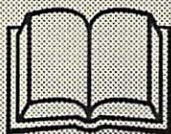


*"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."*



# The *Word and Work*



*"Holding forth the Word of Life."*

FEBRUARY, 1994

## ARE WE SHUTTING OUT THE POWER OF GOD?

### DO WE STIFLE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- "The manifestation of the Spirit is, in my judgement, the greatest need of the church." -- R. H. Boll, page 35
- "Be what you ARE, and not what you WERE." -- James I. Packer, page 48
- "Attitudes which God plants within our hearts are also actions we are obligated to perform." -- Alex Wilson, page 40
- "When Christians met for worship, one great extinguisher was placed over the flame that burned in the hearts of the brethren." -- James Denney, page 45

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Presents

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March 17 & 18, 1994; 7 - 9 p.m.

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2. Are We Ready?

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1. Swimming Upstream in the Last Days
2. The Cost of Victory

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*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

**Alex V. Wilson, Editor**

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# CHRIST'S GREAT GIFT

Alex V. Wilson

When the Savior 'rose to glory,  
There to share His Father's throne,  
Leaving here, to tell His story,  
All His chosen and His own,  
As a parting pledge of favor  
His most precious gift He sent,  
Even the Eternal Spirit--  
Crown of Christ's new covenant

A convicter to accuse us,  
To rebuke the pride within;  
With the two-edged sword to smite us  
And expose our hidden sin.  
Then a comforter to cheer us,  
To remind us of the blood,  
Bringing rest to troubled conscience,  
Showing we have peace with God

Holy Spirit, sent from heaven,  
Now enlighten our dark mind,  
That the Scriptures You have given  
May in us a welcome find  
There reveal our gracious Savior--  
Perfect Lamb, High Priest, Bridegroom--  
Glorify Him, make us like Him,  
Till He comes and takes us home

Make our lives a bounteous vineyard  
Where Your holy fruit may grow,  
That the Master of the vineyard  
Pleasure from His fruit may know.  
Christ, we come for living water,  
That the desert lands around  
Also may be rich and fertile  
And with fruits of love abound.

Fiery Spirit, Wind from heaven,  
Oh, we need revival now!  
Stir us, rouse us from our slumber;  
With full strength and pow'r endow  
May all members of Christ's body  
Fully use the Spirit's gifts,  
That together to all nations  
We the cross may soon uplift.

[May be sung to the tune of "*Love Divine, All Love Excelling*"]

# LACK OF POWER

R.H. Boll

Power is the solution of every difficulty. All things become possible where there is sufficient power. What the church needs is not so much numbers, wealth, talent, organizations, methods, but *power*. The supreme need of the individual Christian is power. On every hand we meet the conscious lack of it. There is not so much deficit of good intentions or will and desire, of consecration even, as of power. The pull of the world over-matches in many the strength of resistance. To will is present, but little ability for performance. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Outsiders will not respond to the gospel because they feel themselves unable to assume the obligation of a holy life. Christians do not attempt much for the Lord, fearing lest they be unable to hold out at it. Even on their chosen low level they are haunted with a sense of failure.

Not in life only but in service the same lack is manifest. Their testimony is feeble. They will shy at bad cases of sin, avoid those who need salvation most, because the difficulty of saving them seems too great. They bank their hope for the convert more on his natural character and abilities than upon aught that God could do for him. They acquiesce in the miserable condition of sinners around them because there's no hope for it, and in the evil that reigns in the church because of a sense of sheer inability to cope with the matter. In a hundred ways they confess to a fatal lack of power.

## "OUT OF WEAKNESS MADE STRONG"

That power is needed in Christian life and work--power which man does not have and cannot furnish--is obvious, especially when we see what class of people it is that the Lord Jesus calls to Him. They are for the most part of the *poor* and of the humbler classes (Jas. 2:5). The Lord, however, calls them for this very reason, so that He might show what He can do, and that through such people He may put to shame the culturists, and moralists, and idealists, the men of intellect, of character, and attainment who (one might think) could live a Christian life naturally, without any special help from God, and so the glory might go to *them* instead of God. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that

are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised did God choose, yea and the things that are not that he might bring to naught the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God" (1 Cor. 1:26-29). Now the only way in which these "foolish," "weak," "base," "nobodies" could put the great and wise to shame, and stop the boast of all flesh, would be by the superior life they live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. But that requires power. Neither can it be a power resident and dormant within man himself, else the glory would in the end still be man's; but power from God, even His strength that is made perfect in man's weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). This is the power we all need.

### THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

The secret of the new life and power of the multitude that accepted the gospel on the day of Pentecost lay in the promised "gift of the Holy Spirit." To his convicted hearers Peter had said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" By "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is not meant some gift which the Holy Ghost would bestow on them, but the Holy Spirit Himself that was to be given to them. In the Old Testament it was freely predicted that the time would come when the Holy Spirit would be freely sent forth upon men. The passage from Joel, quoted by Peter in this same Pentecost sermon was such a prediction. Isaiah and Ezekiel also prophesied of that wondrous dispensation of the Spirit--and always with the consequence of a new life and righteousness following--"I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my ordinances to do them" (Ezek. 36:27).

When the Spirit should be poured out on them it would be like pouring water upon the thirsty and streams upon the dry ground, and they would spring up as willows by the water-courses, and subscribe themselves to Jehovah (Isa. 44:3-5). This was fulfilled to those on Pentecost. Into that baptism of the Spirit which was received by the original band, all that came in afterward entered, and were all made to drink of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). This is an important feature of our great salvation. "Not by works of righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, *and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon*



*us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*" (Tit. 3:5-6). This refers to all saved. They are all partakers of that same Spirit which on the day of Pentecost was poured out. For, as Peter said on that day: "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (Acts 2:39).

Now it is the specific function of the Holy Spirit indwelling to strengthen us with power in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). It is the Spirit indwelling that gives us power to overcome the power of the flesh. For they that are in the flesh cannot please God; but if the Spirit of God dwells in them they are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. And if by the Spirit they put to death the deeds of the body they shall live (Rom. 8:8-12). They are able to overcome the world also, for "greater is *he that is in you* than he that is in the world" (1 John. 4:4). The Spirit helps all our infirmity (Rom. 8:26), fits for service, endues with boldness (Acts 4) and wisdom, and brings forth His fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-32). This alone adequately accounts for the phenomenal transformation witnessed in the thousands of the Pentecost church.

### POWER FOR EACH OF US

Of the things we have been saying the chief point is this-- that this spiritual power is for us also, and upon the same free terms. We must emphasize it just as we emphasize the "remission of sins" in Acts 2:38. We must take hold of the promise by faith, just as by faith we appropriate the promise of the remission of sins. We must count on it and bank on it. We must believe (in the light of 1 Cor. 6:19-20) that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. If we passed by the promise of remission of sins in Acts 2:38 as lightly as we pass over the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit it would fail us. We would not be able to realize our salvation, nor could we have the joy and hope that is connected with the knowledge of sins forgiven. If the baptized ignore or disregard the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit (though God ever true to His promise would not fail to bestow it) they shall not get the power and renewing effect of the Spirit's presence. But if we take hold of the promise by faith we shall soon become aware of the new power that has come into our life. For the manifestation always follows faith. "Said I not unto thee that if thou *believedst* thou shouldst *see* the glory of God?" (John 11:40). And this manifestation of the Spirit is, in my judgment, the greatest need of the church today.

# PUTTING SIN TO DEATH

(That is, "Mortification")

James I. Packer

"By the Spirit . . . PUT TO DEATH the misdeeds of the body . . ."  
Rom. 8:13b

"Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

"PUT TO DEATH, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry . . . You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." *Col. 3:1-10*

I remember my first evening meal in theological college. We were all strangers to each other, and conversation was exploratory. The man opposite me turned out to share an obsession of mine: the teaching of the Puritans.

God had taught him that sin is not rooted out of us nor rendered impotent in us at any stage in this life. Thus watching, praying, suspecting yourself and often examining your heart and actions are vital disciplines lest you enter into temptation without realizing what you are doing. "Mortifying sin" is what the old Bible versions called it. My new friend went on to successfully pastor two difficult congregations for over 20 years. He was one of the most cheerful men I have known. He spoke regularly of mortification to the end of his days, the only evangelical pastor I know to have done so. He thought the subject was important. So do I.

The above passages tell us that Christian privilege makes mortification obligatory. Paul argues thus: "As people who now share Christ's risen life, whose citizenship and prospects are in the heavenly realm, you must behave as befits your status. You are no longer children of wrath, but sons of God and heirs of glory. You must be what you are, and not what you were. Therefore you must mortify sin—put it to death."



## More About Our Warfare Against Sin

1. *Our Struggles:* We fight not merely sins, but **sin**, that hereditary impulse, rooted deep in our nature, which lusts for self-assertion in defiance of God. Sin is the root of all actual sins. Now at conversion the new believer takes Christ as his master and model, and resolves that he will no longer be the self-asserting, God-resisting person he was. This is his repentance, or "change of mind." He renounces sin; he wills its death in him; and thus in intention he has "crucified the flesh" and its desires (Gal. 5:24).

But sin does not die. The Christian still finds it active within him, resisting and to a greater or less degree thwarting all his attempts to do the will of God. The Christian thus finds himself in conflict with a part of himself: "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh . . . to prevent you from doing what you would" (Gal. 5:17). Sin is already at war with us (Rom. 7:23; 1 Pet. 2:11). It seeks our ruin, and the only way to preserve ourselves is to fight back.

2. *Our Resources:* Nobody has much heart for a fight he thinks he cannot win. To expect defeat is thus to ensure defeat. If I imagine that, try as I might, I am bound to fail, I shall not even try as I might. But the Christian is forbidden to have such disastrous pessimism. God obliges him to expect success when he meets sin. "Sin will have no dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14). Its reign has ended; it is a dethroned and doomed enemy. For the believer has put off the old self and put on the new self (Col. 3:9,10); he is born of God and God's seed remains in him (1 John 3:9). It is no longer his nature to sin. Insofar as he does so, he acts out of character, and his heart is not in it. He can never sin with all his heart again.

More than that, the Holy Spirit is present in person to oppose indwelling sin. He strengthens the Christian to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13).

3 *Our Responsibility:* We must use our resources. We cannot mortify sin by our own unaided efforts; but it is also true that the Spirit will not mortify sin in us without our cooperation. He will prosper our striving, but he will not bless our sloth. We ourselves must attack sin. We should practice and develop the qualities most contrary to the sins we have to get rid of--generosity if the problem is greed, a habit of praise if it is self-pity, patience if it is bad temper, planned living if it is laziness. Careless, half-hearted, double-minded Christians can never mortify sin.

[Condensed by author's permission from **GOD'S WORDS**, formerly published by InterVarsity Press but now out of print.]

## **"MORTIFICATION"—Counsel from an Earlier Century**

The outstanding teacher about mortification was John Owen, a great Puritan preacher and writer. Here are some excerpts from his writings:

He who ceases from this duty of mortifying sin lets go of all endeavors after holiness. We must be exercising it every day, and in every duty. Sin will not die, unless it be constantly weakened. Spare it and it will heal its wounds and recover its strength. Let no man think he can kill sin with a few gentle strokes. He who once strikes a serpent, but does not follow up his blow till it be slain, may be sorry that he ever began the quarrel. So will the man be sorry who undertakes to deal with sin, if he pursue it not constantly to death.

We must *starve* out our sinful nature, by refusing to feed it. But we must also *crowd* it out, weakening the flesh by the growth of positive virtues. Every sin has an opposite virtue by which it can be displaced. (See Eph. 4:22-32) Growing, thriving and improving in all-around holiness is the great way to mortify sin. The more we

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# **WALKING BY THE SPIRIT**

## **IS IT RESTING OR WRESTLING?**

Alex V. Wilson

"It is important to understand the nature of the power that God has given us," wrote Eric Fife. "To expect nothing supernatural from Him is to rob ourselves of one of our greatest joys and resources in the Christian life. On the other hand it is important that we not expect from God things that have no scriptural support; doing so can lead only to frustration and cynicism."

An example of these two errors showed up in a Bible class I taught. After we had studied about the Holy Spirit and obedient Christian living a young lady in the class wrote me a note telling of lessons she had learned. "I remember being quite surprised after I received Christ to find out that I was not automatically perfect in my conduct. Our recent studies about holiness helped me realize that being a victorious Christian is a growing process that's never really finished in this life."

So her first mistake was in expecting too much. As a new convert she had thought that God would somehow transform her into a sinless person, just as you might convert a cassette-recorder from using alternating current (electricity) to using direct current (batteries) by turning a knob. Becoming a mature Christian is not that simple nor that quick.

Her note continued: "The class helped me realize more that the Holy Spirit is a person, and what that means. I have never really thought of Him as One who helps me in the growing process; therefore, I have often considered the task hopeless." That was her second error--expecting too little and thus feeling hopeless about overcoming sin and being holy.

### COMMON MISTAKES

Such mistakes seem quite common. On the one hand, many Christians feel that Christian living and service depend entirely on their own efforts. Their attitude is, "If I can only try harder and put forth greater effort, surely I'll become a better Christian." So they grit their teeth and clench their fists and try harder to do their duty, at least for a while.

But there is little growth and less joy, and it all seems useless in the end. Often they give up. This kind of Christian living is very sad. Surely being children of the Living God is meant to be better than this.

On the other hand, some Christian teachers who realize the total inadequacy of such a self-dependent attitude tend to go too far in the other direction. Here are some typical quotations: "Christ is living the victorious life today, and Christ is your life. Therefore *stop trying*. Let Him do it all. Your effort and trying can have nothing to do with victory."

Another writer declares, "In your sanctification and service, God must do all, and *you will take no part in it* but to accept what He will do for you."

And a third teacher agrees, writing, "The abiding life is *an effortless life*; true New Testament living is effortless. Why do we need to try? Only because we are not abiding."

Those ideas contain some truth (Christ is our life) and they sound very spiritual. Many Christians, including myself, have been attracted to such views. But as time passed, two objections arose in my mind. First, how is it possible to "stop trying" or to live an "effortless" life? What do such expressions mean in practice, as far as resisting tempta

tion and practicing reghteousness are concerned? To say "stop trying" only confuses people, for it is impossible.

Second, this viewpoint is not biblically balanced. As the co-authors Robinson and Winward point out, Scripture certainly does tell us to believe receive, abide, trust and rest. But it also urges us to fight, wrestle, run, work, suffer, endure, resist and put to death. The earlier commands stress our need to depend fully on our Lord apart from whom we can do nothing. But we should remember that second list of commands too.

### A BASIC PRINCIPLE

The Bible's teaching is summarized in Gal. 5:25, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (NIV). Or, "if the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit also direct our course" (NEB). In other words, God imparted spiritual life to us when we were dead in sins. He thus *enabled* us to become holy; that is His part. Therefore we are *obliged* to be holy, to keep in step with the Spirit; that is our part. The Christian life is at the same time GIFT and DUTY, a divine provision and human response.

Notice two major applications of this principle. First is the DANGER OF SELF-DEPENDENCE. Christian living depends on what the Lord has done and continues to do for us. Therefore any kind of do-it-yourself attitude is disastrous for us disciples. However, what the Bible warns us against is not effort: nothing can be done without effort. What it tells us to beware of is *self-confident effort*. If we *rely* on our own efforts, or knowledge, training, experiences, abilities and successes instead of on the power of God we shall be as weak as Samson after his haircut. We might have outward success, but no eternal results to the glory of God.

We quoted Gal. 5:25 above. The context of this important verse is Paul's teaching about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is the source of our life" (v. 25), and He is also the source of the 9-fold fruit listed in verses 22-23. Left to ourselves, we cannot make ourselves loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, etc. These qualities result from His presence in our hearts. Just as we cannot save ourselves from sin's guilt apart from Christ's redemption, so we cannot save ourselves from sin's power apart from the Spirit's in-dwelling.

Self-dependence is folly, so reject it. Do not think you can make yourself holy in heart. It is impossible. But God can do it for you, so don't despair. The almighty is our Father; His Son is our living High Priest; His Spirit is our Comforter-Counselor. So trust Him to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. He can overcome our most

deeply-rooted sins, our strongest habits, our all-entangled personal relations. He can cause the delicious, nutritious fruit of the Spirit to thrive in our lives, as we depend on Him.

How do we express our dependence on God? Basically by praying. This is one of the main purposes of prayer. We don't inform God of anything He doesn't know when we pray. Why do it then? In order to remind ourselves and to express to Him our absolute need for Him. Prayer is the primary demonstration that we really believe that apart from the Lord we can do nothing.

### AM I LAZY, OR DISCIPLINED?

We have seen that there is danger in self-dependence. But now notice the other side of the coin: The DANGER OF DISOBEDIENCE. All nine of *the virtues called the fruit of the Spirit are also duties we are commanded to perform!*

**Love:** "Put on love" (Col. 3:14).

**Joy:** "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4).

**Peace:** "Never be anxious but always pray and give thanks, and God's peace will guard your heart" (Phil. 4:6-7). We are commanded to fulfill these conditions if we want the Spirit to produce peace in our hearts.

**Patience:** "Put on patience" (Col. 3:12).

**Kindness:** "Put on kindness" (Col. 3:12).

**Goodness:** "Command those who are rich to do good" (1 Tim. 6:17).

**Faithfulness:** "Be faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

**Meekness:** "Put on meekness" (Col. 3:12).

**Self-control:** "To your knowledge add self-control" (2 Pet. 1:6).

*From one viewpoint these nine virtues are the fruit of the Holy Spirit. That is, they are attitudes which God plants within our hearts and causes to grow there, spontaneously to some degree at least. They are His work. If you are a genuine Christian you have surely experienced this. After your conversion you found a new love and joy and peace springing up within, didn't you? God had imparted His nature to you, which resulted in transformed character (2 Pet. 1:4).*

But you did not become perfect. You probably discovered very soon that the new love within your heart needed nurturing, and that you still needed to put on meekness and to add more self-control. And this is scriptural. *For from a second viewpoint (and the Bible's writers see no contradiction between the two views) these nine virtues are actions which we are obliged to perform.*

We are commanded to speak the loving word, to perform the kind action, to persevere with faithfulness, and in meekness refrain from demanding our rights. If we are not doing these duties we are disobedient. We cannot say, "I admit I am not very loving, joyful, kind or persevering, but don't blame me. It's the Lord's business to make me that way, so I won't let my failures bother me."

Oh no! As someone said, "Without the Holy Spirit *we can't*. Without us *He won't*." That is, we cannot be holy without Him; but He won't force holiness on us if we refuse it, nor automatically impart it to us if we neglect it. Victorious living is our duty as well as God's gift. So we need to obey, and obedience requires self-discipline. We need to do what we should so the Holy Spirit can do what He wants. George Duncan of Scotland explains this point clearly as he describes the fruitful life:

If we are to know the Holy Spirit in His fullness, we shall know Him not just doctrinally or emotionally, but functionally. **A man who is filled with the Spirit is a man in whose life the ministries of the Spirit are being fulfilled.** We quench the Spirit when we fail to allow Him to do in us that for which He has been given.

For example, one of His ministries is to help us in prayer (Rom. 8:26-27). And He does help us pray--as we pray! But if we neglect prayer, we keep Him from fulfilling that ministry in us. He also has come to bear witness to Christ. And He does--as we witness! "The Spirit will testify about me; but you also must testify" (John 15:26).

He has come to help us understand Scripture too (John 16:13). And He does that--as we open our Bible and prayerfully use our eyes and minds and hearts! But if we neglect to study, we shut the door on His teaching ministry.

Above all, the Spirit has come to glorify our Lord Jesus (John 16:14). This is His greatest yearning. But if we live Christ-dishonoring lives, we stifle that ministry of the Spirit in our lives--we are not filled with Him. Then we need to repent and seek a fresh filling.

### WHAT A WASTE

We are like students who want to get a university education but can't afford even the registration fees, much less the tuition, room and board, and transportation expenses. Then a gracious donor steps in and offers us a full scholarship. All expenses paid, even transportation! Wonderful! But the scholarship won't help us even one little bit if we fail to attend any classes.

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Without God, we can't live as we ought; without us, God won't make

# DO WE STIFLE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

James Denney

*(Paul wrote, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:19-21, ASV). Newer versions translate the first of those exhortations as follows: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; Do not smother the Holy Spirit; Never damp the fire of the Spirit.")*

*A related idea is found in Rom. 12:11b Christians should be "fervent in spirit"—that is: "Keep the fires of the Spirit burning; be aglow with the Spirit." A noted Bible teacher at the turn of the century wrote the following about these passages. --Editor)*

When the Holy Spirit descended on the church at Pentecost "there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them"; and their lips were open to declare the mighty works of God. A man who has received this great gift is described as fervent, literally, *boiling* with the Spirit. The new birth in those early days was a new birth; it kindled in the soul thoughts and feelings to which it had hitherto been strange. It brought with it the consciousness of new powers; a new vision of God; a new love of holiness; a new insight into the Holy Scriptures, and into the meaning of man's life; often a new power of ardent, passionate speech. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul describes an early Christian congregation. There was not one silent among them. When they came together every one had a psalm, a revelation, a prophecy, an interpretation. The manifestation of the Spirit had been given to each one to profit withal; and on all hands the spiritual fire was ready to flame forth. Conversion to the Christian faith, the acceptance of the apostolic Gospel, was not a thing which made little difference to men. It convulsed their whole nature to its depth; they were never the same again; they were new creatures, with a new life in them, all fervor and flame.

A state so unlike nature, in the ordinary sense of the term, was sure to have its inconveniences. The Christian, even when he had received the gift of the Holy Spirit was still a man; and as likely as not a man who had to struggle against vanity, folly, ambition and selfishness of all kinds. His enthusiasm might even seem, in the first instance, to aggravate, instead of removing, his natural faults. It might drive him to speak--for in the early church anybody who pleased might speak--when it would have been better for him to be silent. It might lead him to break out in prayer or praise or exhortation, in a style which made the wise sigh. And for those reasons the wise, and such as thought themselves wise, would be apt to discourage the exercise of spiritual gifts altogether. "Contain yourself," they would say to the man whose



heart burned within him, and who was restless till the flame could leap out; "contain yourself; exercise a little self-control; it is unworthy of a rational being to be carried away in this fashion."

No doubt situations like this were common in the church at Thessalonica. They are produced inevitably by difference of age and of temperament. The old and the phlegmatic are a natural and providential counterweight to the young and sanguine. But the wisdom which comes of experience and of temperament has its disadvantages as compared with fervor of spirit. It is cold and unenthusiastic; it cannot propagate itself; it cannot set fire to anything and spread. And because it is under this incapacity of kindling the souls of men into enthusiasm it is forbidden to pour cold water on such enthusiasm when it breaks forth in words of fire. That is the meaning of "Quench not the Spirit." The commandment presupposes that the Spirit can be quenched. Cold looks, contemptuous words, silence, studied disregard go a long way to quench it. So does unsympathetic criticism.

Everyone knows that a fire smokes most when it is newly kindled: but the way to get rid of the smoke is not to pour cold water on the fire, but to let it burn itself clear. If you are wise enough you can may even help it to burn itself clear; by rearranging the materials, or securing a better draught; but the wisest thing most people can do when the fire has got hold is to let it alone; and that is also the wise course for most when they meet with a disciple whose zeal burns like fire. Very likely the smoke hurts their eyes; but the smoke will soon pass by; and it may well be tolerated in the meantime for the sake of the heat. For this apostolic precept takes for granted that fervor of spirit, a Christian enthusiasm for what is good, is the best thing in the world. It may be untaught and inexperienced; it may have all its mistakes to make; it may be wonderfully blind to the limitations which the stern necessities of life put upon the generous hopes of man; but it is of God. It is expansive; it is contagious; it is worth more as a spiritual force than all the wisdom in the world.

I have hinted at ways in which the Spirit is quenched; it is sad to reflect that from one point of view the history of the church is a long series of rebellions of the Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is," the Apostle tells us elsewhere, "there is liberty." But liberty in a society has its dangers. It is, to a certain extent, at war with order; and the guardians of order are not apt to be considerate of it. Hence it came to pass that at a very early period, and in the interests of good order, the freedom of the Spirit was summarily suppressed in the church.

"The gift of ruling," it has been said, "like Aaron's rod, seemed to swallow up the other gifts." The rulers of the church became a class entirely apart from its ordinary members, and all exercise of spiritual

gifts for the building up of the church was confined to them. Nay, the monstrous idea was originated, and taught as a dogma, that they alone were the custodians of the grace and truth of the gospel; only through them could men come into contact with the Holy Spirit. In plain English, the Spirit was quenched when Christians met for worship. One great extinguisher was placed over the flame that burned in the hearts of the brethren; it was not allowed to show itself; it must not disturb, by its eruption in praise or prayer or fiery exhortation, the decency and order of divine service . . . .

That was the condition to which Christian worship was reduced at a very early period; and it is unhappily the condition in which, for the most part, it subsists at this moment. Do you think we are gainers by it? I do not believe it. It has always come from time to time to be intolerable. The Montanists of the second century, the heretical sects of the middle ages the Independents and Quakers of the English Commonwealth, the Methodist lay preachers, the Salvation Army, the Plymouth Brethren and the evangelistic associations of our own day--all these are in various degrees the protest of the Spirit, and its right and necessary protest, against the authority which would quench it, and by quenching it impoverish the church.

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## **MORE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHURCH MEETINGS**

Alexander Maclaren

"I cannot but believe that the present practice of confining the public teaching of the church to an official class has done harm. Why should one man be for ever speaking, and hundreds of people who are able to teach, sitting dumb to listen or pretend to listen to him? I hate forcible revolution, and do not believe that any institutions, either political or ecclesiastical, which need violence to sweep them away, are ready to be removed; but I believe that if the level of spiritual life were raised among us, new forms would naturally be evolved, in which there should be a more adequate recognition of the great principle on which the democracy of Christianity is founded: namely, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh--and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in these days of My Spirit. and they shall prophesy."

## **Revival, Our Greatest Need:**

# **AMERICA'S FIRST GREAT AWAKENING**

David Johnson

The Great Awakening is an appropriate name for what took place in the 1700's. In any movement, after a generation or so, there is a settling down or slowing down. The movement loses its edge and energy, especially once it becomes accepted and is no longer persecuted. Such is true of the Puritan movement.

The Puritans in New England had come to the New World over a century before to escape from persecutions and to establish a truly Christian society. In their early years they accomplished their goal to a large degree. Yet, as this movement became an establishment, the purity and sincerity of its members began to wane. "The settlers had begun with the idea that the visible church should be identical with the invisible--that is, the gathered congregations should be bodies of true believers" (Lang and Noll in *Christian History Magazine*). In England persecution had made sincerity a must, for no one will withstand it unless they believe strongly in the cause. In the New World, they were free from persecution and after a time nominal Christianity sneaked in. Many became more interested in prospering materially rather than building up God's Kingdom. Many were "asleep" in the faith.

The Puritan clergy knew that the people of New England were losing their original spiritual drive and many were alarmed. Pastors and members prayed for a revival of spiritual energy and it came. One of those that the Lord used to help bring it about was Jonathan Edwards. A pious and devoted Christian, his preaching and teaching "wakened" a great many from their spiritual sleep.

Religion at that time had become largely formal and head-centered. There were outward forms but no reality, no heart. The emphasis in the Great Awakening was on emotional and individual response to God. Although Edwards had a great love for logic and reason, he came to the conclusion that true religion consists primarily of emotions. He admitted that many strong physical reactions in meetings (weeping, crying out) may simply be emotional responses to a manipulative preacher, yet he believed that many were indications of conviction of sin by God. He welcomed the new energy and "aliveness" that the movement brought.

As we look around at the church in America today, we can see the same deadness, lethargy and head-centered religion that was experienced in early New England. We see the forms of religion but little power and little heart and soul in it. Much of the church is "asleep."

We must pray as the Puritans did for revival and awakening. We must also not be afraid of the emotional aspect of Christianity nor, on the other hand, become too caught up in it. Contrived emotionalism is no more true religion than is dead traditionalism or mere intellectual reasoning. Jonathan Edwards' thoughts and approach are well worth noting and may be a help in keeping a balance.

Edwards approached the subject with a level head and an open heart. He maintained that scripture bore out the aspect of emotions such as fear, hope, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion and zeal. He believed that true religion was more than believing right doctrines and maintaining proper morals. It involved a heart moved by an experience of God in all His glory, majesty and holiness. Yet he also maintained that emotionalism in itself was not the litmus test of true conversion. High emotions were neither clear evidence of genuine religion nor the lack of it. If they were not accompanied by a life marked by the fruit of the Spirit and an appreciation of God's gracious work, he dismissed them as a mere spectacle.

Edwards also taught against looking merely at human responses to God instead of looking at God Himself as the primary focus of theological analysis. God is to be the central focus in human religious experience. He insisted that "God's purpose in creating the universe was to express His love, to communicate Himself to His creatures and to display to them His glory and His beauty. Thus the essence of true religious experience is to be overwhelmed by a glimpse of the beauty of God, to be drawn to the glory of His perfection, to sense His irresistible love" (George Marsden in *Christian History Magazine*). His view was that we can be so enthralled by such beauty and glory that we lose consciousness of our self and self-interests and be drawn out of ourselves by the power of the beauty of a truly loveable Person. God's love becomes the focus of our lives rather than our love of self. True Christian experience is not merely knowing Christian doctrine but knowing Him and His love. "The Christian," Edwards said, "does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart."

AMEN! We can learn a great deal from this man of God. With the emphasis today on emotionalism, we need his sense of balance to avoid centering on pure emotionalism as evidence of faith or conversion. With the psychological emphasis on self and self fulfillment of today, we need his emphasis of God Himself as the center of our theology. May God grant us an "awakening" and revival. May He also grant us the wisdom He imparted to Jonathan Edwards to deal with it responsibly and accurately.

[David Johnson ministers in Jennings, LA. He wrote this article while studying at the School of Biblical Studies in Louisville.]

# PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING

Dennis L. Allen

As we approach the year 2000 many believers are convinced that we are living in the last days. We tend to center our attention on the sequence of events of the last days, yet even at this late date, the most careful Bible students are not agreed on the order in which all the events spoken of in connection with Christ's return are to occur. It is good to seek diligently to understand what we can as the Spirit reveals it to us, but yet hold an open mind and love and respect those who see a different sequence. Certainly we are well advised to consider carefully all the Lord Jesus has told us about these days. However, His most urgent word to us concerning the end time and His second appearing is to watch and be ready.

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44

This warning, given not to the unsaved but to His own disciples, indicates to me that in spite of all He said about signs, that His coming will be unexpected. However, we can still be ready.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him." Lk. 12:35,36

The Lord is setting forth a lifestyle of readiness. If loins are girded and lamps kept burning, no matter what time He comes we will be ready.

In this connection we need to consider the parable of the ten virgins. I have personally long puzzled over this parable. All of them were waiting for the bridegroom. They all heard the midnight cry and all trimmed their lamps. However, the foolish virgins had no reserves of oil. What does it mean? It would seem that all had their lamps burning, but the foolish virgins' lamps went out at just the critical moment. However, Edersheim, an authority on Jewish customs says that the lamps were not lit until the bridegroom appeared. Therefore the foolish virgins' lamps went out because they had no oil at all, only a wick without fuel. The Lord said to them, "I know you not." Is the warning against going through the forms without actual possession of the Spirit? Many Christians in China, even those who had been leaders, collapsed under pressure from the communists, while others stood firm. The matter of oil is vitally important.

## OVERCHARGED HEARTS

"But take heed to yourselves lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare." Lk 21:34

Literally speaking, snares do not come on you; you come upon them suddenly, unexpectedly. But the thing the Lord seems to be emphasizing is the unexpected suddenness. The rest of the world is going to be caught. We must not be like them.

What then do we need to avoid? An overcharged heart. The Revised Standard says "weighed down". How does this happen?

1. "Surfeiting", i.e., dissipation, debauchery, to throw away, squander. The Lord has redeemed our life. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price. Yet by careless use of time and resources, we can dissipate the grace of God in our lives. Good food, good surroundings, pleasant social events--the good life which is everywhere pursued, by pursuing it we are lulled to sleep and no longer watch.

2. "Drunkenness." Not many believers get drunk with alcohol, though even that is becoming more prevalent. Are there other more respectable ways of getting drunk? Basically drunkenness is a form of escapism. If we use other things to enable us to escape from facing up to the realities of our life--our own nature, our besetting sins, areas that have never been surrendered to the Lord for Him to deal with--could that be a form of drunkenness? See Isa. 29:9; 51:21.

3. "The cares of this life." Family cares. Business cares. Financial cares. It is easy to become so absorbed in these problems that that day will find us unprepared. The Lord will have to speak to us individually about this. Do I need to simplify my life? Do I need to take a fresh look at the things that are causing me to be in a rat race? What is really important? How much of this is really fruitful? "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." In the bad times we may persuade ourselves little can be done, but He says, "Redeem the time." Discern, buy up the opportunity--not because the days are good, but because they are evil.

## PREVAIL TO ESCAPE

"But watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Lk.21:36

It is evidently very much worth while to escape the things He is referring to. The men of the world will be fainting for fear in their anticipation of the things that even they can see lying ahead. It is evidently the "hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world" which the Lord Jesus has promised to keep the faithful from. It is significant that He does not promise to keep us "through" it but "out of" (Greek) it. How will He do it? Many believe it is through the rapture of those who are watching and ready for their Lord.

There is a recurrent thread in the stories of those Jews who were living in Germany and Poland and were able to escape from the holocaust. There came a day when they quietly left carrying small handbags and leaving everything else behind. They did not go back for anything. Jesus speaks of a similar time. (Matt. 24:15-18.)

This will be life-saving instruction for those who give heed at that day. But it seems to me we all would do well to have similar attitude toward "things." We are not to be earth dwellers, "men whose portion is in this life."

Paul spoke of the coming time when "those that buy (would look on those possessions) as though they possessed not, and those that use the world, as not using it to the full." (Cor. 7:30b-31a.) In other words we are exhorted to hold our possessions lightly. In this connection Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." She was being led out of Sodom by the angels. She was already out of the city, out of danger, then she turned and looked back, contrary to the warning of the angel, and became a pillar of salt. Evidently her heart was still back in Sodom with the things she had left behind. The materialistic spirit of the age can so easily find a foothold in our hearts. If the house is burning, no matter what things are going up in flames, get out. If the ship is sinking, no matter how luxurious it is, nothing is more important than getting off and into the life boat. Before Babylon is destroyed, we hear the warning, "Come forth, my people, out of her, and have no fellowship with her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4.) For those who give heed, this will involve a leaving, a separation from one way of life to another very different. It can only be done by faith and obedience, but the separation is the only way to avoid the judgment that falls on her. We might not expect to find Christ's people in Babylon, yet there they are, and He in great mercy calls them out.

Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and money." In this world we have to use money, but we don't have to serve it. Jesus said again, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the worldly wealth; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Lk. 16:9.) C.T. Studd, a young inheritor of wealth, gave it all away and went to the heart of Africa where he poured out his life. Some



make "friends" in a different way--by carefully investing and then exercising faithful stewardship by using what God has put in their hands to advance His kingdom.

## GRIEVOUS TIMES

The Scriptures tell us plainly that there will come a day when there will be a famine of the Word of God. (Amos 7:11-12) If we want to be of help to our brothers and sisters at that time we need to plow deep now and store up the word of God in our hearts. Memorizing is good, but we must also allow the Lord to work in us His truth, so that we can provide food for His people.

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." Heb. 10:24,25

Why is it even more important to assemble and exhort as we see the day drawing nigh? Because we are up against far more than we realize. The Antichrist will "wear out the saints of the most high." (Dan. 7:25) Is Satan not already in this business? We find pressures on all sides--in the schools, the work place, at home, the media. In these days especially church life must be more than attending meetings. At work, at home, in all of our contacts we need to think about one another to encourage each other to love and good works.

## FAITH AND LOVE

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Lk. 18b

"And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold." Matt. 24:12

As the end nears, faith and love will be in short supply. These are warnings that we do well to take to heart. Yet this word must be balanced by other words the Lord has spoken. If we think this means at the end everything will come apart and there is not much we can do about it, we need to consider these words: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.) "But the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits." (Dan. 11:32b.) True, the love of the many shall wax cold, but it doesn't have to be true of us. He has promised to be with us right through to the end. He will not fail nor forsake us, and He is able to guard us from stumbling.

# CHRIST'S SERVICE AND IT'S INNOCENT COMPETITORS

Elton Trueblood

A Christian should give his Christian obligation a certain priority over all others. Because the member of God's new order are people engaged in common life, and never separated from it, they naturally have many responsibilities as citizens. Some should belong to luncheon clubs, some to parent-teacher organizations, some to labor unions, some to veterans organizations. Each of these is a field for the entrance of the gospel, if we represent it with humility and sincerity. But, while this is true, it is also true that the very multiplicity of organizations may come to dominate a Christian's life so completely that the Christian vitality is dissipated.

Recently an accurate survey revealed the discouraging news that, in a town of seventeen hundred persons, there are only five churches, but fifty-six clubs. Naturally the level of participation in the life and work of the churches is low, one reason for such poor participation being that so much of the energy of alleged Christians is drawn off in secular pursuits. After members have met the demands of the American Legion, the parent-teacher association, the labor union, the literary club, and the sorority, there is little time or imagination left for the promotion of the Christian cause. Unfortunately the church is looked upon by many as just another one of these fifty-six clubs, but with a certain difference in that its demands may be less strict. After all, a Rotarian is required to attend the weekly luncheons of his club on pain of dismissal, but the ordinary church is not so unkind.

What we must say about these many organizations is that most of them are basically good and serve good ends. Certainly they are not evil, and Christians ought to work in many of them in order to apply the Christian witness to the work of the ordinary world. But if we begin to look upon the Church as a society of Christian obligation, we soon realize that we must establish some kind of priority in the employment of time, money and energy.

We shall not get very far until we establish, within each church, a hard core of men and women who have sufficient toughness to put the promotion of the Christian cause first in their lives. What if, let us say, we have a group who form the "New Seventy" and who go out once a week, two by two, somewhat as the original Seventy did, to try to reach new people as Christ's emissaries? And then what if, on the night regularly set aside for this task, there should come a benefit performance put on by some local society? Perhaps it is not possible to

give an absolutely inflexible answer to this question, but the general answer is that, except for the most extreme cases, the problem should not be a problem at all. In any event, we shall not bring back the Christian vitality we need until we have groups who follow a discipline of time so clear that they give unhesitating priority for the Christian obligation.

--The Yoke of Christ

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## WHERE THE HIGH AND MIGHTY MEET THE DOWN AND DIRTY

Philip Yancey

In my church in Chicago I taught a class that examined the life of Jesus, scene by scene, drawing from all four Gospels. Several months into the study we noticed a striking pattern in Jesus' personal interactions; the more unsavory the character, the more comfortable he or she seemed to feel around Jesus.

These are the people who found Jesus appealing: A Samaritan social outcast whose resume included five failed marriages, an officer of the decadent tyrant Herod, a quisling tax collector employed by conquering Romans to exploit his own people and Mary Magdalene, recent host to seven demons. Their ardent responses to Jesus stand in great contrast to the reception he got from more respectable types: A rich young ruler walked away shaking his head, pious Pharisees thought him uncouth and worldly--even the open-minded Nicodemus sought out a meeting under the cover of darkness.

I asked my class if that same principle held for those of us in the modern evangelical church. Do sinners *like* being around us? Do they seek us out? I recounted a story told me by a friend who works with the down-and-out in Chicago. A prostitute came to him in desperation--homeless, her health failing, unable to buy food for her two-year-old son. As the woman described her plight, my friend asked if she had ever thought of going to a church for help. A look of shock and unfeigned incredulity crossed her face. "Church!" she cried. "Why would I ever go there? They'd make me feel even worse than I already do!"

What was Jesus' secret? How did he, the only perfect person in history, manage to attract the notoriously imperfect? And why don't we follow in his steps? These are the questions my class discussed that Sunday morning.

## The People Jesus Could Not Stand

Someone suggested that legalism in the evangelical church created a barrier to non-Christians, and suddenly the class discussion took off in a new direction. Survivors of fundamentalist Christian colleges and churches began swapping war stories. I told of my own bemusement in the early seventies when the redoubtable Moody Bible Institute, located just four blocks down the street, strictly enforced a rule against beards, mustaches and hair below the ears--though each day students filed past a large oil painting of Dwight L. Moody, hirsute breaker of all three rules.

Everyone laughed--every one except Greg, that is, who fidgeted in his seat and glared at me. I could see his face turn red, then hot-white with anger. Finally, Greg raised his hand, and rage and indignation spilled out. He was almost stammering. "I feel like walking out of this place," he said, and the room abruptly quieted down. "You criticize others for being legalistic Pharisees. I'll tell you who the real Pharisees are. They're you [he pointed at me] and the rest of you people in this class. You think you're so high and mighty and mature. You find a group to look down on, to feel more spiritual than, and you talk about them behind their backs. You're acting like the kind of people Jesus couldn't stand."

All eyes in the class turned to me for an answer, but I had none to offer. Greg was right. He had caught us red-handed in reverse legalism, a toxic mixture of arrogance and spiritual pride. I glanced at the clock, hoping for a reprieve, but it showed 15 minutes of class time remaining. I waited for a flash of inspiration, but none came. I felt ashamed and trapped.

Then Bob raised his hand. I had never met Bob, but until the day I die I will always be grateful to him. He began softly, gently, "I'm glad you didn't walk out, Greg," he said. "We need you here. I'm glad you're here. And I'd like to tell you why I come to this church.

"Frankly, I identify with the Chicago prostitute Philip mentioned. I was addicted to drugs, and in a million years it wouldn't have occurred to me to approach a church for help. Every Tuesday, though, this church lets an A.A. chapter meet in the basement room we're sitting in right now. I started attending that group, and after a while I decided that a church that welcomes an A.A. group can't be all bad, so I made a point to visit a service.

"I've got to tell you, the people upstairs were threatening to me at first. They seemed like they had it all together while I was barely

hanging on. People here dress pretty casual, but the best clothes I owned were blue jeans and T-shirts. I swallowed my pride, though, and started coming on Sunday mornings as well as Tuesday nights. People didn't shun me. They reached out to me. It's here that I met Jesus."

In a speech of simple eloquence that lasted less than five minutes, Bob discharged all the tension from that room. Greg relaxed, I mumbled an apology for my own attitude, and the class ended on a note of unity.

### **Painful Admissions**

It occurred to me later that Bob had also hinted at a solution to the church's tendency toward legalism and pride. A.A.'s 12 steps, which have had such a revolutionary impact on so many lives, boil down to two basic principles: radical honesty and radical dependence. These are the very same principles expressed in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus' capsule summary of prayerfully living one day at a time.

A.A. meetings, which do not tolerate a holier-than-thou front, insist on radical honesty from all. Members preface every comment with "I'm an alcoholic" or "I'm a drug addict." Half of the 12 steps relate to human inability to change, a painful admission for any of us; the other half point to a cure; radical dependence on a Higher Power, and on fellow strugglers.

If we in the church learned those two lessons--a fierce insistence on honesty from ourselves and those around us, a radical dependence on God and on each other in our striving toward health and holiness--perhaps we could create a place of refuge: the kind of place where prostitutes, tax collectors, and even guilt-tinged Pharisees would gladly gather, on equal ground.

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# VOICES from the FIELDS

**Michiya & Tomoko Nakahara    Shizuoka City, Japan    Jan. 1994**

I would like to express our deep appreciation for your support, both financially and spiritually. We often give thanks to God for His providential care that we are receiving through you so that we can apply ourselves to our task without having anxiety about our living.

Many changes have occurred in both our home and church since my father, Shichiro, was called Home. The year 1993 was unusual in that my mother, Teruko, who worked with my father for 32 years with this mission, moved to the United States. All during the time of her entire moving process we all felt the hand of God leading and guiding many times. We have been told from time to time that my mother's second life in America has been very enjoyable by having good fellowship with friends in the Lord by the grace of God. It is indeed a comfort to know that she is happy and at peace. On the other hand, the work that took over three decades to build up here in Japan has been entrusted to us by God's power. Having prepared for that, we felt very nervous this heavy responsibility at first. But, as mentioned previously, it has been a great encouragement to remember the fact that there are many Christian friends who are standing behind us with much prayer and help.

Another encouraging thing that happened in 1993 was the addition of a wonderful Christian family to our fellowship. Each of them are very talented and are willing to put their gifts into practice for the Lord with us. Brother Watanabe, a pharmacist who owns his own drug store, a Christian therapist, and a father of six children (all Christians), is a very trained and mature Christian. I am very anxious to see how God will work among our group through Bro. Watanabe, since he has great love for the lost and gives careful consideration to our members.

[To receive complete newsletters & financial reports, write Piedmont Church, 7110 Bruton Rd., Dallas, TX 75217.]

**Joy Garrett**

**Ruwa, Zimbabwe**

**January 8, 1994**

January 1st was our annual harvest day. There were over 500 here at Rockwood Park. Bob preached on giving and the audience responded. The collection of almost \$11,000 (Zimbabwe) is going to help finish the church building at Arcturus Gold Mine. There has been a church meeting in school classrooms there for many years. Three of

the brethren at the Hatfield congregation have in turns visited and assisted in that mission work.

In the afternoon of January 1st the finals for the annual youth quiz were held. Four different church youth of four each competed for the trophy. Robert made out the questions on Revelation which is the book the youth selected this year. These questions were factual and not easy. The winner, Glen Nora Church of Christ, had almost a perfect score.

For years we've had a problem with wild pigs. There's a family of them eating our gardens. They live in an overgrown corner of our property near a small stream. It isn't an easy place to get to. When the dry season comes, the pigs often make a nightly visit near the house. Dogs and pigs chase each other making a great noise. So while areas of the country are having problems with a plague of mice eating the maize, we're having pig problems.

**George Galanis**

**Piraira, Greece**

**January 20, 1994**

Thousands of Greeks are coming back to this country from the Russian territories and the Greek government settles them in the area of Thrace. A medical doctor from our Church works in the hospital of that area and keeps himself very busy helping them in many ways. We send them loads of clothing, food, shoes, and medicine. But most important his is doing evangelistic work among them. They are very receptive to the word of God. As the doctor came from Russia himself, he knows the language and communicates perfectly with them. In eight months, he has distributed to them three thousand Bibles and New Testaments. The Lord is doing a great work with our brother. Please pray for him as there is a great and serious reaction from the State religion against him.

Please remember my dear wife in your prayers, as her health condition is getting worse and worse. The doctors intimate that in a few years she might be unable to walk. Her back aches all over due to the Parkinson's disease.

Our Church building construction has stopped since last August due to lack of funds.

Our good Lord is blessing our efforts to grow in Him. We feel our imperative need for a genuine revival and pray earnestly towards this goal. We firmly believe that sincere and agonizing prayer is the answer. We have three prayer meetings a week, including two hours of special prayer on Sunday evenings.



# QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

## *Tax evasion is wrong, but is it wrong to avoid taxes legally?*

The Christian is required to be subject to his government and its officers (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-16), except in the obvious cases of conscience and conflicts with one's higher obedience to God (Acts 5:29). In His admonition to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Luke 20:25), Jesus seems to have quite clearly put His approval on the payment of taxes even when we might not approve of every use for which the funds will be spent. As the question states, tax evasion, by which we mean all *illegal* efforts to avoid payment of taxes, is wrong. The Christian should never be guilty of tax evasion, not only because his return might be audited ("because of the wrath," Romans 3:5), but even if he could know his evasion would never be discovered by man ("for conscience' sake," Romans 13:5). I am sometimes surprised at the calloused lack of conscience some professing Christians seem to have with respect to reporting earnings and in engaging in other dishonest and plainly illegal practices in tax matters.

Our question deals, however, with the use of certain legal ways to avoid or reduce taxes. So long as these ways are not of themselves morally and spiritually objectionable, I can see no reason why the Christian should not avail himself of them. This is simply a matter of practical wisdom. It is true, of course, in a wide variety of areas that all that is legal is not necessarily morally or spiritually acceptable. I doubt that we will be able to give a blanket endorsement of every legal practice even in tax matters. Each case will have to stand in its own merits. I would have considerable reservations about the righteousness of some of the intricate manipulations which require a sharp lawyer and leave a man of wealth virtually free of tax. Or again, pressure on an assessor to reduce a property assessment might not cross legal bounds but could be selfish and unchristian. However, to claim one's deductions, to adjust one's situation to get the allowed tax breaks, or to make the laws work in one's favor do not normally or necessarily mean wrong-doing.

Making a year-end contribution to the church that will move one to a lower income tax bracket and make the gift cost virtually nothing may not be the highest or most sacrificial form of giving, but it is not dishonest. It can often be good stewardship. I knew a good Christian woman who would not report her church contributions, believing she should not give that which cost her less than its full value (something of the principle of 2 Sam. 24:24, I suppose). I respected her con-

science in the matter but wish she could have understood that she could have given the full sum, then by reporting it would have had a tax-saving which could have been given extra in Christian work in which she was interested. Again, this would have been good stewardship.

Ideally, our government wants us to pay only the taxes that are legally due and will help us to that end. In practice, some of the representatives of government may not be as concerned with our welfare and may act more as adversaries. Unfortunately there may also be honest disagreement on interpretation and application of the laws, so that legality in some areas may be indefinite. As a rule, however, the Christian is to go the extra mile, give good measure and more than is required, and avoid the very appearance of evil.

*I don't hear much said anymore about being non-sectarian. Some of the older preachers stressed this point a great deal. Is it not just as important today?*

Just as important, yes, but maybe more difficult to recognize.

One problem is disillusionment with the success of the advocates of the non-sectarian position. In too many cases the "non-sectarian" has ended up with a party all his own. It may lack formal organization and a written creed, but it is really not much different from what he opposes. In many cases the preaching has been far better than the heart attitude and the practice. The ideal is hard to achieve. The Bible still condemns the sectarian party spirit, but we do not get rid of it by declaring that our party is not a party.

Personally I believe the ideal should be pursued and I find much in the past efforts of the Restoration Movement that must be commended. One great failing has been the attempt to get rid of sectarianism--a mark or symptom of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4)--without seeking the spirituality that would give the effort meaning and success. There are many things which are right about the non-sectarian plea, and, in the power of God, we need to press on always in the ideal.

We also need to recognize that the religious situation we face today is not quite identical with that faced by the church of the last century. Many people in our age are probably not as sectarian in spirit as may have been the case in an earlier day. Those who belong to an openly avowed denomination do not seem to offer the same rabid defense for their party as was once the case. The defenses offered for the various denominations are generally not very loud today. Partly this is due, not to greater spirituality, but to a great lack of conviction. Unbe-

lief is eating the heart out of commitment to anything but self. And, of course, part of the declining stress on sectarianism is due to the fact that ecumenism has become a strong current of the day. The kind of ecumenism currently promoted, however, possesses a weakness all its own in that it pursues unity (or, more accurately, union) at the expense of truth. Hence, it seems to solve sectarianism, but only to create a more serious problem.

Another change in our day is the failure of old party lines caused by new and different issues. We are seeing a probable realignment of professing Christians along new lines created by liberalism, social activism, the charismatic movement, etc. These issues have cut across the old party lines and tend to make them less binding. We do not say the party spirit is absent by any means, but things are in a state of change. They may crystallize as firmly as the old denominational lines, but some are now undecided about what to fight for or whose party to support.

Those who would be "just Christians" will find the devil trying to defeat their efforts in several possible ways, but it is a mistake to surrender the ideal just because it is difficult to achieve.

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## NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

### Important Dates For 1994

Feb. 25 - 27 (night meetings only): 7:00 EST, **Tell City/ Lilly Dale Conference**. This year at Tell City. See details elsewhere in this issue.

March 17 - 18, Thurs. & Fri. nights, 7:00. **School of Biblical Studies Conference**, held at the Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville. Main speaker: Earl Mullins, Sr. Also young people who have been involved in mission projects overseas will share lessons they learned.

April 16, Sat.: annual **Ladies Inspiration Day**. This year at Portland Church of Christ, Louisville, Ky. Theme: Fix your eyes on Jesus.

April 19, Tue.: annual **Restoration Lectureship** sponsored by the Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges, including School of Biblical Studies. Speaker: Leroy Garrett. Theme Moving toward Restoration.

Aug. 1 - 4: **Louisville Christian Fellowship Week**.

Nov. 14 - 17: **Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship Week**, Glenmora.

### An Important Correction

Last month we omitted a line in the article, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" This resulted in a wrong impression. It should have been as fol-

lows (the words in capitals were left out):

Most Pentecostal teachers believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a supernatural endowment for which each Christian should seek, an experience **SUBSEQUENT TO CONVERSION, AND QUITE DISTINCT FROM THE EXPERIENCE** of being born of the Spirit when one accepts Christ as Savior

### **Hamburg Church of Christ**

We are once again preparing "sunshine" baskets for our shut-ins at Maple Manor. Please bring in items (*Dove soap, Vaseline Intensive Care, hand/ body lotion, Kleenex, shower caps, sugarfree gum/mints, baby powder, etc.*).

### **Cramer & Hanover Church, Lexington**

Friday Bible Class...will resume this coming Friday with our continued study in 1 Corinthians. This class is geared toward those who don't like to get out at night and have the time during the day for extended fellowship with other members. The class begins at 11:00 a.m. and meets in the fellowship room.

Wednesday Bible Classes...will also resume this week. The major thrust for the past several years has been our bus outreach and the Lord has blessed us abundantly with many childrer. They are divided up into several classes and a light refreshment is provided before they go home. An adult Bible class is also provided and meets in the auditorium. Bro. Victor Broaddus continues to bring the lesson each week.

### **Linton Church Of Christ**

Watch Service: We had 30 present for our annual watch service on Friday evening. Everyone appreciated the movie, 'America You're

Too Young To Die" as we were challenged by its message. There were 15 adults who lasted till the new year and were in a season of prayer when the new year began. The youth were together at the parsonage at the stroke of midnight. How good it is to be with God's people at such a time as this.

### **Locust Street Church Of Christ**

We were privileged to have Bro. Gerald Carmichael speaking at both Sunday services. Bro. Gerald is a "hometown boy," and is well known to nearly everyone here. He was spending the holidays with relatives.

### **Tell City Church Of Christ**

Jon Mayeux Speaking: We will be hosting this month's joint missionary service with Lilly Dale on January 30th at 7:00 PM. Jon will be presenting information on his recent trip to Ukraine.

### **Gallatin Church Of Christ**

Sunday Scene (Jan. 18) - We managed to hold both Sunday meetings before the winter storm arrived. Sunday we recognized Tom & Minnie Jones for ten years perfect Sunday school attendance and Woody Summers for 24 years! Last week we welcomed into our church family Kevin and Susan Carne and their two young children. Welcome home Susie!

This coming Sunday morning we begin a series of sermons on elders. The series will continue on Sunday evenings in February and will be coupled with at least one lesson on deacons.

January 23 In our evening service we shared in a service dedicating John McNevev to the ministry. A time of fellowship followed.

## **Southeast Church Of Christ**

We rejoice at how God continues to bless the work at Southeast. Brother Paul Estes just completed a study with us about spiritual gifts. He challenged us to find our gift and use it in ministry. Our elders and deacons are planning ways to encourage others to use their gift.

We give God the glory for those who make commitments to our Lord and His church at Southeast during 1993. During the year we had 25 additions, including 11 baptisms.

## **Antioch Church**

In March Bro. Lyle Baker, wife Sherri, their son, and three daughters will move to the Antioch Church near Frankfort, Ky. Lyle will do "the work of an evangelist," shepherd, "feed the church of God which (Christ) hath purchased with His blood," and oversee the Antioch Christian Camp with help from area churches in Central Kentucky.

## **Sanctity Of Life Sunday**

On Jan 22, 1973 Roe vs Wade legalized abortion in America. Since then 30 million babies have been aborted. Each year Americans opposed to abortion gather in our nation's capital to march in protest of this unjust law. The Sunday preceding the anniversary of the passing of the law is set aside to observe as *Sanctity of Human Life Sunday*.

The Vietnam Memorial, erected to honor the 50,000 men who died in that war is 500 Ft long. **If a similar wall was erected with the names of the 30 million children aborted written on it, it would stretch 60 miles**

## **Maple Manor - Adult Division**

Alzheimer's Perhaps your family has been touched by this "Scourge of Millions of Families" as

one article was headlined. This article went on to say that Alzheimer's is the single most common reason why seniors are placed in nursing homes today. It also stated that by the year 2030 one in four Americans will be 65 years old. These facts lead on to the subject of expansion!

Our waiting list for a place at Maple Manor always has several dozen names on it. Our thoughts are to add another Nursing Wing of eight rooms with 16 beds and to build an Alzheimer's Unit of at least 16 beds.

This is quite a large undertaking, but there is no doubt in my mind that the need is present and will be from now on until the Lord comes. I firmly believe that the Lord will honor the work as He has for the last 20 years. Please be in much prayer for the work and for the needed expansion! - Ray Naugle, Administrator

## **Maple Manor Christian Children's Home**

The voice on the phone gave indication of some one who was at her "ropes end". The relationship between Mom and the child was strained to the breaking point. "Could we help her?" "What can I do?" These are questions that are often asked of us. These are problems that are faced by all parents who have reared children. Most everyone could identify with the problems and stresses, but because of varying levels of parenting skills, some are not able to deal with it. That's one of the purposes for our being in this ministry. A "time-out" period to allow parent and child to work through this period. A period of separation with counseling, prayers, social, and spiritual guidance that will enable the individuals to be together again as a functional

family. These are not "bad people" nor has anything bad happened to them. Just a bad period of time in which things have happened to bruise some feelings and disrupt family functions. We want to help, especially to any of God's families

who may be hurting because of dysfunctional behaviors. Anyone may be referred to us with our promise of confidentiality.

## **Jennings Church Of Christ**

A big "thank you" to all who helped bring **Moto and Yoriko Nomura** to America recently. They were blessed and I believe that all of us were likewise blessed and challenged as well.

The Nomuras are safely back in Japan and again deeply involved in the work there. We have recently heard from them. A brief excerpt includes, "It was a heart-moving experience to meet the precious old golden friends while making new silver friends wherever we visited . . . Our hearts have been greatly uplifted and you have no idea how Yoriko has been uplifted as well and even spoiled as she now tells me what to do!

"Last Sunday I told three families in our house church in Megumi's apartment about our trip to America and how our small work has been remembered by so many congregations and friends. I noticed tears in their eyes.

"Good Lord has uplifted our hearts so we are ready to serve as we now know our folks are praying for us earnestly. We are no longer loneliness-stricken people as we used to be.

"We went shopping today. One gallon of milk for \$10, gasoline for \$5, a newborn-baby's-head-sized cabbage, lettuce, and broccoli for \$3 each, rice and meat about ten times more than what we saw while we were in America.

"Church folks both in Tokyo and in the mountains were happy to see us again, and some shed tears as we told them how much they have been prayed for by the Christians in America. I think their feeble faith caught a light anew." [end of quote]

I would like to share a challenge with those who have read this far. Can we, as God's children here in a country that has been blessed so abundantly, keep from having a desire to help support this dear couple? They are very worthy of our prayers and our financial support.

While talking to Moto here, I offered our meager efforts to share the news of his work with those who are interested. As a church here we have purposed to support them on a monthly basis and to encourage other churches or individuals to join us. Financial assistance should be sent through Church of Christ Worldwide, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, Ky. 40555. Bro. Victor Broadus is very capably set up to handle and forward the funds to Moto.

Sincerely, **Douglas Broyles**, Elder

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**LADIES INSPIRATION DAY**  
**FIXING YOUR EYES ON**  
**JESUS**

Saturday, April 16th  
8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Portland Church of Christ  
2500 Portland Avenue  
Louisville, Kentucky

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**RESTORATION LECTURESHIP**

*"Moving toward Restoration"*

**DR. LEROY GARRETT**

Editor of **Restoration Review**

Author of **The Stone-Campbell Movement**

Tuesday, April 19th

9:30 a.m.	Lessons from the Past
11:30 a.m.	Conditions of the Present
2:00 p.m.	Perspectives for the Future

Louisville Bible College  
6915 Beulah Church Road  
Snyder Freeway (I-265) at Exit 15: Beulah Church Rd

Co-sponsored by College of Scriptures,  
Louisville Bible College, & School of Biblical Studies