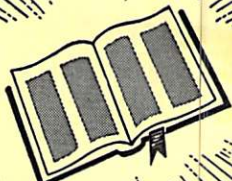
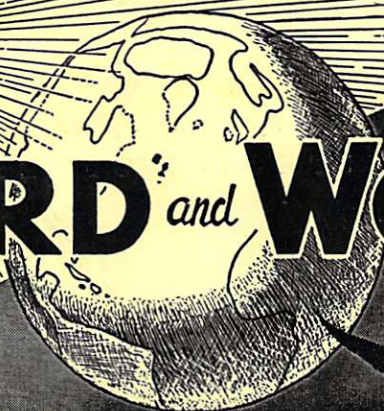


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"Holding forth the Word of life."

OCTOBER, 1991

G O D ' S W I L L K N O W I T , D O I T

I dislike intensely the phrase, "surrender to the will of God." To me, that implies kicking, struggling, screaming. It is like saying, "There is no other way out. I'm running, but I'm caught. I've got to collapse and surrender. It's all over, I give up."

I far prefer the term, "**Affirm** the will of God." If we had any sense at all, every one of us would affirm God's will with confidence and with joy and with deep satisfaction.

—Paul Little

* * *

Choose for us, God, nor let our weak preferring
Cheat us of the good Thou hast for us designing;
Choose for us, God; Thy wisdom is unerring,
And we are fools and blind.

—W. H. Burleigh

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SPECIAL OFFER

GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS: A recent letter from a preacher said, "Smiles for the August *Word and Work*. There are some good things for people to read on principles of good parenting. Sadly, I only know of one couple besides me in our congregation that get your magazine. I would like several to see this issue especially. I am wondering, *would you have any extras left over* that I could give to some key folks? If so, what would be the cost? Perhaps it would even encourage some to subscribe...."

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

GOD'S WILL — KNOW IT, DO IT

An Introduction by the Editor

Alex V. Wilson

Our theme this month is an urgent one. As a preacher once declared to a wishy-washy Christian, "Young man, if God has a will for your life--and He does--then *what on earth could be anywhere nearly so important* as following that will?!"

How sad when people who claim to be Christians seem little concerned about understanding the will of the Lord, much less doing it if it calls for the least amount of effort or sacrifice. And yet how many folks like that sit in our church meetings as the weeks go by, spiritually dead or at least asleep. What a tragedy, and what a travesty of the thrilling abundant life our Savior died to provide for us!

But before we continue along this line, let's think about a helpful distinction related to God's will. James Packer makes the point for us in his book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (93 ff.):

In the fifth and sixth chapters of Ephesians, Paul desires that his readers may be found "understanding what the will of the Lord is" (5:17) and "doing the will of God from the heart" (6:6). This is the will of God as Lawgiver, the will of God that man is to know and obey. In the same sense, he writes to the Thessalonians: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."

In the first chapter of Ephesians, however, Paul speaks of God's having chosen him and his fellow-Christians in Christ before the world began "according to the good pleasure of his will" (v. 5) And he speaks of God Himself as "him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (v. 11). Here God's "will" is clearly His eternal purpose for the disposal of His creatures, His will as the world's sovereign Lord. This is the will that God actually fulfills in and through everything that actually happens--even man's transgression of His law.

Older theology distinguished the two as God's will of precept and His will of purpose, the former being His published declaration of what man ought to do, the latter His (largely secret) decision as to what He Himself will do. The distinction is between God's law and His plan. The former tells man what he should be; the latter settles what he will be.

God's will in the first sense we should submit to and obey. His will in the second sense we should trust in and take comfort from. For instance, if illness or accident cause prolonged disability, and after much prayer and medical treatment it becomes obvious that recovery seems out of the picture, we then should accept our condition as at least God's *permissive* will for us, if not His *directive* will. Aha!--we have just brought in two other aspects of the will of God. Entire books could be written--and have--about these and other questions related to our theme this month. We certainly won't be able to solve

all the mysteries or reconcile all the contradictory views in the following articles, but we trust that they will be helpful as we explore this great subject together. Regarding God's permissive-versus-directive will, I recommend *A Step Further*, the book by quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada.

As happens frequently, our writers don't agree about everything. Earl Mullins, Jr., differs from A. W. Tozer on how detailed is God's plan for our everyday activities. John Stott warns us of "irrational impulses" but Bakht Singh testifies of some God-given ones--not irrational but what we might call unrational, yet heaven-sent. As you read, weigh all these things with care and prayer.

Think Wisely, Do Right, Obey God

Alex V. Wilson

What do you think of these statements, made to me by a Christian teenager? "I'm a Christian, and God won't let me go wrong or make a wrong choice. Anyway, I've prayed about this, so God will keep me from ruining my life. Besides, all things work together for good."

That sounds good, doesn't it? Full of faith in God. Yet the remarks were made to justify a course of action which was extremely unwise, obviously against common sense. Some folks even talk that way to rationalize actions which definitely contradict clear teaching from God's word.

Contrary to those seemingly Christian statements, scripture shows us numerous examples (and church history provides many more) of times when God's people *did* go wrong...and brought dishonor on the name of the Lord and disaster upon themselves. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to God and their fellow-disciples, and were struck dead for it, God used the incident to teach important lessons to those early believers. He brought some good results out of those startling events. Yet their sin still dishonored Christ, and their punishment was a disaster to the two of them.

Here are three simple but important guidelines for knowing God's will and shaping our conduct.

Think Wisely

We should urge our young people to use their minds (and the minds and experiences of older people too) regarding decisions like their education (how much, what major field), career, friendships, courtship and marriage, service to God, general lifestyle, etc. And many older folks also need to examine or re-examine some of these basic questions.

Today many people act merely on impulse, not reason. Years ago when I was in the army, another fellow in my platoon was a constant complainer. Gripe, gripe, gripe all day long. Knowing he had signed up rather than being a draftee, I asked, "Don, if you hate the army so intensely, why in the world did you join up?" His answer still tickles me: "I joined the army because I got so tired of

being bossed around at home and school! I had no freedom--they were always telling me what to do." Wisdom tells us to look before we leap.

Sadly, today many *Christians* act mainly on impulse, not reason. (A key word there is "mainly".) They are suspicious of thinking things through, instead basing their decisions on feelings or constantly looking for unusual experiences. Of course, Proverbs 3:5 does say, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." But the meaning of this is explained in verse 7: "Do not think how wise you are, but fear the Lord"(NEB). That is, verse 5 is not warning us against thinking in itself, but against conceited, self-confident thinking, prayerless thinking, the absence of trusting God and seeking His direction. The book of Proverbs itself is full of wise advice on many subjects--family life, the use of money, business matters, eating and overeating, sexual matters, reacting to enemies, etc. God intends us to form wise principles from His Word and apply them with clear thinking. Paul tells us, "...In thinking be mature." Again he urges, "Be very careful how you live, not as unwise men but as sensible ones. . . . Do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is" (1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 5:15,17).

James Packer has some straightforward advice for us about HINDRANCES to getting guidance from God:

1st, unwillingness to think. God made us thinking beings, and He guides our minds as in His presence we think things out--not otherwise. "O that they were wise...that they would consider. . . ." (Deut. 32:29).

2nd, unwillingness to think ahead, and weigh the long-term consequences of alternative courses of action. Often we can only see what is wise and right (and what is foolish and wrong) as we dwell on its long-term results. "O that they were wise...that they would consider their latter end."

3rd, unwillingness to take advice. Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice." We need to consider carefully the counsel of mature people, even if we cannot finally accept it.

4th, unwillingness to suspect oneself. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes." We dislike being realistic with ourselves. We recognize shallow reasoning or excuse-making when others do it, but overlook it in ourselves. This is especially true in matters related to courtship, sex and marriage. The joy and sense of wellbeing that result from being 'in love' can easily silence our conscience and prevent careful thinking. We need to ask ourselves why we "feel" a certain course of action is right, and make ourselves give reasons--praying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, and lead me." (Guidance and Wisdom)

Do Right

Part of thinking wisely is to ask, "Is this course of action I am considering *right*? Is it honest and fair? honorable? loving and helpful? Or would even nonchristians realize that it flunks the test of ethical integrity? A sad chapter in the life of Abraham is recorded in Gen. 12, when he and his wife went to Egypt. Fearing he would be killed because of her beauty, he instructed Sarai, "Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you." What a wimp! What a failure of his faith in God and his love for Sarai. He acted cowardly, selfishly and deceitfully.

Do you remember what happened? Sure enough, her charms led Pharaoh to add her to his harem, but God intervened to spare her. However Pharaoh had a stormy confrontation with Abraham: "Why did you lie to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Here--take her and get outta here!" So he booted them out.

True, God worked to "keep them from ruining their lives," for He had an important role for them to play in His eternal plans. But what a scandal! What a shame and disgrace they brought on themselves before the king and his court and the entire land. How the *National Enquirer* must have loved the story. What dishonor to Abraham's God, when His servant's visa was cancelled, and he was declared *persona non grata*, and deported by royal edict. The whole experience was a miserable disaster, which could have been avoided if Abraham had thought clearly, and trusted the Lord enough to do right.

Obey God

Of course it is possible sometimes to disobey God even if our actions are right in themselves, not evil. Remember the prophet whom God zapped because he stopped to eat with another prophet? This is found in 1 Kings 13, and it's worth reading.

The brave younger prophet carried out his difficult, God-given mission to denounce the idolatry of none other than Israel's king. God honored his faith by a miracle, thus preserving him from probable execution. It was a glorious accomplishment. But then "a certain old prophet" entered the drama and deceived the younger man of God. He said that an angel told him by the word of the Lord to cause the younger man to eat at his house. That seems like an innocent act, except for two things. The old man lied; and God had distinctly, specifically instructed His younger servant not to eat or drink with anyone at all while on this trip. That latter fact is emphasized by a threefold repetition--verses 9, 17 and 21-22. Nevertheless, being misled by the old prophet's lie, the man of God disobeyed his clear instructions...and ended up being killed by a lion.

Don't rush to wrong conclusions here. God is not a mean tyrant, eager to strike us down whenever we step out of line the least bit, even unknowingly. No, no; He is gracious and merciful; but He also deserves and expects total obedience to His clearly revealed will from those who are privileged to be His servants. We also must not conclude that the Lord is picky, fussy over unimportant details, and vindictive. We should realize that He sometimes in emergencies allows exceptions to His general rules: David, when fleeing Saul ate the bread which only priests were supposed to eat, and God approved (Matt. 12:1-8). Again, during the revival under King Hezekiah, God answered his prayer and bent His rules regarding the observance of that feast (2 Chron. 30:13-20).

Nonetheless, the young prophet was judged by the Lord because of his disobedience. His promising ministry was cut short, his very life was forfeited. And in this is a solemn reminder to us: Sincerity is not enough; seek God's will, then obey it. Don't be casual about the will of God. Don't be lazy and lax about obeying the Most High.

Proving God's Will

Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

As a practising attorney, there are several words throughout the scriptures which catch my attention. One of those words is found in Romans 12:2. There the Apostle Paul indicates that God's people should be able to *prove* what the will of God is. The word "prove" as used by the Apostle indicates an ability on the part of Christian people to come to terms with God's will with the greatest degree of confidence that one can have. The confidence that we can have is derived from our knowing, not guessing, that we are doing what God has called us to do.

Much of the New Testament serves to reinforce and amplify this truth, i.e. God wants us to know confidently what His will is for our lives. In other New Testament letters, Paul would use other terms (such as "walking in the light") to indicate God's desire that we walk knowing we are accomplishing His specific will. In yet other places Paul would pray that Christian people would know Him, i.e. God, and His desires for their lives. God has evidenced that He desires that we know what He wants us to do.

Despite this truth, many Christian people have yet to come to terms with what God wants them to do. Their struggle with this concept leaves them in the dark about so many areas of their Christian walk. For example, many who have been Christians for years still do not know about the talents or gifts that God has given to them, about whether certain practices are right or wrong, whether certain attitudes are pleasing to God, what vocation they should be pursuing, what congregation they should be worshipping with, etc. It is not difficult to understand that the struggles with these difficult questions as they remain unanswered rob one of confidence and leave one without peace.

There are certain specific evidences of God's will that God wants us to prove to ourselves. Included in the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 12:2 is the indication that God will help us to prove His will including the evidences of that which is "good and acceptable and perfect." These characteristics mean that in proving God's will we will be able to do the following:

1. *Prove that which is good about God's will.* That is to say, prove that God's will is full of Himself. God is the only eternal good and His will will be full of Himself, the eternal goodness. In practical terms, this indicates that God's will will focus on His eternal plan and the things of the Lord. If we believe we have come to terms with God's will, but find that which we have thought to be His will does not include the things of the Lord and those things which are indicated by the scriptures to be healthy for maturing, growing Christians, this probably indicates that we have not come to terms with what God's will really is.

Consider this example: If a Christian believes that he has come to terms with God's will as it regards the use of his time but has not made time in his schedule for fellowship with the saints and worship of the Lord as a part of a congregation, it probably means that that person has not yet truly and completely found God's will. Because God directs through His word that we gather together as a body for the purposes of worship, fellowship, and mutual benefit, it would be contradictory for Him not to direct the saints to be involved in that activity. Therefore, God will direct each individual child of His into areas of worship and fellowship with other saints, where possible.

2. *Prove that which is acceptable about God's will.* That is to say, prove God's design rather than man's design. While many people may be used by God in a Godly way to shape, fashion, mold and give guidance to our lives, it is God to whom we look as the one with the final say in our lives. I know and have observed many Christian people who are involved in good and worthwhile matters but yet are not doing what God has called them to do. They may be doing what God has called someone else to do but not what God has designed specifically for them.

Consider this example: If a Christian comes to terms with the previously cited truth that God desires him to be a part of a fellowship (a congregation of believers) but does not discern God's will about which specific congregation he is to be involved in, then he has found only half the truth. God is not only interested in our worship in a fellowship but also in directing us to a specific fellowship.

The ramifications to our churches because of failure in this area are notable. In many of the congregations in which I have worshipped there have been Christians pressed into areas of service which they have gladly undertaken but all the while knowing that there were other Christians either in that particular church or in other churches who should have been there doing what they were doing. However, because many have not come to terms with the specifics of where God wanted them to worship and how He wanted them to integrate into that body of believers, the work of the Lord in many places has suffered. Christians with talents in songleading, preaching, teaching, administration, giving, etc. have failed in these talents when they have refused to come to terms with where God wanted them to be used. (Consider the example of Jonah who carried God-given talents and God-given messages to the wrong place.)

3. *Proving how God's will is perfect.* This characteristic of God's will gives us confidence about the completeness of God's design for our lives. Many people have the mistaken idea that God's will and design for our lives focus on merely a few issues, a few moments in time or a handful of matters. For example, some people mistakenly believe that God is only concerned about whom they marry, where they worship and/or what vocation generally they pursue. Others may expand and enlarge this concept to include God being concerned about what happens on a Sunday or some special day(s). The interim times, in the minds of those holding these ideas, are left to the indi-

On the Other Hand. . . .

Paul Little

We must not think that because we want to do something, it can't possibly be God's will. That attitude is a slur on the character of God. So many of us see God as a kind of celestial Scrooge who peers over the balcony of heaven trying to find anybody who is enjoying life. And when He spots a happy person, He yells, "Now cut that out!" That concept of God should make us shudder because it's blasphemous. . . .

The God who loved us enough to die for us when we did not care that much for Him is not about to short-change us in life when we give our lives to Him. . . . We need to recognize the wonderful truth of Psalm 37:4: "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." This does not mean, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you a Sting Ray, a Cadillac, a Phi Beta Kappa key and the whole business." What he means is that as we delight ourselves in the Lord, our will and God's will begin to coincide. The greatest joy in all of our lives is to do what the Lord wants us to do and to know we are doing it. Admittedly, we must constantly guard against self-deception, but when we really want to do the will of God and do it, we have deep joy and satisfaction.

Steering—and Re-steering—Us Through the Voyage

Kenneth Pike, Wycliffe Bible Translators

Human judgment is liable to error, so that the one who concludes that God's guidance points him to move onward may well be mistaken. Should we then stand still? By no means. Better zeal with ignorance than knowledge with disobedience. Let us rather have partially misdirected vigorous action attempting to obey God than that type of fear of "getting out of God's will" or "running ahead of God" which leads one to let the world perish while one waits for God to give orders now which He has already given 2,000 years ago.

Since consecrated human judgment may be inadequate and frequently is unable to see far enough ahead to provide for necessary modifying actions, the Spirit of God frequently checks one's actions or steers one *along the road*. Thus Paul, heading for Asia, was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word" there (Acts 16:6). Again, "the Spirit of Jesus did not permit him" to enter Bithynia. Compare Isaiah 30:21, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" Here is not a promise of special guidance to get one started on the road, but the assurance of warning when one gets out.

As an illustration of this guidance by checks of one kind or another, note "the way of a ship in the midst of the sea" (Prov. 30:19). It responds to the rudder only when the ship is moving. The rudder may be turned back and forth but is utterly ineffective until the ship is under way. In fact, for purposes of guidance a ship might

better be moving in the wrong direction than not moving at all, since in the one instance it will respond to the helmsman but in the other must drift idly. So God can more readily guide a man who blunders awkwardly on a slightly incorrect path but who goes ahead, than He can steer a man who is drifting smoothly and supposedly waiting for orders. The surest way to find guidance is to be under way under God's written orders. His Spirit can then turn the rudder.

David Livingstone started for China. God's check to him was a war between Britain and China, following which he turned to Africa. Was he out of God's will in heading in the first place to China? By no means. Rather he was guided in the way.

God's Will for Us is in Us!

Peter Wagner

It is common for Christians to speak of their "calling". Part of our religious vocabulary is that "God has called me to do such and such," or "I don't believe God is calling me to do such and such." It is helpful to recognize that a person's "call" and his or her spiritual gifts are very closely associated. (Rom. 12:1-8)

When related to the objective of doing God's will or functioning in the Body of Christ, a person's general call is equivalent to his or her spiritual gift. There is no better framework within which to interpret one's call than one's mixture of gifts. God does not give gifts which He does not "call" the recipient to use, nor does He call someone to do something for Him without equipping that person with the necessary gift or gifts to do it.

However, besides the *general* calling there will also be a *specific* calling. Some like to refer to this specific call as one's "ministry." So the ministry or specific call determines the particular way or setting in which God wishes you to exercise the gift or gifts He has given you. For example, a person can have the gift of teaching and be called specifically to use that gift among children or on the radio or in writing books. Within the general calling provided by each gift, then, are many specific ways that such a gift can be ministered. Elizabeth O'Conner puts it this way: "We ask to know the will of God without guessing that His will is written into our very beings. We perceive that will when we discern our gifts."

Guidance, Natural and Supernatural

The Editor

Sometimes the Lord gave the Apostle Paul *supernatural* directions: at his conversion (Acts 9); the call to his first missionary journey ("the Holy Spirit said...," probably through a prophetic utterance; Acts 13:1-4); the vision of a man from Macedonia (16:9); an angel's message of encouragement which also provided guidance on some practical matters (27:21-39). Philip, Peter and others also received miraculous guidance, through angelic visits, visions, and prophecies: see 8:26; 9:10ff.; 10:3ff.; 11:27; etc.

It seems to me there are *two opposite errors* we may make regarding these facts. 1st is the error of *assuming that such supernatural happenings were the common, usual way that the Lord led His people* in those days. Some contemporary believers feel this way, and conclude that ordinary, "natural" methods of guidance are secondary, less spiritual, and only for carnal Christians whose weak faith prevents their being led in dramatic, miraculous ways.

But study of Acts and the epistles reveals many flaws in this theory. Note these Scriptures: 1 Thes. 3:1ff., "When we could stand it (being absent from you) no longer, *we thought it best* [not "God directed us"] to be left by ourselves in Athens, and we sent Timothy to encourage you." Phil. 2:25ff., "*I think it is necessary* to send back to you Epaphroditus, whom you sent to care for me. For he longs for you, and is distressed because you heard he was ill." 1 Cor. 16:5-7, "*I intend* to pass through Macedonia and *perhaps* I'll stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may speed me on my way, *wherever I go*. For *I don't want* to see you now just in passing--*I hope* to spend some time with you, *if the Lord permits*." 1 Cor. 16:12, "*I strongly urged* our brother Apollos to go to you. . . . *He was quite unwilling* to go now, but he will go when he *has the opportunity*."

Careful examination of those texts shows several interesting facts. When God didn't specifically intervene, Paul was content to look at situations and make what he thought were the best decisions in those circumstances. He often did not know God's will for his future in a precise, detailed blueprint. He was flexible, waiting on the Lord but also making tentative plans based on his thoughts, wants, and hopes--all within the overall call of God to him to be an apostle-missionary. Other believers felt free to reject his advice and urgings, despite his being an apostle.

The 2nd and opposite extreme is *believing God never uses extraordinary, supernatural methods of guidance today*, that "all that stuff passed away long ago." Oh, are you sure? Can you prove it? Has God retired? And by this attitude are you not in danger of unbelief in God's power, and of quenching the Holy Spirit, and of robbing yourself of experiencing some miracle(s) He may want to do for you and through you? Far too often we try to make God fit fit into the box of our doctrinal theories, and then we wonder why we don't see more happen. May the good Lord deliver us from unbelief.

See the following article.

The Length of Our Prayers

"Long prayers and long sermons tend to quench the fire instead of kindling it. Brethren, in all things has our Lord Jesus given us the best example—also in regard to praying. When with His disciples, His prayers were of medium length. In the midst of a large crowd, as at Lazarus' grave and the feeding of the five thousand, His prayer was short. When He was alone with His Father,

in the Garden, or on the Mount—then He prayed all night.

"So ought ye also do, dear brethren. Among God's children, make your prayer medium long, as Jesus did when He was about to be crucified. When in a crowd or with the sick and dying or the unfortunate, short. When you are alone with your Father in your sacred closet, pray as long as you please."

—quote from C. H. Spurgeon

INNER IMPRESSIONS

And the Lord's Guidance

—*John Stott*: Notice Psalm 32:8, where God promises, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." Then he adds, "Do not be like the horse or the mule, *which have no understanding* but must be controlled by bit and bridle." God's promises of guidance are not given to save us the bother of thinking. Some Christians imagine that it is super-spiritual to receive directions from God by irrational impulses. It is not super-spiritual. It is not even spiritual. It is carnal. Worse, it is animal. It is asking God to treat us like an irrational beast, like a horse waiting for a tug at bit and bridle, a crack of the whip or a kick with spurs. But we are not horses and mules without understanding. God has made us men and women with understanding, who in Christ have a renewed mind. —from a sermon

ON THE OTHER HAND: Testimonies of Bakht Singh, Evangelist in India

God's will can be found through His word, His messengers and other circumstances. Most of us get troubled because we limit God to our way of thinking. He has every right to speak to us as He thinks best.

Many years ago, we were having an open-air Gospel meeting. Afterwards we went to a hotel for a cup of tea. As we sat down, I heard the voice of God: "Go to the corner and give a Gospel to the man sitting there." When I saw his mustache, I thought he would not listen to the Gospel, and it was a waste of time to speak to such a man. But the voice came to me again and again: "You go to him, you go to him." With much hesitation, I went and gave him a Gospel with trembling hands. He asked me, "What is this?" I said, "Sir, it is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." Then he exclaimed, "Gospel! I want a full Urdu Bible. For two years I have been longing to have a complete Urdu Bible." I felt so happy and said, "I do not have one with me now, but if you give me your address I shall bring it to you." The next day I took a Bible and went to his home and explained to him how to read it. He was so hungry for the Word of God. He not only paid for the Bible but gave me plenty of cakes and tea and I had the privilege of giving him the message of salvation. If I had gone by my own wisdom, I would not have spoken to him or given him the Gospel. It was only when I obeyed, that I could see how God worked. . . .

Some years ago, I went to a house to meet a certain young man. I was talking for some time when suddenly his friends said to me, "While we prepare some food, you can go on talking." This was the first time I had met him. I heard a voice within me saying, "You speak to this young man." I thought, "I do not know this man, if I speak to him about his sin he may get very angry." Again the same

words came to me, "Tell him that if he does not leave that sin he will go to hell." Then I told him, "If you do not leave that sin, you will go to hell."

In the meantime one of his friends brought coffee, and I was glad because I was saved from speaking further to that young man.

The next morning I got a telephone call from an old man saying, "Can I come and see you?" I replied, "Please come straightway." A very tall man walked into my room and with tears he said to me, "I have come personally to thank you for speaking to my son last night. He has been living in sin with somebody for the past two years. He left home and went away. Both my wife and I were broken-hearted. I do not know what you said to him, but after meeting you, he came and fell at our feet and asked for forgiveness." That was the first I had seen that young man. I did not know him. Neither did I know about his private life. Yet the Lord told me clearly, and insisted that I tell him, "If you do not leave that sin, you will go to hell." In this way the Lord uses His messengers and witnesses to speak to those whose hearts He has prepared. Sometimes they are words of comfort or guidance. Listen attentively when God speaks to you, and do not get angry with the preachers when He speaks to you through them.

ON THE OTHER HAND: Advice from John Wesley

Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions or revelations to be from God. They may be from *Him*. They may be *nature*. They may be from *the Devil*. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but "try the spirits, whether they be from God."

ON THE OTHER HAND: Testimony of Catherine Marshall

The Holy Spirit delights in mediating Christ to us in the everydayness of life. For instance: About two years after Peter Marshall [her husband] had his first heart attack, one morning I was plagued by the insistent thought that I should learn to drive the family car. [This was in the mid-1940's.—editor] I mentioned the idea to my husband. He was not wildly enthusiastic; he knew that two drivers for one car could result in complications.

Over a matter of months the idea kept coming back so persistently that I concluded that this was the Helper insisting. Finally Peter agreed to my taking driving lessons. At the time of his sudden death, I had been driving just long enough to have confidence to carry on. But if I had had to learn during the period of emotional turmoil immediately following his death, I might never have attempted it. Later on I realized that being able to drive also had significance in helping me towards the independence necessary to begin my new life. To me this seems proof, as only the Comforter can give it to us, that God exists, and that He cares about us.—*Beyond Ourselves*

ON THE OTHER HAND: A Warning from Ray Stedman

Scripture gives us a great principle: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Look for those two or three witnesses before you act upon an inner voice, for God will confirm it to you.

I know of a dear Christian girl who, desiring to know and follow God, felt that God had placed an impression in her heart that she should marry a certain man. She did not know him very well, nor was she in love with him, but she felt certain that this was the voice of God—so certain that she began to anticipate ways and means by which this might come to pass. But in the course of a few months, to her dismay and consternation, this young man announced his engagement to another girl. She was dismayed not because she was in love with him, because she wasn't, but because she was so certain she had heard the voice of God. It turned out that he did marry this other girl, and she was troubled, wondering how she could have been so misled.

Later on she felt that another word, this time concerning her parents, had been given to her, but this did not work out either. Gradually she learned the great fact: it is necessary to act with caution about an inner voice, and to expect God to confirm His word to us, so that we may act with understanding. —*Death of a Nation*

THERE IS SAFETY IN NUMBERS: *Another Example from David Bryant*

God speaks as we come together, especially when our discussions keep our mission in view. Silence is so strategic to world evangelization.

One listening group is Youth With a Mission (YWAM). They work in more than 100 countries, fulfilling "impossible" ministries. How did this come about? Twenty-five years ago a little band put into operation the strategy of silence [or waiting before God]. Corporately, they listened for God's directives. Corporately, they weighed out what they thought they heard. Corporately, they actively backed every new mission they were convinced God had ordered. Then, corporately they got down on their knees and listened again.

How did they hear? Usually God gently reminded them of Scripture or gave them unanimous agreement on a new direction for their ministry. Was there ever an audible voice? Sometimes. Was it ever through dreams? Sometimes. One time, a group was waiting silently together to hear God. Suddenly, different individuals saw in their minds a ship in a harbor. When they compared the mental impressions, they found each was identical. They believed that this sign meant that God was promising them a new resource for ministry. Today, YWAM ministers around the world on an ocean liner called the *Anastasis*.

They would tell you that whether God speaks through dreams or through an audible voice or through Scripture is not an issue. He will always speak to us in ways that are consistent with His word. Sometimes He chooses different ways from those we'd ordinarily expect. —*World Christian magazine*

Another Reminder that Scripture is Supreme, from Dr. James Dobson

It is very difficult to separate the "want to" from our interpretation of God's will. The human mind will often obediently convince itself of anything in order to have its own way. Perhaps the most striking

example of this self-delusion occurred with a young couple who decided to engage in sexual intercourse before marriage. Since the young man and woman were both reared in the church, they had to find a way to lessen the guilt from this forbidden act. So, they actually got down on their knees and prayed about what they were going to do, and received "assurance" that it was all right to continue! —*Emotions: Can You Trust Them?*

Testing Inner Impressions

Here is a brief summary of 4 main tests of impressions, given by Martin Wells Knapp in 1892 in his book, *Impressions*. This book was recommended by Gordon Linscott in W&W years ago, and recently James Dobson's backing of it led to its reprint by Tyndale House Publishers.

"Every impression should be tested by 4 criteria before being accepted as valid: 1) *Is it scriptural?* This test involves more than taking a random proof text. It means studying what the whole Bible teaches . . . 2) *Is it right?* Every expression of God's will can be expected to conform to God's universal principles of morality and decency. . . . 3) *Is it providential?* The third test requires every impression to be considered in the light of providential circumstances, such as: are the necessary doors opening or closing? Do circumstances permit the implementation of what I feel to be God's will? . . . 4) *Is it reasonable?* This relates to the appropriateness of the act. Does it make sense? Is it consistent with the character of God to require it?" —Summarized in Dr. Dobson's book, *Emotions: Can You Trust Them?*

An Apt Summary by a Mission Leader

Many of us have experienced the leading of the Spirit in a variety of ways. Sometimes it may be more dramatic, but not necessarily so. On occasions it is a gentle prompting or a deep inner feeling. The great danger lies not in the ability of the Lord to speak to us in this way, but in our weak receptive systems. The voice of the Spirit comes to us subjectively, and in this area we are prone to make mistakes. We can so easily mistake the inner desires of our own hearts for the promptings of the Spirit. While therefore we must not ignore or play down the inner voice of the Spirit, we must be careful to test ourselves and our own sense of leading by other more objective factors too.

What is important in this connection is that we learn to walk daily with the Spirit. If we are in constant communion with Him, practising the presence of God, then obviously we shall become more sensitive to His promptings and more able to discern between our own desires and His will. If we rarely give God a thought in the day, we can hardly expect to hear the still small voice of the Spirit in our guidance. So we have to steer a delicate course between the rationalistic unbelief that decies any inner voice of God speaking to our souls, and the emotionally heated subjectivism that lives in a constant state of tension waiting for the next inner voice. This is part of our spiritual education. —From *When God Guides*, by Denis Lane, a leader of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship.

REPRINT:

WANTED: Great Men and Women

R. H. Boll

It is not easy to see the fairness of the verdict Jesus pronounced on John the Baptist: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11). It looks as if Moses was greater; and even such men as Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, David, Elijah, or Jeremiah might appear to surpass him. What great thing did John do that would even equal the feats of some of those others? But Jesus knew the man.

Great deeds require great opportunities. They came to Moses and to David; but John did little, for in the sphere where God had put him it was not a time nor a place for "great deeds." It was not what the man did; it was *what he was*. If he had been put in the front rank of the battle, he would have done more valiantly than all the rest, and God knew it. But he was left behind to do his work in the camp, and he did it faithfully and well. His was a life of self-denial, of hardness, of suffering, and it ended in deep pathos. It was fitting in the eyes of Jesus that he should receive that tribute from the lips of his Lord, and that the people should know the real greatness of the man who had been among them, whom they had passed lightly by.

It has been well said that the world does not know its greatest men. But God knows them. He does not need any dazzling manifestation to know the character. He does not measure deeds with our yardstick. Every work of faith, every act of love, is great in His eyes, and sometimes the smaller and more unconsciously done, the greater it is by God's standard, for it shows more absolutely the true, golden quality of the heart behind it. He marks the beauty of the pure-rayed gem in the dark caves of the ocean; and the flowers that bloom in the lonely place where no human eye will ever behold their loveliness are not hid to Him, nor yet is their fragrance which they faithfully send forth into the ungrateful air of the desert unknown to Him.

It will be a day of surprises when God announces His verdict of who was the greatest here in the world. The first will be last then, and the last first. Who was the greatest, Lord? The great reformer? The preacher that led thousands to the cross? The man who by faith built the great orphanage and brought many, many children to know the Lord? And the Lord God will reply: "These were good and great, my child; but there was an old woman, poor and frail, who made her living at the wash tub. She was greatest of all." How surprised we shall be at the unexpected announcement! And that old woman will be more surprised than all the rest of us. She was quite unconscious of any extraordinary thing in her. All her life she but served and toiled and never thought much about

herself. She was little in her own sight, and her Lord was great to her; and so she worked, and so she lived, and so she folded her hands and went to her rest.

Lord, that we but might be great in thy sight!

It would be sweet recompense for a life of obscurity and labor. And we do not know who will carry off the honors; but let us not dream that because men applaud us we are more likely to win them. Nor let us think that because our place is lowly and our sphere humble that we shall have less hope of being exalted by the Lord.

Questions Asked of Us

Do Christians Continue in Sin?

Carl Kitzmiller

In 1 John we read (e.g., 1 Jn. 3:6) that the Christian does not go on sinning. But we also read of carnal Christians such as those at Corinth, whose carnality consisted of sinning, allowing the flesh to rule. Was not their continued sinning the evidence of their carnality? Can you harmonize these two situations?

There is no such thing in this present life as a Christian who never sins (1 John 1:8). This truth is set forth by the same writer who declares that one born of God does not go on sinning. It is evident then that the Christian finds himself somewhere between "no sin" and the forbidden area of "practising sin." Now it is not God's will for us to sin, our efforts ought to be strong in avoiding sin, and to excuse sin or to deal with it carelessly in our lives is a very serious error. But God has made provision for putting away not only our initial sins, those when we became Christians, but also those which somehow find their way into our life afterward (1 Jn. 2:1-2). He has made provision for our victory over sin through the Holy Spirit, which is given to us/as Christians.

All of which does not present much of a problem when Christians are living victoriously, stumbling only now and then, not given over to the continuing practice of sin. The problem arises, as indicated by our question, when Christians are carnal. What difference is there between the sinning of carnality and the sinning which is persisted in and marks one as not being a Christian?

First, let's recognize that there is a difference—whether any one of us is able to recognize it or not. The difference is evident because both things are present in the Bible. Those people at Corinth were saints, a part of the church of God (1 Cor. 1:1-2). They were guilty of some grievous things, incurring the chastening of the Lord, and they were soundly rebuked. Yet it is evident that they were not sinning in the way John declares to be evidence of not knowing the Lord at all. The Lord was willing to claim the Christians at Corinth as His, even

though their conduct may have so nearly approached the practice of sin as to make Him the only One who knew whether or not they were His. There are those today who seem to declare two different things by their lives. On the one hand we may see such a bad walk that we are sometimes inclined to say, "These people seem not to know the Lord at all; they need to be born again." On another occasion the same people may show evidence of having a desire to serve the Lord and walk in His ways and manifest some Christian characteristics. The truth is that there are some professing Christians of whom it is true that only the Lord knows whether they are His. Only He knows whether there has been a birth from God. Only He knows the degree of their faith. Only He knows whether they are carnal Christians or unregenerate pretenders. While this may be true in some measure of everyone, there are nevertheless those who do show evidence of the new birth, whose lives radiate something of the work of the Spirit of God.

Since there is a difference between the carnal Christian and the sinning individual of 1 John 3, we have here a lesson in scripture exposition and application which we need to learn well. If one applies 1 Jn. 3 too rigidly he may overstate the case. If one stresses too strongly that carnality does not mean condemnation, he may move toward a dangerous laxity toward sin. One can make too strict application of what it means to practice sin and thereby "prove" that most professing Christians are not Christians at all. Why, that fellow who has publicly confessed his sins three times this year must be "practising sin." On the other hand, excuse anything and everything as merely marks of carnality and one can "prove" that fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, drunkards, etc. (1 Cor. 6:9) *shall* inherit the kingdom of heaven. One can take the "logic" approach to these things and come up with some amazing things either way. The need, of course, is simply to try to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, weighing all the scripture together instead of isolating some as "proof" passages and ignoring others. There is a harmony between the two ideas even if we do not readily see it.

There is a difference that God certainly knows between the carnal Christian and the unrighteous man. It seems to me that the difference is probably as much reflected in attitude as in anything. One man may do a lot of stumbling around and show a great lack of maturity, but he does desire to live for the Lord, wants to do right, gets up when he falls and tries again. The other may maintain a religious profession, but he does not really want to do right; he only wants to seem to do right and wants to get away with his wrong-doing. He has the idea that somehow he will "put one over" on the Lord. No doubt there are other differences, but maybe this helps us to see the possibilities.

God and Jonah – God and Me

God and Jonah East of Nineveh

Florence Olmstead Collins

Jonah 4:1-11 NIV

1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, "O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

4 But the Lord replied, "Have you any right to be angry?"

5 Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?"

"I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die."

10 But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

God had been comforted and eased by the repentance of Nineveh. How different his feelings were from Jonah's! Jonah was angry. He had loved God enough to go to Nineveh and preach. But did he love the people of Nineveh? (Matthew 22:37-39)

JONAH BACKSLIDES

Jonah had the kind of belief in God's grace that caused him to approach God, even in anger. He felt free to complain to the Lord. Is there anyone better to complain to? Who else has the wisdom and power to solve our problems? Who else is as forgiving as our Heavenly Father? The Lord didn't rebuke Jonah for expressing his feelings. He welcomes all communications.

Jonah had long known the part of Exodus 34:6 and 7 that tells of God's compassion and forgiving grace. He quoted it to the Lord. Apparently, when he started to Tarshish he considered that scripture to be a permissive promise. In his own case, he seems to have ignored the rest of the declaration: "Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished." In the case of the Ninevites, however, Jonah's anger reveals that he would have preferred that God enforce that warning

of punishment. He had been thankful for the Lord's mercy for himself, but didn't enjoy sharing it with the Gentiles of Ninevah.

Why did Jonah continue to defensively explain his excuse for first starting to Tarshish (v. 2)? Didn't he believe that the Lord had forgiven him? Perhaps Jonah's belief in God's grace wasn't as profound as it should have been. Had he classified Nineveh's sins as being more heinous than his own -- too wicked to forgive? Or was he questioning God's wisdom in saving the people of the city? Instead of welcoming the people of Nineveh to God's fellowship and mixing with them, he again ran away. He didn't approve of those whom the Lord accepted.

GOD'S WISDOM IN THE 'WOODSHED'

Jonah felt so unhappy about the outcome of his missionary message to Nineveh that he asked God to take his life. God's reply to that request was not a derisive re-hashing of past events or a defense of his own actions. By no means did God approve of Jonah's attitude toward Nineveh. Yet he attempted to bring his messenger along the road to maturity by asking, "Have you any right to be angry?" He focused on his prophet's emotions, for they were Jonah's problem.

Jonah knew and believed facts about the Lord. He trusted him for his own salvation. But his heart was still far from the heart of God. Was he angry with Nineveh, or with God? In either case, his anger reveals pride. Concerning Nineveh, he thought he was more wise than God. He didn't think like God thinks; he didn't feel like God feels.

Going farther outside Nineveh, Jonah made himself a shelter, sat under it, pouting, and viewed the city. What did he expect to happen -- another Sodom and Gomorrah?

What we can do, God can do better, so God provided a better shelter for Jonah. As we saw in the storm at sea, its end and the specially prepared fish, we see again that God didn't just create the universe then leave it on its own. He protects, controls and maintains it. At times he creates certain things for specific purposes. God caused a vine to grow and shade Jonah. Then he provided a worm to destroy the vine. Next, the Lord provided a scorching east wind to beat down upon Jonah. The sun shone so hot that Jonah almost fainted.

We are very thankful for the providence of God when he provides something, such as the vine, which we consider to be good. We extol him for his care and generosity. When his providence brings experiences that cause discomfort or sadness, we often don't recognize his hand at work and complain about them. If we are grateful for *everything* and trust him to send what is best, we will have God's peace (Philippians 4:4-7). Like the worm and the sultry wind, our trials are sometimes God-sent to help us to humble ourselves to him so that we can know him better. A prideful person is not teachable.

Jonah's reaction was much like ours often is. Full of self-pity, he whined that he would be better off dead than alive. Again, God asked the incisive question, "Do you have the right to be angry?" Jonah

still did not speak the difficult words, "I am wrong." Instead, Jonah's unthinking, childish answer was, "I do." He put himself in God's place. He had no right to be angry. But the Lord had every right to be angry with Jonah. Yet in gentleness he tried to help his prophet to honestly examine himself.

Those who remember that God has rescued them from some "sea" from which they could not save themselves don't ride the emotional roller-coaster powered by their rights. Those who keep in their hearts that they possess salvation only because of God's grace, don't attempt to live by what they consider to be their "rights." Those who know they need mercy, not justice, make no claim for their "rights."

Jonah seems to have forgotten his nearness to death in the sea and that God had saved him. He hadn't yet learned the lesson that the Lord had been striving to teach him.

Then the Lord made it very plain. With both kindness and authority, he explained the difference between himself and Jonah -- in how they thought and felt. That difference was that, although he'd had no part in creating and maintaining the vine, Jonah cared most for himself and his own physical and temporary happiness. But God cares most for the eternal souls of each person, young and old, and also for the cattle.

It is the Lord's desire to bridge this gap between himself and us and to restore us to his own image as he first made us. But each of us has sinned and continuously falls short of his glory. Only by remembering and obediently trusting the sacrifice of his Son on the cross can we obtain God's free gift of eternal life (Romans 3:23; 6:23). That life gives us the desire and ability to strive toward becoming the kind of persons he wants us to be. This is what living by the power of the cross means. It is only the cross and our gratitude for it that makes Christians out of sinners.

In the Bible, the story of Jonah is unfinished. We don't know what happened to him after his journey to Nineveh. We hope that God was still not finished with him -- or with us. God knows when it is impossible to bring someone to repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6). He will not always contend with or hold his anger from those who continue to ignore him (Psalm 103:9). But for those who have faith in him, Jesus Christ is able and willing to save to the fullest extent those who come to God through him (Hebrews 7:25).

It is satisfying to suppose that following this journey of Jonah with God, Jonah rejoiced in God's presence and never again wished to flee from it. Perhaps he learned to deny himself daily and follow the Lord. Like us, he may have stumbled many times, but *if he kept turning to God*, God continued to reach down, even to the depths, and save him. He will do the same for us. May many "Ninevites" join us as we travel God's holy highway.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Joy and Bob Garrett, Zimbabwe

Sept. 16, 1991

In December we plan, Lord willing, to visit our friends and relatives in the U. S. We now have 16 grandchildren, 7 of them we've never seen. There is so much to be done and so little time in which to accomplish it all.

At Rockwood we have seen the burning of our brick kiln containing 30,000 brick. We had a second Senior High School Camp with the baptism of two young men at Arcadia the following Sunday. There was also in August our School Leaders Camp. There were 62 young unmarried adults there. This active group has recently had a youth revival at Mbare church with a different speaker each evening. The building was full. The National Youth Choir numbers in the 30's. They travel and sing at our Churches of Christ in different areas. They memorize each song.

Bob is drawing the plans for the church at Kuwadzana. He has ordered the steel structure and roof, and obtained quotes on fencing from several firms.

In the Seke-Zengeza area we are still trying to get a church site. That congregation is at least 25 years old and is still meeting wherever it can find a classroom or house.

Remember us in your prayers.

Moto Nomura, Japan

Sept. 15, 1991

Yoriko has to be with her mother from the middle part of the week 'til Sunday in Tokyo. She comes back to the mountains with me on Sunday afternoon or evening. Our mountain activities thus have been curtailed and jeopardized a lot in many ways when we really now need to devote ourselves to the ministries in the mountains far more than for a small house-church in Tokyo. The ministries here need me more than ever before, but I am so limited time-wise and in physical strength.

This fall one girl went to Ohio Valley College in Parkersburg, W. Va. after graduating from Portland Christian High School in Louisville. But her younger brother still remains in PCHS. The two Heid families have been very gracious to them. Two new students went to PCHS this fall. One is from the mountains. We will send one more student to PCHS next spring. God is slowly opening the hearts of villagers or mountainers to us and we are trying our best to influence their children with love of Jesus Christ.

I am working on the life story of James Moody McCaleb now for our FUKUIN magazine. This will take several years to complete, I guess. I have written 11 consecutive years for the magazine introducing our pioneers to Japan, together with basic introduction of our Restoration history. This has lessened legalistic attitudes of our a cappella brotherhood and promoted unity spirit much among our churches in Japan. I owe much to KBC/SCC for this. This is an area no Japanese has ever done before in our 110 years of history. I owe Bro. LaVern Houtz for introducing me to the church history, while

I owe many former mentors and teachers in Kentucky for (1) His blessed hope, (2) salvation by faith/grace, (3) the work/ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and (4) unity spirit. One cannot underestimate the tremendous impact of that small short-lived school, KBC/SCC, to one's life. But our churches need to reexamine ourselves or we will become (or have perhaps already become) a sect in apathy and self-secluded shell. I am really worried about this.

* * *

WHAT MY MOTHER DID RIGHT

Kathy Katzel Smith, Jennings, La.

When I was a child I could not understand the verse, "Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24)

I could only think of Peter's denial of Jesus during his trial and I was puzzled as to how one could deny himself. It wasn't until I became an adult that I could fully understand the meaning of self-denial and then it was through the life my mother lived.

My parents operated a bakery shop during the 1950's and 60's, which required long hours of work for both of them and for my sisters and me. Business hours were from 7:00 A.M. until 7:00 P.M. seven days a week.

Mama couldn't attend Sunday morning services, but she always saw to it that we children went. As soon as they were financially able, they began closing on Sundays.

Before Mama went to work at the bakery in the morning, she had a full meal cooked for lunch and clothes hanging on the line. She was there to help us get ready for school and to fix breakfast for us.

When my grandmother was unable to live alone, she and my mother's brother, who was simple-minded, moved in with us. I gave up my bedroom to Grandma, sharing a room with my sister, and "Sonny Boy" slept on a fold-away bed in the dining room.

I never realized that this situation created extra work and responsibilities for Mama. She was just as cheerful as she always was, smiling and happy every day.

I can remember always having a new dress for church on Easter Sunday, while Mama was only able to buy white bakery dresses for herself. She never complained about not having anything new and was happy to see us in our new clothes.

I remember her on her knees, praying by her bed every morning and night. She read her Bible every evening, no matter how tired she was. She never acted as though it were a duty she was required to do. She read the Bible because she loved it.

When I was in High School, I left campus during class with some friends. The school notified our parents and we were all required to go to the principal's office. Mama didn't raise her voice or scold me. She told me what my punishment was—losing some of my privileges. But the worst punishment for me was seeing the sadness and disap-

pointment in her face as we walked together to the principal's office. Many years have gone by since then, and I still regret having caused her pain.

During the years my parents operated the bakery, Mama loaned small amounts of money to some of the needy women customers. She kept a small tablet and wrote down the payments and additional loans. She didn't charge interest and no one ever paid back more than they borrowed.

Retirement didn't bring rest for Mama. She began caring for my children at my home while I worked. The neighborhood children would flock around Mama. Some of their mothers worked and they stayed at my house with Mama most of the day. She didn't mind having extra kids around -- she was like a grandmother to all of them.

Five years ago Mama was found to have Multiple Myeloma (bone marrow cancer). She never questioned why God allowed her to have this disease or why she had to suffer. She accepted everything with as much faith in God as she had shown during her life. She submitted to radiation and chemotherapy treatments without complaining. During her frequent trips to the doctor, she would talk to the other cancer patients while waiting to see the doctor, about their condition and give them encouragement. She knew their names and what type of cancer they had. She didn't talk about her own illness, except to inspire the other patients. She was an inspiration to everyone and in spite of her suffering, she always felt God was good to her and thanked Him for His blessings.

During the last week of her life, in June of this year, my sisters and I took turns staying by her bedside. I believe that her last conscious moments were in praying that her home-going would not be too hard for her family to bear.

When the end to her suffering finally came, it was a blessed release for her and her family. It may be, to ease this parting, that God allows his children to suffer.

Her whole life was in serving and giving to others. She was a perfect example of self-denial. By serving others, she served God.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST CITY

Mexico City, the capital of Mexico and one of the most beautiful cities in the world, is located on a plateau in central Mexico. The city is surrounded by mountains and snow-capped volcanoes. Its altitude of 7350 feet accounts for its spring-like temperatures (from 54-65 degrees Fahrenheit).

Although nature provides a beautiful setting for Mexico City, the surrounding mountains trap a heavy, almost continuous smog over the city. Just breathing the air is comparable to smoking 2 packs of cigarettes a day!

The World Moves to the City

Air pollution is just one of this megacity's problems. Its huge and ever-growing population constitutes a major difficulty.

Mexico City contains more people than all of the Central American countries combined! Now estimated at over 24 million, the population continues to increase by over 700,000 people each year—3000 each day! Urban migration has reached the staggering figure of over 1000 daily.

People come to the cities of the world from the jungles, farms and villages. They come thinking that they will find employment opportunities, plenty of food, security—a chance at the “good life.”

Dreams quickly turn to despair. There simply are not enough jobs for the mass influx of willing workers. Disappointment, frustration, loneliness, hunger, lack of shelter and the basic necessities of life culminate in a desperate fight for survival. There is a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness in the face of such economic disaster.

Never before in the history of the world has there been a city of this size! Mexico City has entered uncharted territory!

Street Children

Close to 50% of the population of Mexico City is under the age of 15! There are an estimated 1,900,000 underprivileged children on the streets of Mexico City—of whom 240,000 are abandoned!

Reach the Cities

The challenge of our generation is to reach the cities. While the world's population has been converging on the cities, evangelical missions have traditionally kept sending missionaries to the countryside. A noted urban strategist says that “. . . at no time in history has it been more true than now that he who wins the city wins the world.”

Reaching the world's mega-cities with the Gospel, while constituting one of the greatest needs of our era, may also present the greatest challenge that Christian missions has ever faced.

“If we reach the cities, we will reach the nations; if we fail to reach the cities, they become a cesspool which infects the entire nation,” said D. L. Moody.

Mexico Anti-Religious

The Wall Street Journal reported that “Mexico is possibly the most anti-religious country in the Western Hemisphere.” The Mexican constitution makes it extremely difficult to reach the masses with the

Gospel. It does not permit religious broadcasting, television or journalism. Churches may not own property.

Ripe for Evangelism

In Mexico City, about 3% of the population is "evangelized." There are thousands of neighborhoods which are untouched by the Gospel. This means that this city contains one of the largest concentrations of unsaved people in the world. Most have never heard the simple message of salvation. These neighborhoods are ripe for evangelism, for home Bible studies, and for new churches.

The economic state, political problems and natural disasters (such as earthquakes) have combined to create an atmosphere of hunger for the Gospel. People are searching for answers to the questions of life.

New Openness to the Gospel

It seems that there is a new openness and receptivity to the good news of the Gospel message.

The Christian church and missionaries in Mexico City believe that with a united effort every area of this vast city can be reached with the Gospel. Christians feel they are on the verge of a "harvest of souls"!

—Published by Action International Ministries, Box 490, Bothell, WA 98041-0490

News and Notes

The Passing of Someone Else . . .

The church was shocked this week to learn that one of our most faithful members, Someone Else, had passed away. This death creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Someone Else has been with us for many years. During all those years he did more than a normal person's share of the work.

When ever there was a job to do—a class to teach or a meeting to attend—one name was on everyone's list: "Let Someone Else do it."

Now Someone Else is gone. Who will pitch in to do the things that Someone Else has always done? If you are asked to do a job in the church or you see a need that is not being met, we hope you won't reply, "Let Someone Else do it." He is now gone, and we need YOU to pick up where Someone Else left off.

—Adapted; from Johnson City bulletin

Buechel Church, Kentucky

Sunday was another great day at our church! Our fall "kick-off" breakfast

was just wonderful. A special thanks goes out to everyone who had a part, especially Bob Walls and Berk Ludwick. The country ham and biscuits were good, but the fellowship was better! During this time we talked about the last quarter, the new quarter, and the changes that we are looking forward to in the winter quarter. Sunday School is so important! Why don't more adults see that?

Brother Earl finished his series on Eph. 6:10-20 "The Armor of God." This has been a particularly good series because of our need to see the fact that we are in a very real battle with the enemy of our souls. "We wrestle not" (Eph. 6:12) is the motto for too many! The last message dealt with the weapon of prayer, and our need to pick it up and use it. Nothing in God's Kingdom happens without people praying.

Sunday night saw us begin choir practice after a summer break.

—Duane Smith

NEWS AND NOTES continued on the next page

NEWS AND NOTES (continued)

Turkey Creek, Louisiana

Of recent weeks our attendance has picked up. As high as 139 for one Sunday morning. Wednesday nights are very good also with upper 70's and into the 80's. This past spring was especially a good time. Our VBS is always a big project and this year was no exception. We averaged 112 and had 184 for our Open House on Thursday night. A new project for this congregation was to be sponsor for a week of camp at CYE. Our week was Junior High week. We had 16 adults to go from this congregation as teachers, counselors, cooks etc. Of course they had to take vacations from work to do so but did and had a great time. Now planning '92! I recommend such to any congregation.

So far this year we have had 7 baptisms but hope to increase that number before the year is out and if our Lord tarries. We are blessed with some fine Elders and Deacons who give leadership.

—Glenn Baber

Ingallwood Park, De Ridder, Louisiana Christian Youth Encampment

Renewed interest was evidenced in both campers and workers this year. Junior Week had 109 campers, 37 workers; Jr. Hi Week had 58 campers, 21 workers; Sr. Hi Week had 47 campers, 18 workers! Four baptisms and twelve other responses to the Word of God were witnessed. Praise the Lord!

A fall workday is planned for Saturday, November 23, to winterize the camp along with other projects as well. Plan now to bring a group and help.

Looking Ahead: Camp dates for 1992 have been set:

Junior Week for 9-12 year olds will be
June 21-26

Jr. Hi Week for 12-14 year olds will be
July 19-24

Sr. Hi Week for 14 years and up will be
July 26-31

Adult Week (no children) will be
October 4-9

Highland Church, Louisville

Vincent Godfrey in his 33rd year was called home to be with Jesus, Oct. 15. Vincent had an unusual ability to bring the gospel in song and in leading songs of worship. He was glad to walk the

street and sing and exhort for Jesus. We will miss him greatly, but look forward to singing with him again in the "heavenly places."

Gallatin Church, Tennessee

For encouragement of our youth: Rachel Webster is a freshman at Union University in Jackson (Tenn.) She is planning to study physical therapy and has made the chorus. Sarah Kittrell is in her fourth year at Maryville College. Sarah has majored in Spanish and will also graduate with a teaching degree.

Jennings Church of Christ, Louisiana

We have had visits from several missionaries, including Carlos and Manzanita Iglesias from Mexico, Michiya Nakahara from Japan, and Earl and Ragena Mullins on their way to the Philippines.

Kim Jones directs our children's choir, The Little Jewels, which has performed at the local nursing home, at the Revival in Song at Alexandria, and numerous times here at worship services and Gospel Meetings.

We have added 7 new births through baptism to the Lord's family. Our Sunday morning attendance averages 207 presently.

Two months a year our mission box focuses on one of the following missions: Portland School, CYE, Maple Manor, Words of Life, Nakahara Mission, and Mexican Mission.

We lost two elders this year: Clifton O. Istre, Sr., and Alfred Smith, Sr. Later, we added two elders: Marlin Comeaux and Ed Hahn.

Our church library has 660 books and 30 videotapes. Many were placed in memory of loved ones.

Taeko Shibasaki is a foreign exchange student from Japan living with Doug and Joyce Broyles this school year and attends all of the worship services, although she never attended church meetings before.

—Joyce Broyles

Veteran Missionary Now with the Lord

Mrs. Rena Stewart-Brown, who with her husband labored in South Africa for some years, unexpectedly and very suddenly passed away on Aug. 18, 1991. She was 84 years old. Her husband Jack Crissop had died years ago, and she lived with her sister for the past few years.

NEWS AND NOTES continued on the next page

NEWS AND NOTES, (continued)

Browns to Visit U.S., then . . .

David and Colleen Brown, missionaries among the Zulu people in South Africa, will be coming to the U.S. early in 1992, Lord willing. They are uncertain as of now where they will minister after their furlough. Doors among the Zulus may be closing, so they ask us to pray with them that they will know the Lord's will: continue in their present field? move somewhere else in Africa? minister in the US? or...?

Mergers Being Considered

Reports are that 3 congregations in the Dallas area and about 5 around Amite, La. are praying and thinking about merging. Recently a day of prayer and fasting was called for, that God's will might be discerned.

Preacher Plugs It, Members Subscribe

We received the August WORD & WORK and decided to 'plug it' at our Wed. night study. Enclosed is a check for one subscription as a result. Others promised they too would join.

—David Johnson, Alexandria, La.

[Editor's note: May other preachers follow in his train! With some encouragement, many folks would gladly take W&W and benefit from it.]

Alexandria, Louisiana

Bulletins show that on Sunday nights David Johnson has been preaching through the "Minor" prophets, teaching Genesis on Wed. nights. He points out "In the 3rd chap. of Gen. we meet death, toil, sweat, thorns, the tree, the struggle, and the seed. ALL of these would later be traced to the CHRIST! Jesus is the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) who became the curse (Gal. 3:13), who sweat great drops of blood in agony (Lk. 22:44), who meekly wore a crown of thorns, who was hanged on a tree until he was dead."

The church has set up a tape library, and a workroom for teachers (with supplies of various kinds). It also enrolled in the Churches of Christ national gospel campaign, "One Nation Under God," and was sent 13 names of local people who responded, to follow up.

School of Biblical Studies, Louisville

SBS is offering these subjects this semester: Life of Christ, Personal Evangelism & Discipling, Teacher-training, Pastoral Counseling, and Church History. Teacher-training is an extension

course being taught at Ky. Ave. Church & also Waterford Church; about 10 are enrolled at the latter and over a dozen at the former. We are glad for this interest, plus the fact that 1 of our students came all the way from Louisiana, and 2 more from there plan to attend next semester!

We also thank God for the good record of our graduates: Nick Marsh at Cherry St., Sam Marsh at Lilly Dale, Mike Abbott at Borden, and Dave Johnson at Alexandria.

Bouquets for our S.S. Quarterlies

"Your S.S. material is well done—taking God's Word and applying it to life today so that it is spiritually applicable." —Carroll Carter, Orleans, Ind.

Bouquets for W&W

"Thank you for the copies of your publication. I have taken them home for a careful study, which I know will result in great profit. I appreciate the tone of the magazine and the quality content.

"These are challenging days, may we be found faithful. The Lamb came, the Lion is coming. —Marvin Rosenthal Zion's Hope, P.O.Box 690909, Orlando, FL 32869."

Longtime Reader Reports

"Please find check for renewal. Enjoyed the issues on Thy Kingdom Come; in this area (FL) that is a no-no, so it was refreshing. I enjoy news about workers in other places. I worked with Berea Church near Dugger, Ind. for about 45 years. It was Stanford Chambers' home church too. He was my wife's uncle." —Marion Carty

Ralph Avenue Church, Louisville

If you are being here on Wednesday night, you have been seeing the growth of our young people's classes. We are very thankful for the church van and for Linda Spencer who is the driver. Last Wednesday night she had to leave three children at home because she had no room. The preacher's van was also full. If we continue to grow we are going to need more teachers. Are you willing to pray, "Lord use me"? Maybe you would like to start out as a helper in one of the classes. The younger we can start teaching these little ones, the stronger in Christ they will be.

NEWS AND NOTES continued on the next page

NEWS AND NOTES (continued)

Ladies' Overnight Retreat

Over 40 ladies from at least 9 Churches of Christ and 6 or more other congregations gathered for a retreat at Antioch Camp near Frankfort, Ky. on Oct. 4-5. The theme was "Women Encouraging Women"; there was a panel discussion on that topic, + another one on how to encourage your preacher's wife. In addition, Shirley Schreiner Taylor gave an inspiring message and Cindy Green Farmer presented a challenging vocal concert. All were refreshed by this retreat, and widespread desire for another one next year was expressed.

Interesting Book Available

H. L. Olmstead was one of our leading preachers in the early and middle part of this century. His daughter, Florence Collins, has written a colorful, folksy book about several generations of her family. It shows the importance of Christ-centered living. Entitled *The Glory of the Imperfect*, it is available from Word & Work office for \$8.00, including postage & handling. It's a good book for family reading—insightful, humorous, somewhat like the Laura Ingalls Wilder books.

Are You Seeking Bound W & Ws from the Past?

I have hardback yearly compilations of *Word & Work* for the years 1956-1964. They are like new. Anyone who wants them may contact me: Mrs. Opal P. Rust, 444 S.E. Eastwood, Roseburg, Ore. 97470. Phone 503:673-8192.

More about Word & Work's History

According to a list I saw, *W & W* is the 4th oldest magazine still being published among Restoration Movement churches. We began in 1908 (see January's issue). Only *Gospel Advocate* (1855), *Christian Standard* (1866) and *Firm Foundation* (1884) are older and still circulating. Scores of other magazines were older than *W & W* but stopped for various reasons. PLEASE PRAY FOR US, AND INCREASE OUR CIRCULATION.

Dear Church Members,

Results of a computerized survey indicated that the perfect pastor preaches exactly fifteen minutes. He condemns sin but never upsets anyone, he works from 8:00 a.m. till midnight and is also the janitor. He makes \$60 per week,

wears good clothes, buys good books, drives a good car and gives about \$50 a week to the poor.

He is 28 years old and has been preaching for 30 years. He is wonderfully gentle and handsome. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all his time with senior citizens.

The perfect pastor smiles all the time with a straight face, because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes 15 calls a day on church families, shut-ins, and the hospitalized. He spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched and is always in the office when needed.

If your pastor does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other churches that are tired of their pastor. Then bundle up your pastor and send him to the church on the top of the list. In one year you will receive 1642 . . . and one of them should be perfect.

WARNING: Keep this letter going. One church broke the chain and got its old pastor back in less than 3 months.

—Brookvalley Bulletin, Atlanta, GA

HIS PLAN FOR ME

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ

And He shows me His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been

Had He had His way, and I see
How I blocked Him here, and I checked Him there,

And I would not yield my will—
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,

Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing
Down the paths I cannot retrace.

Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break

With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,

I shall bow my uncrowned head . . .

Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;

Take me and break me, mo'ld me to
The pattern Thou has planned!

—Martha Snell Nicholson

Does Darkness Shroud Your Pathway?

Margaret Clarkson

*"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."
—Matthew 19:26*

Does darkness shroud your pathway, and cloud obscure your view,
your road wind only upwards where guiding lights are few?

Rejoice, O Christian pilgrim! when dangers closest lurk
the God of the impossible is just about to work.

He gives his Word in faithfulness, his promises are true;
the God of the impossible shall work his good for you.

No matter how the tempests beat round your lonely way,
no matter how temptations and trials crowd your day,

No matter what the burden you may be called to bear,
the God of the impossible is walking with you there.

The promises he's given you he's able to perform:
the God of the impossible is greater than your storm.

Your heart can know no sorrow that Jesus has not known;
your very name he whispers before the Father's throne.

Look up, then, Christian pilgrim, and claim his grace anew;
the God of the impossible will see you safely through.

Our God is King Omnipotent, his sovereignty is sure;
the God of the impossible shall keep your soul secure.

Coda:

His name is Truth and Faithfulness, and sure are all his ways;
the God of the impossible will fill your life with praise.

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D

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Louisville

KY 40205

**17th Annual
Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship**

November 18 - 21, 1991

**Theme: First Century Messages for Twentieth
Century Christians**

All Sessions at Glenmora Church of Christ, Glenmora, Louisiana

MONDAY Nov. 18

7:00 p.m. "Both Lord and Christ" Don McGee

TUESDAY Nov. 19

9:30 - 10:00 Prayer Time

10:00 - 10:50 "Baptized into Jesus" Louis Schuler

11:10 - 12:00 "No Shrinking" Robert Gill

1:15 - 2:30 Afternoon Workshop (*daily, Tue. - Thur.*):

"Scriptural Principles of Money Matters"

Doug Barberousse

7:00 p.m. "The Significance of Resurrection in Acts"

Antoine Valdetero

WEDNESDAY Nov. 20

9:30 - 10:00 Prayer Time

10:00 - 10:50 "The Place of Prayer in Acts" Eugene Pound

11:10 - 12:00 "The Significance of the Holy Spirit in Acts"
Stan Broussard

7:00 p.m. "Blind Eyes... With Open Bible in Hand"
(Acts 13:27) Ken Istre

THURSDAY Nov. 21

9:30 - 10:00 Prayer Time

10:00 - 10:50 "Persecution... Help or Hindrance"

Jack Harris

11:10 - 12:00 "A Progressive Church" Danny Miller

7:00 p.m. "Exactly as I Have Been Told" Harry Coultas
(Acts 27:25)

Tapes of the Fellowship messages are recorded and are available from Donald Stump, Route 3, Taylorsville, KY 40071.