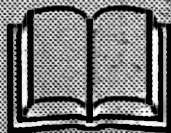


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

FEBRUARY 1993

We need to be
FORGIVEN,
We need to be
FORGIVING.

"He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven."

--George Herbert

"We ought to forgive ourselves little, and others much
No Christian is so like Christ as the Christian who is a great for-
giver; no one is so like the devil as the implacable and unforgiv-
ing man."

--J. C. Ryle

FORGIVENESS

A Moral Miracle

A Turkish soldier had beaten a Christian prisoner until the man was only half conscious. The soldier kicked his victim repeatedly and demanded, "What can your Christ do for you now?" The Christian managed to reply weakly, "He can give me strength to forgive you."

Needed Especially in the Home

"We've found that marriage should be made up of two forgivers. We need to learn to say, 'I was wrong; I'm sorry.' And we also need to say, 'That's all right; I love you.'" --Billy Graham

Needed Over and Over and Over Again

"There is no use talking as if forgiveness were easy. We all know the old joke, 'You've given up smoking once; I've given up smoking a dozen times' In the same way I could say of a certain man, 'Have I forgiven him for what he did that day? I've forgiven him more times than I can count.' For we find that the work of forgiveness has to be done over and over again. We forgive, we mortify our resentment; a week later some chain of thought carries us back to the original offence and we discover the old resentment blazing away as if nothing had been done about it at all. We need to forgive our brother seventy times seven not only for 490 offences but for one offence."

--C. S. Lewis

The Wrong Way of Doing It

"Zeke and one of his brothers in church had fallen out many years before. The brother became very sick and sent for Zeke to talk things over. After a long discussion of their differences Zeke started to leave and the brother made these closing remarks, 'Now Zeke, you understand how it is, don't you. If I die, I forgive you. But if I get well, it is just like it was.'

"So often as brothers in Christ we 'bury the hatchet' but let the handle stick up. When a new occasion arises we grab the handle of the 'buried hatchet' and start the old dissension over again with the addition of the new differences." -- J. Miller Forcade

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

WE NEED TO BE FORGIVEN, and FORGIVING

Alex V Wilson

Marie Balter's astonishing story was told in our newspaper. Marie was the illegitimate daughter of an alcoholic mother, who put her in a foster home at age 5. She then was adopted by a couple who disciplined her harshly, sometimes locking her in the cellar. Increasingly depressed, she was institutionalized at the age of 17, suffering from muscle spasms, choking and hallucinations. The mental hospital staff diagnosed her as schizophrenic ("split personality"). They kept her there for 17 years, and then told her she had been misdiagnosed--she should never have been committed in the first place! Her original problem was a form of depression and panic disorder, not schizophrenia.

How would you have felt? 34 years old, and half your life mistakenly spent in a mental hospital! Does anyone you know have as much right as Marie to be bitter, rebellious, depressed, lazy, self-centered, and wild with rage?

But she is none of those things. After her release she returned to school, even earning a M.A. from Harvard. To top it all, she returned to the mental hospital where she had wrongly been a patient. She has worked with psychiatric patients, lectured, written her autobiography, and now serves as the hospital's community-affairs director. She helps train health workers and recruit volunteers.

What is the secret of her incredible comeback? The newspaper story does not tell if she is a Christian or not, but her attitudes surely are Biblical. Listen:

I always believe that suffering pain is not a negative force in our lives. We take our pain and tragedy and use them to serve others, and then they become positive tools to achieve our goals.

I wouldn't have grown one bit if I didn't learn to forgive. If you don't forgive your parents or your children or yourself you don't get beyond that anger. Forgiving is a way of reaching out from a bad past and heading out to a more positive future.

Bravo, Marie! Well said and splendidly done. I'm guessing you are a believer in Christ, and that He is the source of your courage and hope. What a rebuke you are to the rest of us when we give in to self-pity or an unforgiving spirit.

Notice what a key role forgiveness plays in her outlook. Without it she would still be locked up in a mental cage just as real as her physical "cage" once was. May we too learn the freedom that comes from forgiving. And we truly learn to forgive because we are forgiven, by the loving Redeemer.

Forgiveness is so vital, and so many insightful comments have been made about it that we will share several of them with you in completing this editorial.

"I Stand Amazed"

"We ought to notice what a glorious declaration our Lord makes about the forgiveness of sins. He says, '*All sins will be forgiven the sons of men . . .*' (Mark 3:28).

"These words fall lightly on the ears of many persons, who see no particular beauty in them. But to the man who is aware of his own sinfulness and deeply sensitive to his need for mercy, these words are sweet and precious. 'All sins shall be forgiven.' The sins of youth and age. The sins of head, and hand, and tongue, and imagination. The sins against all God's commandments. The sins of persecutors, like Paul. The sins of idolaters, like Manasseh. The sins of open enemies of Christ, like the Jews who crucified Him. The sins of backsliders from Christ, like Peter. All, all may be forgiven. The blood of Christ can cleanse all away. The righteousness of Christ can cover all. The doctrine taught here is the crown and glory of the Gospel. The very first thing the Gospel offers to man is free pardon, full forgiveness, complete remission, without money and without price. 'Through [Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all who believe are justified from all things' (Acts 13:38)." --J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*

God's Risk, and Ours

Philip Yancey's friend Daniel confided that he was ditching his wife after 15 years of marriage. Someone younger and prettier had captivated his affections. He was a professing Christian, and asked Philip, "Do you think God can forgive something as awful as I am about to do?"

"Here is what I told my friend: 'Can God forgive you? Of course. Read your Bible. David, Peter, Paul--God builds his church on the backs of people who murder, commit adultery, deny him, and persecute his followers.'

"'But because of Christ, forgiveness is now our problem, not God's . . . We change in the very act of rebellion--and there is no guar-

antee we will come back. You ask me now about forgiveness, but will you even want it later, especially if it involves repentance?'

"Daniel made his choice. I have yet to see any evidence of repentance. Now he tends to rationalize his decision as a way of escaping an unhappy marriage. He has rejected most of his Christian friends--'Too narrow-minded,' he says--and looks instead for people who celebrate his newfound liberation. To me, though, Daniel does not seem very liberated. The price of his 'freedom' has meant turning his back on those who cared about him most. He also tells me God is not a part of his life right now." --*Christianity Today*

The Gospel PROVIDES, and REQUIRES, Forgiveness

The Didache, or "Teaching of the 12 Apostles," is a book of unknown authorship which dates from early 2nd century or even late 1st century (while the apostle John was still living). Here is an excerpt:

On Sunday, the Lord's Day, all the Christians should come together to break bread and give thanks. But this should not be done casually or without preparation. For instance, you should not take part in this service if you have any misunderstanding with one of your fellow-Christians . . . All such differences and grievances must be settled before we can offer pure worship.

Before coming to the Lord's table we should also confess our sins and faults, open and secret, so that they may be forgiven and we can draw near with clean hearts. If it is necessary to reprove one another over some fault or other, make sure that you do it in a gentle, loving way, not angrily or maliciously. Do it in the spirit of the Gospel.

But have nothing to do with anyone who has caused pain or hurt to his neighbor. Until he repents, you should exclude him from the fellowship.

"How Far Must I Go?"

"'I don't have to forgive him if he doesn't repent, do I?' is a question often asked or implied. It is true, of course, that in the final sense God does not forgive when there is no repentance. Moreover, in Luke 17:3 Jesus includes repentance as a condition. There is a sense in which forgiveness can never be a reality to the offender without repentance, but do not miss another aspect of the matter--*there is to be a positive attempt to effect it*. See Matt. 18:15. In Luke 17:3, rebuking is included. Remember that while God requires repentance, He nevertheless works in a variety of ways to bring about repentance. He wants to forgive, *seeks* it, has *gone to great lengths to effect it*. The attitude which delights in withholding forgiveness because 'he hasn't come to me and repented' is one which is very unlike Christ." --Carl Kitzmiller in *W&W* Sunday School Quarterly

FORGIVING SINS ISN'T EASY

Gordon R Linscott

You commit a sin and God forgives you Why does He do it? Here are some of the answers I have received

"He promised to forgive. I confessed my sin and repented. God is a God of love; He doesn't hold things against a person I am His child and He loves me."

There is a certain amount of truth in each of these answers, but the really vital truth is completely missing. Many Christians seem to have only a foggy idea of what the forgiveness of sins is all about. Sin against God is kind of like unintentionally stepping on a friend's toe. An apologetic, "Oh! I'm sorry!" makes everything all right. But it isn't all that easy.

GOD IS HOLY

Sin against God--the smallest sin, a single thought--is a capital crime against the Holy One. A law enforcement agency that didn't pursue and prosecute criminals would arouse the righteous wrath of the citizenry. Should we then expect a righteous God to smile benignly at our peccadilloes and say, "That's all right. I know you didn't mean it." A just judge cannot acquit a man proved guilty, and a just God cannot dismiss a guilty sinner without dealing with his sins. The penalty must be paid. God has pronounced sentence. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die " That sentence must be executed--or God is not God.

Thank God, that sentence has been executed, at Mount Calvary! "God has laid upon him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The full load of our guilt was laid upon the Lord Jesus, He bore the penalty for us and we are free! The blood shed at Calvary has been accepted by God as the full payment for our sins--past, present, and future. Every forgiven sin is forgiven because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not the Baby Jesus who saves, and it is not the Holy Spirit who takes away sin. Neither is it an understanding, beneficent Father. Rather, it is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. To bear away the least of my sins cost Him His life. When I cry, "Father, forgive!" I hear the reply, "Certainly, my child, but I grant it at the cost of the life of my Son."

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

"THE LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD"

Take away the blood of Christ and all you have left is religion--mere words and forms. Nothing in the Bible has any meaning if we delete the cross. We hear liberalism sometimes denounced as a "bloodless theology"--but I hear some bloodless preaching from evangelical pulpits, too. No, these brothers don't deny the blood atonement, but when they go to talking about salvation, somehow they manage to mention everything except the blood that cleanses from sin. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin." And without the preaching of that blood, there is no gospel--no salvation. Brother, what message do you preach?

Forgiveness, Human and Divine

Terrance Tiessen

"To err is human, to forgive divine." So said the famous English poet, Alexander Pope, and his words have been frequently quoted in the years since he wrote them. Because it is human to make mistakes, we can indeed be thankful that God forgives. What some of us forget, however, is that it is also necessary for humans to forgive those who wrong them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN FORGIVENESS

Dr. S. I. McMillen points out in his book *None of These Diseases* that many of our physical illnesses are related to spiritual problems and to sin. One of these problems is bitterness, the unwillingness to forgive someone who has wronged us. This can result in such difficulties as ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure and physical fatigue.

Holding a grudge against someone is a stress on our emotional and physical health. If we allow that bitterness to occupy too much of our attention it drains us emotionally and eventually produces depression. Nothing is enjoyable any longer because our minds are preoccupied with the wrong (real or imaginary) which someone has done to us. Solomon spoke of this when he wrote: "Better a vegetable meal where love is than a fattened ox and hate with it:" (Prov. 15:17, Berkeley). We can enjoy just a salad or sandwich when we are free of bitterness in our hearts more than a smorgasbord when we hold a grudge against another person.

For purely physical reasons we cannot afford not to forgive anyone. Forgiveness may well be an effective medical prescription for some of your health problems. But there is a much more important spiritual reason why we dare not keep bitterness in our hearts.

THE NEED FOR DIVINE FORGIVENESS

There has been a tendency in recent years for people to refuse any responsibility for sin or for any form of personal inadequacy. Someone else is always to blame. It may be the environment, the situation in one's family or one's neighborhood that is blamed. It may even be heredity: "What can you expect with parents like mine?" In one way or another people remove from themselves any sense of guilt for their own actions and minimize the seriousness of sin.

The Bible leaves us in no doubt that we are all sinners by nature and by act. We become more aware of how true this is when we consider the five words used in the Greek New Testament for sin. The most common word is *hamartia* which means, basically, to miss the target. All of us fall short even of the standards we set for ourselves. How well, for instance, have you kept your New Year's resolutions? Many of these are broken by January 2. How much more we fall short of the standards God has set for us!

The second word, *parabasis*, means "stepping across: and is often translated transgression (e. g., Rom. 4:15). This pictures for us the line that runs between right and wrong over which we sometimes step. There is a strong tendency in our day to relativism, which denies that the line is clearly drawn between right and wrong. It is true that it is not always clear, but there are many areas in which the Bible makes it clear which is the right action. Are you always on the right side of the line?

The idea of "slipping across" is expressed by the word *paraptoma*, which is sometimes translated trespass (e.g. Eph. 2:1). There are times when we do not deliberately step across the line that God has drawn between right and wrong--we just slip across. In a moment when we are caught off guard, we respond with words or thoughts or actions that are wrong, and which we did not plan, but which we slipped into. That too is sin.

More serious is *anomia*, lawlessness (Titus 2:14). This is the sin of the person who knows what is right but who deliberately and purposefully does what he knows to be wrong.

Perhaps the most difficult area of all is that which is spoken of as *opheilema* or debt. It is this that we speak of when we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). This refers to our failure to pay God what we owe Him in worship and obedience, our failure to do our duty. Sin is not only doing

what God tells us not to do, but it is also not doing what He does tell us to do. Who of us can say that we have always, without fail, loved God with all of our energies and loved our fellowman as we love ourselves? That is a debt we have not paid.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN & DIVINE FORGIVENESS

It is there in the Lord's prayer that we see how important our forgiving or our fellowmen is to our spiritual condition. Jesus goes on to explain to His disciples why we need to ask God to forgive us as we forgive others who have wronged us or who have not given us our due. It is because God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others (Matt 6:14,15).

Jesus is not suggesting that God's forgiveness is to be earned by our forgiveness. His forgiveness is always of grace, it is undeserved. It is given to us because of Christ's death which bore the penalty for our sins, making it possible for God to remain just and still forgive us. But what Jesus is teaching is that when we ask forgiveness we must be genuinely repentant of our sin. A genuine repentance will make us aware of how great our own sin is and of how great is God's forgiveness. In comparison, we will see how small is the wrong done to us by our fellows and our grateful hearts will gladly forgive them for the small wrong they have done to us.

Jesus told His disciples a story to illustrate the situation that we are in when we have been forgiven our sin against God by His grace, through faith in Christ (Matt. 18:23-35). He told of a man who owed a king a debt that he could not possibly repay. When he asked for mercy he was forgiven the whole debt and his record was erased. That same man then met a fellow servant who owed him just a small amount but he refused to give that man time to make payment and had him thrown in prison. Of course, the king was very angry when he heard of what had happened and threw the man whom he had forgiven into prison. And then the Lord applies the story: "And so shall my heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not heartily forgive his brother: (Matt. 18:35). *How many times have we asked God not to forgive us, by praying those words--"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"!*

We are sinners and we need God's forgiveness. We who believe on Christ stand between the great forgiveness we have already received and the forgiveness we need every day of our lives. Out of gratitude for God's forgiveness in the past and in repentance for our sin in the present, we must forgive anyone who has wronged us. We need to forgive; first, because we have been forgiven, and second, because we still need to be forgiven.

We can afford not to forgive men only if we do not need God to forgive us --Evangelical Thrust (Philippines).

You sinned . . . and God forgave you. Now you've sinned again. Will He set you aside this time? This man had the same sinking feeling . . .

THE MAN GOD FORGAVE AGAIN

David Howard

Eliecer Benavides sat restlessly through the class period at the Bible institute in Sincelejo, Columbia, South America. The lesson was about Zacchaeus, the tax collector who made himself rich at the expense of others. Tom Cherry, the professor, explained the significance of stealing and the need for restitution.

The problem of restitution had been bothering Eliecer for months. He had promised the Lord several times that he would make a certain past sin right. The last time it had come forcefully to his mind was when he lay in an overturned jeep on the road near Magangué, his hip broken. He had told the Lord that if He would deliver him this time, he would make restitution. Eliecer was rescued from the accident, the hip healed and the vow was soon forgotten.

Now, however, he could no longer resist. After class Eliecer went to Tom and asked his help. Before he became a Christian, Eliecer explained, he had worked in a gold mine in the Colombian mountains. Every day he pilfered a small amount of gold, smuggling it out of the mine and using it for his own needs. Tom advised him to write to the manager of the mine, confess what he had done and offer to make it right. Eliecer did so in obedience to the Lord, fully conscious that this step might result in his imprisonment.

A reply from the astounded manager came back quickly. He had never encountered such a thing--that an unapprehended thief should voluntarily confess a crime he had committed years before. He agreed that restitution should be made, but in a manner that Tom and Eliecer had not anticipated. He suggested that between them they determine how much Eliecer should pay. Then Eliecer was to earn the amount and contribute it to the Bible institute to help train other young men for Christian service.

Eliecer gladly complied. He sold some cattle that he owned and accounts were settled. After graduation from the institute he stayed on to manage the farm on which the institute was located and also to teach.

On weekends he went out alone to evangelize. On one of these trips he went to Nueva Estacion, a small village where no Christians lived. Over the course of several months of visiting there, he led Victor Landero, a quiet, unassuming farmer and owner of a bordello, to

Christ. And Victor became God's man to lead literally hundreds of people to Jesus Christ. Through his work dozens of congregations have been established throughout a vast area where the gospel had not penetrated previously. Eliecer became the "spiritual grandfather" of a great movement of church growth.

Then one night Eliecer was taken by temptation and fell into sin. No one knew of this fall, any more than the manager of the mine had known of his pilfering gold. But Eliecer had learned his lesson of restitution. He knew that "he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Again Eliecer went to Tom Cherry and confessed his sin. Tom wisely and lovingly embraced him, wept and prayed with him and supported him in the midst of great discouragement. Eliecer voluntarily left the Bible institute in deep remorse and withdrew into the backwoods

Some months later he was invited to return to his former responsibilities. He was amazed at the love of his Christian friends, feeling that he had proven himself unworthy of such trust. After a further time working at the institute, he was called into the pastorate, where God soon gave him a lovely wife as his companion.

For the past ten years Eliecer has been a faithful and effective pastor and church leader. He has worked in some of the most difficult pastoral situations imaginable. He knows much of satanic opposition and demon activity. His family has suffered poor health and his economic condition has been nothing short of poverty. He has never felt adequate, with his limited education, to carry on the responsibilities that have been placed upon him. But he knows much of the greatness of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. He is a true leader of the church in Colombia.

If you were to see Eliecer in a crowd you would not pick him out as a leader. His reticent, somewhat hesitant manner betrays a true humility which is not put on. But if you had opportunity to know him personally, you would find a man of constant prayer and deep-seated faith who knows the power of forgiveness and the place of restitution.

You won't hear much about Eliecer Benavides here on earth, but when you get to heaven, look for him in the front ranks. He will be among those to whom the Lord has said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

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GUILT AND FORGIVENESS

Billy Ray Lewter

The sense of guilt is said to be the most important problem in the development of civilization. Nothing else is so destructive and so crippling, either to individuals or to society.

According to the dictionary, guilt is an emotional feeling associated with the realization that we have broken an important social, moral, ethical, or religious regulation. Guilt is a social problem and is studied by sociologists; guilt is a psychological problem and interests psychologists; guilt is related to physical illnesses and is an important subject for medical specialists; and guilt is a religious problem that concerns theologians, ministers, and teachers. In other words, guilt is a human problem, the greatest that is faced.

Guilt is a difficult subject to write about, because almost anything could be said to stir the conscience of those who are indifferent and insensitive, could certainly overwhelm those who already feel condemned, and could cause them to sink deeper in despair. But it's a problem we all face, and must deal with.

In beginning a study of guilt, the first thing we need to do is to distinguish between several types of guilt.

First, there is *"appropriate" or normal guilt*. This is a guilty feeling over some definite action that clearly contradicts a person's conscience. It may or may not actually break a law; it primarily arises from an individual's conscience. As an example of moral guilt, after David's sin with Bathsheba, and having her husband, Uriah the Hittite, moved to the front lines of the army where he was killed, David's guilt began to destroy his life. He was still king, and had all of his wealth and privileges, but in Psalm 32 he tells how his conscience was tearing him apart. He said, "My body wasted away, my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer." Three times in Psalm 51 David referred to his broken spirit. This is normal guilt, and follows a definite breaking of an individual's standards, whether or not a law is involved.

Psychologists usually distinguish another type of guilt, which they call *"inappropriate" or "neurotic" guilt*. This is a guilt that comes from the thoughts rather than from specific acts. The whole conflict is internal, but it has the same physical or mental effect as the actual occurrence of something wrong would have. Psychiatrists usually treat this as a result of an overstrict conscience and they try to help their patients reduce the power of their conscience to punish and control them. This

is considered to be a matter of "guilt feelings" rather than any actual guilt.

As Christians, our first thought is that this may be a harmful approach, since it often ignores actual guilt on which the "fault feelings" may be based. However, there is such a thing as "inappropriate" guilt for Christians to consider, even though this is not what the social scientists mean by their definitions. When a Christian has been forgiven by God and continues to feel guilty, this is certainly unnecessary and inappropriate. Brother Boll used to talk about being "slaves to our conscience," in other words being always condemned by our conscience. Some people have gone forward in church over and over for minor faults, and many times for the same problem; but they never really feel free from this slavery to their conscience. They never feel forgiven and accepted. This is certainly inappropriate, as we shall see later.

A third type of guilt is often called "*existential*" *guilt*. This is the feeling we have when we examine ourselves and reflect on the difference between what we hoped to do and what we have actually done, between what we hoped to be and what we actually are. This is a deep sense of discouragement, but does not usually lead to any illness, and may even have a constructive effect and lead to an increase in creativity in thoughts and relationships. T. S. Eliot, the British bank executive who wrote poetry at night, once said,

It's not the feeling of anything I've ever done,
Which I might get away from, or of anything in me
I could get rid of--but of emptiness, of failure
Towards someone, or something, outside of myself
And I feel I must--atone--is that the word?

Then a fourth type of guilt which must be added to normal guilt, and to inappropriate guilt, and to existential guilt, is what can be called *True guilt, or Real guilt*. Again social scientists usually fail to accept this. Paul said in Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"; and in 5:12, "death passed unto all men, for that all sinned"; and in 14:12, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

All men are actually guilty before God, regardless of whether or not they feel guilty. Their feelings don't alter the reality of their personal standing under the condemnation of a Holy and Just God.

So the big question in the study of guilt is not whether we are guilty or not-guilty, nor even the cause of our guilt, but "What can we do about our guilt?"

How People Respond to Guilt

One way of handling guilt is to *blame others for our faults and failures*. For example, Hitler, while looking over the ruins of a town his armies had destroyed, said, "How wicked these people must have been to have made me do this." After the sin in the Garden of Eden, Adam answered God and said, "The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Very often we do the same thing. We blame our parents, or our husband or wife or our present circumstances for our failures, instead of recognizing our own guilt and responsibility in the matter.

Another common way of handling guilt is the attempt to *punish ourselves for what we have done*. Many people, even Christians, either consciously or unconsciously, try to punish themselves in order to make up for something they have done. This often leads to self-condemnation and self-hate. Some people are never able to accept themselves or to forgive themselves, and deep inside they hate themselves. It seems that the only satisfaction they have is in those moments when their sense of justice is being satisfied by some form of punishment.

A third way of handling guilt is *by resignation*. At times, probably most of us feel like shrugging it off with a "so what!" and give up trying to change. "That's just the way I am so I might as well accept it and make the best of it. Besides no one else is perfect either."

Still another common way to attempt to overcome our guilt is to *do enough good things so that the bad things might be balanced out*. The trouble with this is that a person can never do enough good to make up for the bad, and he can never undo the effects of what he has done. A good friend in the Philippines, a very devout Roman Catholic, and a very successful business man, once said to me, "I am tempted to believe in re-incarnation. A person simply doesn't live long enough in one life time to make up for all the wrong he has done."

Then a fifth way of handling guilt is one which may also be a part of the other methods, that is the *attempt to hide it from others*. Jesus said of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:5 "Their whole lives are planned with an eye to effect." And this is true today, even for Christians; we try to impress others with a spirituality and maturity and humility that we do not actually possess. We feel that God and others expect us to act in a certain way, so we do all we possibly can to keep them from thinking we are not all that we should be. And sometimes we have kept this up so long that we have even fooled ourselves. It's very hard to be open and honest, even with God. We find it hard to believe that

even God will accept us, just as we are, without seeming to be something different from what we are.

The True Salvation

Well, surely, there must be another way, a positive way, to handle guilt. This is what Paul was seeking in Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" And this is what Paul found, "There is therefore now *no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*"(8:1).

The process given in the Bible for dealing with guilt begins with the *realization of our personal guilt and responsibility*, and the fact that there is no way that we can deliver ourselves from this burden. This recognition of our guilt is the first step toward receiving the freedom and forgiveness that Paul found. T. S. Eliot, in another poem, said, "You think I suffer from a morbid conscience, from brooding over faults I might well have forgotten. You think I'm sickening; I'm just recovering!" In other words, when our conscience begins to bother us, that's a good sign; it's the first step toward recovery.

Then, the next steps beyond acknowledging our guilt and responsibility, are to *confess our faults and turn from them* in true repentance. Proverbs 28:13 says, "Whoso confesseth them and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And James 5:16, "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." And of course for those who have never turned to Him the first time, Peter says, Acts 2:38, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

So instead of putting the blame for our condition on somebody else; or trying to punish ourselves; or giving up in resignation; or trying to balance it out with good deeds; or trying to hide it from God and others; we must be honest and sincere in facing our guilt, in confessing it to God and maybe to a few significant people involved in our lives, and then with the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit turning away from the cause of our guilt in true repentance.

God then assures us of His forgiveness and acceptance. All barriers are removed. There is no need for any further feelings of guilt. And the really good thing about it is that God's forgiveness is not dependent upon whether we feel forgiven, but upon His promise. We may be aware still of our sins and failures; we know what we have done, and it is sometimes difficult to forgive ourselves; but there is now no condemnation, we are forgiven and accepted by God because Jesus paid for our sins and because we have acknowledged our depen-

dance upon Him. God's forgiveness is complete and final, and He will never hold these things against us anymore. Psalm 103:12 tells us, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." And Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am He that blot-teth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins." In Ecclesiastes 9:7 we are told "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, for God hath accepted what you have done." And in Mark 5:19, "Go home to your own folk and tell them what the Lord in his mercy has done for you."

This is the most wonderful news in the world, for the most serious problem in the world, our guilt!

Revival, Our greatest Need:

JONATHAN GOFORTH, AND GOD'S POWER IN CHINA

Condensed from Theodore Engstrom

Any history of missionary work in China would be incomplete without including an account of the ministry of Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth.

The Goforths left Toronto for China in January, 1888. They were at Chefoo, their first home in North Honan, but a few days when all their belongings, wedding presents and everything of real value to them was burned to ashes. Following the fire with characteristic insight Jonathan said to his wife, "Don't grieve so; after all, they are just things." This was the first of six times that the Goforths lost their homes through fire, floods and bandits!

Very early during his work in China Jonathan Goforth made his mark, and his service and ministry was in constant demand. During the next 40 years he covered fifteen of the eighteen vast provinces of this country. He never spoke before a Chinese audience without the open Bible in his hand, constantly referring to it as "The written Word of the One true God."

The Goforths were genuine pioneers. They visited village after village, many of which had never been entered by a white man, telling the natives of the power of Christ, the Son of God, to save from sin. During the late 1890's 25,000 men and women heard the Gospel as preached by Goforth. The progress of the Gospel in China during this period was amazing. By 1899 there were 50 Chinese communities where churches had been established.

Troubles and Persecutions

However, during this time trials and tribulations seemed to multiply. June 19, 1900 their beautiful seven-year-old daughter Florence, went to be with her Lord, joining her brother Donald and sister Gertrude. At the same time the tragic Boxer Rebellion broke loose. The Goforths were forced to make escape to Hankow through bandit-infested territory.

Following the Boxer uprising the Goforths returned to China, and took delight in blazing new trails. It was at this time they began a nomadic ministry, traveling from town to town. Rosalind preaching to the women and Jonathan to the men. Hundreds of souls were given them in this ministry.

Powerful revivals

Evangelism was the theme of the Goforth's ministry at all times. Often months at a time were given to aggressive evangelism in the large center of the field.

The high points in the experiences of the Goforths while in China were the great Revivals which swept Manchuria and Korea. [See the following article.] In both places hundreds of Christians repented, confessed sins, and began serving Christ joyfully. And multitudes of the unsaved were won to a saving knowledge of Christ and filled with Holy Spirit of God. In between some of his meetings General Feng, a Christian general, invited Dr. Goforth to minister to his soldiers. He was enabled to baptize 4,000 soldiers in this great army in one year.

Jonathan Goforth literally wore himself out and went to be with his Lord on October 8, 1936, at seventy-seven years of age. Rosalind joined him in 1942. In over fifty years the aim of both of the Goforths was at all times the preaching of Christ and Him crucified to the end that precious souls might receive Him, whom to know is life eternal.

A CHALLENGE FROM JONATHAN GOFORTH

(All the following excerpts are taken from Goforth's book, *By My Spirit*. It contains scores of examples of overwhelming conviction of sin and stirring repentance that occurred as revival spread in various parts of China and Korea early in this century. We give just one example to start these excerpts.)

It was wonderful how mightily the Spirit of God worked in the church of Taiyuan during the fall of 1908. So marked was His presence, indeed, that it was quite a common thing to overhear people in the city telling each other that a "new Jesus" had come. Their reason

for saying this was that for years many of the professing Christians had been cheating their neighbors and quarrelling with them. Some, indeed, had gone so far as to revile their parents and beat their wives. It seemed that the other Jesus was too old and had lost His power to keep them in order. But this "new Jesus," it appeared, was doing wonderful things. He was making all those old backsliders get up before the whole church and confess their sins, and afterwards go to their heathen neighbors and pay back anything that they owed, and beg the forgiveness of all whom they had wronged. But what was the greatest surprise of all was that they should even go so far as to abase themselves before their wives, asking their pardon for the way in which they had mistreated them. In this way the revival carried conviction to the great mass of people outside the church, that the Living God had come among His people.

Just Emotionalism?

Different ones have termed this work which God has led me into as mere emotionalism. We make no defense other than to quote a few extracts from letters which were written to friends in the homeland by missionaries in Manchuria during the Revival there in 1908.

"Hitherto I have had a horror of hysterias and emotionalism in religion, and the first outbursts of grief from some men who prayed displeased me exceedingly. I didn't know what was behind it all. Eventually, however, it became quite clear that nothing but the mighty Spirit of God was working in the hearts of men."

"Remember that the Chinaman is the most sensitive of men to public opinion, that here were men, and women too, running counter to every prejudice, in the teeth of cherished tradition 'losing face', and lowering themselves in the public eye, and you will realize a little of the wonder and amazement that filled the missionary body."

"A power has come into the Church we cannot control if we would. It is a miracle for stolid, self-righteous John Chinaman to go out of his way to confess to sins that no torture of the Yamen could force from him; for a Chinaman to demean himself to crave, weeping, the prayers of his fellow believers is beyond all human explanation."

Widespread Ignorance, Weakness, and Sins

At one place in Manchuria, where the Holy Spirit had descended in unusual power upon the people, the Chinese evangelists went and asked the missionary why he had not told them that the Spirit would work so mightily. The missionary penitently replied that he himself had not known that it was possible. How pathetic to come out from "the schools of the prophets" and not realize that the Holy Spirit could endue with power to deliver a prophet's message!

We are convinced that the majority of Christian people are living on a plane far below what our master planned for them. Only the few really seem to "possess their possessions."

We cannot emphasize too strongly our conviction that all hindrance in the Church is due to sin. It will be seen from the following chapters how the Holy Spirit brings all manner of sin to light. Indeed, the appalling fact is that every sin which is found outside the Church is also found, although perhaps to a lesser degree, within the Church. For fear that some may judge too harshly, we would point out that many of the Chinese churches, of which mention is made, are not even one generation removed from heathenism. At the same time, let us not delude ourselves by thinking that all is well with our old established churches at home. It is sin in individual Church members, whether at home or on the foreign field, which grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit. I imagine that we would lose much of our self-righteousness if we were to find that pride, jealousy, bad temper, back-biting, greed and all their kindred are just as heinous in God's sight as the so-called grosser sins. All sin in the believer, of whatever kind, mars the redemptive work of Christ. The most piercing cries that I have ever heard have come from Chinese Christians, when the Holy Spirit made plain to them that their sin had crucified the Son of God afresh.

Confession of Sins

In view of the prominence that is given to confession of sin in this book, perhaps it would be as well to make plain my personal views on the subject.

We believe that as regards *secret sin*, i.e., sin which is known only to the individual soul and God, to confess it at the private altar is, as a rule, sufficient to ensure pardon and cleansing. We say, as a rule, because we have known of many, usually such as have been responsible for the salvation of others, e.g. ministers and church leaders of one sort or another, for whom secret acknowledgment of sin has not been sufficient. Their agonized public confessions have shown plainly that, for them at least, there was only one way of relief.

As to sin *against an individual* the Scriptures are quite plain. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24). It is vain for us to pray while conscious that we have injured another. Let us first make amends to the injured one before we dare approach God at either the private or the public altar. I am confident that revival would break out in most churches if this were done.

Then again, as regards *public sins*, experience has shown us that these can only be swept away by public confession. True, this amounts to crucifixion; but by our wilful disobedience we have put the Lord of Glory to an open shame, and it is the price that we must pay.

VOICES from the FIELD

George C. Galanis

Athens, Greece

21 Dec. 1992

I would like to give you a brief report about the progress of our church building project: we have finished the brick work and are now almost ready to start plastering of the whole building. Simultaneously we must start the electric wiring, the central heating, plumbing, aluminum windows, window panes, doors, floors, a new pulpit, baptistry, chairs etc.

We estimate that we will need some \$72,500 to finish our building project completely. Now we are holding our services in the basement of our building, but we hope to be able to finish our main auditorium by June 1993.

Spiritually we have the Lord's blessings. The regular attendance is between 60 to 80 people. This number is considered good for this Country where the State religion has kept the people in darkness and superstitions for seventeen centuries.

Dan Wilson

Hondurus

December 27, 1992

Last year (1991) after graduating from Bryan College, the Lord opened up for me a teaching position at Academia Los Pinares, a wonderful bilingual Christian school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Last year I had the privilege of teaching the Bible classes for grades 9-12 in this school which is 90% made up of Hondurans, mostly from the wealthiest families in the country, and 10% missionary and embassy kids. It was, and is, an intense challenge to make the Word come alive for these kids, most of whom have attended Pinares for years. This year I exchanged one of my Bible classes for a history class. Outside of the classroom there are just as many if not more, opportunities to really minister to these kids on a personal level. Last year I coached the J.V. basketball team (the words coach and team are used in a very liberal sense here since I had no experience as a coach and they had no experience in real basketball), and on Friday nights there are various clubs and activities for the high schoolers such as game nights and Bible studies.

Central America still needs your prayers as it recovers from several devastating civil wars and some continued political unrest, but thank God that His Church is growing rapidly.

This may really help you--

DEAR FRIEND . . .

Joe R. Barnett

Dear Friend,

The preaching of John Wesley started a religious revolution that change the course of England. No single person influenced so many minds; no single voice touched so many hearts.

Wesley's grief was that he was thirty-five when he was converted. Thirty-five!

Why so late? He felt the fault was not altogether his. He groped in darkness for many years and no one enlightened him -- not even his ministers. Wesley wrote to one of them:

"How will you answer to our common Lord that you, sir, never led me into the light? Why did I scarcely ever hear you name the name of Christ? Why did you never urge me to faith in His blood? . . . If you say that you thought I had faith already, verily, you know nothing of me . . ."

Reading that letter brought me to my knees. It would torment me if I deserved such a rebuke because I never mentioned Him to you.

Please do not think me judgmental. You may be a devout believer. But my assumption that you have already been urged to faith in his blood may be presumptuous. I could do you no greater wrong than to neglect sharing my faith with you.

Our worst offenses probably do not lie so much in violating the Thou Shalt Nots as in ignoring the Thou Shalts.

There is a conspicuous difference between the villains in the parables of Jesus and the villains in other literature. In the daily news, as well as in the typical novel, the villain is the person who does what he ought not to do. In the parables of Jesus the villain is the person who leaves undone what he ought to do--

- the priest and the Levite who pass by on the other side;
- the rich man who ignores the beggar at his gate;
- the servant who buries the talent entrusted to him.

I am sending you this letter because I dare not leave undone what I ought to do. If you missed the joy of salvation because I failed to tell you of the wonderful gift of God's grace, I would do you a shameful injustice.

We are different in many ways, you and I. But in the basic ways we are very much alike.

"All we, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

That sentence begins and ends with **all** -- two very significant **all's**.

All people -- modern and ancient, scholarly and ignorant, rich and poor -- have gone astray. In that way we are alike.

Each of us has turned to his own way. In that way we are different.

He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. In that way, again, we are alike.

He laid **our** iniquity on **Him**. What a gift!

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

You cannot save yourself -- can never deserve, buy or earn your salvation. But because of God's grace, you can claim the righteousness of Christ as you own.

". . . not having a righteousness of my own . . . but that which is through faith in Christ -- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Philippians 3:8,9).

When you, by faith, place your total trust in the sacrificial death of Jesus, God views you as righteous -- counts you (credits you) as righteous. (Romans 4:5, 23-24).

"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:21, 22).

Through faith your sin is credited to Jesus' account -- and Jesus' righteousness is credited to your account.

Faith! What joy it brings. For *" . . . everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name" (Acts 10:43).*

Faith! Everything else is but an expression of that faith, evidence of *that faith*.

" . . . in the gospel of righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last . . ." (Romans 1:17).

What about obedience? *" . . . obedience comes from faith "* (Romans 1:5).

Our faith in the breathtaking gift of God's grace gratefully expresses itself in repentance. It is natural that ". . . *God's kindness leads you toward repentance*" (Romans 2:4).

It expresses itself in a joyful confession of that faith (Romans 10:8-10).

And it expresses itself in the thrill of baptism (Mark 16: 16).

" . . . all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:3,4).

E. C. Dawson wanted to share his faith with his old friend, James Hannington. He thought he should write him -- but he feared it might offend him. "Still," he says, "Still, I reasoned that, if friendship was to be lost, it should be at least well lost. So I wrote . . . I spoke of the power of the love of Christ . . . and I urged him to surrender himself to the Savior . . ."

And the result? For that we turn to James Hannington's diary: "July 15: Dawson opened a correspondence with me today which I can only describe as delightful. It led to my conversion!"

In a note written years later he said, "I . . . leaped about the room rejoicing and praising God that Jesus died for me. From that day to this, I have lived under the shadow of His wings in the assurance that I am His and He is mine!"

I confess that in sending you this letter, I share Mr. Dawson's fear -- the fear that I might offend you.

Please understand that I am not judging you. Under no circumstance would I have the right to do that. Judgment belongs to God alone.

It is simply a plea -- a plea to you to accept the magnificent gift of God's grace, if you haven't already

" . . . the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Most Sincerely,

Your Friend

[W&W seeks to alert our readers to helpful literature that you can use. The above article is available in tract form (it will fit into a long envelope) from Pathway, Inc., 6701 Aberdeen, Suite 5, Lubbock TX 79424. (c) 1992. Get a catalog of all their tracts.]

AN OUTSTANDING JOURNAL COMES TO A CONCLUSION

Alex V. Wilson

The December 1992 issue of *Restoration Review* was its last. For forty years Leroy Garrett edited this magazine, and the Lord used it to influence multitudes for good. Through the decades brother Garrett emphasized God's grace, Christ-centeredness over church centeredness, the priority of love, and the need for unity amid diversity among the Churches of Christ.

He and his close friend Carl Ketcherside were leading crusaders to save the various factions of the "Restoration Movement" from legalism and sectarianism. Both of them were often terribly opposed and slandered. In fact, a friendly church gave each of them a "Marty award"--for those who are almost *martyrs*! But the seeds they sowed have produced much fruit in the past 10-20 years.

Actually R. H. Boll and other editors and writers for *Word and Work* were stressing the grace of God and opposing legalism and sectarianism for years before God raised up the Ketcherside/Garrett dynamic duo. But *Word and Work's* impact was muted due to hysterics and bitterness against brother Boll over prophecy. Through the years we have rejoiced over the ministries of brothers Garrett and Ketcherside, even while not agreeing with all they taught. We have re-run their articles from time to time (with their kind permission, of course), and will continue to do so. Following is part of an article from that final issue of *Restoration Review*. (If you want 15 random back issues of *R. R.* send \$5.00 to Leroy Garrett at his new address: 1300 Woodlake, Denton, TX 76205.)

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING

Leroy Garrett

This is the conclusion of a summary of some of the themes treated in this journal over the past four decades. We have had evidence through the years that many people were liberated from legalism, sectarianism, and obscurantism by what they read in this journal. Many people through the years have written or called to express eternal gratitude. We rejoice if we have helped even a few people out of partyism and closer to the security that is in Christ. Here are a few more subjects that have made a difference in their lives.

Nature of the Movement

This journal has stood almost alone, especially among Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches, in telling people that the so-called "*Restoration Movement*" was a unity movement more than it was a restoration movement. Readers are surprised to learn that in the early days of the Stone-Campbell movement our people nearly always referred to their efforts as "the current reformation" or "this reformation" (Campbell liked "the New Reformation") and never, not even once that I have found, did they call it "the Restoration Movement." This was not used until divisions began to occur over the tension between restorationism and unity.

They did use the term restoration, particularly Alexander Campbell with his theme of "the restoration of the ancient order," but it was either used as a synonym of reformation or much as we would use renewal. *They did not use the term in an historical sense, which says the church through the centuries does not matter, or with the idea that they were restoring the original church that had ceased to exist.*

The purpose of the movement was what the Campbells and Stone said it was, a unity movement. The founding documents are all unity documents, setting forth unity principles, and most of them do not even contain the term restoration. Robert Richardson, the movement's first historian and the most resourceful one, said that "the movement was born of a passion for unity and unity has been its consuming theme."

When the Church of Christ and the Christian Church leaders gather for their "Restoration" forums, it is restoration that they talk about. They appear oblivious to the fact that the movement was an effort to unite the Christians in all the sects. It is fair to say that these two denominations are not unity movements and have little or no concern for it. They are restorationists, not unitists, and this is a tragic betrayal of their heritage. *Restorationists always hold the view that they have restored the true church and unity is a matter of all others joining them.* Stone and Campbell, who believed the church has always existed and who pled for unity on grounds of catholicity, did not believe that.

Baptism and Who is a Christian

One only needs to read this paper back through the years to see how we have sought to free our people of a legalistic view of baptism and to give them a nonsectarian view of who is a Christian. We have insisted that while we hold to everything the Bible says about baptism, we reject some of the deductions drawn from what the Bible says. One deduction that we reject is that if one is not baptized by immersion for the remission of sins he is not a Christian. We have repeat-

edly observed that usually the order in the New Testament in becoming a Christian is faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Spirit, but not always. Cornelius, for example received the Holy Spirit before he was baptized, and I have no problem conceding to a Baptist that the repentant thief on the cross was saved without baptism. I just point out that penitent believers are not usually hanging on a cross and thus hindered from being baptized!

Barton Stone gave this definition: "Whoever acknowledges the leading truths of Christianity, and conforms his life to that acknowledgment, we esteem a Christian" (Biography, p. 332). Alexander Campbell had what he called his "favorite and oft-repeated" definition: "A Christian is one that habitually believes all that Christ says, and habitually does all that he bids him" (Mill. Harb., 1837, p. 566). In the Lunenburg Letter Campbell put it this way: "But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will" (Mill. Harb., 1837, p. 411).

I have been called a liberal and a heretic for not being an "ultraist" on baptism (Campbell's word). It should at least be acknowledged that Stone and Campbell were liberals and heretics before me. Oddly enough, our pioneers were never hardliners when it came to baptism, even when they defended the ordinance on the polemic platform, as many of our people are today. They preached baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, but did not make it "absolutely essential," as Campbell put it.

In one article on this subject in 1980, I suggested that we're asking the wrong question when we ask who a Christian is, for it is barely a scriptural term. We should rather ask who is a disciple, or better still, "a disciple indeed," the term Jesus used. Our Lord says, "If you continue in my word, then you are a disciple indeed" (Jn. 7:31). Perhaps we should settle for that. We all seem to know who a disciple is. We have concertized and sectarianized the term Christian.

Nature of Error

One of the important distinctions we have made through the years is between intentional, bad-spirited error and being sincerely mistaken. There are errors and there are errors, and we should keep in mind when we label folk "brothers in error." We are all in error about some things, except those among us who are perfect and have all knowledge. When Carl Ketcherside was accused of having fellowship with "brothers in error," he would reply, "I have no other kind of brothers except brothers in error." The most serious error is to be proud, arrogant, and judgmental; these are the sins our Lord condemned. Some people are sincerely mistaken about things we suppose we are right

about. That doesn't keep them from being Christians unless we presume that a Christian has to render perfect obedience and have perfect knowledge.

Sam Stone, editor of the Christian Standard, tells the story of a preacher friend of his who when visiting an acapella Church of Christ was told he could not be called on to lead prayer because he was a brother in error, for he had an instrument in his church. The preacher replied, "I would like to meet the one you call on for prayer." It is a story that lays bare our arrogance when we presume others to be in error but not ourselves. There may be errors so serious that they would hinder our prayers, but surely being sincerely mistaken is not one of them. If so, who could pray?

Hope for the Divorced

I didn't realize how much I had written on this subject until a sister in Kansas sent me a list of all the articles over many years, urging that I put them in booklet form. My main complaint has been that certain editors, preachers, and elders are making laws about divorce and remarriage that God has not made. And that it is nothing less than nonsense to say that people aren't really married in the eyes of God if their divorce was not for "a scriptural reason." I have noted that it may be true that people sin when they divorce and remarry, but that they are nonetheless now married to the second party. Jesus said as much, "If a man divorces his wife and marries another" "He is married to another!"

My conclusions on this subject have been moderate, not radical. I have simply said that divorce is not the unpardonable sin, and that anyone who is divorced (even if he or she sinned in divorcing) is free to marry, for that is what divorce means--one is "loosed" and is free to marry, even if the marriage does not necessarily please God. And I consider it not only nonsense but inexcusable to tell someone who has been married a second time and has a second family that if he wants to be a Christian he has to leave his second wife and return to his first wife or remain celibate. I think Olan Hicks shows the absurdity of all this when he notes that according to that view one can be forgiven if he murders his wife and marries again, but not if he divorces her!

QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

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). The 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 "practicing 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 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 John 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, the fellow who has publicly confessed his sins three times this year must be "practicing sin." On the other hand, excuse anything and everything as merely marks of carnality and one can "prove" that fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, drunkards, etc. (1 Cor. 6:9) will 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 Spirits 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.

Sushi, Soba, and Salvation

by Cindy Rose

There are sprinkles of hope in Japan. These sprinkles are found in the most unusual places: in a small apartment in Tokyo, near a train station where 3 1/2 million people change trains each day; in an old, dilapidated building at the heart of town, in a 300 year old community northwest of Tokyo surrounded by the "Japanese Alps", in a school of 150 high school students and faculty where the day's chores include milking the cows. . . It is in such places that people live not by sushi and soba alone, but also by Christ's gift of salvation.

The ministry of these people is constant and low-paying. To see immediate results is rare. The churches that meet for worship are usually small, such as the gathering on Sundays at the Nomuras' house, but they continue to pulse and to ask God to work through them.

And the Lord does. Though few in number, the Japanese body of Christ had aided people all around the world. For example, they teach and tutor students, host travelers, prepare meals, and travel long distances (sometimes at great cost) to worship with the assembly. With the gift of salvation, they encourage their own teenagers to consider Christian college, in Japan and abroad. They teach people to look beyond lineage and job status. They accept the outcast in society and find treatment for the deathly ill, even if they risk and acquire infection themselves. Why do they do these things? Because God daily grants them their energy and commitment. Because they are saved.

The result of a "sprinkle of salvation" is bigger than one human being. It is all Christians everywhere, past, present, and future. Each becomes a link in the divine chain of history. God touches many lives by their efforts; He makes more sprinkles.

To look at Japan as a whole is to see a people who greatly benefit from tradition and cuisine, but little from knowing God. It seems a nation all but void of the cross. Is this an overwhelming feeling? Absolutely. Is it terrifying? Certainly. But don't stop there. Dare to see Japan through God's eyes, to find the good sprinkles, rejoice that they exist, encourage them, and pray that they do not give up.

When you visit Japan, glance at all the culture and delicacies that Japan offers. But do not neglect to look hard beneath the layers of sushi and soba, for there lies a sprinkle of salvation. And that makes all the difference.

[Cindy Rose is a young lady living in Maryland. Last summer she spent two months living in Japan, observing churches and missionary work firsthand. Her father was a member of Highland Church in Louisville years ago.]

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Exciting Church Discovered

Joe Domico wrote us out of the blue. Well, really from Westville, NJ. Till recently he thought he was perhaps the only preacher among Churches of Christ who holds a pre-millennial view of prophecy. Then he discovered W&W.

"Our congregation was established in March. We have members who came from Churches of Christ & wanted to start a new congregation in the Philadelphia suburbs. They were joined by members of the Independent Christian Church who wanted to do the same. Restoration churches up here are rare. I was asked to be the minister and here we are! You can add us to your list of premill churches.

"Gateway Church is really exciting. We have several new believers, & several new transfers from other churches. We practice & live the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so much that we have been labeled charismatic by the few Churches of Christ in Philadelphia. We are not charismatic, but believe God is powerful and able. In fact, we appreciated your issue on miracles."

We hope brother Domico will share his interesting testimony in W&W soon. By the way, may I stress the fact that we do NOT base fellowship in Christ on similarity of beliefs about prophecy or any other doctrine. In fact we deplore drawing lines due to prophetic disagreements. Unity is in Christ.

"Voices of Concern"

That is the name of a book published by Missionary Messenger several decades ago, but now out of print. I am eager to get a copy. If

you know where one can be bought, please let me know --Alex Wilson

Catching Up On Old Friends

We recently discovered that Virginia Boll Griffiths, daughter of R. H. Boll, has been living in Simi Valley, CA. She is very active in the Gideons, & she and her husband attend the congregation where noted expositor John MacArthur preaches.

We were delighted when Barclay & Marilyn Riley visited at Portland Church one Sunday night. They were KBC students back in the 1950's. After engaging in missionary work in Japan for a while, they have ministered in churches & at Potter Children's Home in Bowling Green, Ky. Barclay now preaches at the Gates, Tenn. Church of Christ.

And it brought joy to see Tim Yates and meet his wife Dawn. Tim, an all-summer helper at Woodland Bible Camp for years, graduated from Portland Christian High 3 1/2 years ago. He'll finish his studies at Johnson Bible College this May. Then he and Dawn will spend the summer in Malawi, Africa, assisting missionaries there. They plan to become missionaries, Lord willing. --Alex Wilson

Don't Miss It

--the training conference on Tell Others of Jesus with Joy & Confidence, that is. Be sure to read about it on our back cover. Be sure to attend, & bring others. It will provide some practice, not just theory

Calling All Writers

We wish more of our readers would become writers! Remember

the exciting testimony by Sister Loyde Johnson about her grandson? And the stirring reports by Jon & Jeff Mayeux re: healings & revivals in past centuries? Why don't YOU write something for us?

We would like to have an issue on **God's Answers to Prayer**. Do you have a testimony which would encourage others? Write it up and send it to us. We reserve the right to condense, reword as needed, or not to use it at all. But don't let that discourage you. (My 1st article to W&W was rejected!) Your testimony may bless others.

Summer Missionary Projects

Victor Broadus plans another missionary group-trip to the Orient. These have been extremely valuable experiences to many people. Tentative departure date is May 31 with return home July 9 or 10. Most of the time will be in the Philippines, but Hong Kong & Japan are included too. The last day for making a commitment is 2 mos. before departure. \$300 deposit must be made then, and the balance (around \$2,300) is due 1 month later. For full information write Victor at P.O. Box 54842, Lexington KY 40555 or call (606) 269-1312 (day), 253-9834 (night). While you're at it, ask him for a brochure about his mission-funds forwarding service. Every church should know about it. By the way, his trip is ministry centered, not just tourism!

A similar but shorter trip to Japan is planned by Dwight Albright, a friend of Moto Nomura & former missionary to Japan. The tentative itinerary: leave Memphis TN June 10, leave Japan & arrive in Memphis June 21. For more info write Focus on Japan, 5295 Park Ave., Memphis TN 38119-3543.

Gallatin Tenn. Church of Christ

We praise God for the exciting responses we have witnessed in 1993. Our attendance has been well above average and God's presence evident in our meetings. Five placed membership, and 3 have been baptized. We are visiting and counseling with others who need to make these same decisions. Pray and praise God for His goodness.

God is teaching us and leading us to be a praying people. That can be dangerous, because earnest prayer has great effect. (James 5:16). This could include revival, repentance and other dramatic changes.

Thanks to Jo Stockdell for the new display on the mission board. And how about those signs on each exit door: "Your are now entering a mission field." Think about that and act accordingly.--Julius Hovan

Central Ky. Workshop

This will be held at Cramer & Hanover Church in Lexington, March 19-20. Fri. nite, 7:30, message by David Tapp. Sat. morning, starting at 9:30 & afternoon starting at 1:00-3:30. Talks by Ben Rake Jr., Joe Strunk & Nick Marsh on theme of LOVE. Workshops about bus ministry, Antioch Bible Camp, & Church of Christ Worldwide missions office. Also times for prayer and singing. For more info call Cramer Church at (606) 269-1312.

Alexandria, Louisiana Church of Christ

An Opportunity to Love

Bonnie Kolb (wife of our former Minister) called this week with a request for prayers and financial help for their daughter, Danya Trump, who has muscular dystrophy, and has been in a wheel chair for a number of years. Her condi-

tion has worsened to the extent she cannot exhale. Her lungs are failing. This is causing carbon dioxide buildup which in a short time can prove fatal. Her doctor says she needs a ventilator which costs \$1000.00 per month. Time is very critical. They want to know if the Church could pledge a monthly contribution to help meet this need

Bruce Lewis, minister of the Orange, Texas Church of Christ, 501 N. 9th St., Orange TX., 77630, is handling the funds. He will be sending out monthly statements. His phone number is: (409) 883-4805, should anyone want more information. They are asking all the churches they know to help. How can we refuse?

The Kolb's address is: Milton & Bonnie Kolb, Rt. 3 Box 223 B, Goldthwait, Texas, 76844 Ph. (915) 648-3847 --David Johnson

Mackville, Ky. Church of Christ

We are thankful to God for the 6 new Christians we have here at Mackville Church of Christ, and for the two responses for rededication to Christ. Natalie Sexton, Aaron Moore, Bonnie Settles, Gwen Pearson, Brian Gabhart and Justin Decker all came to Christ in 1992. Steve Settles and Cathy Carey responded for rededication. Let's all pray for and encourage all of them --Harry Coultas

Ralph Avenue Church, Louisville

Jan 11-15 Brother Earl C Mullins, Sr spoke each evening exposing the New Age Movement. Good crowds and great interest --Bill Smallwood, Minister

Portland Christian School, Louisville, Ky

The uncertainties of a new year always create both excitement and

concern; 1992 was no exception. In regards to finances, God blessed PCS in wonderful ways. He used friends to enable us to meet all of our financial obligations on time. Although our current enrollment is significantly higher than last year's 1992 brought sadness when several of our families chose to transfer their children from PCS to non-Christian schools. Some left for financial reasons, some for various other reasons. Please pray with us that these youngsters will build on the knowledge they gained while at Portland Christian. Please also pray that our enrollment will continue to increase

In 1992, we were also blessed with two new roofs at the south (high school) campus, the old roofs had been causing us problems for at least 10 years. The two-story building on that campus is sporting new doors, another need God so ably provided for in 1992. 1992 also brought new computers, through the Kroger Company, to our computer lab

At the beginning of the 1992-93 school year we needed five teachers in the elementary grades and one in the high school. As always, God provided wonderfully --Don Rucker

Maple Manor Children's Home, Sellersburg, Ind.

As long as there are children in need, our job is not over. And with the present social climate, it is projected to get worse. "Evil Men will wax worse and worse" (2Tim. 3:15) is certainly evident where our work is centered. God's people need to be in much prayer. During the year we have had the pleasure of a visit by former residents. The personalities, in most cases, are different from what we first witnessed when they came to live with us. They

smile, joke, and want to visit with those they came to know during their stay. Some are doing better than others. Some are married, some still single. One wanted to come back and live with us (sadly, this is not possible), and one wanted to work with us. One particular boy called to say how much he now appreciated the time and love extended to him while he was here. At the time of his stay he was not nearly as appreciative and caused many problems, of which he is now aware. He wanted to visit but has not been able to because of his work schedule. We would be glad to see him! -- Robert W. Istre, Administrator

Jennings Church of Christ, Louisiana

The year of 1992 was one of many "mountain-top" as well as "valley" experiences for the Jennings Church of Christ. The Lord added to our number through immersion six new brothers and sisters, but called six others home to be with Him.

We began the year honoring A. J. and Sunnye Istre for their 20 years of service to the church here just before they celebrated 40 years of marriage. Other high points included the youth rally with Mark Worley; Robert and Joy Garrett's stay with us; song rally with 160 people representing 14 congregations; spring meeting with Dr. Blythe Robinson; and our 57th watch night service, with David

Johnson speaking this year. Other guest speakers through the year included Glen Baber, Kent Bowers, Don Yelton, Carlos from Mexico, Earl Mullins, Sr., and Ben Rake, Jr.

A ladies choir was started with Kim Jones directing; monthly youth devotionals were held in various homes; a new class for adults was added; and on November 1 we celebrated 75 years of work here at our first Homecoming Service!

Special song groups have performed here including "Declaration" from Johnson Bible College; the Southeast Church of Christ Choir from Louisville; the USL Campus Ministry; and "Four-in-One" from Dallas.

Also added to the facilities here was a large screen in the auditorium; a wheelchair; new directories; and 99 books and 9 videos in the church library. A "spiritual gifts" test was given to members which helped in placing them to better advantage in their service.

Kent Bowers was sent to Japan to work with Bro. Moto for 6 weeks. Since his return, Kent had decided to go to Johnson Bible College in Knoxville, TN to help prepare for his return to mission work.

God has been so good to help carry us through happy as well as hurting times. We trust He will continue to do so as we continue our service to Him. -- Joyce Broyles, Reporter

TELL OTHERS OF JESUS WITH JOY AND CONFIDENCE!

TRAINING CONFERENCE FOR ALL DISCIPLES

All who find "witnessing" hard but want to share our good news with others naturally (yet supernaturally too!) -- join us March 11-12 (Thurs. & Fri. nights, 7:00 p.m.) at the Southeast Church of Christ, 1210 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, Ky

Julius Hovan & Kevin O'Brien will speak, & Kevin will lead some hands-on training sessions in winsome witnessing. S.B.S. sponsors this training conference to help equip new converts and veteran believers alike

THURS. MAR. 11

FRI. MAR. 12

**Personal Preparation for
Everyday Witnessing**

**Hands-on Training in
Personally Sharing Your
Faith with Others**