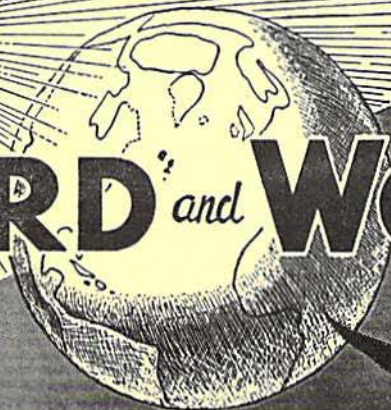


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The WORD and WORK



"Holding forth the Word of life."

JULY, 1990

Can We Still Trust The Bible?

"Christ's attitude toward the Old Testament was one of total trust. Nowhere, in no particular, and on no subject did he place Scripture under criticism. Never did he distinguish truth 'in faith and practice' from veracity in historical and secular matters, and he told the Evil Foe in no uncertain terms that man lives 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

"To his apostles, under whose scrutiny the New Testament would be written, he promised his Holy Spirit, who 'shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'"

—John Warwick Montgomery

"As far as I'm concerned, the liberal theologians can keep their historical Jesus and their cut-and-paste Bible. I am a former alcoholic and adulterer set free by the power of the living Jesus Christ. Who cares about 'higher criticism' when the resurrected Son of God can transform you here and now?"

—From a letter written to TIME Magazine

The Anvil of God's Word

*Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.*

*"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."*

*"And so," I thought, "The Anvil of God's Word
For ages sceptic blows have beat upon,
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."*

John Clifford

NEWS AND NOTES

125th Anniversary:

1990 marks the 125th year of the Lilly Dale Church of Christ. Our revival meeting is planned Aug. 13-19 beginning at 7:00 p.m. each evening with Bro. Nick Marsh as our evangelist. A basket dinner is planned after the morning worship services on the 19th and a homecoming service that afternoon. Everyone is always welcome to worship the Lord with us and to fellowship with us. Perhaps you have worshipped or ministered at Lilly Dale sometime in the past. We would especially appreciate your presence.

A display of photographs, news articles and notes of the history of Lilly Dale is planned.

Come and join us. You will be a blessing to us and we trust you will receive a blessing.

—Sharle Sutcliffe, reporter

Gallatin Church of Christ

Our elders are pleased to announce the appointment of Barry J. Fowler to the position of minister of youth and education effective June 1, 1990. As most of you know he has been our song leader for several months and active in our work in other ways. Barry is 26 years old and single.

His degree is in music and he has been choral director at Gallatin High School for the past three years. Upon

feeling God's call to go into full-time ministry, he applied for this position. A good idea from Gallatin's new youth minister:

Dear Parents,

I want you to know that I will make myself available to you and your family. I am a firm believer in building relationships with the immediate family as well as the church family. We will be having quarterly meetings for Parents only to discuss problems, experiences, hopes, solutions, and to discuss upcoming events. Bring your ideas and suggestions!

K - 6 Parents—July 8

7 - 12 Parents—July 12

Your truly, Barry Fowler

MINISTERIAL CELEBRATIONS:

On June 9, two wonderful couples, veterans in serving the Lord, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries. Orell and Frances Overman actually were married on June 7, but held their celebrations on the 9th in Louisville and the 10th at the Pleasant Grove Church in Switz City, Ind.

Bruce and Irene Chowning are the other celebrants. Both these couples have often experienced God's faithfulness to them, and in return have shown exemplary faithfulness not only in their

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

Can We Still Believe the Bible?

Alex V. Wilson

Let me tell you about three friends of mine. All are born-again followers of King Jesus. They attended three different colleges in Kentucky during this recent school year—Kentucky, part of “the Bible belt.” And each of them enrolled in a religion class.

Friend A. studied “Introduction to New Testament Studies” in a college with a Protestant heritage. Among other things, the instructor said something like this: “Maybe Jesus himself never claimed to be the Messiah. Maybe that claim actually was just an interpretation made up by some of his followers later. As the Church developed its theology, it ascribed to Jesus lots of beliefs and claims which he himself never made.”

The instructor also said, “There’s no evidence for Jesus’ resurrection apart from the testimony of his apostles,” implying of course that they were naturally biased and their testimony was weak.

More Denial from Religion Teachers

Friend B. studied in a Catholic university, and enrolled in a class about the Old Testament. Here are some teachings she heard: 1) The Bible isn’t the inspired Word of God. 2) The Old Testament was not written down but existed only as oral tradition (thus becoming inaccurate with the passing of time) until the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, around 538 B. C.—at least 700 years after Moses. Thus it contains historical errors. 3) Its miracle-stories are untrue. 4) Abraham may have never existed. Stories about him and the creation and the flood were just myths to explain the beginnings of mankind.

5) The fact that the Hebrew word for “God” in the early part of Genesis is plural reflects belief in more than one God. I.e., originally the Hebrews, like all other people, were polytheistic. Belief in only one God developed later. 6) There are no prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament. The writers of the New Testament merely fabricated stories about Jesus to fit some of the Old Testament passages like Isaiah chapter 53.

“It must be true; the Textbook says so!”

Friend C. attended a state college. In the class he took about the Bible, the textbook was entitled *The Enjoyment of Scripture*. What a great title. But lots of the book’s contents militate against the idea expressed in that phrase. For enjoyment of Scripture decreases when we learn that we can’t really depend on its accuracy. The author, Samuel Sandmel, does admit that “every quarterly published in the field of Bible these days seems to have at least one article in every issue defending as historical that which nineteenth-century scholars gave up on.” That is, archeology and other studies continue to confirm the Bible and refute its critics. Yet Sandmel still believes that Scripture errs often.

Here is just one example. Sandmel acknowledges that the Old Testament "suggests that the organized priesthood, beginning with the consecration of Aaron as High Priest, arose within the Wilderness period"—i.e., soon after the exodus from Egypt. Yet "modern scholarship for well over a century has concluded that the [just-mentioned] supposition is romance, rather than history"—fiction, not fact. Sandmel agrees with this modern theory that the laws establishing the priesthood, sacrifices, offerings and feasts of Israel were written some centuries after the people had settled in the promised land and set up a kingdom. That means that large chunks of Numbers, Leviticus and several other books were written long after Moses. Laws and instructions which originated centuries later were inserted into the book of Moses as though established in his time.

Such alleged mistakes in Scripture don't bother Sandmel at all. Instead he praises the "creative insight" of the later re-writer of history (he was "no mere pedestrian copyist"). "If his creativity somewhat distorts the actual history" of Israel, that is OK because he did it for a good purpose and with good results! This is like saying that the U.S. Congress was not actually established by our Constitution in 1789 but rather by Lincoln during the War between the States, in 1863. But all our history textbook writers soon afterwards began claiming that Congress was set up by our founding fathers, so that we would have more respect for our legislators. Since that is a worthy purpose, we should praise rather than condemn the historians who inserted those lies into our history books. Horsefeathers!

So What?

What conclusions may we draw from the experiences of my three friends? First, I should encourage you by the assurance that all three of them have kept the faith in spite of the attacks on the Bible which they heard. The confidence in God and His Word imparted to them via family and church stood the test. But how many other students in those classes had their faith severely crippled or even demolished?

Second, if you are surprised by the unbelieving ideas taught in such "Bible classes," it shows you are out of touch with teachings that have been common in many academic circles for a long time. Ideas vary from teacher to teacher and from time to time, of course. But expressions like these have been widespread: "We don't believe the Bible IS the word of God, but it CONTAINS the word of God" (or, another version: ". . . it may BECOME the word of God to you"). Or, "we need the religion of Jesus, not the theology of Paul"—meaning that we should follow Jesus' ideas of love, forgiveness and sacrifice rather than Paul's later teachings about Jesus' deity, Trinity, atonement, etc. In other words, "Get back to the religion OF Jesus, not the religion ABOUT Jesus." Etc., etc. ad nauseum.

Third, we should realize that colleges and universities are a needy, urgent mission field. We should pray for Christians who teach there, and for students too. And we should prepare our young people *ahead of time* for what they shall find there—not only in religion classes, but in scientific and humanities subjects, and in dorms, clubs, frats, etc. We realize that not many college students read *Word & Work* usually,

but WHY DON'T YOU PUT THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE INTO THE HANDS OF AS MANY COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL CHRISTIANS AS YOU CAN? It may make a tremendous difference in some young person's life. (A xerox machine may help you!)

Public versus Christian Schools

Now let's hold a mini-debate, on the pros/cons of public and Christian schools and colleges. First, and mainly, let's hear it for Bible-based, Christ-centered schools. Lloyd Knowles teaches at Great Lakes Bible College in Lansing, Michigan, and wrote this in the March/April *Integrity* magazine:

Is the university really just as good a choice as the Christian college for the 18-year-old high school graduate leaving home and church for the first time to go to school? Most anyone who has firsthand knowledge of our state universities today knows that the dormitories are typically filled with very loud and anything-but-spiritual music, alcoholic beverages, drugs, and premarital sex. On many campuses there has been a significant rise in crimes like assault, rape and even murder. In the classroom many professors lack purpose or enthusiasm—except perhaps for their research or paychecks—and they are often hard to find when a student wants help.

Other problems abound. One student transferred to our college from a university because she found her former literature professor's open advocacy of, and lifestyle as, a "gay Buddhist" repugnant. . . .

Ironically the word "university" itself literally means "one truth," and yet the presentation of truth at these schools is fragmented, with each discipline often being an independent and unrelated end in itself. The legacy of all this is the promotion of a kind of secular humanism which leads students to the viewpoint that truth is only subjective and that man is all-important in himself. . . .

Our Christian colleges, on the other hand, while admittedly having some of their own faults, nonetheless advocate the objective reality of God and truth, man being important because the All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator of the Universe loves him and allowed His Only Son to die for him. Truth is integrated as all disciplines are inter-related parts of the great design of our Divine Planner. Whereas universities have concentrated on educating the mind, Christian colleges have attempted to influence the heart as well.

As a graduate of a Christian high school and college, I say "Amen" to our brother's ideas. And Christ-centered education is important not only on the college level but also in elementary and high schools. Thank the Lord for the ministry of Portland Christian School and High School in Louisville, for example. As morals worsen in our society, and as costs of Christian schools increase, let's back such institutions more and more with our prayers and funds.

But in fairness we should add that *not all* public schools or state colleges are dens of iniquity or hotbeds of unbelief. God has called many of His people to be missionaries in the academic world, and in at least a few places they wield a strong influence for faith in God and the Bible. For instance, the religion department at Western Kentucky University was staffed mostly or entirely by evangelical professors (believers in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture) a few years ago—and perhaps till now.

And though many secular schools obviously *are* dens of iniquity and hotbeds of unbelief, these words written in *Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship's* magazine back in 1941 still ring true:

The safest place on earth is in the unChristian university, if God sends you there . . . If you are on the unChristian campus and in the will of God, remember this: Every circumstance in life, if faced properly, serves as a springboard to a better understanding of His will and a prelude to a deeper growth in grace.

Daniel's experiences back up those statements. May God so strengthen our young people that they will stand with purpose true, daring to stand alone for Truth and Righteousness and the Lord.

* * * * *

THE BIBLE—OFTEN ATTACKED, NEVER DESTROYED

by Donald G. Barnhouse

Surveying the history of the conflict between faith and unbelief we encounter strange facts. One hundred years ago, there was a set of arguments arrayed against the Bible. We shall call them Arguments A, B, C and D. The intellectuals of that day derided those who held to the Bible because, they said, Facts A, B, C and D made it impossible for thinking men to accept divine inspiration and revelation. Twenty years passed and the slow advance of scholarship refuted A and B. By this time the critics had created Arguments E, F, G and H. Scholarship crawled along and found the answers to C, D, E and F, but the doubters scurried around and came up with Arguments I, J, K, L and M. In the first half of the twentieth century, true scholarship advanced toward the old evangelical position, and it became apparent that no honest man could advance Arguments G, H, I, J and K. The debaters accepted this, but shifted their unbelief to bastions N, O, P, Q and R. But with all the findings of archaeology and research in linguistics, their line of defense has been destroyed. Are they dismayed? Not at all. They have about run out of letters of the alphabet. Some of them are denying the Bible because of arguments X, Y and Z. They know enough of history to be very much disturbed, and they are thinking of starting out on some new alphabet. Perhaps if they advance the arguments of Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta, they can still sound intellectually respectable, and by the time all their positions in their first alphabet of denial are completely destroyed they can escape into positions prepared under the headings of the rest of the Greek alphabet.

While this parade of doubt passes by, there is the quiet march of men of faith who are filled with all joy and peace in believing, because they have been filled by the God of hope who establishes, strengthens and settles them. (Rom. 15:13) Some of us are proud to be in this company. We may be slightly behind the time, but we are always confident that in the fulness of time the position of divine revelation, preserved through divine inspiration, will win the day. The reason we are so sure, and the reason that we are not willing to use the alphabetical foxholes, is that we are touched by the One who has said, "I am Alpha, and Omega! the beginning and the end! the first and the last" (Rev. 1:8).

The Bible's "Errors"

Let us give a few examples of attacks on the Bible, the defeats of these attackers, and their subsequent attacks from fresh angles. One hundred years ago, critics said that the Bible could not be true because it stated that Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus and the other books of the Pentateuch. *They claimed that writing did not exist until long after Moses.* But today we know that writing existed long before Moses, and in the very peninsula of Sinai where he led the children of Israel. In fact, there was writing long before Abraham.

Other critics denied the Bible because it spoke of camels at certain periods and the critics *denied that the camel had been domesticated at such periods.* But now we know that camels were domesticated long before the times mentioned, and were known in Egypt as early as 3000 B.C.

For many years, and in many books, the critics *denied that Belshazzar had reigned in Babylon, and even stated that no such man had existed.* Secular evidence showed that Nabonidus was the king. Therefore, they said, the book of Daniel was false. But in his book *What Mean These Stones?* Miller Burrows of Yale pointed out, "The solution of this apparent discrepancy was apparent when evidence was found that during the last part of his reign Nabonidus lived in Arabia and left the administration of the government to his son Belshazzar."

In early editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* it is stated that *Tiglath Pileser, mentioned in both the Kings and the Chronicles, never existed.* Then his palace was discovered, and other buildings were unearthed which contained thousands of bricks with his name on each of them.

An ancient people mentioned about forty times in the Bible were the *Hittites*. In the nineteenth century many scholars *expressed doubt of the importance of such a people and some even denied their existence.* But in the early part of our century their capital was discovered not far from Ankara, Turkey. In Boghaz-Koi, archaeologists discovered Hittite archives consisting of hundreds of clay tablets, including a treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites made more than 1200 years before Christ. Burrows confesses that the Hittites were "hardly more than a name to us" before these discoveries, but now they are known to be one of the great nations of the ancient East. In 1894 there appeared a scientific article entitled "The So-called Hittite Inscriptions." Sixty years later a volume on the Hittites gives a bibliography of more than a hundred works on this people, whose greatness rested on the fact that they were superb horse-trainers and developed the chariot to the highest degree for use in war.

Despite all this, there are scholars today who seek data in which to take refuge against the truth of the Word of God. We might wonder what goes on in the minds of these men, but remember that the Word of God is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Evidently, these scholars wish to break the power of the Book which condemns them so severely. In our day the battle against the Bible has shifted almost altogether from the field of archaeology. There have been too many stinging defeats in this realm.

Christ and Scripture

by Kenneth Kantzer

"In my home church everyone assumes that the Bible is God's word from cover to cover, but here at the university my trust in the Bible is always under fire. Since my church didn't give me any *reasons* for belief in inspiration, it seems to me that now I have to give up faith in the Bible if I'm intellectually honest."

The student who said this to me faces a dilemma that is all too common. University circles today usually assume that intelligent people no longer believe the Bible to be the divinely revealed truth of God. As one modern theologian bluntly puts it, "The orthodox doctrine of verbal inspiration (i.e. the doctrine that every word of the Bible rightly understood in its context teaches the truth and never teaches what is false) has been finally destroyed. It is clear that there is no connection between it and scientific research and honesty."

A professor of New Testament at Yale University accurately summarized the typical modern viewpoint: "The Bible is full of things which to an intelligent educated person of today are either quite incredible, or at best highly questionable. . . . The protracted struggle of theology to defend the inerrancy of the Bible (i.e. its complete truth) against the findings of astronomy, geology and biology has been a series of retreats ending in a defeat which has led all wise theologians to move to a better position."

In spite of these drastic charges, evangelical Christians affirm that such a view of Scripture is not only true but important to Christian faith. The basis of this conviction is the authority of Jesus Christ. By definition, evangelicals acknowledge Jesus Christ as their personal Savior from sin, and divine Lord. As Lord, He is the sovereign authority over the thought and life of His followers.

However, no teaching of Jesus Christ on any subject is clearer than His teaching on the Bible's complete authority. In His Sermon on the Mount He declares, "... heaven and earth would sooner pass away than the dotting of an 'i' or the crossing of a 't' from the law" (Matthew 5:17-19). In a similar passage in Luke 16:17 He adds that it's impossible for one particle of the law to be set aside as void, and He rebukes His disciples for not believing all that the prophets had spoken (Luke 24:25). In controversy with the Jews (John 10:34, 35) He argues that Scripture cannot be broken, dissolved or discarded. On one occasion He introduces an isolated passage from the Old Testament with the formula: "God (the creator) says." In the thought and teaching of our Lord, the law of Moses is explicitly labeled the word of God (Mark 7:6ff).

H. J. Cadbury, one of the more extreme New Testament critics of the last generation, once declared that he was far more sure as a mere historical fact that Jesus held to the common Jewish view of an infallible Bible than that Jesus believed in His own messiahship. Adolf Harnack, greatest church historian of modern times, insists that Christ

was one with His apostles, the Jews, and the entire early Church in complete commitment to the infallible authority of the Bible. John Knox, author of a highly regarded life of Christ, states that there can be no question that this view of the Bible was taught by our Lord Himself. In fact Jesus' teaching about the inspiration and authority of the Bible is freely admitted today by almost all scholars, non-Christians and liberals as well as evangelicals.

The basic question about the inspiration and authority of Scripture is "What do you think of Christ?" If we accept Him as Lord, it's consistent to submit to His teaching on the complete authority of Scripture. To accept Christ's Lordship and at the same time to reject the inspiration and authority of the Bible is inconsistent. This simple logic explains why evangelical Christians, out of obedience to Jesus Christ as their Lord, insist that the Bible must be believed and obeyed as the very Word of God.

Circular Reasoning?

But you may ask, "Isn't this a circular argument? All we know about Christ we learn from the Bible. How do we know that Jesus Christ is divine? And how do we know what He taught about Biblical inspiration and authority apart from the Bible? Unless we presuppose our conclusion, the entire case based on Christ has no foundation."

Yet the evangelical doctrine of Biblical authority based upon the lordship of Christ does not fall into this vicious circle. Faith in Christ as Lord and Savior doesn't necessarily depend on prior faith in an infallible Bible. The Christian doesn't insist that one must believe *everything* in the Bible before he is convinced of *anything* in it. Christian faith doesn't logically presuppose as its basis an infallible Bible, but only a New Testament that is true in its main points. If Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, I am shut up to the position that He exercises His lordship over me by enjoining the Bible on me (1) as my place of communion with Him, and (2) as the means for learning His will. He has sent His Spirit to help me understand the truth in the Bible, and to enable me to apply it and obey it. The inerrant inspiration and authority of the Bible is one corollary of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Clarifying Our Terms

Problems about Biblical authority can be reduced from insurmountable obstacles to minor obscurities by understanding what is meant by the doctrine of an inerrant Scripture. A story told about Henry Nelson Wieman (former professor of philosophy of religion in U. of Chicago) says that he would pose the following dilemma to students entering his class: "Is there anyone in this class so foolish as to believe in the literal truth of the whole Bible?" If any timid soul dared to express such a conviction, Dr. Wieman would then ask, "When our Lord told followers to 'go tell Herod that fox,' do you believe that Herod was a four-footed, furry animal? Obviously not. And therefore you do not believe in the literal truth of the New Testament. Let us try the Old. The psalmist declares that the hills clap their hands for joy. Do you believe that the Judean hills banged

themselves together out of sheer joy? Of course not. And so I see that you do not believe in the literal truth of the Old Testament either." Thus Dr. Wieman polished off faith in the truth of the Bible.

But as any alert student knows, no one believes in the literal truth of the whole Bible, and our Lord never commands His followers to believe such an absurdity. Figurative language has a place. There are other things that the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Bible does *not* mean. It doesn't suggest that all the Bible was verbally dictated by God to the apostles and prophets. It doesn't mean that the Bible was written in exact, precise language. It doesn't assert that the Bible employs up-to-date scientific terminology. It doesn't suggest that the New Testament must always quote the best text of the Old Testament. Nor does it prove that all recorded statements contained in the Bible are true. [Some are obviously set forth as lies or mistakes.—Ed.] It doesn't imply that everything taught as binding upon Israel is best in an absolute sense and ought to be obeyed by all men of all times. There is such a thing as progressive revelation *without involving false teaching*. I may properly teach a child to eat potatoes with a spoon and not with his fingers. Later I may properly instruct that same child to eat his potatoes with a fork and not with a spoon.

When properly understood, inerrant inspiration of the Bible means simply that God by His Spirit so guided the writers of Scripture that their words—properly interpreted in the light of their grammatical and linguistic analysis and in light of the historical and cultural context they were written in—teach the truth, and never teach what is false. (This answers Dr. Wieman's question about the literal and the figurative.)

Karl Barth chided orthodox Christians for believing that both Genesis and Acts are true, even though according to Genesis seventy souls went down to Egypt and according to Acts there were seventy-five. But we are not disturbed, merely pointing out that Luke never says seventy-five. Rather, he says that a certain man named Stephen quoted that figure seventy-five (from a Greek translation of the Old Testament). By inspiration Luke recorded Stephen's speech correctly. When we see what the author really intended to teach in any given passage, many of the surface difficulties become irrelevant.

Reconciling Some Contradictions

Still, there are difficulties of significant proportion, but this should not surprise us. The Bible contains thousands of statements covering centuries of history. The amazing thing is that there are not more presently insoluble problems. Realistically, we should expect many instances where we can't bring passages into harmony. If the Bible is verbally inspired and inerrantly true, yet expresses its truths from different viewpoints and from various cultural backgrounds, this type of problem should be common. The occurrence of such apparent discrepancies only prove that the Biblical authors did not write through collusion.

Accurate detailed accounts by eyewitnesses interviewed independently will necessarily give us data which, without further questioning, can't be fit together. We can cross-examine contemporary

witnesses, but we live too late in history to press the Biblical witnesses for a harmonization of their testimony.

Several years ago the mother of a friend of ours was killed. We first learned of her death through a trusted mutual friend who reported that the woman had been standing on a street corner when she was hit by a bus; fatally hurt, she died a few minutes afterwards. A little later, we learned from the grandson of the dead woman that she had been involved in a collision, was thrown from the car in which she was riding and was killed instantly. The boy was quite definite; this was all the information he had. His story was not only clear and positive, but he had secured his information directly from his mother.

No further word was available from either source, so which were we to believe? We trusted both our friends, but we certainly could not put the data together. Much later we learned that after the woman was hit by a bus and fatally hurt, a passing car picked her up and headed for the nearest hospital, on the way colliding with another car. The injured woman was thrown from the car and died instantly.

This story presents no greater difficulty than any recorded in the gospels, even the death of Judas. Such coincidences occur repeatedly; they are inherent in any independent detailed descriptions of events. The only significant difference between this story and the accounts of the four evangelists (or of Chronicles and Kings of the Old Testament) is that we cannot cross-question Biblical witnesses. We live thousands of years too late.

Properly understood, the Bible is believable. Our Lord commanded us as His disciples to believe it. For those of us who seriously call upon Him as Lord, there is no alternative but to accept His word. We are under orders.

Challenges Facing Us

The great difficulty evangelicals have with the Bible, then, is not its infallible truth and authority, but *obedience* to its teaching. Orthodoxy must never fall short of ortho-practice. No true evangelical should ever rest satisfied merely with correct views about the Bible. The harshest words of Christ in all the Bible are directed not against disbelief in the truth of Scripture but against negligence, willful misinterpretation and disobedience to holy Scripture.

If we believe that the Bible is true, carries divine authority, and is the source of our knowledge about Christ and His will, then we should *study* it. And as we do, our Lord has promised His present, indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us to Biblical truth, and help us live a life of joyful and obedient fellowship with Him as the Lord of Scripture.

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* * * * *

"No man can be called an uneducated man who knows his Bible, and no man can be called an educated man who does not know his Bible."—William Lyon Phelps, a former, highly-esteemed professor of literature at Yale.

REPRINT:

Forty-two Lads

R. H. Boll

Few incidents in the scriptures have given occasion for more criticism of God's word and ways than Elisha's curse upon the lads that mocked him at Bethel and the subsequent slaying of the lads by the bears from the forest (2 Kings 2:23, 24; actually the text says the bears "tore" or "mauled," not killed the young people.—AVW). We may be sure that this sort of divine vengeance does not come within the gospel-conception of things. That was an age of law and judgment; this is a day of grace and forbearance. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to you-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Also God, through Christ, has extended world-wide reconciliation, "Not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Until this day of grace ends—which it must—God suspends His judgments. Grace reigns and mercy and loving patience is shown to sinners, if by any means they may turn and be saved.

The sons of Zebedee who wanted to call down fire from heaven upon the villages of the Samaritans because they closed their gates against Jesus, were reprov'd by Him for their vengeful spirit. But in the circumstances of the days of Elijah such an act of God was perfectly appropriate. (Lk. 9:51-56; 2 Kings 1:10-12.)

An irritable old man??

Let's look at the facts. We have not here, as some may think, the act of a vindictive, irritable old man. If it had been that, then God would not have endorsed it. (See Jonah 4 for His attitude toward Jonah.) This was not an uncalld-for stroke, but there was a salutary, if severe, justice in this punishment.

Note first the irreverence of the lads (they were not "little children," but young men). Such impudence as theirs was common then, as it is now, among boys of that age. It is none the less reprehensible. God's word was, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man." That much is due to any old person. It is a foretoken of national ruin when "the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable"—a thing too prevalent in our country (Isaiah 3:5).

In the second place, this was irreverence against a prophet of God, well-known to be such to those lads. Elijah was known everywhere, and Elisha had been his constant companion for years. "Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" asked Jehovah of Aaron and Miriam (Numbers 12:8). It is a serious matter to treat with contempt a representative and messenger of God's word. It is often done, apparently with impunity, but God's judgment will one day take that into account. If the people had no respect for God's

prophet, then their ears would be closed to his message. It was necessary to inspire such respect and reverence, and to put the fear of God into the hearts of the people.

Thirdly, the judgment that fell upon those lads was even more a judgment upon the parents than upon them. Those parents had allowed, yea, perhaps had taught, their children to have such disrespect for the prophet. More than likely they had encouraged them in this particular hooting. For Bethel was from the days of Israel's first king, Jeroboam, a stronghold of idolatrous worship (1 Kings 13). There a true prophet of God would be held in scant honor, and the gang of boys that came running out of the town to mock Elisha were probably not doing so against the wishes of their elders. Their mocking cry, "Go up, thou bald-head," had more significance than that of mere rudeness and rowdiness. The lesson to Bethel that day was in order and went far to establish Elisha's authority in idolatrous Israel.

We are living in an era of grace and forbearance, and God bears patiently with many an evil deed. Even we, all of us, owe our salvation to the longsuffering of God. But when God rises up to judge—as some day He will and must—men shall give account of all the idle and blasphemous words they have spoken of God, His word, His church, and His servants. The terrors of His retribution will not be slight.

* * * * *

Pink Elephants and Changed Lives

Alex V. Wilson

It's nearly time for Sunday school to begin when suddenly you notice the superintendent dashing up the sidewalk toward the church building. He is really sprinting! But as he gets near, the expression on his face impresses you even more than his running. He has an odd gleam in his eye. Rushing up to you, he exclaims breathlessly, "I just saw a big pink elephant walking down the middle of the street four blocks away!"

Seeing unbelief written on your face, he continues excitedly, "It's true, honest! I really saw a pink elephant wandering down the street, just five minutes ago. (A knot of Sunday school teachers and pupils form about him now as he talks.) "You don't believe me, do you?" I couldn't believe it myself at first. I stopped and stared and pinched myself and stared again. When he came to about twenty feet from me, I took off running and didn't stop. Let's call the police, or do something!"

You are no lawyer, but automatically your mind begins holding court and considering various explanations for this wild tale. Is Brother Jones a liar? Oh no, you eliminate that possibility immediately. You've known him for years; he's a good Christian with unquestioned character. Then is he deluded—sincere but deceived? Maybe he actually thinks he saw an elephant, but for some reason he is fooled.

Maybe some kid had an elephant-shaped balloon and Brother Jones' eyes played tricks on him. Or maybe he had some kind of hallucination, the way men in deserts see mirages. Yet he's always impressed you as a very stable fellow, not emotionally off-balance. And his eyes have never bothered him before. Then could it possibly be true? Maybe the circus that just came to town is pulling some publicity stunt. Or perhaps its elephant escaped. . . .

Any time we hear about something incredible, we naturally wonder about it. The report may be about pink elephants, flying saucers, or miracles in the Bible. Whatever it is, we begin asking questions about the person who says he saw it. Basically there are only three alternatives. He is either 1) *lying* (or kidding): he knows that he is not telling the truth but wants to deceive other people; or 2) *deluded*: he thinks he is telling the truth but is actually deceived himself (perhaps he is simpleminded or superstitious or suffers from hallucinations); or 3) *telling the truth*: what he says actually corresponds to reality. To find out which of these alternatives is true, we ask questions about the person's character, past experiences, mental stability and physical ability to discern accurately. We also consider motives (what benefit does he get from telling this story?), and whether he sticks to his report or begins contradicting himself, and whether there are other witnesses to this event (does their story agree with his?).

These tests can be applied to past as well as current events. So when we read that the apostles repeatedly claimed that Jesus arose from the dead, and we know that Christianity resulted from those claims, we can apply tests. Were these men honest and good? Yes, What benefit did they get from saying Jesus arose? Very little, humanly speaking; rather, they were bitterly persecuted because of their belief—and never recanted, even in the face of death. Were they emotionally stable? Perhaps Mary Magdalene was not, but the fishermen brothers, Matthew the tax collector, doubting Thomas and the others were. Were there many witnesses to the resurrection? Yes, once over 500 saw Him. Was He often seen or just two or three times? Many times, in different places and circumstances; and He was not merely seen but also conversed with and physically handled. Did everyone who heard that Christ arose believe it? No; many did but many others did not, and some strongly denied the story. What evidence did those opponents produce? None; they spread a rumor but they could never find His body to desprove that He arose. In fact, "the silence of the Jewish leaders is as convincing as the preaching of the apostles." What effect did the reputed resurrection have on those who believed it? A tremendous impact. They were morally transformed and began living with such dedication, love, sacrifice, and purity that as time went on the entire Roman world sat up and took notice of them.

On and on the investigation could go. But let's take the last-mentioned fact and examine it in more detail: What moral impact has belief in the living Christ of the Bible had, not merely in first-century disciples but also down through the ages?

Transformed Lives, A Foundation for Faith

Paul put it this way: "We thank God . . . that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, *which is at work in you believers*" (1 Thess. 2:13). In other words, we can intelligently believe the message of Scripture not only because it comes to us from apostolic eye-witness (which in itself is a good reason, as we have seen above), but also because the message produces grand results in lives. Note some examples.

TRANSFORMED INDIVIDUALS: Jim Vaus was a wiretapping expert for a criminal gang. He was saved during a Billy Graham meeting and what an about-face took place! He typed out nine pages of wrongs in his past life which needed confessing and/or paying back. To make right those wrongs took thousands of dollars, and cost him his home, furniture, car, and the next two years' earnings! Later Vaus began a ministry to hoodlum gangs in New York City, which he carried on for many years. An article in the *Reader's Digest* quoted an authority who said that Vaus did more to reduce crime among teenagers in East Harlem than any other single influence. What made the striking difference in this man's life? The living Christ, revealed in the Bible.

TRANSFORMED COMMUNITIES:

"The thrilling saga of the *Mutiny on the Bounty* has been retold and popularized in newspapers and books for years. However, there is one incident of this true story that is little known.

"The mutineers sank their ship and landed on the lonely island named Pitcairn. There were nine British sailors, six Tahitian men and ten women. One of the sailors discovered a method of distilling alcohol, and the island colony became debauched with drunkenness and vice.

"After a time, only one of the white sailors who landed still survived, surrounded by women and children. This sailor, Alexander Smith, found in one of the chests taken from the "Bounty" a Bible. He began to teach his fellow exiles its principles, with the result that his own life and ultimately the life of the entire colony was changed. In 1808 the U.S. ship "Topaz" visited the island, and found a thriving and prosperous community without liquor, without a jail, without crime, and without an insane asylum. The Bible had changed the life of that entire island!"

—Billy Graham, "The Authority of the Scriptures"

Dr. Rendle Short gives another example. It is from the life of Charles Darwin, the "father of evolution." "In his own village (in England), the preaching of the story contained in the Bible had such a good effect in a hall which had been lent by him that he wrote to Mr. Fegan, the preacher, 'Your services have done more for the village in a few months than all our efforts for many years. We have never been able to reclaim a drunkard, but through your services I do not know that there is a drunkard left in the village!' The hall is being used for Christian work today."

Another very similar example was reported in the *Reader's Di-*

gest some years ago. The article was entitled, "The Village that Lived by the Bible." It told how American troops toward the end of World War II discovered an unusual village in one of the Japanese islands. Some time before, a missionary who had to leave gave the local leaders a Bible and told them it was God's word. As a result, the leaders studied the book thoroughly and tried to rule their people according to its teachings. In morals, education, family life, and politics that village far surpassed all other places the soldiers had seen.

TRANSFORMED TRIBES:

"The testimony of Charles Darwin, who will not be suspected of any undue bias towards Christianity, may be quoted here. In his *Voyage of the Beagle* is as dismal an account of the misery, low estate and dangerous wickedness of the people of Tierra del Fuego as could be well imagined. But when he returned to the island many years later, after the Bible had been spread abroad in the island, the change for the better was so incredible that he not only testified his astonishment and admiration but became a regular donor to the missionary society."

—Why Believe?, by Dr. Rendle Short

The Auca Indians provide a thrilling example from our own times. This tribe in Ecuador has a Stone-age culture. They hunt and war with spears, bows and arrows. So suspicious, hateful and fierce were they that they had absolutely no peaceful contacts with other tribes, even for trade. And there were numerous bloody feuds within their own tribe. The story is now well known about their slaughter of five missionary men in 1956, and of how the gospel of Christ was finally brought to them. Christ has now "erased their hearts," as one of the former murderers expressed it. A number of Aucas have experienced His life-changing power, and now some Auca missionaries have been sent out to tell other Indians of the one true God!

Such examples could be multiplied, including the headhunting Ilongot tribe of the Philippines, and other tribes from the four corners of the earth.

TRANSFORMED COUNTRIES could even be mentioned. An outstanding example was England during the 1700's. Space prohibits a detailed explanation. But it may be boldly claimed that the gospel preaching of Whitefield, the Wesley brothers, and a host of other bold and zealous evangelists saved England from undergoing a violent bloodbath such as burst upon France in the 1789 French Revolution, with its "reign of terror," anarchy and godlessness. Secular historians have admitted this fact. One writer stated, "John Wesley produced a spiritual revolution in England which spared it from a political revolution." Between 1740 and 1790 this Evangelical Revival gradually but deeply influenced English moral standards, politics, education, law and order, respect for women, and other aspects of life. Widespread preaching and teaching of the Bible lay at the root of these reforms.

Transformed individuals, communities, tribes, and countries; proof of God's power. By the way, is He through His word working in *your* life?

LIVES RESCUED AND RENOVATED

(A True Story)

A remarkable incident occurred in the life of Dr. Harry A. Ironside. Early in his ministry the great evangelist and Bible teacher was living in the San Francisco Bay area working with a group of believers called "Brethren." One Sunday as he was walking through the city he came upon a group of open air workers holding a meeting on the corner of Market and Grant Avenues. There were probably sixty of them. When they recognized Ironside they immediately asked him if he would give his testimony. So he did, giving a word about how God had saved him through faith in the bodily death and literal resurrection of Jesus.

As he was speaking, Ironside noticed that on the edge of the crowd a well-dressed man had taken a card from his pocket and had written something on it. As Ironside finished his talk this man came forward, lifted his hat and very politely handed him the card. On one side was his name, which Ironside immediately recognized. The man was one of the early socialists who had made a name for himself lecturing not only for socialism but also against Christianity. As Ironside turned the card over, he read, "Sir, I challenge you to debate with me the question 'Agnosticism versus Christianity' in the Academy of Science Hall next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock. I will pay all expenses."

Ironside reread the card aloud and then replied somewhat like this. "I am very much interested in this challenge. . . . Therefore I will be glad to agree to this debate on the following conditions: namely that in order to prove that Mr. _____ has something worth fighting for and worth debating about, he will promise to bring with him to the Hall next Sunday two people whose qualifications I will give in a moment, as proof that agnosticism is of real value in changing human lives and building true character.

"First, he must promise to bring with him one man who was for years what we commonly call a 'down-and-outer.' I am not particular as to the exact nature of the sins that had wrecked his life and made him an outcast from society—whether a drunkard, or a criminal of some kind, or a victim of his sensual appetite—but a man who for years was under the power of evil habits from which he could not deliver himself, but who on some occasion entered one of Mr. _____'s meetings and heard his glorification of agnosticism and his denunciations of the Bible and Christianity, and whose heart and mind as he listened to such an address were so deeply stirred that he went away from that meeting saying, 'Henceforth, I too am an agnostic!' and as a result of imbibing that particular philosophy found that a new power had come into his life. The sins he once loved he now hates, and righteousness and goodness are now the ideals of his life. He is now an entirely new man, a credit to himself and an asset to society—all because he is an agnostic.

"Secondly, I would like Mr. _____ to promise to bring with

him one woman—and I think he may have more difficulty in finding the woman than the man—who was once a poor, wrecked, characterless outcast, the slave of evil passions, and the victim of man's corrupt living . . . perhaps one who had lived for years in some evil resort, . . . utterly lost, ruined and wretched because of her life of sin. But this woman also entered a hall where Mr. _____ was loudly proclaiming his agnosticism and ridiculing the message of the Holy Scriptures. As she listened, hope was born in her heart, and she said, "This is just who I need to deliver me from the slavery of sin!" She followed the teaching and became an intelligent agnostic or infidel. As a result, her whole being revolted against the degradation of the life she had been living. She fled from the den of iniquity where she had been held captive so long; and today, rehabilitated, she has won her way back to an honored position in society and is living a clean, virtuous, happy life—all because she is an agnostic.

"Now," he said, addressing the gentleman who had presented him with his card and the challenge, "if you will promise to bring these *two people* with you as examples of what agnosticism can do, I will promise to meet you at the Hall of Science at four o'clock next Sunday, and I will bring with me at *the very least* 100 men and women who for years lived in just such sinful degradations as I have tried to depict, but who have been gloriously saved through believing the gospel which you ridicule. I will have these men and women with me on the platform as witnesses to the miraculous saving power of Jesus Christ and as present-day proof of the truth of the Bible." Dr. Ironside then turned to the Salvation Army captain and said, "Captain, have you any who could go with me to such a meeting?"

She exclaimed with enthusiasm, "We can give you forty at least just from this one corps, and we will give you a brass band to lead the procession!"

"Fine," Dr. Ironside answered. "Now, Mr. _____, I will have no difficulty in picking up sixty others from the various missions, gospel halls, and evangelical churches of the city; and if you will promise faithfully to bring two such exhibits as I have described, I will come marching in at the head of such a procession, with the band playing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' and I will be ready for the debate."

Apparently the man who had made the challenge must have had some sense of humor, for he smiled wryly and waved his hand in a deprecating kind of way as if to say, "Nothing doing!" and then edged out of the crowd while the bystanders clapped for Ironside and the others.

* * * * *

A QUESTION FOR UNBELIEVERS

O. S. Boyer

Concerning the evolution theory, we repeat here a story of a certain young man, who, shortly after graduating in Paris entered the house of a neighbor where he found two young women reading.

"What is the beautiful novel that you are reading with so much interest?" he asked.

"We are not reading a novel, but the history of God's chosen people."

"Oh, then you believe there is a God, do you?"

Surprised at such a question, one of the young women answered: "You mean that you do not believe there is?"

"I used to believe there is a God, but since I have studied philosophy, mathematics and other things in Paris, I do not believe there is. I am convinced that God is nothing more than an empty word."

One of the young women answered: "I have never studied in Paris, neither do I know anything about such beautiful things as philosophy, etc. All I know is my catechism, but with your studies it must be easy for you to tell me from where an egg comes."

"What a queer question! An egg comes from a hen to be sure."

"Which of them existed first, the egg or the hen?"

"I cannot make out what you want with this question and your hen, however, it is the hen that existed first."

"There existed, then, a hen that did not come out of an egg?"

"Pardon me, I was not thinking, the egg existed first."

"Oh, there was an egg that did not come from a hen?"

"Pardon me, I wish to say . . . you understand . . ."

"I understand that you do not know if the hen existed before an egg, or if an egg existed before a hen."

"Well, then it was the hen that existed first."

"Very well, if there was a hen that did not come out of an egg, tell me then who made this hen from which have come all the other eggs and hens."

"But why are you asking me such a question?"

"All right, let me tell you, for you do not know: He that created the first hen, or if you wish, He that created the first egg, is the same that created the world. This being is called God. You cannot explain the existence of a hen or an egg without God, and yet you affirm that this world exists without God!"

There is also a moral proof of the existence of God. Our conscience recognizes the distinction between right and wrong. As Kant, the celebrated philosopher, said: "The moral law in us proves the existence of God. Our yearning to see God is proof that He exists, if not, nature outraged us in making us." There is not a people, tribe, or individual with judgment, in the whole world, that does not know that God exists. It is still as true as in the days of Plutarch, that one can travel around the globe and see many marvels, but never a city without temples, cathedrals and churches. Or as Cicero said many centuries ago: "There is not a people so wild and savage as to not believe in God, though they may not know His nature." This innate knowledge of God is of supernatural origin.

And the greatest and most certain of all proofs that God exists is that which comes to the one who yields all to Him. Anyone can prove for himself the words of St. Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

The Stumbling Block of the Cross

John R. W. Stott

There is a question I have often puzzled over. It is this: why are Christians still such a minority movement in the world? Why is it that, even in a so-called Christian country like England, so few people seem genuinely to be trying to follow Christ? I am not saying that the average man isn't quite a decent chap, nor that he doesn't believe that there is a God (according to a recent survey only 2 percent of the English population categorically deny that there is a God). What I am saying is that comparatively few people are definitely and personally committed to Jesus Christ. Why is this?

Let me tell you some of the reasons which people have given me.

FAIRY-TALES

The first is that Christianity is all fairy-tales. They believe in what they call "One Above" (a supreme Being of some kind) and that there was once a person called Jesus of Nazareth. But they don't believe Jesus was the Son of God, who was born of a virgin, performed miracles, died for our sins and rose again from the dead. "No, no," they say. "The baby in the manger, the Savior on the cross, the empty tomb—these things are all very picturesque, no doubt, but they are fairy-tales."

Well, I do not deny that some people have genuine intellectual difficulties about the Christian faith. But I will tell you something I have discovered about the fairy-tales idea, which is rather revealing. I have talked to hundreds of intelligent people like this who say they can't believe that Jesus was the Son of God—university students, professional people, business and working people. And I've found that the great majority of these skeptics have not read the gospels which tell the story of Jesus since they were kids at school! In other words, they have rejected Christianity without ever having examined it properly. And that's not playing the game. If anybody like that is reading this, I challenge you to take down your New Testament and read the gospels again (or for the first time), with the inquiring mind of an adult and the humble mind of a child.

IRRELEVANT

The second group of people who reject Christianity are prepared to believe that it's *true*, but cannot see that it's *relevant*. "Jesus lived over nineteen centuries ago," they say. "He belongs to remote antiquity. No doubt He said and did some remarkable things in His day. But what on earth has it got to do with me in the technological, scientific world of the 1990's? I love my family and enjoy my job and go off for my holidays, and honestly religion never enters my head. It's irrelevant."

Is it? What am I to say to people like this? I think I must call their bluff. Christianity speaks to the eternal problems of mankind, with which philosophers, playwrights, novelists and ordinary folk have always wrestled. I don't say that it gives pat answers to all these problems. But it has something to say about them. For instance, have

you a guilty conscience? Many people have. Jesus Christ can bring you forgiveness and the certainty of forgiveness. Are you overpowered by strong passions—temper, greed, jealousy, malice, lust? Jesus Christ can teach you self-control. Indeed He is able to make you a new person altogether. Are you full of worry about the future? Jesus Christ can give you peace. Are you baffled by the problem of suffering? Only Jesus Christ can convince you that, in spite of suffering, God loves you. Are you afraid of death? Jesus Christ has conquered it. Do you want to leave the world a better place? You can spread the love, joy, peace and justice of Christ in your community. Are you tempted sometimes to despair, and to wonder if there is any hope for the future of the world? Jesus Christ is coming again as King.

I find it hard to understand people who say that Christianity is totally irrelevant. On the contrary, it speaks forcefully to our contemporary needs.

THE CHURCH

A third reason people give for rejecting Christianity is the Church, and here I don't altogether blame them. We have to confess that, if I may generalize, the Church is a pretty bad advertisement for Christianity.

All I would say on this subject is that it is one thing to reject the Church; it is quite another to reject Jesus Christ. The two are not the same and must not be confused. Maybe the Church has become disloyal to Christ and seldom seems either to proclaim His message or exhibit His love for mankind. But please don't judge Christianity by the Church; it isn't fair to do so. By and large I can't help agreeing that the Church has failed. But Jesus Christ has never failed anybody who has come to Him and begun to follow Him.

Let's now come back to the question with which we started. Why do people reject Christianity? I tell you frankly I don't believe it's because they think Christianity is fairy-tales or irrelevant, or because of the Church. I'm convinced that, at least to some extent, these are not reasons but rationalizations. The real reason why people reject Christ has to do with His message. There's something inherent in the message of Christ which puts people off. It's the cross. The cross is the big stumbling-block. Twice in his letters the Apostle Paul refers to this. In the letter to the Galatians he actually uses the expression "the stumbling-block of the cross." In his first letter to the Corinthians he writes "we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block..." The thing which upsets people, stumbles people, puts people off in Christianity, is the cross. It is the biggest obstacle in the way of their accepting Christ. Why?

THE CROSS IS HUMBLING

First, the message of the cross is extremely humbling. Jesus said that His death was not a tragic accident, but something deliberate, something essential which must take place. He was going (He said) to give His life as a ransom to set men free, going to shed His blood for their forgiveness. And His apostles later explained more fully what He meant. Peter writes that He bore our sins in His own body

on the cross. Paul goes further and says that Jesus was actually made sin for us, the sinless Christ made sin with our sin. And the whole New Testament tells us that it is because Christ died for us, bearing our sin and judgment Himself, that we can be forgiven if we come to Him and ask Him to be our Savior.

Moreover, there is no other way to be forgiven. Salvation is a free gift. We do not deserve it (because we are sinners under the judgment of God) and we cannot earn it. We can only receive it as a gift—absolutely free and utterly undeserved.

And this message (of forgiveness only through the death of Christ) is very humbling. As I look up at Christ on His cross, He seems to say to me: "I'm here because of you. I'm bearing your sins in my own body. I am suffering the condemnation you deserve. If you were not a sinner, I would not be here. If you could save yourself, I would not be here. I'm here because you are a sinner, guilty and helpless, and because God loves you and longs to save you, and because there is no other way." This is the stumbling-block of the cross. It's very humbling. No other religion in the world humbles us like Christianity. Only Christianity says that however hard we try we cannot make the grade. Of course we can do some things by ourselves. We can make our bed and cook our breakfast; we can do our job and earn our living. But we cannot forgive our sins or secure our forgiveness or even contribute to it. I love what William Temple said: "The only thing of my very own which I contribute to my redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed."

THE CROSS IS DEMANDING

The second reason why the cross is a stumbling-block, is that it is very demanding. Jesus did not only tell us to come to His cross and receive salvation as a free gift; He told us to take up our cross and follow Him.

It's quite clear what He meant. Palestine at that time was an occupied country. The Romans had conquered it, and had introduced their own system of law. Under Roman law, the worst criminals were executed by crucifixion, and the condemned criminal had to carry his own cross to the place of execution.

It's against that background the Jesus told people to take up their cross and follow Him. That is, we are to put ourselves into the position of a condemned man on his way to execution. We are to take our proud, ambitious and willful self, and nail it to the cross. To take up the cross means self-denial, to repudiate ourselves and our own self-centeredness, and to surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to this that He still calls His followers today—not to a soft and easy-going life of self-indulgence, but to self-denial, as we follow Christ, serving Him as Lord and our fellow men for His sake. We have to die to self if we are ever to live for Christ.

Such is the Christianity of the New Testament. First we have to come to *Christ's* cross; then we have to take up *our own*. First we humble ourselves before the cross of Christ, admitting our sin, our guilt, our inability to commend ourselves to God or win His favor, and asking God for Christ's sake to forgive our sins. Then we brace ourselves to take up our cross and follow Christ.

Hosea, The Heart and Holiness of God

"MISLAYING GOD"

Ernest E. Lyon

HOSEA 8; read the passage first

This is a chapter of judgment. The New International Version's heading of "Israel to Reap the Whirlwind" is accurate in calling attention to the judgment. After laying His charges before them throughout the chapter, in the last verse God gives the all-containing malady and a brief but picturesque statement of judgment. From a correct translation of that verse I have taken my heading of "Mislaying God," as you will see later.

OPENING WARNING: A more literal translation of verse one would be this; "The trumpet to the roof of your mouth. As an eagle (vulture) against the house of the Lord." This is certainly warning in a very picturesque way that judgment is about to come. The verse is then completed with a "because" that actually applies to the rest of the first thirteen verses. This passage contains five charges God makes against Israel. We will discuss them one at a time.

"THE PEOPLE HAVE BROKEN MY COVENANT and rebelled against my law." Israel did not acknowledge the covenant God had given them. They cried out about their knowledge of Him but their actions drowned out their words. Jesus, you will remember, said at the Feast of Tabernacles, "If anyone chooses to *do* God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." To want to *know* God's will is not enough. We must want to *do* it.

"THEY SET UP KINGS WITHOUT MY CONSENT" (v. 4). Like the people of today, they did not realize that "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain" (Psalm 127:1). They were like those Jews before Pilate who shouted for him to give them Barabbas instead of Jesus and admitted their condition when they said, "We have no king but Caesar." Today in this country both church leaders and government leaders as well as the overwhelming majority of others have fallen into the great mistake of thinking we will get along well without God being taken into consideration. If a voter looks at the spiritual background of a candidate for office, that voter is considered a bigot. We have been misled into thinking that God and state should be separated. Men high and low speak of the "constitutional separation of church and state," something that is not there. It is very wrong to say that because the first amendment forbids the state establishing a state church, that God must be eliminated from all public life. No man that took part in the constitutional convention believed such, so far as I can find out. And quite the opposite was expressed in print by many.

"With their silver and gold **THEY MAKE IDOLS FOR THEMSELVES** to their own destruction" (v. 4). The northern kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam did this officially from the day that government

started. Verse five points out something we should all know, that idolatry is always associated with impurity. God judged their idolatry (and impurity) and He will judge this country for the same reason. When I think of how many sins that the Bible speaks strongly against are present in abundance today, I shudder as I think of the judgment to come. Verse seven puts the blame properly for the troubles in Israel. Paul stated this briefly in Galatians 6:8—"God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

"EPHRAIM HAS SOLD HERSELF TO LOVERS" (v. 9). They tried alliances with other idolatrous cruel nations, including Assyria. That would be a major cause of their downfall. God had warned them long before that they would suffer if they did that. Let us, then, stop for a moment to think of these things in connection with the U.S.A. We did not break a direct covenant with God, for we had none, but think of how we have departed from the constitution by which we said we would be governed. Remember that God is still over all the nations and is holding them accountable to govern as He would have them. Then think how it is considered wrong, as I mentioned before, to consider the faith of a political candidate. Think what a basically idolatrous nation we are—with greed for more money, more possessions, bigger houses, better cars, more filthy pornography, and countless other things. And though we have no direct covenant, think how the Lord has blessed this country because of its original dedication to Christian standards and how we have forsaken Him and seek those who hate Him. Many of our alliances with other countries are a real shame. And then think of the last of these indictments:

"EPHRAIM BUILT MANY ALTARS FOR SIN OFFERINGS, THEY HAVE BECOME ALTARS FOR SINNING" (v. 11). In v. 12 it goes on to point out how Ephraim had come to think that God's law was an alien thing. Think how this country refuses to allow Biblical statements to influence courts and other governmental decisions. So many in this country pay lip service to the Lord and live as if He did not exist. And now let us look at the climax of the chapter for the "all-containing malady":

"ISRAEL HAS FORGOTTEN HIS MAKER, (v. 14). First let us correct the translation of the word "forgotten." I had read that it meant "mis-laid," so I looked it up in Strong's and found that "mis-laid" is the only definition given for the word. Strong adds, "i.e., to be oblivious of from want of memory or attention." Israel had mis-laid God! The One Who should have been central in their thinking was relegated to a secondary place; they had acted as if He did not exist. So what did they substitute? The building of "palaces" ("spacious buildings") is listed first. Now think of how every tall building in Louisville is hailed as a great sign of progress without God being taken into consideration. People are obsessed with seeking great things. Judah is linked with the problem as having depended on fortifications. And what do we so often look to as safety for our country?—our bombs, planes, SDI, etc. We are like them without any question. Like them we have mis-laid God in the sense of putting Him out of calculation. Dire consequences fell on them—and will on us. The close of verse

14 shows why I called this a chapter of judgment—and we will not escape.

Many give an intellectual assent to the fact of God's existence, but their conduct does not affirm their statement. God is relegated to the church on Sunday and is left there until the next Sunday. Such a way of doing is not Christian! Let us not forget one thing—to forsake God is to guarantee ruin. We can build sky-scrapers and forget that ancient man started to build a temple reaching to the sky—but God put an end to it and scattered them over the earth. He has blessed our country, but as long as we forget him, as long as we mislay Him, our future is guaranteed to be that of ruin, not ruling.

The Position and Work of Women in Church Meetings

(CONCLUSION)

Samuel Alexander

(Last month the author considered such scriptures as Gal. 3:38, Acts 2:17-18, 21:8-9 and 1 Cor. 11:4, 5, which seem to allow room for the sisters to exercise a public ministry. He comes now to those apparently prohibiting such.)

1 *Timothy* 2. This Scripture is sometimes confidently appealed to as settling the whole matter beyond dispute, though no attempt is made to reconcile such an interpretation of it with the passages we have already considered. If this portion is carefully studied I submit that it affords no justification for the imposition of silence upon sisters in assembly gatherings.

Two spheres of activity are in contemplation. Verses 1-10 undoubtedly legislate for the ministry of intercession in the assembly. Here the relationship and deportment of "men and women" (plural number) are defined. Verses 11-15 relate to the family, as verse 15 makes abundantly clear. The relationship of "a man and a woman" (singular number) is therefore dealt with. If this be questioned I reply that "childbearing" is no part of the function of a Christian assembly. The change in number, from plural in the first section, to singular in the second, is most important.

The subject dealt with in the first section is indicated in verse 1. It is the assembly prayer meeting and the ministry of intercession on behalf of all men. Men and women take part in this. But the directions given to each vary. Men are to pray "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." Women, "adorned in modest apparel," etc. There is a contrast here between men and women. It cannot be that men are to pray and women are to dress. That would be an absurdity. The emphasis is not so much on prayer as the *manner* of prayer. Men are to pray, "lifting up pious hands," as J. N. Darby renders it. The Greek word translated "holy" in our ordinary version is "Hosios," and means "kind" or "gracious." The thought is that of holy purity and indicates Christian character. Then this requisite for effective prayer is carried over to women. They must exercise

this ministry "in like manner"; adorned, "not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment, but through good works." The words "in like manner" are full of significance and seem to necessitate the supply of the word "pray" (as Chrysostom does) or its equivalent, to complete the sense. (See Conybeare's footnote.)

We pass in the second section (verses 11-15) to the Christian home. Not "men and women" are now treated of but "a man and a woman." Verse 15 is so clear that this hardly needs to be laboured. "She (the woman) shall be saved through her childbearing if they (the man and the woman) continue in faith, and love, and sanctification, with sobriety." Now, Paul says, in the home, in the circle of the Christian family, "I permit not a woman to teach nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (verse 12). "Quietness," rendered "silence" in A.V., is Greek *hesuchia* and signifies tranquility or stillness. It is quite a different word to "silence" in 1 Cor. 14:34 to which we shall refer later.

Any usurpation of authority by the wife in a Christian family violates the divinely appointed headship of the husband. It is not a question of individual capacities or gift. Great principles are at stake, of an eternal character. The husband must be the teacher, he should conduct the family worship and return thanks at meals if present. But supposing the wife is a teacher and the husband has no natural gift in that direction. This is not a question of "nature" but "divine appointment," and spiritual qualifications are developed by the Spirit of God as we yield obedience to a divine injunction. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ so let wives also be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:22-24).

1 *Corinthians* 14:34-40. It is manifest that if this passage teaches what it appears to convey on a cursory reading, and what it is strongly held to mean by gifted Bible teachers, for whose devotion and learning we have the greatest respect, then it proves far too much, and is impossible of reconciliation with the general teaching of Scripture and God's ways with His people throughout history. Moreover Paul would be found contradicting his own previously given instructions in chapter 11:5 and going counter to the foundation utterance of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 2. Quite apart from the fact of inspiration, it is in the highest degree unlikely that a man of Paul's intellectual eminence would so write. Surely the key is found in verse 40. All things in the Church must be done "decently and in order."

The most elementary study of the epistle shows that all through Paul has been striving to rectify disorder. He has had to deal with the gravest and most terrible confusion in not a few particulars. The disorders revealed in chapter 5 and 6, and especially in chapter 11:20-22, are almost unbelievable in a Christian church.

It must be remembered that the Corinthian assembly contained a considerable Jewish element, and it is more than probable that the women were seated in a part of the building separate from the men,

as is the custom in the synagogue, and indeed, in many Christian churches today on the continent of Europe. In a church where it was possible for members to drink to excess at the Lord's table, and where the gift of tongues was exercised in such a manner as to produce confusion and disharmony (cf. chapter 14:26 with v. 33) it would be small matter for wonder if the women interrupted the services with ejaculations and questions. It is, I believe, with this that the apostle is dealing. That his subject is not public speaking in the sense of ministry is evident from verse 35.

As indicted above, the original word translated "silence" in verse 34 is a different one from that used in 1 Tim. 2:11, rendered "silence" in A.V. and "quietness" in R.V. It is *sigao*, and its use in the New Testament is an interesting study. The word occurs nine times. Three times in 1 Corinthians 14 (verses 28, 30 and 34) and six times elsewhere. In six out of the nine occurrences the sense is that of hushing or bringing to silence some who have been vocal or noisy. The word is used in verses 28 and 30 of 1 Corinthians 14 in relation to speaking in tongues and prophesying. If no interpreter was present the "tongue" was to be silent. If a revelation came to another (prophet) sitting by, the first was to "hold his peace" (A.V.). In Acts 12 we read that when Peter was released from prison by the angel there was some natural excitement in the Church prayer meeting (verses 14, 15). Our word comes in verse 17. "He beckoning unto them with the hand to 'hold their peace' declared," etc. Why this use of the hand? Because the motion of his hand could be seen, even though his voice could not be clearly heard owing to the commotion, and this must be stilled for his message to be received. Similarly in Acts 15. There was "much disputing" (A.V.) in the Church Assembly at Jerusalem (verse 7). Then all the multitude kept "silence" (verse 12). After they had "held their peace" (verse 13), i.e., when the disturbance was stilled, Barnabas and Paul, and afterwards James, gave their respective messages. I submit that it is in this sense and no other that the word is used in 1 Corinthians 14:34. "Let the women keep 'silence' in the Churches"; let them not interrupt is clearly the force of verse 35. There must be no disorder whether through spiritual exaltation in the exercise of the gift of tongues—a most important consideration in these days when disorder in that which claims to be a revival of this gift is so manifest—or by prophets—male or female—speaking without due subjection one to the other, or by women who have not learned their place of subjection and the reverence due to the Lord in the midst of the assembly of the saints.

It is clear therefore that the ban of complete "silence" imposed in some quarters on sisters in the assembly has no warrant in Holy Scripture, but is contrary to the general effect thereof, and a great and serious limitation to the Holy Spirit, in inspiring and leading worship to the Father, as well as in the ministry of intercession.

Nevertheless it must also be said that the whole tenor of both Old and New Testament Scripture makes it clear that God's normal method is to use men in the more public activities of the church and especially in government. If, in the family the woman is not suffered to teach or to usurp authority over the man, this divine ordinance and rela-

tionship will hardly be abrogated when the family is merged in the assembly. But if men are in acute minority, or are unspiritual and therefore unfitted to be vessels of the Holy Spirit, God will use women today as He always has done under similar circumstances. It is a symptom of spiritual weakness when sisters in an assembly are more vocal than the brethren, even if, as is so often the case, their ministry is in life, and they are obviously led by the Spirit of God.

Sisters should, moreover, bear in mind that the truth enunciated in 1 Corinthians 11, as to the headship of man is an abiding fact and must receive due recognition. The mode of recognition is prescribed. They must wear a covering in addition to their hair. This is a requisite, because all ministry in the church both Godward and manward is "in the heavenlies" where spiritual intelligences observe and are brought into activity by the prayers of the saints. The Church is the theater wherein "now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies" the manifold wisdom of God is displayed (Eph. 3:10). "Power" (1 Cor. 11:10) is Greek "Exousia" and implies a symbol of authority. Wearing such a sign on her head, a sister may minister in an assembly even in the Word, as also in worship or prayer, *always and only* as she is moved thereto by the Holy Spirit. Subjection to the Holy Spirit is the crying need for both brethren and sisters.

The activity of religious flesh is all too common, and this ministers death, not life, quite irrespective of whether the flesh is that of male or female. Oh, for a return to that due order and power of the Holy Spirit in the assemblies of the saints so that the unbeliever coming in may have the secrets of his heart made manifest and falling down on his face he will "worship God declaring that God is among you indeed" (1 Cor. 14:24, 25).

ANOTHER VIEW — COMPARE CAREFULLY

IS HAT WEARING GOD-ORDAINED?

Bob Ross

With all respect to many good people, I must say that it is not clear that a woman today is fulfilling the requirement of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 when she wears a hat to church.

Why? A brief reference to the background of Paul's injunction will be helpful. The wearing of a veil in regular dress, contrary to popular opinion, was not an ancient Hebrew custom. In the first century the veil was in regular use, not among the peoples of Palestine, but among the Greeks and the Romans. In public it was the sign of every respectable woman. Now Corinth was noted for its excesses in immorality. In fact, the ancients coined the expression "to corinthianize" meaning to act immorally. In Corinth, therefore, it should have been unthinkable for a Christian to appear in public, especially in public worship, without the sign of decent subjection to her husband.

Now, let us note a couple of facts about the text before us. First, the veil which is required could not by any stretch of the imagination be equivalent to what we moderns know as a "hat" for the

fairer sex. A veil was a *veil*, meaning a covering for practically all of the head including the face. If a Christian woman wearing only a hat were to walk into Corinth's worship while Paul was preaching, he would doubtless sternly rebuke her. It is evident that to fulfill this scripture will take more than a hat.

In the second place, it is obvious that Paul's injunction is related *not* to a commandment of the Lord regarding the veil as such but to the normal custom of all decent Corinthian women. (It will be helpful to remember that not all the females in the Corinthian congregation had been thought of or thought of themselves as "decent women.") For in verse 13 Paul plainly expects the Corinthians to understand that common observation would teach them what he is saying. And it is equally clear that common observation does not teach this today. Whereas the Corinthians would easily reply "yes" to Paul's rhetorical question, if the same question were asked today the usual answer would be "no." When a woman wears a hat today it means only one thing: she is dressed formally rather than casually. And Paul is by no means arguing for formal against informal attire but for decent against indecent attire. If today a woman did, externally speaking, what Paul here requires, and wore a veil to church, she would hardly be considered either decent or in subjection to her husband but simply degraded or sensational.

We have already seen that a hat is not a veil, but supposing it were, then it must be realized that a woman still cannot fulfill 1 Cor. 11:2-16 by simply wearing the hat to church. The reason is that the external observance is there without the meaning which Paul has in mind. It would be like the kids "baptizing" the rooster—the form may be correct, but no one believes that is what Jesus had in mind in the Great Commission when He said to "baptize."

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Some of the men God used in the Old Testament were not very good men. How can we account for this?

Some of the people God uses today are not very good people. It is evident that one of God's problems in dealing with sinful man is finding instruments worthy of use. In fact, none are worthy except for His work of grace. Unless He bypasses man altogether though, He has imperfect vessels to use.

There are several mistakes we can make with respect to the matter under question. It is a mistake in evaluating the character of those who lived in Old Testament times to judge them by New Testament standards. God allowed things under the old economy that He does not now (Matthew 19:6-8, Acts 17:30). God has made some provision under the New Covenant, notably the indwelling Holy Spirit, which was not a common experience for God's people in the earlier day. This alone makes a great difference. God has not changed, but He has changed to some extent the rules by which men

are to live. As His revelation of Himself has progressed, so have His demands of man. We who live under the New Covenant must bear heavier judgment.

It is a mistake to assume that God uses only righteous persons. One does not have to be even a professing follower of His. This will be seen in many of the rulers—the Pharaohs, the Herods, the kings of Israel and Judah, Belshazzar, etc. God knows how to use evil men to make them serve Him, and yet He leaves them entirely responsible for the evil. The fact that the Bible reports how God has used a man does not by any means place God's stamp of approval on that one as a righteous individual.

It is a mistake to assume that God approves of all of the deeds of those who are named as His servants. Even the apostles could make mistakes (cf. Gal. 2:11-14). The mention of a man in the Bible, even as a servant of God, is not to place a complete stamp of approval on him or his deeds. The Bible often reveals both good and bad about even God's servants.

It is a mistake to assume that we always know enough about a person mentioned in the Bible to make a fair judgment. The accounts are often condensed, and our "reading between the lines" can be inaccurate. Except for the light given in 2 Peter 2:7, our concept of Lot's character would be much changed.

It would seem clear that God's greatest work is reserved for those with clean hands and a pure heart, so we must not think that God is indifferent to the kind of life His servants live. He is not limited, however, to use only a select few who are comparatively without blemish.



It is not a sin, is it, when one does things society has not approved in the past—things related to a person's inherited weaknesses? I have in mind, for example, whether an alcoholic is to blame that he is an alcoholic, or a homosexual to blame that he is not normal.

Society's approval or disapproval, past or present, is not the final test as to what is sin. Sin is our missing or falling short of the standard set by God. That which is condemned by God is sometimes also condemned by society; and the Christian, because he must not give offense or cause stumbling and would win men for Christ, is concerned about what society accepts; but we must beware of adopting mere human values. The Christian is not unaffected by society's values, but we must never seek to determine what is sin in the final sense by what is approved or disapproved by society. This changes, varies in the different segments of society, and is often quite unrelated to what God calls right or wrong. We are still bound in this twentieth century by what God has said in His word.

No man should be praised or blamed for the mere fact of having those inborn traits that are his, whether good or bad. He had no choice and exercised no control over what he would or would not receive. Sin involves making a choice. The alcoholic is not to blame that his body reacts in a given way to alcohol, nor is the

homosexual person to blame that his body may have been born with certain weaknesses or tendencies. But these and all others are responsible for how they use these endowments and for the encouragement or discouragement they give to inborn traits. An evil tendency or weakness as such is not a sin, but yielding to it is.

We readily concede that some may be so constituted in a physical way that they are tempted to homosexual acts; others feel nothing but revulsion for such deeds and have no need to fight the temptation, for they are not thus tempted. The former is not allowed to commit such acts simply because he is so constituted as to be tempted. That would be the same as justifying all heterosexual acts—adultery, prostitution, wife-swapping, etc.—because one has a strong sexual drive, or all fits of temper because one is naturally “high strung,” or the failure to perform necessary tasks because one has been born with an inclination to laziness. I know a man who justified an outburst of anger on the grounds that “God gave him his temper.” But God also meant for him to control his temper, not give way to it. The righteous use of what God gave is a part of good Christianity. Overcoming evil tendencies is a part of what Christianity is all about.

Of course men differ in natural endowment. Some are supremely selfish while others just seem naturally inclined to be generous. Some have high tempers; others seem to have so little. Some are tempted in ways others know nothing of. This does not give license to yield to the wrong impulse. The naturally generous man may not be tempted to covet, steal, or withhold from the needy, but he will have his own set of temptations. Every man has his weaknesses. He is not allowed to sin just because his temptation is strong.

The Bible declares homosexual acts are wrong (Lev. 20:13; Deut. 23:17-18; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-10). Let the person who is tempted resist and overcome, not weakly yield and demand that society accept him as he is. Drunkenness is wrong (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3). Let the alcoholic (or the imbibing non-alcoholic) simply accept this fact and resist the temptation to indulge the weakness. And so we might go on for each sin and weakness known to man. You cannot get rid of the sin by a whitewash job, declaring it not to be sin. It is far better to call it sin and seek victory over it in Christ.

THOUGHT PROVOKERS

from Here and There

“HOLY COMMUNION”

With such an earth-shaking, heaven-rending event before us, how can we rush through the Lord's Supper in six minutes? We need—week after week after week—to make the sufferings of our Savior the subject matter of our prayers and praises and meditations. There at His table together we wonder at His love, and the depths of depravity from which He saved us. We rejoice at our position of

privilege with Christ in the heavenly places, and stand in awe at the judgment He bore to take us there. We worship Him who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and remember that He emptied Himself of His glory for the death of the cross.

—Gordon Linscott

“Christianity started in Palestine as a *relationship* and became an *idea* in Greece, an *organization* in Rome, and an *enterprise* in America.”—Richard Halverson

GOD FINDS AN ATHEIST

Tatiana Goricheva is a Soviet dissident who emigrated West. Her transformation at age 26 was the explicitly miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. She was raised in an atheistic culture by rather ordinary nonbelieving parents. She went on to become an outstanding philosophy student, the pride of a Marxist society. Predictably, she was still unsatisfied.

“I was on a journey from nowhere to nowhere: I had no roots and would go into an empty, meaningless future.” After never saying a prayer in her entire life, she ran across the Lord’s Prayer in a yoga book & began to say it as a mantra. “I said it about six times, and then I was suddenly turned inside out. I understood—not with my ridiculous understanding, but with my whole being—that he exists. He, the living, personal God, who loves me and all creatures, who has created the world, who became a human being out of love, the crucified and risen God.”

... She describes a vibrant Soviet Christian community, growing not despite persecution, but often because of it. “It is a pity that the West does not understand the value of suffering, its power to renew and purge. The experience of the persecuted Russian Church says to us quite clearly that suffering for God does not take us away from him, but on the contrary brings us nearer to him.”

—*Christianity Today*, February 19, 1988

BE AN ENCOURAGER

Look around in your congregation for someone to encourage. Thank a brother for his public prayer, write a note to your preacher thanking him for a recent lesson, thank an elder for his concern for the flock. Or perhaps tell that dear widow what an inspiration her example has been for you. All around you are people who will blossom when encouraged. So be creative in encouraging people in your church family. A ministry of encouragement will not receive a lot of recognition, but it will vitally influence your congregation ... “Encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thess. 5:14).

—*IMAGE* magazine

INCHING TOWARD INFIDELITY—AND RATIONALIZING IT

“I am convinced that more people get themselves into the pain of infidelity through empathy, concern and compassion than through any base motive. The world is full of lonely and vulnerable people,

hungry for a sympathetic ear and a shoulder to cry on. With a little help from rationalization, the sympathy leads smoothly into tenderness, the tenderness to the need for privacy, the privacy to physical consolation and the consolation straight to bed."

—Richard Exley, in *Ministries Today*

TEACH THE BIBLE BETTER:

THE DAY THE QUESTIONS STARTED

"You did it again," Candice was exasperated. "You ran out of time before I got my question asked."

I was a young teacher in the Sunday school program of a military base in Japan. Many of my junior high kids had first-hand family experience with the Vietnam war. Their fathers flew; their mothers patched together young bodies. If ever a group needed time for questions, this was it.

"Next week," I promised her. "We'll start with questions."

I worried all week. I was a very organized teacher. I knew my lesson. I had everything planned so I wouldn't make any mistakes or forget anything. I asked questions during class, but they were questions I was prepared for. I was in control. There was no time for questions that were off track. Those kinds of questions were dangerous. I might not know the answers. I might look silly, or worse—dumb.

The more I worried, the more certain I was that God wanted me to trust Him and allow unprogrammed time.

I opened the next week's class by asking, "Any questions?" Six hands were raised. I pointed to the least dangerous looking kid.

"My girl friend's baby sister died before she was born. Will she go to Heaven?"

Without waiting for my comments, a boy who almost never talked interrupted. "My dad flew out this morning. If his plane is hit and he dies, what happens to him? He's not a Christian."

I sent up a "help-Lord" prayer and started to answer. The right words. Words that were wiser than I was. For the first time, I allowed myself not to be in total control. Christ could show His strength.

That class set a pattern. Never again would I teach without allowing my students time to share their concerns, fears, and joys.

—David C. Cook Publishing Co.

NEWS AND NOTES, continued from inside front cover

fine Christian families but also as sacrificial shepherds in God's flock.

Ky. Ave. Church of Christ, Louisville:

John Sparrow recently began serving as associate minister to Dennis Kaufman. John will concentrate on youth and children's ministries, while continuing his studies at the School of Biblical Studies.

S. B. S. SUPPER

The annual School of Biblical Studies promotional supper will be held at the Sellersburg Christian Center on Aug. 7 at 5:15. That is the Tue. nite of Louisville Fellowship Week. All friends of S.B.S. are invited to attend.

After the meal, Bro. Tom Mobley, president of Louisville Bible College, will speak briefly about various po-

tential relationships between LBC & SBS: different options, reasons, pros & cons. There will be considerable time set aside for questions from the floor. Dennis Kaufman, chairman of SBS' board, will also update us on SBS.

Denham Springs, LA.:

Each of the issues of W & W is a blessing, but I really say a hearty "Amen!" to the theme of the May issue: Facing Moral Crises. Much needed!!

—Don McGee

Portland Christian School, Louisville:

The PCHS Alumni sponsored a reception honoring Earl and Ragena Mullins, held July 22 at the Sellersburg church's Christian Center. Earl taught and/or administered at PCS for 31 years, and Ragena was his secretary and paraclete for 25 of those years. Pray for them in their new ministry, and for PCS too. Praise God for His faithful servants.

Cracks in Some Walls—New Bridges Built

The Berlin Wall has fallen, and the Iron Curtain is in shambles, thank God. But in church relationships some good things have been happening too. A sizeable proportion of folks, including preachers, in the "mainline Churches of Christ" have turned away from the sectarian, aloof, or even fist-shaking attitudes toward "us"—attitudes that were common in former days (and still are, in some places). For example, brother Bill Goodpasture, a minister from Nashville area, spoke at the Tell City Workshop last Feb. & will hold some meetings at the Tell City Church Oct. 8-14. 2nd example: brother Rubel Shelley from Nashville—wellknown speaker & author among the more open "mainliners," recently held meetings for the Gallatin Church. 3rd example: A number of Gallatin's members thoroughly enjoyed attending "Jubilee '90" a very large & spiritually alive & positive conference held in Nashville from July 4-7. Reports say that the preaching was superb both in content, attitude & depth, & singing was outstanding. The fellowship was open & enthusiastic. The leaders invited Julius Hovan to introduce one of the workshop speakers, though they knew where Julius "was from." Most of all, Christ

was exalted! We thank God for this good news from various places.

Tell City, Indiana

There were ten of us who enjoyed the Father-Son Campout this past Friday and Saturday. Everyone had a good time. Then the Mother-Daughter Banquet was enjoyed by over 115 last night here at the church building!

Remember the Price Increase in Sunday School Quarterlies

As announced earlier, starting with the Fall quarter (Sept. - Nov.), W&W quarterlies will cost \$3.00 a year.

Tod and Valda Smith to Austria

After several delays, Tod and Valda Smith & their 3 daughters, arrived in Austria last May to begin missionary work in that needy land. Valda has some "roots" and relatives in the Highway Church of Christ in Pekin, Ind. She & her parents at various times have been active there. Tod & Valda ministered at the Portland Ave., Ky. Ave. & Belmont churches last Dec., telling of opportunities & problems in Europe. Pray for them to adjust easily to a new culture and language. Also that God will open doors and hearts of people there, in a land where many people stay aloof from strangers.

Clorox Boycott Ended

Christian Leaders for Responsible Television (CLear-TV) is ending their boycott of The Clorox Corporation. CLear-TV began the boycott July '89 after identifying the company as a leading sponsor of sex, violence, profanity, and anti-Christian stereotyping on network television.

CLear-TV Executive Committee voted to end the boycott, originally scheduled to last one year, after nine months. The decision was prompted by a reduction of almost two-thirds in the amount of sex, violence, and profanity sponsored by Clorox last fall (as compared with last spring), and after assurances by Clorox that they would continue their practice in the future.

CLear-TV boycott of Mennen products, begun at the same time as the Clorox boycott, will continue through July. Mennen has not announced any changes in their practice since being identified as a leading sponsor of sex, violence, and profanity, spring '89.

LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

August 6 - 9, 1990

THEME: "BIND US TOGETHER, LORD"

MONDAY, AUGUST 6th

7:30 p.m. Singing (PCS Alumni, James Embree)
8:00 p.m. "Cords That Cannot Be Broken" Paul Kitzmiller

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7th Theme for the Day: "BOUND BY FAITH"

9:30 Prayer Time
10:00 "Roots of Our Faith" Glen Baber
11:05 "The Faith Work-Out" Bill Smallwood
1:00 Workshops (see list below)
2:00 Workshops
7:30 p.m. Singing (SCC Alumni—Dale Jorgenson)
8:00 p.m. "Victorious Faith" Hall Crowder

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8th Theme for the Day: "BOUND BY HOPE"

9:30 Prayer Time
10:00 "Roots of Our Hope" Dale Jorgenson
11:05 "The Hope Work-Out" Ray Naugle
1:00 Workshops
2:00 Workshops
7:30 p.m. Singing (All Ladies Chorus—Bonnie Colwick)
8:00 p.m. "A Victorious Hope" Earl Mullins, Sr.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9TH Theme for the Day: "BOUND BY LOVE"

9:30 Prayer Time
10:00 "Roots of Love" Kenneth Preston
11:05 "Walking in Love" Nick Marsh
1:00 Workshops
2:00 Workshops
2:50 - 3:15 Special Report: Michiya Nakahara (Japan Work)
7:30 Singing (Revelators)
8:00 p.m. "A Victorious Love" Dennis Kaufman

WORKSHOP TOPICS & LEADERS:

1. Home Bible Studies Julius Hovan
2. Singles Ministry Vaughn Reeves
3. Christian Literature Clarksville Book Store
4. Ladies' Panel Various Ladies
5. Youth Ministry Mark Baker
6. Current Events and Prophecy Victor Broadus
7. Fellowship Groups Alex Wilson

(Some will be offered once, some twice, some thrice.)

Meetings for Young People will be held on Tue., Wed. & Thurs. nights.

For Homes to stay in, call Dale Offutt, 812-246-2694.