

THE WORD AND WORK

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God's Family

W. R. H.

THE YEAR THAT IS

It is good to look back at the end of a year and to count the many high points that the Lord has permitted us to experience as we journey along. Of course, one cannot guess the nature of the events of another's life, nor would another be greatly impressed with mine, but there are some generalities that are common to us all. Perhaps this has been the year of a birth in your circle, or a marriage or a death. In the spiritual realm God may have given you some anchor point, such as a definite prayer answered, a body restored by the Lord's power, or a sinner-friend helped to enter the gates of Life.

At Nelsonville, Portland, and several other congregations, we enjoy the annual "watch night service." I use the word "enjoy," because for the ones who come, it is true joy. What better place could we find in which to close out the old year and usher in the new, than in the fellowship of the house of God? The service generally consists of a lengthy sermon dealing with the state of our nation and/or the signs of the times. Then, after fellowship, comes a time of sharing and of thanksgiving in word, prayer, and song. God's word to Moses and Aaron, "This month shall be the beginning of the year unto you," has an appropriate application.

I remember in years past, other New Year's Eves spent in a much different way. What an emptiness there was when the noise and the horns ceased and the empty and "so what?" feeling flooded in. Surely there must be a more significant way to celebrate a milestone of lives that are all too short! To me, "Watch Night" has been the answer.

If we were going to suggest some resolutions for the New Year, that should have been done a month ago. But rather than resolutions, how about a check list to see how this year is running?

Have I started on what I plan to accomplish this year?
Do I remember that to love someone is to influence them

toward God?

Have I hugged my children this year?

Have I prayed and read God's word daily?

Have I considered the value of that "second income," as compared with one's being at home with the children?

What good book(s) have I been reading?

Are those high aims of January 1 still in focus?

May God teach us to number our days and so to get us a heart of wisdom.

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

GRACE, THEN PEACE

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus the apostle Paul ends his introductory paragraph to his letter to the church in Rome. In these words "grace" and "peace" Paul wishes the highest possible blessings to the Christians in Rome.

Grace is, of course, the fundamental blessing. Without grace there can be no real blessings. There are many long dissertations on the meaning of the word, but I would simply like to confine myself to a definition that Dick Lewis was reported to me as giving in a Bible class a number of years ago—"The unmeritable favor of God." Many have called grace "the unmerited favor of God," but Dick's definition goes beyond that to point out that it is impossible to earn God's favor.

This definition comes out of a clear view of the debt of sin that man has. It is impossible to pay for it. If my life could be perfect for fifty years I still would be simply doing what I ought to do, not paying for past sins. A human analogy makes this clear: If I break a law of the state in which I live, I am a lawbreaker regardless of how perfectly I keep the laws after that. If, then, I do anything against the will of God (and what man could say he hasn't done this many times?) I am then a sinner and must have someone else take away my sin, since I can not do it myself.

It is not a definition, but I like very much the explanation of what grace is that I once read: "Grace is the way by which the holy God is able to bring to sinful man the blessings He wants to bring them while still remaining holy Himself." God found the way to do this in sending His only begotten Son to become a man and to take our sins upon Himself on the Cross that He might bear their penalty and we might be counted righteous. Let us never quit thanking God for His wonderful saving grace.

Paul, of course, is using grace here in speaking to Christians, so he is speaking of the grace needed for daily lives. For not only are we saved originally by grace, we are kept by this grace and by grace we will be brought home to the Lord. Notice in this verse before us (Romans 1:7) the source of our grace is God our Father and the channel and sphere of divine blessing is the Lord Jesus Christ. Though not mentioned here, the Holy Spirit brings these blessings to us in the name of the Father and the Son.

Paul, however, does not stop with grace in his greetings here; he goes on to wish that blessing which Jews everywhere still repeat, peace, or *shalom* in Hebrew. Paul is actually combining Greek and Hebrew greetings but giving them both a much greater meaning in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since peace with God is a blessing that comes to us when grace brings us His salvation, I presume that Paul here is speaking of the peace of God which "shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). This is the peace we need in our daily lives, a peace that will keep us through any kind of circumstances that can arise. This is a blessing suitable to any time of year, but maybe it has special meaning to many at the beginning of a new year, a time when many people look around them and begin to take note of the things that are coming on the world. The world presents a very black picture at this time to all who look honestly and intelligently at it without considering the grace of God. "Wars and rumors of wars" are but a very small part of that picture. The moral decline, the decline of morale in our country, the increasing inroads of the communists (the world's greatest slavemasters), the cooperation of our own government in the growth of communist control, the fast increase of the power of the Russian war machine while ours seems to decline—and the list of depressing things in the world situation can be carried on to tremendous lengths. But the Christian must not be depressed, cannot be depressed if he is looking unto God as he should. "Grace to you and peace" is not just a quotation of Hebrew and Greek thoughts; it is the reminder from God that by grace He saved us, by grace He keeps us, by grace He will bring us to Himself, and not only do we have peace with Him, if we will look unto Him with the realization that He is the One who overrules all circumstances, then we can have inward peace in the face of

inflation or depression, shooting war or cold war, or whatever may come.

In closing may I remind you that you are not “doing well under the circumstances,” for, if you are a Christian, you are not *under* the circumstances. God is in charge of the circumstances and will overrule them to the good of all who love Him, as we will see later in Romans.

Love Is An Emotion, Too!

Billy Ray Lewter

A distinction is usually made between the two main Greek words for love. *Agape*, a will-directed esteem, even toward the undeserving, is considered to be a higher type of devotion than *phileo*, an emotional affection. As a result it is common to believe that we can choose to love (*agape*) someone without feeling affection toward them.

This distinction is based on John 21:15-17, in which Jesus asked Peter three times “lovest thou me?” using *agape* the first two times, to which Peter answered using *phileo*. The third time Jesus used *phileo*. Most commentaries point out that Peter refused to rise to Jesus’ kind of love, so Jesus came down to Peter’s level. Even Thayer’s Greek lexicon indicates that *Phileo* suggests an inferior love.

This distinction does not fit the rest of Scripture, however. In every way that *phileo* is used, *agape* is used.

Both are used to express love of the Father to the Son, the Son for the Father, God for man, man for God, man for man, Christian for Christian, man for woman, woman for man and for children, and toward inanimate things.

The two words are interchangeable (at least both words are included in the same kind of contexts) in many places. John 14:23 says “If anyone loves me, the Father will love him” (*agape*), while John 16:27 says “The Father loveth you because you have loved me” (*phileo*).

John 20:20 refers to “The disciple whom Jesus loved” using *phileo* while the same expression is used in 21:7 with *agape*.

Hebrews 12:6 says “Whom the Lord loveth (*agape*) he chasteneth”, and Rev. 3:19 uses *phileo*, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.”

The two are interchangeable in John 11. In verse 3, 5, and 36 Jesus is said to love Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; verse 5 uses *agape* while the other two didn’t.

1 Peter 1:22 uses *phileo* for “unfeigned love,” while 2 Cor. 6:6 for the same expression used *agape*.

1 John 4:8 says “God is love” (*agape*), but in John 5:20 “The Father loveth the Son,” and Titus 3:4, “When the love of God appeared to men” *phileo* is used in both.

Contrary to popular belief we are even commanded to feel emotion!

1 Cor. 16:22 says “If any man loveth (*phileo*) not the Lord, let him be accursed,” while Mt. 10:37 says, “If anyone love (*phileo*) father or mother or son or daughter more than me, he cannot be my disciple.” We must have emotional affection toward God.

Gal. 5:13 says, “Through love be servants one to another”; and in 1 Thes. 5:13 “Esteem them very highly in love, *phileo* is used both times. We must have affection for other Christians.

1 Peter 3:8 says for husbands and wives to “love as brothers” (*phileo*). We must have affection as marriage partners.

Like *agape* (“We love Him because He first loved us” 1 John 4:19), *phileo* is also learned. Titus 2:4 says for older women to teach younger women to love (*phileo*) their husbands and their children.

Thus, there is no indication in Scripture that *phileo* is inferior to *agape*. In John 21:15-17, Peter used *phileo* each time to show the passionate, intimate fervency of his love for Jesus. Peter not only esteemed Jesus worthy of love (*agape*), he went beyond that to tender, personal affection. Yes, “beyond that!” Since *phileo* is the kind of love the Father has for the Son (John 5:20), *phileo* must be the highest form of *agape*! We begin with a choice to love, but end with affection.

In verse 17 of John 21, Peter was grieved (John wrote) because Jesus said to him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” (*phileo*). But Jesus didn’t say *phileo* three times. Apparently neither John nor Peter saw any discrepancy between the kind of love demanded and the love felt.

Peter conceded omniscience to Jesus in saying “Thou knowest all things,” but was grieved because of the suggested doubt of his sincerity, or choice of words. Jesus gave Peter, who had recently denied Him three times, an opportunity to become restored and publicly commissioned in this triple confession of Him again.

Agape includes *phileo*. As we “Put on the love of God” (Col. 3:14), that developing love should certainly involve the emotions. We may not like what a person does, but we can learn to love the person. God loved us while we were yet sinners. We love ourselves, take care of ourselves, and are concerned for our needs and well being, but at times we may be sick of our behavior. We can

learn to do this with others. Jesus said, "As I have loved you, so ye also love one another." That was His *new* commandment—that we love as He did.

His love involves giving: "God so loved the world that He gave His . . . Son" (John 3:16); "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20); "As Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25).

His love involves the desire to be with others. In the Garden, God "walked and talked" with Adam and Eve. In Ex. 25:8, the tabernacle was made in order for God to dwell among fallen men. Jesus was called *Immanuel*, which is "God with us." In the New Jerusalem there is no need of a tabernacle because "God is with men, and He shall dwell with them."

His love involves emotions. He wept for Lazarus. He yearned over Jerusalem. He had compassion on the multitudes.

His love involves action—desiring, choosing, giving, feeling. It isn't mere talk. Never once is it recorded that Jesus said, "I love you." But He loved, He gave, He felt.

His love is an investment that affects His emotions.

The will is certainly involved. By the will we choose to give of ourselves, and to continue giving to the point of affection. There are times when we need to give, to pray for, to serve, to correct, in love, whether we feel like it or not at the start. But let's not stop short.

We limit tragically our relationships and our witness, by falling so far short of real love. We may at times (in spite of the difficulty) express our love, but we usually fail to communicate it. If there is no emotional affection on the part of the giver, there is none that can be felt by the receiver. If there is a favorable response to us, our service, or our message in the other, it is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit, not the result of our "dutiful" love.

Learning to love—to willingly give of ourselves to the point of emotional affection—is not easy. It takes time, even years. Learning is never instant.

I am deeply committed (*agape*) to God, to my wife and family, and to my teaching ministry, but I have fallen so far short of real love and affection (*phileo*). What a difference that would have made to my effectiveness.

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

I'M SURE YOU ARE not considering bingo to raise some money to help the Lord run His church. John J. Capuano, a Roman Catholic priest in Worcester, Massachusetts gives a little insight into the profit and loss of this endeavor. It seems the weekly games at Mount Carmel-St. Ann Church grossed about \$8,000 (of which \$1,400 was clear profit) per week last year, but he's not sure about the pay. In a recent parish bulletin he wrote, "Bingo has certainly helped us financially and somewhat socially, but it is no longer helping us morally or spiritually." Therefore, the bulletin read, when the parish's gambling license expires the games will stop. Sometimes only 100 of the 500 playing are from the parish. Capuano said, "The people who came to play bingo weren't coming to help the church or to take part in a parish social. They came to make money." About \$5,300 of the weekly gross went to prizes. Deciding that bingo brings out the worst in players, the priest said he would stop the play because it had become too "hard to keep it innocent and charitable."

I find the priest's assessment—bingo brings out the worst in players—rather interesting. I have never favored bingo in the church, but I would never have thought such as that would be the case. He has had much more experience with the game and its followers than I, so I am sure he knows what he is talking about.

NATIONWIDE, THE NEW TESTAMENT IS now an official school

textbook. This is not true in the United States, but, according to *The Messenger*, it is true of the schools of Bolivia, South America. Never before in missionary history has an entire nation requested copies of the New Testament for every student in their schools, and then endorsed it as required reading in the classrooms. Bolivia's national minister of education declared, "I believe that the placement of the New Testament in schools will not only be for the moral upbuilding of the youth, but also the secret to the spiritual needs of Bolivia." The *Messenger* article exhorted that we "pray for many more such openings in countries around the world." I say "Amen" to that, and also hasten to point out that it would be an act of contempt of the Supreme Court of the United States if one village in this so-called Christian country would do it. Let us also pray for America.

THE LATEST GALLUP YOUTH SURVEY finds that 95% of America's teen-agers believe in God or a universal spirit. And three out of four teen-agers believe in a "personal" God—one who observes an individual's actions and rewards or punishes, the survey found. Nearly 90% of the youths surveyed said they pray, and 39% said they pray "frequently." (More than half the older girls—ages 16, 17, and 18—reported that they give thanks to God aloud before meals.) The survey results were based on a sample of 1035 teen-agers.

An earlier survey showed that about 70% of American adults believe in a personal God.

A NEW GERMAN MOVIE on Hitler has attracted 350,000 people in six weeks. The author is no Nazi, and his concern in making the film was to bring his fellow citizens face to face with the underlying causes of Hitler's appeal to an entire generation. However, the film has been roundly condemned as putting Hitler in a positive light. The French weekly news magazine *Le Point* warns: "The German newspapers have every right to be disturbed. This film wakes sleeping demons: Germany will no longer be able to forget Hitler. If the biographers continue in this vein, Hitler will soon become Germany's Napoleon." And the author intended no such thing. So sometimes we see even though a movie may have been created for a good purpose, it may indeed serve just the opposite.

A THIRTY-MINUTE DIRTY JOKE. That is what three Southern Baptist Convention leaders who previewed the first two episodes call the new prime-time television show, "Soap." An ABC official calls it a "sophisticated adult farce." (ABC produces it.) They also said that in time "Soap" will be perceived as a moral show. To the claim by some that "Soap" will be a hit, Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Christian Life Conference, replies: "I say it is a hit. It hits decency. It hits morality. It hits family life. It hits the values without which no civilization can survive." Reports indicated that the British Broadcasting Company declined the show without comment. Some ABC stations have said they don't want to run it. I don't know how it compares with the regular so-called soap operas viewed daily now throughout the land. I don't see how it could get much worse than they are.

FORMER BLACK PANTHER Cleaver filed a \$4.2 million damage suit against the FBI, the CIA, and a number of other government and police officials. The suit claims that his and his wife's constitutional rights were violated as a result of illegal activities directed against them and the Black Panthers by the U. S. government. Cleaver made a Christian profession in 1975 during his self-imposed exile in France. He is now

out of prison and on bail while awaiting trial. He is presently engaged in Christian evangelism, and last month announced that he had established his own evangelistic organization, Eldridge Cleaver Crusades.

"IT IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL." And so, atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair has filed suit in federal court in Austin, Texas, in an effort to have "In God we trust" removed from America's money. Her reason for calling it unconstitutional is because "...it compels plaintiffs to subscribe to and affirm a belief which is antithetical to plaintiffs' most deeply held convictions..." Because it is necessary to handle money, notes the suit, the injured are compelled to disseminate religious symbolism with which they disagree.

A very interesting development in Ms. O'Hair's war against God is her teaming up with, of all persons, evangelist Bob Harrington on a cross-country debate tour. Harrington, a Southern Baptist evangelist, whose platform manner has been regarded as highly entertaining, has come under a lot of criticism for this particular move. Mike Pigott, a Nashville Banner reporter, followed the show to five cities in three states. He reported that the same speeches were given in every place, they entered and left the stage as on cue, and that they set each other up for the same one-liner comments in city after city. Recently the musicians quit, charging that the debates were theatrical and money oriented. The O'Hair forces claim that the arrangement has been a financial and public relations success for their side. Harrington, who according to the arrangements stands the expense, insists that he is barely breaking even.

While there are criticisms of the evangelist, he does have his supporters who say that if he has been tarnished it is only because he has been willing to get into the arena and take on the forces of atheism in close combat that is bound to leave some scars.

WHO CAN SAY what success Ms. O'Hair will meet with in her suit in Austin? There is abundant evidence that the founders of our great country, in their private and public utterances

and writings alike were men of faith and devotion to God, and recognized the need for faith in the citizenry to maintain the free government they founded and passed on. In the Articles of Confederation, forerunner of the constitution, they reflected this faith when they stated, "... the Great Governor of the world had been pleased to incline the hearts of state leaders to work together." And they recognized that every "right" and "freedom" dear to mankind was not the gift of government, but of God, and governments were organized to protect men in these rights. So they wrote a constitution to limit the powers of government for the simple reason that they knew men used governments to defraud their fellow men of these God-given rights.

THE US GOVERNMENT CONTINUES to downgrade Rhodesia and South Africa, but praises Socialist governments in Africa, and around the world, for that matter. The French weekly magazine *Le Monde Et La Vie* recently carried a report by Pierre de Villemarest so South Africa's transition from a nation where white initiative had drastically raised

the black standard of living to a nation threatened by warring blacks with a Red takeover.

The article reports that the long road to the bloodbath which Andrew Young and the Carter administration are determined to finish started in Johannesburg in 1958, when a luxurious center was opened by the U.S. Information Service. Here a campaign was launched to woo black students into comfortable chairs at smooth tables to read a wide range of books and publications.

If not labelled "Communist," the material the young Africans were encouraged to study was no less Leftist and revolutionary. According to *The Citizen* magazine, the free libraries were provided by the Ford, Rockefeller, Fairfield, and Carnegie foundations.

Perhaps the young blacks treated to this revolutionary literature had no idea that "those nice people helping them fight against 'capitalism' and 'racism' were for the most part super-capitalists themselves, and white racists practicing racism against the whites. Nor could they even suspect that they were working hand-in-hand with the Russians.

Book Review

"... The Whole Truth and Nothing But The Truth"

by Alex Wilson

If you like books that end, "...and they all lived happily ever after," then don't touch this book with a ten-foot pole! If you want only to be soothed and comforted, don't open this book. If you prefer not to be stirred to tears, and startled by agonizing questions, and provoked to disturbing thought, then don't even waste time reading any more of this book review. But if you want your mind stretched and your heart expanded, then this is the book for you.

What book?

THE COSTLY HARVEST, by David Howard. It is published by Tyndale House Publishers at \$2.95, which is a good price for 180 pages. I would turn you off (probably) by saying it's about missions, or about the history of some Christians in Colombia, South America during the years 1948-1968. But it would turn you on (hopefully) to say it's a book about God and His dealings with men. Just as the book *KNOWING GOD* (reviewed in the April *Word and*

Work) confronts us with the Lord from His word, so **THE COSTLY HARVEST** confronts us with the Lord from His workings in the ups and downs of life.

I found the book so useful I gave two chapel messages at Central Bible Institute based on it. What is it about? A persevering missionary who seemed to be an all-around flop, and ended up being senselessly murdered. Terrifying persecution of believers by the politically entrenched Roman Catholic Church, followed in later years by an about-face in which some Catholics asked their former "enemies" to teach them the word of God. A remarkable, book-of-Acts-type movement in which multitudes were converted and scores of churches were established, mainly by "laymen." An unexpected outpouring of "spiritual gifts," some of which were absurdly counterfeit and others of which were Scriptural and powerful. Veteran preachers who fell to temptation, one after another.

But the main lesson that sounds through the entire story is this (as given by another reviewer, Peter Wagner): "God is sovereign and He is Lord. No man can fully understand Him. Stop trying to put God in a box or tie Him to a leash. God will not be made over in the image of men, no matter how fundamental or evangelical that man may be. If we try to make God conform to our established patterns, we will end up either dishonest or of all men most miserable. God does not want to be analyzed, He wants to be trusted . . . The Christian life is full of imponderables. God doesn't want us to know every answer."

Or, as the foreword to the book says, "The wrong people die in the wrong way at the wrong time. Dismal failure greets well-intentioned efforts. Confusion and humbug beset what starts out as apparently a genuine visitation from God. Anger and sexual havoc muddy the water. Altogether, it is a damaging book—if it is understood that what is damaged is an idol, (a false idea of God), and not the living God known by Job and the prophets and manifest in the Son of Man."

Don't get the idea from the above that the story is glum and gloomy from start to finish. Not at all. Glorious light breaks through the clouds time and again. But it is true to life all the way.

You might be interested to know that David Howard is the brother of another writer also known for her realism. Elisabeth Elliott (Betty Howard Elliot Leitch) is a modern day Job. Tragedy wiped out all apparent results of her first year on the mission field. (The book **THESE STRANGE ASHES** recounts this.) Then she married Jim Elliott, who was spared to death by the savages he went to evangelize. (Her books **SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY** and **THROUGH GATES OF SPLENDOR** tell of Jim and the martyrdom.) Years later she married a professor of theology. Not too long afterward, he was stricken with cancer and died. Through these experiences, the Lord molded Elisabeth Elliot

as a spokesman to our generation of Christians. She has challenged many through the books just mentioned, and others such as **LET ME BE A WOMAN; A SLOW AND CERTAIN LIGHT; NO GRAVE IMAGE; WHO SHALL ASCEND.**

David Howard has written other stimulating books, too. **BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** deals with some controversial topics in a clear, loving, balanced manner. **WORDS OF FIRE/RIVERS OF TEARS** comes to grips with the prophet Jeremiah (another realist!). I haven't read it yet, but am itching to get to it. *Know your author; read his books.* Read discerningly, of course. Don't let any writer, however helpful, be your "pope."

Oh yes, by the way . . . this is mainly a review and recommendation of **THE COSTLY HARVEST**, in case you've forgotten!



Be A Counter-Revolutionary For Christ

Alex V. Wilson

The sex revolution seems to have overwhelmed the world. A girl in a U.S. university was led to Christ by some fellow students. As they instructed her about her new life as a Christian, she asked them, "Must I quit going to bed with my boyfriend now?" She thought that probably that was the Christian standard, but she wasn't sure! Christian standards of sex purity have usually been unpopular, but today in many places they are hardly even *known*.

Another girl in college, a 17-year old first-year student, refused to have sexual intercourse with her boyfriend. She wanted to wait. When the other girls in her dorm learned about this they treated her with such scorn and disdain that she became miserable. Finally she dropped out of school.

There have always been many immoral people, but usually they blushed with shame over their misdeeds. But today it is those who keep themselves *pure*—waiting for marriage—who blush, because of the ridicule heaped upon them.

In the U.S. the sex revolution has plunged to such depths that it is said that 14 years is the age of the largest number of unwed girls who get pregnant!

The sex revolution has infected the Philippines too. A columnist for a Manila newspaper wrote, "Certain education officials have expressed the fear that a big segment of today's college-age youth

may top off a 4-year residence in Manila as holders of 'sauna cum laude' citations." A survey of sauna baths and massage clinics (many of which are mainly houses of prostitution) shows that "about 85% of men seen going in or out of these establishments are of college age—17 to 21 years." Also we remember how popular the *bomba* films were before the government cracked down on them.

FIRST CENTURY (IM)MORALS

And yet, as terrible as present conditions are, we must not give up in despair. William Barclay declares, "The moral problems which face our own generation are far from new. That does not make them any less serious, but it does remind us that *Christianity is not facing anything which it was not called upon to face before.* . . . It is doubtful if there was ever such a cataract (or flood) of immorality in any age as in the years when Christianity came into the world" (*The Plain Man's Guide to Ethics*, pp 136, 134; italics mine).

Among the first-century Greeks and Romans faithfulness in marriage was hardly even expected. It was highly unusual. Marriage itself was often considered as just a matter of convenience. Cicero the famous orator, after being married for 30 years, divorced his wife so he could marry a rich woman and thus pay off his debts! Later his daughter by his first wife died, and because his second wife did not seem very sorry about it, he divorced her! The Roman leader Sulla was married five times, and the famous general Pompey four times. The Christian writer Jerome mentioned a woman who married her 23rd husband; she was his 21st wife.

Sexual perversion was so common in those days that fourteen out of the first fifteen Roman emperors were practicing homosexuals.

That was "the situation of sexual morality into which Christianity came. And Christianity confronted that situation with an uncompromising demand for purity" (Barclay). It is also provided a new moral power, we may add.

WE NEED TO BE REMINDED

Let's notice one of Paul's major passages dealing with the Christian view of sex and marriage: 1 Thes. 4:1-8. In the opening verse he exhorts, "As you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing . . . do so *More and more.*" He is not rebuking them for sin. Rather, he acknowledges that they are living God-pleasing lives. Yet he still feels the need to stir them up to even greater progress—"more and more."

Christian living is like bike-riding: if you don't go forward you may fall off. Or, more accurately, Christian living is like paddling a boat upstream: if you don't go forward you will surely go backward! We need to press on in the Lord, for if we grow careless we may easily get drawn into the sex whirlpool that whirls all around us, which Paul refers to in later verses.

“For you know the instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus (v. 2). Paul is not revealing any truths to them. They know these facts, for he taught them when he was with them personally. Yet he feels it is important to *remind* them, to *reinforce* these standards. Otherwise, little by little the world’s attitudes seep into our minds and hearts and cause rottenness there.

The world shouts out its philosophy every day in many ways. In books and popular songs, on radio and tv, the world proclaims that romance is the goal we should pursue. Young people are brain-washed with the idea that if they have no boyfriend or girlfriend, they must be freaks.

In movies and magazines, by pictures and dress styles, the world also proclaims that sex is the greatest thing in life (whether inside or outside of marriage doesn’t matter). “What!—you don’t participate in sex activities? You’ve *never* had any sex experience? Then you are missing out on life! How crazy can you be?” Because of these intense pressures around us, we need to often instruct (v. 2) and exhort and even beseech each other (v. 1), to follow God’s will.

PASSIONS VERSUS PURITY

“For *this is the will of God*, your sanctification: that you abstain from immorality” (v. 3). The disciple of Jesus may sometimes face decisions where he is unsure about God’s will. And groups of Christians disagree among themselves about God’s will regarding some activities. (Are movies good or bad? Is *Karate* right or wrong?)

But here is one matter on which we can have absolute certainty. Without the shadow of a doubt, it is God’s will that we avoid unchastity. “Flee youthful lusts,” wrote Paul in another place. And again, “Flee fornication” (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:18). No one dare call himself holy (or sanctified) who is lax about sexual standards and actions.

Verse four is ambiguous in the Greek language. Literally it says “Each of you should know how to use the vessel that is his, in holiness and honor.” The “vessel” Paul has in mind may be the believer’s *body*, as in 2 Cor. 4:7. Thus the sentence might mean, “Learn to control (your) body in a way that is holy and honorable” (NIV; NEB). Or “vessel” may refer to a Christian man’s *wife*, as in 1 Peter 3:7 (KJV; ASV). If so, Paul means, “Know how to take a wife in a holy and honorable way” (TEV; RSV).

Both of these ideas are true, of course. First, we should be masters, not slaves, of our *bodies*. This duty has several applications. For one thing, masturbation is not good for a Christian.*

*Read *Sexual Understanding Before Marriage* by Herbert Miles (Zondervan) for a further study of “self-abuse.” Miles takes a thoroughly Bible-based, Christ-centered view of sex. His approach to this delicate subject is at least worthy of study, as this matter is a big problem for most young men.

Even though it is physically harmless (and this is the point usually stressed by school sex-education teachers), it often becomes an enslaving habit. It also is usually accompanied by defiling sex fantasies, for our bodies affect our minds and our minds affect our bodies.

Another application is this: pornography and sex-arousing movies are definitely out of bounds. If we are to rule our physical desires, it is essential that we keep our thoughts and imaginations pure. If we don't we are like an idiot playing with matches in a dynamite factory! Sex is an explosive force: handle it with care.

But perhaps Paul is thinking about *courtship*, or our manner of taking a wife. This also should be holy. That means inner beauty should be considered more important than outer. It also eliminates trial-marriages and common-law marriages; such practices are dishonorable. Situation-ethics says, "Love without marriage is better than marriage without love." The Christian replies by saying, "Both are wrong and forbidden." The marriage vows in some weddings now say, "I take you as my partner so long as we both shall love" (rather than, "so long as we both shall live"). The meaning is obvious: "If later on I lose my love for you, or if I develop a greater love for someone else, then goodbye—we're through!" The Christian view stands opposed to all such ideas.

But perhaps all these prohibitions sound very negative. We must hurry to clarify an important point. The Christian attitude toward sex is not "NO, because it is *bad*," but "WAIT, because it can be so *good*—within marriage with the life-long partner whom God may give you to love and honor." Sex in itself is intended to be good, beautiful and enjoyable, when we follow our Creator's instructions.

Verse five shows a great contrast. Those "who do not know God" are not seeking holiness, as the Christian is. Usually their main motive is physical craving, or "the passion of lust." *Passion* here means intense feelings, emotional excitement or agitation. It brings to mind animals who are driven by instinct rather than guided by reason and conscience. *Lust* sometimes means a desire of any kind, whether good or bad. But here it means a desire that is over-developed, an appetite that has become too strong because it has been overfed. Someone had defined such lust as a "desire for any of a bad thing or too much of a good thing." Christians should flee from lustful passions and from any lifestyle that promotes them.

WIDESPREAD DAMAGE

Paul next urges us not to wrong our brother or take advantage of him (v.6). His exact meaning is unclear. Maybe he is warning us against immoral relations with a Christian brother's wife or daughter.

Whatever he means, one lesson is plain. In sexual sins, *Many* people are wronged. For example, in fornication the man wrongs the girl by robbing her of her chastity. He harms *himself*, for it is likely that if he later marries he will have sex problems. Also his future wife may easily suspect him of being unfaithful to her. He wrongs any *baby* that may be conceived, by giving it a difficult, shameful start in life. The man's *parents* and even the woman's *parents* are grieved and disgraced. And if the man or woman is a church member, the testimony of the *church* is also dragged down. And *God* our Creator? Above all others, He is wronged and grieved.

Immorality often harms *health*, and leaves deep *emotional* wounds. If it results in a forced marriage, then the couple's *education* and *career* and *finances* will probably be sadly affected too. Oh yes, contraceptives may prevent a baby from being conceived, but "no one has invented a diaphragm for the soul and conscience." No pill can prevent shame, remorse and despair from being born.

REASONS TO MOTIVATE US

Reviewing verses 1-6 and looking on the verses 7-8, we find Paul gives many motives for purity. The heathen don't know God, but we do. Doesn't that make any difference (v.5)? Don't we want to please Him; don't His feelings mean anything to us (v.1)? Purity is unquestionably His will (v.3). And it is His call: He calls us not only to heaven but to holiness; He saves us not only from hell but from uncleanness (v.7). Also, the Lord is an avenger in these matters: "We strongly warned you that the Lord will punish those who do such wrongs" (v.6, TEV).

The natural response to such high standards is, "Of course it sounds like a fine idea. Purity, self-control and all that. Wonderful ideas . . . except that it is all impossible! Even if I would want to live that way, it would not matter, because I can't do it!"

But that is false, for Paul ends up his teaching on this subject by declaring, "God . . . gives His Holy Spirit to you" (v.8). The indwelling Spirit of purity can do for us what we could never accomplish by ourselves. Divine strength can energize us so we can be pure in a rotten world. Remember God's will. And remember God's call. But also remember God's Spirit! The will of God never requires from us anything which the power of God cannot provide for us.

Carl Kitzmiller is a Minister in Oakdale, Louisiana.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Would you comment on the clergy and laity distinctions that are often made by many people?

In the early centuries, as the church drifted from the purity of the New Testament period, separations began to be made between ordained office-holders in the church and the rest of the people in the church. Those in some form of official ministry came to be known as "clergy" and the rest were known as "laity." In the singular form we have "clergyman" and "layman." It developed that certain acts could be performed only by the clergy; other Christians were not allowed to perform these acts, or if they did, the acts were regarded as invalid. Thus a distinction arose which separated God's people into two classes.

We still find this distinction being made today in varying degrees. Some religious groups make a very definite difference between the clergy and laity. Others may be more flexible and do not absolutely restrict acts to the clergy only, but the roots of separation are still there. Ministers may still be put in a class to themselves, with distinctive titles, distinctive dress, or distinctive places in society. As a result of the position given to ministers, many people somehow seem to think that they are not quite like other human beings, the same rules of conduct do not apply, and certain privileges of class are extended.

It should be evident to even a casual student of the New Testament that there are no class distinctions in the church. We are all (Christians) members of the one Body, and whatever work or office God has called us to is honorable. The early church had apostles, but even these did not occupy such a position of privilege or power that they were set apart from the rank and file by special titles or other human marks of distinction. This is not to say that God does not equip, call, and use some men for purposes different from others, nor that God does not delegate more power to some than to others. Paul sometimes had to remind disobedient Christians to whom he wrote that he was an apostle. But he also held the description 'bondservant' as one of honor and used it (Rom. 1:1; etc.). Jesus rather clearly indicated what the attitude of Christian people should be toward human distinctions. While the Pharisees loved titles

and wanted to be put on a pedestal and honored above the common man, our Lord said it is not to be so with us! In Matt. 23:8-12 (note context), Jesus teaches His followers not to be called "Rabbi" and "Father." By principle He tells us to avoid those other names or titles that would set us apart and that are based on pride of position. In spirit, the clergy-laity distinctions stand in outright opposition to Jesus' teaching on this occasion.

Not many days ago a city official, whom I knew reasonably well, had an occasion to call me by phone, and he was at quite a loss as to how to address me. He stuttered around for a while and finally just asked how he should address me. Even after I explained that my given name or any form of address that he would use with any other citizen was fine, he still seemed uneasy; he was reluctant to call me by my name. Somehow he believed there must be some title or special form of address because he knows that I am a preacher. He wanted to do the right thing, the correct thing, and he knew that preachers are generally set in a class to themselves.

In most of modern usage "Reverend" is attached to a preacher's name almost automatically. Many editors regard the failure to thus title a preacher as bad or unacceptable usage. This reflects how much the old clergy-laity distinctions are still with us. While much of this usage in our day may be more a matter of courtesy than of anything else, we can only account for the rise of the usage by realizing that professing Christians have used and gloried in the thing that gave rise to it. While in our day a preacher is probably held in much less esteem than was once the case, the titles and places of honor which many of them accept or even expect make us realize that the issue is not a dead one.

"Layman" has passed into our language today to signify one who is not a "professional." It may be used in fields other than religion. It is not unusual to hear a doctor refer to laymen. Language is a living, changing thing and we cannot reject every term which might have less than correct beginnings. Nevertheless, I avoid talking about laymen in the church or "lay" preachers. I believe it tends to perpetuate a separation and a classification among God's people which is not good. It tends to say that here is someone with less authority, less knowledge, less right to lead in some act of worship, etc., when it may be that he is as able and as equipped as many a "clergyman." It tends to say that only the trained professional really knows anything for sure about spiritual things and reinforces the tendency of the average man to delegate his responsibilities to others. To be a layman does not carry the honor and title of clergyman, but this is just the other class in a division of God's people.

We are all brethren, whether preacher, elder, deacon, teacher, doorkeeper, or a Christian in some other work for the Lord. A man who knows his Bible and who faithfully preaches the word

is deserving of love and honor for his very works' sake. But so is the one who teaches, oversees, or keeps the doors, when he is faithful. God desires service, not titles and that which appeals to human vanity.

Now we live in the world and cannot go out of it. There are many battles in the spiritual realm to be fought which are greater than setting the world straight in every respect on these matters. It would be somewhat futile or maybe misguided for a preacher to try to fight the government, official forms, and legal terminology by insisting that he is not a clergyman. The early church was called a "sect" (Acts 24:14), but other than correction when this was possible no campaign was undertaken to show how false the term was as applied to the church. Some newspapers may accept the absence of "Rev." before a preacher's name, but some may not. My time will likely be more profitably spent in a community in other ways than in making this a major issue. The masses for the most part make a distinction between the clergy and the laity, which will not likely be changed much by the impact we might be able to make. But we can adopt correct usage ourselves and teach others in the church proper usage. Even better, we need to adopt the right kind of thinking, which will make unnecessary the artificial distinctions among God's people. We may get our terms right without really getting at the root of the separation. Terms can be deceptive. Even "brother" when it is used to address a preacher only and not other fellow Christians becomes a title and betrays the thinking that he belongs in a separate class.

In Exodus 12:38 we read that "a mixed multitude" went out of Egypt with the Israelites. Who are these?

This "mixed multitude" appears again in Num. 11:4, where they are seen as a dominant part of the murmuring about food on at least one occasion after the exodus.

Since these are not further identified in scripture we can only suggest some of the possibilities. The Israelites had been in Egypt for about 400 years, so it is very likely there had been some inter-marriage or at least some births of mixed blood. Even if this was discouraged by the segregation of Israel in Goshen and possibly by both peoples as a social or religious matter, still it would have happened. And as is true of most enslaved people, after the Israelites became slaves there were likely many cases of forced relations and the birth of many half-breeds. The chances are good that most of these would have been happy for any chance to get away from Egypt

The Israelites may not have been the only enslaved people in Egypt. In military battles slaves were sometimes made of the conquered people and they were carried to the alien land. These, if there were such in Egypt, would likely have worked side by side

with the Israelites, have heard of their God, and have sought to escape with them.

Again, there may have been Egyptians who were prisoners for various reasons, also made to serve at taskwork, or those who for some other reason were disgruntled and saw a chance to get away.

Finally, we should not overlook the fact that Israel had a far superior religion, and it is not impossible that some of the Egyptians had been "converted." The failure of the Egyptian gods during the plagues could have added some last minute proselytes.

113 N. 6th Street, Oakdale, La. 71463.

THIS YEAR ALSO

The Husbandman,
The Owner of the Vineyard
Comes seeking fruit
And finding none, He says
"I've waiting been
And patient three long years.
A tree of mine that bears no fruit
It cumbers but the ground.
Cut it down!"
The vinedresser lifts pleading hands
And if you closely look
The nail prints you will see.
O Lord, No hireling, I.
I love that fruitless tree.
I, too, came seeking fruit
And finding none, am grieved.
Let me but try with this poor tree
A little longer.
Just one more year.
I will dig about it
And fertilize it —
The rains will come
The early and the latter rains.
The tree will surely answer
To my care and love
And bear some fruit.
Perhaps, at first, not large or perfect fruit
But fruit, withal, I'll have for Thee
From this poor tree
Of Thine.
And then with constant, sweet abiding
More fruit — —
Much fruit.

—Marie Acton Rehorn

Honor To Whom Honor Is Due

Alex V. Wilson

The words "Thank you" are just too feeble and anemic. They are too lightweight to convey the respect, admiration, love and deep gratitude that dozens of past and present missionaries want to express, I'm sure.

A letter from Sister Myrtle Smith informs us that Sister Verna Wilborn is forced to give up her work in the missionary office because of bad health. Sister Ronald Kane will replace her, and Sister Betty Allen will help, too.

Who are these ladies? Many readers may ask that question, for the ministry of these women is a behind-the-scenes one. They operate the "missionary office" sponsored by the Highland Church of Christ in Louisville for many years. Every month various Christians send donations for missionaries to this office, specifying what amounts should be sent to what workers in foreign lands. Thus if a donor or a church wants to send funds to four different missionaries, they can send one check to the missionary office instead of having to send checks to four different treasurers in various places. The ladies keep track of what to send to whom. Also, every month they write a letter direct to the missionary, even if the check is sent to his treasurer in the U.S. And they carry on a ministry of intercession before the Throne.

Not one penny sent to the office for missionaries is used to pay these women for their labor. They donate every minute of their time. They are only on God's payroll. One hundred per cent of the money sent for missionaries reaches the missionaries. Nothing is even deducted for overhead expenses—electricity, stationery, postage costs, etc. They are either absorbed by the workers (the heat, electricity, etc.,) or paid for by the Highland church.

So, on behalf of the missionaries and their treasurers, and the donors, we want to say "THANK YOU, Sisters Wilborn and Smith, for your long years of devoted helpfulness. And THANK YOU, Sisters Kane and Allen for your present and future services. We are grateful for all your prayers, and every letter, and your book-keeping and forwarding of funds.

And what shall we more say? For time will fail us if we tell of Brother Janes, whose zeal for missions early led him to establish the office, and of Sister Ethel Sevedge who was the secretary, and did much of the work in the publication of *Missionary Messenger* for the approximate 35 years of its publication before it was merged into *Word and Work*. For all of them, we thank our Father.

Other behind-the-scenes workers include missionary treasurers, and those who mimeograph and mail out prayer letters, etc. And it was good to see recognition given in the May *Word and Work* to Sisters Edith and Mildred Lale. Without their labors of love, the *Word and Work* might well expire!

May the Lord continue to raise up many believers who have and use the important gift of "helps."

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Mrs. J. R. Stewart-Brown

Cape Town, R.S.A.

November 15.

We have had some more baptisms in the church at Bellville but two of our faithful families are moving next month, one to Johannesburg and the other to Durban. They will be a big loss to the church. Both are being transferred. They both will be a great asset to the churches where they are going; some of them are Sunday school teachers.

In spite of unrest and uncertainty, our colored work is still progressing. Praise God especially for those of them who are putting God and His kingdom first. Let us continue praying for the colored work and for those that look up for guidance, especially in these troubled times.

So many are out of work. Some are looking for work and some do not want work . . . they are the ones who make it hard for those who want to work.

We also need your prayers for S. Africa, S. W. A. and Rhodesia. God is still on the throne. He still holds the whole world in His hands, and prayer changes things.

Leonard Bailey

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

November 14.

The Lord willing, we expect Mabel and our oldest son, Allen, to fly to Canada via England, where they will visit my sister for a few days. We are hoping that Allen will be able to enroll in Western Christian College in January 1978. It has been a very hard decision to make, to send him so far from home, but hope it will be for the best. Mabel's mother and family will not be far away.

Bro. Short seems to be getting stronger again and recovering from the heart attack. Sister Short is not too good. They have managed to get a home nursing service which is run by the Red Cross and have an African nurse's aid 24 hours a day. This is a very great help to their daughter Sybil, otherwise sister Short would probably have to be in a hospital.

We are very restricted in our work at the present time. I used to travel among the rural churches trying to build them up and encourage them. Sometimes the whole family would go out and camp for three or four days. We also went out to the close churches just for Sunday services. Owing to the present security situation, we are not able or do not think it wise to do this now and are more or less restricted to city areas.

Donald R. Harris

Salisbury, Rhodesia

November 22.

Things are about the same here but we are looking forward, if the Lord wills, to have replacements come next June so that we may be relieved for a time. Brother Garrett is really 'going to town' on the new church building in Glen Norah. They already have the foundation complete for the outside toilets, worship building and the parsonage. Where Bob gets all the energy would be beyond me if I didn't know, of course, that the Lord sustains. He has been sick with flu as of late, and up and down out of bed. He sure needs help. Lord willing, I will go out this Friday and help him put some conduit in his new buildings before they pour the concrete floor.

We have good news at this writing that last month on Oct. 16 a young Indian boy aged 16 was baptized, and this month on the 6th one of our members' son aged 16 was also buried in baptism. We praise God that he is still working here in Arcadia. Services here are being attended in peace since the church closed nearly a year ago.

Alvin Hobby

Livingstone, Zambia

November 21.

Although October was the hottest and driest October we can remember for a long time, it was a very good month as far as responses at church were concerned. Here in the one congregation, next door to us, there was a total of 58 baptisms and about 20 requests for prayers of the church during the month. The responses have continued on into November. Yesterday there were five baptisms and two restorations.

About two weeks ago I received the Tonga typescripts of nine of the books of the Bible to read, correct and criticize.

Georgia seems to be making steady but slow progress in her healing.

Thomas W. Hartle

Cape Town. R.S.A.

November 10, 1977

I have labored in five homes and from October 17 to 20 conducted a gospel campaign at one of the congregations in the Grassy Park area, about twelve miles from our apartment. There was very good attendance and five precious souls were baptized on the final evening. Four of them were young teenage boys whom I had previously been teaching in their home. Their parents are already members, praise God!

At the moment I am busy with another gospel campaign in the Steenberg area (church meeting in a house). To date, we have had very good attendances, and again seven precious souls (teenagers) have been baptized into Christ. The attendances at both of these campaigns were members of other congregations, of the congregation itself, plus many visitors.

There is now a possibility of hiring a community center in the area of Heathfield, about eleven miles from our apartment, which can possibly be the place for the new work. This area is not too far from where I have been conducting the two gospel campaigns. Please pray for this new and hopeful intention of Heathfield.

Joy Garrett

Salisbury, Rhodesia

December 7, 1977

Even though we are going through troublous times, still souls are being added to the Lord. In recent weeks three young men at Arcadia have been baptized. Two weeks ago at Glen Norah a young girl came forward to accept the Lord Jesus as moved into Glen Norah township lately.

The foundation, fill, hard core and concrete floor slab have been completed for the church auditorium, restroom block, and parsonage. The brickwork in the restroom block is up to window level. The African brethren who have regularly worked on Saturdays and holidays plan this Saturday to pour the concrete floor for the pulpit and changing rooms. Then all floors will be complete.

Out in some of the tribal trust lands the terrorists have caused all churches to be closed. We ask for special prayer for the Christians in those areas. Salisbury and immediate vicinity are relatively quiet. We are thankful to God for the freedom and opportunities we've had to preach His word in this area.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

J. Larry Miles

First of all, I would like to cite for you the words written in Matthew 16:13-18: "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do the people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.'" (N.A.S.V.)

Yes, Jesus kept His promise, and the church was established on Pentecost. Arthur F. Fogartie, in the *Presbyterian Journal*, wrote these words: "The Church's preoccupation must be Christ. Jesus did not say, 'I will build your Church, or you will build my Church.' He said, 'I will build my Church.'" Yes, the church of Christ is Christ's, bought by His own blood that was shed on the cruel cross

of Calvary.

Who comprises the church that was established on the day of Pentecost? We want to cite a few definitions.

1. In the class *The Church*, at the Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Bro. Tom Thurman gave us this definition: "Saved People serving in the Divine Pattern."
2. Thomas Campbell, writing in the *Declaration and Address*, wrote these words, "That the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else, as none else can truly and properly be called Christians."
3. The mystical body of Christ of which He is the head (Eph. 1: 22, 23).

We have shown heretofore the church in its universal sense. We want now to center our attention on the church in its local sense. We will be discussing the church at Thessalonica.

First of all let us consider some background material. What is the history of Thessalonica? Thessalonica was called in ancient times Therma. The name Thessalonica came from the wife of the builder Cassander. Cassander was the one who rebuilt the city. When the Romans took over what remained of the Empire of Alexander the Great, they subdivided Macedonia into four parts, Thessalonica being one of them.

The geographic location of Thessalonica was very important in the ancient world. We know that the Romans had a practice of building great roads. One of them, the Via Egnatia, came right through Thessalonica. This road stretched between Rome to the regions north of the Aegean Sea.

In Acts 17:1, Luke says that there was a Jewish synagogue located in Thessalonica. Why was this important? J. W. McGarvey, in his commentary on Acts wrote these words, "It was doubtless the synagogue in this city which drew the apostles on without stopping to preach in Amphipolis or Apollonia, for a synagogue in a city indicated the presence of a considerable Jewish population, with a nucleus of Gentile proselytes about it, and furnished an open avenue for the introduction of the Gospel."

How and by whom was the church of Christ established in the great metropolis of Thessalonica? The church there was founded on Paul's second missionary journey. Paul's visit to Thessalonica is mentioned in the following passages: Acts 17:1-4; Acts 20:1-3; and in 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

Were there any problems that arose in the church there? Merrill F. Unger, in Unger's Bible Dictionary, lists three problems that arose there. "They were: 1. Carelessness about their daily work, evidently under the impression that the second advent would very shortly take place. 2. A concern among them lest their Christian friends who died would suffer loss at the coming of Christ for His own. 3. Friction between church officers and those who possessed miraculous spiritual endowments." We know that the Apostle Paul dealt with these issues and problems when he wrote the two letters to the Thessalonian church.

In closing, how can we today benefit from a study of the church at Thessalonica? I believe it would be fitting to close with the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe." (N.A.S.V.)

MARANATHA!

"Looking To Jesus . . ."

It is ever the Holy Spirit's work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan's work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ. He insinuates, "Your sins are too great for pardon; you have no faith; you do not repent enough; you will never be able to continue to the end; you have not the joy of His children; you have such a wavering hold of Jesus." All these are thoughts about self, and we shall never find comfort or assurance by looking within.

But the Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self: He tells us that we are nothing, but that "Christ is all in all." Remember, therefore, it is not your hold of Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not your joy in Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to your hand with which you are grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to your hope, but to Jesus, the source of your hope; look not to your faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by "looking unto Jesus."

Keep your eye simply on Him; let His death, His sufferings, His merits, His glories, His intercession, be fresh upon your mind; when you wake in the morning look to Him; when you lie down at night look to Him. Oh! let not your hopes or fears come between you and Jesus; follow hard after Him, and He will never fail you.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness:
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

—From *Believers' Chapel Bulletin*

"CHOLESTEROL A PROBLEM"

Dr. Horace E. Wood

Watchman Nee in his book, "The Normal Christian Life," makes a beautiful comment on Romans 6:6, quote: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him." The tense of the verb is most precious, for it puts the event right back in the past. It is final, once-for-all. The thing has been done and cannot be undone. Our old man has been crucified, once and forever, and he cannot be uncrucified." (end of quote.)

In John 15:5 our Lord says, I am the vine, ye are the branches. Again note the all important tense of the verb, ye are, present tense. How bewildering the thought of trying to get into a room when you are already there. We do not *hope to be* or try hard to be and function as a branch. When the old man was crucified, you automatically became a branch.

Normally there flows from the vine through the arteries of the branch a fruit producing liquid. If by our own efforts we try to supply this all important liquid as in the case of cholesterol in the blood stream, the normal flow of liquid from the vine is greatly hindered. This hinderance affects the fruit and the leaves are a pale yellow. If the Holy Spirit is not hindered in His work, the arteries are kept open and the fluid from the vine produces the beautiful fruit.

On the 18th of September I heard a man speak who had spent twenty-five years in China with the China Inland Mission. He is Daniel Smith, who was born in England and is now living in Vancouver, B.C. He related a most interesting experience which took place in Vancouver. He said, "I was walking down the street and suddenly the Holy Spirit constrained me to enter a dwelling that I was about to pass. I had no previous intention of going into this house. On looking behind a screen I saw a very elderly sick man lying on a couch. I simply asked him, "Old man, are you ready to make the change from this life to the next?" He replied, "I have no place to go." I talked to him about the Lord and the provision that He had made. Would you like to accept this One and go to the place that He is preparing?, I asked. Oh yes, he replied, I would like to accept Him. This dying man heartily received the Savior into his heart. I read to him the 14th chapter of John, "In my Father's house are many dwelling places."

Mr. Smith, I have some money to leave; will you take it? No, I replied, I will not accept it. Will you give it to a worthy church? No, I will not. Do you have a wife and family? Oh yes, he replied, but I haven't seen my wife and daughter for twelve years. My wife was a devout Christian and she kept after me constantly to consider and accept the Lord. I got completely fed up with her pleading and I got my hat and left and have not seen them again since. Will you do me a favor? he asked. Yes, I will certainly try. Will you please try and locate them and give them this money? I will turn over every foot of ground in Vancouver until I locate them.

The old man lived for three weeks and I visited him every day, each day reading again to him the 14th chapter of John at his own request, for now he had some place to go.

After much effort and searching, I finally located his wife and told her of the above account and how her husband had gladly accepted the Lord before he died. Oh, she said, Mr. Smith, I have been praying for my husband every day for these past twelve years.

How perfectly the life-giving fluid flowed through this branch, unhindered, and produced a full cluster of grapes.

REPRINTS:

What The Indwelling Spirit Does For Us

R. H. Boll — 1927

What is the necessity of the Holy Spirit's indwelling? What function does He perform? What does He do in those who are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" which would otherwise be impossible? Manifestly, the coming of the Spirit marked a new era. Something never before received was given. The Spirit had wrought among men before, but never had He "come" as He came on Pentecost. That Pentecost event was the result of the Savior's finished work on earth, and He had to ascend to the Father before it was even possible that the Holy Spirit should come (John 16:7). The inspired word of God had been here many centuries; yea the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had come, and His words (which He declared were "spirit" and "life"—John 6:33) had been spoken far and wide among the people, and were believed and received by many (John 17:8). Yet *the Spirit* had not come. "He abideth *with you*," the Lord told His disciples; and pointing forward to the time after Pentecost, added, "and shall be *in you*." (John 14:17). It must certainly have made a big difference whether the Holy Spirit was merely *with* men, or whether He was *in them*. All the time before Pentecost (though we read that in a certain sense men had at former times, occasionally been "filled with the Holy Spirit") the Holy Spirit was with men only; but from Pentecost onward He was

to be *in them*. So important was this coming and work and indwelling of the Spirit in God's people from Pentecost onward that the whole ensuing dispensation of the new covenant is called "the ministration of the Spirit," as the former dispensation was called "the ministration of the letter"—that is the Law, a ministration of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:6-9). What then is the great difference? What does the indwelling Spirit do for men?

1. *The indwelling Spirit makes a God-pleasing life possible.* If the Spirit of God does not dwell in a man he is said to be "in the flesh"; and those that are "in the flesh cannot please God." "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:8,9). The question, then, whether a man can please God depends on whether he is "in the flesh," or "in the Spirit"; and that, in turn depends on whether the Spirit of God dwells in him or not. Therefore unless the Holy Spirit dwells in a man, he cannot live a life pleasing to God. That is plain.

That is followed by the statement, "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is often taken to refer to a Christlike disposition. The connection, however, shows beyond peradventure that the meaning of the phrase, "hath the Spirit of Christ" is the same as "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," in the same verse. Many seem to evince a Christlike disposition, who are really "none of His"; and (alas) some that really are His do not always manifest a Christlike disposition. The indwelling Spirit does and must produce a Christlike disposition, as we shall see. But here he speaks of the fact of the Spirit's indwelling. In that lies the distinction. The man in whom God's Spirit dwells is a child of God, for every child of God receives the Spirit; but one in whom the Spirit does not dwell is not God's. And the former *can* live a God-pleasing life, the latter cannot. He may hear, believe, come to Jesus, become a child of God, receive the Spirit, and then live the new life; but until that takes place he cannot please God.

2. The reason why a man who has not the Spirit cannot please God, while one in whom the Spirit dwells can, is that the one is necessarily actuated by the flesh, his fallen human nature. For that is all he has. Even if he goes in for religion (as Saul of Tarsus once did, as many under false forms of "Christianity" do now) he is under the control of the flesh. There is no more dangerous being alive than the fleshly righteous. History shows what monsters religion can make out of fleshly men. For whether in the gross indulgence of lust, or in the refined pursuits of culture and earthly ambition, whether it wear the garb of crime or disguise itself in a cloak of religion, the fleshly nature of man is always contrary to God—"because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it

*From the first moment that the word reaches the heart of a man, if it find reception there, a change begins to take place. The man is then spiritually in a transition. Yet the object of the gospel is to bring him into this state where he is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and the Spirit of God dwells in him. If he stops short of that he cannot please God.

is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:7).^{*} The works of the flesh are manifest, "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like"—and anything and everything done in self-will. (See similar lists in Rom. 1:21-31; 3:9-18; Tit. 3:3). The Christian, though he has received the Spirit, still has this old nature, the flesh, and is still in danger of being controlled by it. Hence all the admonitions: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof," etc. But having the Spirit he now has a power within which can overcome the power of the flesh. "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:16,17). So the Christian is no longer under the domination of the flesh, but if he chooses he can now walk by the Spirit, and thus go directly contrary to the flesh. But if he elects to walk after the flesh he is back on the road of death. "So then brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh ye must die; but if *by the Spirit* (context shows it is the Spirit indwelling) ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:12, 13). In those who so give Him scope and control in their lives, the Holy Spirit brings forth His fruit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22,23).

3. The Holy Spirit endues us with inward strength and power. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father," says Paul, ". . . that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory that ye may be *strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man*. This means also "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (in Rom. 8:10, "Christ in you" is equivalent with "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" in v. 8—for where the Spirit is, there also is Christ present); and this enables us to grasp the love of God: that ye "may be strong to apprehend . . . what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:15-19). All this is the work of the Spirit. A sense of reality, a great and deep conviction of the love of God fills the heart where the Holy Spirit dwells. "For the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us (Rom. 5:5). Thus we look up with confidence to God and say, "Abba, Father." Since our love to God, to the brethren, and toward all men, is but the outgrowth of our apprehension of *God's love to us* ("we love because he first loved us," 1 John 4:19) it is easy to see how "the fruit of the Spirit is love," and how, being strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, we become also "rooted and grounded in love." Of powerless and loveless Christians there are not a few. Yet God has made provision for us in the gift of the Spirit to give us power and love.

4. The Spirit imparts *boldness*. This is a thing every Christian needs if he is to be of any force in the service of God; preachers most especially. When at the first rise of persecution the church gathered together and prayed for boldness, God answered by a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit, "and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). It is of interest to note that though some of these had been "filled with the Holy Spirit" on Pentecost (Acts 2:4) yet here they are again filled. There is nothing to forbid the thought that God's children may over and over again be filled with the Spirit.

5. The Holy Spirit imparts *wisdom*. He is the "Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Isa. 11:2). Of Stephen it is said that he was full of the Holy Spirit and of faith and of grace and of wisdom and of power (Acts 6). These things are vitally connected. By faith we apprehend and by grace receive the manifold gift of God, of which power and wisdom are but two items; and all comes through the Holy Spirit, the Gift of all gifts.

6. The indwelling Spirit *intercedes for us*, with groanings that cannot be uttered. This to help our infirmity, for we know not how to pray as we ought, but the Holy Spirit makes up our lack by His intercession. This is done within us, in our hearts; and perhaps to us not distinguishable from the yearning of our own hearts. But God who reads the inward secrets sees and hears the thing the Spirit has in mind for us when He thus intercedes in our behalf. (Rom. 8:26, 27.) Indeed we cannot offer acceptable prayer, true and sincere, nor worship acceptably in any other wise, except by the Spirit (Phil. 3:3; Eph. 6:18). Which does not mean merely by the directions of the Spirit, in the word, for *that* was always required, long before the Spirit was given; but speaks of the new worship which is not only in accord with God's word, but impelled and sustained by the Spirit of God.

7. Finally—and this really goes back to our first item—the Holy Spirit alone can produce in us the Christlike life. For consider that our Lord Jesus was all His life long, from His miraculous begetting, until by the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without blemish unto God, under the Spirit's sway, in all His words and works and ways; and that all His Character is but the manifestation of the Spirit and the fruit thereof. Could any man duplicate even remotely Christ's life, unless he had Christ's Spirit? Surely not.

But God not only sent His Son, He also sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts by which we cry Abba, Father (Gal. 4:6). For this Christ died and went to the Father that this priceless Possession of His, the Spirit, might become available to us also.

If we cannot comprehend these things we can nevertheless believe them on the authority of God's word. The promise is not for those who are able to reason out the deep whys and the hows,

but for those who believe God and accept His offered gift, and act upon it by faith.

THREE KINDS OF PRAISE

There are three kinds of praise representing really three stages in the Praise Life. First, there is praise for blessings received. This is Thanksgiving. Only one leper out of ten who were healed, returned to give thanks. And do we return to give thanks for one blessing in ten? The second kind of praise is praise for blessings expected. This is Faith. Often the blessings never come until we believe God sufficiently to praise Him in advance. We never praise in vain, for our praises soon become objectified in real tangible blessings. A third kind of praise is praise to God Himself. This is Worship. It has no reference to blessings, either received or expected. It rises above our needs and our experiences and is taken up entirely with the present character of the glorious Lord. There are many who know Thanksgiving who do not know the Praise of Faith. And of all those who know the praise of Faith there are but few who know extended moments of true Worship. —Selected.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

WORDS OF LIFE

Arrangements have been made for the "Words of Life" broadcast to be heard on radio station WKPG in Port Gibson, Mississippi, starting Sunday, January 29. An individual Christian is assuming the financial responsibility in reference to this broadcast. Praise God!

Gallatin Church, Tennessee: Our Sunday school average attendance during the year 1977 (excluding 1 Sunday in December) was 195. This figure was somewhat disappointing, but considering such factors as bad weather during the months of January and February together with a

flu epidemic which hit our younger children during March, this figure would have been higher.

Highview Church, Louisville: The retreat our youth group made at Otter Creek in December was very successful. We all had a good time in the Lord and with each other. We especially thank our sponsors for the great Christian witness they are to us.

Buechel Church of Christ, Ky. We are so pleased and happy for Glen Adrio. He was baptized into Christ last month. We welcome Glen to our church family.