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MAY, 1984

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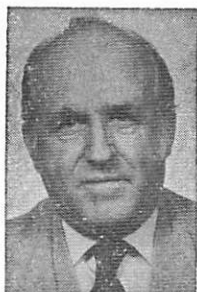
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God's Family

W. R. H.

"SINGING AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART"

A recent discussion about the merits of a cappella singing in our congregational worship, set me to thinking how we might be able to improve the thanks and praise offering that we raise to our Lord. Realizing that Almighty God is our prime audience, we surely want to honor and glorify Him in all that we say and do. I feel that there are three distinct areas of improvement: First, in the attitude of our hearts; second, in the quality of our effort; and third, in the participation of the full congregation.

HEART PREPARATION

"This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." Isaiah gave this warning in his day, and Jesus reiterated it in His. The first preparation of our hearts should be a loyalty to the word of God. Gladly accept all of God's revelation, and praise Him for "His wonderful works." We do well to sing the words that David and other saints have written under the Spirit of God. Singing is not just a pleasant introduction to a prayer time and Bible lesson, it is an opportunity for each of us to lift our hearts and voices to the God of all grace. Strong, majestic, major chords bind our praises into swelling waves of adoration and gratitude until we are "lost in wonder, love, and praise."

THE MECHANICS

In England, during WW II, I made acquaintance with the song books in the churches of England. There they had only the words, written in poetry style, with many stanzas. I found that the back of the book had musical notation, so that you could take any words where the metre fit, and sing them to a favorite tune such as *Ortonville*, *Old Hundred*, *Refuge*, *Pisgah* or the like. I happened to have some "Great Songs of the Church No. 2" in our chapel choir, and when the folks at Sapperton, England saw how convenient was the arrangement, they asked me to write to Bro. Jorgenson to send 20 or 25 copies which he did. He was delighted to have his book in a rural Church of England congregation.

In older times, our churches held singing classes in sightsinging (reading the notes as well as the words). Brother Chambers was most effective in this, and his work is still bearing fruit, but there needs to be

a return to this discipline. Ninety-nine out of a hundred people have sufficient tonal concept to carry a tune, and we need to apply our best efforts to develop Christians in this area. It will not come by sitting back and letting the instruments do it for us. And it will not come by letting a robed choir do the praising. Nor will it come when our members sit lazily and indolently musing to themselves during the worship period. Not only need our hearts be prepared—we ought to know the score. (It is right on the page, either over or under the words that we are hearing. We have no excuse, because the shape-note books that we now have makes sight-singing easier than ever.

It is time for some of our churches who do not know how to fill time on Sunday night or Wednesday night, to let their song leader or another able person literally teach the basics of music to the “music illiterates” who are not able to sing “those new songs.” Our young girls should long to be able to sing both the alto and soprano parts, and our boys ought to know that it is just as well to sing tenor as to sing bass. Mixed and male quartets, and girls’ trios ought to be the order of the day, and there need be no shortage of singers. There ought even be family trios and quartets, as indeed there are in some blest congregations. I feel that it is high time we made the singing a participation activity instead of a spectator sport. I am sure it would please God.

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

If the Lord had put some limit as to who can sing; let’s say only the young, or only the old, or only the male, or only the female, or only the rich, or only poor, or the elite (whoever they are) or the musically gifted—then there might be an excuse for some to sit quietly. But I recall a verse that says “let everything that hath breath, praise Jehovah” (Ps. 150:6). This also indicates that there should be reasonable volume to our singing. Another of the psalms enjoins us to shout unto the Lord. Why shouldn’t we all be as exhilarated in praising God as we would be at some thrilling point of a ball game?

We song leaders will have to bear much of the blame. If we don’t think that salvation is worth shouting about, who will step ahead? If we can’t find an occasional “new” song in the book and see its worth and bring it forth to the group, who can? If we don’t explain the responsibility of each person to share in the singing just as surely as he does (I hope) in the prayer and in the Lord’s supper, who will get the silent ones into motion? Let God help us to express vocally that melody that He has put within us.





Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

USUALLY OMITTED FROM LISTS REVEALING THE HUMAN suffering related to alcohol consumption are those injured by someone else's drinking—fires, assaults, auto and other accidents. Such is the case in these reported by Secretary Heckler of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. She said that about 40% of the nation's health care costs, soaring at \$322 billion, can be ascribed to alcohol and tobacco.

ELEANOR FLAGLER, A COURIER JOURNAL COLUMNIST, REPORTED that a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta stated that 90% of all fatal accidents may involve drinking. In 1982, 41% of victims were under 24 years of age. Elliot Churchill, Chief of the Division, said that "Drinking and driving is underreported."

RECENTLY SEVEN BOYS IN OREGON, students in the high school gifted classes, were sentenced in connection with thefts of \$100,000 worth of computers, vans, telephone equipment, office machines, and building supplies. One mother said, "It made me feel terrible. I examined the way we raised him, and tried to decide what I had done wrong. I decided it was not me. We had not done anything to make him that way." Her son, too, reflected on the thefts, saying, "A year ago, none of us would have taken anything from anybody. Somewhere in there we changed, somehow . . . We were all in advanced classes and it was easy. If it would have been tougher in school, we all would have been different people." This may be worth sharing with your child when he complains about too much homework or how hard he has it at school.

SENATOR DON NICKLES (R.—OK) REPORTS OUTRAGEDLY, that 194

government advisory committees that didn't even meet were paid \$1.24 million last year. The committees are made up of private citizens who are supposed to provide expert information on various matters, according to the US General Services Administration. The Senator points out that "what happens is that a politician will get one of his friends appointed to a committee. It's a way of rewarding supporters." If you resent this use of your money, let your elected officials in Washington know about it.

AN ADVERTISING LEAFLET FROM SPINSTERS BOOKS, a bookstore in Kansas, states: "Spinsters Books is a womyn's and children's bookstore collectively operated by lesbians. We carry books by womyn, womyn's music, buttons, bumper stickers, jewelry, and crafts made by womyn, feminists, and lesbian periodicals, cards, and posters. We have a free womyn's lending library."

SEVERAL HUMANIST ORGANIZATIONS ARE STARTING the first school in North America to train humanist leaders to combat what they see as a rising opposition to secular humanism. Called the Humanist Institute, the new training center is an umbrella group, the North American Committee for Humanism.

THE UNITED STATES SENATE VOTED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING amendment: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any state to participate in prayer. Neither the United States nor any state shall compose the words of any prayer to be said in public schools." Did the Senators want to make prayer in public schools illegal,

or did they want to make prayer a legal requirement in the U.S.?

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JESSIE JACKSON says that if elected he would support the stronger of the two federal gay-rights bills and issue an executive order banning anti-gay discrimination in all federal agencies, including the military. He explained that his prohibition would extend to the granting of "security clearances," too. He also threatens to change immigration laws that currently exclude homosexuals. The Baptist minister was proud to point out that he was the only presidential candidate to specifically mention lesbians and gay men directly as part of his "Rainbow Coalition." He didn't take a backseat either in stating his opposition to prayer by school children in citizen supported schools. All of the above simply underlines the fact that he is not very unlike the other Presidential candidates.

JAMES ARMSTRONG RESIGNED HIS PRESIDENCY OF the National Council of Churches and also his post as bishop of the United Methodist Church. Armstrong admitted to being an adulterer. About this the national news media were tip-toe quiet. Religion editor Ken Woodward of Newsweek said that he would have written about the Armstrong affair if Armstrong had presented himself to the world as a "symbol and or model of moral rectitude as, say, a Jerry Falwell does." Even religious editors recognize that presidents of National Councils of churches are not supposed to be too moral. But they do seem to set a high standard for those who oppose the left-

wing religious and political positions of the liberal media.

THAILAND HAS DECLARED ITS 19 YEAR-OLD FIGHT with Communist guerillas is all but won. Maoist insurgents have surrendered in droves dropping Communist strength in the Thai jungles to below 3,000, and they are still coming out of the jungles in large numbers and surrendering.

INCREASING NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS finding it difficult to cope with today's pressures are becoming depressed and taking suicide as the way to solve their problems. Suicide is the second cause of deaths for college age and third for adolescents. The people who are killing themselves, according to Dr. Robert Davis, a sociologist at North Carolina A & T University and a specialist in suicide, are those with rising expectations. "It is the upwardly mobile, the people who see a change in status or class who commit." He added that a lack of support from family and friends is a major contributor to depression and suicides, regardless of age.

IT JUST HAD TO HAPPEN. A man named Michael Benton has filed a lawsuit in the San Francisco Superior Court against the designer, maker, and merchandisers of the poplar Cabbage Patch dolls. He maintains in his suit that: "The advertising campaign for the dolls holds adopted people up to ridicule and humiliation by implying these individuals are bought and sold." He further claims for \$100 million that he and others have suffered emotional distress and psychological harm.

A PRAYER FOR HOLINESS

I want a principle within of watchful, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.
Help me the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire;
To catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.
From Thee that I no more stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.
Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.
Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy power impart;
The burden from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.
O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,
And drive me to that grace again, which makes the wounded whole.

—Charles Wesley



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

“The Infirmity of Your Flesh”

I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you present your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.
—Romans 6:19-21, NKJ.V

The title of this article was taken from the ASV instead of the NKJV, but it seems to me that the latter version, as given here, is easier for us to grasp than the older style language. So many people think of themselves as strong in the flesh, but that is an illusion that deceives even many Christians and keeps them from full service to the Lord. If you will combine that phrase with the one at the end of verse 20 (“free in regard to righteousness”) you will see that, as always, the Bible does not pay our human nature any compliments. By nature this passage says, in brief, that we are weak, slaves of uncleanness and lawlessness, free (the only freedom to natural men, who claim to be “free agents”) in regard of righteousness and headed (v. 21) toward death. Not a very complimentary picture, is it? But it agrees with and adds to what has been said in Romans all along, starting from the eighteenth verse of chapter one.

But thank God for the close of verse 19! We do not have to remain in the condition we have summarized in the preceding paragraph. Because of the wonderful things that we have read about Christ’s work for us since Romans 3:21, we are urged to present our members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. I realize that most of us dream of freedom, and free from sin we can be—but only by becoming a willing slave of Jesus Christ and therefore of righteousness. Only then can men speak of righteousness in their lives and do it correctly. But those who have been buried through baptism into Christ’s death and risen to walk in newness of life (His life, resurrection life) can follow Paul’s exhortation here, and everyone who is a Christian, washed in the blood of the Lamb, should make this choice and see the results in his life.

As I mentioned before, men like to dream that they are “free agents,” free to make their own choices and hew out their lives as free

men. But that is one of the devil's great deceptions. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day felt they were free, and said to Jesus in John 8:33, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone." Yet Jesus had demonstrated to them in the opening of the chapter that they were in bondage to sin. And they were in bondage to Rome at that time. Jesus in that chapter told them that their actions showed they were in bondage to Satan, who was their father, proved by the fact that they were doing the devil's desires. The devil was a liar and the father thereof and a murderer and they were seeking to put Jesus to death. Now that is easy to speak of the bondage of others, but our natural lives will always demonstrate the same weaknesses to us if we will look closely at them.

Our passage closes with the terrible consequences of our slavery by nature to sin—death. That means eternal death, existing through eternity in the lake of fire, the place God prepared for the devil and his angels but to which we choose to go when we refuse the wonderful salvation God has offered us through faith in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God does not want you to go there and gave His Son to die for you to take you from there to His heaven; Jesus Christ does not want you to go there and gave Himself for you that you might be able to spend eternity in the place He is preparing; the Holy Spirit does not want you to go there and He dwells in the church and in individual Christians to testify to you so you may not perish but have everlasting life. The choice is yours.

May I close then with an unfamiliar story about a familiar song, taken from a reliable book of such stories:

One bleak day in February, 1832, a young theological student sat in his room at Andover Seminary. Samuel Francis Smith was going over a sheaf of German songs for children, given him by a friend, the composer Lowell Mason. Sunset shadows crept into the room and Smith was tired from a strenuous day of study. He was relieved to spend a few relaxed moments going over his friend's music.

As he hummed over one after another, one struck his fancy. He glanced at the words at the bottom of the page and his knowledge of German told him that the words were patriotic, but they did not appeal to him. He decided to write his own words. He searched around on his desk until he found a scrap of paper, about five or six inches long and two and one half inches wide. On this, as he tapped out the rhythm of the music, he began to write,

My country, tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring.

I presume that you recognize this as the first verse of a patriotic song that vied with the *Star Spangled Banner* for many years to be our national anthem. It lost out finally due to pressure from educa-

tional associations which forced the adoption of our present national anthem. As you know, it is a religious song and the ones who forced it out had the added argument of the fact the tune was used by the British for their national anthem and was a patriotic song in Germany. But Smith's song spoke of God and also spoke of liberty and freedom. We had freedom of religion, freedom in economics, and freedom politically, all three of which we are now losing, I am afraid. But the one who places his faith in Jesus Christ can have the one freedom that will last through eternity. I hope you have it.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Is there anything to keep a church from bringing in just about any practice if the most of the members wish to do so? Are not churches independent and free to do as they please?

The answer to this question depends in some measure on just what is in the mind of the one asking it. Does he mean literally any practice, or does he speak of those things not specified by scripture? Churches have a great deal of freedom in matters where scripture makes no requirement or where we have no divinely given examples, but they are bound by the word of God in those areas where God has given instruction.

We live in a nation where churches of every brand and stripe are allowed to exist without governmental interference. This is guaranteed by the constitution. Only those practices which have serious consequences beyond their religious aspect are normally any cause for trouble from the government. Those who might advocate polygamy, ritual murder, or such like have an effect on society beyond the mere religious practice. There have been and are areas where the neutrality of government is somewhat less than it ought to be, and there are gray areas where it takes a great deal of wisdom to separate between what is religious and what is not. Basically, however, churches in the U.S. are free to do pretty much as they please. There is very little restraint from this source.

Some religious groups have central governing bodies and legal arrangements whereby aberrant behavior by a congregation might result in seizure of property, expulsion from the group, or other consequences. It is true that N.T. churches were congregationally independent and not answerable to some outside human body—only to the Lord. Those churches which maintain such a pattern in government today are therefore free from such human restraint on their practices.

There are ties of love and fellowship between brethren which may become strained by abnormal practices or beliefs, but this is not such that it has power to prevent these practices.

A church might by a majority or better vote or by the dominance of a few leaders adopt practices or beliefs different from others. This happens all the time as groups break away from others and new "churches" are started. Faithful brethren may protest, rebuke, or try to correct, but there is very little that can be done righteously to prevent such a course. With congregationally independent churches there is very little human restraint, therefore, to keep a congregation from following just about any course it may choose.

As we have earlier indicated, there is the restraint of scripture. Even this, however, may be ignored and wrong practices adopted. God's judgments do not necessarily fall at once. God holds man responsible for the requirements of scripture, but men are sometimes allowed a lifetime of disobedience before they are called to account. Even the limitation of scripture does not therefore make it impossible for wrong practices or beliefs to be adopted. Man is accountable to the Lord for his rebellion to or rejection of the scriptures, but "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). Man seems to "get away" with doing as he pleases for a while.

The thing that keeps churches from doing as they might please, then, is the restraint God imposes on sin. God has not left us free to do what we wish just so long as everyone, or just the majority, agrees. We in the U.S. have become so accustomed to democratic government that we assume it is to rule in every area of life. The church itself has not been put under democratic rule, however. There are matters in which the democratic process may be used, but basically the church is a kingdom, an absolute monarchy in which Christ has established the "laws." He has arranged for the churches to have overseers, but these are not legislators. They do not originate the requirements. These men are bound by the scriptures just as other Christians are, and they have no authority to alter, remove, or add to the word. They have no authority to alter, remove, or add to the word. They have no authority to grant some kind of immunity to individuals or churches. In effect, they merely see that the scriptures are carried out. The scriptures, in that they reveal the will of the Head of the church, are the authority by which Christians and churches are bound. Any choice by the members of a congregation which runs counter to the demand of scripture is wrong, no matter how it is arrived at. An unanimous decision which contradicts the word is still not acceptable before God.

Democracy as we know it is not free to vote in just anything. In our nation the constitution is a source of control. Laws may be declared unconstitutional and therefore not valid even though adopted by the majority. However, while the constitution can be changed by a sufficient vote, this is not the case with the scriptures. Given by God, they cannot be changed by man—even if 100% of men wanted to do so!

When the requirements, principles and examples of scripture are not involved there can be occasion for the congregation to vote demo-

cratically on matters. In such matters congregations have a great deal of freedom. The Bible does not provide instruction for every situation which arises. Human decision must be made. And since elders are not to lord it over the flock (1 Pet. 5:3), the will of the congregation should be allowed when possible. Details such as the color of carpet for the floors, the hour of services, etc., are not revealed in the scriptures and are not greatly affected by the spiritual stature of those involved in the decision. Other matters may not be specifically revealed in scripture but are best decided by those who are spiritually mature. The choice of Sunday School teachers by a popular election, for example, would probably not be the best method and might violate the spiritual oversight of the elders. Wise elders will allow as much latitude as possible without sacrificing their responsibilities before God.

In summary, N.T. churches are independent congregationally, but if they are to continue to serve the Lord and maintain a healthy relationship with Him, they can never be independent of Him or of His word. There must be a deep and abiding respect for His word and for the guidance therein. Even in unrevealed matters there will be a serious concern with trying to know His will. They will also be mindful of the ties to other churches imposed by love and mutual concern for the Lord's work and people. There are matters where much freedom is possible and where we must be careful not to bind what God has not. Moreover, error can happen in either direction without civil interference or without sudden, open judgment from the Lord. Apparently a church might have its candlestick removed (cf. Rev. 2:5) without being clearly aware of it. It might go on with business as usual, but it would have been removed from His ownership. Disobedience is always possible, but never profitable.

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Believing or Looking

There are many Christians who believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, who, nevertheless, do not seem to be looking for Him to come. There is a great difference. In the former instance, it may simply be the holding of a doctrine. In the latter case, it is a blessed hope. In the one case it may centralize the thinking but in the other it will sanctify the living.

One is reminded of the earnest Christian who said to a fellow church member: "As I read the news and compare what is happening with what is written in the Bible, I am convinced that the Lord's coming will be very soon."

"How dreadful!" was the only reply he received.

The return of Christ will be a dreadful thing to the unsaved, but to the child of God it is a glorious prospect, a blessed hope. For the Christian looks beyond the event to the Person, and longs to see Him and to be like Him (1 Jn. 3:2). To be looking for Christ's coming is a purifying influence in the daily life. Such an attitude brings doctrine down to a very personal matter. —*The Pilgrim*

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Wycliffe

James C. Hefley

The servant opened the ponderous door and peered out. Before stood four robed friars.

"We have come to see Dr. Wycliffe," the leader began.

"But the hour is late, and my master is very ill."

"We are on official business, and see him we shall," the friar answered, and he brushed past the servant into the sick man's chamber.

"Yes?" the patient inquired weakly.

"You have death on your lips, Wycliffe," the leading friar informed him with veiled satisfaction. "Be touched by your faults and retract all that you have said to our injury."

John Wycliffe, Oxford University's best scholar, popularly known as the "Gospel Doctor," lay subdued before them. The friars smiled in anticipation of a humble retraction of the professor's statements which he had taught his students: *The scriptures are the only law of the Church: the Church is not centered in the pope and the cardinals, but is the whole company of the elect.*

Now the sick man whispered to his servant, "Help me up." Feeble, pale, and barely able to sit erect, he faced the friars. His eye caught their gaze and with a strength not his own he declared, "I shall not die, but live! I will again declare the evil deeds of the friars!"

Faces livid with anger and shock, the friars retreated in confusion. John Wycliffe's battle for freedom of religion in England was far from over. In the remaining few years of his life, the noted Oxford professor built the foundation for the future Protestant church in England.

When Wycliffe was born in 1320, England, like the rest of Europe, was wavering in allegiance to the Roman pope. Kings found themselves opposing the pope on occasions when he was favoring a rival nation. The common people resented the heavy taxes demanded by the church and they deplored the corrupt lives of many churchmen. Yet the church's influence remained strong, for in its sacraments it claimed to offer or to deny eternal spiritual life to the people. To resist the church was worse than death in the minds of millions of Europeans.

But John Wycliffe was born to a different heritage—one of trust in God's Word rather than men's words.

His early life is obscure, but at 16 he entered Oxford, which then had 30,000 students. One of his teachers, Bradwardine, a famed mathematician and astronomer, made a profound impression upon him. "Worship of mere external forms and ceremonies can never take the place of true worship of the heart," he counselled.

Wycliffe was then preparing for the priesthood. He noticed that fellow students felt it beneath their dignity to teach from "so elementary a book as the Scriptures." He was not required to read the Bible, but his own desire led him to study the Latin Scriptures, and for this he

was nicknamed "The Gospel Doctor."

In November, 1348 the "Black Plague" swept into London, and 100,000 Londoners perished. The scourge burdened the Oxford man's heart. In Bible study he found a new rest and confidence in God. Shortly afterward he wrote, "So when we were sinful and the children of wrath, God's Son came . . . He died for us. Then much rather shall we be saved, now we are made righteous through His blood."

After graduation he was made master of Balliol's College, one of Oxford's five "halls." In addition to his administrative duties he lectured on the Scriptures. Students thronged his classes to hear him declare: "The Bible is our final standard of appeal—not the Pope."

England had not paid tribute to the pope for 33 years when a letter arrived from Pope Urban V in 1365 demanding payment. Edward III called Parliament into session and laid the letter before them. Wycliffe was present, and he probably was an influential adviser. Clearly the temper of the officials that day had been whipped up by Wycliffe's lectures.

The first baron on his feet shouted, "England was won by the sword, and by the sword it has been defended. Let the Pope try to exact this tribute by force. I, for one, am ready to resist."

Acting by unanimous proclamation, Edward's Parliament defied the pope. "We accept Edward of England and reject Urban of Rome," they declared. It was a step toward national freedom.

Wycliffe grew bolder. He took note of the horde of "begging friars" that had overrun the countryside. Clad in coarse woolen black gowns the "Black Friars" preached fables and superstitions. "Soldiers of the Pope" they called themselves as they solicited donations from the "faithful." More than once they kidnapped children and shut them up in the monasteries. In 1333 the chancellor of Oxford wrote the pope: "Parents refuse to send their children to the university since they are stolen by these friars."

Wycliffe raised the fire of the "holy men" by accusing them of 50 heresies and errors. "Friars say their religion is more perfect than the religion of Christ," he charged. "They draw children into their order by hypocrisy, lying, and stealing. They live as lords, and send out idiots to preach fables and lies to please and rob the people." It was little wonder that the friars looked forward to the stilling of Wycliffe's tongue.

When the king appointed six royal commissioners to meet with the pope's emissaries on the issue of church property, Wycliffe was one of the members. Following this service, he was appointed by King Edward to the rectorship of Lutterworth, one of England's choicest parishes. No doubt this was in recognition of his foreign service.

In 1371 Parliament proposed that the Crown "should remove all prelates from offices of the states and replaces them with laymen." A Bill of Indictment against the pope followed stating: "Upon pain of life and limb should a papal collector remain in England." Behind these actions the "Gospel Doctor" was the guiding influence. He advised, "Prelates are so occupied in heart about worldly lordships that they are not found studying and preaching the Gospel."

Wycliffe's preaching and his influence with Parliament started an avalanche of papal vengeance rolling toward him. In February, 1377 Courtenay, the bishop of London, cited him to appear and answer for his teaching. But he came accompanied by two of the most powerful men in England at that time, and was dismissed with only an injunction against preaching his doctrines.

"If he is guilty, why is he not punished?" the curious wanted to know. "If he is innocent, why is he ordered to be silent? If he is the weakest in power, is he the strongest in truth?"

A new king, Richard II, came to power and Wycliffe was summoned to advise his parliament. The papal capital was now at Avignon and a French pope was demanding tribute from England. But England was then at war with France. To give tribute would be equivalent to financing the enemy. Wycliffe concluded: "Our kingdom may justly detain its treasure for the defense of itself." Then he took the opportunity to challenge the right of the pope. "How could the apostle Peter give unto you that which he did not himself possess?"

Then five papal bulls reached England, ordered Wycliffe's arrest and examination. Wycliffe was summoned to appear at the archbishop's palace at Lambeth. Wycliffe without wavering repeated his conviction that "the popes do not have temporal dominion," that "absolution from sin will profit no one unless there comes the pardon of God, nor will excommunication hurt anyone unless he be condemned by God."

The church issued a second prohibition against Wycliffe's teaching his "pernicious doctrines." But he gave no promise to obey.

In 1378 a schism had rent the papacy, Pope Urban VI ruling in the Vatican while Pope Clement VII sat on the papal throne at Avignon, France. As Wycliffe saw the European nations taking sides, he was deeply affected. He wrote a tract requesting "emperors and kings to recover the heritage of the Church."

In the spring of 1381 the "Gospel Doctor" posted 12 theses at Oxford. The first denied the bread and wine of the Eucharist to be the actual body and blood of Christ. "It is but a sign of Him," he wrote.

"Heresy," the religious orders thundered in reply. A council was summoned to meet at Oxford. "The opinions are heretical," they concluded.

Wycliffe was lecturing when the officer entered his class and read the sentence. "You ought first to have shown me that I am in error," he replied. "I challenge my opponents to refute my doctrines."

"You must either be silent or go to prison," he was told.

"Then I appeal to the king and Parliament," he retorted.

Before Parliament met, Bishop Courtenay, Wycliffe's old enemy, convened a church synod. They condemned 10 of 24 selected propositions of Wycliffe, and emphasized that "the errors were not to be taught at Oxford." But the university was not in sympathy with the clergymen. Courtenay complained to the king. Political circumstances influenced the king to agree with the bishop. He gave authority to imprison any who maintained the condemned propositions.

Bowed but unbroken, Wycliffe retired to his church parish and began the greatest work of his life: translation of the Bible into English for the common man, and the commissioning of traveling preachers for telling the simple Gospel across the country.

Jerome's 900-year-old Latin version was the only Bible available, and few people could read it.

Some priests declared the Scriptures were "injurious to the laity," but Wycliffe said, "Though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the Gospel than we should from all that multitude. As the faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known . . . the better."

He translated the New Testament by himself. The Old Testament was translated by Dr. Nicholas Hereford, a close friend, and then partly revised by Wycliffe. There was no printing press, so he enlisted 100 scribes to make copies. Immediately the demand exceeded the supply. Often one copy would serve several families.

To counteract the legends and superstitious tales of the "Black Friars," Wycliffe enlisted followers to preach the truth to the people. Leaving their possessions, they set off barefoot, a staff in their hand and clothed in a coarse robe. They preached wherever an audience could be found. The people clustered around Wycliffe's "poor priests," eagerly drinking in the message. Precious hand-copied Bibles were read by dim lights and then passed on to other hungry hearts.

On the last Sunday in 1384 Wycliffe was administering the Lord's Supper when he was stricken with paralysis. Friends carried him to his bed, where he died on December 31.

But his godly deeds and example lived on. His followers, the Lollards, spread his Biblical teaching around the country, and Wycliffe's writings became treasured legacies to the oppressed people of Europe.

Forty years later, a Church council in Germany ordered that his bones be dug up, burned, and cast away from their resting place. The order was followed, and his ashes were cast into a nearby stream. From here they went to the river and eventually to the ocean, symbolizing the spread of his revolutionary teachings to other lands. "The Morning Star of the Reformation" had given the impetus that would finally bring about the lighting up of the whole horizon of Europe.

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Is Divorce The Only Answer?

Jim Atwood

I must confess a great deal of trepidation in attempting to address the issue of divorce. In recent years, no subject has received as much attention as this one, yet the result of this attention has often been confusion, controversy, and division. I recognize the sensitive, even explosive nature of this subject, but since this is the most crucial issue

confronting the Christian home today, I am compelled to offer some suggestions as alternatives to divorce.

Before making these suggestions, let me emphatically state that I believe divorce is a distinct possibility for every marriage. I have seen too many "strong Christian homes" that ended in divorce. I am no longer surprised nor shocked to hear of faithful, dedicated Christians getting a divorce. I believe that we must take seriously the Biblical injunction of 1 Cor. 10:12, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

My purpose, therefore, is prevention. Divorce is not the only answer. Let us examine some possible alternatives and propose some practical suggestions for preventing divorce.

Prevention begins with two convictions: marriage is a commitment for life, and divorce is sin. Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). Paul records that the wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39). Malachi boldly asserts that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). These scriptures clearly substantiate the principles that marriage is a lifetime commitment and that divorce is a sin. (There are, however, two exceptions for divorce: Mt. 19:9 gives fornication and 1 Cor. 7:15 mentions desertion by an unbelieving spouse.)

In an age of no-fault divorce and irreconcilable differences, it is time for us to restore integrity to the marriage vows. "As long as we both shall live" is a lifetime commitment. The engagement period is the time to decide that your marriage will endure better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness and health, till death us do part. Christians have no business marrying someone who does not firmly hold these convictions. Divorce should not be seen as merely the dissolving of a partnership, but as C.S. Lewis describes it in *Mere Christianity*, a painful amputation of a vital limb. Divorce is not the only answer.

But solving the issue of commitment does not guarantee a happy home. This leads us to a second suggestion for prevention, learn to practice the 4F's: forgive, forget, forbear, forever. Commitment does not nullify problems, disagreements, or quarrels. It is love that sustains the relationship in spite of these things. We read in 1 Cor. 13 that love is patient . . . does not act unbecomingly . . . does not take into account a wrong . . . bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Holding grudges, keeping score, harboring resentment, refusing to forget past mistakes will drain the life out of your marriage.

Maybe we could profit from a careful reading about Hosea and his wife Gomer. Here is a godly prophet of God married to a harlot. She is unfaithful to him yet he is forgiving and loving to her (Hos. 3:1-3). This is a powerful example of how forgiveness, even for fornication, can save a marriage. Divorce is not the only answer.

A third preventive measure is directed to the couple who is beginning to have some real thoughts about divorce. Paul suggests in 1 Cor. 7:5 a temporary separation. The context seems to indicate that there is some tension between the husband and wife that is affecting their sexual relations. To keep this from escalating Paul

concedes this temporary measure of prevention. From the text we can glean four practical suggestions:

1. This must be done only by agreement of both parties. It is not the result of a careless whim or capricious impulse nor the solitary decision of one spouse. It is a mutual decision.
2. A time limit is desirable. Paul's suggestion is "for a time." There should be no mistake that Paul's intent is for a *temporary* separation.
3. The purpose for this separation is to devote yourselves to prayer. It is not for sowing wild oats or for "getting it out of your system." The purpose is spiritual and designed to seek God's help in making the marriage work.
4. Come back together again. Beware of Satan's desire to tempt you. Do not delay the reunion. My suggestion is that the reunion should involve open communication in the problem areas, repentance, forgiveness, and eventually the resumption of sexual intimacy.

In many cases, the problems have gone too far for the couple to work out by themselves. This requires a fourth preventive suggestion, seek godly counseling from a professional. Solomon remarked, "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in the abundance of counselors there is victory" (Prov. 11:14). There should be two primary considerations in choosing a counselor: his expertise in the field of marriage counseling and, more importantly, his godliness and use of God's Word in counseling.

The tragedy of counseling is that most people wait too late to seek it. Their problems are so severe that counseling is useless. Pride is the chief hindrance. Many are too proud to admit their need for help so they live with the illusion that their problems are not that serious. They perpetuate this illusion until their hurts become wounds, their wounds become scars, and their scars become apathy. Apathy is the final step in destroying a marriage. Before it is too late, listen again to some advice from Solomon, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (Prov. 12:15).

I believe it is time for marriage as God ordained it to be vindicated. It is up to the people of God to show the world that Christianity works in the home. Let us carefully and prayerfully examine all the alternatives before we throw away our marriages to the divorce courts. Divorce is not the only answer.

So, You Wish To Become a Missionary!

1. Do I pick up 'the heavy end of the log,' or leave the drudgeries for others?
2. Do I take good care of other people's property, or would they rather not loan things to me?
3. Do I follow the Lord steadily, or is my 'call' constantly changing?
4. Am I the first to say, in a strained relationship, "I'm sorry," or do I wait for the other person to 'break' first?
5. Do I rejoice to see the Lord using someone else more than He seems to be using me, or do I get jealous?

6. Do I find that I can commit adverse circumstances to the Lord, or do I murmur and complain?
7. Do I quietly endure the 'gracious uncertainty' of waiting for the Lord to provide, or do I have to have plenty on hand to keep peace of mind?
8. Do I see an opportunity in every difficulty, or do I see a difficulty in every opportunity?
9. Do I like to use my own money 'to keep things going,' or do I always wait for the other person to spend his money first?
10. When I started dealing with a soul do I stick at it until they come right through to victory, or do I drop them after a while?
11. Do I willingly accomodate myself to others, or do people get on my nerves?
12. Do I take the 'invasion' of my schedule graciously, or does it tend to spoil the whole day for me?
13. Am I really concerned for the welfare of the people I meet, or do I 'pass by on the other side' and avoid responsibility?
14. Am I going out as a missionary as a life work, to glorify the Lord, or am I hoping for some experience abroad to give a boost to my work here at home?
15. Am I neat and orderly in all that I do, or does some one have to go around after me to clean up the mess?
16. In living the 'life of faith' do I expect to pay my full way, or do I expect discounts or favors from every one?
17. Do I look directly to the Lord to supply all my needs, or do I look again and again to someone the Lord may have used once to help me?
18. Am I as careful in the use of Mission funds as with my own, or do I feel that it doesn't matter?
19. When I arrive on the mission field am I able to praise the Lord for all the work my senior missionaries have accomplished, or do I feel that I arrived 'in the nick of time' to save the situation?
20. Am I daily pressing forward with my work, or simply coasting?

Reprint:

PRE-RAPTURE ALERT

N. B. Wright



Many readers of these and other pages have been informed of the Blessed Hope, the coming of the Saviour to the air to gather the saints who sleep and those who are alive to be with Him

forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Some of us, including the writer, have been very slow to learn there will be a pre-rapture alert to the people of God. In anticipation of Scriptures to be presented we can say there will be this alert to the saints who are careful, prayerful and who are taught. The world will be thrown into unspeakable confusion because they do not know the significance of events to transpire.

I. SIGNS

First of all we turn to the gospel of Luke, chapter 21, verses 25-27, which read as follows: "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Here follows a difficulty and an explanation of that difficulty. Reference was made in paragraph 1 to the rapture (catching up) of the church. This particular occasion, so far as the record reads, has to do with the private matter between Christ and His own. The dead sinners and church members who live in gross disobedience do not enter into the picture at all. Now, it is plain that the passage in Lk. 21 has to do with another occasion and with other peoples; i.e. the coming of Christ to the earth. This coming, we learn from Dan. 9:24-27 will be at least seven years after the rapture of the church. After the rapture there follows seven years of the Great Tribulation. The Blessed Master in Matt. 24:29 also places the event of His coming "immediately after the tribulation of those days."

How are we to understand the description of the events immediately to precede His coming to earth with the events of the rapture at least seven years before? Your editor has had no help from man on this point. What scholars have to say on the subject is not known by him. Yet we believe the answer to the supposed difficulty is easy and at hand.

The very next verse of the Luke passage gives us a definite lead. It reads: "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." This word is a general exhortation, yea, commandment, for all who are looking for His coming. Now drop down to vs. 34-36 and find other instructions to be watchful, careful and prayerful. So we ask ourselves: Who shall be looking for the coming of the Lord? The answer immediately comes in a two-fold manner; i.e., the living church at the time of the rapture and the few living saved at the end of the Great Tribulation. Plain enough, what is our conclusion?

We allow you the same freedom to come to an opinion as we exercise for ourselves in arriving at an answer. It is: we believe the same signs which shall occur before His coming to earth will also transpire immediately before the rapture. The general exhortation indicates this matter to us.

Back to the signs. Note, there are to be signs in heaven, in sun, and moon and stars; also upon the earth, roaring of the sea and

the billows. We thought we heard a very loud roar immediately before the earthquake in California in 1971. We heard it and said to the Mrs. : It is going to be a bad one. It was bad — immediately. Therefore, unusual appearances of the sun, moon and stars alone do *not* constitute the sign; neither those on earth alone. It takes both to qualify. When they occur in conjunction, no one will need to wonder whether “this is it” or not. Evidence will be absolutely convincing.

We take a second look at Matt. 24:29, 30. “But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Isn’t it the same story as in Luke 21?

Another reference is Lk. 17:26-37. In verse 26 He speaks of the days of the Son of man. Verse 31 reads: “In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not turn back.” Verse 34, 35: “I say unto you, In that night there shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.”

When you look back to vs. 31, you will realize something told the man on the housetop and the man in the field that the rapture would immediately come. What told them? The signs, for one thing. They would be of sufficient magnitude to alert them.

Very well, since we have established the fact that the saved person who is in a constant state of readiness will be alerted immediately before the rapture occurs, what shall he do about it? These are instructions. Do you know what they are? Let us see.

2. WHAT ARE THE LIVING DISCIPLES TO DO?

We quote it again, Luke 21:28: “But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.”

Do you know what you just read? If you are fortunate enough to be alive on this occasion, you are, when the signs begin to come to pass, to *look up—lift up your heads*. Yes, yes, he is talking about a physical stance—look heavenward. Here will be that last chance to obey your Lord—your last act of obedience. These instructions are to enable us “not to blow it.”

A lengthy exhortation follows in vs. 34-36. We give them; then close with a three-fold promise.

“But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare, for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on all the face of the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Escape all these things"? Yes, escape with your physical life intact. The fact is, some non-careful, non-prayerful and untaught disciples will be killed; then soon raptured. Many of the world will die of heart failure and many be killed. So our Lord is telling those alive in grace how to escape with their physical lives.

Promises to the obedient are three-fold:

1. Redemption. They shall be changed, without dying, to be like the Lord, 1 John 3:2.
 2. Be unashamed. "To stand before the Son of man." That is, not be ashamed of having failed the last test, looked up.
 3. Kingdom appointments. The great awarding day is given in Rev. 19:6-8. Kingdom appointments in Rev. 2:26; 3:21.
- Say, are you a careful, prayerful and taught believer?

In part I of our study we learned certain signs in heaven and on earth (both, be it noted) will alert the careful, prayerful Christian who is taught that the rapture of the church will be immediate.

At this time we want to present another factor of the subject; even that of the INNER WITNESS to the watchful that His coming to the air to receive them will be immediate.

We now present the Scripture and its interpretation with the understanding if you have a different comprehension of its significance, well and good. Hold on to it until you see differently.

You are pointed to 2 Peter 1:19. We take the liberty to quote verses 19 and 20. "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation." That is, the prophets were not giving their personal view of things, but, as the next verse says, they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Our attention is focused on the expression "until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." The appearance of the day-star guarantees the day is just at hand. The day here must refer to the coming of Christ. What is the significance of the clause "the day-star arise in your hearts"?

Our best understanding of the latter expression is this: Immediately before the coming of Christ, His own shall have an inner witness that His coming is immediate. You are at liberty to make up your own mind—you have the same liberty we enjoy. Of course, were you to disagree I could ask you: What *does* it mean?

In the prophecy of Zacharias, Lk. 1:78, the first coming of Messiah was spoken of as "the dayspring."

Let us see if the principle of our study, God gives witness beforehand to His own, is found in the Scriptures. Reference will be made to both covenants.

First of all, to Enoch. See Genesis 5:21-24. We quote the reference to him as found in Heb. 11:5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God."

Note the similarities: Enoch walked with God; God bore witness that he should not die but be translated. So, to the watchful believer before Christ comes, the Lord will give him a witness that his translation (without death) is immediate. See 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

A very dramatic illustration of this principle is found in the case of Elijah, 2 Kings 2. Verse 1 reads: "And it came to pass, when Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha to Gilgal." Then in verse 3 we learn the students of the theological school in Bethel came out to meet Elisha with these words: "Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head today?" His answer: "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." These students also knew of the impending event. And verse 5 shows the same situation with the students at Jericho. Verse 11 shows Elijah was carried into heaven by an angel or angels (Ps. 18:10; Lk. 16:22) with the appearance of a chariot of fire and horses of fire.

We now turn to the New Testament. For years the significance of the words in Matthew 25:6 escaped us. We read them now: "But at midnight there is a cry: Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him." Something alerted these spiritual watchers, the cry went forth: He is Coming.

Were His coming to be today, would you have this alert in your heart and mind?

Reference was made in Part I to Luke 17 and 21. We review them; first Luke 17:31: "In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not turn back." Something alerted these believers on the housetop and in the field that His coming, their being translated without seeing death, was to be immediate. When we put the signs in heaven and on earth together with the inner witness of the immediacy of the rapture, these will be no cause for the prayerful, careful and taught disciple to be caught unaware; rather, to be in a position to obey the Master.

Perhaps we would not stray too far from our theme to ask: What will happen to the unwatchful, untaught disciple? And to some sinners in the world? Verse 37 of Luke 17 answers the question in these words: "And they answering say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them: Where the body is, thither shall the vultures (margin) also be gathered together."

Some believers who are disobedient (vs. 31 and 21:28, 34-36) will be killed, then resurrected immediately. Some sinners of the world will be killed and their flesh eaten by the vultures. So what is difficult with verse 27?

The Lord's command to believers alive at the rapture is found also in Luke 21:28; namely, "But when these things (signs in heaven and on earth) begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; because your redemption (translation without death) draweth nigh."

Better fix in your minds exactly what the command—and your last opportunity to be obedient if you are alive at the time—is: LOOK UP and LIFT UP YOUR HEADS. Yes, He is talking about a physical stance.

We think there shall be a great black-out (Matt. 24:26); all transportation may cease and communication systems mal-function.

The exhortations to watchfulness and prayerfulness and readiness is found in Luke 21:24-36. "That ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

The Blessed Lord is going all out to give clear instructions to His friends of the last days in order to save their physical lives intact—until He translates them.

Long time readers of the *Exhorter* may recall our piece on this subject with the title: Does Your Wife Know What To Do?

So, when the signs come and the inner witness given, you won't have time to call your wife to tell her what to do. Your responsibility is to instruct your family BEFOREHAND. And, sinner friend, you won't have time to grab a ten dollar bill, rush to your rabbi, priest or preacher and say: Pray for me. You can be saved today, if you choose; and by His grace (1 Pet. 1:13) be ready to meet Him unashamed (1 John 2:28) in great joy (Jude 24).

Say, will you hear the trumpet sound?

HOW TO LIVE ON \$100 THIS YEAR

Get rid of all your furniture except one chair and one table.

Throw out all TV sets, lamps, radios.

Dispose of all your clothing but your oldest dress or suit. One pair of shoes may be kept for the head of the family.

Shut off the water, gas, electricity.

Remove all appliances from the kitchen. Keep in the pantry only a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt, a few moldy potatoes, some dried beans and a handful of onions.

Take away the house and move the family to the tool shed.

Your neighborhood will be a shanty town.

Move the nearest medical help ten miles away. It will be tended by a midwife.

Get rid of the car.

Forget newspaper, magazines, books. You won't miss them because you must also give up literacy.

Have \$5.00 for emergency funds. You'll have no bankbooks, pension plans, insurance policies.

Cultivate three acres as a tenant farmer. Provided there is no drought, you can expect from \$100 to \$300 a year in cash crops, paying one-third to the landlord and at least one tenth to the moneylender.

Lop off 25 to 30 years in life expectancy.

Nearly half the people in the world actually live on \$100 a year. And they do it much as described here!

In our economy it is not really possible to live on \$100 a year.

But you CAN live on \$100 less this year . . . or \$200 or more . . . and give the extra to your church for Christ's work throughout the world.

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GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

The Christian And Personal Evangelism

The emphasis of New Testament teaching is on the development of individual character, causing it to reflect the likeness of Christ. But the image of Christ in the individual is imperfect if there is no concern for the lost; this was always on the heart of the Savior. Jesus was transfigured before certain of His disciples (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2). Paul used the same word when he wrote of Christians being transformed in character and glory after His image (Romans 12:2; II Corinthians 3:18). Can one be thus transformed and not share, at least in measure, to the Lord's feeling that leads to a sincere effort to reach others that they, too, be transformed in the same likeness.

—Homer Hailey, in *Vanguard*

On Settling an Estate

A wise old Scot, who was a judge, was once asked to settle a dispute between two brothers over inheritance of a large estate. The judge's decision was worthy of Solomon: "Let one brother divide the estate, and let the other brother have first choice."

—Selected

Friend or Foe

We are passing through a world that crucified our Lord and Master, and He declares that we are not of it. Hence it follows that insofar as we have any fellowship with the world, we are false to Christ. What should we think of a wife who could sit and laugh and joke with a set of men who murdered her husband? And yet this is precisely what Christians do when they mix themselves up with this present world, and make themselves part and parcel of it.

—C. H. M.

Our Father In Heaven

We have often walked in the fields in the early morning, and have noticed how the rising sun has turned each dewdrop into a glittering gem; one ray of its own bright light making a little sun of each of the million drops that hang from the pendant leaflets and sparkle everywhere. But it is helpful to remember that the glorious orb itself contains infinitely more light than all the dewdrops ever did or ever will reflect. And so of our Heavenly Father; Himself the great Source of all that is noble and true, of all that has ever been loving and trustworthy—each beautiful trait of each beautiful character is but the dim

reflection of some ray of His own great perfection. And the sum total of all human goodness, and tenderness, and love is but the dewdrops to the sun. How blessed then to confide in the infinite and changeless love of such a Father.

—J. Hudson Taylor

Until next time, Maranatha!

ON THE JOB

Sylvia sat opposite me, apologising that she had not been to church. She asked if I minded if she smoked. From the look on her face she had been drinking, too. She was an unstable person with a broken marriage behind her. Several years ago she had become a Christian. She worked in a factory and there faced temptations and pressures which the majority of Christians know nothing about.

She spoke of some of the things that went on at work—the private showing of blue films during the lunch break, the cheap magazines passed round full of lurid pictures, the non-stop talk about sex, the dirty jokes, the swearing. She fought a constant battle against being drawn into these things. Workmates wanted to know why she was so stand-offish. “Because I’m a Christian, I’ve given up that sort of stuff.” As a result came queer looks, tittering, jibes and mockery, the attempt to break her and make her throw over all that holy nonsense. Sometimes she had done just that, for she had found the going too hard. But Christ always brought her back.

At Work

There was a time when Christians were thrown to the lions and faced other kinds of persecution because of their faith. Today we look on them with admiration, and wonder how we would fare, were the cost as great. The cost of being a Christian is great for the person who dares to be a true follower of Christ at work.

“It’s soft to be honest there.” “You’re a fool if you don’t fight back when someone tries to pull a fast one.” “You’re not a man if you don’t join in with the rest and get drunk at Christmas.” “Christian standards and behaviour just don’t work in this sort of situation.”

Relevant

And it is in these situations that Christians are desperately needed to show that Christianity is relevant, having first of all proved it to be so in their own lives. What they hear and learn on Sunday must be possible with God’s help to put into practice on Monday. The good news is for modern man.

Among the workers in our industrial and city areas Christians are to be found, rubbing shoulders with those whom the majority of us in the Church are not reaching. Therefore we need to be right behind them in our prayers and our support, just as we would be behind a missionary on the field. For the industries of Britain are a tremendous mission field. And any Christian who finds himself working in a factory, a warehouse, in the docks or on the dustcarts is a front line man. But don’t let’s forget that he’s human and needs help when he fails and encouragement to go on.—from *News Extra*

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

Washing One Another's Feet

John 13:1-17

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

We have said previously, I believe, that John's Gospel is regarded by many as the paragon of the gospels, marked particularly by spirituality. Clement of Alexandria has often been quoted as saying that John was moved by the entreaty of his intimate friends and inspired by the Spirit to compose a "spiritual gospel." One wonders if some of this sentiment is to be traced to the nature of the Upper Room Discourse, that section of the gospel to which we come in our studies at this point.

Many years ago, on September 20, 1950, I heard Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, say in a chapel message to new students and their older fellow-students, "The Upper Room Discourse contains the purest Christian teaching that we have anywhere in the New Testament." As with some other of Dr. Chafer's statements, it may have been something of an exaggeration—Dr. Chafer was occasionally guilty of using the "shock technique" in his teaching methodology—but the remark properly underscored the purity and significance of the teaching in this discourse.

It will be helpful to remind ourselves of the place of the discourse in the unfolding progress of thought in the Gospel of John. The revelation that John wished to set out concerning the Son is really complete with the description of the seventh sign, the restoration of Lazarus and its effects (cf. chapters 1-11). The reaction of the people and the little flock of believers to the ministry is described plainly in chapter twelve (cf. 12:37-50). It remains now to prepare the apostles for the time when He would no longer be physically present with them, and that is the purpose of the teaching in the upper room (chapters 13-16) and the following highpriestly prayer (chapter 17).

The ascent of Mount Everest required and requires months of preparation. Roger Bannister, the British physician who broke the barrier of the four minute mile run, actually prepared for his accomplishment for years. It is not surprising, then, that our Lord should spend some time with His apostles preparing them for the future.

What He says to them essentially is very startling. It is this: They shall have Him again with them, with everyone of them individually and permanently, through the ministry of the coming Spirit, given to them by the Father and by Him. Thus, while He shall leave them physically, He shall be with each of them intimately and eternally by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. What a magnificent comforting fact for despairing men!

So, we approach this section of John's Gospel with eager, open hearts, looking for what Dr. Chafer called "the purest Christian teach-

ing” and asking for the Spirit’s illumination as we study it. Dr. Chafer also called it on the same occasion, “the seed plot of all grace teaching,” containing “in germ form every essential of doctrine.” We shall bear that in mind, too.

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

The introduction to the discourse (John 13:1). There are three divisions in the discourse, considering the highpriestly prayer to be a part of the discourse. They are:

- (1) First, the preparation for the instruction (cf. 13:1-30).
- (2) Second, the discourses (cf. 13:31 - 16:33).
- (3) Third, the prayer (cf. 17:1-26).

The divisions in the material are clearly marked at 13:31 with its, “Therefore, when he was gone out,” and 17:1, with its, “these words spake Jesus.” A change of location in the giving of the discourse is marked by the words, “Arise, let us go hence,” in 14:31.

Verse one of chapter thirteen is introductory to the discourse, “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” Since His love is not developed completely in the opening chapter, or section, it would seem, then, that the words are spoken with the entire discourse in mind. In addition, the second verse appears to contain a second and more particular beginning.

The expression, “his hour was come,” refers to the time when He must suffer on the cross, and it has been anticipated several times in the gospel (cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23). Till this hour His enemies are powerless (cf. 7:30; 8:20), but when it comes He recognizes it and submits to it.

The verb, “should depart,” is probably significant. It means to pass over from one place to another. It is found in 5:24 (cf. 7:3) and 1 John 3:14 of the believer’s instant passage from death to spiritual life. It is, therefore, well-suited to express the passage from life here to life there. We simply transfer our location of life, or “go to the Father,” as He. And also, as Barrett points out, the work is equally applicable to the thought of death as a departure, and to ascension to heaven. The tense of the verb looks at the departure as an event, and is harmonious with the idea of an instantaneous, or momentary, passage from the cross to the Father for Him, or with the momentary passage through death, or His coming again, for us. There is for us no lay-over in purgatory!

The phrase, “out of the world,” together with the phrase, “in the world,” give the clue to the viewpoint from which these chapters are written. As Pink says, “What we have here *anticipates* that which was in view in Christ’s *return* to the Father. He graciously affords us a symbolic representation of His *present* service for us in Heaven.”

The participle, “having loved,” in its tense, a complexive aorist, gathers up into one word the many expressions and evidences of the Son’s love during His incarnation (cf. 15:19).

The words, “His own,” in view of their use in 1:11 regarding the nation Israel, are instructive. In spite of the refusal of the nation to

turn to Him, the Father did give Him a people, a little flock which became His own. In a sense, the words strike the keynote of the discourse. It is designed for "His own," those who are His, *not by race, but by redemption.*

The words, "His own," always remind me of the infinite price necessary for the consummation of this relationship. One remembers Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 6:19 that "ye are not your own," and rejoices in the fact that we are *His own*, not our own, His own by redemption.

The last clause of verse one is not easy to understand, and the difficulty lies in the "unto the end." The Greek phrase may mean *completely*, or *utterly*, an adverbial sense (cf. 1 Thess. 2:16). One grammar suggests the sense of *fully* and, as a paraphrase of the clause, the rendering, "he gave them the perfect love token," the words, then, would lead right into the washing of the disciples' feet, that being the beginning of the evidence for His love.

On the other hand, the phrase may also mean "unto the end," as the Authorized Version has it (cf. NASB, "to the end"; NIV, "showed them the full extent of His love"). The temporal sense is retained by this translation (cf. Luke 18:5). The phrase would then anticipate the supreme expression of His love in the gift of Himself on the cross, that which is the ground of all the blessings set out in the discourse as soon to be theirs. The reference to "his hour," which refers to the cross, causes me to lean to this view of the words. Jesus' love knows no limits, encompassing the supreme self-giving sacrifice of the atoning blood.

*His love no end or measure knows
No change can turn its course;
Eternally the same it flows
From one eternal source.*

The introduction to the foot-washing incident (John 13:2-3). The introduction to the section of the gospel is followed with something of an introduction to the specific incident that John now describes, the washing of the disciples' feet.

The background of the supper is found in Luke 22:24-27. Apparently in their squabbling over who should be the greatest they had forgotten to take turns in the washing of one another's feet before supper. With ruffled tempers they had trooped into the upper room like a gang of sulking schoolboys.

The AV's "And supper being ended" reflects a variant reading in the aorist tense, but most recent translations prefer the variant in the present tense and render similarly to the New International Version's, "The evening meal was being served (NASB, "And during supper"). It is possible, however, to take the aorist to be that which John wrote and translate, *and supper having been served*, which would preserve the past tense force and also the supper's continuation.

The AV's rendering, "the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him," is probably not correct. The Greek construction and text are more plainly rendered, *the devil having already put it into his heart* (the devil's) *that Judas, the son of*

Simon Iscariot, should betray him. The devil, in other words, had already made up his mind to use Judas as his tool. The tense of the verb "put" suggests that the evil desire to betray the Lord was sown in the heart of Judas by Satan sometime previously, and that it has now taken root (cf. v. 27; Luke 22:3). Ryle comments, "It was the last and final heading up of his apostasy."

THE SYMBOLIC ACTION

The Lord's action (John 13:4-5). What follows is an acted parable, like those of the Old Testament prophets, in which our Lord's past and present ministry are pictured. The laying aside suggests His death (cf. 10:15), due to the terminology use, and the washing represents His present ministry to His own. This is clear from the words in verse three, containing the backdrop of His incarnation and exaltation. Further, the word "laying aside" is the rendering of one of His favorite words for His death (cf. 10:11, 15, 17-18; 13:37-38). In true prophetic style He asks for an interpretation of the action in verse twelve. The remainder of the discourse enlarges on the meaning of the action.

The action of our Lord is described in verses four and five, and it is simple enough. The action represents the prophecy of verse three, pointing to the work of salvation and purification. We are reminded of the great passage on the personal union of the two natures in Christ, found in Philippians 2:5-11. In both of them there is the background of a slave, and in both of them there is a lyric note. Strachan comments, "All the great New Testament utterances about the person and work of Christ are not merely dogmas. They began as doxologies.

The seven-fold humiliation of our Lord in Philippians two is also paralleled by the seven distinct statements here about His laying aside of His garments and His washing of their feet.

The Lord's conversation with Peter (John 13:6-11). The Lord begins with Peter, who was probably sitting just across from him at the foot of the table (perhaps taking the lowest place, since the Lord had just said that the greater was the one who served!). When the Lord came to him, Peter's response was, "Lord, are *You* trying to wash *MY* feet?" My rendering is an attempt to give the verb its conative sense and the pronouns their emphatic sense.

We shall learn that by Peter's blunders we shall see more clearly the truth in the action of our Lord.

Our Lord's reply in verse seven is, and I am again putting the emphasis where it is in the original text, "What *I* am doing, you do not know at this moment, but you shall know after these things (probably the things that follow this event, that is, His death, resurrection, and particularly the coming of the Spirit). Cf. 7:39; 14:26; 16:13; 12:26.

Peter, however, assumes that he knows all there is to be known about the matter and replies, "Thou shalt never wash *my* feet." He corrects and improves upon the intentions of the Lord Himself, in effect affirming that He does not need the ministry of cleansing love.

Our Lord's answer is, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." The word "part" is important. It refers in this instance, on the analogy of its occurrence in Luke 10:24 and 2 Corinthians 6:15, to

fellowship, or communion. The use of the phrase, "with me," instead of "in me" confirms this. He does not speak, then, of union, but of communion.

It is clear, then, that Peter is taking the position of a perfectionist, contending that He does not need the purifying ministry of the Lord now. But he is not through. He has other heretical tendencies!

In the ninth verse, realizing that he must have erred somewhere, since our Lord has replied to him so sharply, Peter responds with, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." John's use of "Simon" with the name Peter accentuates his weakness. One must admit that Peter's loyalty and generosity speak here, but it is not faith, but unbelief infected by self-will. Peter has put himself in the position of one who says that the once-for-all bathing (cf. v. 10), already received, is not enough. He wants another bath. In effect, he has taken the position of an Arminian! Impulsive, impetuous Mr. Johnson (his name was Simon bar Jona, or Sim, son of John, or Johnson. You see, I follow in apostolic succession!) has zeal, but lacks knowledge.

One is reminded of the testimony of a man in the Salvation Army, known for its Arminian leanings, who said in a meeting, "Thank God, I've been saved! I've been saved seven times."

Jesus' reply to Peter in verse ten is full of significant theological meaning. He said to him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet; his whole body is clean." It is clear from this reading I refer my reader to the commentaries regarding the variant readings here. I prefer the longer reading, found in the AV, the NASB, and the NIV. The last has this, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean." It is clear from this reading that our Lord is making a distinction between washing and bathing, the Greek using two words for the cleansing action, one meaning to wash the whole body, while the other means to wash parts of the body generally (cf. Heb. 10:22; Acts 9:37; 16:33; Mark 7:3; Matt. 6:17; John 9:7).

The bathing to which Jesus refers is evidently the washing of divine regeneration, which occurs only once in our lives, when we believe in Jesus Christ. The washing of the feet is the present ministry of the Lord, which He exercises in heaven in behalf of the present continuing sanctification of the saints.

One thinks of the tabernacle of the nation Israel and the brazen altar, on which the animals were sacrificed, picturing salvation, and the brazen laver, at which the priests washed their hands and feet continually as they went in and out of the holy place (cf. Exod. 30:17-21). In oriental societies the words would suggest their customs of bathing before visiting friends, but of washing their feet upon arrival at the house of the friends for dinner. The one who has been washed by regeneration still needs constant cleansing from defilement in order to remain in communion with a holy God. A muddy child climbing into mother's lap learns that, although he may be a member of the family union, cleansing must come before the enjoyment of communion!

In the eleventh verse the apostle adds a word of explanation of our Lord's words in verse ten, "and ye are clean, but not all." He

points out that our Lord was referring to Judas, who was not among the clean, because he was not among the ones in union with Christ.

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The request (John 13:12). The application follows, for as Temple says, "The Lord does not leave His acted parable without interpretation." "Know ye what I have done to you?" he asked. Sitting down, He had assumed the posture of a teacher. Peter's lecture was something of a sidelight. The principal lesson, the lesson of responsive love, will be given. In a moment He will express it most plainly and directly, when He gives the new commandment (cf. 13:34-35).

The reasoning (John 13:13-16). The argument is from the lesser to the greater, or "all the more." The reasoning is simple. If He, their teacher and Lord, has washed their feet, then they, who are simply pupils of the Sovereign Master, ought to do the lesser thing of washing one another's feet.

Some have supposed that our Lord was introducing another ordinance, the ordinance of foot-washing, practiced by some orthodox (and unorthodox) believers. In fact, the Pope has traditionally once a year around Easter washed the feet publicly of certain poor persons picked for the occasion! Bengel remarked concerning this custom, "The Pope would shew a more serious humility by washing the feet of one king, than those of twelve poor men." It seems plain, however, that the example was not intended to become an ordinance. The bathing referred to in verse ten is not a physical one, and it would be strange for the washing, to which the bathing is related, to be a physical bathing.

The practice of our Lord on this occasion was intended to illustrate the new commandment, soon to be given. The atoning activity of the Lord in our regeneration was intended to be the motivation and justification of the non-atoning activity of ministering to our fellow-believers in love (cf. 1 John 3:16; 4:11).

This matter of loving service as an obligation rising out of our reception of His love is tellingly discussed by Archbishop Temple. "This is an argument," he says, "that appears elsewhere in the Johannine writings. 'If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another' (1 John 6:11). What gives cogency to the argument is *the revealed* character of God. It is not cogent argument to say, 'If A love B, B ought to love C,' unless A loves B and C equally. But the test of my love to God is the question whether I love my neighbour; for I know that God loves him as He loves me, and love of the loving God must shew itself in love of all whom God loves. 'If a man say 'I love God' and hateth his brother, he is a liar' (1 John 4:20)." The reference to the love of God for believers is obvious.

The reward (John 1:17). The point our Lord makes here is very clear. Happiness comes with the knowledge of the truth of God *and* appropriate responsive action.

CONCLUSION

The account of the event was preceded by a dispute over greatness, and our Lord's actions certainly make the point that true greatness is

seen in lowly humble service (cf. Luke 22:26-27). A consecration to the Lord without a similar consecration to the Lord's own is in the final analysis an illusion.

Did Peter learn the lesson? His later comments leave the impression that he did. In his first letter he wrote, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed in humility: for God resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5, ASV). The verb *engkomboō*, rendered here by "be clothed with" was used with two meanings. The root of the verb meant a *knot*. Thus, the word came to be applied to a garment fastened to an under garment with a knot or a bow. Thus, the *engkombōn* was an apron which the slave tied on over his undergarment. It is, then, suggestive of the slave's position. Well, where did Peter come upon this idea? The easiest solution is to find the source in John thirteen and in this incident of the foot-washing. It is interesting that the Greek word came to be associated also with royal garments, because they were attached in a similar manner. Beare writes, "Hesychius, however, gives *stolisasthai* as a synonym; this would suggest rather the donning of a beautiful apparel—robe yourselves in humility."

Perhaps Morgan is on to something when he writes, "It seems to me that possibly Peter saw the knotted garment of slavery on Jesus, and before he was through, he saw that it was the knotted garment of royalty." May we follow this marvelous example of lowliness, love and humility!

MR. EVERYMAN HAS A WEAK SPOT

Marc Champagne

We live in a day of revision, restructuring and innovation. As a result, the life-styles of modern man—political, economic and religious—are undergoing profound changes. Man's curiosity, his quest for sensational news and especially the advances of science have all tended to make the individual impervious to the Word of God.

Popular culture may sometimes quote the Bible, just as it quotes Victor Hugo or William Shakespeare, but it does not view it as authoritative. In fact, this may even be said of the leaders of some of the Protestant denominations. Most of the people whom I have met during the last five years have proved during the first five minutes of conversation that Mr. Everyman's number one problem is still "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1)

Thrusting the sword into water

Sometimes we see commendable efforts to witness to the Gospel where the truth seems to miss its mark. In many cases, experience later shows that the reason for the failure was that the "interested people" had little, if any, faith in the Bible. I would call this "thrusting the sword into water." In dependence on the Holy Spirit, we need to evaluate the effectiveness of our witness.

Often it is the approach, rather than message, that is rejected. We must first discover the person's level of receptivity and then speak to him in terms that he can understand. The secret of success is in communicating at the right level. It has been my experience throughout the Province that people, generally speaking, are no longer hostile, whatever may be their position in society. I, in common with many other workers, am literally swamped with invitations to visit people in their homes, to preach at meetings or to participate in special efforts. Though a lot of work is being done in Quebec, it is very little compared to what could be done. We need to wrestle in prayer for Quebec and, by God's strength, we shall win.

Without tact — no contact

More than ever, we need to rely on the Lord's wisdom in dealing with our contacts. There has been a great change in the way the people of Quebec think. The popular religion no longer has the hold on them that it once had and many now seem to think that "God" is a matter for the "Commission on Historical Monuments." However the confusion of our world provides many opportunities to proclaim the Gospel. The person who does not know the Bible has a weak spot. Mr. Everyman cannot easily remain uninterested in what God has said about our age.

In Quebec, as elsewhere in the world, the surge of interest in the occult and in astrology witnesses to man's confusion as he seeks for peace of heart. More than ever he is afraid; he dreads what tomorrow may bring.

Many times I have seen cold, unbelieving hearts burst into flames as they have been shown the many Bible prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Some, who have since been saved, came in this way to recognize that God has spoken. Several "Gospel parties", grouping from 15 to 20 people, have been held, and are still held, in our area to discuss "The Bible face to face with the news". The Lord grants us such liberty that often these parties go on for four or five hours without the interest waning. During an introductory Bible study they first become concerned, then fascinated; they ask questions and we engage in dialogue in a truly relaxed atmosphere. Thus the light often breaks through, consciences are awakened and the Lord works with power. We seem to be mere spectators watching the Lord Himself at work.

As a result of such parties, some 45 people have been added to our local assembly in the past eight months. They have been encouraged to witness to others. New faces appear at our parties. Let us pray that the Lord will consolidate His work.

Available and usable

Day by day the need of better preparation is impressed on those serving God in Quebec. Our need is not merely for men and women, but for servants who have been so adapted that they can present the Gospel at the level, and according to the needs, of the average man. Although the human heart is everywhere the same, a ready-made gospel will not suffice. The message of God is custom-made for each

individual. The servant, therefore, must be more than just available; he must be called and fashioned by God so that he can be used to meet the needs of the hour.

In Quebec it is now possible to open the Bible anywhere, in public or in private, with considerable liberty. God alone knows how long this will continue. Last fall I was invited to have a "Bible booth" at a book fair held in our area. Many thousands of people passed our booth during the few days that this important cultural event was on. Several times our booth became an unexpected centre of attraction. Bible in hand, we had full liberty to demonstrate to the surprised crowd the clarity and truth of the Word of God. I have had similar experiences at "Bible week-ends" in colleges, to which I have been invited.

In all these opportunities, we have found that it takes more than words to establish communication. There is real art in engaging the interest of people. The apostle Paul gives us a good example of this in Acts chapter 17. No human methods are particularly appropriate, feelings and interests of modern man. We can have the same mind that was in Jesus Christ and our every thought can be brought into obedience to Him. We can thus become instruments that He can use. This is our aim as we lean on His promise to be with us always, right to the end of the world (Matt. 28:20).

NEWS AND NOTES

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—Louise D. Palmer

The Lord blessed our Men's retreat greatly. 24 men came together on May 3-5 at Ingallwood Park for discussions on church leadership. The messages

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C. D. Weatherford, Cleo Russell, Stan Broussard, John Burgess, Carl Kitzmiller, Johnny Roberts, Antoine Valentero, A. J. Istre, Robert Smith. Glenn Baber and Bob Morrow were Directors.

The Lord is blessing here. A recent meeting resulted in 5 baptisms and 2 rededications.

Our regards to all,
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