

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLVI, June, 1952)

Procrastination

"Dream not too much of what you'll do tomorrow,
How well you'll work perhaps another year;
Tomorrow's chance you do not need to borrow—
Today is here!

"Boast not too much of mountains you will master,
The while you linger in the vale below;
To dream is well, but plodding brings us faster
To where we go.

"Plan not some day to break some habit's fetter
When this old year is dead and passed away;
If you have need of living wiser, better,
Begin today."

—Selected

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE COST OF COMFORTING

The principle of the grain's dying that it may bear fruit (John 12:24) has many an unsuspected application. It somehow cannot be that a life should be of real, abiding blessing and benefit to other lives, except at a commensurate expense to itself. All power to bless others stands for self-mortification, a dying to self, to the things that self holds dear. There is no use of ease-loving men's objecting to this doctrine: it is simply so, and to rebel against it is of as little avail as rebelling against a law of nature. Those who gave most to the world are those who have given up most; those who healed and helped most are those who suffered and endured most. And it cannot be otherwise. Of nothing comes nothing. It is that way in small matters as in great. You may be fortunate enough to number among your friends one who is a real "son of consolation"; one who has an unaccountable power of comforting and encouraging, and whose very presence seems to carry an atmosphere of hope and healing; and you may have marveled at the gift, and perhaps even yourself longed to have it, that upon you also might come "the blessings of them that were ready to perish." But such a gift comes not by accident. It has its price. Sympathy and the power to comfort comes of suffering bravely borne, and of self-denial and the mind to forget self to enter into the life of another. That comforter of yours has very little or nothing at all to tell you of his own troubles and burdens. He has them, and he bears them alone in quiet, and pushes aside the con-

sideration of himself and his own affliction or sorrow that he may have
"A heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize."

CHRIST THE COMFORTER OF HIS PEOPLE

"The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning mine ear, as they that are taught" (Isa. 50:4). So prophesied Isaiah concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. It was on one special and memorable occasion that He spoke such words of comfort to His own. On that dark night of the betrayal, Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, was yet taken up with the needs of that poor little flock that hung upon him with hungry eyes, whom soon he must leave to an hour of extreme desolation. So he sunk his own greater burden into his anxious concern for "his little ones," and "having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end." In my calls on the sick or distressed I am oftenest requested by them to read the fourteenth chapter of John. And why? Certainly it is for the unspeakable sympathy and comfort that lies half concealed in those wonderful words. They fall like the cadence of sweet, soothing music on the ear: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And: "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you." And: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." But who has remembered that these words of peace and comfort were wrung out of a soul weighed down even then to the breaking point with its own terrible burden of anguish? And it was not till afterward, in its own time, that the grief of Jesus found expression. They passed out and crossed the brook where once, long years before, his father David had crossed weeping; and they came to Gethsemane. Then the mighty surging waters within burst through the dam, and Jesus broke down, and his human yearnings for help and sympathy became manifest when he said to the three: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Abide ye here, while I go yonder and pray." And that was the price of his sweet comfort, that he must ignore his own bitter woe the while his disciples needed him; and this the price of the peace that he gave us, that the storms should break upon his head. For "the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Let us then follow him unto his self-denial and self-sacrifice that we may become fountains of blessing to others, and find that greater joy which was set before him and to which he attained. "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor." (John 12:25, 26.)

ANOTHER COMFORTER

On the same night our Lord predicted the coming of another Comforter, so that when He left them they should not be left as "orphans." "If ye love me," He said, "ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him for he abideth with you and shall be in you." So we read that in those troublous days of the early church, "the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in comfort of the Holy Spirit were multiplied (Acts 9:31). Now "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, . . ." And where these are no tribulation is too heavy to bear. Count on these promises, and the peace of God shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

* * *

IN WHOSE SPIRIT THERE IS NO GUILE

"Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," wrote David in joyous release from sin by the wonderful mercy of God. These words of the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David incidentally disclose a deep abyss of the heart of man. The fleshly nature lists decidedly toward deceit; so naturally, too, that men are often unaware of our own insincerity, and nothing but the searchlight of God's word can reveal it to us. Almost or wholly unconsciously we can sneak and cheat, and lie to ourselves and to conscience and to our God, and try to take advantage of him and beat him in our transactions and craftily escape him by guile, and play cunning tricks upon his goodness and grace. You do not? No, probably not in your front room, in your heart's reception parlor; there everything looks fair and good. But just behind that, just back of your superficial self, there is a little dark room where all sorts of things are going on, and you need but have God's light turned in on that back chamber (which, after all, is your real heart) and take a square honest look at it, to know.

What you see there is humiliating. You become aware that it had never been your real, genuine purpose to break unconditionally with any and all sin, nor had you ever a wholehearted intention to deny yourself, except, perhaps, as far as you had judged best for human reasons. You were playing, as it were, a game against the Almighty, and complimenting yourself under the surface current of your thoughts on your shrewdness. You lay on guard for the first symptom of judgment or calamity or emergency, so that you might repent right quickly and be saved in plenty of time. You were anxious, not to avoid sin, but to avoid sinning so much and so greatly that you would not be able to return. Like a deceitful child, you were intent on taking in what forbidden sweets of self-indulgence and worldliness you could, ready at the slightest noise to drop what you held in your hand and to gaze unconcernedly out of the window and look innocent. All this was there beneath your outward self; for you had not even admitted it to yourself, and (strange miracle of psychology) you had knowingly and willingly let yourself—your better self—be duped by yourself—your lower self—into thinking that you

were honest and true to God. And a dozen more such schemes you were working. Yet God was not deceived: he knew you all the while.

But, my brother, if this be your case, turn and repent, and once for all; deal uprightly, straightforwardly, with God. Come, trust him. Open those evil inner compartments and let God look upon your inward leprosy that he may truly heal you to the inmost core. Make a clear, clean sweep of sin. Keep back nothing. Come to his goodness and forgiving love, not as a traitor at heart, but as a child, in guilelessness and singleness of purpose. Behold he has desired truth in the inward part. To them who so deal with God comes the blessing of sins forgiven and transgression covered, and he is "the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." (Ps. 32:1, 2.)

THE WORLD'S RELIGION

Andrew Carnegie was of the opinion that the best preparation for a life to come (granted there is one) would be to spend this life in acts of kindness and benevolence, and to live honestly and in moral uprightness. Such talk is very common and sounds very plausible to the fleshly mind. From the day of Cain's bloodless sacrifice until now this has been the world's creed. The fraternities of this world, for example, point in complacency to "the good we do," and their members, in many cases, as well as hosts of other unsaved men and women, indulge themselves in hopes, secret our outspoken, of being accepted with God and saved for their works' sake, or at least of winning by their works such favor with God that he will in mercy cover up their shortcomings in other lines. But what then the need of Christ? What the purpose of the sin offering? What the use of the gospel? of faith? of baptism, of the church? Ah, there remains no real and essential need of any of these. And some are consistent and honest enough to admit it. Jesus is to them but a great man, a teacher, an example. But to all who will listen to him, Jesus pointed out that entrance into the kingdom of God does not come by human morality and good works, inasmuch as there is no true morality nor any works in the flesh that are "good" enough to abide the test of God or to avail in the judgment as long as other of our works condemn us. Nicodemus, flawless Jew though he was; Paul, "as touching the righteousness which is of the law, found blameless"; or the publicans and harlots—upon them all Jesus laid the one and same universal necessity: "Ye must be born again." "For there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Therefore can no man stand in his own righteousness, but must, by faith in Jesus Christ, accept the free gift of a righteousness from God, procured for us by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And then, then only, can we work as fit instruments of God. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10.) The man who hangs his hope on anything less than that is greatly to be pitied.

NEWS AND NOTES

Amite, La.: Bro. Richard Ramsey was with the church of Christ here in an eight day meeting, closing May 4, and, although only one person was added to the church, this was considered one of our great meetings. Attendance was good from start to finish and visitors from the town were more numerous and diversified than usual. The messages were top-level, powerful, convincing, yet with kindness and compassion. The evangelist was in his home congregation and among some of his kin, yet he was not without favor. He also spoke five times over radio on free time, the devotional hour, a public service feature by the local station at Hammond.

"This week Bro. A. K. Ramsey is with the Oak Grove church of Christ in evening meetings, considering the book of Acts, giving special attention to the younger people of the congregation. Bro. N. B. Wright recently spent a week there in daily Bible studies."—A. K. Ramsey.

Jennings, La.: "We are grateful for the visit of the Kentucky Bible College Chorus, and praise God for blessings they brought us. It was another busy day for them as they sang about 40 minutes before the Jennings High School student body in the morning, and made a 30-minute tape recording in the afternoon, which was broadcasted on the local radio station the following morning, and at night they sang at the church auditorium, which was too small to accommodate the crowd.

"Brother Dale Jorgenson is doing a good work in directing the chorus and the Lord is blessing their labors. The young people did exceptionally well in their singing in spite of the long distance they had traveled.

"Brother Winston Allen, president of the college, made inspiring talks at the high school auditorium, and also at the church. May the Lord bless their good work. We hope that more of our young people will be able to attend the school next term. We need the school and may we render every assistance we possibly can."—Ivy J. Istre.

Dallas, Texas: "Lord willing, I'll be in Jennings, La., for a meeting June 1-11, then at Crowley, June 12-19. Bro. R. H. Boll is scheduled to be with us at Mt. Auburn June 22 (or 23) through June 29.

"The Lord has been good to us in the work at Mt. Auburn. We've had several responses for both membership and restoration since last report, and Sunday School attendance has reached another new high in the month of May.

"We have recently purchased professional quality tape recording equipment, enabling us to enter into open doors for broadcasting the gospel in sermon and song, in cooperation with Dan Richardson in Florida. We've spent \$800.00 on equipment, but with this equipment we are enabled to assist in four broadcasts per week. And because God has allowed us to help in this way, Bro. Richardson will be given enough relief so that he will be enabled to open up broadcasts on other stations. We are thankful for these broadcasting privileges.

"Dr. Eugene Wood recently preached at Wichita Falls, and Bro. S. A. Lawyer at Denton. Bro. Jesse Wood continues preaching regularly at Denton, and the Lord is blessing his efforts. Dr. Cecil E. Brooks, now living in Mobile, Ala., has been helping in the work in New Orleans, and is looking to the Lord to lead him into a definite place of service in the Mobile area. Lord willing, I'll be with the Raiford Rd. church, near Glen St. Mary, Fla., July 13-20."—Robert B. Boyd.

Louisville, Ky.: "The South Louisville Church enjoyed a great season of spiritual refreshing during our recent one week's Youth Revival. J. L. Addams served as the evangelist, presenting the Christ in a very effective way. Songs were directed by one of our most promising young directors, Mac LeDoux, who assists Bro. Addams at Parkland. Well over twenty ministers attended, and at least that many churches of Christ participated. There were eight rededications, several from other congregations.

"To date in 1952 the South Louisville Church has witnessed 22 responses to the invitation: four baptisms, all mature people, five for

membership and thirteen renewals. The Lord has blessed us in both the morning Bible School, which is averaging some twenty above any previous attendance in my five years at this church, and in the morning services. We have more than fifty children under ten years of age at 5th and M."—N. Wilson Burks.

Johnson City, Tenn.: "We had a good revival at Locust Street, May 4 through May 18, with Bro. Paul Clark and Brother Richard Ramsey doing the preaching. Bro. Clark started the meeting on Sunday, and the following Wednesday Bro. Ramsey arrived and delivered the messages for the next twelve nights. Both of these men fed us a diet rich in Spiritual food, served in an excellent manner, and interest was exceptionally good, with full-house attendance most of the time. We enjoyed the fellowship of visiting brethren from Mountain View, and also had out-of-town visitors from Greenville, S. C. and Louisville, Ky.

"We are thankful to the Lord for all of His blessings, both visible and invisible. There were two responses for rededication, and from the amount of interest manifested, we feel that the invisible blessings must have been many."—S. A. Singleton.

The Buechel, Kentucky, church is announcing a protracted meeting to be held from June 1 to 8, with Edward Schreiner, minister of High View church of Christ, near Louisville, as evangelist.

The church at Sellersburg, Indiana, is having a Youth Revival the first week in June, using Orell Overman as speaker from night to night.

The Ormsby church at 622 E. Ormsby Ave., Louisville, plans an all-church Vacation Bible School from June 22-29. There will be classes for both children and adults. The Highland church of Christ has had such a school at night for the past two years. Their school is to begin June 16 this year and continue for ten week nights.

V. B. S. Supplies in Stock

The Word and Work is stocking Vacation Bible School supplies again this year. However, it is best for churches to get orders in to us in plenty of time for us to order

out from publishers, as we do not have enough to supply all schools that buy through us.

Bibles, Testaments, and books otherwise, may be purchased from our book room for graduation gifts. We appreciate your patronage.

Why Attend

KENTUCKY BIBLE COLLEGE?

The chief reason that young people would do well to attend Kentucky Bible College is because of its spiritual emphasis. Brother R. H. Boll's Bible classes and related subjects taught by other consecrated Christian teachers set Kentucky Bible College of as second to none as an institution for Christian training. Furthermore, the faculty is composed mostly of men and women with Master degrees as well as high Christian character. The young people who have made appearances in the College chorus are samples of the type of students you will find at K. B. C. While it is not yet accredited yet arrangements have been made whereby credits given may be used at more advanced colleges.

Annual All-day Picnic

The annual all-day picnic of the Sellersburg Children's Home will be July 4. There will be speaking and singing, a basket dinner, and games for all.

Chatanooga, Tenn.: "Some time ago we enjoyed a stop-over meeting by Paul Clark and Kenneth Istre and wife. We rejoice over the fine work they are doing in Johnson City, Tenn., and community.

"There have been four grown people added to McCallie Avenue in the last few weeks, two of these by baptism. The work here is going along very well."—E. H. Hoover.

Alexandria, La.: "I have just read the articles of Brother J. A. Harding which he published in his paper, **The Way**, and which were republished in the January issue of the **Word and Work**. Evidently he believed that Revelation 19 and 20 will have a literal fulfilment, for in his comments he called attention to the harmony with what is said in other scriptures of the teaching of Revelation 19 and 20: the coming of Christ with His saints, the overthrow of the beast and the

false prophet, the binding of Satan, his imprisonment so that the nations were free from his deceptive powers during the thousand years, the first resurrection, and the reign of Christ with His saints during the thousand years before the rest of the dead are raised.

"In his chapel talks which I heard him make when I was attending Potter Bible College, as I remember, he made some of the same, or similar statements. I feel that it was due to his influence and teaching that my attention was directed to the literal fulfillment of the above scriptures. From the time I began preaching in 1909 until now I have not seen fit to believe and teach otherwise, though my knowledge of what the scriptures teach relative to prophecies and other parts of the Bible have been greatly enriched by a diligent study of what is revealed therein.

"Furthermore, by accepting the words of the prophecy of the book of Revelation I have been able to save some from the teachings of Charles T. Russell, which they were on the verge of accepting."
—W. J. Johnson.

Lexington, Ky.: "We had one confession and baptism at prayer meeting tonight. We had 13 responses during the John May engagement here April 7-20: eight for baptism, three by membership, and two for prayer and reconsecration. We had 158 for Bible school on the last Sunday of the meeting.

Gallatin, Tenn.: "Brother Orell Overman was with us a week in April and brought us some great gospel messages. Three were baptized during the meeting; four have been baptized by Brother Crowder since the meeting and one placed membership. Our Daily Vacation Bible School is now on, being directed by Brother Crowder. Over 200 are in attendance.

"I was with the faithful little group in Lima, Ohio, where Bro. John May labors. One man was baptized and two other persons expressed a desire for baptism before we closed the meeting."—H. L. Olmstead.

The Portland Avenue Church expects to begin its annual tent meeting on the lot behind the church building, beginning July 13. Brother Boll will be the speaker.

SONG LEADERS' SEMINAR: A REPORT

As the Song Leader's Training Class is likely to become an annual affair at Kentucky Bible College, it is believed that a report should be published of its successful and useful first session. It was a wonderful week!

Sixty or more were in attendance all or part of the time: song leaders, some of the wives, and others equally interested. Most of the regular leaders in the cooperating churches of this area took advantage of the work—two hours each evening, in three periods each time. These experienced leaders, together with the young men of K.B.C. who lead singing, made up the backbone of the Class. The experience of the older men from surrounding churches, and the fine training that the college men had already had under Dale Jorgenson, lifted the work to a mature level, and made discussion and instruction possible covering the most advanced problems that arise in the song leader's work. In fact, it was necessary to keep the class on a level that was perhaps too advanced for the youngest among them; and some separate arrangement for them is indicated for next time, in order to give them the elements and rudiments that were more or less assumed this time—unless the present leaders can pass on to them, in their own groups, these more elementary things. The week just ended turned out to be more of a "Refresher Course" than a Rudimentary class.

After words of welcome by President Winston Allen of the College, the Seminar began with a short address by Willis H. Allen of the Seminar faculty on "Sacredness of the Song Service." The second night opened with a short address on "Relationship of Minister and Song Leader," by Ernest E. Lyon, minister of Highland church, and conductor of the Band at University of Louisville. Thus, the stress from the outset was laid on the spiritual aspects of the song leader's high and holy calling.

The instruction in the mechanics of singing and of leading went along the following lines: Breathing, phrasing, diction; Quick, sure and simple ways to pitch in all keys, both sharps and flats; Brief Introduction to Sight Singing—the older and the newer methods; Instruction and Drill in Choice of Hymns for the various meetings of the church; also Introduction and Drill in congregational directing.

Perhaps liveliest of all was the Panel Discussion of the song leader's problems, in Announcement of the number (with or without Psalter or Bulletin). When, and when not, to stand before the church; When, and when not, to direct (beat time); How to direct simply and unostentatiously, without undue vigor and "windmilling" that distract worship in the pew; What is the correct tempo (speed of movement) for the various time signatures, and in the varying conditions and customs of the established congregation; use of the pause between verses, and the use of closing **Ritard**; The management of verses that are to be omitted, and the leading of that most important song, The Invitation.

Brother Boll conducted Bible Classes in the afternoons for all who could come, and the week closed with a general Hymn-Sing or "Song Rally" at the Portland Ave. church on the last night.

It was a good week, by the grace of God; and all who profited by it are indebted, under God, to the College that sponsored the Seminar, and specially to its able, energetic and forward-looking music master, Dale together with our ever-willing and capable colleague, Wills H. Allen of the Shawnee Church.—E.L.J.

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(Prepared by D. A. J.)

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PAUL'S GOSPEL III.

R. H. B.

The gravest objection raised against Paul's gospel concerned the Jew-Gentile question—the exclusion of the great mass of Israel, and the bringing in of the Gentiles—the election of individuals (only a few comparatively) from among the Jews, and a larger number from among the Gentiles, to form the Body of Christ, which is the Church. This was the new thing, the mystery kept secret for ages, and now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit—most especially to Paul, because through his ministry these things were brought into fullest prominence. (Eph. 3:3-11.) To the Jew this development seemed out of all order and reason. Were all the centuries of God's past special dealings with Israel, to separate, train, and endue them; giving them His law ("He hath not dealt so with any nation" Ps. 147:19, 20); revealing Himself to them (Ps. 103:7); establishing them to be "a people near unto Jehovah," dealing with them in mercy and in judgment, giving them His covenants and his promises, and loving them above all the nations, with an everlasting love—was all this to go for nothing? Was Israel now to be rejected, and hordes of Gentiles, mere outsiders, "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of the promise, without God and without hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12) to be received as God's people, unto blessings and privileges, even higher than Israel herself had ever had? Impossible! How could such a thing be harmonized with the Law and the Prophets? Yea, how even could God be exonerated in such a breach of promise and covenant? These were serious questions indeed. What we so lightly accept, as if it were a matter of course, was a terrible problem and stumblingblock to the Jew. It fell to the lot of Paul to face and answer these questions and difficulties, and to vindicate the righteousness of God's dealings with both the Jews and the Gentiles. This he does most fully in three of the chapters of the epistle to the Romans—chapters 9, 10, and 11. In Romans 9 he defends God's right and action in rejecting the Jews; in chapter 10 he shows *why* they were rejected; in chapter 11 that their rejection was not complete nor final.

The apostle begins with the declaration of his consuming sorrow and his all-engrossing love for his "kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites"—"whose is the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is God blessed for ever. Amen." Thus he describes the high calling, the standing and privilege, of Israel.

It is hardly necessary to point out that here he is speaking of that nation, descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the lost and rejected nation, not the elect spiritual remnant (for over them he had no occasion to mourn). But how could a people so blest and exalted, be rejected? Has God been unfaithful to His promises? To the Jew it looked that way—and that was their chief objection to, and their bitter repudiation of, Paul's gospel. How will Paul—rather the Holy Spirit through Paul—meet this objection?

First of all he shows that never at any time did God bind Himself to save all the individuals of the nation of Israel, regardless of their conduct and attitude. To be a member of the nation was indeed a high honor, involving vast blessing and privilege, with exceeding great mercies. When they strayed God called them, pleaded with them, disciplined them, forgave them, saved them when they deserved nothing but judgment and perdition. (See Ezek. 20.) But when all was said "Israel" was not only a name of a nation, but a high calling to be lived up to; and they never were all Israel that were of Israel. In saying this he does not nullify their nationality, nor deny them the name of "Israel," for God never ceased to speak of them by this name; and though foreseeing their disobedience, yet pledged Himself never to destroy them as a nation. He chose them "in the furnace of affliction," and the remnant of them would be saved.

So Paul defends God's sovereign right to "make choice among His chosen ones," and to have mercy on whom He wills to have mercy. He illustrates this by His choice of Isaac and rejection of Ishmael, and the even more pertinent case of God's choice of Jacob and rejection of Esau. When the nation had broken the covenant of Mount Sinai in the matter of the Golden Calf, and had forfeited every right and claim they might ever have had, God told Moses that thenceforth He would show mercy on whom He willed to have mercy (Exod. 32). As the potter indisputably has the right and freedom to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor as he may see fit—it was God's prerogative to say upon whom His promises and blessings were to be bestowed. No one had any right to tell God He *ought* to save such and such people because of their fleshly descent from Israel, or, for that matter, on the ground of any other obligation. Mercy must be free, else it were not mercy. If then Israel had no claim on God, but were cast wholly upon the free mercy of God—were they not in that respect on the same level with the Gentiles? And if God could show mercy to some of Israel, was He not equally free to extend such mercy to equally undeserving one from among the Gentiles, according as He willed?

Such is Paul's first argument. It is not the last word on the matter; but before everything else God's sovereign right to deal with Jews and Gentiles as He saw good, must be recognized.

There is however a difference in God's dealing with Israel. They were after all *His* nation in a special sense, and He had pledged Himself never utterly to destroy them, (Jer. 30:11, 35-37) but to work out His foretold purposes through them. In the darkest days of their history God had preserved for Himself a remnant of Israel as Isaiah said; and in that remnant lay the guarantee of the nation's continuance—else they would have been made like unto Sodom and Gomorrah. But the very fact that it was but a remnant argued the rejection of the greater mass of the people, then as now. Could the Jew object? (Rom. 9:21-28.)

In summing up his argument at this stage, Paul brings out the fact that, after all, God's choices and rejections were not arbitrary.

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith: but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; even as it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame." (Rom. 9:30-33.)

The reason of the Jews' rejection was, that they endeavored to attain to righteousness by the way of the law, and spurned the free promise of God. They sought it not by faith as the free gift of the grace of God, but thought to obtain it by their own merit and desert, by the works of the law.

This, their great error, is further set forth in the tenth chapter, which we purpose to take up in our next article on Paul's Gospel.

EXAMPLE

J. H. McCaleb

I saw a nice looking teen-age girl sitting at a soda counter and sipping a "coke" as she drew on a cigarette. Every day one sees boys doing the same thing. They all seem pitifully young.

Look around you as you come in the vicinity of the taverns. Many of the guests are women. Some are young, too young. Of course, there are plenty of men and young men also. There always are.

I know you will agree with me, however, that moral turpitude that was frowned upon fifty years ago is now accepted without question, and condoned as a normal condition. What has brought this change? Why can folks do things now that no longer bring the disapproval of society? What has worn down the old resistance?

It must be that we older folks have weakened. We have not passed on to our children the example that our parents passed on to us. We have not adhered to the old paths, nor have we exercised the discipline that comes from a knowledge that we are practicing what we have preached. Because of our poor example, we are afraid to use that discipline that in every age is so necessary.

We may be quite sure that if the example we leave is but a weak shadow of propriety, the following generations will slip further and further until evil appears to be good. What is more natural than for children to copy the practices of their parents? You recall the little boy's reply to the question whether he would like to be a little gentleman. He replied: "I don't want to be a gentleman. I want to be like Papa."

Are our children interested in the work of the church? Are they willing to forego pleasures of questionable flavor? They will follow largely the example we give them.

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

(Acts 21)

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. In his address at Miletus Paul had said: "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." (Acts 20:22.) And as he went on his way, this testimony was repeated. At Tyre the disciples "said to Paul in the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem." From this some have concluded that he made a mistake in going—that in so doing he was acting contrary to the Lord's will. We do know that not even inspired men were immune from making mistakes. The apostle Peter had been guilty of a wrong action at Antioch, for which he was rebuked by Paul. (Galatians 2:11-14.) But in this instance the apostle's course was so deliberately planned and so persistently pursued, even in the face of bonds and afflictions, and his motive was so pure, that to this writer it seems incredible that he was without the definite leading of the Lord in so doing. And at the last, the disciples at Caesarea and Paul's companions seem to have taken that view. (Acts 21:14.) The abiding principle of his life is expressed in Philippians 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ." The repeated predictions of coming trials served to test his faith and to make fully apparent his whole-hearted devotion to his Lord. It was but natural that his friends, out of their love for him, should interpret them to signify that he should turn back. Their motive was good, but his—love for Christ—was better.

Luke briefly traces the route of the journey: to Cos, to Rhodes, to Patara, where they had to transfer to another ship, but apparently without much delay; then past the island of Cyprus, scene of some of Paul's earlier missionary work, until they came to Tyre. "And having found the disciples," says Luke, "we tarried there seven days." The King James translation, "finding disciples," tends to make the impression that they just accidentally happened to meet up with some Christians there. But such is not the meaning. They sought out the disciples, as the Revised Standard Version has it. Christians today may spend days in a strange place and make no effort to locate their brethren, so little do they value the fellowship of Christian people; but it was not so with Paul and his companions. No doubt those were seven happy and profitable days for them all; and at the last we have the beautiful picture of the Tyrian brethren with their wives and children accompanying their visitors outside the city to the beach, and their kneeling and praying together and bidding each other farewell.

One day was spent with the brethren at Ptolemais; and the following day they came to Caesarea, where they tarried some days as guests in the home of Philip the evangelist. This Philip was one of the seven who had been appointed to look after the daily

ministration in the Jerusalem church. (Acts 6:1-6.) He was among the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution waged under the vigorous leadership of Paul, then known as Saul of Tarsus. We do not know whether these two men met personally at that time; but now, twenty years later, the former persecutor is the honored and beloved guest of one whom he would then have willingly condemned to death! Such is the transforming power of true Christianity. "Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied." A truly gifted family in the service of the Lord! Those who would justify women's preaching on the basis of this scripture must *assume* that they exercised their gift *publicly*. There is much teaching of the Word that a Christian woman can do without entering the pulpit.

But another prophet came down from Judea — Agabus, whom we formerly met at Antioch. (Acts 11:28.) It was he who, in the dramatic and impressive manner of the times, predicted that Paul would be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. It appears that only then did his travelling companions fully comprehend the perils that confronted him; for they joined with the brethren of Caesarea in begging him with tears not to go. But even this did not change his purpose. At Miletus he had said, "But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." And now he answered, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." The brethren then ceased their pleading and said, "The will of the Lord be done." "And after these days," says Luke, "We took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge." (Acts 21:15, 16.)

BONDS AND AFFLICTIONS AT JERUSALEM

A BROTHERLY WELCOME. Paul had come to Jerusalem fully aware that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Even before leaving Corinth he had written to the Roman brethren, earnestly beseeching them to pray for him, that he might be delivered from them that were disobedient in Judea. (Rom. 15:31.) On a number of occasions along the way, as we have seen, he was forewarned of trouble that was sure to come. Yet for several days after his arrival everything seems to have been quite peaceful. He and his companions were gladly received by the brethren; and the following day, in the presence of James and all the elders of the Jerusalem church, he related in detail "the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry." (Acts 21:19.) There was indeed much to tell of the three eventful years at Ephesus, and also of his labors in Macedonia and Achaia. But with characteristic humility he took no credit to himself, except that it was through his ministry that the Lord had accomplished these things. To the Corinthians, who had shown a tendency to glory in men, he had written: "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers (i. e., only servants) through

whom ye believed; but God gave the increase." (1 Cor. 3:5, 6.) Likewise the brethren at Jerusalem, when Paul finished his story, gave the glory to God for his successful ministry among the Gentiles. So should it ever be with those who preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

PROPORTIONAL GIVING

E. H. Smith

The most important business being carried on in the world today is that which is done for our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of precious souls. Our consecration to Him and to His service implies that we are ready to use whatever resources we may have as He directs. Christians, then, should seek to give in a scriptural manner as they are constrained by the love of Christ. That such giving is a privilege attended by the greatest blessing is attested both by the Scriptures and multiplied personal testimonies.

The manner of giving, as well as the amount given is, of course, a matter for the conscience of the individual believer. However, the Word of God sheds light on this form of Christian service as well as all others. Both the Old and New Testaments bear out the thought that such giving should be in proportion to the income of the giver, according as he purposes in his heart except where the tenth was specifically commanded as in Leviticus 27:30. In this instance, the Israelite brought free-will offerings in addition to the tenth (Deut. 12:6).

They Gave Proportionately

In Hebrews 7:2 we are told that Abraham gave a tenth part of all. Jacob promised the Lord a tenth part of all his gain (Gen. 28:22). Zacchaeus, after his conversion, said that he was giving half his goods to the poor (Luke 19:8). That God considers the proportion given, rather than the amount, can be seen from Luke 21:3, 4, where the poor widow was commended for casting in more than the rich men inasmuch as she gave all her living, while they only gave out of their abundance. Proportional giving is suggested in 1 Cor. 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

Some object to proportional giving as being tithing and therefore belonging to the dispensation of law. Such an objection could hardly apply to the aforementioned instances; and, those who advance this argument usually admit that a man enjoying the blessings of grace should out of a willing and grateful heart give more than a man under law. All who long to see the Lord's work financially unhampered will certainly agree. Proportional giving is scriptural, business-like and effective.

No Definite Proportion

While some will agree that the proportion given should be more than 10%, no definite proportion is commanded in the New Testament. This is in line with all that relates to the dispensation of grace. God desires that we should give out of willing hearts rather

than because of rigid legal requirements. The U. S. government allows 15% as a deduction from income for charitable purposes. Taking this as a reasonable percentage and assuming that the blood-bought believer is not apt to be less charitable than the average worldly donor, some interesting deductions may be made. In even a small assembly, where there are possibly twenty wage earners aggregating an income of about \$4,000 per month, 15% dedicated to the Lord's work would be \$600 per month. If half of this amount were given to mission work and other outside activities, there would still be the very adequate amount of \$300 per month to carry on the work of the local assembly. These figures can be used as a measuring rod to determine both the possibilities of service and the extent of our failure. Lack of funds for God's business falls back as a heavy responsibility on the individual believer.

How Can We Afford It?

Those who have not experienced the heaven-sent blessing of proportional giving will immediately wonder how they can afford to give God His share. Scriptural giving, like all else that pleases God, must be of faith. The fear, some seem to hold, that generous proportional giving to the Lord will result in personal poverty is a ghost that fails to materialize.

Do we believe God's Word?

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11:25).

God loves the cheerful giver; and faithfully abounds toward those that abound toward Him.

Courting Poverty

On the other hand, those who use God's share for themselves and their second self — the family, put their money *"into a bag with holes."* They *"Sow much and bring in little"* (Hag. 1:6). The same hand that takes from God, takes from self. Failure to honor the Lord with our substance may result in temporal as well as spiritual poverty. *"And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?"* (Luke 16:12).

Putting God First

Giving to the Lord should not be relegated to last place in our financial affairs. Let us be careful to give God the first place. Giving God the first share of our monthly pay check or other income should be done with the absolute confidence that He will bless the remainder to our personal needs even as He has promised in Philippians 4:19: *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* To supply your own needs first, leaving to God anything that happens to remain is not of faith. The scriptural

order of apportioning our income is seen in the following passages:

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3:9, 10).

"The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God" (Ex. 23:19).

"And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 17:13, 14).

A Fair Test

Those who desire to be obedient, but are timid, should put proportional giving to the test for a period of some months. Let the percentage that seems right and proper to be given to the Lord's work be laid aside at regular intervals. At the end of this test period the individual can decide for himself whether he has received a blessing through this kind of giving or whether God has allowed him to suffer any form of loss.

The Alternative

The great rival of proportional giving is sporadic or hit-and-miss giving. Those who give in the latter manner put their spare change in the collection box as the occasion arises. Sporadic giving actually hinders the work of the Lord when the donations made are inadequate to meet the need. It manifests indifference to the manner in which this service is rendered. Would a faithful steward be haphazard in using his Master's funds? Would he not rather be systematic in apportioning them and using them according to His will? A careful check on this type of giving over a period of a month will show that the amount given, in nearly every case, falls far below even the Old Testament legal requirement for the support of the Lord's work. Sporadic giving is an excuse rather than a sacrifice. *"Will a man rob god?"* (Mal. 3:8).

Have We Forgotten?

We meet each Lord's day to remember our Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's unspeakable gift to poor dying sinners. He gave His last drop of blood freely and willingly that we might be saved. Ours would be the undying worm, the everlasting flame were it not for Him. How often we repeat the words: *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9).

Does such a marvelous truth grip our hearts? God must wait with wonder to see what returns such love and generosity will bring from us. *"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"* (Heb. 13:16).—E. H. Smith, in *Gospel Messenger*.

Camp Taylor, Kentucky, Meeting

J. Scott Greer of Detroit is scheduled to be in a meeting with Camp Taylor Church of Christ beginning June 15.

THE SIXTH LESSON IN ROMANS

R. H. B.

ABRAHAM'S JUSTIFYING FAITH (Rom. 4)

The sinner unto whom God reckons "righteousness" is said to be "justified." This, as Paul has shown (Rom. 3:22-24) God does "freely," without charge or compensation, for those who have faith in Jesus Christ. This is the "righteousness which is from God by faith in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:9) and which is equivalent here to "justification by faith." This is the peculiar revelation of the gospel, because of which it is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 1:16, 17.)

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

Having declared and defined that "righteousness of God" in Rom. 3 (vs. 21ff) Paul now proceeds to illustrate and discuss it further. The case he uses for illustration is that of *Abraham*. What a great name that was to the Jew! How wonderful was Abraham's relation to God, as "the friend of God," with whom He walked, with whom He talked, to whom He made the promises. Was Abraham then, himself, also a sinner that needed to be "justified freely? Or did he have his standing with God in his own right, by virtue of his own character and good works? If that had been the case Abraham would have had something to boast of. But not so, says the apostle: *not before God. For what saith the scripture? "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness."* (Gen. 15:16.) Now this could not have been said of Abraham if he had been justified by the merit of his works. For "*to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.*" If we were to paraphrase this statement it would run something like this: "Now to the man who seeks to attain to righteousness by his own works, his reward, if he should succeed in this endeavor, would not be reckoned to him as of grace; but it would be a matter of debt — a just due. But the man who does not attempt anything like that, but simply believes in God who has promised to freely justify the sinful, his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness." Such therefore was the case of Abraham. He stood not in the merit of his own works and character, but by his faith. He, too, then, was but a sinner saved by grace. He came in for the blessedness of those to whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from any consideration of works; of whom David says:

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin."

CIRCUMCISION AND LAW-OBSERVANCE NO ADVANTAGE

(Verses 9-15.)

In the next verse (v. 9) Paul shows from the case of Abraham that this justification is not for the circumcised only (as the Jews would have liked to think) but for the uncircumcised, who had

never known the law, as well. The proof is simple. At the time when Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, he was as yet uncircumcised. That settles the question whether the uncircumcised can receive this free righteousness. It was not till about fourteen years after this that Abraham was circumcised. Circumcision was the seal—the token—of the righteousness of the faith which he had while yet in uncircumcision. And Abraham, justified while uncircumcised, and later circumcised, is set forth as the living proof that justification ("righteousness") is for the uncircumcised; and for the circumcised also, *provided* they walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham which he had while as yet uncircumcised.

One thing is clear in this argument: it is not circumcision but *faith* that avails. Circumcision has nothing to do with justification. The uncircumcised are justified by faith; and the circumcised can be justified only in the same way. In this matter circumcision is of no avail to them whatever. They must abandon their trust in their circumcision, their law, every special privilege, and every excellence of which they might boast (compare Phil. 3:5-9), and come empty-handed to that same faith by which Gentiles are justified. What a blow to Jewish pride! And with circumcision the *law* also goes down as a ground of hope, though on the law the Jew rested his claim and in it he gloried (Rom. 2:17, 23). This he shows in vs. 13-15, and again by the example of Abraham: "*For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.*" This is evident, for the law came not till "430 years after." (Gal. 3:17). And if (as the Jew thought) "they that are of the law are heirs"—then "faith" would have been void ("for the law is not of faith," Gal. 3:12) and the "promise" would have been made of none effect (Gal. 3:18). For the "promise" was a free promise, and required only simple faith on part of the recipient. The law, on the other hand, instead of procuring any promises for them, brought condemnation upon them: "for the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law neither is there transgression."

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

In the preceding verses (9-15) the discussion has been directed more against the Jew who thought that his circumcision and law-observance entitled him, and him alone, to this salvation. But from here to the end of the chapter (vs. 16:25) the teaching is for all. We will present it in outline, verse by verse.

Verse 16. God designed that the promise should be of faith that it may be according to grace. What is of faith is also of grace (comp. 4:4, 5)—therefore perfectly free, affording no ground for boasting; for faith is not anything meritorious in itself, so that in reward for it God would give salvation. Faith is but the empty hand held out to receive the great gift. By making it dependent on faith, the promise was made available to all of Abraham's seed (i. e. those who have faith like his, Gal. 3:7) whether they be of the law and of circumcision or without law or circumcision (comp. vs. 11, 12). For Abraham is the father (the head and proto-type) of all those who

believe even as he believed.

Verse 17. This is in accord with the word spoken to him by God — “a father of many nations have I made thee.” Abraham, old and childless, believed God — he believed God was able to give life to the dead (for he was as good as dead); and as able to speak of things as yet non-existent as though they already were (for God said “a father of many nations *have I made thee*”). With other words, he believed that his God was able to do what was, humanly speaking, impossible.

Verse 18. Thus in hope (a hope kindled by faith in God's word) he believed against hope (against all natural hope and possibility).

Verse 19. He was not unaware of the difficulty (or, should we say, the impossibility) that stood in the way of God's promise. He did not try to conceal or minimize the facts: he faced them squarely — namely the deadness of his own body and of Sarah's womb, who even in the days of her youth and strength was barren.

Verse 20. But he did not stop with looking at the obstacles: but *looking to the promise of God* he never wavered in his faith, but “waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God.”

Verse 21. This verse describes his faith in simplest words: he was “fully assured that what God had promised, he was able also to perform.” It was not something he imagined God could or would do, but what God had *promised*. For faith ever rests on the declarations of God's word. (Rom. 10:17.) To have believed such things without warrant from God's word would not have been faith, but presumption and fanaticism: of which there has always been a superabundance in the world. But Abraham's faith was founded on God's word.

Verse 22. Further than this faith could not go. He believed God utterly and absolutely, all regardless of all reasons and appearances to the contrary. To such surrendered heart and mind God can give His best and all. “*Wherefore it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.*”

Verses 23-25. The conclusion: This was not written as merely applying to Abraham: it applies *to us*. We too are so justified, by the same sort of faith. We too believe in the “God who giveth life to the dead,” who does the impossible — even the God who “raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.”

FACTS AND QUESTIONS

Our study of Romans 4 brings up the old, oft-discussed question concerning the relation of faith and works, on which Paul and James seem to differ. Paul declares plainly that Abraham was justified by faith apart from works. James just as plainly says that Abraham was “justified by works,” and that “by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.” (Jas. 2:21, 24.) But a closer look reveals the fact that though James uses the same three words, “faith,” “justified,” and “works” which Paul uses in Romans, he uses each of them in a sense different from that in which Paul employs them.

This is perfectly obvious once attention is called to it.

1. The works Paul opposes are works of merit by which a sinner would try to win salvation; works which, so to speak, would put God under obligation and debt (Rom. 4:4) and which would enable the doer of them to boast as having wholly, or in part, accomplished his own salvation. But James has in mind works which spring from faith, and which are the test of faith's reality: such works as Paul also himself exalts in Gal. 5:6 — "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but *faith working through love.*" Martin Luther, though at first inclined to reject the epistle of James because of this seeming discrepancy, said later, "I see that Paul inveighs against works that make faith void, but James pleads for works by which faith is made perfect."

2. James also uses the term "justified" in a different sense. Paul insists that Abraham was justified long before circumcision was instituted, and before Isaac was born. (Rom. 4:10, 11.) Abraham was already (and had been for years) a justified man in Paul's sense of the word when he offered up Isaac upon the altar. If therefore James says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" — it is evident that he employs the word "justified" differently from Paul's meaning. James could not have been ignorant of the fact that Abraham had righteousness reckoned to him (i. e. that he was "justified") as far back as Gen. 15:6. It has been well pointed out that a man is justified: (1) *Causally*, by grace (Tit. 3:7); (2) *effectively* by the blood (Rom. 5:9); (3) *instrumentally* by faith (Rom. 5:1) (4) *evidentially* by works (Jas. 2:24).

3. Again, when Paul speaks of faith, he obviously means that trustful committal of one's self to Christ which includes all submission, confession, obedience to the gospel (Gal. 3:26, 27.) But James condemns a mere profession that masquerades as faith, as that of a man who merely says he has faith, or who merely, like the demons, holds the correct and orthodox doctrine that there is one God and whose life bears no evidence of true faith; but whose so-called "faith" is but an empty, worthless, inert mental assent to truth, which is as far from being real faith as a dead horse is from being a horse.

Paul then is seeking to show that acceptance of God is granted freely to those who believe, apart from merit or works of law; James endeavors to show that real faith must and will manifest itself in works.

The terms "promise," "faith," and "grace," as Paul uses them (or rather, as the Holy Spirit uses them through Paul) require special attention. They are not always well understood. To illustrate — a man might argue that there was faith and promise and even grace connected with the law. The Jew believed that there is but one God; that the law had been given from Mt. Sinai, that it was from God, and therefore right and true. That could be called "faith" in one sense of the word. Also there were certain blessings held out to those who faithfully kept the law. We might call that "promise." But Paul uses neither "faith" nor "promise" in this sense. Accord-

ing to him the "promise" is a free offer and pledge from God to do something for us which goes beyond all power of man and of nature, something God Himself alone can do, and which he freely tells us He will do. And to take hold of this promise, to trust in it, and to proceed upon it as upon a sure pledge — that is *faith*. To illustrate, when God said to Abraham "So shall thy seed be" — He promised him something impossible so far as man was concerned, a thing that could not be except by God's power and truthfulness. And when Abraham believed God, in spite of all facts and appearances to the contrary (Rom. 4:18-21) — that was the *faith* that was reckoned to him for righteousness. When later he begat Ishmael — that was done in the power of nature, according to the flesh: Ishmael was not the child of the promise. For this was the promise: "Sarah thy wife shall have a son." The child born of Sarah was according to *promise*, born not in the power of nature but in the energy of the Divine work through faith. (Gal. 4:23, 28; Rom. 9:8, 9.) Not what man achieves in his own power is of faith and of promise; but what man can never do or attain to, what God graciously offers to do for him, what he believes God is able to do and, according to His word, *will do* — that is by *faith*, by *grace*, by *promise*. The law was a simple contract: if you do this and that I, Jehovah, will do thus and so. But the gospel is a free promise to sinful, ruined man. And "the law as not of faith," not because it is now abrogated but because it is of works; for "he that doeth them [i. e. the precepts and ordinances] shall live therein." (Gal. 3:12; comp. Rom. 10:5.) So the promise is a free and supernatural blessing held out to man; and faith is that by which we take hold of it.

Now faith is a resting and leaning upon God's free assurance of promise. As such *it* cannot be meritorious. Faith has no ground for boasting, except in God. What we get by faith we therefore *get by grace*. And what is by grace is always and only a perfectly free gift. (Rom. 4:5, 6.)

If in the light of these things we re-study Romans 4 now, its meaning will open to us more fully.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

Was Abraham justified by works? If he had been would he have had something to boast of? What statement of scripture shows the contrary? What argument does Paul make in verses 4 and 5? How do David's words illustrate free justification by faith? Was Abraham a circumcised man when he was justified? Did he have the Law? Can people who are uncircumcised and who have not the law be justified? How only can the circumcised be justified? Why did God arrange that justification should be by faith? (v. 16.) How was Abraham's faith described in vs. 17-21? Was this written for us also? On what sort of faith are *we* justified? What apparent contradiction in James 2 to the teaching of this chapter? Is it really a contradiction? Does James use the words "justify," "faith," and "works" in the same sense as Paul here uses them? What is the difference? Is faith itself a meritorious act?

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

To all who may be inclined to preach Baptism as a work of law or merit, we recommend the reading of this reprint from the *Harbinger*.

Campbell on “Justification by Faith”

The gospel is addressed to faith. All its promises of pardon, justification, sanctification, adoption and salvation are addressed to this power or capacity of our nature. But faith, being the belief of testimony, whether human or Divine, is essential to the blessings contained in that testimony—essential to the appreciation, or appropriation, or enjoyment of them. Hence ordinances are instituted and ordained—such as repentance, baptism, the Lord's day, the Lord's supper. There is a special grace connected in the Divine economy with every specific ordinance. But whatever be the specific ordinance, faith is indispensable to the enjoyment of each and every blessing connected with it. So that it is not the ordinance alone, or at all, but the faith developed in our active or passive obedience to it, that possesses whatever be the gift, or virtue, or power in it, or associated with it. Hence we are justified and pardoned by faith, exercised and perfected in our acquiescence in and submission to, these ordinances. The merit is not in them, but our enjoyment or reception of the grace contained in them, is mercifully connected with this obedience of faith. For faith can be perfected only in obedience, or submission to these gracious institutions. No man can shew or prove his faith but by his obedience, for faith is made perfect only in and by obedience.

With Martin Luther, I regard “justification by faith, the test of a standing or a falling church”—perhaps it should have been of “a standing or a fallen church.” Grace and faith are not incompatible in any scriptural view of either. But grace and works are evidently incompatible. Grace and baptism into Christ are not incompatible, for baptism is not a work of the subject, but of the administrator. The subject is as passive in baptism as he is, or will be, in his literal burial in the earth, so far as his own work is contemplated. There can be no merit in any work not performed by the subject himself. Hence baptism is but the personal and formal confession of the faith of the subject. It is, therefore, never regarded nor denominated as a good work of the subject. All good works have our fellow men as their objects and not ourselves. They are the radiations of philanthropy. Piety itself is only gratitude to God. We can never make God our debtor. We must eternally be debtors to God. These are but the aphorisms of eternal and immutable reason.

Hence in its institution, Christian immersion is only a development of the grace of God. It is his solemn, silent assurance to the proper subject of the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God through the sacrifice of Christ, whose blood alone “cleanses from all sin.” Man alone, of all the tenants of the universe, can be pardoned.

Demons, dying infidels cannot, according to the whole Bible, be saved. There is not one ray of hope for them in any Divinely inspired book or document under the broad heavens. He that believes and is immersed into Christ shall be saved; and he that does not believe in the person and mission of the Lord Jesus shall as certainly be damned, or condemned, to an everlasting destruction—an endless perdition, as that God exists and is a rewarder of every man according to his works.—Alexander Campbell, in *Millennial Harbinger*, 1857, p. 648.

Notes on Revelation 20:1-3

Eight years ago the Editor of this department wrote these "Notes." If they be judged worthy of a place with these "Reprints," it would be because of their simplicity.)

The following paragraph, taken from an exchange, is used here, not with intent to criticize the author of it (a truly good man), but for introductory and background purposes.

"That this [the overthrow of Satan] was done through the death of Christ is stated in the Hebrew letter: 'that through death he [Christ] might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil.' What more could be done with the devil than to destroy him, or bring him to nought? Well, the inspired writer declares this was done through the death of Christ. It cannot be said, then, that it is something yet to be accomplished in a supposed age, in a material kingdom, following the age in which we now live. . . . From such as accept this atonement through obedience to the gospel the devil is effectively bound. He can deceive them no more—sin is his power of deception and sin has been blotted out by the blood of Christ."

QUESTIONS

1. Is it "stated in the Hebrew letter" that "this *was done*"—that is, to a finish, for those who accept the atonement? The text reads, "that through death *he might* bring to nought him that had the power of death." (Heb. 2:14.) Of course, the final triumph is "through" Christ's death. (Rev. 1:5.)

2. Has Satan then no longer the "power of death" over those who accept the atonement? Is that done to a finish, for them? If so, why do Christians die?

3. Did not Peter say (to persons who had accepted the atonement "through obedience to the gospel"), long after Christ's death, and long after Pentecost—"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"? (1 Peter 5:8.)

4. Does not the text in question (Rev. 20:1-3) plainly declare, in simple, indicative language, that it is *the nations* (not alone those who accept the atonement) that Satan shall deceive no more, "until the thousand years should be finished"?

5. If Satan is bound now, through the death of Christ, how could he ever "be loosed for a little season," after the thousand years? Will the death of Christ be abrogated for a little while?

6. Finally, what is there, after all, in the vocabulary of this text (Rev. 20:1-3) that any humble reader should fail to understand? What language is there *in this portion* (though there is much *elsewhere* in Revelation) that is so "highly metaphorical and symbolical"?

The plain truth is, there are *no symbols* in Rev. 20:1-3 (except

"dragon," immediately interpreted as "the devil"). There are two simple figures of speech, "key" and "chain"—so simple and so fitting in this context that a child may understand. Nor is there any difference among us brethren in our understanding of these two words: the "key" is simply something suitable for locking and unlocking the abyss; the "chain" is simply something suitable for binding a great and powerful being. No one—that I know of—denies or ought to deny that these are figures; but some of us think that they are figures of *something*! None of us insist that "key" and "chain" are literal, iron implements, but some of us believe they really lock and bind what God says they lock and bind! In other words, no careful student insists on the *literal sense*; but only on the plain *grammatical sense*.

Try for yourself the following child-like test questions on this text:

"I saw an angel"—what is an angel? Is that a dark symbol or a difficult figure?

"Coming down out of heaven"—do we not know what "heaven" means? "Having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand"—What is the evident meaning, in this context, of the simple figures, "key" and "chain"?

"And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan"—Is this not clear enough? If not, why not?

"And bound him for a thousand years"—Is there anything difficult here? Do we not know what the English phrase, "a thousand years," means? Does "bound" mean "loose"? Does "bound" mean "walking about, seeking whom he may devour"?

"And cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished"—Is there anything too hard in this third verse? Are there any "symbols" here? Is it not written in plain, simple, indicative, declarative English, faithfully translated out of the original Greek?

Paul tells us (Eph. 2:2) that Satan is "the spirit that *now* worketh in the sons of disobedience" ("now," that is through "the course of this age"); and Peter said, long after Pentecost, that Satan was walking about, "seeking whom he may devour": is all this one and the same in meaning as to be "bound," "cast into the abyss," "shut" and "sealed" in that place, in order that "he should deceive the nations no more . . .! If so, there is indeed an end to any significance of inspired language, and we may as well give up the search for truth!

It is all very odd and unnatural! Those who believe Rev. 20: 1-3 in its *plain and grammatical sense* are called "speculators," unsound and unworthy; but those who tell the common people that God does not mean what He grammatically says—these are the safe and sound ones in our day!

It seems to me the issues have been stated in reverse: they ask, Can they bear with us, can they tolerate us, can they fellowship us, who accept the simple, grammatical statements of the word of God? And to this some of them (not all) have answered, No. But the question might well be, Can we bear with them, can we tolerate them, can we fellowship them, who "spiritualize," and explain away what God has said? Yet to this question—unless in the case of the extremely factious—we have always answered, Yes!—E. L. J., in *Word and Work*, 1944, p. 176.