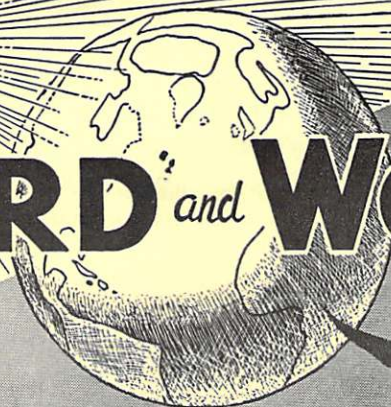


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MARCH, 1984

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God's Family

W. R. H.

HAVE YOU BEEN ILL?

Mid-March has been a rugged time for many people in the Louisville area. Blame it either upon slightly below normal temperatures, or the prevalence of some untimely virus, but many have been under the weather for as much as three or four weeks. There has been some besetting infection, that seems able to re-establish itself every few days, as we think that we are on the way up. Strength is sapped, and the mental energy that it takes to get through the day proves to be in short supply. If we deem ourselves able to make it through the day, there is certainly no reserve left to accomplish anything in the evening. And moreover, there is the danger of spreading your "virus" to others, if you do make effort to drag yourself out of the house. How we long for some really bright and spring-like days to get us out of these doldrums. Surely, we need to hear the prayer of the Apostle John (3 John 2) "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

But if the bodies are so quickly to flag and so long to gain back their vigor, how similar must be the analogy of a depressed spirit and soul, even though the body may prosper? Brother Frank Mullins, Sr. once stated (for our impression) that "the Spiritual realm is more real than the physical." As we contemplate that God is Spirit, and that He existed before all things, then the truth of Bro. Mullins' statement is most evident. Let us consider how many of our physical ills have counterparts in the Spirit realm. Birth should be the first to be mentioned, and death, of course, would be last. But let us think of some of the ailments in between.

SOME SPIRITUAL PARALLELS

If we prefix the word "spiritual" to tuberculosis (for example), we picture someone whose "lungs" are becoming unable to breathe in God's Holy Spirit. Along with much misery and contagion, there settles in a consuming weakness, debilitation and death. Our spiritual lungs were designed to breathe-in the presence of God, but the Eden experience has subjected all of mankind to the innumerable hosts of wickedness. Medical science has found a remedy for tuberculosis, so that in enlightened countries, there is hardly any fear of it. So it is with God. He has cleansed us with the blood of the Lord Jesus, who has said "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," and those weak, faltering disciples became men who "turned the world upside down." We who

have been enlightened and restored, have the responsibility to pass the good news along.

Or, one may have spiritual emphysema, where his lungs have so long been polluted with his sinful habits and environment, that he no longer is able to breathe-in deeply the good things of God. Wheezing and coughing predict a permanent inability. O, to be washed with the washing of regeneration, and be renewed by the Holy Spirit!

Perhaps many Christians have spiritual hepatitis, having drunk from Satan's polluted fountain, rather than keeping himself unto the "water of Life." A lethargy and mild fever sets in, and much time, opportunity, and even strength are lost until such time as the pollution, if for what it is, is turned away from, and replaced by "whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." There is need for a good wholesome diet in order to be cured.

OTHER ANALOGIES

Consider other common diseases and the way they affect us, and see if there are not more parallels in Spiritual life. Do some of our traditions reflect a spiritual hardening of the arteries, so that there is no more the ability to think objectively? Have we crystallized into a set pattern of both thought and action, to where we are inflexible to cope with the changes that Satan employs against us and our youth? Can we concede that God's plan for salvation was centered in a Man, Christ Jesus, rather than a routine of actions?

God used Isaiah to speak of those whose eyes were blinded and whose ears were dull of hearing. Jesus repeated the quotation, showing that it indeed dealt with spiritual conditions that were besetting the religious leaders of His day. Blind guides can only be trouble. Jesus later said to the church of Laodicea, "I counsel you to buy of me eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." Jesus labeled that church as being "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

We might take the dreaded disease of cancer, and make many applications to spiritual life. All of the types are hard to explain, difficult to detect at first, death dealing if unattended, and causing a uselessness to the infected part of the body. Whether it strikes at the throat, lungs, breast, stomach, liver, blood, bone or brain—its insidious inroads are at first all unknown. Finally there is the breaking down of the system and the beginning of our all-out effort to stay the destruction. How much like sin in general! No part of our body is immune from its evil designs.

INFLUENZA

How about the common cold, or influenza? Spiritually, are you fighting a low-grade infection and an over-all aching feeling? Satan, the accuser of the brethren, will gladly keep us knocked to our knees for weeks at the time, in order that the work of God might suffer. If we feel "too beat" to pray, read, witness, or meditate, that suits him just fine. If in the evening we feel "would that it were morning" and in the morning, "Would that it were evening!" we are like to scattered Israel (Deut. 28:67) who, in such a frame of mind, would be utterly useless to God's cause.

May the spring-time sunshine of God's grace rejuvenate us!



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

“Whose Servant Are You?”

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
—Romans 6:12-14, NKJ

In verse 11, just preceding the verses quoted above, Paul had urged us to count as true something that is true—that we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is a marvelously encouraging verse, but it must not be left by itself. Paul reinforces the verse by these three verses. In them he urges us not to let sin “reign-as-king” in these mortal bodies we live in, for if we do we would obey the lusts of that body. Then, not stopping with the negative, he presents the positive side—present your bodies to God so that he might use them and your members with the body as instruments of righteousness for God’s use. He then concludes with another encouraging verse that you should ever keep before you—sin shall not have dominion over you; and the reason for that is that you are not under law but under God’s divine favor (grace).

First let us look at that negative statement in verse 12. Paul, who had been up to this time presenting us with things God has done for us, now turns to urge us to act upon what we have learned and make a commitment to the life God wants from us. I believe that part of the import of this verse is misunderstood because of the fact that in English we are not told clearly what he meant by “should obey *it* in *its* lusts.” The “it” and the “its” refer not to sin, as many suppose, but to the body, according to the Greek. With that the meaning of the verse becomes clearer. Sin is still present, by which Paul means the thing “sin” itself, not the acts of sin that are committed because of that evil principle that dwells in us. Since Paul urges us not to let sin “reign-as-king” (the meaning of the Greek word “reign”) it is obvious that we have that choice, and I am afraid that many Christians either don’t know they have the choice or they make the wrong choice. Paul then says that if we do that we will obey the lusts of the body. Now “lusts” simply means “strong desires,” whether good or evil, though the word so translated here is most often used in the New Testament for evil desires. The body has both kinds of lusts, as you can figure out easily

for yourself, but when we let them take charge they become a matter of self-will and self-indulgence and therefore evil.

Paul opens the next verse by continuing the negative exhortation. He urges us not to present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. It is interesting to note the choice of the Greek word for "present" that Paul used. It was a technical term used for presenting Levitical sacrifices and offerings (and will be so used again in chapter twelve, verse 1). To do that would be to put our members at the disposal of sin, which Paul uses then for the positive statement he wants to make, exhorting us to put ourselves once for all at the disposal of God. In that positive statement he includes both things just given negatively—"Present yourselves unto God" and "Present your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Now please note that Paul does not say to "feel" yourself nor "give" yourself nor "make" yourself as a part of God's army of workers, but simply to "present" yourself. We are in Christ, so present yourself to God. Have you really done that once-for-all? He does not want you to have to make that decision every day, though he does want you to confirm the decision. Present yourself to him and start each day by a recognition of that position.

Paul concludes our lesson for this time by another of the wonderfully encouraging statements of this letter to the Romans and it is based on the same reasoning that he has used in urging us to present ourselves to God. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." The law showed the sinful nature that man has had from the time our first forefather sinned. It was the means of revealing the terribleness of sin, but it gave no power to help us overcome it. But the grace of God is very different—it tells us to fly and gives us wings! It not only saves us through God's unmeritable favor, it provides us with the help we need, help from God Himself through His Spirit, to do as he would have us do. We can go forward with confidence, knowing that God has made the provision and will not fail. In closing, then, may we put together the opening of the first and last verses of our lesson—"Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, for sin shall not have dominion over you." As Paul said to the Philippians, "Think on these things."

NO MIDDLE GROUND

Jesus was either what He claimed to be—the Son of God sent down from Heaven, the fulfiller of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, God in human flesh—or He was one of the worst frauds ever committed against humanity. If He was the latter, then we can ignore Him and go on our way without any attempt to follow Him. But if He was the Son of God—as Christians claim to believe—then there is no room for half-heartedness, partial commitment, or an occasional act of devotion. If He is God's Son, we have no more important job in the world than serving Him, obeying Him, honoring Him in all that we do.

The out-and-out athiest may be more honorable in his conduct than the person who confesses that Jesus is the Christ and then serves Him half-heartedly!—from the *Oakdale Messenger*



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Does the New Testament allow separation in certain cases? Can there be remarriage? Is adultery a state of being or an act?

Questions about marriage—or rather, about the break up of marriage—probably outnumber any other single category that we receive. Many of these are hard questions. There are those things about which the New Testament does not speak specifically, and in the applying of principles there are often many factors to consider. Good conservative people who want to stand on the word of God do not always understand alike what is revealed concerning divorce and separation. Add the fact that this is a very personal issue in many cases and thus the human factor looms large. In discussing the problems with others, one often senses that views have been greatly influenced by family situations, by the injustices experienced either personally or in those close and dear, and by the background and training.

I must confess that I do not have all of the answers. I wish I did, because some of the knottiest problems for which people seek advice from preachers are in this area. I know what is safe and right, and it needs to be stressed that there is really very little room for doubt or question as to what constitutes God's highest purpose as to marriage. There is much to be said for starting right, staying right, and never transgressing God's ways. If we do not sow bad seed we do not have to be concerned with a bad harvest. My advice to young people is always that they avoid the problems brought on by disobedience to God's will in these matters. We live in a sin-cursed world, however, and we have to deal with people as they are, not as we would like them to be. We have to be realistic and face the fact that even in our churches this problem cannot be wished away. There are practical aspects which in our age we cannot long avoid. Those who "have all the answers" seem to fall into two groups—those who do not have to deal with the problems, mere armchair quarterbacks who "know" what everyone else ought to do; and those who are very legalistic, making any kind of marriage problem virtually an unpardonable sin. I have seen the "solutions" to marriage problems offered by some very legalistic brethren which seem utterly selfish, treating the marriage problem as the only concern, proposing the individual *save himself*, even if in doing so he commits great sins of injustice to a companion or to children involved. I must confess that there are marriage problems about which I can only advise earnest people seeking to do right, "Cast yourself on God's mercy. Begin where you are and try to do right from

this point onward." The sins committed in bad marriages are not unpardonable.

It is true that there must be repentance, and that repentance means restitution *when such is possible*. I know that people try to "play games" with God in these matters, hoping to have their cake and eat it too. These try to avoid repentance. God knows what's in a person's heart. And when there is genuine repentance, then God forgives the sin brought to Him through Jesus Christ even if the sinner does not know the way out of the practical problems created by his sin.

Now, to be more specific about the question asked, we begin with the question on separation.

The only New Testament teaching on this subject is found in 1 Cor. 7. One of the problems in this chapter are Paul's statements in vs. 6, 10, & 12, which seem to differentiate in the authority of certain statements. Some read this to mean that Paul was only giving his opinion in part of the matters. I do not so interpret the passages, and I believe we should accept what he has to say without any doubt as to its inspiration and authority. I cannot conceive of the Holy Spirit allowing Paul in such a serious matter to include that which was only human opinion. Thus, as to the truth involved, these statements are as authoritative as if no source were indicated.

The "concession" of v. 6 refers to marriage itself, not to the responsibilities indicated in v. 5. In other words, marriage is allowed but not a commanded necessity if people have the ability to be pure without it. In vs. 10 & 12, where some things are attributed to the Lord and some to Paul, the view most consistent with inspiration seems to be that the Lord taught some things specifically during His ministry but that He had not done so about others and that Paul by inspiration gave the proper truths in those areas.

A limited separation seems to be allowed in vs. 10 & 11. No specific cause is stated, nor is this limited to the unbeliever as in vs. 12-15, which we will discuss later. One of the purposes of marriage is the avoiding of fornication (v. 2), and in marriage there is a sexual responsibility that each partner has to the other (v. 5). Hence, a separation should be resorted to only in the most serious of cases, something that would justify the danger to temptation for either partner involved. In separation a partner might cause undue temptation to the other to sin, and Christian love (apart from any romantic love) would require that this be carefully considered. In other words, a selfish separation over trifles is not indicated here. The total spectrum of Christian conduct is not to be set aside when such a separation is considered. Even so, in extreme cases, this verse seems to justify separation. But it is strictly separation, not divorce, and there is to be no remarriage—only reconciliation to the partner.

In verses 12-15, another facet of separation is discussed. There are divided homes where one partner is a Christian and the other is not. This may be brought about by disobedience in believer marrying unbeliever or by one partner in a union of unbelievers turning to the Lord. Although this division is not good, it does not destroy the union nor pro-

vide an honorable reason for breaking the union. In many cases this unequal yoke gives rise to serious problems. The believer is not allowed to break the union on the grounds that the partner is unbelieving. The unbeliever, however, often will not feel the same obligation to accept God's standards and may leave the believer. The believer cannot forsake his faith to preserve the marriage. Ideally the believer must make every possible concession that is right to preserve the marriage, will honor his/her commitment to the other, and will act in Christian love (as discussed earlier). But if the unbeliever leaves anyway, then "let him depart: *the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases*" (v. 15). We have italicized the statement here to call attention to it. Does it allow separation only? Or does it allow for divorce and remarriage? The answer, of course, depends on what is meant by the phrase, "is not under bondage."

Other New Testament teaching allows divorce (with the implied right of remarriage) only for sexual impurity (Matt. 5:31-32). From a practical standpoint, an unbeliever leaving in this way will often become guilty of impurity, thus bringing into the matter the permissible course given in Matt. 5. But what if he/she does not? What if no other alliance is formed? Does this kind of desertion allow for remarriage? In the light of Matt. 5:31-32, I am personally hesitant to interpret "not under bondage" to mean remarriage. Some do.

In any case, it needs to be pointed out that in such mixed marriages there is no license for the believer to use wrongdoing to provoke the unbeliever to seek a break. This is not an escape clause that is to be brought into play by tricky maneuvering but simply recognizes that the Christian may be deserted *through no fault of his own*. We must keep in mind that there are sins beside those having to do with the marriage union itself, and a person might be wholly right and blameless as to faithfulness, sexual purity, etc., but very much at fault in other ways. A believer is certainly not free to use selfishness, unreasonable demands, or such like as a means of provoking the unbeliever to desert the marriage. God is not deceived by that kind of escape on technicalities, and He is not limited, as our court system sometimes seems to be, in dealing with it.

Can there be remarriage? Rom. 7:1-3 makes it clear that in the case of the death of a spouse there can be honorable remarriage. But unless 1 Cor. 7:15 allows for remarriage in the case of desertion of believer by unbeliever (an opinion on that has already been expressed), I know of only one scriptural reason for remarriage following divorce. That is the one reason given in Matt. 5:31-32. There are those who deny remarriage for any reason other than the death of a spouse, seeing the exception clause is not contained in some passage (cf. Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18). Its inclusion in the one passage cannot be denied or set aside, however, and I have no hesitation to speak as the Bible speaks and to say divorce and remarriage are *permitted* in such a case of sexual impurity.

The final part of the question we must save until next month.

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



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

THE CURE-ALL FOR EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS—MORE MONEY! Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell seems to be saying, "Not so!" And it seems to me it makes sense to listen to him. He shows that Scholastic Aptitude Tests scores of high school seniors who were planning to go to college during the period 1972-1982 fell in every state. The starting average was 937 and it fell to 893. Mr. Bell in his statistical report says that the highest-spending states are not necessarily the highest-achieving states. New York, the second highest-spending state, placed 25th in the achievement test scores. The state which ranked 28th in per-pupil spending, New Hampshire, placed first in pupil achievement. Mary Futrell, National Education Association president, is unhappy with the report saying that it could damage public support for education. Mr. Bell may be thinking the same thing. Public support for public education has been "blind in one eye and not seeing out of the other" for far too long. Such reports if sufficiently publicized may change the attitude of NEA and Company which is most sorely needed as a first step in education reform.

MR. MONDALE IS ONE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL candidates who is recommending more federal money to solve America's education problems. Foremost educationally-successful states are New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Idaho. They credit such things as: community involvement, strong discipline, and a focus on basics. Ann Hayward, PTA president, tells it like it is: "Perhaps we have more respect for education; we're less anxious to jump on band wagons and try new kinds of things." N.H. Education Commissioner Robert Brunell added: "We're spending what we can spend; it isn't money in itself... but parental and

citizen involvement." "Go, thou, and do likewise."

DR. JOHN WEISBURGER, DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN HEALTH foundation in Valhalla, New York discovered a link in rats between ethylene dibromide (EDB) and cancer. In the experiment they force-fed rats more than 10,000 times the dose allowed for human consumption five times a week for thirty weeks. These rats did develop tumors. Dr. Weisburger concluded: "To extrapolate this finding to humans is totally unjustified." Someone in the government wasn't listening. The good scientist compared the government's reaction to EDB with its silence over aflatoxin, which is produced by a mold which grows on peanuts, and is a thousand times more powerful as a carcinogen in rats. To this day there is no government outrage over the eating of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Not that any scientist believes that peanut butter is a threat to anyone's longevity, but it seems to be comparable to the actual situation as to EDB. One does wonder why. But there is so much about government releases to ask "Why?"

PRESIDENT REAGAN MADE THE FOLLOWING COMPARISON: In 1948 the tax on the average two-child family was just \$9. Today, it is \$2,900." Someone has observed: "The power to tax is the power to destroy."

ACTS OUT MOVIES. A former assistant state's attorney in Illinois, Jeffery Gurga, admitted breaking into a Chicago apartment, stabbing to death Kathleen Pearson, and wounding her daughter. He said that he was acting out fantasies based on violent scenes he had studied on video-cassettes. He said that he would walk the streets at night with a knife and fantasize about stab-

bing the women he passed on the way.

PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT REVEREND JESSE JACKSON was on a well-publicized trip to Syria in order to influence the enemy to release a captive, and, at the same time, his wife, Jackie, was on a jaunt to Nicaragua with Abzug promoting the Reds in that country. Jackson said that her presence in Nicaragua was to raise the consciousness of the American people and to make them realize the struggle there for peace and free self-determination. She added that the most critical threat in Nicaragua was of the United States' invasion, and that, if her "humanitarian" husband were elected President, he would cut off aid to the anti-Communist forces. That's right, friends, its a team, and they both are friends with those who oppose freedom as we know it in these United States.

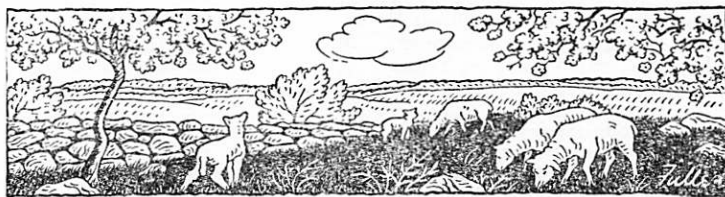
HOW FARED THE LOWLY TAX-PAYER AT THE HAND OF SENATOR WALTER MONDALE? According to columnist Don Fedder he was one of the half-dozen biggest spenders in the Senate in 1975, the year before he was elected Vice-President. The National Taxpayers Union got a candid shot of Sir Walter picking the pockets of producing Americans 90 percent of the time. Terry Donlan says Mondale's history is one of big taxes, big government, big spending, big deficits, more government regulation, and a weak national defense.

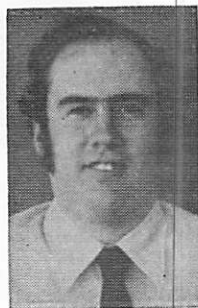
AND THINGS ARE LOOKING BETTER FOR COMMUNIST CHINA. In the three years since Communist China took its seat at the World Bank, they have been awarded loans by that agency totalling \$870 million. Never mind that \$300 million were non-interest loans. What difference does it make when they are not repaid?

AMBASSADOR RICHARD SCHIFTER, U.S. DELEGATE to the annual session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, says that the Russians are spawning "an all-pervasive climate of fear" in the U.S.S.R. by long prison terms for dissidents, internal exile, and psychiatric abuse. "In a frightening way," he says, "the Soviet Union is today approaching the world of George Orwell's 1984. The death of Yuri Andropov illustrates the great gulf... between the rulers and the ruled. The people of the Soviet Union were denied any knowledge of the relevant facts. Where even knowledge of such facts are denied, how can we think of ever coming close to adherence of the provisions of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which gives everyone the right to take part in the government of his country?" He adds that anti-Semitism has now become one of the established elements of Soviet policy. He charges the Reds with provoking "hatred of the Jews."

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS UNITED FOR A BALANCED BUDGET. You would think that would include the whole delegation, but then you are dreaming. To date, more than 40 members of both houses have joined in this effort to get two more states to approve petitions for Congress to convene a Constitutional Convention for the purpose of considering a Constitutional Amendment requiring a balanced federal budget. With ever-increasing deficits, it is apparent that Congress either cannot or will not restrain the government in its irresponsible spending, which is bringing the nation to ruin.

AND THE REAL DELIVERANCE IS IN GOD. We must be faithful in praying for those in authority, and, especially in this election year, to pray that the right kind of people will be elected to office.





GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

Sovereign Ruler of the Skies

Sovereign Ruler of the skies
Ever gracious, ever wise,
All my times are in Thy hand,
All events at Thy command.
His decree, who form'd the earth,
Fix'd my first and second birth;
Parents, native place, and time,
All appointed were by Him.
He that form'd me in the womb,
All my times shall ever be
He shall guide me to the tomb;
Order'd by His wise decree.

—John Ryland (1777)

The Grace Of God

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus.”

—The Apostle Paul, In Titus 2:11-13

Thoughts on Fellowship

1. Fellowship with God is not contingent upon a perfect knowledge of the divine revelation.

2. It is not contingent upon attainment of a life of sinless perfection.

3. It is not contingent upon an ability to explain or expound every point of doctrine.

—Carl Ketcherside, in *Mission Messenger*, January 1958

What is Fellowship Contingent On?

It is contingent upon a complete surrender of self to the Christ, and a willingness to follow as He leads. On the divine side, fellowship is a union with and a participation in the life of Christ through the Spirit; on the human side it is a communion with brethren whose mutual relations were transformed by the Spirit.

—Carl Ketcherside, in *Mission Messenger*, January 1958

The Apostolic Proclamation

We conclude, therefore, that the apostolic proclamation was the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, with such attending facts as His dying for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection, all in fulfillment of the scriptures, and that this was made credible by many witnesses. "Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:12), or, "We . . . preach . . . Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:4) is the gospel.

—Leroy Garrett, in *Christian Doctrine*

Until Next Time, Maranatha!



When "Acts" (The Book) Ended The Acts of God Didn't

Alex V. Wilson

Wishy-washy Charlie Brown, of *Peanuts* fame, has a younger sister named Sally. Once for a history report at school, she began, "When writing about church history, we have to go back to the very beginning. Our pastor was born in 1930."

Lots of Christians are like Sally. Their knowledge of God's mighty acts during the past two thousand years, and their heritage as Christians, is almost nil. Bruce Shelley puts it this way: "Many people today suffer from historical amnesia. The time between the apostles and their own day is one giant blank. That is hardly what God had in mind."

Recent articles in *Word and Work* have stressed the value of **READING** (read the Bible; read good spiritual books; read worthwhile secular books); and the value of reading **OLD BOOKS** (some of the Christian classics from earlier centuries); and the value of studying **HISTORY** (know what happened in previous generations). Now for a final point: While a believer will profit from knowing history in general, it is especially important to know **CHURCH** history.

Charles Malik is a former government leader in Lebanon, and served a term as president of the U.N. General Assembly. As an outspoken disciple of Jesus Christ, Malik made this observation: Some Christians "think that nothing really worth knowing happened in the Christian world between Saint Paul and Billy Graham . . . Evangelicals should get themselves integrated into the unity and continuity of the cumulative Christian tradition. Christ has shone on many a soul and many a culture in the past, and not only on the Evangelicals of today."

Perhaps in the Churches of Christ we are especially inclined to ignore church history, except perhaps that of the "restoration movement." "After all, our goal is to restore New Testament Christianity.

And for that purpose all we need is the New Testament, right? And anyway, the Church became corrupt and got away from God's pattern very early in its history. So why study about the decadent, worldly, unscriptural Christendom of the 300s to the 1800s?"

Now it's true that Christendom in general as it developed, deviated from Biblical principles in a number of ways. Its decline into worldliness began quite early, and accelerated terribly during the 300s, from Constantine onwards. Nevertheless there have *always* been scattered groups of "New Testament Christians" throughout church history—at time, *numerous* groups. Have you ever heard of the Paulicians, the Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites, Anabaptists, or Pietists? They are just some of the groups which either did not veer away from the Gospel when most of Christendom did, or who were "restoration movements" that went back to the Bible in later ages. (Most of these folks, by the way, referred to themselves merely as "brethren" or "believers." Many of the names by which they have become known were given them by outsiders.) To know their histories is to be strengthened in faith and stirred to praise our common Father.

And there are many similar groups today, those who want to be Biblical Christians and have scriptural churches and practice New Testament Christianity. They echo our plea, "Why not be just a Christian?" They may not agree with us on the exact definition of what New Testament Christianity is, but on the heart of the matter we share the same aims and desires.

And even within some corrupt, dead churches there always have been and still are individuals or even groups here and there who have life in Christ. They are trusting and following Christ in spite of, not because of, the teaching of their churches and preachers. David Lipscomb wrote,

There are some sectarian churches who will obey God and follow him in spite of the churches in which they find themselves. As examples, there are persons in the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches who are baptized to obey God rather than to please the sects. In this they rise above the sectarian spirit, despite the parties in which they find themselves. They ought to get out of the sectarian churches, but they see so much sectarianism in the nonsectarian churches that they think they are all alike.

So—back to our main point—it is valuable to know church history, to learn how God has dealt with people and how people have responded to God in various ways, with various consequences. One of the best books in this area is *THE PILGRIM CHURCH*, by E. H. Broadbent. Other church history books spend much time regarding Christendom—the popes and kings and religious wars. Those things are worth knowing, but this book exceeds them in value, being an "account of the continuance through succeeding centuries of churches practising the principles taught and exemplified in the New Testament" (i.e. like those we listed earlier).

Helpful Results

A significant fact was pointed out by Stephen Board in *Eternity* magazine. He said, "Among liberals, church historians are the most conservative, and among conservatives, church historians are the least narrow-minded." In other words, among churches and preachers

which are liberal in theology (not fully believing the Bible, and the most radical ones hardly believing in Scripture at all), those who have a grasp of history are less inclined to wander so far from orthodoxy as those who know little of the past. And among preachers and churches which stress the full reliability and authority of Scripture (whether termed "fundamentalist" or "evangelical"), those who know church history well are most likely to recognize that God's family is large and far-reaching and that no one group or movement can rightly claim that they alone are Christ's church on earth. Knowledge of God's working through the centuries tends to make a person more moderate and less extreme. It helps us avoid the radical view that it doesn't matter what you believe, and the opposite extreme—if you don't agree with me on beliefs #1-25, you can't possibly be a good Christian and probably you're not saved at all.

Word and Work articles from time to time provide insights from church history. Brother Boll analyzed the strengths and shortcomings of Martin Luther and the Reformation. Larry Miles' series on the Campbell/Stone movement showed various developments, issues and trends. When the Jesus People movement was strong in the 1960s and 70s, an article showed similarities between it and the great revival in Wales in 1904 ff., and pointed out blessing and dangers in the movement. Other series of articles surveyed what men like Stone, Campbell, Lipscomb, Boll, Chambers and Jorgenson believed and practiced regarding fellowship with other disciples of Jesus. These provide examples of the benefits we can gain by studying church history. At present a series of mini-biographies is running; it will include great Christians like John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, William Carey, George Muller, Hudson Taylor, and Amy Carmichael.

But in addition, why don't you get a church history book and read the whole thing? It will be sort of like reading the book of Acts, chapters 29 - 1984.

Robert L. Shank held with Wayne Jackson, as part of the Denton (Texas) Lectures on November 17, 1983. Brother Shank was first introduced to *Word & Work* readers in June, 1982, when we reviewed his latest book, *Until the Coming of Messiah and His Kingdom*. Several of our readers purchased his book at that time. In August of 1982 we published a timely article entitled "Should Christians Support Israel?" We feel that all of our readers will be helped by the present open letter, which unfortunately, we must divide into two or three parts. —Ed.

An Open Letter to an Opponent Debater

Robert L. Shank

Part III

For me, the low point of our exchange at Denton was your reference to my treatment of Mk. 9:1 as "slick" and brother McClish's remark, in his censure of my reading from my book, that "when one tells the truth, he doesn't have to worry what to say every time someone asks him a question." I am a sinner saved by grace, guilty before God of many sins and sorry for them all; but never in my 65 years have I

been "slick," deliberately deceptive, in my handling of the sacred Scriptures, and never have I written or preached or taught anything I did not believe to be true. I have an absolute horror of "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2). I am persuaded that any accommodation (any "bending," or any deliberate ignoring) of any portion of the Scriptures in the interests of a man's theological position or preference, or his "professional" dignity and reputation as a preacher or teacher or scholar, or his personal convenience, is a mortal sin fatal to faith and salvation. If I were inclined to be "slick" with the Scriptures or to write or preach or teach things I do not necessarily believe, I would still be a Baptist today (and well ahead financially, incidentally). It has cost me more than you can know not to be "slick" with the Bible. But it has gained for me far more than it has cost, and has saved me from sharing the dreadful destiny of men who perjure their souls before God by trifling with the Word of Him who "has magnified his word above all his name" (Ps. 138:2) and has underwritten the integrity of the word of the Scripture with the eternal honor of his name.

I am out of favor with many in the brotherhood today, and I am sorry. But in my lifetime labor in the Scriptures, my concern has not been to please the brethren. ("Deliver me, O God, from the company of slaves to men's approval and applause, more concerned to "play it safe" with men than with God!) Despite the ill favor of some, as a premillenarian I am in the tradition of the Restoration movement (see current issue of THRUST for quotations from Campbell, Stone, Scott, Lard, Fanning, Lipscomb, Brents, Sewell, Milligan, McGarvey; Harding—my article "The Biblical and Historical Foundations of Premillennialism"). Church historians agree that premil is the original faith of the churches of Christ, universal from the apostles to third century, predominant until after the death of Augustine, A.D. 430 (see UNTIL pp. 477-501).

Did you see "The Day After" (ABC 11/20)? The grim scene of missiles rising out of underground silos and beginning their deathly journey to targets on the other side of the world (missiles already were on their way to targets in the United States!) called to mind the words of Jer. 25:32, 33: "Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation, a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth. At that time those slain by the Lord will be everywhere—from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground" (NIV). The words are part of a great prophecy that spans the centuries from the time of Jeremiah, when Jerusalem and all Judah and many contemporary nations drank from the cup of God's wrath through the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, to the end of the age when God's "controversy with the nations" (v. 31, *all* nations and people on earth, vs. 29-33) will be resolved at the coming of Messiah in power and righteous judgment to take over the earth for his possession (Ps. 2:8, 9, Ps. 110:5, 6). God's prophecy through Jeremiah spans the whole period of "the time of the Gentiles" (as Jesus called it, Lk. 21:24, note *until*) which began with the conquests and reign of Nebuch ("you are this head of gold," Dan. 2:38) and will end with the coming of Jesus to assume the throne of David in Jeru-

salem to reign over the nations, whose kingdom indeed will be "a great mountain filling the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35, Ps. 2:8). The Bible contains many prophetic portrayals of the world holocaust of Armageddon, the fiery judgment of God to be loosed on the rebellious world at the coming of Jesus to "smite the nations," and then to "rule them with a rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9, Rev. 19:11-15; 2:25-29). Contrary to the assumptions of many, in the biblical disclosure Armageddon is no mere symbol of the age-long conflict of good and evil and the ultimate triumph of good; it is an *event* on the agenda of God's interaction with humanity in the fulfillment of his purposes in the moral universe he created. There will be nothing allegorical about Armageddon. It will be as real as the world holocaust portrayed in "The Day After." Armageddon is coming, for God has decreed it as the resolution of his age-long "controversy with the nations" of a world that rejects his word, his truth, his plan, and his grace. God will be responsible for the world holocaust that will be Armageddon, and not premillennialists "trying to make their interpretation of Bible prophecy come true," as some have foolishly charged (precisely the propaganda line promoted by infidelic "Christian" misleaders in liberal religious circles and by numerous outspoken atheists and humanist who are militant enemies of the Bible, the church, and Jesus Christ and his gospel).

Everything in the world scene today suggests that Armageddon is near. But some other things must occur first in the unfolding of end-time events foretold in the prophetic Scriptures. There must be a time of "peace," following a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute, a settlement that will mark the beginning of Israel's 70th Week (Dan. 9:27), seven fateful years that will culminate in the resolution of God's "controversy with the nations." The first half of the Week will appear to promise better times for the world, but the latter half will be the time of the Great Tribulation bringing terrible persecution of the faithful and dire judgments of God on the world, though under the reign of Antichrist still a time of "peace" (avoidance of the dreaded nuclear war) until the end of the Week when, as Paul said, "the day of the Lord" will come "as a thief in the night" at a time when the world will be saying "Peace and safety!" . . . only to be overtaken by "sudden destruction . . . and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:2, 3). But the informed faithful will not be taken by surprise, for they are "not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief," and they are to "watch," and thus not be taken by surprise (vs. 4-9).

But only the informed faithful, properly taught, can watch for the coming of "the day of the Lord" and the coming of Christ in the intelligent and perceptive manner indicated in the NT. "Watching" in the NT definition is much more than just believing that "Christ will come sometime." Jesus had much to say about signs that will indicate the approach of the time of his coming, and about the importance of taking heed, as did the apostles. The NT views the church as the company of the watchful, and it is "unto *them that look for him*" that Christ will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). ("Whether we wake or sleep," 1 Thess. 5:9, 10, is not to be understood in the *ethical* sense of vs. 4:8, but in the sense of 4:13-18, the occasion of the resurrection and translation of the faithful, whether "asleep," or

“alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord”—caught up to meet and be with Christ prior to Armageddon, “the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth, Rev. 3:10). In light of the solemn words of Jesus in Lk. 21:34-36, watching for the day of the Lord and the coming of Christ is to be a critical aspect of true faith and faithfulness as the Day draws near, and of utmost concern. Prospects are not good for non-watchers in the closing days of the age.

But how can our people watch (in the NT definition) unless they are properly taught from the Scriptures? Most of the dear people in the churches of Christ are no more equipped to “watch” for the coming of “the day of the Lord” than are the people of the world who “sleep in the night” of ignorance and unbelief. In radical contradiction of Paul’s teaching in 1 Thess. 5 (and all that the NT indicates), our people have been taught that *there is no way* we can know of the near approach of the Lord and the coming of Christ. They have been taught that since we cannot know “the day and hour” of Christ’s coming (true), it must therefore be true that *there can be no signs to indicate the approach* of that “day and hour” (not true), and they are therefore left “in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief.” Our people know that “a lot of bad things are happening in the world today,” but they see no biblical significance in the world scene to move them to diligence and faithfulness “so much the more as you see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25), for they have been taught that there is *no way to see* the Day approaching (contrary to 1 Thess. 5 and much, much more in the NT). Erroneous teaching in the area of Bible prophecy and eschatology can only encourage our people to “sleep, as do others,” and to fail to “watch” in solemn expectation and preparation for the coming of Christ and the day of the Lord. Men whose unscriptural teaching in this critical area in these closing days of the age can only bring “darkness” and “sleep” to our people instead of awareness and watchfulness will surely be called to account in that Day (Jas. 3:1).

It is evident from the NT that the apostles expected Christ to return in their generation, and that they saw on every hand signs of his coming, as they believed. It is evident from patristic literature that the early fathers also expected Christ to return in their day and believed they saw signs of his soon return. The NT enjoins on us no other attitude or expectation, and its solemn injunctions to watchfulness have been relevant in every generation of the church. Though Christ has not yet returned, the apostles and early Christians and the faithful of all past generations who believed they saw about them signs of the soon coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord were *right* in their faith, expectation, and attitude, for that is precisely what Jesus intended for all his followers until he returns. In our day, we now live in the presence of the most evident and unmistakable signs of the soon coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord. Among the multitude of signs is Israel’s resumption of statehood—not an “accident of history” as some have charged, but also not the fulfillment of the promised ultimate Restoration, but rather a setting of the world stage *in preparation* for the unfolding of many end-time developments and events, to cul-

minate in the coming of Messiah and the promised Restoration (Acts 1:6, 7; 3:18-21; 15:14-18; Rom. 11:25-29). Another of the many significant signs is the fact that Armageddon is now on the horizon and fast approaching. We have every reason to believe that the awesome Day of the Lord is near. What Christ said to his followers in all generations from the days of the apostles onward, he now says to us: "Watch! . . . Behold, I am coming soon."

At Denton, Byron Denman asked, Why a millennium? What could be the purpose of a millennial kingdom, an interim age before the beginning of the eternal age of the new heaven and earth? The Bible discloses that the millennium will be the time of the great gathering of the nations into the kingdom of God (Isa. 11:10-12; Mic. 4:1-8; Jer. 3:17; Zech. 2:10-12; Acts 15:14-18), for which purpose both restored Israel and the faithful of the churches will be priests of God for the instruction of the nations (Zech. 8:20-23; Rev. 5:9, 10). Christ and the faithful of his churches will shepherd the nations for their blessing and salvation, but it will be "with a rod of iron," with firmness against evil (the word *rule*, *poimaino*, Rev. 19:15 and 2:27, means both to govern and to shepherd). The millennial Messianic kingdom is an integral part of God's great plan for the building of his eternal kingdom, as disclosed in the Bible.

The millennial age is not "a second chance" and takes nothing away from the present urgency of the gospel. Our present responsibility is to preach the gospel and baptize as many as possible into Christ and into his kingdom the church. We are *right* in preaching the church as now the kingdom of Christ on earth, "a kingdom which cannot be shaken"—our only place of refuge and security now, and in the world to come—into which men must enter *now* through faith and obedience to Christ and the gospel. Thank God, the churches in our brotherhood are faithfully preaching this urgent, all-essential truth, and this good news of the kingdom must continue to go forth with clarity and power.

But the reign of Christ over his churches does not fulfill all that God promised to his Son or most of what the prophets foretold concerning the reign of Messiah the King. Jesus is to reign, not only over his churches, but also over Israel and the nations in a reign yet future, in which the faithful of his churches are to share (Rev. 2:25-29; 5:9, 10). We are not under the necessity of choosing whether to believe that the church is now the kingdom of Christ on earth over which he reigns from heaven, or to believe instead that the reign of Christ awaits his return to earth to reign over Israel and the nations. Both things are disclosed in the Scriptures, and neither great truth contradicts or militates against the other.

I was pleased that so many at Denton told me that, regardless of whether they agree with me in the area of Bible prophecy and eschatology, they love me as a brother in Christ. Many others have written or called me to tell me the same thing. Such gracious attitudes reflects not only a Christian spirit, but also a serious commitment to the authority of the Bible rather than of the opinions of men, and to freedom to study the Scriptures objectively without breaking fellowship. "Open Bible, open minds, open hearts" must be our spirit and practice if our

brotherhood is to prosper under the blessing of God in these closing days of the age.

Dear brother, I appreciate you for your keen mind and great ability. More than that, I love you in Christ. Let us join hands and hearts in our common commitment to the authority of the word of the Scriptures and in the ongoing search for fuller knowledge and understanding and more accurate proclamation, that we may be faithful stewards, handling aright the word of truth, that we may be workmen who stand unashamed and approved unto God in that Day (2 Tim. 2:15 ARV). God bless.

The Principle of Harmony in Biblical Interpretation

C. Dennis Kaufman

There is a considerable difference between a contradiction in Scripture and an alleged contradiction. For centuries skeptics and a few individuals with honest questions have proclaimed discrepancies in the Bible. With equal fervor proponents of Scripture have defended and attempted to harmonize these passages, believing that the Bible is free from error. Is harmony a legitimate way to interpret Scripture or is it, as some have said, an "a priori" approach which results in hermeneutical gymnastics to manufacture harmony?

Since this is to be a brief treatise, and the material on this subject is so massive, a representative from each view has been chosen. Stephen T. Davis in his book *The Debate About the Bible* succinctly put forth the view that the Scriptures do contain error, thus harmony should not be forced. Jack Cottrell writes in *The Authority of the Bible* that the Bible is inerrant in the autographs, therefore, harmony is not only admissible but essential.

AGAINST TOTAL HARMONY

Stephen Davis is an example of the school of thought which rejects total harmony as a principle of interpretation. His reasoning in the book, *The Debate About the Bible*, seems to be illustrative of the growing neo-orthodox position.

Davis gives several examples of Bible contradictions. The most radical example will be used for the sake of contrast.

In reference to statements found in Deuteronomy and Joshua (Deut. 7:2, 20:17, Josh. 6:17), Davis states,

"I frankly find it difficult to believe that it was God's will that every Canaanite—man, woman and child—be slaughtered. Since the Bible clearly says that this was God's will, I must conclude that the Bible writers were mistaken. The error of confusing patriotic sentiment with God's will is a common one in human history, but it is error nonetheless."

Davis rejects all efforts to harmonize the Canaanite slaughter by saying it seems implausible in light of God's moral standard in other places (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Lu. 18:20; Rom. 13:9).

The very fact that error is proclaimed in passages such as these pushes this investigation to a higher plane. If errors such as this exist, what happens to the concept of inspiration and the final authority of scripture? Davis is one of a growing number who are proponents of infallibility, but not inerrancy. One may be hard pressed to see a difference in these terms, but subtle semantic differences have been used to change the historical meaning of infallibility. In some circles, infallible now means the Bible will not fail to be trustworthy in every aspect of faith and practice. However, the human side of Scripture is emphasized and room is left for error in minor details and historical and scientific matters. This may all sound well and good, but God's position in the Canaanite slaughter is not minor. That is a matter of theology.

In addition to redefining infallibility to accommodate error, the concept of inspiration is also reasoned. In what becomes the watershed issue, Davis says the Bible idea of inspiration in no way demands inerrancy.

After considering these things, it is easy to discern why Davis and others reject total harmony as a principle of interpretation. If errors are possible in God's Word, one must consider every potential contradiction and treat it individually making human judgment and subjectivity the final authority. It is not within the scope of this paper to deal with the danger of the position. The departure of the liberal world from sound doctrine stands as evidence of the frailty of human authority.

FOR TOTAL HARMONY

The great outcry from the liberal world, and even evangelicals such as Davis, is that inerrantists approach the Bible with an "a priori" assumption that everything is correct. The person who believes in total harmony of the Word is accused of twisting the facts to make them fit together. Certainly these are legitimate questions that require an answer.

Rather than an "a priori" assumption, those who believe in total harmony of the autographs base their belief on the authority of Jesus and the apostles. When Jesus makes statements like "the Scriptures cannot be broken", one is forced to sit up and take notice. When Jesus says "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all is fulfilled," one gets the impression the Scriptures are solid authority. Nothing that Jesus said or did seemed to ever indicate that He was undermining the authority of the Old Testament. He even used the principle of harmony in Matthew 4:7 after Satan has misquoted a passage from the Psalms to tempt Him.

In addition to the position of Jesus, inspiration is clearly taught in Scriptures. By definition inspired means God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16). The most solid argument for inerrancy seems to be found here. Jack Cottrell in his book *The Authority of the Bible* uses a syllogism which is a basis for the principle of total harmony.

1. Every word of God is true (God cannot lie).
2. The Bible is the Word of God (Matt. 15:6, Rom. 3:2).
3. Therefore the Bible is true (without error).

Thus it is what the Bible says about itself that leads to the principle of harmony rather than an "a priori" assumption.

With this starting point, when one encounters an apparent contradiction, he obviously will try to defend the Bible. While this may be distasteful to the liberal, it is a concept which our legal system is founded upon. The accused is innocent until proven guilty. Since the Bible has been on trial since its beginning, there will always be those accusing and those defending it. If we accept what Christ and the apostles said, it will always stand the test and be harmonious.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, this battle will continue to rage. Apparent contradictions will always be a problem. It seems that harmonization will always be an essential principle. There is a choice, however. Davis and others choose to harmonize the concepts of infallibility and inspiration with what they see in the Bible, thus making human judgment the final authority. Cottrell and others have decided to harmonize the Scripture thus allowing the Bible to be the final authority. Somehow the latter seems like a safer move!

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Shichiro Nakahara

Shizuoka City, Japan

February 7th

Greeting in the Name of our Lord, for your continued co-operation in carrying out the Great Commission here in Japan as well as for your constantly remembering us of our need in your prayer with financial support, for which we do praise our God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with us.

As for our church activities for the year 1984, we've set up plans with goals to reach by mobilizing all the forces we now have.

1) membership to be doubled:

This has been made clear to all that it's a job for every Christian here to win one soul for Christ this year. To this end we've made out a prayer-list for each one to have, in which a name of his or her choice is marked down, for whom he is responsible to pray each day, to keep in close touch with, guiding to the way of salvation and bringing into the fellowship of our Lord and of His church. There's been a great change made in a prayer life of each member, and attendance in our weekly prayer meeting is greatly blessed in number. We have had our Early Morning Prayer Meeting on the 1st Sunday of each month for three years now and I noticed on Feb 5 we had as many as eleven present at 6:30 a.m., still dark.

2) The lot to be purchased:

We've rented the lot ever since the beginning of our ministry in 1960 and it was eight years ago when we as church had decided to buy it as it was for sale. We've come through many struggling years to reach this point. One of the chief sources of fund is, of course, our own contributions and the rest are by various activities, such as church bazaar, selling used materials—books, newspapers, tin cans, old clothes and etc. We're still short of \$5,000 to make the full payment. There is also a small piece of land adjacent to it and we may lose it since our next-door neighbor wants it, too. The only way left for us is to pray and ask God to keep in store for us until we can be ready. Your prayer is so much appreciated!

3) Our son, Michiya, 18, had long been seeking the will for him, wondering as to what the Lord really wanted him to do. We'd spent so much time both in prayer and in discussing with him about the matter. Now we're so happy that the Lord has shown him the way and he himself has decided to come to the States to study. Stephanie having graduated from the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, recommends the school very highly, wishing him to come there at least for the first two years of training. The spiritual atmosphere of the school seems so wonderful and Stephanie herself has gained much strength from it. We wish you all to remember him in your prayer.

I'm to be operated on my right eye on Feb. 17, while the other eye was operated in May 1982. Your prayer is also appreciated. We've had a wonderful time together with our daughters visiting.

Consider These Qualifications Prayerfully

Greetings in Jesus! Some have written about suggestions for more workers coming, so I am sending you my suggestions. Other people may not agree with me—anyway, these are my thoughts.

My suggestion in regard to the need of more helpers here in the Orphanage work are varied. These suggestions could apply to any field in Africa.—

On a mission field one needs to have a spirit of give and take.

Often times it is weeks between visitors coming. If someone is used to being with people and often going somewhere, life on a mission is very quiet in this respect. Of course, there are many visits from the sick and leprous and blind ones, and those having trouble in childbirth, fightings, etc., so the days are never dull.

One needs to know how and be willing to do various jobs. The busier one is for the Lord the happier he is, for "we do for those we love" so our actions prove if we love Christ and are willing to spend our lives in His service, to become servants of all, and to "go" as He said, and "teach" others of His saving power.

One needs to be saving, and able to make the best of what he has till the Lord sends something better.

One needs to be willing to study and learn the language so he can talk with those around him. This helps one to be happier and to feel a part of the work, and people will be able to talk with you about their joys and their problems.

One needs to realize missionaries aren't coming to foreign fields to teach people "Americanism" but are coming to teach them about Christ, and to show them by their daily life what Christ really means to them and what He has done for them.

One needs to be able to like foods obtainable in other countries—here the fruits are varied but very good.

One needs to be willing to help where needed to help the work to go forward.

A man or a woman with lots of patience, and love for African children—that loves children because they are souls to be trained for God—not because the child is black or white or Indian. You know, some people feel they can't stand to have "black children" around very much, and soon, on a mission field where there are mostly black people around, a person can become unhappy, if this feeling is in their hearts.

Transportation is a problem. There are no buses out here. The nearest train stop is 7 miles, so if one is without some means of transportation he always has to depend on someone else when he wishes to go anywhere. With a "landrover" one can go into the villages for Bible classes, sewing classes, preaching tours, etc. and be able to cross rivers and rough places.

One needs to be satisfied with his place of abode and make it "home-like" even if it isn't the latest style or kind.

One needs some hobby or recreation to give the mind a rest. Being outside and working in the ground is one good recreation, and gives one a chance to feel God's good earth and see new life take root.

One needs to study God's word often and give God's message to all one meets. How easy it is to be talking about everything except the most important things in life, then before one realizes it, the time is gone and no one has been brought closer to the Lord. "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee" should be our daily prayer.

One needs to be able to find pleasure in little things, and to make the best of whatever comes up. Have a happy outlook! Remember God watches over and cares for His children wherever they are, and He will supply all our needs as He sees best. When one has faith and trusts God, he is happy.

A sewing machine is very useful for those who enjoy sewing and mending. (I'd rather sew than eat—not for myself but for others—The little village children are so thrilled when they get something for their very own. Often clothing that comes in parcels just needs a hem taken up, etc., and with a sewing machine it just takes a few minutes to give them something they can use and wear for many months.)

One needs to realize he will find many unpleasant scenes and things in the villages. Christians are to try to help these people learn of Christ and go forward and upward—from filth to cleanness—as Christ tells us to keep our bodies—and do all things "as unto the Lord." If this goal is in one's life whatever he does will be the best he can do. If he has no soap, God has supplied water, so use that to wash with.

One needs to be willing to help treat many little sores, burns, etc., as often people come for doctoring and it gives one an opportunity to speak a word for Christ.

As someone has said, "One who is a missionary in the home land will also be a good missionary in foreign fields."

At present we have only the little house by the Clinic ready for someone with a small family as there are only two bedrooms. We pray God will provide means to build a house for more workers. Building a house by contract is supposed to cost about 2/6 per square foot of floor space. Cement blocks and asbestos roof are very permanent and require little repair in many years.

Tuesday morning we had a phone call that the Officials from Lusaka were coming out to visit the Orphanage and to give a thorough inspection. They arrived at 8, Wednesday morning and were here nearly three hours. We pray the words spoken will bear fruit for the Master. This morning I had a call from the Official in Livingstone to come Wednesday morning for some further discussion. So, please pray the Lord will give us the right words to say which will bring glory to Him and His work. —*Elaine Brittell*, Sinde Mission Orphanage, Northern Rhodesia, Feb. 13, 1965, in *Missionary Messenger*

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Francis of Assisi

James C. Hefley

A merry laugh echoed through the prison, stirring an inmate to remark: "That Francis Bernardone is a strange chap; you'd think he was a troubadour or knight returning home in triumph instead of a prisoner rotting in jail."

After a year in prison, Francis' companions were still surprised by his constant antics and laughter. While they bewailed their misfortunes, "That Francis," as they said, "laughs and talks about the adventures he will have when he gets out."

Twenty-year-old Francis had been captured in the year 1202 by soldiers from the neighboring town of Perugia. Assisi and Perugia were towns on opposite sides of the Tiber Valley in olive-rich central Italy. Perugia had declared war upon Assisi, and Francis, son of the wealthy cloth merchant, Pietro Bernardone, was in the Assisian front ranks and dreaming of knighthood and military glory when he was captured.

Before this Francis, the town's gay blade, had led his friends in buffooneries, pranks, and merrymaking. Almost nightly the quaint walled city would ring with the noisy songs of Francis and his fun-loving comrades.

This was the time when knights and troubadours were cavorting over Italy. These gay wanderers were the ideals of Italian youth, and Francis while in the Perugian prison kept prison chit-chat vibrating with his dreams of the future. "Life for me will be like the songs of the troubadours," he told his friends.

In November 1203 peace was made between the two cities, and Francis and his friends were released. They returned to the games, festivals, and parties of former days, and Francis was the life of the crowd until one day he became gravely ill.

The crisis passed and slowly he regained his strength, but he seemed a different person. When he walked into the open country to breathe the fragrance of spring, the solitude alarmed him. Memories of his wasteful past flooded his mind, and Francis hurried home feeling drained and discouraged.

A knight preparing to join in a religious war invited Francis to join his group. Francis eagerly agreed. "I know I shall become a great prince," he declared as he rode off with his various shields. But on the way he became ill again, and the following day he took the road back to Assisi. His doting parents were disappointed, having visualized Francis as a plumed knight returning victorious from battle. Now he came straggling back sick and weary.

Vaguely seeking for the meaning of life, Francis started doubling his charities to the countless poor people and beggars who dotted the countryside. Victims of war, disease, poor harvests, and a greedy ruling class that often conspired with religious leaders, the unfortunates had a miserable existence. Since his teens, Francis had liberally given his money and even his clothes to needy men, greatly irritating his tight-fisted father.

One day while Francis was busy with customers in his father's shop, a shabbily dressed man came in, begging, "Give me something in God's name, young master."

"Begone!" Francis shouted impatiently, and the beggar scampered away.

"Suppose he had asked something in the name of a count or a baron," Francis thought in sudden shame. "He came in the name of God. Why, I am no better than a clown!" As the customers stared in amazement, Francis ran after the poor man to aid him.

The inequalities and injustices about him tugged more and more at Francis' heart. Often he slipped away to a cave behind a grove of olive trees and prayed: "Lord, show me the purpose of my life."

His friends were puzzled at his moodiness. "Come, Francis," they would say, "join us for an evening of fun." But the former playboy could no longer frolic while confused and hopeless people filled his vision.

Since the death of Augustine in 430, national governments had been torn by conflicts with rival countries and with the power-seeking Roman Church. Wealth and property accumulated more and more in the grip of the few, and the great masses struggled to obtain daily bread. Education and culture retreated to the walled monasteries. Some religious leaders were among the worst exploiters of the people. Only strong individuals resisted the tides of corruption.

By the time of Francis' birth in 1182, people were drawing together in cities from the farms, and schools were beginning to form in answer to demands for learning.

In 1206, at the age of 24, Francis was praying at a crumbling chapel outside Assisi when the Lord spoke clearly to his heart. "Lord

Jesus, shed abroad Your light in the darkness of my mind," he prayed. "Be found of me, Lord, so that in all things I may act only in accordance with Thy holy will."

He felt he heard God's answer: "I have accepted you. Now I desire your labor, your life, and all your being."

From that time Francis did not doubt that he had been brought into intimate union with Jesus Christ. He returned home to sell all he had and take up his apostleship to the poor.

His merchant father promptly disinherited Francis in a public ceremony. Francis handed him the remaining clothing and money he possessed, and the merchant callously took them and hurried away.

Francis left Assisi clad in an old mantle lent him by a gardener. For the next two years he slept in the open, begged for food, encouraged the poor and the lepers, and helped rebuild crumbling churches.

Once he encountered a band of ruffians in the forest.

"Who are you?" they demanded.

"I am the herald of the great Knig," he answered, "but what is that to you?"

They stripped his mantle from him and threw him into a snow-filled ditch. "There is your place poor herald of God," they chuckled. Francis, cold and shivering, fled to a monastery.

In 1209 as he participated in a service at the Chapel of Portiuncula near Assisi, Francis was deeply impressed with some words read from the Bible: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."

"This is what I want," Francis declared. "I shall set myself with all my strength to put it into practice. From now on, my life will be one of Gospel poverty." He discarded his shoes and purse, and set out to preach repentance and God's love and to help the poor in their needs.

Shortly afterward, Bernardo di Quintavalle, a prominent and wealthy man, told Francis, "I will distribute my goods to the poor and join you." With Bernardo and another would-be disciple, Pietro, Francis went to the St. Nicholas Church. There, after praying, he opened the Gospel and read to them his commission he had heard at Portiuncula. "Brethren," he told them soberly, "this is our life and rule, and that of all who may join us."

Francis took his band of companions, now numbering eleven, to seek the approval of Pope Innocent III in 1210.

"Your life appears too severe," he told them. "But with Francis as your leader, go and preach repentance to everyone as the Lord may deign to inspire you." The dedicated men then embarked upon their humble ministry of preaching and ministering to the sick and needy.

Francis did not aim at social or ecclesiastical reformation. He and his "brothers," called friars, felt called to show God's love by compassionate deeds and to stimulate faith by preaching the gospel. They yearned to demonstrate that Christ is the answer to men's needs.

The strategy of Francis called for a hermitage near large centers of population. From here the brothers went out two by two on their

Gospel tours. They sang and preached in city squares and market places, where priests, merchants, peasant, beggars—even rowdies—clustered to hear their message.

Francis returned to Assisi, and the city opened the cathedral to him. Near where he had been beaten by his angry father and hooted by children, he preached to overflow crowds. Here he gave his group the name: "The Order of The Brothers Minor," signifying that no brother should assume an office higher than another.

Upon entering the order, brothers were expected to sell all their material possessions and give the proceeds to the needy. They were expected to continue their trade, or to learn one if they had none. At haymaking time some worked in the field and at the end of the day joined the hay gatherers in singing hymns before retiring to sleep in the hay. Brother Ginepro was a cobbler. He carried with him his awl to mend sandals. Brother Egippo was a handyman. He dug graves, carried water, wove baskets, and harvested olives and grapes.

The sharp contrast between these first "Franciscans" and the priests and bishops was obvious to everyone. The poor brothers rejoiced in poverty, whereas many church leaders gloried in church positions. The brothers lived unrebukable lives while some clergymen joked about their private sins.

In 1219 Francis and his co-laborers journeyed to Egypt to preach to the Moslems and on one occasion to the Sultan.

By 1223 the Order of the Brothers Minor was beginning to show significant changes. After Francis asked Cardinal Ugolino (later Pope Gregory IX) to assume organizational guidance of the order, the simple and sacrificial characteristics of the group began to fade.

A new rule was added against Francis' wishes, making begging rather than laboring the main method of support. Members of the order began to take teaching positions in schools and advisory posts in the church hierarchy. Property was acquired, and the organizational structure grew increasingly complex. Preaching the Gospel and living in poverty were neglected by the new leaders.

As Francis saw the departure from his original efforts and goals, he tried to stop the trend by writing his desires in a will during his final illness. But after the saintly man's death in 1226, Pope Gregory rejected the will, and the Franciscan order went on to take its place alongside other powerful and wealthy organizations of the church which unquestioningly serve the Pope.

Francis lived only 17 years in this rigorous service to the Lord, but in that short time he earned lasting recognition by the universal Christian Church. Protestant church historian Philip Schaff wrote of him: "Few men of history have made so profound an impression as did Francis . . . So far as we can know, he stands well among those of all time who have discerned the meaning of Christ's words and breathed His spirit." Francis of Assisi was one of the spiritual beacon lights of the Dark Ages.

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Edited by Dr. Horace Wood

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

The Spirit and Believers: His Teaching Ministry

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

A very common and down-to-earth question among spiritually interested people finds its answer here. It is the question, "How may I understand the Bible?" And the answer that Jesus gives here is a simple one, "By my teaching ministry, which I shall provide through the Holy Spirit. He shall take of the things that belong to me, the central figure of the Word of God, and show them to you?" (cf. John 16:12-15).

Many years ago in the early days of Dallas Theological Seminary Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to take the four chapels of the first week of the opening Fall semester. He spoke to the entire student body each year, and his subject was always the same. Essentially, to speak technically, the subject of the four sessions was biblical epistemology, or how does one understand the Bible. In the early days the faculty sat on a platform behind the pulpit, so that the students were able to see all of the faculty during the chapel sessions. In those days there were about a dozen faculty members. Dr. Chafer, who also led the singing in the opening part of the chapel hours, then would address the student body from the pulpit, in those days simply a small lectern. His opening statement every year was the same. With the faculty of about a dozen men in full view of the students Dr. Chafer would begin by making this startling statement, "At Dallas Theological Seminary we have a faculty of one." From that abrupt beginning he would unfold for us throughout the week the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit and the necessary conditions for understanding and receiving it. It was always one of the highlights of the year, although many of us heard the messages many, many times. John sixteen always was an important part of the biblical text.

This teaching ministry of our Lord through the Spirit is part of our Lord's unfinished work. Students of the Scriptures are well acquainted with the fact that our Lord's work is both finished and unfinished. The basis of our redemption has been paid in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. Once in the end of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (cf. Heb. 9:26). This once and for all offering and bearing of our sins, however, is followed by His appearance in the presence of God for us (cf. 9:24). There He continues working as the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek to secure the full accomplishment of all that He purchased by His sacrifice (cf. 9:24, 28). This work at the right hand of God is part of His unfinished work, and His ministry of instruction of believers through the Holy Spirit is also an aspect of His unfinished work. Just as God is the Creator and the Sustainer of His creation (cf. Col. 1:16-

17), so is God the Son the Creator and Sustainer and Perfecter of the new creation (cf. 1:16-18). Cf. Rom. 8:34.

Before we turn to the details of the instruction of the Eleven in the upper room, suffer a word of contextual review. Our Lord has just warned the Eleven that they may expect the hatred of the world when He has departed for the Father. He has also said, however, that it is expedient for them that He go to the Father, for otherwise the Holy Spirit could not and would not come to indwell them. And this is necessary for them to carry out their ministry of testimony to Him, which He has also just said that they will perform (cf. 15:26-27). The coming of the Spirit to them will enable them to testify to the world concerning Christ and through the Spirit's testimony by them the world will be convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is clear, then, that the Spirit must instruct the disciples in the things that concern Christ, in order that they may be useful and fruitful in convincing a hostile world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Christ must be glorified in them first, before He shall be glorified in others in the age to come following Pentecost (cf. Acts 4:13). It is of the nature of the Spirit's pedagogical work that Jesus now speaks in His continuing discourse with the Eleven. To that we now turn.

The Disciples' Limitation

Jesus continues His discourse with these words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (cf. John 16:12). As is clear from what follows, He moves now from the Spirit's work in the world to His work in believers (cf. 15:3).

The "many things" to which Jesus refers, the things that He would like to be able to say to the Eleven are something of a pre-authentication of the remainder of the New Testament. The rest of the New Testament provide what He wishes to tell them. The Comforter was to come and remind them of the things that Jesus had said to them in His days in the flesh (cf. 14:26). But there would be more to come is our Lord's desire and point. One notices, too, that our Lord wishes to give them propositional revelation, not naked, unexplained events. The truth is what He wishes to tutor them in. The Comforter will "speak" and "tell" them the things that concern Christ.

There is an interesting point here that should not be overlooked. It was popular some decades ago to cry, "We must go back to Jesus for our theology." Implicit in this was the view that the later authors of the New Testament, especially the Apostle Paul, were arch-corrupters of the simple ethical instruction of Jesus. What was simple practical ethical moralism was turned by Paul into the mystifications of the professional theologian. The aim of this was to discount and destroy Paul's emphasis on atonement by the cross alone and justification by faith apart from the works of the Law. It was an old tactic, made common by even such a person as Thomas Jefferson in the opening years of the republic. It was all wrong, of course, for the essence of Paul's teaching is found in the gospels, although no one would say that all of it is found there. Why should it be? In the New Testament there is progress in the divine revelation just as in the Old Testament.

But, most of all, this claim flies in the face of the teaching of our

Lord. If we should say that we shall take only His words as the source of religious doctrine, then we are refusing to follow Him. It is He who said plainly that the doctrine taught to this point in His ministry, the point of His soon death, is incomplete. It is He who urged His disciples to submit to the further instruction that He would give in the days of His resurrection and ascension through the Holy Spirit. The later Teacher will bring men fuller knowledge of the truth.

William Temple put it eloquently, "It is no true loyalty to the mind of the Lord which confines attention to what He did and said on earth." And, "We are most loyal to the mind of Christ when we are most receptive of all that the Apostles, under the guidance of the Spirit, learnt and taught, and of all that the same Spirit would teach us now."

The claim of our Lord, "but ye cannot bear them now," refers to their spiritual incapacity, not to their mental or moral unfitness. There is not the present indwelling Spirit to illumine their minds (cf. 7:39; 14:17), and the teaching of the Lord is at this point designedly incomplete. The Greek word used here and rendered "bear" in the Authorized Version is one that refers in this context to the absence of power to carry out that which He would later give them through the Spirit (cf. Acts 15:10).

The Declaration of Instruction

The discourse continues, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (cf. John 16:13). The reference, of the truth of the divine revelation.

It is striking that the pronoun "he," referring to the Holy Spirit, is in the masculine gender. This is particularly so, since the noun in apposition with the pronoun, "the Spirit," is in the neuter gender, and one might have expected that the pronoun would also be neuter. That would be the normal usage. The use of the masculine supports the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit, a doctrine established by many types of evidence in the New Testament teaching.

The Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth," and the genitival phrase, "of truth," is not unimportant. Recently in a national convention of one of the largest churches in the United States a well-known professed evangelical speaker uttered some astounding naive and astonishingly erroneous statements. Among them were these, "I don't know a preacher that does not believe that every single word of the Bible is the word of God." He seems totally oblivious to the wisely publicized debate over the inerrancy of the Bible among professing scholars and preachers of the Bible. That a minister could be so unaware of debate is appalling, and he is the minister of one of the largest churches of one of our large cities. Another of his utterances was just as startling. He contended that love for one another must come before orthodoxy of belief. Such a viewpoint is ultimately destructive of Christianity itself and is opposed by the Word of God that he contends he believes. We cannot question the fact that the Bible inculcates biblical love. It is important, and the orthodox must contend for it and practice it. But

love without truth is not love in the biblical sense, for it does not have the complete wellbeing of its object as a first consideration, if it is not love in the truth. In fact, the Bible makes both truth and love primary principles and expressly commands *love in the truth* (cf. 2 John 1:11; 3 John 1-4). On the other hand, the New Testament also teaches that our love is to abound yet more and more, but it is to abound in "knowledge and in all judgment" (cf. Phil. 1:9). Love, to be genuine biblical love, must always be bounded by the knowledge of the truth that is found in the Bible. Other forms of human "love" usually turn out to be hardly more than maudlin sentimentalism, the "lu-u-ve" sounded by the proclaimers of pop and rock.

Our Lord says that the Spirit "will guide you into all truth." That is a very suggestive description of the work of the Spirit in illumination of the disciples. The verb rendered here by "guide" is a word that is constructed of two words that mean literally *to guide in the way*, and it is found in some interesting New Testament places (cf. Matt. 15:14; Luke 6:39; Acts 8:31; Rev. 7:17 [cf. Isa. 49:10]). The Ethiopian Eunuch's answer to Philip's question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" illustrates its meaning. His answer was, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (cf. Acts 8:30-31). The aid of the knowledgeable man in understanding the Word is implied. Now Jesus says that it is ultimately the office of the Spirit to illumine our spiritual minds, to guide us, in the truth. And what an encouraging thing it is to know that He, the Spirit of truth, is engaged in bringing His own into the possession of the truth.

The word *guide* suggests some important truths. In the first place, it suggests that the entrance into the understanding of the truth is not something sudden and final. It is ideally a gradual matter. Peter's word is in harmony with this, "But *grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (cf. 2 Pet. 3:18).

In the second place, *guide* suggests that a response from us is needed. It is not *bring*, but *guide* and, while the divine initiative and enablement must always be made primary, human responsibility always exists.

And, finally, *guide* suggests that the guidance is never ended, while the church is still on the earth in its present form. Many manuscripts have the Greek preposition *eis* after guide (AV, "into"). If that reading is preferred, then our Lord is saying, I believe, that the Holy Spirit will enable the disciples to penetrate all aspects of the truth. On the other hand, a number of manuscripts have the preposition *en*, which may be rendered by the English word *in*, and the majority of modern textual critics feel this is what John wrote. If so, our Lord is saying that the Spirit will guide the disciples in the whole sphere of truth. Personally I prefer the latter, but the former makes excellent sense as well. The promise is not that of ultimate omniscience, but it is the promise of gradual and growing enlargement of spiritual knowledge. The picture is that of a man entering a large and broad land, which he has inherited, and then gradually exploring, possessing, and enjoying the land.

Continued next month.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

A lively **Foreign-Missions-Concern Meeting** was held on March 22nd. 30 people attended, some from Winchester, Lexington, and Elizabethtown as well as from various churches in Louisville. Most of the time was spent in question-and-answer time with Victor and Mae Broadus, Dennis Allen and Alex Wilson.

Interest was high, and **ANOTHER MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY MAY 3**, again at 7:30 at Kentucky Ave. Church of Christ, 1418 Belmar Drive, Louisville. Please announce this meeting, and pray for it—that God may raise up workers. All are welcome.

Dear Brother in Christ,

I was concerned that some articles cast doubt on the need to be baptized in order to have the promise of salvation. Recent articles indicate that you stand, as you have for years, for the essential nature of baptism for the remission of sins. So please extend my subscription for two years.

Sincerely yours,
Jerry Hallett

Please renew. It is one of the best.
—R. M. Mounts

* * * * *

Christian Fourth Encampment, DeRidder, La, *Men's Retreat — May 3-5, 1984*

THURSDAY

- 12:00 Noon Arrive & check into cabins; coffee & fellowship
- 2:00- 2:30 "Desiring the Office" —C.D. Wetherford
- 2:30- 3:30 Discussion
- 3:30- 4:00 Coffee
- 4:00- 4:30 Handling Authority —Cleo Russell
- 4:30- 5:30 Discussion
- 5:30- 7:00 Free time & supper
- 7:00- 7:30 Preparation Before the Fact —Stan Broussard
- 7:30- 8:30 Discussion

FRIDAY

- 7:00- 8:00 Get up — Breakfast
- 8:30- 9:00 Handling church problems without elders —John Burgis
- 9:00-10:00 Discussion
- 10:00-10:30 Coffee
- 10:30-11:00 Responsibilities of Elders —Carl Kitzmiller
- 11:00-12:00 Discussion
- 12:00- 2:00 Lunch & Relaxation
- 2:00- 2:30 Responsibilities of Deacons —Johnny Roberts
- 2:30- 3:30 Discussion
- 3:30- 4:00 Coffee
- 4:00- 4:30 Responsibilities of Ministers —A. Valdetero
- 4:30- 5:30 Discussion
- 5:30- 7:00 Free time & supper
- 7:00- 7:30 Qualifications of Elders —A.J. Istre
- 7:30- 8:30 Discussion

SATURDAY

- 7:00- 8:00 Get up – Breakfast
- 8:30- 9:00 Qualifications of Deacons –Robert Smith
- 9:00-10:00 Discussion
- 10:00-10:30 Coffee
- 10:30-11:30 Evaluation Discussion – Message Review
- 11:30 Dismiss

Financed by free-will contributions. For more information contact
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by Dale Jorgenson
An indepth objective view

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