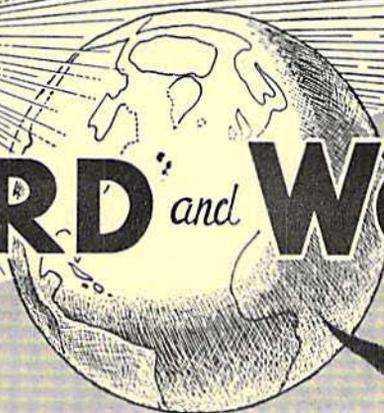


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FEBRUARY, 1974

**IT'S TIME TO STUDY ABOUT
ARMAGEDDON**

p. 48

**PERHAPS YOU ARE NOT YOUR
HUSBAND'S FIRST WIFE**

p. 57

**THE HEATHEN GODS OF ANCIENT
HISTORY ARE STILL WITH US**

p. 59

**When Israel Rejected Jesus They Doomed
Themselves to Trouble**

p. 62

IS PUBLIC CONFESSION NECESSARY?

p. 51

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In This Issue

Talking Things Over —G. R. L.	34
Moved To Tears—Not Action —Grace Ferguson	35
The Stumbling Block of the Cross —John R. W. Stott	36
Yet Another Sign —Fred W. Schott	39
God Uses Tracts, Do You? —Bill Swain	41
Viewing the News —Ernest E. Lyon	42
Total Commitment —Mrs. Creath Davis	44
Shelomith —Mrs. Paul J. Knecht	46
Come Down and We Will Believe —Harry Gipson	47
PROPHECY: After Armageddon—Then What? —O. E. Phillips	48
Questions Asked of Us —Carl Kitzmiller	51
MISSIONARY MESSENGER	54
The Spiritual Woman —Sylvia Lockwood	57
Your God Determines Your Destiny —Billy Ray Lewter	59
REPRINT—Israel's Troubles —R. H. Boll	62
NEWS AND NOTES	63



Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

ON BEING OPEN-MINDED

"Now two plus two equals four—or at least I think it does. I like to keep an open mind about such things." A friend of mine jokingly attributed this statement to a professor of education at our local university. Though he had his Ph.D., he was never really sure of anything.

On the other hand, we sometimes hear criticism leveled at Bible-believing Christians, "They think they're the only ones who know anything; they're conceited." What about such critics? Do they have any ground to stand on? Unfortunately, sometimes they do. All of us have heard preachers who came through to us sounding arrogant, sanctimonious, or holier-than-thou. Perhaps they spoke the truth, but it was adulterated by the personal mannerisms of the speaker.

There's a difference between "I know it all" and "God's word is final." A preacher's manner of speaking may convey to his listeners "I know it all" while he thinks that he is uncompromisingly declaring the unchangeable truth of God. The preacher (or Sunday school teacher) who does this would probably not profit by listening to himself on tape; he's secretly in love with himself. The true story is told of two Puritan preachers. Said one, "Yesterday I preached hell-fire and damnation to the congregation." Said the second, "Brother, did you preach it with tenderness?" A message is always flavored by the vessel that carries it. A little of the Enemy's flavoring has sometimes brought reproach upon the Message.

THE UNCERTAIN SOUND

I used to receive a publication called *The Uncertain Sound*. Like the professor first cited, it was very open-minded on all religious issues. In contrast, the Bible is a book of certainties. There is no need for a preacher of the Word to sound apologetic. God has indeed spoken and His Word is settled in heaven. The power of Billy Graham's preaching lies in the oft-used phrase, "The Bible says . . ." True, there is room for question on what the Bible says about certain things, but it's a poor preacher who spends much time beating the bushes of doubt when there is so much certain truth needing to be declared. Strange, that our minds should tend to

gravitate toward the obscure and controversial, while we easily pass over plain, unequivocal commands.

It is strange, too, that so many people can be so sure of many things the Bible teaches and yet be unsure of salvation. Over forty times does First John use the word "know"—"that you may know that you have eternal life"—yet many remain in doubt on this most important matter. "He that hath the Son hath life." Don't be too open-minded about this!

Moved to Tears -- Not Action

Grace Ferguson

"Tears and Thunderbirds" in April Word and Work brought the reaction, "Moved to tears, not action." This is the outcome too often. What has gone wrong with God's people who can't, or won't, get serious about serving God? As in the parable of "The Sower" we are caught up in the cares of this world, and if that doesn't bind us, then Satan throws in the deceitfulness of riches, and the snare holds us.

Can you imagine any Christian being moved to tears, and yet not being able to help a missionary? Don't misunderstand me, I am referring to one whose financial standing is in keeping with the article, and I would term anyone in the \$12,000 a year bracket well off.

Isn't it past time for a warning to be sounded loud and long for God's children to quit playing games at serving God? To repent of our selfishness, and ask God's forgiveness for our lack of dedication, and our stark unbelief of His word! If we really believed God we wouldn't dare be selfish—think of the rich man and Lazarus.

Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26

Jesus also said, "—whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Many times when we are ready to forsake all, to give up everything, then in God's goodness we are permitted to keep all. Then again it may be just the opposite. Christ sends us far away from family, friends, and all worldly comforts into a strange land and among strange people.

Does God have His hand on you? Has He been speaking to you? Don't turn a deaf ear, don't be "moved to tears, not action."

The Stumbling Block of the Cross

J. R. W. Stott

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

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

FAIRY TALES

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

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

IRRELEVANT

The second group of people who reject Christianity are prepared to believe that it's *true*, but cannot see that it's *relevant*. 'Jesus lived over nineteen centuries ago,' they say. 'He belongs to remote antiquity. No doubt He said and did some remarkable things in His day. But what on earth has it got to do with me in the technological, scientific world of the 1970's? I love my family and enjoy my job and go off for my holidays, and honestly, religion never enters my head. It's irrelevant.'

Is it? What am I to say to people like this? I think I must call their bluff. Christianity speaks to the eternal problems of man-

kind, with which philosophers, playwrights, novelists and ordinary folk have always wrestled. I don't say that it gives pat answers to all these problems. But it has something to say about them. For instance, have you a guilty conscience? Many people have. Jesus Christ can bring you forgiveness and the certainty of forgiveness. Are you overpowered by strong passions—temper, greed, jealousy, malice, lust? Jesus Christ can teach you self-control. Indeed, He is able to make you a new person altogether. Are you full of worry about the future? Jesus Christ can give you peace. Are you baffled by the problem of suffering? Only Jesus Christ can convince you that, in spite of suffering, God loves you. Are you afraid of death? Jesus Christ has conquered it. Do you want to leave the world a better place? You can spread the love, joy, peace, and justice of Christ in your community. Are you tempted sometimes to despair, and to wonder if there is any hope for the future of the world? Jesus Christ is coming again as King.

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

THE CHURCH

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

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

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

THE CROSS IS HUMBLING

First, the message of the cross is extremely humbling. Jesus said that His death was not a tragic accident, but something delib-

crate, something essential which must take place. He was going (He said) to give His life as a ransom to set men free, going to shed His blood for their forgiveness. And His apostles later explained more fully what He meant. Peter writes that He bore our sins in His own body on the cross. Paul goes further and says that Jesus was actually made sin for us, the sinless Christ made sin with our sin. And the whole New Testament tells us that it is because Christ died for us, bearing our sin and judgment Himself, that we can be forgiven if we come to Him and ask Him to be our Savior.

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

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

THE CROSS IS DEMANDING

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

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

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

have to die to self if we are ever to live for Christ.

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

—Used by permission

Yet Another Sign

Fred W. Schott

Lord, I'm amazed,
And very much relieved,
After reading the words
Of your prophet of old.

I had often struggled
With what I sensed
Was a godly conviction.

The conviction was this—
Simply, that
The poor,
The fatherless,
The widow,
Yes,
Even the welfare mothers
And their ADC children
Are in today's world,
As in ages past,
Exploited!

Exploited?
Is that the word?
At least no justice,
I sense,
Is given especially to these,
These Thy little ones.
Even these least.

But . . .
The problem I faced
Was this—
To suggest some course,
Some course of action;
Or, to show concern,
Or, even to sympathize,
My Brothers and Sisters,
More often than not,
Would warn me of a
Somehow cancerous liberalism,
Of what could be
A dangerous infatuation with
"Social Action."

I longed to serve you, Lord,
Yet resisted
What to them seemed the obvious,

The ministry.
Even when all said I had a "gift."
And still others
Pointed out to me (how strange)
My "calling."
Choosing instead
Social Work,
As that occupation
Where God
Could have His way with me.
I was viewed with caution,
By even some with sincere concern.
For I was,
It seemed, even to me,
A weird sort of Christian.

My love for you, Lord,
Seemed real enough
That they could not deny—
At least they never said.
But, didn't I know?
Communists, socialists, liberals,
And such as these
Swell the ranks of this
My profession?

And after all,
Didn't I also realize,
That the poor,
In the final analysis,
Had no one really to blame
But themselves?

"Join us," they said,
"God has a work for you,
In fighting the real enemies
Of our Lord."

"And who are they?"
I asked.

"They are the communists, socialists,
Liberals,
Of course!
And perhaps most of all
Those heretics of
Evangelical tradition (?),

Those proponents of a
Social Gospel!"

But don't they see?
Our God has really only
One enemy,
And any gospel
Other than His Gospel,
Is but a tool of that enemy?
How crafty he is,
Our enemy.

He so very easily tricks us,
Tricks us into beating the wind,
While he is busy pounding
And shaping
The hearts of men.
He has split Christendom,
But not the "Church" I trust,
Into a thousand pieces.

There is, of course,
The social gospel.
But there is also a gospel
That paints
His cross
With our stars and stripes.
Sometimes this gospel's adherents
Place their trust in God,
Yes, in God's blessing
Of our armed forces,
The size of our stockpiles,
The split-second readiness of SAC,
And the willingness of all
True Americans,
To fight to the end.

There is a gospel too,
That has come even to mean,
"The American Way."
Another gospel
Expounds the thrills of the
Ultimate trip,
The final groove,
And the eternal high.

The gospels that insist,
On a cause,
A social cause, a political cause,
Or, a cause to purge society—
Purge it of one or all
Of its many evils or vices—
Are all quite fulfilling
And easily organized.

And, lest I forget,
There are any number of gospels,
Gospels that tie the Spirit,
And even Salvation,
To water,
Laying on of hands,
Tongues,
Or any number or combinations of
Consummating spiritual experiences.

Then, there is the gospel,
That is reduced
Or condensed
To four simple and convenient
Spiritual laws.
Or, perhaps
To some hidden, unwritten,
But subtle creed.

There are many others
I think.
Oh!
Lord, deliver me!

Ah,
How satisfying
Is His Gospel!
To have the Son of God
Revealed
In one's heart.
To realize
That all that is really necessary
Is to
"Look full in His wonderful face."
How wonderful
To find release
In His blood.
To leave it all
At the Master's feet.
To trust
Even His enemy
To the fulfillment of His purposes.

Only to be
"Laid hold of"
By the Father
"For the adoption of sons."

As for the poor?
The thoughts about whom
This rambling began?

REJOICE!

Rejoice because,
Although overlooked,
And never pointed out
In those many sermons—
Sermons on "The Second Coming,"
"Signs of the Times,"
Or, "The Last Days,"
And although it even seems
Mysteriously hidden from the elect,
Injustice and oppression of the poor is
Yet another sign of His coming.
"And He looked for justice,
But, behold oppression;
For righteousness,
But, behold a cry" (Isaiah 5:7).

And,
When He comes,
Ah, when He comes,
He will not judge them
From their shabby appearance,

Nor will He judge them
 By the testimonies against them
 Testimonies, even from the lips
 Of those called Christians,
 Testimonies as to
 Their inferiority,
 Worthlessness,
 Lack of dignity,
 Their laziness,
 And their complacency.
 No!
 He'll go much deeper than that.
 All the way
 To the heart.

Listen,
 Give ear and rejoice,
 To the words of the prophet,
 "But with righteousness
 Will He judge the poor,
 And with equity
 For the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11:4).

And, though it would be wrong
 To extract and make of this
 The whole, the sum total
 Of His incomprehensible plan,
 His Gospel;
 We His elect,
 Would do well till His coming
 To "cease to do evil,
 Learn to do well,
 Seek justice
 Relieve the oppressed,
 Judge the fatherless,
 Plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:16-17).

As for me,
 Oh to be numbered
 When the Son of God
 Comes into His glory,
 Among he sheep,
 His flock,
 Gathered at His right hand (Mt. 25:
 31-46).

God Uses Tracts, Do You?

Bill Swain

"I casually gave *Think of Our Lord Speaking to You* to a friend who passed on the tract to another lady," wrote a woman from Texas. "This lady gave it to her daughter who was having teenage emotional problems. . . . The girl credited the tract with helping her directly with her problem.

"Then the lady gave it to her husband's secretary. The secretary sent it along with a note to her best friend who was involved in a wife-swapping affair. She and her husband decided to stop the affair immediately as a result of the tract."

"The best friend then gave it to her sister-in-law who has cancer but has such a fear of it that she would not make plans for surgery. After reading the tract, she felt such relief and peace that she called her doctor for surgery.

"All of these people have made many comments about how this little tract had such a critical influence in their lives . . . It has the same effect on me. Every time I read it I get such a sense of how much God cares for me."

No wonder we sold over 250,000 of that tract last year!



"No teacher or school can escape the problem of life-orientation, the ultimate commitments by which every person must live. This is precisely the domain of religion. . . . thus we teach religion in the schools whether we would or not."—Dr. Philip Phenix, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



Viewing the News

ANTI-SEMITISM (actually "Jewish hatred" would be more correct terminology, since even the Arabs are "Semites") is believed to be about to increase in this country due to the shortage of oil brought on by the Israel-Arab War, which, it seems to all outsiders, was started by the so-called Arab nations. Let us pray and work to the end that this will not be true.

I READ recently that abortions now out-number births in the District of Columbia by two to one and that the president of the Rockefeller Foundation (a leading abortion advocate) says "the new objective is to create the capacity in the U.S. for from 1.2 million to 1.8 million abortions a year."

A RARE OCCURRENCE in Texas, Arkansas, Texas recently drew nationwide attention. The First Baptist Church there withdrew fellowship from four members who sell alcoholic beverages.

BUREAUCRACY brings strange desires to control. Recently Richard O. Simpson, Chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, speaking to a consumerist conference in Newark, N. J., said: "My general counsel tells me that while firearms are exempted from our jurisdiction under the Consumer Product Safety Act, we could possibly ban bullets under the Hazardous Substances Act. Now, before the National Rifle Association leaps to their telephones let me warn them that we're not listed in the directory and information can rarely find our number."

IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE with Red China our government said recently that it "acknowledges that all

Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China; the United States does not challenge that position." So our betrayal of one of the best friends we have had goes right on with our befriending one of our worst enemies. I wonder what happened to the "liberal" position that Taiwan should be left to those Taiwanese who were there before the Nationalist Chinese moved in?

THE "UNIFICATION CHURCH" is being called a "Christian Church" in the mass media, but don't believe it. The "Rev." Sun Myung Moon, said to be a former Presbyterian, is stirring up a lot of interest with public processions, but before accepting him at face value, read this from Ben L. Kaufman's column in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* for December 2, 1973: "One focus of the Rev. Mr. Moon's writings and teachings is the biblical Garden of Eden story. Adam and Eve were to have been joined by God as the perfect parents, forming with God a kind of trinity to shape the world. Eve sinned with an archangel who became Satan and that ended the blissful state of man. JESUS WAS TO be the second Adam, creating the perfect family, but He was crucified before He had a chance to marry and redeem mankind physically, the clergyman says. Jesus did redeem mankind spiritually." Mr. Moon claims a mountainside vision in 1936 where supposedly Christ told him, "Carry out my undone task." Many thanks to Mr. Kaufman for telling about this and to E. A. Bealls for sending this and so many other items I have used in my column.

THE SHUNNING of Christian values in our government schools has

gone to the point that even the National Council of Churches called for a conference on the subject and it was attended by 16 denominations. This may have healed a little of the split between the NCC and the Catholic ecumenical people as well as focusing attention on the atheistic emphasis given so much in our schools. Kentucky may be among those who move a little in the right direction. A Kentucky legislator has introduced a bill in the General Assembly to assure creationism equal emphasis with evolution, both to be taught as theories as done in California.

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS in Louisiana have dropped the "white" requirement for churches seeking to join their state convention, according to another news item recently. There was only one dissenting vote in the state convention.

DID YOU KNOW that the manger scene at the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in Washington was outlawed by a U. S. Court? And did you know that this was brought about by a suit instituted by "so-called" religious leaders - one an Episcopal minister, another a Roman Catholic priest?

AMONG THE most useful sources of material on the spiritual declension in church and government are these two, one local and one national: Christian Heritage Center, 205 Watertown City West, 1941 Bishop Lane, Louisville, Kentucky 40218. Church League of America, 422 No. Prospect Street, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.

THE MOST-FORMAL, non-evangelical churches are being changed considerably by the charismatic movement. The Catholic charismatics are becoming well-known and a large group among the Episcopalians are changing things many places.

THE NCC and some of its member denominations are publicizing the banks that have made loans to South Africa because of the white-controlled apartheid program. Some of the banks are withdrawing loan offers as a consequence. Don't wait too anxiously to see the same groups turn against many of the same banks for making loans to Russia and China, where less than 4 per cent of the people control the governments.

THE UNITED Church of Christ (a union of the Evangelical & Reformed Churches and Congregationalists) keeps in the left-wing news. Recently the head of the denomination, Dr. Robert V. Moss, after a visit with other churchmen to East Germany stated that it was "time . . . for this country to put an end to automatic, emotional anti-communism . . ." He did not state why atheism in this form should not be opposed. Also recently Eden Theological Seminary gave an honorary doctor of divinity to the president of Concordia Theological Seminary because he fought the conservative president of the Missouri Synod (Lutheran) on the subject of the theological faculty having the right to be disbelievers in the inspiration of the Bible.

THE FEDERAL government is spending much money to help build a city in North Carolina that is to be populated almost entirely by blacks. As one writer put it, "It will be interesting to see how (the government) arranges the school bussing to achieve 'proper' racial balance after building a city for 50,000 blacks."

IN CASE YOU are one of those who think that all citizens in a communist country are treated alike, you should have read the Newsweek Feature Service story on the privileged class in Moscow. The Russians are proving George Orwell's prophetic abilities by acting like "some people are more equal than others."

SEVERAL SENATORS in Washington, led by Sen. Edward Kennedy, have been trying for some time to get our government to admit all the (communist) revolutionaries that were imported into Chile by the Allende government and are being run out by the military government that saved Chile from becoming a communist slave state. A prominent worker with Kennedy is the leftist Catholic priest, Representative Robert F. Drinan. All of the communist papers and magazines are enthusiastic about the drive! Many other newspapers and magazines have joined in the effort to give those revolutionaries the freedom of this country also, and the military government of Chile has been called every terrible name I can imagine. However, many Chile citizens who love freedom have written to this country

giving thanks for their being saved from communist slavery by the military coup.

THE AMERICAN DOLLAR and lots of other national currencies are in great danger, especially those that, like our dollar, are not supported by a supply of gold or other precious metal. I would not be at all surprised if the dollar becomes almost worthless within a few years. Many economists are now joining with those who have warned about this for several years.

Yet our country is giving away quite a few billion dollars again in the next fiscal year to foreign countries in better financial shape than we are. It is government deficit spending that is apparently the prime cause of inflation and devaluing of the dollar.

MANY THANKS for your help in keeping this column going. Keep sending your clippings and your questions to Ernest E. Lyon, 2629 Valletta Road, Louisville, Ky. 40205.

Total Commitment

Mrs. Creath Davis

Isn't it amazing how we can hear something for so long and think we know all there is to know about it, and then one day it begins to dawn upon us that we really do not know the first thing about it? This has been my experience in the area of total commitment . . . This is by no means exhaustive of the beauty and meaning of total commitment, but I would like to share with you these four things I have learned:

First, in total commitment we lose our lives. This means that the sovereignty of my life slips out of my hands, so that it is no longer "I" who gives the directions, but it is God. "I" no longer belongs to "me." Like Peter, I will be girded about by another and be compelled through love to go where I would not.

Second, total commitment is not something I do, but something I must become. I do not in one act commit myself totally and unreservedly unto the Lord. This is too general. Commitment must be made as an area of my life is opened up to me, where I can see and know what is there and then come to say, "Lord, I cannot handle this area of my life properly and right. I commit it unto Thee to handle as thou seest fit."

I looked up the word *commit* in the dictionary. It stated that to commit, in its broadest term, always implied "a transfer or delivery, as to a superior power, another person's charge." From this I understand two things.

a. I can only commit something I know and possess. Commitment must be deliberate and specific. Therefore, I cannot commit to God a self I do not know.

b. Once I have committed something, it is then out of my hands.

It has been "transferred" and I no longer have the control of it. If I am still holding on to it, it has not been committed.

Third, total commitment is a process of steps. "God does not expect us to grow by leaps and bounds, but by our ability to take steps. This step-taking is entirely individual. God confronts each of us on the level on which we stand. As we take a step, He is able to confront us on a deeper level.

I think total commitment is like the man who had a piece of ground that wasn't worth very much, about \$25 an acre, which he decided to give to the Lord. He went down to the church and signed the deed, but before the ink was dry he found out coal had been discovered on the land. Well, the land was worth about \$225 an acre now, and the poor man immediately said, "Now, Lord, I gave You the land, but that coal is mine." Then he stopped and thought a minute and said, "No Lord, I gave You the land, and now I give You the coal."

Soon oil was discovered on the land. The man was sure the land and the coal were enough for the Lord. After all, the land was worth about \$1000 an acre now and surely he was entitled to some of it. But he thought seriously awhile and then said, "Lord, I gave You the land and I gave You the coal. Now I give you the oil."

Then uranium was discovered and the land was priceless. The man became angry and told the Lord he had given Him enough. The Lord waited patiently and soon the man was saying, "Lord, I gave You the land and the coal and the oil. Here, the uranium is Yours too."

Fourth, the heart and the basis of total commitment is a love for Jesus Christ and His purpose that runs deeper than life itself. This is the place I must start—with an examination of the quality and depth of my love for Jesus Christ. The depth of my commitment will be in proportion to the depth of my love. Commitment cannot be made on any other basis. Hope of reward, fear of punishment, duty, and all the many lesser motivations will cause me to only give what is essential to get me to Heaven. But if I can find in me a little spark of real love for Christ and His purpose, I can commit a little of my life in depth. Then if I can come to pray, "Oh, God, give me a love for Jesus Christ and His purpose that runs deeper than life itself, no matter what the cost," I will know I am losing my life.

—In *The Defender*

Shelomith

Mrs. Paul J. Kuecht

Shelomith (Lev. 24:10-23) was an Israelitish woman whose son had an Egyptian father. If he was her husband we are not told. The Israelites were strictly charged not to intermarry with other nations. There had been instances, of course, of intermarriage and also of illicit unions, for a mixed multitude attached itself to the Israelites when they followed Moses out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38). They caused him some trouble, too, (Num. 11:4) as disobedience always does.

In this tragic case, told in a few straight-forward, concise words, the only actors in the drama besides Moses, the judge, who are named are Shelomith and her father and the father of the tribe from which she sprung. This is unusual since she was a woman. It seems to indicate that she was perhaps the one most responsible, especially since, being an Israelitish woman, she undoubtedly knew much of God's dealings with her nation, His chosen people.

But she was of the tribe of Dan which tribe is later seen to have been one of the two tribes that went deeply into Idolatry (Jud. 17-18). These two alone apparently could not produce 12,000 each to be witnesses for God during the tribulation. The witnesses are chosen in Revelation 7 and afterward (v. 9—how long we are not told) John sees the great multitude who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. If they were the "virgins" mentioned in Rev. 14 it must be remembered that spiritual virgins were those who kept themselves true to God, who never deviated to idolatry. From the fact that these two most idolatrous tribes are the two not named in the gathering of the 144,000 in chapter 7 it is easy to suppose that neither of them (Dan or Ephraim) could produce the required numbers who had kept themselves pure before God in the matter of idol worship.

This might explain in some measure at least, Shelomith. Her union with an Egyptian in the first place shows an irreverence for God and His word. Then the fact that her son "blasphemed the Name and cursed" would follow as a natural consequence unless the lad were strongly taught by a faithful, reverent mother, or other member of her tribe. What a contrast this was to the situation in the home of Timothy whose mother and grandmother taught and trained him so faithfully as to overcome except in the matter of circumcision the influence of his Greek father. The apostle Paul took care of the one omission when he became acquainted with the family and saw their faith.

But Shelomith was evidently a Danite of the Danites; therefore her son inherited we may say, idolatry from both sides of the house. His strife with a man of Israel did not bring him into judgment. It was his blasphemy that obtained for him the death sentence. He

was stoned to death by the children of Israel. It is significant that "the children of Israel" brought him forth out of the camp "and stoned him with stones . . . as Jehovah commanded Moses."

They, all that heard him, laid their hands upon his head, and all the congregation stoned him to death "as Jehovah commanded Moses." Shelomith means peaceful. Dibri (her father) means eloquent.

Come Down and We Will Believe

Harry Gipson

These soldiers who stood at the foot of the cross uttering their cry were sensationalists. In their eyes, Jesus could vindicate his claim of Messiahship only by doing the stupendous and colossal. They were asking to see, not the picture of silent self-denial and sacrifice, obeying the will of God, but something as dramatic as loosening his hands and feet and stepping down from the cross. And when He did not do it, the whole incident became so boring that the soldiers sat down and cast lots for his garments. There, within a stone's throw of them, the greatest drama ever enacted was in progress. Yet, they were completely unaware of it because they were looking for the sensational.

Today on every hand, people are trying to find God in the spectacular and dramatic. To them, the test of every sermon is not "Is it true?" but, "Does it sweep me across the whole keyboard of human emotion, leaving me perched on a mountain-type high?" The test of revelation is not, "Did it come from the book?" for that is ever so undramatic; but "Did it come by vision or by dream?" Similarly, the test of one's spirituality is judged, not by his devotion to God or his service to man, but by his amazing ability to feel overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, while speaking in an ecstatic language.

People who try to find God in the spectacular and dramatic, are often likely to miss God for the very reason that there is a sense in which no one is as unsensational as God. Naaman, the leper, wanted God to cure him of his dread disease in a dramatic, spectacular way. God told him to dip seven times in the muddy Jordan. How undramatic! Yet, he found healing.

So many are missing Christ because they are expecting religion to be dramatic. They are looking for a "Sign" which Jesus said was the mark of an evil and adulterous generation (Matt. 12:39). Such need to hear the statement of Abraham to the rich man in Hades: "If they heed not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Salvation is not sensational. Faith is not all emotion. You can sit in its very shadow, as did the soldiers, and still miss the meaning. —In *Gospel Tidings*

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

After Armageddon --

Then What?

O. E. Phillips

We know from the study of the prophets, both Old and New Testaments, that the Battle of Armageddon will bring to an end Gentile World Rule. There are quite a number of world shaking events that will take place, but as to the exact order of all of them we cannot see clearly so far. But we call attention to some of them and probably we may place some of them in their order.

In Daniel 12:11-12 the great angel revealed to Daniel that after the 1260 days that ends the Tribulation with the Battle of Armageddon, 30 days will be added to those 1260 days, then the angel adds 45 more days to the 30 days, making 75 days in all. Why did he separate those 75 days? and what are some of the events that will take place?

Zechariah 14:4 reveals that at the descent of Christ the world's armies will be besieging Jerusalem. As soon as His feet touch the mountain it will split wide open—half of it falling north and half of it falling south, with a very great valley running east and west. The 12th verse reveals that the armies of the world will fall dead—their flesh consuming away on their bones, their eyes consuming away in their socket, and their tongues in their mouths. This is a horrible scene, but this writer believes the Lord said what He meant and meant what He said and knew what He was talking about.

We know that there will be great changes that will take place on the earth upon the Lord's return, such as a great river springing forth from under a new temple which will be one mile square. That river will flow into the Dead Sea and heal the waters, then flow south to the Red Sea. Zechariah was told that the mountains south of Jerusalem will all be leveled and made like a plain and men will dwell there. Whether all this will be completed in the 30 days we do not know, but He can certainly do it as easily as He created the earth. It appears that after the first order of events take place and the judgment of all nations has taken place that the above events will follow.

When the battle shall be over and the judgment of the nations has been finished, billions of people will be dead—all unsaved, and they will be doomed to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). All saved dead will have been resurrected. It appears that now will

be the time for the HOME COMING of the SAVED REMNANT of ISRAEL from all the world. Zechariah 12:10-14 reveals that when these saved Jews see Him whose side was pierced they will go to weeping for the sins of their ancestors in their long rejection of their Messiah. This "Remnant of Jews" are represented in Revelation 12 as the "Woman Clothed with the Sun, the moon under her feet and crown of twelve stars upon her head." She will be hidden in the wilderness during the 1260 days, but now she is returning as "The Daughter of Zion to her beloved city" (Isa. 35:10; Zech. 2:10; Isa. 5:26).

The weeping will be turned into joy at the presence of Christ for He will wipe all tears away. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be there together with David. The great host of 144,000 Jewish preachers of the Tribulation will be there as well as the blind, the halt and the outcasts of Israel who have been saved. They will never stumble any more. Imagine the joy of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and all the rest of redeemed saints, and listen to Jesus as He speaks peace to all who have been washed with His blood. Read Isaiah 65:18-19; 2:6-13; Isaiah 27:7-9).

THE FORTY-FIVE DAYS

We shall not be dogmatic, but it appears that these 45 days will open with a great wedding feast. Not the wedding, because that takes place in heaven, but Jesus speaks as follows in Luke 12: 35-56, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Matthew 25:10 speaks of the marriage, when it should have added the word feast which would make it read marriage feast.

Here will be fulfilled Joel 2:28-29. This text had A fulfillment at Pentecost, but *THE* fulfillment will be after the Lord returns. At Pentecost He was poured out upon a few, whereas the prophecy reads that the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. For the first time since the fall of Adam and Eve has the earth had such a company of regenerated people on it, with all the unsaved cast into the lake of fire. Now God could pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, with all the other wonders mentioned in the text, which did not take place at Pentecost.

Another great promise that Jesus made fits in for fulfillment at this point, namely Matthew 19:28, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Do not overlook the 29th verse and its great promise. This will also fulfill Isaiah 1:26, "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness." Read the remainder of that chapter.

And that is not all; the prophet Isaiah was led to write that a great highway will be brought into existence that will run from Assyria through Israel to Egypt, for all those countries will have turned to the Lord. Isaiah 19:24-25 reveals the following: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land. Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." As unlikely as this may appear I believe it will be just as God had it recorded. Do not try to explain it away, just believe it as it is recorded.

WHERE WILL THE CHURCH FIT IN?

In Revelation 3:21 is a promise to the Church, just as He sits with His Father upon His throne so we will sit with Him on His throne. In the 5th chapter we see the redeemed saints in heaven, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Note the last few words, "AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH" (Rev. 5:9-10). I believe it, do you?

This Scripture and others teach that we will return with Him and will reign with Him. There is no text or intimation that we will retire to heaven and wait for Him at the end of His thousand years reign.

There will be one Church and one Kingdom, not two. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." This will continue when the earth passes away at the end of the thousand years and we are to be in the New Heaven and the New Earth for eternity.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is the eye by which we look to Jesus. A dim-sighted eye is still an eye; a weeping eye is still an eye.

Faith is the hand with which we lay hold of Jesus. A trembling hand is still a hand. And he is a believer whose heart within him trembles when he touches the hem of the Savior's garment, that he may be healed.

Faith is the tongue by which we taste how good the Lord is. A feverish tongue is, nevertheless, a tongue, and, even then, we may believe when we are without the smallest portion of comfort; for our faith is founded, not upon feeling, but upon the promises of God.

Faith is the foot by which we go to Jesus. A lame foot is still a foot. He who comes slowly, nevertheless comes. —George Mueller.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Is it necessary for the Christian to confess his sins before the church for them to be forgiven?

Sin is an offense against God, and forgiveness of sins is, in the final sense, a matter between God and the individual sinner. We must be careful not to impose some other intermediary or priest or even the church acting in a priestly capacity as being necessary for forgiveness. Every Christian is a priest, able to petition God on his own behalf. This is a basic truth we should keep in mind when discussing sin and its forgiveness. It is possible for one to feel that he must confess all his sins before the assembled church in much the same fashion as the Catholic may confess before a priest. The New Testament certainly does not teach this.

Let it be understood, however, that there is a very definite place for public confession of sins by the Christian. This is true, primarily, because sin may also be against our fellow man or against the church. The reason for the public confession before the church is not because the church has some priestly power that must be exercised but because the sin has been against the church as a whole or in part and this is a very effective way of making one's repentance known and of asking forgiveness on the human level. For this reason the confession should normally be made where the sin was committed, not at a sister congregation somewhere on the other side of town or down the country several miles. We need the pardon of those injured, not the people who have never heard of us.

Possibly some illustrations will help clarify when public confession is needed. A man finds himself guilty of entertaining evil thoughts, lustful feelings, or some other private wickedness. His sin is before God and is totally unknown to any other person. He needs only repent and confess before God. Only God has been sinned against. Again, a family finds itself in bitterness, speaking angry words and committing spiteful deeds, all within the confines of the home or in the presence only of one another. Let the sin be confessed toward God and toward those other members of the family involved. The church as such knows nothing of the sin and has not been involved in it. It is not wrong if one wishes to confess this kind of failing before the church and finds help in doing so, but it is not necessary for forgiveness. But let us suppose that the same family strife and bitterness becomes known to others, begins

to injure the good name of the church and raises charges of hypocrisy (etc.) in the thoughts and words of others. One of the most effective ways of correcting that sin with respect to the church and others is the public confession, with its stated or implied request for forgiveness from those offended. In short, if the sin has been public, or the knowledge of it has been public, then the confession of it needs to be public. This enables those offended or injured to know of the change of heart. There is a sense in which forgiveness from men (or rather, the genuine seeking of it) is necessary to the forgiveness of God. Repentance toward men is a part of repentance before God.

This matter is kindred to restitution, which was discussed in these columns recently. When one genuinely repents of sin, he seeks to have the sin made right with God and, if men have been involved in any way, with men. This is a natural result of true repentance. The absence of the public in those cases where it should occur may very well indicate the lack of genuine repentance.

Too frequently, I fear, Christians try to bypass the public acknowledgment of wrong-doing because it is distasteful to the flesh and the repentance really has not been complete. To be sure, there are plenty of cases when it is a matter of human judgment whether the public confession is needed. We need to be careful as a church or an offended individual that we do not require more than we ought. We must not get so technical that we fail to recognize genuine repentance when it occurs. But as those repenting of an offense, we ought not assume that men know more than they do or that they know our hearts. Many of us need to be a good deal more verbal and more ready to confess openly, "I have sinned. I am sorry. Forgive me!"

Normally a general confession will be sufficient. One need not always go into the gory details of the sin. It is possible to "confess" sin in such a way as to glorify sin. Some even give the impression of boasting about their vile deeds. This surely is neither necessary nor right. As a rule it will be evident to those involved what the burden on the heart is. Nevertheless, one must not avoid the specific confession in some sort of fraudulent attempt to give the impression of repentance when that has not occurred.

In Matt. 7:1, Jesus forbids judging. Yet in other passages judging is demanded of us or implied as a commendable action (e.g., 1 Cor. 5; 6:1-5). When one denounces sin in a person's life, he is frequently met with the protest, "That's judging!" Please give me some help on this subject.

With every topic in God's word, it is the sum or total of God's revelation which we need and which will provide us with the whole truth. When there are two apparently contradictory lines of thought in God's word, the believer knows the problem is with his understanding. He ought to realize that God is showing different facets of the truth. He must not set one line of thought against the other,

choosing the one and rejecting the other. If he seeks carefully, he will find the harmony that exists between the two. The problem concerning judgment is as simple as that.

The Lord never intended for us to be wishy-washy, unable to stand in the presence of sin to recognize it for what it is. It is clear that the church at Corinth had to do some judging as to the sin of the fornicator. Paul indicates that he personally had made a decision in the matter. He further indicates in chapter 6 that Christians ought to be able to do some necessary judging. It is evident, when we stop to think, that the Christian's ability to help the weak (1 Thess. 5:14) involves judging who is weak, or his ability to do the Lord's work involves knowing that some matters are "weightier" (Matt. 23:23). What was Paul doing when he declared that Demas "loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10), or that some had erred from the truth (2 Tim. 2:17-18), or that others had "made shipwreck concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 1:19-29)? When we begin to look out men full of the Holy Spirit to lead the flock of God, must there not be some discernment or judging? We have likely too long allowed ourselves to be dominated by only a part of the Lord's instructions concerning judging, and we have forgotten the admonition to *judge righteous judgment* (Jn. 7:24). It is really a dodge to say we are fruit inspectors instead of judges. When the Lord declared that "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:16), He was requiring a certain amount of judgment and discernment on our part.

The major thrust of Matt. 7:1-5 is that of prohibiting *unrighteous* judgment—judgment based on too little knowledge or on externals only, or judgment against another when our judgment is blinded by something immensely greater in our own life. He was warning of harsh, condemning judgment that is motivated by the flesh. Some have the idea that when our Lord said, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," He was advocating great leniency and meant that if we do not denounce sin He will take no notice of our sin and it will not be denounced. Nothing could be farther from the truth. What He really says is that with what fairness or righteousness we judge we shall be judged. There is no fairness about judging when we substitute our values in place of the Lord's. The context shows the thing prohibited is blinded judgment caused by a loss of relative values. He forbids the use of one standard for ourselves and another standard for others. Because it deals with such a common human tendency to judge unfairly or unrighteously, we very much need this particular passage and facet of the truth, but it should not become an excuse for failing to make the righteous judgments that are needed.

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Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Winston N. Allen

Eagle River, Alaska

December Bulletin

There has been good progress on the new basement structure which was begun September 17. The first meeting will be held there Sunday, December 9. This week 2x2's are being nailed to the concrete-block walls and insulation and sheet-rock are being attached to this framework. Men of the church are doing the work at night. Yesterday I completed the construction of a speaker's stand which Irene plans to stain and varathane. Though there is yet much to be done, we are thankful the building is now usable.

Work yet to be done and equipment and materials which need to be purchased include: windows (openings now are covered with plastic), four inside doors and a fireproof door for the furnace room, suspended ceiling, covering for the concrete floor, chairs and equipment for the Sunday School rooms, interior decorating, fixtures installed in the two restrooms, preparation of a parking lot, and there are several fire code requirements to be met.

Attendance in the mobile home during the summer and fall has been crowded much of the time. Two Sunday mornings fifty or more people were present. Sickness and severe weather have hindered some in recent weeks. For several months on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, Irene has been teaching Bible classes for ladies in Fort Richardson and in the Birchwood Loop area.

Robert and Joy Garrett

Salisbury, Rhodesia

December 20

The Salisbury African churches held an all day fellowship meeting on December 2. They plan to have other such meetings from time to time as the Lord leads. One of the purposes is to encourage and strengthen the younger congregations. The first such meeting was held at Tafara. I spoke at the morning service and Bro. W. L. Brown in the afternoon. Four responded to the morning invitation—three to accept Christ as Lord and Savior and one rededication. There was another baptism in the afternoon. The different congregations chartered buses to bring them to the meeting. The building was packed. The buses have luggage racks on the roof so Harare brought along some of their benches to help seat the crowd. Everyone brought their own lunch because of the difficulty of cooking food for such a crowd and it was impossible for the people to go home for lunch. Although it rained heavily during the lunch hour which made it impossible for us to eat outside, it

did not dampen people's spirits. The meeting was very worthwhile and we praise the Lord for His blessings.

Joy and I are busy with different Bible classes again. There is such a great need for teaching. We need your prayers that our teaching will be effective. This afternoon I finished printing the December issue of the Munyai. The other day a man stopped me on the street. Although I did not know him he knew me. He wanted to thank me for the magazine and said that everyone enjoyed it and got a blessing from it. He also asked for some tracts and I will mail some to him. He is a member of a country church which is about 50 miles from Salisbury. The Munyai goes out to over 60 congregations. I will be so glad when our new printing equipment arrives as it will make our work much easier and do a better job. Please pray for this work.

Mabel Bailey

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

December 16

This morning the boys and I went with the Kendall Balls to worship at the new congregation for coloreds that started recently.

We never have seen Elaine since we came to live in Rhodesia. We are expecting Dennis and Anita Mitchell down from Namwianga this week and are looking forward to that. We wish Elaine would come, too. We did enjoy having Gladys with us with her husband and family. Just now they are sailing towards the U. S.

Addie Brown

Waterfalls, Salisbury, Rhodesia

December 10

We are back home and settled in. We had such a good flight back. Dora had the house clean and shining. She also had us for several meals after we got back. The first Sunday we went to Waterfalls for meeting and Daddy Brown preached. The work has grown and I'm so thankful. Another woman was baptized last Sunday. The Ian Garrs (whom Robert Gill baptized) have been faithful. Ian preached last Sunday night and did quite well. They put their membership in at Waterfalls. David works hard to keep everyone encouraged and busy. The work among the whites is a sort of a Restoration Movement, and there are some who want to be simple undenominational Christians. Some have never accepted Christ before.

Daddy went out to Tafara yesterday where he preached in the morning. Nine came forward at the invitation—6 for baptism and 3 confessed sin. He said the building was two-thirds full. I called Sister S. D. Garrett this morning. She is keeping well and is busy. She plans to spend a day with us next week.

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Rhodesia

December 1

. . . As I walked from the social welfare office, a clerk called me to go see one of the owners of one of the biggest stores in Livingstone. She said, "Elaine, my father passed away two years ago

and left each of us children a little gift, so Mr. Oga and I decided to give it to you to be used for the Old Folks however you think it can be used." Truly God alone could work all things out for the good at just the right moment. I suggested she contact Bro. Sikabbubba and give the gift for use buying the windows for the remodeling of the Old Folks Home. She said they will contact him this week and give him the gift. Then she drew out the envelope with the gift and on it already was written "K60 for the Old Folks Home." Next week the plans for the remodeling are to be discussed, so the gift came at just exactly the right time.

Dennis and Betty Allen

Kowloon, Hong Kong

December 31

We have just finished 3 nights of evangelistic meetings. Several of the young people were able to bring their unsaved friends. The last night three expressed their decision to accept Christ. They need more teaching, but we hope they will complete their obedience in baptism soon. We hope to be more aggressive in evangelism in the coming year.

On the evening of the 23rd the brethren had a Christmas love feast. Each one brought something and we had an abundance of food. Some brethren came that we had lost touch with and had not seen in years. We had a service following the meal.

Christmas was a quiet day at home enjoying one another. In the evening we had a British lady for dinner who is alone in Hong Kong. She teaches at the university of Hong Kong. We had an enjoyable and profitable visit.

When the children go back to school Jan. 7 they will be almost immediately plunged into semester exams, so they must spend a lot of this week in preparation. Lots of home work is required by the teachers here.

Tomorrow afternoon there is to be a tea party for one of the Chinese girls who is getting married, and we are responsible for most of the arrangements for that. The day following we are invited to her wedding feast. She is marrying a Chinese boy who has come back from the States to find a wife. She will be going to the States to work with him in his restaurant. He seems like a nice boy, but the sad thing is he is not a Christian. She did bring him one night to the evangelistic meeting. She has spent her life selling fruit in the market so it will be a big adjustment for her.

Christmas was the coldest here for 26 years. Even though we have no heat in our apartment we are quite comfortable. Our windows face east and south and we get the sun all day long. The coldest so far has been 46 degrees.

The Spiritual Woman

Sylvia Lockwood

YOU ARE NOT YOUR HUSBAND'S FIRST WIFE! You are not even the girl he married. That is, you aren't if you have been saved since your wedding day. Then ask yourself these questions: **Is he unreasonable because he objects to the step I have taken? Or, am I the unreasonable one?**

Think for a moment of the radical change that has taken place in your life. Did you used to go to shows with your Bill? And dances? Did you spend hours with other couples over the card table? And did you suddenly give up these hours of pleasure together because you received the Lord as your Savior?

Is it really any wonder that your husband is disappointed, disgruntled—even disgusted? After all, a mutual satisfaction in these pastimes undoubtedly had a part in drawing you two together in the first place. Now you have suddenly discovered that you no longer care to participate in these things.

But what of Bill? His heart is still unchanged. He still longs for the old companionship, the old places of amusement. And you have become a strange, unpredictable creature, transformed almost overnight. You are no longer the girl he married. Is it any wonder he rebels against the One who so changed you?

Why do I say this to you? Because I wish that someone had just pointed out my husband's side of the question in those first days after I was saved and became a new creature in Him. I believe with all my heart that if such had been the case, it would have changed the course of our lives—my own, my husband's and my children's. And my husband would have been able to see Christ in me long before he did.

As it was, I went on for years in my self-righteous way, feeling sorry for myself because my mate did not see as I did—insisting on my 'right' to Thursday and Sunday evenings out that I might attend services. After all, if I sat with the children the other five nights, he should be able to stay with them two! And I insisted on other 'rights' also.

Then one blessed winter when I was 'cooped up' with the children because they both had whooping cough, I did a great deal of Bible study on my own. It was then that the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart through such passages as Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 4:30-32; and especially 1 Peter 3. I saw myself as God saw me—and as my husband saw me. It wasn't easy to face the facts. This wasn't a nice picture at all. How short I fell of God's ordained ideal of a Christian wife!

The Holy Spirit showed me that I had no 'rights' except the right (and glorious privilege) of living in godly subjection to my

The above article came to us on a mimeographed sheet from a brother in Colorado. We do not know the author nor where this was originally published.

husband, displaying the fruit of the Spirit in my life to the glory of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

I knelt in brokenhearted contrition before my heavenly Father, confessing a long list of 'dispositional' sins—especially in relation to my husband. I felt the 'water of the Word' flowing through my being with cleansing and sweetening power. When I arose from my knees that day I was *truly* a new creature in Christ. And my heart was overflowing with a love for my husband that I had not known in a long time. Oh, what a refreshing, blessed experience it was!

But the test of that experience came in the days that followed. It is never easy to die daily to self. And Satan saw to it that I was tested and tried from every side. It was not easy to put my husband's desires above my own. And, at first, after I had confessed to him my failure to live before him as a Christian wife should (even as I had confessed to my heavenly Father), there were many times when he tried my 'sincerity' (as he put it) to the uttermost. Only the grace of God saw me through. But it did! Wonderful, all-sufficient grace of God!

Oh, I wasn't perfect from that day on. Far from it, as my husband will attest! But I was sincerely learning to yield my '*members as instruments of righteousness unto God*'; and not as '*instruments of unrighteousness*' (Rom. 6:13). I was learning daily to reckon myself '*to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus, our Lord*' (Rom. 6:11). I was being taught to walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh (Gal. 5:16). What a joy it brought to my heart, and what a change it brought in my husband's attitude! There was a new respect born in his heart for my Lord and His Word, as God took me through the rough places and gave me grace to accept forgiveness when I failed.

There came a day when the 'rights' I used to demand were freely, and lovingly, granted. But it didn't come in a matter of weeks, nor even in a matter of months. It took years. How grateful I am to God for His faithfulness to me through this time!

No, my husband is still not an out-and-out Christian, though he makes a profession. But he acts more like a Christian than some of my friends' husbands, who are pillars in the church. Where he used to hinder in every possible way anything I desired to do in my Lord's service, today he urges me to participate and does his utmost to help.

He tells me that he would not have his 'first wife' back for anything in this world, agreeing that the changes wrought in my life by the Holy Spirit, through the Word, have all been for the better. He no longer resents the fact that worldly amusements are 'out' as far as I am concerned, but commends me for sincerely living as I believe my Lord would have me live. And I firmly believe that one of these days will see him taking an out-and-out stand for my Lord and by my side in the church. May God hasten the day!

My one big regret is that some '*mother in Israel*' did not see my need and set me straight earlier in my Christian life on God's re-

quirements for Christian wives. Had I known then what God expected of me, perhaps my husband would have found Christ as his Savior long ago. At least he would have had a sweeter wife to live with down through the years!

Your God Determines Your Destiny

Billy Ray Lewter

The only real freedom a person has is the freedom to choose the source into which he will put his trust; to choose what he will depend on to make life meaningful; to choose his "god." Once he has made that choice, then, his "god" determines his destiny. Paul said in Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Jesus said in John 8:34: "Everyone that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin."

From the times of ancient history, nations and individuals have had their gods. They recognized them as gods; they called them by name. One interesting (or rather tragic) thing about these gods and goddesses of ancient history is that they are still with us. The names have changed, the mythology has been dropped, and the worship is more subtle; but the world goes right on worshipping the same deities.

Is that because these gods and goddesses reflect the drives, desires, and search for security which are basic to human nature? Is it because they are simply extensions of ourselves?

KNOWLEDGE

There was Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and knowledge. She was represented by a forty-foot statue of wood, gold, and ivory in the inner sanctuary of the Parthenon, the great marble temple on the acropolis of Athens. Athens, the ancient capital of philosophy, the city of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other giants of thought, was named after this goddess.

Well, Athena is still with us today. She's worshipped as passionately as ever, but known more commonly as "knowledge." (The search for "wisdom" seems to be in disrepute.) The worship of knowledge is one of the by-products of a scientific, technological, computerized age. Modern man has tried to exclude things emotional, moral, and religious, and has put his faith and trust fully in knowledge—a god as real to America today as Athena was to the Greeks. But perhaps the best critique of modern man is that made by Paul, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." That's because their god determines their destiny!

SELF-INDULGENCE

There was Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, known as Dionysius among the Greeks. Festivals of eating and drinking were held in his honor in Rome and Athens. Euripides wrote a famous play about Bacchus. In Lebanon there still stands an almost complete

ancient temple of Bacchus. Inside is his statue, a plump old fellow with his eyes rolled back in his head, holding a bunch of grapes in his hand.

Today the symbol is different. Instead of a drunk old man in a temple we have suggested to us sophisticated men and women with a sparkle in their eyes admiring a glass of whiskey. Millions are still worshipping Bacchus. In spite of warnings about the dangers of alcohol, the number one social problem, people are still taking to drink until drink finally takes them. Their god always determines their destiny!

SEX

Consider these goddesses. Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty, who loved Mars, god of war, and had a son, Cupid, who became god of love. Venus, with Cupid, helped lovers with their problems.

Another Roman goddess was Diana, the goddess of the moon, the daughter of Jupiter and twin sister of Apollo. Diana looked after maidens and helped women in childbirth. The temple of Diana at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world.

The Greek goddess of love and sex was Aphrodite. Each evening about a thousand priestesses would come down into Athens to encourage men in the worship of Aphrodite. Their sandals were inscribed with the words "Follow me."

Ashtoreth (or Astarte), the sister of Baal, was the goddess of sexual love. Canaanite religion centered almost completely on sex. The hillside temples ("high places") where sacrifices were offered to Baal and Ashtoreth were legalized centers of vice; a glorification of sex in the name of religion. (Gomer, the wife of Hosea, was a "Kadesh," a temple prostitute.)

Very often in the Old Testament Israel mixed the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth with the worship of Jehovah—and it's easy to see why! If it hadn't been for the stern moral law of Moses, the faith in one God, and the commanding presence of men like Elijah, Israel never would have survived the fleshly appeal of the religion around them.

Today we don't have ornate temples on high hills. We have motels, parked cars, drive-in theaters, etc. About the only other change in the past few thousand years is that an animal (as in Ash-toreth and Baal worship) is no longer sacrificed before the rituals begin.

But God alone knows how many people continue to offer sacrifices of health, nerves, reputation, homes, and maybe their eternal salvation on the altar of sex—sex that has become an end in itself, a god that determines destinies!

MATERIAL ABUNDANCE

The most powerful god in the ancient Middle East was Baal, the son of El, the Bull. Baal was the god of rain, fertility, nature, and the resulting material abundance. Baal was known as Chemosh in Moab, and as Melkart in Tyre and Sidon.

We don't talk of Baal today, but the material abundance which he represented is very much a god today. Materialism is so much a part of our lives, that even as Christian, the things God has given have often become more real to us than God Himself. Americans actually may be the biggest idol worshippers of all time! Maybe the warning to materialistic American "Christians" needs to be similar to that of Elijah to Israel: if Jehovah be God, *follow Him*; but if Baal, then follow *him!* to hell! because, again, your god determines your destiny!

GOD OR SELF

These gods and goddesses from ancient history have all changed their names and forms, but it is obvious they're still with us, because these man-made gods are simply extensions of human nature. They provide a visible and tangible means of filling basic needs of human nature: recognition, achievement, power, acquisition, meaning.

Whatever it is, then, that is most important to us; whatever we count on and turn to in a squeeze; whatever we give priority to and receives our fullest attention and thought (it may be education, money, sex, alcohol, work, clothes, illnesses, power, pleasure, etc.) this has become our *god*, even though it certainly is not what we would intellectually or theologically say is our God. But Paul said, "To whom you present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants you are whom you obey."

The only real freedom we have is the freedom of choice; the freedom to choose who will be in control of our lives. Ultimately there are only two candidates for this position of supremacy. God as revealed through Jesus Christ, or ourselves. We may manufacture outward, visible forms of deities to worship, but these are all simply extensions of ourselves. The candidates remain only two. Either God, Jehovah, has the last word, or we do.

The major problem we face in life then, is self-centeredness. The fall of man is well expressed by Isaiah, "We have turned every one to his own way." It's human nature to put ourselves at the center, to play God, to worship ourselves and the extensions of our desires. God is on the side lines of our self-centered world, and we're in bondage to self.

The only escape from this destructive bondage is to *surrender* fully, consciously, daily, the control of our lives and wills to God. We need desperately, as Christians, to know God in terms of His *Lordship* over us.

Jesus said to His disciples, (Mt. 16:24,25): "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The choice of what we follow after is ours, but we'd better be aware of the consequences, because this choice determines our destiny. The warning of First John is still relevant: "My little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Israel's Troubles

R. H. Boll — 1939

The real reason of Israel's long distress and terrible suffering is declared in the same faithful Book that tells of their origin and calling, foretold their present state, and prophesies their future. Their sufferings in Old Testament times were caused by their unfaithfulness to Jehovah their God, especially in the matter of idolatry. After their return their disobedience took a different turn and reached its climax in the rejection of their Messiah. Nothing else could be pointed to as adequate cause of the new and all-surpassing calamities that have befallen them since.

A nation, of course, includes a great number of individuals, good and bad, wicked and personally innocent. In *national* judgments, all suffer together. There is such a thing as national guilt as well as individual. The Jew today instantly resents the imputation of the murder of Jesus. Only a few leaders, say they, committed that deed. True, but those leaders acted representatively for the nation, and the people fell in behind them. This is always the case in national transgression. However, that in this instance the people as a whole participated in the sin of their leaders appears plainly in the after-history of the book of Acts.

The explanation of the age-long distress of the nation is recorded in the gospels, in their own utterance and choice. "We have no king but Caesar," they said (Jn. 19:15). So they have had "Caesar" ever since. "Not this man, but Barabbas," they shouted, and Barabbas the robber has haunted their history ever since. "His blood be upon us and our children," they cried; and that blood-guilt has followed their race through all the centuries. True, they say that they now repudiate the action of their fathers. But there is only one way in which they can repudiate that deed. There is no middle course in the case of Jesus of Nazareth; if He was not what He claimed to be, then He deserved to die as He did; but if He was what He claimed to be, He must be accepted as Christ and Lord. Only by the latter course can any living Jew clear himself and save himself from his untoward generation.

DEBTORS TO THE JEWS

But in saying this we are far from endorsing the wanton wickedness and cruelty of their oppressors. Still further would we be from intimating that any Christian should—or consistently could—share in the spirit of antisemitism. God lets His instruments of wrath execute the evil work, but His children are vessels unto honor. It is theirs to represent their Lord in all His mercy and love. Every Christian, though recognizing the situation and all the reasons for it, has the Christlike heart of compassion and moreover remembers that to that nation he owes a debt of supreme gratitude (Jn. 4:22). For through them we have received the priceless treasure of God's Word. Theirs were the covenants of the promise, theirs also the

fathers, and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. 9:1-5). We Gentiles who are Christ's do this day live off the root and fatness of their olive tree.

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," said the Lord long ago (Isa. 48:10). "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly" (Hos. 5:15). "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth" (Amos 9:9). "And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God" (Zech. 13:9). The day of the fulfilment of this is drawing nigh. And the Lord said, "From henceforth ye shall not see me till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. 23:29). What a great day that will be! "For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15).

NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

Gallatin, Tenn. Church of Christ: Last Sunday evening those present were treated to a series of slides sent to us by Brother Winston Allen from Eagle River, Alaska. The slides gave us a progress report on the building of the house of worship for the Spring Brook congregation at Eagle River where Brother Allen ministers. We remind you that although the space is now enclosed and the congregation can begin holding services in it still the work is far from complete. The window openings are still covered with plastic sheeting, interior partitions are not installed, plumbing is yet to be completed, etc. The members of the congregation are going ahead with the work as fast as they can but they are limited both in time and in finances. Continue to pray to the Lord to move His people in the South 48 States to help supply the funds to purchase materials with which the Eagle River congregation can work.

Buechel Congregation to Read Through the Bible in 1974

The Bible teacher was ashamed to admit that he had never read the Bible through. He had been teach-

ing a class of adults for several years. He had just followed the printed materials, however, and spent very little time with God's word. Actually, this is not unusual. Very few have ever completely studied or even read through God's Book.

The Lord leading we will both read and preach the entire Bible in 1974. Beginning Sunday the sermon will come from the scriptures assigned for reading. Week by week we will read entire books of the Word of God, then on Sunday you will have your reading emphasized by the sermon. —Mike Sanders.

Portland Ave. Church of Christ: At the close of 1973 Portland had a total of 25 new births for the year. The last born into the family of God was Kevin McCaughey, son of Ruby and Floyd. He became a child of God on December 23, 1973.

THANK YOU!

From the faculty of PCS comes the following note of thanks: "To the churches and PCS families, thank you for the very generous thanksgiving food shower. We thank you and God

for providing so much of our food for the next three weeks. We certainly appreciate your thoughtfulness and sacrifice."

Our teachers are also grateful to the PCIS Alumni Association who presented a turkey to each faculty family on November 22nd.

Sellersburg, Ind.: Born again at 79? Yes, that's right. Our hearts were made to rejoice at the news of Louis Keibler's decision to accept Christ as Saviour. He was buried with his Lord in baptism on Monday morning, Dec. 31, 1973. We welcome Lou into our congregation, and may God use him to His glory. What a wonderful way to start the new year.

Buechel Church of Christ: Greg Hammond became a Christian and was baptized January 7.

Tell City, Ind.: We co-operated with Lilly Dale this New Year's in a Watch night service held there. Speakers were Brethren Elmer Ringer, Bill Smallwood, Harry Coultas, and myself. In spite of very slick roads, the meeting was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Plans are being made for a spring revival meeting with Bro. Julius Hovan, to be held in April. Also the SCC chorus is to be with us the 10th of February.

Our ladies' class meets every Tuesday night. Besides studying presently in Romans, these ladies make quilts which are distributed to those in need. A men's class has recently been started and meets the first and third Friday evenings of each month.

We have seen an increase in our Sunday School attendance and in our worship services. Our Sunday school averages in the lower 80's and Sunday morning worship around 115. Recently, two families have placed membership with us. —Ray Naugle

Rangeland: As we look back on '73 we do so with thanksgiving to God! If memory serves us right, it was our greatest single year as to responses to the invitation, and before the year ended, we saw several returning to study and worship with us. And it was encouraging to notice a number of others demonstrating an improved spirit of dependability. The brethren at Rangeland demonstrated a genuine

spirit of faith in God by accepting greater financial responsibilities.

We're happy, and thankful, to report that God has rewarded the efforts of brethren in the Central Louisiana area to secure a time slot for "Words of Life," and the first program was aired on KSYL in Alexandria, Sunday night, January 6, at 9 o'clock. Brother Jerry Samples, minister of the Alexandria church, called last Saturday with this encouraging information. We believe the Lord opened this door for His Word on this station in answer to prayer. Let us continue in prayer that our God will give us favor in other areas.

The time change that was recently put into effect didn't affect our broadcasts on WFIA or WHAS in Louisville, but in time zones that went on Eastern Daylight Time, our broadcast on WHAS is now heard at 12:05 (midnight) and in the Central Time zone, it is heard at 11:05 p.m. In Louisville, you'll continue hearing "Words of Life" at 9 a.m. on radio station WFIA, and at 11:05 p.m. on WHAS.

Highland Church, Louisville, Ky.: The Maple Manor Christian Homes, both divisions, need workers. Words of Life is now on KSYL in Alexandria, Louisiana. SCC has had an increase in student body for the second semester. Their lectureship and the PCS Spiritual Emphasis Week will both begin March 19. PCS has had to borrow (at no interest) only \$2,000 so far this school year. —Bulletin of January 13, 1974

Iroquois Church, Louisville, Ky.:

Praise the Lord for the Last Sunday of 1973! What a wonderful way to close out the old year! Fifty-seven in Bible School, 62 at Morning Worship, and Sixty, that's right, sixty present at evening worship! That's not all—there were six decisions for rededication of life! Next week we hope to give a report on the whole year. It was full of blessings, and we know 1974 will be even greater as we are led by His Spirit!

MORE NEWS & NOTES WANTED:

Others would like to hear about your area. Why not send in news on a regular basis?



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—The Sunday School Times.

WIDELY USED—

"A New Creation" has been stocked by a number of book stores over the country since being favorably reviewed by *The Sunday School Times*. Many have found it to be an ideal gift for new converts and young people. One colored congregation in Tennessee bought a copy for every member in the church. A number of young people's groups have used it successfully as a basis for a series of studies on the practical problems which face them. A missionary in Africa has asked for permission to translate it into Tonga using photographs of native Christians.

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