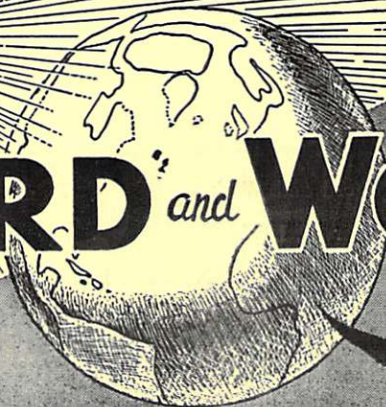


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

OCTOBER, 1984

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

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Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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God's Family

W. R. H.

“Ruleth Well His Own House”

The adult sunday school class was just about equally divided between men and women, about a dozen of each. The lesson began with Ephesians 5:22, “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” All were invited to participate, and most of them did. But it was a real seeking to discern the way of the Lord in the ongoing marriage relationship. As usual, I could wish that certain men had been there who were not; but had they been there, their prejudice in favor of themselves would have completely blinded them to the truth. I think of young men who are so immature that they left their lovely young wives and gone back to Mama. Or others, who don't stay home long enough to know what is happening, let alone taking any leadership.

Looking into the Greek, the verb translated “be in subjection” is indeed an imperative (command), second person plural (you-all), middle voice (of which our English has no like form) that means “I do it for myself.” This helps open our minds to what our own American Standard version has said, “be in subjection.” The wife is to subordinate *herself*. There is no verb that says the husband is to lord it over her as he subjugates her.

When king David became king, the people came unto him at Hebron and turned the kingdom of Saul over to him, submitting themselves to his leadership. He never forced himself upon the people nor into the throne. The citizens loved and willingly served him for what he was. A more striking example of this is Christ Jesus, Himself. He made no effort to organize a rebellion or a ground-swell of loyalty so that He might ascend to the leadership of Israel, even though “to this end had He been born,” to be King of Israel. Nor in the age of the church does He “lord it over” mankind and force them to any unwilling submission. We read that Christ Jesus “loved the church, and gave Himself up for it.” And to this day, membership in the body of Christ is by humble and voluntary acceptance of Jesus as both Savior and Lord.

But some husbands think they *must* set themselves in authority over their wives as well as over the whole house. They feel a need to throw their weight around every now and then to keep everybody in line. Such men feel that this proves them the head of the house. Isn't that what is necessary (as, for an Elder) to rule his own house well? Not at all! As the elder is cautioned “not to lord it over the

flock," but to follow the pattern of the Chief Shepherd, so husbands are to "love their wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it." It may be human nature for most men to domineer their wives, but it certainly isn't Christ-like. And we could say that many men of the world, who are outside of the family of God, yet have more compassion, kindness, and good judgment than some who belong to Jesus. What a drawback to their testimony among those who know them well. And what a sick sort of happiness they thus bring to their relationship.

Let's shout it from the housetop! One who rules well, is one who knows how to delegate to others. Marriage is a partnership. Can't we delegate to a partner? Business men who succeed, do so as they surround themselves with subordinates who can do specific jobs. One man is entrusted with purchasing, and has a free hand. Of course he is accountable, but first he is deemed to be worthy. Do men not deem the wife of their bosom as worthy? Again, a business man will have a chief of personnel, who hires and fires as necessary. He must be able to evaluate, to motivate, and to discipline. Can't a wife evaluate, motivate, and discipline? They are better informed of what the kids do and need, than the fathers.

Thirdly, an executive will group together with him the heads of his various departments, to formulate plans. Is a husband so wise that he has no need for counsel? Are his occasional ideas the last word on the subject? Even the Syrian commander-in-chief, Naaman the leper, was humble enough to listen to his servant and follow the reasonable advice that was given him.

No, it isn't the person who handles the money who is necessarily the head of the house, any more than the treasurer is the chairman of the board. Ruling well the house, would include such things as: (1) Planning that time (the most valuable possession) be spent wisely. That the wife and mother fill her proper role with the children. (2) That the atmosphere of the home be Christian and loving, and that the day to day living is a joy to everyone. (3) That education be encouraged, scrutinized, and appreciated. (4) That God's things come first and always have their proper place. This includes worship, Bible knowledge, fellowship with other saints, and a life of service to God and others. (5) That as head of the wife, the husband imitate Christ, so that the family can imitate him. (6) That proper values be instilled, not just by word but by action, so that honesty, charity, industry, faith, and happiness be "sold," as undisputed priorities to each member of the house.

When all husbands rule their houses after the manner that the Lord Jesus rules His church, then wives will gladly submit themselves, as unto the Lord—unless there be an unequal yoke with unbelievers.



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

“Alive Apart From Law”

And I was alive apart from (the) law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (Romans 7:9, NKJ with the parenthesis added by the author to indicate that the word “the” is not in the original).

I was about to begin my series of lessons from the glorious “Holy Spirit chapter” of Romans, chapter 8, when it occurred to me that since there are many fine authorities who look at verse nine quoted above differently from what I gave you and consequently make something altogether different out of the chapter. Since I think it is very important to grasp the real meaning for ourselves on the Word, regardless of how good and respected the man is who thinks differently.

To illustrate what I mean I would like to quote a part of a paragraph from a book by the man that I feel is the outstanding New Testament expositor of the 20th century—the late Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones. The quotation is found on page 133 of the ninth printing of *The Law: Its Functions and Limits*, an exposition of Romans 7:1 - 8:4 (Zondervan 1981), one of a series of six books on Romans 3:21 - 8:39. I heartily recommend the series to any serious student of this part of Romans. You will need to be patient and to think for yourself, but as always Lloyd-Jones is very thought provoking and helpful.

However, I do find his understanding of Romans 7 clouded by what seems to me to be a very basic mistake. I tremble at contradicting such a great Christian expositor of the word, but in all honesty I must. The portion I want you to notice is this: “Every Jew was born under the Law of Moses, and yet, here, he seems to say that at one time he was alive ‘without the law’ (elsewhere he points out that this expression from the King James actually means ‘apart from the law’) and lived apart from the Law. Clearly, therefore, he must be using his terms in a relative manner. Indeed we shall find that he does so with all the terms that appear in this statement. What he is saying is, that as far as his experience was concerned, he was living without the Law, apart from the Law. In other words the Law was not really doing its work in him; he was virtually in a position as if there was no Law. There never was such a position, of course, but as far as his knowledge and his experience of the Law went, that was the position.”

It seems to me that our respected scholar has made this mistake because of a basic mistaken conception and by ignoring something that Paul said himself. First, his basic misconception is that Romans 7 is

speaking of non-Christian experience. If that were true I would agree with him on what he says, but I do not feel it is true. It is the basic misconception made by every expositor that I have found to be misinterpreting the chapter. And the second mistake, which, I will discuss in a moment, shows that it is not true. Many things in verses 7-23 are similar to the striving done by sinners who decide they can be saved on their own efforts and work manfully to do it; but many of them can be true only of Christians, as I pointed out in my brief discussion of the chapter.

The second basic mistake is ignoring what Paul said in Acts 23:1 when brought before the Sanhedrin after the riot in chapters 21 and 22. "And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1, ASV). Let no one imagine that the apostle Paul, in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt and who was used by that Spirit to do many wonderful things in spreading the gospel throughout the Roman world of that day, could say that he had lived in good conscience before God as a Jew when he was ignoring the Law and acting as if it did not exist. Paul was incapable at that time of such a deception, I hope you understand. But, on the other hand, if Paul meant, as I feel and have said, that when he became a Christian he was "alive apart from law" as he recognized that salvation is entirely of the Lord and did not depend on his Law keeping. But then that Spirit that made him realize this, also made him realize what the inner spiritual meaning of the commandments of the Law meant. Then, instead of allowing the Spirit to "fulfill the righteous requirement of the Law" (Romans 8:4, NKJV) in him, he attempted to live up to the new higher standard himself. He was miserable until he realized that not only did he have a Savior to make him a child of God, he also had a Spirit to guide his life and continue to live "in all good conscience" before God and men. He cried out for a deliverer (7:24) and thanked God for Him (7:25). I hope you and I will always do this. Then we can avoid this miserable conflict, look again at Romans 6:23 ("But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord") and go on to 8:1, which we hope to set forth next month: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

For many years Bro. Stanford Chambers wrote "Questions Asked of Us," first in the *Truth Advance*, and later this was made a department in the *Word and Work*. Recently the present writer was looking

over some old clippings of pages from *Truth Advance* and noticed several questions on the church. We have thought it good to be reminded of some of the answers Bro. Chambers gave, so this month we offer several question and answers picked at random from these old clippings.

"Can you help me show an honest seeker what church to join?"

First of all, help him to get away from the idea of joining something. Help him to the point of being willing for the Lord to add him to His church. He does need to join Christ (Rom. 7:4). Show him that the Lord adds those whom He saves, adds them to His church (Acts 2:47). That gets the name in the Book of Life (Heb. 12:23), which will prove a very important matter (Rev. 20:12-15). With that effected, the question will naturally arise, With whom shall I assemble? That question in the early days of Christianity would not have been in order, as the present confusion was not then known. Now that cultism, modernism, and even atheism are to be found in assemblies calling themselves churches, the question is of importance. "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" The very best advice we would know to give would be, Seek out an assembly of believers in Christ as the Son (not just "a" son) of God who continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Find an assembly that affords the opportunity of steadfastly remembering the Lord in His death for us, even as He appointed: "Do this in remembrance of me." Some assemblies fall short of this; some do too little; others do too much.

"Is Christ the Head of all denominations?"

No, nor of any single one of them. Denominations were unknown in New Testament days, also for centuries afterward. They have their human heads. Christ is the Head of the individual Christian ("The head of every man is Christ," 1 Cor. 11:3), of the congregation of His saints ("I espoused you to one husband," 2 Cor. 11:2), and of all the saved anywhere, everywhere they may be found, constituting the body complete. "He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). He is not the head of any denomination or sect, of any group of congregations, but of such as have been born again, who in the aggregate (living and dead) make up "the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). His own constitute the church which He proposes to "present to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:26). Blessed is he that hath part therein, being a part thereof. "And the Lord added . . . them that were being saved" (Acts 2:47, See margin).

"Will there not be people of all churches saved?"

If so it will be in spite of the church in the case of many a one in Christendom, for there is many a church not built on the Rock, not sponsoring the truth of the Bible, not acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God, not recognizing Him as Lord or as Head of the church. Our question: How can any one be true to the Lord and enjoy such affilia-

tion and fellowship? Is one not responsible for his affiliation? (2 Cor. 6:14).

"When is a church unrecognized by Christ?"

The question assumes that there are churches not divinely recognized, which is certainly true, even as shown above. A church not founded upon the rock foundation, the deity of Christ, cannot be recognized by Him. If any church have not the Spirit of Christ it is none of His. There are churches denying the atonement for sin by His death, the conquering of death by His resurrection, the inspiration of the Scriptures by His Holy Spirit. Surely no such need claim His recognition. How neglectful a church may be, not to say unfaithful, though established on a Scriptural basis, before He ceases to recognize it or before He removes its candlestick, we shall not attempt to say. Between Philadelphia and Laodicea is a wide difference. To the latter, even, He shows some recognition, even though He is outside the door. Possibly in the church of Laodicea are individuals with whom He may find fellowship. Let every church strive for the very highest loyalty and consecration, not at all satisfied just to pass. To be spued out—what an experience!

"Which is the true church?"

The question assumes that the true church exists. The question indicates a denominational conception of even the true church. The question would seem to mean, Which denomination is the true church? The answer would be *none*. The word church—how it has been abused! Let us go over the matter once again. The church of the holy scriptures in its general sense embraces all those who are Christ's living and dead. No denomination will even claim as much, therefore, no denomination is the true church, even though it be granted that it may embrace some of the redeemed. The church or body of Christ embraces all the saved. The Lord Himself adds to it its members as they are being saved (Acts 2:47). The church in the *local* sense in New Testament days embraced all the saved at a given place. The church at Philadelphia embraced all the Christians there; the church at Smyrna embraced all the Christians there; the church at Berea all the Christians there. It *should* be so today. How contrary to the Savior's prayer today that there have to be different communions for the differing people! What can we do about it? In the first place, be Christ's. Be exclusively His, and be "all out" for Him. In your being saved He added you to His church. That is enough. You do not have to join it. And now that you are added and belong to Him, seek to worship among and with those who gather unto His name, even as He said. Let it be truthfully said of such an assembly and of you yourself what is written in Acts 2:42; and "let there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10). Be at God's family altar, at the family table, guided by the family Bible with such portions of God's family as gather there. That is the way it was in N.T. times.

"Should one belong to a church in which he cannot serve God according to His Word?"

No. Moreover, he should not lend support to such a church either by means or by influence. Have you made an earnest endeavor to lead the church into the will of God?

"What church was the Ethiopian eunuch a member of?"

We should recognize that "churchianity" did not play the role it does today. Acts 2:47 reveals to us the activity of the Lord in the saving of souls. He added the eunuch to His church, and he became a member of the body of Christ. As to local "membership," he had none. He belonged to no local congregation. . . . (This) does not argue, however, against the importance of the local assembly. The Lord provided for that; it is embodied in His will. He honors the assembly in His name even though made up of only "two or three." The epistles to the seven churches, Romans to Thessalonians, underscore to us the importance He attaches to the congregation. "So ordain I in all the churches." The seven epistles in Revelation, chapters two and three, emphasize the same to us. Unless His purpose is thwarted in the matter the local body is a type of the body complete. He is its Head, its Founder, its Foundation. It is a temple of His Holy Spirit; it consists, by His will, of every member of Christ in the community, all in one fellowship. "The church of your choice" is not offered in the New Testament to anyone. "Let there be no divisions among you," "Of one accord in one place" is the Holy Spirit's desire. "They that believed were of one heart and soul." How heavenly the sight! Since that glad day divisions have come; barriers separate professed followers of our Lord; party pride and prejudice build and sustain denominational walls; and the Savior's prayer for oneness—a oneness that the world can see—is trampled under foot. Were His will "done on earth as it is in heaven," the picture would be altogether different. How many take this matter to heart? How many "take it to the Lord in prayer" as our Savior did? His prayer should be my prayer.

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



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

IN 1970, THE MAJORITY REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Obscenity and Pornography came out with its infamous statement that "pornography is harmless" urging that all obscenity statutes be repealed. Since that time the numbers of rapes have increased beyond counting, and pre-

cious children are suffering indescribable sexual abuses at the hands of friends.

FIVE MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COURT ARE PAST 75 years of age. It is quite probable that the President elected in 1984 will be respons-

ible to name some of their successors during his administration. Political philosophy plays a very important part in the decisions of the Federal courts. President Carter never had a chance to name a member of the Supreme Court, but he did name 35 circuit judges—all liberal Democrats who have performed predictably. Who names the judges shapes the law.

AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE in Houston in 1977, the feminists met in Washington, D.C. to regroup and formulate their strategy. One of the feminist leaders urged that they "Use the separation-of-church-and-state argument on 'em; that scares 'em to death." One thing that scares thinking people about this phoney issue is the way it misuses and abuses the meaning of the First Amendment. The term "separation of church and state" is not used in the Constitution. The Constitution says: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of a religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Where do you find Jerry Falwell mentioned there?

PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA have clearly outlined their goals in their publication *Five Year Plan: 1976-1980*. Their plan was to... Expand education services, particularly to schools... create a national clearinghouse on sex education programs... Universal reproductive freedom... by making contraceptives, abortion, and sterilization available and fully accessible to all. To accomplish these goals, they intend to "modify attitudes, change behaviour and abolish outmoded restrictions... legal and cultural, which limit individuals' freedom of choice." If they accomplish this, they are doing so with the aid of the Federal government. Our government is forbidden by the Constitution to "prohibit the free exercise" of anyone's religious faith. In tearing down the faith of our fathers, they are also establishing the Humanist's religion. And now, read this part carefully, almost without exception, public schools use materials produced by Planned Parenthood Federation of America—written material, films available upon request, and speakers who are permitted to come into schools and address students or show films. Much more could be reported about this organization and its

program to pollute the minds of our children, but you have a responsibility to find out how they are reaching your children through the tax-supported government school.

WHEN THE AMERICAN COALITION FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES, representing more than 45 million Christians asked Ms. Geraldine Ferraro, the chairman of the Democratic Platform committee, for an opportunity to present the 10 moral concerns for the millions they represent, they were totally ignored. And they went right on to construct a platform in opposition to every one of their moral concerns, all the while saying that they were believers in and supporters of "Traditional values."

THE COALITION FOUND A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE among the Republican delegates, however. They were welcomed to the staff sessions, and the Republicans constructed into their platform a plank representing almost every one of their moral concerns. The Coalition representatives reported that the members of the platform committee and the President are so committed to those concerns that it is likely that they would have included them even if the leaders of the Coalition had not presented them. It is clear that the issue with Mondale/Ferraro is not the separation of church and state, but the separation of morality and state.

AND SOME WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT political platforms are meaningless. And they may well be, but this year both parties are headed by people who really believe the moral philosophies which their respective platforms express.

A. B. HOUSE, MINISTER OF BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY, speaking to the state convention of Christian Churches in Frankfort, encouraged ministers everywhere to speak out on moral issues. He expressed the wish that, "out of this convention will come a resolution in which we shall join our Catholic brothers and fraternal organizations in their efforts to cleanse the moving picture industry. There are many people who... cannot help but feel it has been prostituted to love, sex, and crime," he declared.—Taken from the *State Journal*, Frankfort, KY. "Fifty Years Ago", Oct., 1984.

JUST OVER A MONTH AGO, A HEADLINE IN THE *Washington Post* read: "Bishop Urge Reagan Defeat." It was explained thus: "Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church at their denominational quadrennial meeting in Kansas City, urged Church leaders to organize the church's 3 million members to help defeat President Reagan this fall." Do you remember reading a single editorial comment condemning these church leaders for a failure to observe the liberal "separation of church and state"?

GERALDINE FERRARO HAS SAID "If my name had been Gerald, I would not have been considered." In saying this she is obviously admitting that Mondale's decision was sexist pure and simple. It seems that many women have come to agree with her, at least,

on that score. . . .

ALTOGETHER, CHINESE, SOVIET, AND CAMBODIAN communists have murdered, by conservative estimates, at least 100 million people. According to a British study, as a result of the Soviet's brutal invasion of Afghanistan, around 500,000 Afghans are in danger of starvation.

A DISBELIEVING HARVARD ALUMNUS INQUIRED of the university's president, Mr. Derek Bok, if it were true that the chairman of the department of history was a Communist. "Sure," replied the president, "Professor John Womack is a Communist." Now you know, too. And you can know, too, that the question and the reply didn't change a thing; Mr. Womack is still teaching at Harvard.

Our Great Need: Reality of Faith

James E. Coulter

"With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."
—Acts 4:33

If the world today is consciously or unconsciously groping after a reality of life, the question we Christians need to ask is: Will they find it at our door?

Can any man find anything that is real in our church sanctuaries? Is our Christianity a theory or an experience? Is it a ritual or a reality?

The tragedy of our day is not Communism or any other "ism." Rather it is that the reality of the living God is largely missing among the sons and daughters of the professing church. The most dangerous thing we face today is not the materialism and secularism of the world, but the spiritual regress of the church.

I do not believe I miss it by far when I say that the ingredient missing in the recipe of the average church service is the overwhelming reality of the living Christ. I do not need the perception of a prophet to make such a statement. All I have to do is reread the Book of Acts.

The rebels in Paul's day could never use the church as an excuse as to why they were out "doing their thing." The early Christians came together to meet with God, and God met with them. Whatever else the world of that day could lay to their charge, they could not deny that they walked and talked as if Jesus was at their elbow (and so He was). With "great power" they gave witness that Jesus was not dead but living, and proof of the fact was plainly written in their godly conduct in private and public worship.

The meeting of the early saints had nothing in common with most of what passes as divine worship in this day. The modern church,

with her restless concern for the approach of the end of the worship hour, with her perma-pressed programs whose inspiration breathes more of showmanship than adoration, and with her prepackaged and inflexible mimeographed services, would grow disgustedly weary and not a little impatient were she made to join the little band that met at Troas. There the preacher "continued his speech until midnight" and then had the audacity to expect some to sit with him "even till break of day" (Acts 20:7-11).

Bakht Singh, of India, said we Americans know how to do everything except one thing: to worship God. Singh's churches come together for no less than six hours to participate in the presence of God. I am not making a plea for long services, as if the hours we log in church will commend us to God. Nor am I making a plea for long-winded preaching. In fact, some services might be more of a success if someone would have the wisdom to substitute the benediction for the invocation and let everybody go home and do whatever is uppermost in their minds anyway.

But I am saying that the *depth* of our devotion can be measured by the *length* of our desire to be with Him in private and public worship. One mark common to all revivals is that the people gathered together in a spirit that threw time to the winds. And it is the mark of spiritual decline when the time-god is more to be revered than the true God. One wonders how many worshippers in America would turn up for divine services if they could not rely upon the unspoken promise that the program would conclude so they could be out of the building by noon.

For the sake of a world that is facing judgment and hell, we need to find and deal with the causes of unreal Christianity. We do not have to look far to find the root, for it is unbelief that has denied the power and left us with only a form of our religion. Nevertheless, I submit two basic reasons for the lack of reality in most of our churches.

The first one is this: the majority of churchgoers do not see the need of taking time to cultivate a daily, vital communion with God. We must come to church not *to* worship but *as* worshippers. No man can really worship God just once a week. The level of our once-a-week outward worship can rise no higher than our daily, inward worship.

Daily devotions may seem like a trite answer to the need, but the truth remains that no man can tell God that visiting hours with Him are to be held strictly to once a week (or perhaps twice) and expect the Lord to place His power upon that life. Let it also be remembered that the quality of our worship will determine the quality of our work for God. And if we are to get on with a vital work of God we must get back to a vital worship, which cannot really exist except on a daily basis.

If in our modern Christianity we have drifted from divine Presence to human performance, from reality to ritual, from experience to cold theory, the single root cause can be traced to the failure of individual believers to maintain a daily devotion to the indwelling Christ.

Those who neglect a daily fellowship with God through His Word cannot possibly hope to unravel themselves from the cares of the world

in the little worship time marked off by tradition and comfort. They may faithfully sit in the pews but they find no liberty to worship—their minds are too dominated with mixed emotions like (as someone aptly put it) that of a baseball crowd that suddenly finds itself in a cathedral.

If we are to meet the terms of fellowship with Christ our daily devotions must be more than a hasty prayer and a few verses of Scripture. The author of "Sweet Hour of Prayer" knew that it takes time to get away from a world of care into the sweet presence of God. No one can measure the exact time except to say that it is as much time as it takes to fill your heart and your day with the spontaneous fullness of God. And then, when we meet together, each in the precious fullness of God, the worshipped will be ordered by the joyous reality of the Holy Spirit.

The second basic reason for the lack of reality is that our Christianity has largely become an end in itself. The new birth and what should logically follow, the joining in fellowship to a Christian group, is not an end but a beginning. Nor is the filling of the Spirit a state of having arrived. Rather it is the beginning of a glorious journey whose every mile is inspired by the power of God. The Christian life is like a toll bridge whose gate stands at the entrance. Jesus has paid the toll with His own blood, which makes the "other side" an immediate possession for all those who would enter in. But having entered in, we must move along, for a bridge is no place to build a house or settle down.

A Christianity whose prime effort has shifted from fruit-bearing to a mere existence is like a flowerless stem—it has no purpose nor future. This was the curse of the fig tree at Bethany. Jesus denounced it because it had ceased to be what God intended it to be. It had somehow denied God's twofold purpose of selfgiving and self-propagation—in that order. Like modern Christianity, it had become an end in itself, and Jesus could only condemn the selfishness of "nothing but leaves."

"Saved to serve" means more than voluntary membership on the refreshment committee or chairman of the flower show or labor in any other social or ritual activity of the church. It means saved to serve God *to reach others*. Jesus said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and the Body of Christ can claim no other cause to justify its existence.

When Jesus said "Ye shall receive power" He meant something more than merely being able to rise out of bed on Sunday morning. The disciples were waiting in the upper room in anticipation of fulfilling a purpose of far more import than that which motivates most of the activities of the average evangelical church. They went to the upper room as debtors to Jesus and to the people of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world—debtors, like Paul, to preach the gospel to every creature.

And until the church gets in step with Jesus Christ on the Great Commission all of her other activities, however feverishly staged, can at best be only a superficial performance. Modern Christianity cannot

come to a sincere faith until she becomes desperate, and she cannot really come to that unless she is willing to abandon herself to the humanly impossible task of reaching the world for Christ. If she will not she has nothing really to be desperate about.

Until the church can see that the footsteps of Jesus led to Calvary, not for Himself but for others, and then follow Christ in the same spirit, she cannot possibly share in the burden of the Spirit of God in her prayers. And without this, all intercession is void and hollow, sentimentality and sincerity notwithstanding. Nor can she know desperation inspired by necessity, the catalyst needed for a vital faith. Nor will she ever understand the pattern and emphasis of God's truth.

Because the comfort of her worship has become more important than the conversion of the world, the church is like a fleeing Jonah, asleep and indifferent, sailing in the opposite direction of the command to "go . . . and cry against . . . wickedness." But those who have gone overboard with Jonah in rededication to the task of the cross know what a transforming effect it has had on their prayer life, their faith life and their understanding of the Bible. Actually, there can be no harmony of all the elements of the Christian life except in the footsteps of Jesus lead into the wilderness after the lost sheep of the earth.

Living in this clamoring kindergarten world with its three billion fumbling children struggling to spell life with the wrong blocks, we Christians need to examine ourselves to see whether our lives indeed spell plainly that there is a true and satisfying life that comes from God. The church in this urgent hour, with her ears ringing from the desperate rattle of humanity trying to open the door of happiness with the wrong key, needs to search her heart to see if indeed she is holding forth the key of life to a dying world.

We who hold that there is an empty tomb where once a dead body lay need to ask ourselves this final question: Are we *still* seeking reality? or have we found *Him*? —*The Alliance Witness*

HEROES OF THE FAITH

John Bunyan

James C. Hefley

When the blacksmith who had recently turned preacher entered the farmhouse, he felt the spirit of apprehension among the small congregation. The owner drew him aside.

"John, the constable is coming here to arrest you."

"For what evil, pray tell me?" John Bunyan asked.

"Word has spread that our meetings are a cloak for the planning of plots and collection of weapons to fight against the Crown. Me-thinks we had better not have the meeting."

"Bosh," he replied. "Our cause is good. To preach God's Word is nothing to be ashamed of."

Bunyan glanced outside and saw the farmer's children playing in the yard. He thought of his own brood of four and his pregnant wife

Elizabeth. "No," he assured himself. "I cannot even think of them. I must be faithful."

Hardly had the congregation begun the first hymn when the constable burst in with his warrant. The next day Bunyan was brought before the justice of the peace of Bedfordshire.

"You have been arrested under the Conventicle Act of 1593," he coldly informed Bunyan. "This Act stipulates that any person who goes to a place of worship other than the parish church shall be imprisoned for three months without trial. You have broken this law in double measure, neighbor Bunyan, for you were the preacher."

"If it is a crime to instruct people to forsake their sins and follow Christ, then I am guilty," Bunyan replied.

Friends advised him that he would be released at the end of his three months' term if he would agree to cease preaching and attend the parish church. Bunyan simply replied, "I must follow my conscience."

So in a dungeonlike cell—from 1660 to 1672—John Bunyan languished. His wife gave birth a few months after he entered the jail. When he received the news that the baby was born dead, he wrote: "The parting with my wife and children hath been to me as the pulling of flesh from my bones. But what can I do but obey God?"

Elizabeth Bunyan offered a tearful petition to the authorities. "I have four small children, one of whom is blind," she pleaded. "I am without education and my only trade is making shoelaces."

But her pleas went without avail and her husband continued in jail barely a stone's throw from his cottage.

In his dungeon cell John Bunyan had only his Bible and *Fox's Book of Martyrs* for comfort. But he could pray and think and write. During this imprisonment he averaged more than a book each year—15 in all.

Then in 1672 political conditions made it possible for him to be released. He was called as pastor of the Baptist church in Bedford. But persecutions pushed his services back into the thick woods.

In March 1675 Bunyan was back in Bedford jail for preaching without a license and failing to attend the services of the state church. During this sentence he wrote a moving allegory that depicted the experiences of a man named Christian in his journey from earth to heaven.

Pilgrim's Progress was published in 1678. Ten years later the author died after being drenched in a rainstorm while on his way to London.

But his name became a torch for believers in religious liberty who flocked to the American colonies. His writings tremendously influenced the patriot fathers who wrote the American Constitution and Bill of Rights. Besides this he is ranked as one of the two greatest writers of the 17th century in England. *Pilgrim's Progress* has become, next to the Bible, the most popular Christian book ever written.

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Superficial Believism

Paul Kenyon

Sometime the true history of the present church will be written. It may not be until the hour when the records are opened in heaven that all the facts will be revealed.

That hour, of course, will divulge most clearly the state of things which prevailed in our own apostate generation. What comes to light could amaze even the saints in heaven. Most startling of all may be that some of the doctrines most vigorously proclaimed in the ranks of the supposed orthodox, will be numbered among the most dangerous heresies ever to stain the pages of church history.

When error has been accepted as truth by the masses it is not too likely that it will be readily or easily eradicated. False doctrine creeps in unawares. It has always been so. The subtlety of error is that it appears so very close to the truth. Only the few who have lived with the Word of God and under the strict guidance of the Holy Spirit have ever detected wherein the error lies. To come out boldly against these false but popular teachings, once they are established, is to bring oneself under condemnation. Often it means that one is branded a fanatic. To all of this, church history testifies most eloquently.

Let it now be made plain. I am not referring to the obviously heretical doctrines of the numerous modern cults. Neither am I alluding to the far departures from truths as found among the liberal theologians. I am speaking of a teaching which has wide and enthusiastic acceptance in our own evangelical ranks, a teaching which is being confidently proclaimed as the message of the hour. In particular I refer to that most popular of doctrines which I shall term "superficial believism."

From the plain teachings of God's Word, there is no doubt that eternal souls pass from death unto life through a living faith in Jesus Christ. But ever and always this faith must be preceded by genuine repentance. Paul, the apostle, had but one message for Jews and Gentiles alike wherever he proclaimed the gospel of grace. That message he summed up completely before King Agrippa. Said Paul: "O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19, 20).

This is the message which that God-appointed man preached in establishing all of the New Testament churches. And he boldly claimed that he received this message by the "revelation of Jesus Christ." He did not get it from men (Gal. 1:11-12). Repentance ever precedes faith in New Testament doctrine, and there is no faith born into hearts apart from a repentance which is genuine in the sight of God who knows all hearts. The Pauline teaching further demanded "works meet for repentance." This was an external evidence that the sorrow for sin and complete turning from sin were a factual inner reality. Here was the visible and public testimony to a transformed life.

True Biblical teaching on repentance has been practically abandoned in this day of superficial believism. It remains as a conviction only with the small minority. Not only has the doctrine come into disrepute, but the type of preaching which the Spirit of God could use to produce repentance is seldom heard from modern pulpits. Hence, in our orthodox ranks, cold-hearted and dry-eyed sinners are sweetly exhorted to "accept Jesus as their Saviour," without so much as being told that they must thoroughly repent and completely forsake all known sin. They are but to "believe;" and what is meant by believing is enveloped in a thick mist of theological obscurities.

What, then, are they to believe? Not long ago a preacher lifted a New Testament passage neatly from its context, misapplied it, and then cried out: "If you believe what this verse says you are saved right now; I say, you are saved right now." The verse was: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). This particular belief to which the listeners were exhorted was actually nothing more or less than an intellectual assent to historical fact. Such is schoolroom knowledge and not a living faith in God's Son. Such is the concept of faith in our generation.

This matter of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is not so easy as it sounds. Take for instance the simple statement of the apostle John: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (I John 5:1, A.S.V.). The word which is translated "believeth," as used here and in its various constructions throughout the New Testament, means "to believe a person to be true; to place trust in them, to rely on them; to commit oneself to them; cast thyself upon them; entrust oneself to them" (Souter's Lexicon).

It is a cry far from merely accepting with the intellect the historical facts—that Christ died for sinners and rose again for their justification—to this inborn reality of faith that produces the kind of believing here defined. Any other theory of faith can be wholly superficial. Salvation comes to the sinning one when he, under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, repents and forsakes sin. He then casts himself totally on Christ as his only hope. It is absolute commital; and such alone is true believing.

We repeat that such faith can never be inspired until repentance is complete. God is the one to be satisfied, and God knows our hearts. Invariably the act of believing is revealed in the New Testament as something we do which is consistent and continuous. The Greek tenses which are used to declare the believing process undeniably certify that this is so. We read literally in I John 5:5, "Who is he that keeps on overcoming the world, but he that keeps on believing that Jesus is the Son of God?" Such a life of constant faith naturally demands unflinching obedience to the will of God.

In such individuals the transforming work of the Holy Spirit is real and complete. They are truly begotten of God, and to this the Comforter witnesses. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth" (I John 5:6). He is the One Who alone has right to witness to the believing heart the fact of the miracle of the new

birth. God has never delegated to any human being this divine prerogative. These Spirit-born Christians are overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil; not sometimes by mere effort, but consistently by the indwelling power of Christ. The Spirit's witness is the abiding assurance within; the overcoming life is the evidence without.

It is nothing short of pitiful to witness the sincere ones, among the adherents of modern superficial believism, try in their own weakness to live the overcoming life. Vainly, and sometimes defiantly, they attempt to cling to what they have been told. "Just believe" was the instruction of the experts, so they struggle to believe that which somehow they know is not quite right. Neither God nor their own lives are witnesses to any supernatural transformation, so they struggle on, or turn back to the old ways in hopeless frustration.

The end of the trail will reveal untold thousands of people who were the hapless victims of this erroneous teaching. They were so near to truth by the standards of a present-day perverted doctrine, yet so very far away from the plain teaching of the Word of God. These became the unfortunate victims of this doctrine of death.

Note: Christ began His ministry by preaching, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15) and He commanded "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:47). His warning to all was, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

The Apostles were obedient to His command, preaching, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). St. Paul preached "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21), and warned in Gal. 1:8, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." —Doris Guinup



GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

LOOKING TO JESUS

But the point demanding our attention is this: that not by crying for or grasping at the Spirit, but by coming to Jesus, by believing in Jesus, by obeying Jesus, the Spirit is received. "If anyman thirst let him come unto me . . . he that believeth on Me . . . the Spirit which they that believe on Him were to receive." So runs the teaching. Those who look on Jesus, those who believe in Jesus, those who behold

Jesus—they come to know the Spirit who dwelt with them, and the Spirit shall be in them.

—R. H. Boll, in *Words in Season*, 1923

IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL

To sum up, those who are baptized: "shall be saved," shall receive "the remission of sins," do "wash away their sins," receive "newness of life," "are baptized into Christ" and "put on Christ," experience the "working of God" (Col. 2:12), "doth now save you." Thus do these and all other New Testament passages on baptism point in the same direction and say the same thing. There are many good people who love the Lord, yet do not accept these verses at face-value. Of John's baptism, Jesus said, "But the pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." Let us not make the same mistake relative to Christian baptism.

—J. R. Clark

ALONE WITH THEE

Perhaps some future day, Lord, Thy strong hand
Will lead me to the place where I must stand
Utterly alone.

Alone, O gracious Lover, but for Thee.
I shall be satisfied if I can see
Jesus only.

I do not know Thy plan for years to come,
My spirit finds in thee its perfect home,
Sufficiency.

Lord, all my desire is before Thee now;
Lead on—no matter where, no matter how,
I trust in Thee.

—Elisabeth Elliot

"AN INTERCESSOR"

"I looked, and there was none to help." (Isa. 63:5).

"I sought for a man . . . that should . . . stand in the gap before Me for the land . . . but I found none," (Ezek. 22:30).

"He . . . wondered that there was no Intercessor." (Isa. 59:16).

CHRIST IS COMING!

Christ is coming! let creation
From her groans and travail cease;

Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore and faith increase;

Christ is Coming!

Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace.

Earth can now but tell the story
Of Thy bitter cross and pain;

She shall yet behold Thy glory,
When Thou comest back to reign;

Christ is coming!

Let each heart repeat the strain.

Long Thine exiles have been pining,
Far from rest, and home, and Thee;
But, in heavenly venture shining,
They their loving Lord shall see;
Christ is Coming!
Haste the joyous jubilee.
With that blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty advent chorus
Onward roll from tongue to tongue;
Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!

—John Ross Macduff

HANDLING ARIGHT THE WORD

Several weeks ago I read an article on Zechariah 14 by a brother who holds to the inspiration of the Scriptures as do we. The article was largely a series of explanations why the Lord Jesus would not indeed stand upon the Mount of Olives, why the earthquake would not occur, and why the various other events described by the prophet would not—indeed could not—take place as stated. The writer's basis for rejecting the literal statements was reason. He carefully reasoned out that each of the details of the prophecy was either unnecessary or impossible of literal fulfillment. As I read, the same feeling came over me that I have in reading Pfeiffer or Driver or any other of the modernistic Old Testament critics. To myself I thought, "What difference is there between this approach to Zechariah and their approach to Moses or Daniel?" In all soberness, are we free to set aside the plain grammatical statements of the Word of God?

—Gordon R. Linscott, in *Talking Things Over*
Until next time, MARANATHA!

Becky And The Cat

Becky, the little girl next door, has a cat.

Now, Becky loves to sit, holding the cat, watching my dog. This, of course, drives my dog nuts. He would like to bite the cat. But, Becky doesn't understand this.

Becky also perceives the cat as being her baby. She likes to squeeze it. She likes to spank it. The other day I watched as she disciplined it for some imaginary offence. The poor thing squinted its eyes in pain as she administered the rod of correction.

Becky thinks that the cat likes to have its ears and tail pulled. So, many times, you can see it being stretched to new proportions.

If I could speak "cat talk", I would like to give some advice to the cat. I would tell it to run away. Becky isn't going to change, and I believe that its only hope is to seek a new environment. But, I really don't think the cat would do this. My impression is that the cat is a "fraidy cat" and not open to new ideas.

So, I think that I will have to talk to Becky. When I do, I think that I will say, "Becky, a cat is a cat. You must remember that. And you must treat the cat as a cat. Also, you have a lot to learn about cats."

What's the point?

Sometimes we treat other Christians the way Becky treats the cat. We have a misperception of what our brothers and sisters are. We try to force them into our imaginary concept of what we think they should be. The question is not one of loving others. Becky loves the cat, I am sure. We probably behave the way we do because we love each other. But what we must realize is that many times we make other people's lives miserable by trying to make them into something that God has not yet made them. God makes cats cats. Little girls can't change that fact. God makes Christians Christians. We can't change that fact.

What should we do? Turn loose of each other and allow ourselves the freedom to be what God has made and is making us.

How would Becky like to trade places with the cat? How would you like to trade places with the person you want to change?

—Jim Goodwin

PRICE TALKS:

Why Christians Are Not Afraid of God

William A. Price

You can scarcely blame people for being afraid of God. He's our Creator and you and I are merely His creatures. He's our judge and we're sinful lawbreakers. He's our Lord lifted high above all earthly change and we're merely bubbles on the tide of time. God is eternal, almighty, sovereign, righteous, just—and about everything that we aren't.

I John 1:5 emphasizes this measureless difference between us, when the apostle says. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." God is more dazzling in His glory than a million megaton bomb. He's more penetrating in His glory than a Xray. This measureless difference is again measured between us in Hebrews 12:29 where God is likened to a consuming fire, and to underscore the blazing righteousness of our Creator, the Hebrew writer sounds an ominous note in Chapter 10, verse 30, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

What then is God really like. Well, He's like a volcano threatening to overwhelm us with the hot lava of His holy wrath. Texts like these that we have recalled, are scarcely calculated to make us feel very comfortable when we think about the Judge whom we must finally face. And that's why I say that we cannot blame people for being afraid of God. Now of course God is God. But surely we don't have to view Him with cringing fear, as does the mouse which is put into the cage of the rattlesnake as food for the hungry reptile.

BY NO MEANS. I have already sized up the many attributes of God that we do not naturally possess. In fact He is everything that we aren't. But this line of teaching cries out for counterbalance. If we fail to emphasize this counterbalance we shall be failing to present the full circle teaching of the Bible about God's grace. Instead we will be presenting a caricature of the gospel, which will repel, rather than invite, people to a saving knowledge of God's grace.

Where do we find the counterbalancing truth. Many places in the N.T., but one in particular, John 14:8, 9. Here Philip says, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us". In other words, What is God like? The Lord answered him, Have I been so long time with you Philip and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." To put it in the simplest terms possible, Jesus gave Philip the answer, God is like Jesus Christ.

But this simple answer raises another question. Is Jesus so different from us, so holy even in His humanity that we shrink away from Him? No. Jesus does not arouse any reaction of terror or dread. Quite the opposite. He draws us to Himself by the magnetism of understanding and compassion and love.

For example, turn to Hebrew 4:14-16.

This is a remarkable scripture. For one thing it gives us a revelation. It pulls back a veil and discloses the character of God. "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." You will notice, that this is a double negative, and in a double negative one negative cancels out the other, thus the statement results in a positive revelation. God CAN be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Touched? Yes touched.

What happens when you or I are touched with someone else's distress? We react as if the distress is our very own, and that's what precisely happens with God. Philosophers talk very learnedly about God as the first cause of the cosmos, or God as the very ultimate ground of being, or God as the unmoved mover of existence. But this is not the God revealed by Jesus Christ. Their God is a kind of cosmic icicle, a God of unruffled serenity, a God who has an empty space where his heart ought to be. Jesus Christ, however, disclosed a God who feels with us, a God of sympathy and compassion.

Can you believe it? When I suffer, God is touched and He suffers with me. When I grieve, God is touched. God grieves with me. When I suffer with acute anxiety, God is touched. He shares that anxiety with me. Our text gives us an explanation for His compassion. Why is God able to feel all of my infirmities. Is it because God knows all? I believe that this uncanny awareness is not just because of divine omniscience but we derive his uncanny sympathy from His own personal experience. The apostle flatly declared that Jesus Christ was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin. When He lived here on earth, a man among men, Jesus Christ ran the whole gamut of sinful possibilities with all its powerful seduction. He underwent every possible kind of trial and trouble.

Let us not water down this amazing truth because it baffles our small minds. Let us hold fast to the Bible revelation. The Incarna-

tion was not a sham. It was not a play put on by God for our benefit. Jesus Christ led a human life—real flesh and blood, no different than from our own, except by yielding to the Holy Spirit, He emerged from His ordeal without blunder or blemish.

He is no arm-chair strategist but a soldier who slugged it out with the enemy in the front line. He knows the power and pain and persistence of evil by personal experience. He knows the frailty and feebleness of our flesh.

Am I a spiritless coward plagued by anger? Do I feel mean and resentful and sometimes full of vindictive hate? Jesus Christ understands that. Am I plagued by loneliness? Do I feel unwanted by anybody. Jesus Christ understands that. Am I plagued by guilt? Do I feel that I am a sinner, that deserves nothing but judgment, a sinner for whom there isn't a glimmer of hope? Jesus Christ understands all these and countless more. He is touched by the feelings of our infirmities.

Notice something about this scripture. It gives us an invitation. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace," the apostle writes, "that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need." Because the God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ is a God who understands, we shouldn't shrink back from Him as if He were an emotionless monster. We are entreated to come boldly to Him just as we are.

Why do you suppose distressed people find their way to a psychiatrist. There are many, many reasons but perhaps the greatest reason is that the guilt-ridden person is so over-burdened by accumulated guilt and not being familiar with modern technique on how to unburden his load—so he pays for the privilege of unloading his rottenness on some skillful listener. And oh what a relief usually comes when his rottenness has been unloaded and his guilt has been confessed.

Well, the apostle is inviting us to view God as though He were a super-psychiatrist. He tells us to come and pour out to Jesus Christ all the meanness, the filth, the despair which has been accumulating—urging us to rehearse it in full detail, holding nothing back, getting down to specifics, searching out the recesses of memory and conscience because Jesus Christ understands us thru and thru as no psychiatrist does.

What an invitation. It sounds forbidding. But, no. It sounds as if it were a forbidding and austere throne. Not so. For this throne is a throne of grace, and the King that sits on this throne is a Priest, a father with a mother's heart. We need not grovel before Him like a captured spy begging for mercy.

This text, therefore, gives us a motivation for turning to God rather than running away from Him. It assures us that when we respond to the Savior's invitation, we shall find what we most desperately need—mercy and grace and love and compassion and pity and tenderness and understanding and sympathy and forgiveness. With these there will be strength and power.

Why come boldly, when you and I know we're disobedient and sinful, mere creatures who have forfeited any claim on God's mercy and

grace? Because behind this throne of the universe, towers an altar, a strange altar indeed (two pieces of crude wood fashioned into a cross) the Cross of Calvary. And on that altar our High Priest, Jesus Christ offered sacrifice. Ah, that was His sacrifice. He offered Himself. On the cross He died as our substitute bearing the burden of your guilt and mine. And now alive forever in the miracle of the resurrection Jesus Christ guarantees that as we come to Him, there will be the mercy and grace which we need. So it's the cross that motivates us to respond in simple trust to the invitation almost too good to be true. "I need no other argument—I need no other plea. It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me."

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"Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each of you will still be alive. . . . There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature with whom, if you saw it now you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare." —C. S. Lewis

How to "Eat" the Word

by James M. Gray

"Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."—Jeremiah 15:16

There is a great difference between "finding" the Word of God and "eating" it, and it is the man who eats it who gets the benefit out of it. Eating makes digestion and assimilation possible, and when these functions are normal in their working, the result is health and strength and all the usefulness and joy of living.

But eating comes first, and the eating that counts is that which has taken plenty of time for mastication. You must retain the food in your mouth and get the full taste of it, and let it mingle well with the saliva and chew and chew and chew until the least possible amount is left to swallow. The man who does this has learned one of the greatest secrets of his physical being. He has learned how to keep well and how to eat almost anything he likes without ill results. Keeping the food in the mouth is the key to it all.

Something like this is true in the higher realm. Usefulness and joy in the spiritual life depend on spiritual health and strength. But these in turn depend on the spiritual nourishment one takes—its kind, its quantity, its condition. The only nourishment for man's soul is the Word of God. "Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby," is the inspired exhortation (I Peter 2:3), and the more

you get of it the better, always provided that you can digest and assimilate it.

Holding the Word in Your Mind

Here comes the thought of eating again.

It is like holding the food in your mouth. That is how to get the full taste of it. Prayer does in the one case what saliva does in the other. Turning it round and round, thinking of it from this point of view and that, asking questions about it, taking it to your parents, your Sunday school teacher, your pastor, searching its meaning in a commentary all these things correspond to the chewing that makes good digestion and assimilation.

Now the only way to hold the Word in your mind is to memorize it. It is not hard to do this, and when you begin to see the benefit of it, it becomes a real pleasure. Make the task as easy as possible by taking a small portion at a time.

Don't "Bolt" Your Food

In other words, while you are a beginner let the passage of Scripture be so small that it may be readily recalled several times during the busy day. And see that you do recall it, that is the point. Master your will in the matter until it obeys you almost automatically and you are able to recall the Scripture without effort. You will be surprised how soon you will be able to do this, and it will mean so much to you. It will be better than counting the bank notes you have been hoarding up somewhere, or tasting a sweet morsel hidden away, or conversing with a friend whom you love very much.

At family prayers I read this verse in Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." I at once fastened it correctly in my mind, and as I walked to my office, I kept "eating" it, turning it over and over, and getting such a sweet tast out of it, and such a sense of strength and spiritual satisfaction.

What I Found in the Word

"The name of the Lord," said I, why that means the Lord Himself!

He is a "strong tower." And the "strong tower"? In olden time, that was a place of defense and protection, like our forts today. "The righteous runneth into it." Who can the righteous be, save those who are made righteous through receiving Christ by faith as their righteousness? "Runneth." There is a thought of haste because of the pursuit by the enemy, and Paul's words came into my mind, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." "Runneth into it is safe." Oh, the security and peace of the believer who puts this trust in God! And so I kept on "masticating" the Word and finding something new in it in every bite.

But that was not all. Before the day was over I needed all the strength I got out of it. There were trials that day, the enemy was on my heels, and how glad I was to run, and to know the place to run to and be safe!

What the Prophet Meant

I think this is what the prophet meant when he said: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." And this is why I urge every Christian to memorize a portion of the Word of God every day. It gives his soul something to feed upon, and the more he feeds upon, and digests and assimilates it, the greater is his spiritual strength and joy and power and fruitfulness in the Lord.

Let me illustrate this. The next day after my experience with Proverbs 18:10, I was at a prayer meeting, and being suddenly called upon to give a word of exhortation, I had an opportunity to pass on that verse to three or four hundred other people. And to how many more will they pass it on? They were all Bible students preparing for Christian work in the uttermost parts of the earth. Can you compute the number of souls to whom they may pass it on in a lifetime, and who in turn may pass it on and on and on while the age lasts! And all because of that one little bite of truth I got that morning, and because I held it long enough to chew it well! Memorize the Bible if you want to be blessed and become a blessing.

* * * * *

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds."—2 Cor. 10:4

In London, Ontario, where I pastored a church for eight years, there is a church of Satan. Two years ago, at the provincial conference of the Satanists the London church was honoured for its distinguished achievements. That year, the Satanists had prayed to Satan for the elimination of a select list of London's evangelical leaders from the Christian ministry through immorality or marriage and family breakdowns! In one year, they succeeded in seeing five of our finest, five on their list, forced to leave the ministry! What a victory for Satan that was.

Never in my life have I sensed the reality of our spiritual warfare as during these last two years. The enemy has brought out his most destructive weapons and levelled them directly at marriage and families, God's style. Our country, churches and homes are devastated by divorce, homosexuality, abortion, commonlaw unions, suicide, wife-beating, child abuse, runaway teenagers, etc., each bearing the trademark of the Evil One.

War has been declared. All around us, scores are falling like flies. To fight back with carnal weapons is to invite defeat. It is a spiritual battle. It demands spiritual weapons.

—William J. McRae

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

The Outcome of the Resurrection

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

John 16:16-24

True spirituality is ultimately personal. We can never be satisfied with a purely intellectual knowledge of God, although a true knowledge of God is always intellectual in its foundation.

The necessity of the personal dimension led finally to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. John, in particular among the apostles, stresses the point. It is he who has written in this gospel, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him" (1:18). And, in response to Philip's query, Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (1:9). To see Jesus is to have a personal revelation of the Father's nature and being. And, finally, in his First Epistle the apostle begins the opening chapter with these words, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1:1-3). It is clear that for John spiritual life is not simply intellectual knowledge, although that is necessarily involved, but also a personal acquaintance in the most intimate way with the Son of God, the revelation of the Father.

That kind of revelation can only be through the medium of an incarnation. There is a very touching story, told by Dr. Rufus Jones, the notable Quaker philosopher, about a mother seeking to encourage her little girl to put aside her fears of the dark. The mother assured the daughter that she need not be afraid of the night, because God was with her. The little girl was not so sure yet of the omnipresence of God and of His special concern for her, for she bluntly replied, "I don't want God; I want someone with a face." And the child probably spoke for many of us at one point in our spiritual experience. We naturally want someone with a face, and it is because of this, among other more theological things, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Since that time there has been available for men the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is one of the ways in which Christianity is distinguished from other religions. Of course, one of the most significant ways is simply this: Christianity proclaims the finished work of Christ, and its characteristic word, therefore, is "done." He has finished the work of

atonement and He has done it all Himself (cf. John 19:30; Heb. 1:3). All other religions are "to-be-done" religions, and the work is to be done by impotent man. Thus, they can never save, for salvation is of the Lord entirely (cf. Jon. 2:9; Acts 13:38).

Another way in which Christianity differs from other religions lies in its stress on the personal relationship with God. The largest of the professing Christian religions finds salvation not simply through a personal relation with the Triune God through the atoning work of the Son of God, but insists that the benefits of His work become ours only through the adherence to their sacramental system, administered by their clergy and priests. It is clear at once that in this system there is a departure from grace and a return to legalism, from faith alone as the means of salvation to human works (cf. Rom. 3:21-26; 4:1-25; 5:1-11, etc.). And if justification is by human works, then it is not of grace, contrary to the express declaration of God (cf. 11:6).

Vance Havner, the popular Southern Bible teacher, has told the story of a spring whose waters had certain medicinal properties, so that those who drank from it were helped in various infirmities. In the course of time, homes sprang up around the spring—then came a hotel, stores, and eventually a town that grew into a city. But there came a day when visitors would ask, "Where is the spring from which this grew?" and the residents would say, with embarrassment, "We are sorry, but somehow in the midst of all our progress and improvement, we lost the spring." Havner contended that institutional Christianity's biggest problem today is to find its lost spring.

I have a very fine Christian friend, a Bible teacher of ability and a man of God. He is now in his eighties, and for a few years now has had cancer. He is still out in his itinerant Bible teaching ministry, undaunted that his condition can only get worse as the months go by. Recently he wrote me a letter to say, "I am now on female hormones and the pain is not so great. My back does trouble me. Then the red blood cells are weakened and destroyed by the cancer. The doctors tell me if it grows worse I will have to have a transfusion." He then adds, and one can see in his words the thrill of the personal relation with God through Christ, "I have learned that all the whys, whens, wheres, and wherefores in life are in the strong hands of Jesus Christ. I bow to his will and say, "our Jesus does all things well." That is what Christianity and its personal knowledge of God in Christ does for its people.

In the section of John's Gospel which we are studying the apostle has been speaking of our Lord's upper room instruction, given to the eleven before He was crucified. The Lord has spoken of their union with Him (15:1-17) and, therefore, of the world's sure and certain hatred of them. The world has hated Him, and the world will surely hate His followers. Nineteen centuries have confirmed this. He has also reminded them, however, that they will have the help of the Holy Spirit in dealing with the world (15:18-16:15). But He has had to say to them that He must leave them soon, and that was for them a matter of great sorrow (cf. 16:6). And so in the following verses, the ones to which we turn now, He will deal with some of the difficulties that His men will face in His absence.

THE INSTRUCTION

The declaration (John 16:16; cf. 13:33). Continuing the discourse Jesus says, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." The words are reminiscent of the statement of 13:33 in which He stated that He would be with them for only a little while longer. The words here are very enigmatical and, in fact, suggest the method of the familiar TV quiz program, "What's My Line?" In effect He is seeking to lead them on to anticipate His departure with its accompanying sorrow, and then His resurrection with its permanent rejoicing.

The "see" in verse sixteen is probably to be taken as physical seeing.

The interrogation (John 16:17-18). The declaration of the Lord puzzled the disciples (we have company!, and they began to discuss the puzzling words and phrases among themselves. They said, "What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith" (see vv. 17-18). Particularly puzzling to them was the phrase, "a little while." Of course, we must remember that they were standing on the other side of the cross from us.

Godet comments, "Where for us all is clear, for them all was mysterious. If Jesus wishes to found the Messianic kingdom, why go away? If He does not wish it, why return?"

The explanation (John 16:19-20). In a sense Jesus replies to their need rather than their question. After repeating their questions, He puts His answer in the form of a description of how they shall feel in the future. They shall weep and lament, while the world shall be rejoicing, but their sorrow shall become joy.

In the twentieth verse there are three verbs used to describe their coming weeping over His departure, the first two expressing outward lamenting and singing of dirges, the third expressing inward grieving. What is most significant about the verbs is that they all were used for mourning for the dead, and perhaps our Lord uses them to give them a clue to the fact that their sorrow shall be related to the death that He shall soon die. The first interval of "a little while" takes them to the time of His death, then.

The last clause of verse twenty is particularly interesting. It is not said that their sadness shall be *replaced* by joy. Literally our Lord says that their sorrow shall *become* joy, that is, as Lenski puts it, "...the very thing that plunged them into such excessive grief, shall turn to joy, i.e., into a glorious cause for joy." They are to mourn over His death, but the *death itself* shall become a source of joy to them. Their sadness shall become gladness. History has borne out our Lord, for it is in the death of our Lord that His apostles have gloried, for through His death, they have received life, forgiveness, and justification (cf. Gal. 6:14).

THE ILLUSTRATION

Our Lord follows His brief explanation with an illustration. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow," He says, "because her hour

is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for that a man is born into the world" (v. 21). The purpose of the illustration of a woman and her birth pangs is to indicate that one and the same thing can produce opposite effects, in this case both sadness and gladness, with only a brief interval of time between the two emotions. That, it seems, is the primary purpose of the example.

There may also be a secondary purpose. The purpose of the pain of the mother is a birth, and the purpose of the pain of the disciples over the departure of the Lord may be related to the creation of a "new man," the church of Jesus Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, who enter that body in the same way and upon the same basis. I do not want to labor the point overmuch, but there also may be some connection with the later Jewish doctrine of the "travail pains of the Messiah." Cf. Isa. 26:17-18; 66:7; 16:16-20; Matt. 19:28.

Good Friday was to be the time of pain, but Easter was to become the time of joy. Our Lord's words may be understood better against that background.

THE INTERPRETATION

A new joy, or "joy perpetual" (John 16:22). Now our Lord will apply the figure, or illustration. And in His application He distinguishes three matters, the first being the new joy that will characterize the believers. He says, "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (v. 22).

There are two questions that come before us there, and the first is a question of *time*. When will He see them, and they Him? Several answers have been given.

(1) First, some have taken the words, "I will see you again" (cf. v. 22), to be a reference to the second advent of our Lord. And it is true that in the New Testament the second advent is said to be "a little while" off (cf. Heb. 10:37), but the time between the cross and the second advent can hardly be called a time of grief (cf. 1 Pet. 1:8-9, etc.).

(2) Second, others have referred the clause to the Day of Pentecost (cf. 14:20). There are difficulties with the view, however. First, Jesus speaks of a mutual seeing here (cf. vv. 16, 22), and it is reasonable to think that the two sights will be of the same character. By this view their view of Him will not be a physical seeing of Him, while, of course, He is able always to see them. But, second, and perhaps better, the disciples were filled with joy again before Pentecost. At Pentecost they received "power" (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), but this very Gospel of John is testimony to the fact that the disciples' sadness turned to gladness before Pentecost (cf. 20:20).

(3) Third, it seems much the best view to refer our Lord's words, "I will see you again," to the resurrection. And the precise fulfillment text is found in 20:20, when on the day of the resurrection at the assembly of the disciples they saw Him. John writes of that meeting, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." And it should be noted that in John's statement it is said that two things happened. First, they saw the Lord, and the same verb is used in this

text that is found in verse twenty-two. And further, they were glad, and the same verb is used in this text of the joy of the disciples that is used in verse twenty-two of chapter sixteen. It seems clear, then, that our Lord by the words, "I will see you again," refers to the resurrection event, a physical seeing of His men.

The interval of time, phrased here by our Lord as "a little while," the time between the cross and the time that He sees them again, is then an expression that corresponds to the expression, "after three days," characteristic of the Synoptic Gospels.

The entire verse reminds one of Isaiah 66:13-14, a text that looks on to the advent of the Lord, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice. . . ."

This seeing and the consequent joy could never be taken away, since it was bound up with His resurrection (cf. Rom. 6:9-10). And that joy has been a part of the experience of all believers during this age. As Rendall Harris once said, "They may tear the volume to shreds, but they can never rub off the light of God from the faces of His people." That has been confirmed in my experience, for I have seen literally scores of believers with this impressive permanent joy glowing with an enduring light on their newly enlightened minds and faces.

A *new relationship*, or "*relation paternal*" (John 16:23). Another historic milestone in our Lord's mediatorial work is referred to here. We are by His cross and resurrection brought to the Father! Cf. 20:17; Eph. 2:18; 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:18. The exercise of this relationship contributes to the joy mentioned in the preceding verse.

There are several things to notice here. First, the "me" in the clause, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing," is emphatic in the Greek text. And, second, the verb rendered by ask" is one that means *to ask a question* in many contexts. That seems to be its force here (cf. vv. 5, 19, 30), and in other places in John it has that force, too (cf. 1:19, 21, 25; 9:2, 19, 21). In other words, Jesus is referring to verse nineteen, and He is saying that they will no longer ask Him such questions. The Spirit will be their teacher to guide them into all truth.

The second sentence refers to the new object of their petitions. It is the Father. Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." In this second sentence of verse twenty-three the verb rendered "ask" is a verb that is different from the verb rendered in the same way in the first sentence of the verse. The second verb does mean *to ask* in prayer. One would gather this from the opening sentence's "nothing" also for Jesus would not say that in that day they would not petition Him for anything.

This second sentence indicates that the Father is the new object of prayer, that fact resulting from the resurrection (cf. 20:17; 1 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 2:18; 3:12). No longer will they ask the Lord Jesus the old familiar inquiries, for the Spirit will be their teacher and the Father the object of prayers.

The expression "in my name" should not be overlooked, because it is by virtue of His representative mediatorial work that the disciples have access to the Father in the Spirit. What we have is through Him and His merits, won by the sufferings of the cross. Thus, what our Lord is promising is an all-prevailing acceptance before the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

This text, then, is a marvelous promise, and it is a sin to neglect its potential for spiritual growth and blessing. What an encouragement for intercessory communion with the Triune God in prayer! Let me cite some words from Charles Haddon Spurgeon. "It has been said by someone that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.

"There is something exceedingly *improving to the mind* in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master-science, finding that our plumb-line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild ass's colt; and with solemn exclamation, "I am but of yesterday, and know nothing." No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God . . . But while the subject *humbles* the mind, it also *expands* it. He who often thinks of God, will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this globe . . . The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ, and Him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.

"And, whilst humbling and expanding, this subject is eminently *consolatory*. Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you drown your cares? Then go, plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in his immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead."

A *new promise*, or "*prayer effectual*" (John 16:24). The last phrase, "in my name," suggests the greatest assurance. He has been accepted; so will we be in Him. Up to this point they had not asked of the Father in His name, for the way through Him was not opened before the blood was shed. A contingent acceptance through the

coming Redeemer and His work was their hope, but now the fullness of redemption and its benefits are to be theirs. Abiding, complete joy shall be theirs also, as they ask and receive from the Father, when they ask in His name. What significance our Lord places on the work of covenantal union!

The construction of the last clause, "that your joy may be full," permits the sense of not only being filled with joy but of remaining filled with joy. "Filled full and remain full" might be a paraphrastic rendering of the verb and participle (cf. 15:11; I John 1:4; 2 John 12).

One might ask, "Why does answered prayer lead to joy?" The most obvious answer is simply this: It is an assurance that God is with us. He is Immanuel, God-with-us, to us, and that is joy-creating.

Many remarkable fulfillments of this magnificent promise could be given. H. A. Ironside tells of one in his work on John. He writes, "I read a remarkable testimony which I think will be a blessing to all who hear it. It had to do with a money matter. Down in Columbia, South Carolina, is located the Columbia Bible College of which Dr. Robert McQuilken is the president. Some time ago they started to buy a large building to be used as a men's dormitory. They put the amount of money needed before the Lord and it came in, and then the next year they were to pay ten thousand dollars on October 1. This letter came telling us that on the last day of September, singularly enough, the balance needed was exactly \$2121.21. They took it to the Lord in prayer, and then went out and opened a little box into which donations had been dropped. When they counted the money put in that morning, it was \$21.21. That left \$2,100.00 to be made up. They had a day of prayer, and as they waited before the Lord that day, from different sources gifts began to come in. The largest gift that morning was one hundred dollars. Later a gift of five hundred was received. By evening they had received in all, exactly \$2,121.22, just one cent more than they needed. What a wonderful bookkeeper God is. He gave all they needed and one cent more toward the next ten thousand dollars."

Dr. Lewis Chafer used to speak often on John fifteen and the union with the believer that our Lord speaks of there under the figure of the vine and the branches. He used to say that Jesus promised *joy celestial* (cf. 15:11), *prayer effectual* (cf. 15:7), and *fruit perpetual* (cf. 15:16). Well, much the same is found here. We have, first, a new joy. Have we realized it?

We have a new relationship to the Father. Have we recognized it? We have a new promise of effectual prayer. Have we exercised it?



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