.T. Pierson

Until Next Time, *MARANATHA!*

Misunderstandings: Are They Curable?

LeRoy C. Dugan

George and Glen attended the same church for twenty years. For fifteen of those years they scarcely spoke to each other. After church each week they smiled at each other, muttered platitudes, and pressed through the crowds to their separate cars, and drove to separate homes. But that was as near as they ever came to having fellowship.

Why?

Because of a simple misunderstanding.

One night, after the annual congregational meeting, George's telephone rang. Confined to his bed with a nasty virus, he had not been able to attend. When he lifted the receiver he heard the voice of another member, just returned from the meeting.

"Hey, George, how are you? That cold any better?"

"Well, right now I feel terrible. But, I should be back among the living by tomorrow night. Anything big happen at the meeting?"

"Well, the truth is, that's why I called, George. Something was said that I thought you should know."

"OK. Shoot."

"Remember Glen Sorenson? Listen to me, will you. *Of course* you remember Glen. You guys have been fishin' buddies for five years. It's just that . . . well after what I heard him say tonight, I guess it's hard for me to think of him as an old friend of yours. Don't

misunderstand me, George. . . I've got nothing against Glen. I wouldn't even bring this up. . . but I thought you should know. . . ."

"What are you talking about? WHAT should I know?"

"Well. . . during our discussion about new elders your name came up as a candidate and Glen said something like, 'He's not really the man for the job.' Man, you could have knocked me over with a feather! Imagine him saying a thing like that! So I thought I should warn you. Next Sunday the names of the new elders will be in the bulletin, and I didn't want you to think that your name is missing because of some of the rest of us. Lots of us voted for you in spite of what Glen said. I'm sure sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but I thought you should know who it was that swayed the voting."

That was fifteen years ago! George has gotten bald since then. Glen has gotten grey. And neither has gotten any nearer the real truth. Glen noticed something wrong, of course. But he figured that if George had anything he wanted to talk about, he'd bring it up. Glen was never one to pry things out of people. At first he just tried being as friendly as ever—a slap on the back; a suggestion about fishing next Saturday; an invitation to come over to Sunday dinner. He tried everything. But there was never an affirmative response. Sometimes. . . quite often, in fact, he had dreams about George and the great times they once had together. At other times he had dreams of a reconciliation between himself and his cherished friend. But, since he could think of nothing more to do to make the dreams come true, they stopped. The two men just went on getting older. . .

Misunderstanding is a terrible thing! It cannot be called sin, but it certainly can create intolerable and unnecessary barriers between believers!

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MISUNDERSTANDING

By its very nature, it is a *mental* problem, not a moral one. Perhaps that is the cardinal reason why it seems so unassailable. It does not lend itself to the same treatment which sin requires. Jesus has told us, once and for all, precisely what to do when someone SINS against us. The instructions are very clear in Matthew 18.

But misunderstanding is different.

There is no sin to confess. There is no repenting to demand. There is no handy set of verse to quote.

HOW DOES MISUNDERSTANDING OCCUR?

In the first place, it can occur because of misinformation received.

One person *lies* to you about someone else.

This is the simplest mode by which the seeds of misunderstanding can be sown.

"Sally said you are completely unreliable!" Words like these can destroy the relationship between two people. And there may not be a grain of truth in them. What Sally *really* said may have been the reverse. But, once the falsehood is uttered, the implications of it may live forever!

One person gives you *partial information* about someone else.

"I suppose you've heard that Irwin is homosexual?" Someone whispers into your ear. The truth is, Irwin *was*. The truth is, Irwin

still had some effeminate mannerisms which carried over from the old life. But, the *rest* of the truth is: Irwin is *no longer* a homosexual. He ceased that practice the moment he was converted!

What a man once *was* is only part of the story. What he now *is* is the most important chapter!

Sadly enough, it is often more scintillating to report the sordid than the salutary. And the resulting fragmenting tale becomes the foundation for a total misunderstanding!

One person gives you *distorted* information about someone else.

It's difficult for any of us to report facts without twisting them, at least a little. So, someone comes to you and says, "This guy might be a Christian. But he's an emotionalist!" Of course the brother bringing the report is from a denomination which despises Charismatics. His opinion, therefore, is filtered through his theological bias.

Someone else tells you, "That fellow you met at the Graham Crusade. You know what he is? He's a hypocrite, that's what! He does not practice what he preaches. Don't ask me what he does. But, take my word for it, he's a hypocrite!"

What, you may ask, is the inspired source of this indictment? Easy. The observer saw him coming out of a bar last Saturday night. What he neglected to document was the fact that the man in question has gone into the bar to rescue a young friend whom had been conned into going back to his old ways and was in dire need of being relocated!

In the second place, it can occur because of your own ears. You may hear *partial* statements.

You tend to trust your own hearing more than you trust that of others. So, when you are going out of church and you overhear, "Has she got a baby *already*?" you can easily conclude that someone was pregnant before married and the disgraceful fact is now manifest by the infant's untimely arrival. Had you heard the rest of the conversation, your impression would have been very different! The ladies discussing the newborn also mentioned that they fondly hope that the two-month *premature* baby will live! They are not decrying the sin of the mother. There is no sin. They are declaring their hope for the lovely child's survival!

You may hear *jocular* statements.

If all the words used in innocent jest were recorded on God's permanent record, to be faced on that last great day, the finest saints might find themselves in the lowest hell! Fortunately for us all, God has a better sense of humor than we. He knows exactly when statements are to be taken seriously and when they are not.

You may not be so accurate. Someone in whom you trusted may one day flippantly call you "ugly," and you may believe it. Someone else may tell you a hilarious story about "the Norwegian who went ice fishing, and came home with twenty pounds of ice." You may hear only the reference to your beloved fatherland, and take the tale as criticism.

Granted, some humor is in bad taste. Some jokes with racial overtones are not in order. Ethnic stories may injure others unintentionally. But, so often they are just that: unintentional. And you

must not automatically conclude that a story is always a weapon of hate. It is probably intended as a vehicle of good humor.

You may hear *pressurized* statements.

Very commonly even the best of God's servants speak "out of character." It is not their way of life. It is exceptional. But, it happens. And when the pressures of obligation, sickness, or griefs are upon them, they may say something which in no way reflects their true character intention.

If, under such pressure, a friend of yours speaks words that seem harsh, you can easily misunderstand his intentions.

In the third place, it can occur because of your own observations.

Perhaps you have seen, at a distance, someone pulling his child into the house while the child screams as if it were about to be dismembered. You instantly conclude that the father was brutal!

What you failed to see, one moment before, was the near-miss of a speeding car which almost took the life of the youngster who had disobediently run into the street.

Perhaps you watched the zealous activities of one who substituted for you when you were temporarily incapacitated, and interpreted the zeal as an attempt to take your job. Had you read your benefactor's heart, you would realize he was trying to retain it for *you* by keeping the level of effectiveness high in your absence.

Perhaps you saw the Sunday school superintendent making particular efforts to keep some of the pupils in your class happy, and were certain she was attempting to get them to transfer to her own class. What you didn't know was that God had given her a special concern for some of the class members she knew how Gospel-resistant and nonsupportive their parents were (a condition *you* had neglected to investigate).

HOW CAN MISUNDERSTANDING BE CURED?

Assume innocence.

You must begin with a foundational assumption, which is crucial to every individual case of misunderstanding:

What you have assumed to be evil might not, in fact, be evil at all. Therefore, you absolve every suspect in advance.

You always assume that you probably do not have sufficiently accurate information to draw a final conclusion about the quality of the person's words or actions.

I well remember, many years past, hearing the report of the supposed marital infidelity of a minister of the Gospel. I was shocked, because I knew him to be an effective soul-winner and saint. But, the hearsay evidence, from usually reliable sources, seemed conclusive. The next time I visited a brother of mine I mentioned the matter to him. His reply was pointed.

"Yes. I've heard that, too. But I decided not to believe it! I refuse to think of him as guilty." From that day to this I have assumed him innocent. And I have never been shown any more conclusive evidence of his guilt. So, I will assume his innocence 'til I die. The result is that my reactions to him are not clouded in the least by suspicion.

Since God is God, and far more knowledgeable than I, He *may* know him to be guilty. But, lacking that perfect insight, I happily call him "innocent"!

Acquire accurate information.

Armed with the frame of mind which gladly assumes innocence, you may safely search for further information when the misunderstanding affects you—that is, when it is within the sphere of your responsibility.

How do you get such further information?

Easily.

You speak to the source. You talk to the person himself.

"I have been hearing things about you which make me sad. I do not believe what I am hearing, but I know that if false charges against you are going around, they can only hurt you more. Rather than circulate them further, I would like to hear the real story from you, so the next time something is said, I can do my part in stopping the misinformation."

For many years I worked in the same department with a certain woman. All during those years she seemed offended by almost everything I said. I could not understand it, so I cried to God repeatedly about the matter, asking Him, "What have I done, Lord? Please reveal to me what I have done wrong!" I never heard one word from heaven in reply to those cries. Finally, after delaying far too long, I asked her what I had done to offend her. She looked at me through startled eyes and said, "What? I don't ever remember you offending me in all the years we've known each other!" In one instant the entire misunderstanding had been cleared up. What a relief. And how foolish of me not to have gone directly to the source long before!

More recently I took a special trip to California to visit one of my brothers. He has lived there, in that distant state, for many years. I experienced growing sadness about the fact that, even when he did come to my part of the country, he seldom came to see me. I searched my memory for some reason why he should be "cold" toward me. I always came up empty. When I finally went to California, primarily to get this matter cleared up, I told him about my deep concern and asked if I had offended him in any way. He told me, frankly, that I *had*, and related the specific instances of those offenses. I had gotten accurate information about the misunderstanding between us. It hurts to discover that I had been wrong. But it was well worth the hurt! I apologized, and asked him to forgive me. After years of failing to go directly to the source, we had been drawn together again.

We are duty-bound to acquire accurate information from the persons involved whenever possible! And I suspect that God has meant it to be this way, so that the very process of investigation will tend to draw us back to the people we misunderstand.

Ask for mediation.

Sometimes you may find it difficult to express yourself adequately. Sometimes you have reason to believe that the person who is the subject of your potential misunderstanding is not approachable.

In such cases a mediator is very helpful. Find a "peacemaker,"

and ask for his help. He can make arrangements for a meeting, and arbitrate and clarify during the conversation between you. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Calling on the help of such a person will introduce a "blessed man" into the picture and further facilitate the dissolving of the problem.

By the way, you may be curious about the end of the story of George and Glen:

The words Glen actually spoke in the annual meeting were these, "George's gifts are such that I would like to see him be a *deacon* in our church. I believe God has really equipped him for that special calling. So, I would like to suggest that his name not be offered in nomination as an elder. He's really not the man for the job. However, the next time we expand our board of deacons, I suggest we could do no better than to have George on it!" (The story of George and Glen is a hypothetical composite of what happens all too often in the church.)

Fifteen years of misunderstanding! Because nobody took steps to remedy the remediable!—from *THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS*

The Mind of Christ on Missions

John R. W. Stott

John 4:31-38

Any passage in the Gospels in which our Lord Jesus lays bare His heart and His mind is precious to the Christian believer and worthy of his serious study. In this passage Jesus reveals His mind on missions, that is, on the spread of the gospel, as it is illustrated by the remarkable turn of events in Samaria.

Let us recall the scene. Jesus has sat by the side of Jacob's Well to rest; He has spoken to the Samaritan woman about the living water which He was offering her; He has exposed her sin and explained to her the worship which the Father requires; and He has declared Himself as the long-awaited Messiah. Now she has left the well and her water-jar and gone back into the village to tell the people about Him. Meanwhile, the disciples have returned with the food which they had gone into the village to buy, and they urge Him to eat. But the mind of Jesus is preoccupied with spiritual things. A work of God has begun in the soul of the woman, and the news is spreading in the Samaritan village. Already He can see in the distance the inhabitants of the village to ascend the mountain-side to see for themselves. The seed has been sown and the harvest is immediately anticipated. So He tells them what is in His mind. What He says is relevant to every evangelistic enterprise, and not least to the work of God in the fields of the Far East. There we find the same awakening of spiritual interest through contact with Christian believers. There also is the same rapid spread of the gospel in many places. The question before us is how did Jesus view the work?

Firstly it is an urgent task. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your

eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (v. 35). Jesus employs the harvest metaphor in order to stress the urgency of the task. In doing so, He strikingly contradicts what is in their minds. They were saying, "There are yet four months and then comes the harvest." It may be that the words were a current proverb, although no trace of such a proverb is to be found elsewhere. It may be, alternatively, that He was simply stating the fact of His own observation. The fertile plains at the foot of Mount Gerizim may at that time have been covered with sprouting corn. It may have been December, and He knew that the harvest would not come until April. That was their expectation with regard to the physical harvest, but it was not true of the spiritual harvest. There were not four months to wait. No! Already the fields were ripe. Already the golden was turning white as in the late summer. Already the call had come to the reapers to put in the sickle. The four months had been telescoped into a few hours. The seed in the woman's heart had germinated so fast that there was no time to waste. The reapers need to tread on the heels of the sower.

The application is clear. Fields of ripe grain are not in a static condition which can wait the leisure or pleasure of the reaper. The ripening process pursues its inexorable way and waits for no man. When the maturing process reaches its peak, the corn goes to seed and turns to decay. Delay means ruin. Unless the harvest is gathered at the right time there is a costly wastage. The price of the seed and the labour of both ploughman and sowers are all in vain.

We turn our eyes to the East. How long will the harvest remain ripe? Do we say "four months" or "ten years"? That is not the mind of Jesus. He says, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; they are white *already* to harvest!" Can the harvest be left to be spoiled? Let us think of the cost of the seed. The seed is the word of God. The word of God is the word of the Cross. There could have been no seed, if it were not for the precious blood-shedding of Jesus. Think also of the labours of ploughmen and sowers who first took the seed to the East. Shall His blood have been in vain? Shall their labours have been in vain? All the time the harvest is ripening. Our sinful neglect may spoil the crop.

Secondly, it is a rewarding service. So Jesus said of His own work, and since He permitted the disciples to share in it, it is no doubt true of them also. There is a present reward and there is a future reward.

(1) *The Present reward.*

"In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (vv. 31-34).

When Jesus declined their offer of food and said He had food to eat of which they did not know, they misunderstood His words. As Nicodemus had missed His reference to spiritual birth, and as the Samaritan woman had missed His reference to spiritual water, so the disciples missed His reference to spiritual food. When He said, "My

meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work", He surely did not just mean that the service of God was physically stimulating, but that it was spiritually satisfying. Have we ever stopped to enquire what it is which satisfies the soul of man? No doubt the natural answer would be Jesus Christ Himself, for He is the bread of life. But in this verse we are told that the meat or food of the soul is the will of God and the work of God. It was thus for Jesus Himself. "I do always those things that please him," He said. Again: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God". Again: "Not my will but Thine be done". He taught His disciples to pray the same: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Here He declares that this doing of the Father's will and this finishing of the Father's work was His "food". Now, the disciple is not greater than his master. If it satisfied Him, it can satisfy us. Obedience to God and service to man are the most satisfying of all human employments. Disobedience and sloth spell spiritual starvation.

(2) *The future reward.*

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages" (v. 36a).

We may be tempted to skip this statement. We may say that we do not want wages and that we do not expect a reward. I doubt if we are right to take this attitude. We may be guilty of a false modesty which is hardly distinguishable from pride. Does God promise a reward and do we spurn it? Are we wiser than God? It is true that the nature of the reward is not always clear, but the fact is certain. What it is appears in this context to be the joy of harvest and a share in the final rejoicing.

We are sometimes secretly persuaded that God is calling us to some costly service or sacrifice. It may be to go overseas when we do not wish to. It may be to stay at home when we wish to go overseas. It may be to let somebody else who is dear to us go abroad and leave us behind. There are seeds of rebellion in our hearts. The way of God seems hard, and His yoke heavy. Now, to refuse His will and to neglect His work is not only to endanger God's harvest, it is to hurt our own soul. Disobedience is to rob the soul of its true joy, to starve it of its food now and to deny it of its fullest bliss hereafter. His will and His work are the soul's meat and drink.

Thirdly, it is an enduring work:

"and gathereth fruit unto life eternal" (v. 36b).

Here is another source of satisfaction and inspiration for the reaper. Every worker looks not only to his work, but to the result of his work and the use to which his labours will be put. What will happen to the crop? If the farmer knows that the market is glutted and that thousands of tons of his crops will be thrown away in Covent Garden, he is unlikely to find much joy in his labour. But if he knows that he is harvesting precious crops which will feed the hungry and keep the nation healthy, he will find his occupation satisfying.

With this in mind Jesus points another contrast. However useful may be the toil of the farmer, the result of his labour is only temporary. He has stock for the winter until the next crop comes. Or the grain may last a year or two. Even if like the rich fool he fills his barns with goods "for many years to come", fire may destroy the lot, or he

may lose it all overnight through death. But the fruit of the spiritual harvest is eternal. The wheat is stored in the heavenly garner never to decay or to be lost. It is fruit "unto eternal life".

The Christian reaper toils therefore partly because the precious harvest might otherwise be lost; partly because he finds in the work spiritual release and joy; and partly because he is handling eternal stuff which will replenish the granaries of heaven forever.

Fourthly, it is a combined Operation:

"that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours" (vv. 36c-38). "The sower" may refer to all the Old Testament saints culminating in John the Baptist who prepared the way for the coming of the Lord, or Jesus may be referring to Himself since it was He who sowed the seed in the woman's soul. The reapers are the disciples who have already been working in Judaea and are now to reap in Samaria also. What He says about the sower and the reaper is a familiar thought. St. Paul states something similar in the third chapter of I Corinthians when he declares that he had planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. In that passage the teaching is that the harvest is not the work of man but the work of God. In this passage the teaching is that the harvest is not the work of one but the work of many. It is a humbling thought. And yet if we have grasped the nature of man and the nature of the Church, it is an exhilarating thought. God has made us social creatures to live and to work together. God has constituted His Church one Body with many members differing in function from one another. We need one another and we depend on one another. "One sows and another reaps." We shall never know how many people are used to contribute to the salvation of one soul. We shall know hereafter. We shall discover how complicated a combined operation it is in which very many have had a share. It is so with the soil. One ploughs and prepares the soil with fertilizers; another sows the precious seed. One weeds and hoes and waters, and another reaps.

It is so with the soul, too. One prays; another gives. One teaches; another preaches. One translates the Scriptures; another sells them. One tends the sick; another cares for the children. One organizes; and another administers the funds. One day we shall all meet, and the rejoicing on the further shore will be beyond all description and imagining. We shall share the joy of the angels over one sinner that repents. We shall enter into the joy of Jesus who rejoiced in spirit when He saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven. The harvest will have been gathered in. The reward will have been consummated. The fruit will lie all around in the heavenly garner, and the labourers will all rejoice together. —from a CHINA INLAND MISSION booklet.



Lifted High Up

Grace Ferguson

I would like to tell you a true story that happened just recently. Some of you in Louisiana and Texas and former Southeastern Christian College students will know the parents, Rick and Jimmie Doris Istre.

One Saturday morning Jimmie Doris brought Bradley, their five year old son to visit with me while she trimmed my hair.

During the conversation Jimmie said, "Brad tell Mother Grace what you dreamed the other night." The very mention of the dream changed his whole countenance. You should have seen his face. His eyes sparkled, his face fairly glowed, and his voice was full of joy when he said, "Mother Grace, when my daddy lifted me high up I saw Jesus."

What a testimony, what a witness, what a sermon that child was telling us. He was thrilled to tell it. In his dream he saw Jesus when his Daddy lifted him high up!! From then on Brad had peace and calm from the disturbing dreams he had been having.

Oh! Mothers, Oh! Fathers, what an exalted place God has given us in the lives of our children. To lift them high on the wings of Faith, high on the wings of love, so they can see Jesus!

In application, I Peter 2:9 tells us that we are royal priests. To think we are priests of the living God, and *royal* priests at that. What a glorious place we have in the service of our loving Father. Mothers, Fathers, especially you Fathers are the high priest of your families. Take time to train up your children in the way of the Lord.

What does it mean to lift a child high up? You take him in your arms, then you lift him high above your shoulders, your head, on extended arms. Every Daddy that ever played with his children has done that many times. It was then that Brad saw Jesus. When he was lifted high up.

Let us lift up our children and one another that we, too, may see Jesus.

REPRINTS:

He That Hath Ears . . .

Reuel Lemmons

To some who were listening to His parable Jesus one time said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." This was His way of saying to His listeners that they were in danger of missing the real lesson He was teaching about a sower sowing seed. Most of us when we read this familiar parable are captivated by the idea of stony ground, wayside soil, and thorns, or maybe the hundred-fold harvest. Jesus was teaching what the kingdom of heaven is like. He said it was like seed which was sown.

A lesson most of us have never learned is that the kingdom of heaven is not something that we build like a house; it is something that grows from a seed that is planted. We think of this when we see articles on "how to build up the church." Most of us think of the church as something that will not develop except as we develop it. We think of it as a project which must be planned in elders' meetings and implemented through committees and work programs. We watch its slow development and think of any progress as the result of the carpenter work we have done on the kingdom.

The church is not that kind of manufactured product. It is a living organism. It grows from seed that has been planted. It grows from the miracle of life having been instilled. All we can do is plant, and maybe water. It is still God that gives the increase. The increase, then, is not of our manufacture; it is of God's grace. We get amused sometimes at church leaders hovering over every little detail, blueprinting "the building of a great church." What they ought to do is plant some seed, and then step back out of the way and let it grow!

We have visited many "mission fields" where for years "sponsoring churches" and dedicated "missionaries" have labored to put together a church in a new field. They started right by planting the seed, and they saw a new life spring from the seed they had planted. But then they began to systematize and organize it to death. They seem to have more confidence in their architecture than in God's generating power. It seems that everything the Holy Spirit urges us to do in faith, we try to manipulate and organize. Maybe we ought to have more confidence in God who makes all things grow, and let these "mission" churches grow, instead of hovering over them in the belief that we have to mechanically build them into churches of Christ.

When we build a house one thing happens and when we plant a seed an entirely different thing happens. We may build a beautiful house, but when we are finished we have nothing more than a cold, dead, unresponsive product of our own engineering. When we plant a seed, and God puts life into it, it breaks the ground under its own power as a living thing and grows to bear fruit in response to God's encouragement rather than man's. We can give it loving care and cultivation, to be sure, but we cannot structure a living thing.

Working for the Lord, especially in the realm of spreading the kingdom, has some supernatural qualities about it. The kingdom is spread by the quiet seed planting, which any Christian can do, rather than by grandiose plans laid by the cleverest of men in an officers' meeting. Often we set plans in operation for "building up the church," as if a human blueprint faithfully followed would produce so much growth. Life does not respond to this sort of engineering. There is something mysterious about life. You can't, by taking thought, add one cubit to your stature. God, the Author of life, takes care of growth in living things. The church is a living organism.

Some years ago, as a result of an airplane failure, we were stranded for three days on a small island in the Indian Ocean. While awaiting relief we found that years before, during World War II, someone had planted a tomato patch on that island. In the intervening years

the old airfield had fallen into decay and had been abandoned. But the tomatoes had ripened, dropped their own seeds into the soil and reproduced themselves without any human engineering for several years. That is the way it is with the seed of the kingdom. Sowers of the seed go to distant lands and islands of the sea. They sow the seed. The seed germinates in good and honest hearts. A new life—the miracle of God—begins. Soon this new life is planting seeds in others hearts, and the harvest may be thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold. The most effective way to destroy the crop is to subject it to human supervision back in America where elders' meetings are held over how to make the new church grow. The new church is not a house built by man; it is a living organism that was brought into being by God, and which belongs to God. He can probably care for His own better than we can.

—Editorial in *Firm Foundation*

Edited by Dr. Horace Wood

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

Christ Drawing All Men

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

John 12:27-36

When the Greeks came to Philip earnestly asking, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21), Jesus saw in their request an indication that the time for the good news to go equally to the Gentiles was at hand. He immediately said, when Philip and Andrew brought the request to Him, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (cf. v. 23). The cross and the events that were to follow were soon to come. Israel was in a state of rebellion against the Lord God and was rejecting His Son. There could come nothing but the crucifixion, the resurrection, the coming of the Spirit, and the prophesied change in the outworking of the purpose of God. The apostles who had been told to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (cf. Matt. 10:5-6) were now to be told to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (cf. 28:19). Israel, who had not known the time of her visitation, was not to be left desolate, and the kingdom of God was to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruit of it (cf. Luke 19:44; Matt. 23:28; 21:43).

The Gentiles knocking at the door for His attention is a signal of the new age, and our Lord senses it accurately. His glorification, a necessary prelude for the new turn in events, is upon Him. The "other sheep" not of the Israelitish fold are now to be brought into His flock (cf. John 10:16). He had prophesied that that time would come, but now it is at hand. What a glorious thing it was for Him to see that the fruit of the travail of His soul in His sufferings would soon be His!

The thought of His coming death, however, brings to Jesus the remainder of the depths of suffering that await Him on the cross. No ordinary death is the death that He is to die. In fact, no other being has ever died, or ever will, die such a death,—death under the judgment of a righteous and holy God for the sins of sinners, an eternal death of infinite pain.

It is of such dreadful significance for Jesus that He immediately begins to speak of it, first by means of a figure, that of the corn of wheat that must die, and then more plainly. As He more plainly speaks of the death, the deep sufferings of it grips Him and out comes the terrible utterance, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" (the AV's colon is better punctuated by the question mark). Gethsemane already is upon His mind, and beyond the garden trial lies Calvary's, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

This section is not an easy section to handle in exposition, but it is one that is very blessed for the believer who loves Him. The world likes to see its heroes as triumphantly above weakness, striding on from victory to victory, but Jesus is not presented as a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is given to us tempted in all points as we are, yet without any sin. It is the most impressive of valors that we see in Him, that which overcomes in the midst of the naturally human shrinking from death, but also in the midst of a quiet, calm, wholehearted commitment to the purposes of God. What we have is a picture of a true humanity and a full deity united in the glorification of the eternal Father.

Author John Gossip finds in our Lord's words in verse twenty-seven the very heart and soul of religion. "Supreme and final words that echo and re-echo through the heart!" he says and adds, "What deeps calling to deeps are in them! The natural shrinking of the human spirit; the quick resolute curbing of that, and the quiet laying of it aside; the certainty that in this appalling providence beginning to loom up, in it too there were meaning, and love, and God; the wholehearted committing of himself to God's purposes, keeping back nothing, asking only that God will deign to stoop and use him for his glory; and the rest he leaves with him." This is further proof that He is worthy to be our Savior and Great High Priest. We can only respond in grateful worship, asking that God will teach us to pray similarly in the trials of life.

In the section that follows we shall find some things very difficult to grasp. The proper approach to them is faith, as Cowper suggests in his famous stanza,

"Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan his work in vain.
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

We turn to it in that spirit.

THE ANTICIPATION OF GETHSEMANE

The struggle (John 12:27). The Greek's request has introduced Him to the struggle, as we have pointed out. His hour is at hand,

and it is the time for Him to most perfectly illustrate His own words of spiritual counsel, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (cf. v. 25). Now is His time to "hate his life in this world"!

The opening words of verse twenty-seven introduce the reader to the struggle through which our Lord is going. The word, "troubled," is in the Greek perfect tense, the sense of which is that He has in the past entered into a struggle over His coming death, and now He lives with the results of the struggle working in His heart. It is a vivid way of expressing what is going on within Him. One thinks back to the statement at the time of Lazarus' death, and perhaps there is an indication in the use of the same word in that context (John 11:33) that some of the same kind of struggle in trouble was His then. What was seen in Lazarus' death reminded Him of what He must do to overcome the effects of Adam's sin.

We have something of an exegetical problem in the rendering of verse twenty-seven. There are different ways of punctuating the original text. One way to punctuate the text is to divide the words into a question, followed by a declaration. The rendering would be, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (the AV has this).

There are two ways of taking the verse if it is punctuated in this way. First, it may be taken as a prayer for deliverance from the hour, a desire to escape the agony of the death, not the death itself, for that He knew He must die. If one were to think that He was praying to be delivered from death itself, that suggestion would be nullified by the clause that begins with the "but," for the words, "But for this cause came I unto this hour," would make no sense, if He were said to be praying to escape death. On the other hand, it would be understandable, if He were understood to be praying to be delivered from the agony of death. One might illustrate it by a physical operation by a surgeon. One might, while recognizing the inevitability of the operation, still desire to be delivered from its pain (cf. Luke 12:29-50).

But, second, understanding the sentence to be a question, followed by a declarative clause, one might think of it as a prayer for resurrection (cf. Matt. 26:42; Heb. 5:7). The words, "save me from (the Greek preposition used here is literally *out from*) this hour." would then harmonize with His repeated announcement of His death. He would be seen to have no question about His death, but to be anxious simply about His resurrection. But did He not prophesy that He would be raised from the dead also? Why then such a prayer? Further, this interpretation cannot handle the following clause beginning with the "but" either, "but for this cause came I unto this hour."

Therefore, with the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version, we must take the sentence to begin with a question, followed by another question, "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour." It is an expression that indicates His rejection of the temptation to turn from the hour of the cross, the

hour of the atoning sufferings. And it is a prayer that reveals in startling light the humanity of the Savior, as well as the sincerity of His trials. He rejected the temptation to turn from the time of the cross. He must bear it. In Gethsemane the prayer there is concentrated on the agony of the cross. That He would by-pass, but only if it should be within the Father's will. The final clause of His statement here sounds the same note, "Father, glorify thy name" (cf. v. 28).

The sound (John 12:28). John writes, "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The voice from heaven reminds the reader of the voice that came at the baptism of Christ and at the Transfiguration of Christ. And the words of the Father, "I have glorified it," bring to our minds the magnificence of the love and mercy and grace of God manifested in the life of Christ to this point in His ministry. What a glorious view of God we would have obtained, even if the Son of God had passed into heaven at this point. We, however, would never have been able to profit from it for, lost in our sins, we would never have grasped the true meaning of His life and been able to receive the life that brings illumination and salvation.

There was more to come, for the Father added, "and will glorify it again." And it has proved to be so, for after this came the agony, the cross, and the resurrection,—the glory, indeed, for God, because they have deepened our estimation of the ministry of the Triune God. Gossip comments, "Yet if in John 12 Christ had died peacefully in his bed (an impossible thought, really!), and there had been no Calvary, how much would have been lost to us."

One final thought here. The "I will glorify" probably, in the light of the context of the coming of the Greeks, refers also to the Lord's ministry in its outreach beyond the nation of Israel to the Gentiles. As Isaiah put it, citing Yahweh's words to him regarding the Messiah, "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

The significance of the sound (John 12:29-30). Three interpretations are given of the sound from heaven. One says it was thunder, and another says that an angel had spoken to Him. Jesus follows with the meaning of it.

The meaning of the voice was perceived in proportion to the spiritual perception of each. One might illustrate by the animal which perceives only the noise, or sound, of the human voice. That is the untrained animal. The trained animal, however, finds a meaning in the sound, for example a command which it obeys. Finally, in this case the Lord interprets the voice, giving the true significance.

No doubt the inability of the people to hear anything more than a sound was a great trial to the Lord. Their indifference to Him and His message must have severely strained His compassion. Their indifference to His saving work caused Him later to weep. How sad that Israel, the people of God, should be so blind to the Messiah's

person and work, that which was the ground of the forgiveness of sins. The cost of the benefit, the blood of the cross, meant nothing to them, for they did not perceive their lost condition. His voice to them, calling upon them to repent and be saved, was only "thunder."

THE EXPLANATION OF HIS GLORIFICATION

The judgment of the world (John 12:31a). Jesus opens His interpretation of the event and the words concerning glorification of God's name with the words, "Now is the judgment of this world." We have an expression referring to the revelation of a truth that had been hidden from our knowledge for some reason. We say about the inevitability of its revelation, "The truth will out." Well, the cross is the revelation of the divine decision concerning the world. It lies in the wicked one (cf. I John 5:19), dead in its trespasses and sins (cf. Eph. 2:1-2). Our Lord's cross is the judgment of the world, revealing the world, guilty of His death, as wicked and hopeless apart from divine redemption.

Just as we say about the machinations wicked politicians, "The truth will out," so has the truth about the world been unfolded in the sufferings of the Messiah. The character of the world is wicked. Cf. Acts 2:40.

The casting out of the world's ruler (John 12:31b). The expulsion of the world's ruler, Satan (cf. 14:30), is linked with the future, as the tense of the verb, "shall be cast," indicates. The reference, no doubt, is to the work of redemption that our Lord will accomplish on the cross. The divine dealing with Satan, first announced in Genesis 3:15, finds its fullest explanation in the words of the remainder of the New Testament, in such words as those of Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14-15, I John 3:8, and Revelation 12:9, 20:3, and 20:10.

The drawing of all men (John 12:32). Our Lord continues, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

There can be little doubt that by the expression, "lifted up," Jesus has reference to the cross (cf. 3:14; 8:28). The cross is the ground for the drawing of men to Him and His message. It is also the path to the crown of exaltation (cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31, the same Greek word being used here).

By the word "draw" Jesus refers to an effectual drawing of men to Him (cf. John 6:43-44). In every case in which the word *helkuo* is used the drawing is effectual. In other words, the drawing accomplishes the intention of the drawer. We may grant that there is resistance to the drawing. As Morris points out, however, "There is not one example in the New Testament of the use of this verb where the resistance is successful. Always drawing power is triumphant, as here." What this means is important. If the "all men" (the AV adds "men"; the Greek says simply *all*) refers to *all men without exception*, then all men shall be saved, and universal salvation is a biblical teaching. But it is clear from multitudes of texts that that is not biblical teaching. Therefore, we are shut up to a different sense for the "all men." It must refer to *all men without distinction*. That is, by the drawing power of the Spirit and the Word, grounded in the cross of

Christ, there shall be saved men and women from every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation. But Jews and Gentiles are the objects of the saving ministry of the cross of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:9; 4:42; 10:16; 11:51, etc.).

To put it most simply, Jesus speaks here of the universal range of the atonement." We see again that universal terms must be interpreted in the light of the contexts of the passages in which they are found. It is simply not true that "all" always means all without exception, but there are some that cannot see their own hands before their eyes, or such divine illumination is the need.

The drawing, of course, is by the Spirit and the Word of God, and the drawing is to the Lord, and not to judgment. One of the reasons why in our day the cross does not seem to stab or thrill as it one day did is that it has become a "twice-told tale," heard by the dull ears of spiritually drowsy religious men. When the Word goes forth and men are asked, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" the world replies, "Who cares?" They drift away in their nodding spiritual sleep to an eternity without Christ. May we, the saints of God, whose hearts have been touched, never lose the vitality of the salvation of our souls.

In the thirty-third verse Jesus' words are interpreted by John as referring to the manner of His death.

THE FINAL INVITATION TO THE JEWS

The interrogation (John 12:34). "How can the Messiah die?" the crowd asks, in view of the fact that they had been taught that He was to abide forever (cf. Psa. 110:4; Isa. 9:7). They add, "Who is this Son of man?" They are obviously confused about Him.

The invitation (John 12:35-36). He replies to the spirit of their request, urging them to act on the light that they do have. They are to "walk" in the light they have, that is, make progress in the truth, and they are to believe in the light as well. It is not enough to "have" the light; one must walk in it, believing in it.

It is, then, a tremendous picture of our Lord's passion for the souls of men, for me! He has been lifted up now, and He has been drawing men and women to Himself by the Word and the Spirit. As He draws may our response be, "Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee" (S. of S. 2:4).

The section is also a glorious revelation of His sympathy and strength for those in trouble. He, too, though the Son of God had to learn obedience by the things which He suffered on the way to our redemption. He has been tempted and He has suffered, and for these reasons He is able to aid and support those who are being tested. What a blessing it is to have a high priest who can be "touched" with the feeling of our infirmities! What a puzzle it is that the world does not rush to such a Savior and embrace Him, too. Come to Him, the Light of the World, and believe in Him, walking in His light on to the brightness of the glory of heaven.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

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Chairman: W.E. McReynolds

7:00 Living by God's Grace: Titus 2:11 Stan Broussard
Song Leader — Robert Johnson

TUESDAY

Chairman: David McReynolds

Personal Christian Responsibilities in the Community

10:00 Community Defined Joe Blansett
11:00 James Exposition Glenn Baber
1:30 Professing Honest Occupation: Titus 3:14 John Winchell
2:30 Benevolence: Gal. 6:10 Ray Naugle
7:00 Evangelism Robert Boyd
Song Leader — Gene Clay

WEDNESDAY

Chairman: Harry Prather

Personal Christian Responsibilities in the Church

10:00 New Testament Giving: II Cor. 8 & 9 John Burgess
11:00 James Exposition Glenn Baber
1:30 Responsibilities Toward our Works of Faith Harry Coultas
2:30 Holy Living: I Peter 1:16 Jerry Samples
7:00 Christian Ministry Vernon Lawyer
Song Leader — Tim Morrow

THURSDAY

Chairman: Antoine Valdetero

Personal Christian Responsibilities in the Home

10:00 Family Members' Responsibilities to Each Other: Eph. 5:22 - 6:4 Milton Pledger
11:00 James Exposition Glenn Baber
1:30 Responsibilities of the Christian in a Divided Home: I Peter 3 & I Cor. 7 Dennis Mitchell
2:30 The Home and Personal Faith Sam Marsh
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