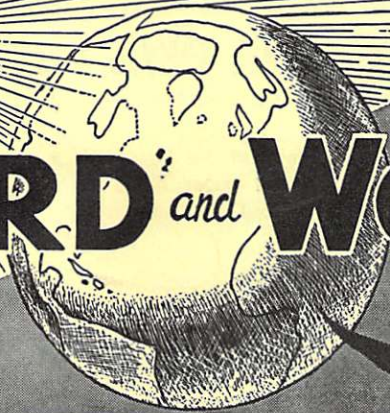


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God's Family

W. R. H.

"LET US NOT REND IT . . ."

When Brother Oginni visited Louisville, to give a report on the fruits of "Words of Life" radio work in Nigeria, we were all impressed by his long white tunic, which immediately distinguished him as from another culture. Tall and straight and forthright he stood, speaking of the many workers and groups of saints that have been gained for the Kingdom as a result of the preaching of the word by radio.

A few years earlier I had the privilege of a retreat to the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani, Kentucky. One of the most impressive things to see was the monk's personal living area, a cubicle 8 feet square, wherein were a board shelf with a thin mat (for sleeping), another smaller shelf that served as a place to write, a chair set before it, and a peg on the wall to hang up his one garment. This was all; no chest of drawers, pictures, footlockers, clock, telephone, or radio, not even a calendar. But there was that peg upon which to hang his one long, black outer garment.

We learn from the gospels that Jesus, too, possessed one particular garment which not only distinguished Him a bit from the rank and file of other men, but also spoke a message of the austere poverty of His earthly ministry. Who do you suppose made that seamless cloak? We can only guess: Mary, His mother, or Martha, or the Magdalene or Salome—who can know? But one thing is certain, it was a suitable covering for the Son of God, as He walked through this sin-cursed earth, proclaiming the gospel. And, even the soldiers, as they parted His garments there on Golgotha, dared not to tear it into bits, but rather cast lots for it, whose it should be. And have you ever wondered which one got it and what he did with it? Surely there was not one among them that could fill it out!

THAT SEAMLESS DRESS

Let's look beyond the wool, the flax, or the cotton of which the garment was spun, and see the spiritual and eternal garment that Jesus wore as He ministered to a needy world in that first century. These were some of the colors woven into His seamless dress: poverty, meekness, compassion, piety, firmness, righteousness, wisdom, a love to teach, to heal, to give, and to share. These and many others were the strands chosen by the Father to robe Him in His vesture of humanity as He would say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." What a privilege that we, as children of God, can be clothed in His righteousness and show forth His winsomeness and glory as we try to point sinners to the Lamb of God!

REND IT NOT

Many have favorites of color or texture, as they feel the majesty

of that garment, however, and tend to focus on one or two components, rather than to grasp the beauty in its entirety. For example, the monks of the Cistercian order, which I mentioned earlier, see Poverty as the chief good to be emulated, and even take a vow of silence, cutting off the joy and power of communication with fellowmen. Why tear away the place for teaching, which is a *must* in the plan of salvation?

Others see piety and modesty as the supreme good, and set up a code of do's and don'ts as they legalize the way of salvation. This is not to say that their code is not well-intended, but there follows a "works" basis of righteousness, rather than the imputed righteousness from the Lord.

Firmness and sternness characterize others, and they would rather teach the commandments and the judgment than the second coming of Jesus. Theirs becomes a bondage of fear—a fear that they may have missed a jot or a tittle somewhere in their law keeping.

Some believe that we ought to suffer just as Jesus did! (which is of course impossible, since His pain was bearing the sins of Mankind) and so they seek out various reproaches, even to instigating them by their "Moonie" and "Jonestown" manners of life. It is not enough for them that "all who would live godly in this life *shall* suffer persecution." We don't have to seek it out.

Hospitality and Liberality are foremost unto many, as they build a religion around a social gospel. The main aim becomes material well-being for all, and that becomes an end in itself. Not believing Jesus, who said, "the poor ye have with you always, but me ye have not always", they center their thoughts on the creature rather than the Creator, who is God-blessed forever. We are told to share with those who are in need, and so we do; but the direst need is the need for the Savior Himself, and until we have taken Christ to the nations, our possessions will do them no eternal good.

Many of us have looked to Jesus' ministry of healing as the answer to the physical ills of all of mankind. Indeed, that day is promised and will soon come. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." Isa. 35:5. This will indeed be Zion's happy future, and we shall all share therein, since the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations. To prove His ability to perform this, He healed the multitudes with whom He came in contact. But divine healing, for all and at all times, would have us all living in this sin-cursed earth on and on, with no one "departing to be with Christ." Healing is glorious, but not as glorious as the life to come.

So, let us not rend the seamless garment of Jesus' exemplary ministry into bits and pieces, but remember that the sum of God's word is truth, and all the facets of Jesus' glory have their importance in the fullness of the message for a more abundant life that will show forth His excellencies, who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

IT SHOWS ME THE LAW IS FAIR. So said groceryman Homer Wilson. One of Homer's neighboring small businessmen, J.R. Righthouse, owner and operator of a hardware store in a rural section of Clark County, Indiana was awakened in the night by the sound of prowlers in his store. Hurriedly dressing and instructing his wife to call the police and his father he rushed out to the store. After his father arrived and blocked the exit to the parking lot, Mr. Righthouse ordered the intruders whom he had discovered to halt. Instead, they began running to their car, which later proved to have been reported stolen, and J.R. fired several shots into the pavement. This, however, did not stop the intruders who entered the car and started to leave. The owner then fired at the car in an attempt to disable it, and one of the shots struck the driver in the head, killing him.

After a police investigation, Clark County Prosecutor Jerome Jacobi decided not to prosecute the store owner. Jacobi said that he wanted to send a signal to would-be criminals and citizens in the "frontier" areas of Clark County because Indiana law allows the use of reasonable force in such circumstances. Jacobi said that he believes that Mr. Righthouse's action was only to prevent an escape. The prosecutor said further that Righthouse was trying to protect his father since the car was speeding toward the exit endangering the father who was blocking it. He points out, too, that Righthouse did not attempt to harm the boys when he first discovered them or even when they were running to get into the car. Another consideration was that citizens and property owners living in those rural areas do not have the same police protection as those in the city.

"I support the right of the armed citizen. On the other hand, we will

have no vigilante justice. People are not permitted to take the law into their own hands. What is reasonable in one situation may not be in another," said Jacobi.

Righthouse said, "I wish I never would have become involved in this."

RIGHT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE ADRIATIC SEA, ALONG ITS WESTERN SHORE, is tiny Albania. This is the only country in the world that is declared by its government to be totally atheistic. Many of its citizens have an Islamic heritage, but in the 1960s the government moved to destroy all forms of religion (Communism excepted). To the east of Albania is a city of Pristina, Yugoslavia, the capital of Kosovo Province, and the home of the world's only church with services in the Albanian language. This province is a stronghold of occultism and sorcery and has more than 2.5 million Albanian-speaking citizens, most of whom are Muslims.

Last summer, after many delays, the Yugoslavian government gave permission for the Albanian believers to begin services in their own building. Now the church's hundred members pray with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, and also that they will be able that they will effectively reach Pristina to train young Albanian believers in the scriptures and then plant churches in surrounding towns and cities. Also lying heavy on their hearts is a prayer burden that the gospel message will cross the mountains into their homeland. Why don't we join with our Albanian-speaking Yugoslavian brothers and sisters in this worthy prayer for the triumph of King Jesus in this land taken captive by Satan.

WE FREQUENTLY HEAR COMPARISONS OF THE WAR CAPABILITIES of the U.S. and the USSR. Here,

taken from Missionary Crusader, are some figures concerning this conflict that are almost wholly overlooked. According to U.S. News and World Report, the United States maintains radio towers in more countries, but Moscow's transmitters are stronger, MORE NUMEROUS, AND CARRY MESSAGES IN many languages. The Soviets have nearly 300 transmitters in dozens of places in the USSR and Bulgaria, while the U.S. has 160 in 20 cities. The USSR has 32 transmitters with 500,000 watts each, the U.S. has four. In total power, the Russians lead the Americans, 100 million or more watts to 29 million. Moscow broadcasts 2,167 hours per week, compared to 1,059 for the U.S. In language broadcasts, the USSR is ahead, 81 to 45. Soviet radio carries nine African languages, the U.S. three. Moscow leads in languages to India, 12 to 3. Perhaps the Soviets feel that they have something of great importance to tell the rest of the world. I don't know about how you feel, but I think these are most startling statistics.

AGAIN FROM THE MISSIONARY CRUSADER, THIS STORY: India's supreme court has ruled that members of "scheduled castes" (formerly called "untouchables") lose their claim to special government aid when they convert to Christianity,—but that they may receive aid if they reconvert to Hinduism. An estimated 144 million people belong to scheduled castes. Shades of the "mark of the beast."

I JUST MUST SHARE THIS ONE FROM MISSIONARY CRUSADER. Six Soviet cosmonauts said they witnessed the most awe-inspiring spectacle ever encountered in space—a band of glowing angels with wings as big as jumbo jets. Cosmonauts Vladimir Solevev, Oleg Atkov and Leonid Kizim said they first saw the celestial being last July, during their 155th day aboard the orbiting Salyut 7 space station. "What we saw," they said, "were seven giant figures in the form of humans, but with wings and mistlike halos, as in the classic depiction of angels. Their faces were round with cherubic smiles." Twelve days later, the figures returned and were seen by three other Soviet scientists, including woman cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya. "They were smiling," she said, "as

though they shared in a glorious secret." And who knows but what they did.

VICTORIOUS COMMANDERS CHOOSE THE CONDITIONS AND LOCATIONS of the battles. "The battle for Nicaragua is not being waged in Nicaragua, it is being waged in the United States," says Tomas Borge, Nicaragua's Interior Minister. And where else but the U.S. Congress. There are several dozen pro-Sandinista members of Congress who have consistently opposed every effort to aid the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. Three Congressmen Reps. Barnes and Miller and Senator Dodd traveled to Managua to meet with Sandanista leader Daniel Ortega in January of 1982. To prepare for their visit, the Sandanista Foreign Ministry drafted a memorandum for Ortega. The document detailed how the Sandanistas would manipulate sympathetic members of Congress. "In the first place," the document began, "we should remember that these persons are friends of our revolution. Both Congressman Barnes and Senator Dodd have questioned and continue to question seriously, firmly and insistently the policies of the Administration with respect to Central America in general and El Salvador and Nicaragua in particular." Noting the crucially important role played by Barnes, the memorandum continued: "It is equally important to remember on this occasion that Congressman Michael Barnes, as chairman of the subcommittee on Inter-American affairs of the House of Representatives, has very special power and influence, out of proportion to that of any other Congressman... for all these reasons, special care should be taken to cultivate his friendship." And so far, this cultivation of friendship with a U.S. Congressman has stood the communist Sandanistas in very good stead. In 1984 Barnes and nine other Congressmen wrote the dictator of Nicaragua a letter apologizing for American foreign policy in Central America and expressing support for the Sandinista regime. Not only that, but they have strengthened their determination that the U.S. will be powerless to oppose the growth of communism in Nicaragua and in all of Central America, but that they will do everything in their power to aid Ortega in the crushing of the opposition by the Contras at home.



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"God's Will Is Perfect"

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses,

*"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."*

It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. (Romans 9:14-18, NIV).

Paul anticipates here, as he does in many places, an objection that others might raise to what he was saying. Because God chose between men even before they were born, some might say that he was unjust in doing that. Such arguments are founded on man trying to reduce God to human terms. If the Scriptures said it, then Paul knew it was the right thing. So when in Exodus 33:19 God says the matter of having mercy and compassion is one of His own choice, Paul knew immediately that that was the absolutely correct way for the choice to be made. O that every Christian would have such a reverence for God and His Word!

To understand the significance of what Paul is saying here and what God meant by His statement and also to apply it to our age and to ourselves, we need to go back to Exodus 33 and see the context of God's statement to Moses. In the preceding chapter the sad story of Israel's idolatry even while at the foot of the "mount of God" and even after all the great mercies God had shown on them and the great miracles He had worked in Egypt and afterwards, including giving them food and water (for up to three million people) every day in a place where they could buy none or raise none or even build wells. In spite of all that, they had made and worshipped a golden calf, saying of it, in the words of Aaron, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." To understand the depravity of human hearts, stop to think that they had just formed the calf of materials they had brought and then said that this is what had brought them there!

Since what all Israel had done was a terrible sin and by the Law deserved death, all the Israelites stood condemned before God.

God would have been just if He had wiped them all out and sent them to the place of suffering. But God is also love, He is merciful, He is kind, and He is every good thing that can be imagined. And since He is also perfect in knowledge, can anyone judge Him as unjust if He decides between the Israelites, condemning some and allowing the great majority another chance by showing mercy and compassion on them? It would have been unjust if any man, even Moses, could have decided who should have mercy, but it was perfect that God made the decision. I am sure that everyone of the Israelites would have liked to have had mercy and probably would have been glad to work for it, but it is not possible for man just by desire or effort to work out his own salvation. But when God decides the question, the judgment is perfect.

Before taking up the subject of God's words to Pharaoh and Paul's application of this, let us remember that every man on the face of the earth deserved condemnation, for everyone is a sinner by birth and by practice. God therefore gave the sentence, looking only at what man did, of condemnation. But His love moved Him to send His Son to take my sins and your sins upon Him and die as our substitute so that we need not perish but have eternal life. I have no idea why He brought His message of salvation to me by His Spirit so that I received the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved—even though much better men than I did not reach that position. But I do know this—when all is made clear to me in Heaven, I will see that what He did was absolutely perfect, praise His Name.

Please do not misread God's words to Pharaoh. God does not say that He brought Pharaoh to life and saw that he lived in order that He, God, might display His power. He is simply saying that He brought this particular Pharaoh into power as head of Egypt at this particular time so that God's power might be shown in His working miracles that judged all the gods of Egypt. If you will read carefully the Exodus account of God's conflict with Pharaoh you will see that Pharaoh's heart was hard ("heavy", according to some authorities) during the beginning of those plagues and God later simply left Pharaoh's heart in that condition so that He could work out all these miracles that would show all the earth that He was the powerful One. Maybe that view of Pharaoh's condition will help you to see that Paul's conclusion (v. 18) is not showing God to be unjust but showing He had the right to do what He did and that it was justice in perfection. I thank God that He is in charge and will praise Him for all eternity for His will. Are you in position to do that? You are if you have placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He can do what you can't do—save you unto eternal life. Yes, you should desire it; yes, you should try for it—but all on the basis of His love, His grace.

On the occasion of writing this hundredth in this series of articles, I would like to thank all of you who have suffered through the 100 articles, the proof readers who have patiently corrected my errors, the type-setters who transferred them onto type suitable for print, and especially to Robert Heid for his editorship of the whole magazine and his own column. Again, to all, I say, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart."



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Is there not a danger of putting too much emphasis on church attendance?

There are very few things which cannot be wrongly emphasized in some way. Even the grace of God can be stressed in such a way as to make God seem to be indifferent to sin. So it is surely quite possible for people to put such an emphasis on church attendance that they press it and other things out of their proper place. This is not to say, however, that every attempt to stress church attendance is a wrong emphasis or that this is one of those matters where every one is a law unto himself.

There is such a thing as a legalistic approach to church attendance which makes it just about the whole measure of the Christian life. According to this view, those who carefully attend every service are regarded as good Christians no matter how they may lead their lives otherwise. These may regard attendance as a sort of good work whereby they qualify for salvation, and they may be very careful to let nothing hinder their attendance. These may be so careful about observing the Lord's Supper that in those cases when they are unable to attend they ask that the Supper be brought to them. (Now not every person who is careful about church attendance or who wishes to partake of the Lord's Supper is a legalist. The motivation for their concern is the determining factor.) We must remember that the Pharisees of Jesus' day were careful about public praying, public fasting, and all those religious acts that gave them status in the eyes of their fellows. They were careful to perform the external acts of religion, but they were severely rebuked as hypocrites by that One who knew their hearts.

No right-thinking, spiritually-minded elder, teacher, preacher, or any other Christian puts the kind of stress on church attendance that makes it the supreme good. In a zeal to see results church leaders may sometimes stoop to tactics which tend toward legalism and a wrong emphasis. There is sometimes a temptation to try to accomplish by law or by the flesh what seems to be difficult to accomplish by grace. The primary concern becomes results, numbers, the big crowd—without proper concern for the motives by which people have acted. When this happens, then, yes, there is a danger of putting too much emphasis on church attendance. God is not pleased with even right acts which are performed for the wrong

reasons. Church attendance in and of itself does not save anyone. It is theoretically possible to set attendance records and die and go to hell.

The indifferent, lukewarm, or half-hearted Christian tends to find too much comfort in the above truths, however. He wants to be able to say that church attendance is no matter of concern, has nothing to do with pleasing God, and is in fact usually a waste of time. It is something to do once in a while when a person feels like it, but one can be just as good a Christian without it. Such is wishful thinking, or perhaps deceived thinking, and is certainly not according to the testimony of God. Immature Christians sometimes assume that since there is no law which says, "Thou shalt meet twice on Sunday and once in the middle of the week," they are free to choose when to go. Just as there is a danger of putting too much emphasis on church attendance, there is also a danger of putting too little emphasis on it and of making one's own feelings and choices the standard.

The New Testament pattern of church attendance is set forth in several ways. We have some clear, specific examples from the apostles and the early church. When the church began on Pentecost a definite pattern of worship was followed. "... They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The first day of the week was not the only time they assembled or worshipped, but it became the practice of the early church to meet each first day of the week (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Such assemblies were not the only work or concern of the church but they were a regular part of the Christian activity. These were times for worship, instruction, and fellowship. Those who would follow the New Testament pattern must include regular times of assembly together as part of their practice.

In Heb. 10:25, Christians are instructed in a negative way in the importance of church attendance. We must not forsake our assembling together. Even in that day some seem to have become disobedient in this matter, but one need have no question what the Lord wants or what is right in His eyes.

In order to achieve some of the things directed by the N.T. we need the assembling together. This affords a time for fellowship and exhortation, which would be difficult to have otherwise. Sharing one another's burdens, instruction in God's word, subjection to elders—these all suggest times of meeting together. Christians need the assemblies and the sharing that takes place therein.

Worship of God is one of the activities in which Christians are to engage. Worship may be on an individual basis, but there is also the sort of worship that calls for the united outpourings of gratitude and praise from God's people met together. People can worship "at home" or "on the lake," etc., but the simple truth is that most do not and that there is a real need for the united, assembled worship.

I do not believe God designed church attendance as some unpleasant task for Christians to fulfil as a legal duty. He made it to be an occasion in which we delight, an occasion of blessing received as well as worship rendered, a means of binding us together and of

uniting our efforts for greater good. These are occasions for our benefit. We can be better Christians because of the help, encouragement, instruction, and sharing. The greater the spiritual dangers about us, the more we need the fellowship of God's people. Some churches may have allowed the ways of the flesh—strife, falsehood, secular concerns, etc.—to so dominate the church assemblies that Christians are not benefitted as they ought to be; but, generally speaking, the disinterest, dislike, and infrequent attendance which characterizes many Christians is a commentary on their own spiritual status. Many will deny this, for to admit that it is the case is not very flattering, but it is nevertheless true. One of the signs of spiritual health and well-being is a right regard for the assembling together of Christians according to the Lord's will. It is not all there is to good Christianity but it is a part of good Christianity.

There are certainly occasions when we cannot meet with the church—serious illness, invalidism, extreme weather, schedules over which we have little or no control, etc.—but for the right-thinking Christian these will be reasons and not excuses. We will be careful to keep our priorities right and will often be able to work around the problem. It is evident the way some people handle the hindrances that they are not concerned with finding a solution. The right-thinking Christian does not attend because he must—or be lost—but because he delights in doing so and thereby finds occasion for expressing his love for the Lord.

Yes, we can put a wrong emphasis on church attendance, but some of the happiest, most spiritual, most fruitful Christians I know are those who "are there every time the doors are open."

127 E. Highland Rd., Johnson City, TN 37601

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE TURN AWAY

A small group of Christian college students were asked to list the adult actions and attitudes they thought are responsible for indifference to the church among their peers. The most frequently listed items were:

1. *Hypocrisy* among men and women who profess to be sincere Christians.
2. *Lovelessness*, often shown by a superior attitude toward young people.
3. *Irrelevance*—a refusal to apply Christianity's implications to leading controversial social and other issues of the day.
4. *Superficiality*—being more concerned about a person's long hair and shabby clothing than about his spiritual needs.
5. *Defensiveness*—acting as if God couldn't get along without our feeble help.
6. *Lack of creativity*—doing things the way they have always been done.
7. *Intolerance* and dogmatism about relatively unimportant matters.
8. *Failure to investigate* what "the opposition" is *really* doing and saying.

Why We Lose Our Students

James W. Reapsome

A four-year study by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research shows a 27 percent decrease in weekly churchgoing among 2,200 young men between the time they were sophomores in high school and freshmen in college.

It would seem that dropping out of the church is one of the major changes most adolescents of today go through in late high school and early college years.

Why?

Here are some possible answers:

- Many people in the church, including teachers and pastors, don't *take the time to listen to young people*. They seem to be more concerned about telling than listening. The church's formal program is based on this kind of indoctrination philosophy, which means the young person is appreciated more if he listens and appreciated less if he asks questions.

At a pastors' seminar dealing with young people, one pastor defended indoctrination as a necessity.

"Young people need to be told," he said. "We don't have time to discuss. There's only so much time available, and there's already more truth to expound than we have time for."

Little did he realize he was cutting his own throat!

Let me share some observations and opinions that I have developed from my experience listening to high school and college young people:

Indoctrination without feedback is a lost cause, because it means that the pastor or teacher has lost his audience. Few young people listen to monologues, no matter how important the truth they contain.

This is not to downgrade preaching and teaching. Both are biblical and are useful to communicate truth. But they are not effective unless the communicator takes the time to listen to those he is ministering to.

Young people have a hunch that the person who talks all the time doesn't really care about *them*. They know he feels strongly about the truth, but does he feel just as strongly about getting to know them as people? If the communicators in churches will take more time to listen and to show that they care about young people, not only will the truth be implanted more effectively, but more young people will be coming to church to find the truth.

- The church loses students because the proclamation of the Gospel is *not related to the actual needs of young people*. The Gospel is proclaimed in the abstract, like a dry, dusty legal journal. Sure, the Gospel concerns heaven and hell—which are legitimate things to be concerned about—but why is our presentation of the Gospel so often limited to concerns of the future rather than to the here and now?

Young people find it tough to think about the future, but they are easily engaged about everyday concerns. The good news that Jesus Christ died and rose again must be connected to those everyday concerns. The abundant life that Jesus Christ talked about is not limited to heaven—it begins at the moment of conversion and it relates to everything in a person's experience. That's what young people want to hear when they go to Sunday School or church.

Of course a young person's primary need is the same as anyone else's. He must make a commitment of trust to Jesus Christ, so that his sins will be forgiven and he can be redeemed from the power of sin, and so that he can one day enjoy the blessings of heaven. But the communicators in church must apply this truth to where a young person hurts.

What needs *does* a young person have?

Well, yes, he needs to be saved. But *then* what?

Certainly the Gospel of freedom from sin has something to say, for example, about drugs, alcohol, and sex. Doesn't it? If Jesus Christ was raised for our justification, does He not live in a young person's life right through the moral tug-of-war that occurs in high school and college?

- The church often loses students simply *by forgetting them*. Church people are very well aware of young people when they're in trouble or when their hair is long or when they come to church in blue jeans. But how important are students in the over-all concerns of the church?

Are students as important as missionaries? As servicemen? If so, why doesn't the pastor remember to pray for them from the pulpit on Sunday morning? If so, why aren't some letters from students used as information for prayer meetings on Wednesday night?

When I was a college chaplain, pastors whose young people were enrolled frequently expressed concern about their students. I answered as best I could, not knowing much about some cases. But then I put the burden on the pastor. Why should the college chaplain be the one to report on how a particular student was getting along, when the pastor could find out very easily for himself? All he had to do was write a letter, make a phone call, or, better yet, visit the student in the dorm.

I never met a pastor who came to the campus to visit the young people from his own church, except at the time of denominational meetings on campus.

On the other hand, I know of a church whose pastor and laymen make it a point to arrange a personal visit with every student away from home. Those students are scattered around the country, but the pastor includes them on his schedule when he is out of town. He asks businessmen from the church to do it also. Those students know they are remembered and appreciated. They are not likely to drop out.

- It seems to me that the church loses some of her students *out of sheer boredom*. This is especially true in cases where the young person has already spent every year of his life in the church.

By the time he's 16 or 17, he's had it with the repetition caused by lack of planning.

Kids drop out not only because the content is repetitious, but also because it is not related to their lives. Students fall by the wayside, first chance they get because they have not been given a voice.

They also choke on the Sunday School lesson and the sermon if the intellectual content is beneath them. Christian communicators have been insulting the intelligence of teen-agers for years.

• Students also drop out of the Church because they feel that *the church misrepresents the university*. Some churches still picture the university as a place filled with godless professors trying to subvert young people. These churches tend to magnify the moral problems of university life.

It is true, of course, that students meet atheists and agnostics. They also meet people who drink, who are on drugs, and who engaged in illicit sex. But is that the total picture? Many students cringe over this misrepresentation because it exposes the church's ignorance about what a university is really like. A university is a microcosm of all of life, really, even with its unique opportunities and pitfalls.

When young Christian college students from a Michigan church were asked to tell a group of pastors what they would like to see in their churches, they emphasized the importance of having pastors, teachers, and church people in general spend some time on campus—not just for concerts, but also for controversial guest lectures.

These Christian young people also asked the pastors to:

Provide a place where students could get to meet other students and adults from the community.

Talk with them about contemporary issues head-on.

Encourage their laymen to make students feel at home by talking with them after church, inviting them to their homes, and being concerned about their problems.

This last suggestion of the students illustrates the fact that the church loses many young people because the latter feel that the church doesn't really care about their personal problems. Oh, yes, the church people can get worked up about co-ed dorms, drugs, and liberal professors, but what about the often lonely and distressed young person who just wants some sympathy and understanding? How does he rate in the church's priorities?

Being dumped into a cold, impersonal university of from 20,000 to 30,000 students is no picnic. Students need all the help they can get. Does the church—that is, her pastor and people—really take the time to care? To care about struggling with grades, with loneliness, with severe moral temptation, with intellectual doubts?

If church people showed some awareness of these real battles, fewer young people would drift away from the Sunday services. With nearly eight million young people going to college, the church faces an uphill battle in terms of keeping up with and ministering to the student generation. But the tide of dropouts can be reversed.

It must be, if the church as we know it is to have a future.

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Hudson Taylor

Harry M. Savacool

A sickly looking man faced three consulting physicians in a London hospital and waited quietly for their verdict. He didn't seem surprised when it came:

"Dr. Taylor, our tests and examinations lead us to tell you that in our opinion you will never be well enough to return to China. Your work there has so undermined your health that it would be madness to think of returning."

"Thank you, gentlemen," said the patient as he arose to go. "I appreciate your interest in me. As to the future, I will leave that to God."

The frail young man, Dr. J. Hudson Taylor, left the hospital uncertain of his next move. It was 1862, a year of slow progress in foreign missions, and Taylor's broken health had forced him to leave China after only seven years of service. To a man of his vision and energy, this seemed a near-calamity.

But Taylor had great faith in the ways of God, and he was already praying that this disappointment would be erased by the enlistment of five new missionaries for China. If he himself could not go, perhaps God would send others in his place.

Taylor was not idle for long. Besides being a physician, he was a skilled linguist, and he and another missionary set about revising the Ningpo version of the New Testament. This took from five to eleven hours a day. He also took up some medical courses and supervised by mail the mission work he had left in Ningpo, a city near the East China Sea. Speaking at church gatherings filled in the spare minutes on his schedule.

While doing translation work, his Bible before him and a large map of China on the wall, Taylor gradually became aware of the desperate plight of idol-worshipping Chinese in isolated areas of Inland China. For all the missionaries in China worked only in the cities along the coast. But the millions who lived in the interior had felt only the slightest touch of the Gospel in bygone years. Taylor brought this spiritual burden to the attention of existing mission boards. They listened sympathetically, but none felt they could expand their work.

The conclusion was inevitable: if no one else would venture among these perishing millions, he, Hudson Taylor, must do it. But Taylor wasn't ready. True, he had faith that God would provide for him and also supply the needed missionaries, but the immense responsibility of directing the activities of a new missionary society staggered him. Yet the burden persisted, becoming heavier and heavier as Taylor contemplated the Chinese dying without Christ. Day and night the unrelieved weight pressed upon him until Taylor's health began to fail from lack of sleep.

A Christian friend, deeply concerned about Dr. Taylor, invited him to vacation at the great seaside resort at Brighton. On Sunday morning they went to church. The great church was thronged with well-dressed, happy people rejoicing in salvation and its blessings.

As he sat looking about at this great congregation enjoying all the benefits of salvation, Taylor could not help contrasting the scene with the tragedy of Inland China's perishing multitudes. The figure of the preacher in the pulpit seemed to be replaced by Christ Himself pleading with hands outstretched for the lost in China.

After the noon meal, Taylor excused himself and wandered out to a lonely spot on the seashore to talk with God. There he came to a great realization: God would not give a command without being responsible for its results, therefore Taylor would trust God for everything and establish the new mission.

A great peace such as he had not known for months flowed into Taylor's heart. Taking up his Bible he wrote on the margin of a page his first petition for God's help in the new task. It was a call for 24 missionaries, two for each of the unreached provinces, including Mongolia.

He hastened from the beach to his friend's home with the light of a great joy upon his face. That very night he began writing a pamphlet, "China's Spiritual Need and Claims."

When he returned to London on Monday he told his wife of his acceptance of the call of God. She was willing and rejoiced with him. They agreed together that he should go to the bank, take their last \$50, and open an account in the name of the China Inland Mission. With this small amount, the great mission was born in 1865.

Things soon began to happen which showed that God was honoring their great faith. Help began to come from every side. One day an envelope bearing the coat of arms of Lord Radstock was received. Tearing it open they found a letter beginning, "I have read your pamphlet and been greatly stirred by it." Enclosed was a contribution of \$500.

It turned out that the most severe test of Taylor's faith was to come from those who were his friends and wished him well in the enterprise but did not share his great faith. Some of them urged him to set up a "guarantee fund" as a reserve to use in case of need. He felt that such a fund would be a renunciation of his faith, something like saying, "This we need to fall back on if God fails us."

Not a person was to be asked to join the China Inland Mission. The mission would ask God to select and call people to volunteer. If they asked for no funds and sought no workers, they could not hurt the work of the regular mission boards.

The response was amazing. So many volunteers came that Taylor had to choose among them to select his 24 workers. As they prayed, money flowed in, and before long he was able to announce that all of the funds needed for equipment and transportation was in hand.

As the time for departure drew near, many people tried to discourage him. Some mentioned his children as a reason for remaining in England.

“How can you dare to go out to the interior of China with four little children?” they said. “With no church behind you to see that funds are sent regularly, you and your children may starve. You will be hundreds of miles from the nearest Europeans. Who will you turn to for help in an emergency?”

His constant reply was, “We are leaving all in the hands of God. He will not forget us. There are plenty of ravens in China, and the Lord could send them again with bread and flesh.”

So the little band set sail for China. Cutting loose from all human resources, they went out trusting in God alone. During the long four-month voyage on the little ship of 800 tons, their Christian living was so contagious that many of the rough crew were converted. It was the first-fruits of the power of their great faith.

In China, the results were the same. Slowly at first, and then in a steady stream, came Chinese eager to find and follow their Saviour. During the 40 years that Hudson Taylor led the march of CIM, the Gospel reached from the nearer provinces on to distant provinces. Taylor suddenly went to be with the Lord in 1905, but CIM, its roots strong and deep despite Boxer persecutions about the turn of the century, continued under God to carry on its great program.

From the start, CIM remained a “faith mission.” It has been supported entirely by free-will offerings and the only solicitation is to God in prayer. When missionaries join, they understand that there is no human guarantee of support. All funds received are distributed after prayer for guidance on the basis of the needs and the amount available.

In times of special need, CIM resorts to special prayer and has always received a special blessing. The mission is backed by a prayer union and hundreds of prayer circles. Volunteers in the homeland are assigned to missionaries as prayer partners.

Answers to prayer have been amazing all through the history of the CIM. In 1875 they prayed for 18 new workers and received 22. In 1881 their petition was for 70 and 73 volunteered. In 1887, an even 100 new workers sailed. Taylor visited the United States in 1888 and helped to open an office from which 14 workers soon sailed. Even in the great Depression years of 1929 and 1930, CIM sent out 200 new workers. All of this was done with never a penny of debt!

CIM held strictly to its policy of working in inland areas. Its workers bypassed coastal cities and penetrated deep into the interior where Christ was not known.

More than 1,200 CIM workers dotted China’s vastness when the Communists swept over the land after World War II and began their ruthless attacks upon Christianity. It became evident that the missionaries’ presence was handicapping the growth of the Christian Church in China. Reluctantly CIM began to withdraw its devoted members, but their living memorials, the Chinese Christians, prove the sacrifices were not in vain.

CIM left China, but continued its God-given mission to the Chinese. Under its new name, Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the

missionaries reach out to the 16 million Chinese in Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Nationalist China, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. But they minister to all the peoples in these lands, not just the Chinese. The pioneering spirit and triumphant faith of founder Hudson Taylor is very much alive today; in fact, his great-grandson is its present director. With their eyes on Christ, the missionaries of the OMF are marching on to new victories in winning men and women of Asia to Christ.

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Treasures From Hudson Taylor

Deep thirst for more of God's transforming power: Though Hudson Taylor had been a missionary in China for fifteen years, and accomplished much for the Lord, he suffered intense dissatisfaction with himself. He wrote to his mother in England,

"I have often asked you to remember me in prayer. My need has never been greater than at present. Envied by some, despised by many, hated by others, often blamed for things I had nothing to do with, an innovator on what have become established rules of missionary practice, often sick in body as well as perplexed in mind—had not the Lord been specially gracious to me, I must have fainted or broken down. But the battle is the Lord's, and He will conquer.

"But I continually have to mourn that I learn so slowly to imitate my precious Master. I cannot tell you how I am buffeted sometimes by temptation. I never knew how bad a heart I have. Yet I know that I love God and His work, and I value above all else that precious Saviour in whom alone I can be accepted."

Inner Struggles: Not too long afterwards he wrote a letter to his sister,

"My mind has been greatly exercised for six or eight months past, feeling the need personally and for our Mission of more holiness, life, power in our souls. But personal need was the greatest. I felt the danger and sin of not living nearer to God.

"Every day the consciousness of sin oppressed me. I would begin the day with prayer, determined not to take my eye off Him for a moment. But pressure of duties, sometimes very trying, and constant interruptions apt to be so wearing, caused me to forget Him. Then one's nerves get so fretted in this climate that temptations to irritability, hard thoughts and sometimes unkind words are all the more difficult to control. Every day brought its register of sin and failure, of lack of power.

"There was nothing I so much desired as holiness; but far from attaining it, the more I strove after it the more it eluded my grasp, until hope itself almost died out.

"I would give you the impression that this was the only experience of those long, weary months. Sometimes there were seasons not only of peace but of joy in the Lord; but they were transitory, and at best there was a sad lack of power.



GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles

THE CHRIST OF FIRST JOHN

The Christ of First John is no mere great teacher, or prophet, or moralist, or humanitarian, but is the true God and eternal life manifested in the flesh and person of Jesus of Nazareth. "My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (5:21). Any other Christ is an idol-man-made.

—H.L. Olmstead

USE AND PERUSE THE WORD

Use the Word and it becomes a sword against the devil. Peruse the Word and it becomes bread unto your soul. We should do both.

—Selected

THERE'S A HILL LONE AND GRAY

There's a hill lone and gray, in a land far away,
In a country beyond the blue sea,
Where beneath that fair sky, went a man forth to die,
For the world, and for you, and for me.
Behold, faint on the road, 'neath a world's heavy load,
Comes a thorn-crowned man on the way;
With a cross He is bowed, but still on through the crowd,
He's ascending the hill lone and gray.
Hark, I hear the dull blow of the hammer swung low:
They are nailing my Lord to the tree!
And the cross they upraise, while the multitudes gaze
On the blest Lamb of dark calvary.
How they mock Him in death, to His last lab'ring breath,
While His friends sadly weep by the way!
But though lonely and faint, still no word of complaint
Fell from Him on the hill lone and gray.
Then the darkness came down, and the rocks rent around,
And a cry pierced the grief-laden air!
'Twas the voice of our King, Who received death's stark sting
All to save us from endless despair.
Let the sun hide its face, let the earth reel apace,
Over men who their Savior have slain!
But behold, from the sod, comes the blest Lamb of God
Who was slain but is risen again!

—Carradine

Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

RELIABLE RECORDS?

Anne Scott

"I get tired of you Christians!" Henry got up from the table with an air of disgust, "You're always saying, 'The Bible says. . .', 'The Bible says. . .', as if that were the answer to every question. But as far as I'm concerned, that's just where the *questions* begin! Naturally if any of us believed for a minute that that collection of Eastern stories and mystical sayings really *was* true, we'd all have become Christians years ago. But that's just what I can't accept. It seems to me that even if there was such a person as Jesus Christ all the real facts about him will have been lost without trace by now, and even if the New Testament did once tell something accurate about him the whole record must have been changed beyond recognition in the two thousand years since then. It always seemed funny to me that supposedly intelligent university students seem to throw their intellects overboard when it comes to talking about the Bible!"

"But . . ." Ed, the Christian Fellowship president, groped for suitable words, but with the sinking feeling that he didn't know what to say. Then he noticed with relief that Dr. Stivers, the biology professor, had come into the cafeteria. "Doc," as everyone called him, was a mature Christian and also popular with the students for his friendliness. He noticed Henry and Ed.

"Hi, fellas. What's up?"

"Well, sir," said Henry a little less fiercely, "It seems to me that no idea can be stronger than its basic premise. Now, as I understand it, the basic source of what you Christians call the truth about Jesus Christ is the Bible, isn't that right? My question is, just how reliable is the Bible? If I can't be clear about that, then I'm not prepared to believe in your Jesus, no matter how many meetings you take me to!"

"All right, Henry, why don't you sit down and just ask me some of those questions that are burning in your mind, and I'll do my best to answer you? Your quite right, you know, about basic premises being important. There are some mighty funny systems of thought in the world today, religious and otherwise, and they're usually quite logical if only you are prepared to accept an invalid basic presupposition. We can ask searching questions like this about the Bible and we don't need to be afraid that it won't stand up to our questionings. Now, what's your first query?"

ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

"Where did the Bible come from? I mean, did it just drop out of the sky? or was it written on gold plates by an angel and then someone was given a special pair of spectacles so that he could read it, as the Mormons say about their book of Mormon?"

Doc laughed. "No, Henry, it was written down by hand by ordinary men like us. You know that there are two parts to the

Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was mostly written in Hebrew and it was completed by about 400 B.C. though some of the books in it may have been written as early as 1300 B.C. The books of the New Testament were all written within the first century A.D. and were circulated separately at first and then, as men who had actually known the Lord Jesus and could speak at first hand about Him, died off, these letters and records were collected together and used more and more in the Churches. The first formal pronouncement by a Church council about which books were felt to be authoritative was not made until the 4th century A.D. but all of these books had been read and used in the Churches for a long time before that."

EXCITING DISCOVERIES

"But all that is more than a thousand years ago. Paper and ink are so unendurable and there must have been wars and fires. How could we possibly still have accurate versions of the original texts?"

"Yes, I know that it seems unlikely, but do you know how many ancient manuscripts we have for the New Testament alone? About 4,600! All of these were written or, rather, copied before the 10th century and the most important ones date from the 4th century and earlier. In the John Rylands library in Manchester there is a tiny fragment of papyrus containing a part of John's Gospel which was actually written down within a hundred years of Jesus' resurrection. I wonder what other ancient works of literature in either the East or the West could claim such early manuscript evidence? The whole story of the discovery of these ancient texts is terribly exciting. Maybe you have heard how in 1859 a German theologian, von Tischendorf, was visiting an ancient monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai and there to his astonishment discovered "by chance" one of the most precious parchment manuscripts of the Bible, the famous 'Codex Sinaiticus' which dates from the 4th century A.D. and contains the New Testament and parts of the Old. It's still in a good state of preservation and if you ever go to London you can see it there in the British Museum."

"People are always referring to the Dead Sea Scrolls. What exactly were those and what was so important about them?"

"That's an exciting story too—in the early summer of 1947 a Bedouin shepherd boy found in a cave near the Dead Sea eight large jars containing scrolls. These manuscripts included many copies of Old Testament books, and radiation and other tests proved that they had been placed there about 66 A.D. although they had been written many years before the birth of Christ. Why were they important? Well, previously, the accepted text for the Old Testament in Hebrew had been one which had been painstakingly corrected, annotated and 'vocalized' (written Hebrew doesn't have any vowels) in the 7th century A.D. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls had reduced by at least one thousand years the time gap between the original writing and the oldest surviving manuscripts! And even then there were hardly any significant differences from the text we had always used."

MISTAKES?

"You mean, that there *were* some mistakes? If they just copied things down by hand, there are sure to have been many errors. I know how different my notes in classes are from anyone else's!"

"Yes, sometimes a scribe could copy something down wrongly or miss out a word or write it twice—the study of this phenomenon is a really large and specialized field. But generally speaking, we can usually discover the original version by comparing the thousands of copies we have. Also, they were much more fussy about copying the Scriptures than we are about lecture notes. Do you know that the ancient Jewish scribes used to count not only the number of words, but also the number of letters in a whole book and then find out both the middle word and the middle letter and woe betide the poor copyist whose reckoning didn't come out right! Our English versions of the Bible are all based on these original Greek and Hebrew texts and they are frequently revised in the light of modern scholarship. But the changes and improvements are very slight—we can rest assured that the Bible as we have it now in whatever language we use is a pretty accurate reproduction of the original Scriptures. But I wonder if this is what is really worrying you, Henry? Your questions go a bit deeper than this, don't they?"

IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

"How do we know that what the Bible says is true?"

"I know what you mean. It would be nice to know that we had an accurate copy of "The Arabian Nights" but even then they would still just be imaginary stories and nobody would be asked to commit his life to one of the characters in the book?"

"Yes, it's what the Bible *says* that bothers me, especially when people get so serious about it. It's just a collection of legends and stories with a few moralistic and mystical bits added on, as far as I can see."

"Well, that's for you to decide on the basis of the evidence. But at least half of the Bible, that is, the first half of the Old and the first half of the New *claim* to be straight history, and the rest, that you call the moralistic and mystical parts, are a bit like kites; they may be flying to great heights of spiritual aspiration, but they're also firmly anchored to an actual situation. Most of the Old Testament prophets wrote during situations of great national danger; Paul immediately after a 'mystical bit' ('I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . .') goes straight on to say, 'When you come, bring the cloak I left at Troas, also the books'. That too sounds like a real life situation to me."

"But I have heard that even some Christian theologians don't believe all that about Israel in the wilderness, and the miracles of Jesus. They say they are just folk myths."

"Yes, that's true—there are many so-called theologians and many of them are sincerely honest men, who deny the historicity of many

of the stories. But in most cases, this comes back to what we were saying earlier about premises and presuppositions. Naturally if you are not prepared to admit that the Jews were originally monotheists instead of polytheists, you'll say that most of the Book of Genesis was made up years later and doesn't represent real history. If you refuse to admit the possibility that even God can act sovereignly in the universe He created, then all the miracles of Jesus and the other Bible miracles must be mere fiction. There are quite a few Christians even now who make up their minds first what the Bible is saying and they try to make the evidence fit in with their interpretations."

"What about archaeology and all that? Could you use that to prove the Bible?"

"I'd prefer to put it the other way, and say that the Bible record can often help scholars understand the meaning and significance of their archaeological finds. But certainly some recent discoveries have made the Biblical critics of a few years ago look a bit silly. For instance, people used to look down on Luke, the author of Acts, as an ignoramus because of the odd term he used to describe the Roman official in Philippi. But actually it's recently been discovered that this special term *was* used exclusively in Philippi—it was Luke who was right all along."

DID JESUS EXIST?

"What about Jesus, then? How can we know that there ever was such a person?"

Doc's eyes twinkled, "Well, I could say—because the Bible says so! But there are other evidences too, such as the fact of the rise of the Christian Church from the most notoriously conservative race of people in the world, the Jews, and under the nose of the most ruthless despots of the ancient world, the Romans. I'm no classical scholar, but would you like to hear the words of one who is? Professor Blaiklock of Auckland University in New Zealand says in his little booklet (entitled *'Myth or History?'*)—"I have taught ancient history all my life; my approach to classics is historical; I have read and read again the documents of the world of Greece and Rome. And I tell you that I find the evidence for the unique life of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, better authenticated than most of those facts of ancient history which I teach with some confidence in class and lecture rooms."

REASON FOR AUTHENTICITY

"Hm-m-m. Doc, time's going by. Could I ask you just one more question? Why do you believe the Bible's true?"

"I can give you three reasons. And the first is what we've just been talking about, the historical and intellectual reasons. And along with that I should put what J.B. Philips describes as 'the ring of truth' in the Bible stories. You take the stories of the intrigues in David's court in Samuel and Kings or the stories in Luke or in one of the other gospels. Does this really smack to you of myth (or perhaps you haven't read enough myths to distinguish them)? And, remember, the

novel hadn't been invented at this time—the only contemporary stories that are as vivid and artless as these are *true* stories. If they were just made up to deceive then the deception would have been a bit more expert and there wouldn't be divergencies in some of the Gospel accounts, for instance. As far as I can see, these tittle discrepancies are proof of genuineness. No, personally, I find nothing intellectually unacceptable in the proposition that the God Who created our eyes and minds and gave us the faculties of speech should be able and willing to communicate with His creatures through those same means, enlightening the minds of those who wrote these remarkable pieces of literature and marvellously preserving them for us."

"What would your second reason be, then, Doc?"

"Could I describe it as the 'Realism' of the Bible? I've never read another book whose view of the world and of human character so exactly fits the facts as I see them. Someone once said that the only explanation for the world of nature as we observe it is that it was created perfect but is now under a curse. This is exactly what the Bible affirms. We think of people in terms of black and white—but the Bible shows us how 'a man after God's heart' like King David can sink to the lowest depths of vileness and wickedness, and it was the Lord Jesus and His apostles who showed the infinite possibilities for good in even the most depraved man or woman. An agnostic looking at this present world situation must be in despair. A reader of the Bible is distressed too, but he has hope because he knows that even this is no surprise to God, and that the final issues are in His hands."

"My third reason? It's a personal one, and I must say that it is the one that came to me first, long before I was particularly familiar with the Bible or had had a chance to study the intellectual problems. It's because somehow the Bible speaks to *me* with a strange power and authority and compulsiveness. Six words spoken once in middle school days which rang in my thoughts for four years before as a first year university student I personally surrendered to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. They were "for He is faithful Who promised . . ."—they continually haunted and challenged me; it was as if God Himself were speaking to me. And I now believe that that was indeed what was happening. And now I am going to show you a verse of Scripture, Henry, and I pray that it will penetrate to the *root* of your doubts. It is found in John chapter 7 verse 17 and it is an utterance of the Lord Jesus Himself. He said, 'If any man's will is to do His will, He shall know whether the teaching is from God'."

It looks as if we're talking about presuppositions again, doesn't it, Doc?"

"Well, about conditions, anyway, Henry. Are your difficulties really intellectual or are they basically concerned with what you are or are not willing to do? If anyone were to admit the truth of the Bible, as you yourself said at the beginning, then he is conscience bound to obey it and to commit himself to it. And because we are proud and independent beings it is often more convenient to use

intellectual queries to hide our own basic unwillingness to submit to God's estimate of us and His plans for us. That's worth pondering, isn't it?" —From *The Way* magazine

Books for Further Study:

The New Testament Documents, by F.F. Bruce; Eerdmans.

Know Why You Believe, by Paul Little; Inter-Varsity Press.

Can I Trust the Bible?, by Vos; Moody Press.

Evidence that Demands a Verdict, by Josh McDowell; Campus Crusade for Christ.

Have We Grieved the Heavenly Dove?

T. E. Randall

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Ephesians 4:30

Addressed as it is to Christians collectively, this apostolic command needs to be heard by God's people today in the spirit of obedience. We affirm this because the evidence points to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit of God may have been grieved by what is taking place in the Church of the 1980's.

We ask seven sobering questions in order that Christians may consider the evidence for themselves and be driven to pray for the renewal of the Spirit's work and ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ.

We begin with a question that is fundamental to the Spirit's relationship to the Church. *Have we grieved the Holy Spirit by not giving Him the recognition He deserves as the Father's gift to the Church?*

This is the point at which the Puritan preacher and author Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) began his great work on the Holy Spirit. "There is," he wrote, "a general omission in the saints of God, in their not giving the Holy Ghost that glory that is due to His person, and for His great work of salvation in us, insomuch that we have in our hearts almost lost this third Person"

It may be thought this is not the case in 1980. Take, for example, books on the Holy Spirit? The answer to that question is yes and no. Yes, there are scores of books relating to the Holy Spirit, but the majority of these are historical and/or polemical.

That is to say, the literature on the person and work of the Spirit appearing today is narrowly conceived and basically controversial. Authors are anxious to defend a particular position with regard to the gifts of the Spirit.

But while there is a need for competent exegetes to share their investigations into this aspect of pneumatology, the Church needs books of a more general nature dealing with the total subject of the Spirit of God.

Thus the answer to the question is both yes and no. Yes, there are many books on the Holy Spirit. No, in the sense that too many of these books are taken up with controversy.

A cartoon is created by taking one aspect of a person and deliberately exaggerating that one feature. In focusing on the charismatic

gifts to the virtual exclusion of the rest of the biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit, what we have is not a portrait but a caricature.

It is our conviction that the teaching of the Lord Jesus on the Holy Spirit in John 13-16 lays the foundation for the rest of the New Testament teaching relating to the Spirit's present work. This teaching is both foundational and seminal. By isolating Paul's teaching on the Spirit's gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12-14, from this seedbed of teaching we have created an image of the Spirit's ministry that is not longer Christ-centered or biblically correct.

We have focussed on what is being presently written about the work of the Holy Spirit because books are often an indication of the mind and mood of the Church. If we are to judge the recognition being given to the Spirit of God by current titles, we would have to conclude that the Church is suffering from a one-sided—and therefore inadequate—doctrine of the Spirit.

Our second question is just as searching. *Have we grieved the Holy Spirit by maintaining an orthodoxy of doctrine that is not accompanied by the power of the Spirit?*

Fundamental Christians in North America are proud of their heritage. During the great fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920's and 1930's, Bible-believing Christians held fast to the "form of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13). They lost control of the major Protestant denominations along with the colleges and seminaries, but they passed on the fundamentals of the Christian Faith to the next generation.

Yet it is sadly possible to have a form of godliness—even a form of orthodoxy—and to deny the power thereof (see 1 Timothy 3:5). We may defend the Faith, but manifest no holiness of life or godliness of heart.

How pathetic to see a church proudly maintaining the great doctrines of the Faith—the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of the Blood of Calvary and other fundamentals—while at the same time knowing nothing of the power of the Spirit of God in the transformation of life!

It is not a matter of either true doctrine or abundant life. True doctrine is important. We must know what we believe. We must have strong convictions with regard to the fundamental truths of the Bible.

Our point is this: We may be able to articulate and formulate an entire systematic theology. We may be able to grasp the whole sweep of redemptive history. We may be very exact in our exegesis and interpretation of Scripture.

But all this without the life and power of the Holy Spirit is deadening. Indeed, often the reason the second and third generations of Christians reject the theology and rebel against the authority of their parents and grandparents is that they have seen a rigid orthodoxy minus the abundant life promised by Jesus to His disciples. As a result there has been a lack of holiness of life, a loss of love—a right creed without a right conduct.

We are pleading for both aspects—a right theology and a holy life. There is no argument against that combination.

Trace that combination in Paul's letters. In Ephesians 1, for example, he prays that his readers may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe (verse 17-19). Here are intellectual, moral and spiritual elements. Paul wants his readers to know these things not academically, but actually in their lives.

We turn now to the sad division among us as evangelical Christians. We ask: *Have we grieved the Heavenly Dove by permitting and promoting divisions in our midst over secondary matters?* Are we fighting major battles over minor issues?

We must learn to distinguish between "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3) and "the unity of the Faith" (4:13). The former is a present possession that we must cherish and cultivate (Paul's exhortation is: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit"). The latter is an ultimate goal toward which we must advance (Paul's statement is: "Till we all come in the unity of the Faith").

Difficult as it may be at times, it is possible then to maintain the unity of the Spirit while at the same time we may not yet be together in the unity of the Faith. In this way the Word of God will be fulfilled: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

With caution and compassion we would pinpoint several subjects that are presently being debated in such a way that the result is often division rather than the fostering of unity.

There are those who are making loyalty to the exact text of the present *King James' Version* of the Bible to be the test of loyalty to the Word of God and to Christ. Often those who are inadequately equipped to discuss the whole subject of biblical manuscripts and translations seek to foist and force their views on others, and when not accepted, brand their fellow-Christians as being unsound on the doctrine of Scripture.

To such we say: We are wholeheartedly committed to the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures in the original autographs. We accept the authority and the inerrancy of Scripture without any equivocation. We think it regrettable, however, that any Christian should adopt a position that puts the process of translation virtually into a deepfreeze by appealing to the wording of the *Authorized Version*, majestic and noble though it may be, as the exact equivalent of the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Besides, the wording of a 1980 *King James Bible* is not the exact equivalent of the 1611 first printing!

By all means let us discuss together these matters, not with a judgmental spirit, or from a know-it-all standpoint. And while we discuss them, let us seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit lest, even in the act of discussing them, we grieve the One who inspired the Scriptures.

Healing is another controversial subject that has divided God's people. Endless and erudite discussions seek to resolve questions hoary with age: Is healing in the Atonement of Christ? Does God will to heal all? Is faith the only condition for receiving healing?

These, and other questions, are constantly being debated.

But are we not in danger by our attitude toward and assaults on fellow-Christians, of quenching His working when we become hostile toward one another over such matters?

We are reminded of a story from Canadian history.

When the English and French were at war in Quebec, Admiral Phipps was put in charge of the British fleet. He had been given orders to anchor outside Quebec, await the coming of the British land forces, and then proceed against Quebec in a joint attack.

Phipps arrived early, and, being an ardent nonconformist, he was greatly annoyed by the statues of the saints which adorned the roof and tower of the Roman Catholic cathedral. So he spent his time shooting at them with the guns of his ships. How many he hit we do not know, but this fact history does record: when the infantry arrived and the signal for attack was given Admiral Phipps found himself out of ammunition. He had used it shooting at the saints!

May God deliver us from shooting at His people!

At the risk of being considered narrow-minded, we must raise a fourth issue. *Have we grieved the Holy Spirit by revising moral and ethical standards through the pressure of the world-system around us?*

We recognize that fundamentalists in the past have drawn up lists of taboos and used these lists legalistically, condemning mercilessly those who did not cross their t's and dot their i's in precisely the same way.

The pendulum seems to have swung, however, entirely to the other extreme. Christian leaders now say that we should not interfere in the personal life of the Christian. We are told that we should not seek to regulate any aspect of the believer's life lest we introduce a system of bondage.

Under this umbrella, Christians are adopting habits that used to be identified with the world-system. They are allowing the world to squeeze them into its mold.

We give social drinking as an illustration of this trend. In many evangelical circles, both in North America and in Britain, it was the practice of believers who desired to please God and to avoid giving offence either to the unsaved or to the weaker Christians to abstain completely from alcoholic drink.

This standard is no longer being maintained in some churches. Christians are now permitted to drink—provided it be with moderation. European customs are referred to in defense of such a change.

But, we ask, have we not grieved the Holy Spirit in revising our standards in this way? "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). That is still God's directive to His children, and we are convinced that the only way for many to avoid drunkenness is to avoid drinking. Thus we would argue for total abstinence as the standard for all believers.

Divorce, too, is an area where the Church is in danger of grieving the Holy Spirit. The world-system has made marriage a merry-go-round where couples are free to get off and on. The dan-

ger facing the Church is to open the door of divorce too wide. While dealing with couples facing marital problems in a spirit of consideration and compassion, the leaders of the Church must hold the husband and wife to the highest standards possible.

Problems in the area of marriage are not easily solved, but we must let it be known through our preaching and through our counselling that we are seeking to maintain biblical standards rather than being swayed by the world-system around us.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of purity. The Thessalonian believers Paul wrote: "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 4:7, 8). We grieve the Holy Dove when we indulge in any form of impurity.

It is clear from the teaching of the New Testament that individual impurity or immorality directly affects the other members of the local church (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 5). That is why we may grieve the Heavenly Dove if we do not deal with the sins of individual members of the Body.

Our next question also relates to the gathering of God's people. We ask *Have we grieved the Holy Spirit by losing sight of the greatness and majesty of our God as we assemble together as His people?*

We recognize that the New Testament does not set down in legalistic fashion rules and regulations for church services. The prevailing attitude in some churches today is informality. "Come as you are." "Do your own thing. These are the encouragements given to people who sometimes would prefer to be on the golf course or beside the sea rather than in church.

In some churches the sermon has been replaced by discussion groups; the great hymns of the Church replaced by meaningless "pop" songs that have little Bible content; the reverence and respect due to the name of God replaced by a gaiety that is born of the flesh.

In the worship services of the Church we must seek to maintain the balance of exulting in the freedom of access that we have into the presence of God and emphasizing the greatness and glory of the God we worship.

The New Testament does not prescribe the manner of our approach to God, but surely it should always be characterized by godly fear and holy joy. That great English expositor, Charles Fox, stated the truth well when he wrote: "Holy freedom which ignores holy fear is a freedom itself to be feared at all times."

It has been the glory of the Reformed churches that the pulpit has been central in the church, and the preaching of the Word at the heart of the worship service. We hear Christians complaining that there are few great preachers of the Word today, but have we not contributed to that tragic fact by minimizing preaching, by restricting the time given for the exposition of the Scripture, by demanding that sermons be topical in their content? Great preaching is cultivated in churches where the ministry of the Word is prized; in that kind of an atmosphere a preacher blossoms and gives his best.

Of course, there must be times for testimony and sharing. In some churches no opportunity is ever given for the individual participation of members. The same few pray at prayer meetings; the same "elect" run the business meetings.

There must be a happy combination of the traditional and the contemporary. In that direction lies the possibility of preserving an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit is not grieved.

Many Christians lament the Laodicean condition of the Church. They are disturbed by the decline of church membership (especially in Britain). They grieve over the lukewarmness of so many Christians. *But have we as God's people grieved the Holy Spirit by failing to pray for revival?*

Once upon a time there were prayer meetings exclusively for revival. Little groups of Christians met on a weekly basis to pray down God's blessing upon His people. In the words of the psalmist they cried out: "Visit this vine" (Psalm 80:14).

But this is a thing of the past. To speak of special prayer for revival is sometimes to be branded as a fanatic. To gather together as a remnant of God's people is to create suspicions that such Christians are pretending to be holier than others.

That God wants to revive His people is clear from the Bible. Promise after promise is given to encourage us to pray in faith for revival.

We sometimes compare circumstances today with Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (see Ezekiel 37:1-14). In Ezekiel's case he was commanded by God to pray for the Breath or Wind from Heaven to give life to the corpses that were reassembled by God's power. In fact, he was given the prayer he was to offer: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (37:9). What was the result?" "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (37:10).

If Ezekiel had been disobedient to the divine command, he would have grieved the Holy One of Israel. But he obeyed, and there was great blessing as a result of the advent and activity of the Wind of Heaven.

We, too, need to pray for the Breath of revival. We, too, must lay hold of God for the moving and manifestation of His power. Revival is possible, but it will only come through the united prayers of God's people.

One of the results of a work of revival in the Church is an increased vision of a lost world and an increased zeal to spread the Gospel throughout the earth. Our last question relates directly to the missionary work of the Church. *Have we grieved the Holy Spirit by neglecting the missionary expansion of the Church throughout all nations?*

In his valuable book on the Spirit's work, Dr. A. J. Gordon, in a way that perhaps no one else has done, has shown us the relationship of the Holy Spirit to missions. Writes Dr. Gordon: "Nowhere is the hand of the Spirit more distinctly seen than in the origination and

superintendence of missions." Indeed, as Dr. Richard B. Gaffin states in a recent book, "The Spirit of Pentecost is the Spirit of mission."

If the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of revival, then it will come as no surprise to us to know that whenever God's people have been awakened they have immediately undertaken the work of missions. Responding to the voice of the Spirit, they have immediately discerned what is the mind of the Spirit, and that mind is the evangelization of the world.

In some churches missions are indeed kept prominently before the minds of God's people, but generally this is not so. Great areas of the world, including Europe, are without missionaries of the Cross. Some churches have not had a missionary candidate go from their ranks for years. Some Bible colleges are losing their original emphasis on the preparation of missionaries.

We ask, therefore: Are we not grieving Him who is the Administrator of the missionary work of the Church by neglecting to undertake our responsibility for the spread of the Gospel? Are we failing in missionary involvement, missionary intercession, and missionary investment to cooperate with the Spirit of missions?

If, after exposing our hearts to these searching questions, there is a recognition and a confession on our part that we have indeed grieved the Heavenly Dove, then let us repent immediately. Let us pray with William Comper:

"Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast."

In our repentance there is hope of our restoration.
—from *Praire Overcome*, Sept. 1980.

Southeastern Christian Education Corporation

In March of 1983, Southeastern Christian Education Corporation officially came into existence. According to its articles of incorporation, the stated purpose and object of the corporation is the promotion of Christian Education and the training of men and women for Christian service. This purpose is being accomplished through grants and scholarships from the earnings off the funds that were left from the final dissolution of Southeastern Christian College.

When all indebtedness was paid off, and all affairs of the college were settled, there was a lump sum of approximately \$156,000 available for investment. From March of 1983 until December of 1985, that amount has grown to nearly \$170,000. In addition to that growth, \$14,520 has been awarded to students for Christian education at PCS Biblical Studies, Bryan College, and Immanuel School of Religion.

The corporation is currently composed of eighteen board members, and is open to members being added upon the recommendation of his or her church. The board has an annual meeting in August, usually in conjunction with the Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. At this meeting new members may be added to the board.

Those who would like more information on the corporation, or who have specific questions may direct their inquiries to the secretary. Brother Victor Broaddus is now serving in that capacity, and his address is: 2035 Cummins Ct. Apt. #6, Lexington, KY 40504.

—Terry Morrison, V.P & Treasurer

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