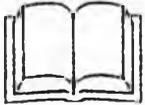


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The **Word and Work**



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JANUARY, 2000

ETERNAL DOOM!

**God Gives People What They
CHOOSE:**

He respects the choices people make.

Someone well said,
"The penalty for choosing to live without God in
this life is that we'll be compelled to live without
God in the next life."

*Indeed, we cannot travel the wrong Direction and
reach the right Destination!*

*We need to flee from the Judgment we Deserve to
the Mercy and Glory we Don't.*

HITLER IN HEAVEN?

Dr. John R. Rice

One blessed day I am going to Heaven. My, what a happy time I anticipate there. That longing to lay down the sword, to have the fight all ended, I have expected to be fulfilled in Heaven. Suppose one fine day I wake up in Heaven, and all my loved ones are there. As I settle down to enjoy my wonderful mansion in Heaven, there comes a ring on the doorbell, and I find the angel Gabriel waiting for me. "John, get your Bible. The Lord wants to send you out on an evangelistic tour," he tells me. "Well," I say hesitantly, "I thought I would get to rest with my family now. I thought the fight was all over. But bless God, Jesus died for me, and I will preach for Him a million years if He will let me." So I take my bible and get ready to leave with the angel Gabriel.

Meanwhile, he explains, "Well, all the sinners, you know, are up in Heaven. God was too good to send any sinners to Hell, so they are all here and they need preaching mighty bad." As I go out the front door Gabriel warns me sharply, "Don't ever leave your door unlocked! Remember every thief, every crook and burglar that ever lived on earth is in Heaven now. Lock your door."

Rather startled, I turn and lock the door, and Gabriel continues, "And that reminds me, don't you have some lovely daughters? Well, don't you let them out unescorted. They must be warned to keep themselves very carefully. Remember that Heaven is now a city of criminals. God was too good to send any sinner to Hell; and all **those wicked Sodomites** are now in the streets of Heaven, and every lustful man who ever betrayed and seduced an innocent girl is here, so take good care of your girls."

By this time my eyes are misty and I am feeling the keenest disappointment. This is not the kind of Heaven I was looking forward to! Here we are interrupted by a funeral procession. We find policemen on every corner. As we go down the street we pass a great jail. Soon I hear the cry of a newsboy, "**All about the war! Hitler's War in Heaven! Towns wiped out and now in flames! Thousands Homeless, Millions Under Arms, Other Millions Dead.**" Oh, yes, of course, if God were too good to send sinners to Hell, then Hitler would be in Heaven, and with him would be war and murder and misery.

Thank God, that is not a true picture. I am sorry that sinners reject Christ, and sorry that they must go to Hell, but with all my soul I thank God that one day there will be a place where every wicked, Christ-rejecting sinner will be shut out, and those that love God can at long last have peace, sweet peace.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$8.00 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$7.50 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. XCIV

JANUARY, 2000

No. 1

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[editorial:]

Can Modern Man BELIEVE in Hell?

Alex V. Wilson

It may seem morbid to have the first *Word and Work* of the 2000s focus on hell. Yet, while our doing so is based mainly on the order of the articles in the doctrinal series we've been running for many months, it also is appropriate in several ways. For it underlines several basic assumptions of this magazine: *We take the Bible seriously. *We agree with the teachings of Jesus Christ. *Life has a serious purpose. *Eternity transcends this short life in importance. *All have sinned and deserve God's judgment. *We desperately need His grace. *Having been saved by His grace, we desperately need to share the Good News of Christ crucified with all people everywhere.

Though most people say they believe in hell, they don't take it seriously, but neglect or downplay it. A newspaper religion reporter wrote, "In the 5 months I've been critiquing churches I haven't heard one sermon on hell." More than that, a retired school teacher who holds evangelical convictions said, "In over 50 years of listening, I have heard only three sermons on hell. One I gave myself."

What's the CAUSE of this SILENCE? Read on.

A theologian in Europe said, "Of course there's a hell: only nobody's there, because Jesus used it to scare the hell out of us." An English bishop wrote, "Hell is an ultimate impossibility because already there is no one outside Christ." And a survey of 10,000 U.S. clergymen (of whom 7,400 responded) showed that 53% agreed with the statement, "Hell does not refer to a special location after death, but to the experience of guilt and meaninglessness in this life."

When theologians, church leaders and preachers in general don't believe in hell, it's not surprising if many people don't either.

What's the RESULT of this SILENCE? Read on.

A Christian psychologist-therapist counsels an average of twenty people weekly. Thoughts about death are often discussed, but "I don't remember a single one of them relating their death-anxiety to a fear of how they're going to face the Judgment." Again, a large radio station in Dallas sent a reporter out to ask, "Who's going to hell?" of a random sampling of people. Of approximately 500 polled, 98% said they didn't know anyone whom they thought was bound for hell!

The widespread attitude was suggested by Phil Donahue on his talk show several years ago. According to him God will say, "Aw

shucks, fella! Just forget it. *I can't hold a few little things against you forever.*"

Some Harp on Hell

At the opposite end of the spectrum, some tract publishers feel they must mention hell prominently in most, if not all, of their tracts. Great emphasis is placed on hell's horrors.

And around 25 years ago a popular film in a number of churches and evangelistic organizations was "The Burning Hell." The film went into lengthy and vivid details about hell's tortures--the fire, worms, etc.--and insisted that every single statement is completely literal. Predictably, the film resulted in a great host of "decisions for Christ." But since they were based almost entirely on a highly emotional incitement to fear, most of the professed conversions did not last after the emotions died down. And many thoughtful people recoiled in disgust and became more deeply embedded in scoffing not only at such ideas but at hell itself.

Jesus believed in it; that's all that counts.

He mentioned it more than the OT did, and more than Paul too. Because He believed in it, I believe in it too. But we should notice what and how He taught about it.

We'll soon see that hell (Greek: *gehenna*) is not the only expression used for the punishment of the wicked. But it is the most common. "Hell" appears in eleven verses, all in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus is the speaker in every case. So, as recorded in Scripture, He mentioned it fewer than a dozen times, on four or five occasions:

Three times were in the Sermon on the Mount, spoken primarily (though not exclusively) to His disciples (Matt.5:22,29,30). He also taught about it in Matt. 10:28 & Lk.12:5; Matt. 18:9 & Mk.9:43-48. All or most of these were spoken to *His disciples only*. Finally there is Matt.23:15,33, spoken to the law-teachers and Pharisees. In general they were hardened, hypocritical religious leaders who were sinning against the light.

From these facts I conclude that we should definitely teach about hell, especially in our era when this subject which Christ believed in is recklessly neglected. Yet, following His example, such teaching should not be *primarily* for the purpose of evangelistic scare-tactics. Mainly it should be used to motivate disciples -- so they (*we!*) will diligently seek holiness and try to win the lost. Study the what, how and when of His teaching about hell, and see if that conclusion is right or not.

My research shows that the word "hell" is never used in the book of Acts, which describes the early church's evangelism. Yet future judgment definitely is taught (see 10:42; 17:30-31; 24:25). So it's possible to preach the fact that we are accountable to our Maker and that He will punish evil -- it's possible to do that without going into details about hell, or even mentioning it.

Did you realize that Paul never mentioned "hell" in his epistles? Yet he wrote statements like "God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel," and "For those who ... follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil" (Rom. 2:8-9,16). We definitely should not shun preaching that the Lord is a God of justice and wrath as well as of love and mercy. And I'm surely *not* saying it's wrong to mention hell specifically. But *perhaps* there will be occasions when it is wiser to speak of "judgment" and even "wrath" without using the word "hell" -- due to erroneous ideas people often have regarding both hell and people who take it seriously.

May God give us wisdom, and lead us as we proclaim the Gospel to the unconverted and teach disciples to grow in Christ.

THOUGHT-PROVOKERS about DAMNATION

"Keep the day of judgment in mind all the while. It will sharpen your determination to work for God." --The Epistle of Barnabas, written around 120 A.D. [not by the Barnabas of "Acts"].

* * *

"The **young** do not want to think about the afterlife because it is **too far off**, and the **old** do not want to think about it because it is **too near**." --Harry Blamires

* * *

An Unbeliever's Call for Us to Evangelize!

"Were I a Christian, did I truly, firmly, consistently believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, then the Spirit of Truth be my witness, religion should be to me **everything**. Religion should be my **first** waking thought, and my **last**. I would take thought for the tomorrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained to heaven worth a life of suffering. I would strive to look only on eternity, and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly miserable or ever-

lastingly happy. I would consider all who thought only of this world, merely seeking to increase temporary happiness and obtain temporary possessions, as madmen. I would preach to the world, in season and out of it, and my text should be, 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'" --A. S. Ormsby

* * *

Another Unbeliever's Blatant Infidelity

Some time ago, the *Detroit Free Press* carried an article by Dr. James H. Laird. He used 800-1000 words to ridicule Jesus and hell, and poke fun at those who believe in Him and it.

He wrote, "I would say that **Jesus believed a number of things that were not so.** He believed that mental illness was the result of demon possession, that on the cross He was momentarily abandoned by God, that His death would usher in the Kingdom of God, and, if He ever thought about it, He probably thought the earth was flat."

The article continues, "Have you ever noticed that people nowadays who believe in Hell take some kind of perverted delight in the thought, always confident they know who is packaged and ticketed for the Fire, and always sure they are not to be among the cargo consigned there? Such humility!"

He concludes, "Don't spend any sleepless nights worrying about some never, never land of fire and brimstone."

* * *

God Gives People What They CHOOSE:

He respects the choices people make. Someone well said, "The penalty for **choosing** to live without God in **this** life is that we'll be **compelled** to live without God in the **next** life." Indeed, we cannot travel the wrong Direction and reach the right Destination! We need to flee from the judgment we deserve to the mercy and glory we don't.

* * *

C. S. Lewis regarding what he called Christ's "appalling words" found in Matthew 7:23, "I never knew you. Depart from me."

"In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely outside -- repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged."

* * *

"Hell has disappeared, and no one noticed." --Martin Marty, contemporary writer & historian, writing about the middle half of the 1900s.

* * *

"Hell's Sober Comeback" -- That was the title of an article in U.S. News & World Report, March 25, 1991. The article said, "It seems that hell is undergoing something of a revival in American religious thought A recent Gallup Poll showed more Americans believe in hell today than did in the generally more wholesome and pious 1950s." [But note the following item, which cancels out any "gain" implied in this one.]

* * *

An Empty Hell?

A large radio station in Dallas sent a reporter out to ask, "Who's going to hell?" of a random sampling of people. Of approximately 500 polled, 98% said they didn't know anyone whom they thought was bound for hell! Put this fact and the preceding item together, and they seem to show that lots of people believe in hell, but they think a very small proportion of people are going there. Check out what Jesus thought: Matt.7:13,14; Lk.13:22-27.

* * *

Tragic Truths

The Grand Rapids Report describes the unevangelized millions as **human beings who, "though created by God like God and for God...are now living without God."**

* * *

Solitary Confinement

"Hell in the Scriptures is absolute aloneness. As spiritual life is union with Christ, spiritual death is eternal separation from God. In the final judgment, as one theologian has said, a man will be asked what he did with all the blessings and gifts God gave him. If he was selfish and concerned only about having his own way, if he had thought continually only of saving his life, then in eternity he will lose it. Having cared only for himself in this life, his eternal judgment will be to have only himself. No friends, because friends are a gift of God. No light or music, beauty or food -- nothing except one's naked existence. Hell is eternal banishment a million miles from nowhere, in solitary aloneness.

"Even the self-centered individual desires togetherness with other people in this life. **He must have others around to serve his selfishness.** The proud man needs somebody to applaud him. The show-off athlete wants the coliseum full of spectators. The man of distinction wants neighbors who will notice his fancy car. The lady with the flashy, expensive dress wants to wear it, not in the privacy of her room, but down Main Street where others will turn around to look. The man of greed or power or lust wants others around so that he can exercise his greed or power or lust on them. Even the most hardened sinner does not want to live by himself, but once he gets his way of living completely for himself, he will find that he will inherit utter aloneness." --W. Robert Smith

[I.e., in eternity we shall have what we lived for in this life. Live for self, and self is all you will inherit. Live for God and others -- "losing your life" for them in loving sacrifice -- and you will inherit the loving present of God and His family. Give, and you will receive; keep, and you will lose. See Luke 9:23-24. --avw.]

* * *

Not only *Where* you are but also *What* you are (#1)

"There is a legend about a man who went down to hell to look the place over. He saw everyone starving and wretched and dirty. He discovered the trouble was all the people in hell had stiff arms and couldn't feed or take care of themselves. He was greatly distressed, but then delighted when given a chance to look at heaven. There everyone was healthy and laughing and happy. But then he observed a curious thing: the people in heaven had arms just as stiff and unbendable as the people in hell. But the difference was that the people in heaven were feeding each other." --Maryanna Johnson in Eternity magazine, June 1966

* * *

Not only *Where* you are but also *What* you are (#2)

C. S. Lewis wrote, "Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you into something a little different from what it was before. Taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with others and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: joy, peace, knowledge, power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other Each, if

he seriously turns to God, can have that twist in the central man straightened out again: each is, in the long run, doomed if he will not."
--*Mere Christianity*, Book III, chapter 4.

[In other words, we shall forever either have to **endure** what we have become, or shall get to **enjoy** what we have become.]

* * *

But, can we Believe in God's Wrath?

"The Great Day of [God's] Wrath has come...." Rev.6:17

"This 'wrath' is the retribution which must operate in a moral universe such as God's universe is. Even if we call it 'retribution' rather than 'wrath' to exclude the intemperate passion which is so rarely absent from our anger, yet it is not a principle operating independently of God, but it is the response of His holiness to persistent and impenitent wickedness. It is indeed His *strange work* (Isa. 28:21) to which He girds Himself slowly and reluctantly, in contrast to His proper and congenial work of mercy. But where His mercy is decisively repudiated, men are left to the consequences of their freely chosen course."

Regarding Rev. 16, the Bowls of Wrath: "Unpalatable as the work of judgment may be, it is inseparable from a moral universe. Is God 'unjust in bringing his wrath on us?' asks Paul. 'Certainly not!' is his reply. 'If that were so, how could God judge the world?' (Rom.3:5f.). Symbolical as the details of these plagues are, they denote terrible realities. More terrible than the plagues themselves, however, is the way in which those on whom they fall are but hardened in their impenitence." --F. F. Bruce in *The International Bible Commentary*

WHEELCHAIR CHURCH

Leroy Garrett

I was visiting an aged sister in a nursing home that I frequently call on. I found her in a social room where she was assembled with 25 others, all in wheelchairs. The occasion was a sing-song. I joined the party, making that my visit. It turned out to be a thoughtful experience.

Some sight it was, a roomful of wheelchairs! Some were completely out of it, zombie-like, curled up and strapped in. Whatever was to happen could have no meaning to them, but I figured they were wheeled in by the staff to provide them with something to do, even if they didn't know what was going on. But more than half of them were alert enough to enjoy the occasion, some more than others.

I say it was thoughtful. I mean it set me to thinking as I sat there with them, holding the hand of the dear sister I had come to visit. They were all women except for one man. I studied them, wheelchair by wheelchair, and I thought of those lines in Ps. 102:11: "My days are like a shadow that lengthens, and I wither away like grass." With one and then another I allowed the chapters of their lives to pass before me. They were all once babes in the arms of a caring mother; then they were little girls playing with dolls; then teenagers flirting with boys; then they were grown women with babies of their own.

The shadows lengthened. They were soon grandparents, then widows, and at last in a nursing home, even in a wheelchair. There they all were, withering away like grass. And all so quickly. It leads one to conclude that the Preacher in Ecclesiastes had a point when he lamented: "It is all vanity and a striving after wind."

Whatever tales of woe might have been told from that one small group, we had a lively party instead. Animated staffer, with a double portion of patience, led us in such peppy tunes as "Down By the Old Mill Stream," "A Bicycle Built for Two," and "Yankee Doodle Dandy." A smiling 93-year old, a resident who came from that part of the home where folk can still care for themselves, played the piano with vigor.

Once we began singing spiritual songs - and the pianist knew them all --I figured she had probably played the piano in Baptist churches for 60 or 70 years. She was such a delightful thing to behold, as gifted as aged, that I was determined to stay to the end so that I could meet her.

Once we got into "Amazing Grace" and "The Old Rugged Cross" I realized that it was not only a party but church as well. My first "church" where the congregation was all in wheel-chairs. A wheelchair church! The singing may have been a bit out of tune, and a number of

them completely out of it, but still this too was worship - and was not the party ("Yankee Doodle Dandy") also worship? And who knows but what it was the kind of worship that pleases God most.

One lady in particular was really with it. She not only sang "Take the Name of Jesus With You" with the rest of us, but she kept on drolling out the lines after the music stopped, all by herself!

The leader gave a short homily on being thankful, speaking softly, kindly, patiently. She told the story of a lady who thanked her friend for the apple she brought her. The friend protested that it was only an apple. But the lady said, "When you're thankful for it, the apple tastes better." And all of life tastes better, she went on to say, when you're thankful.

I met the pianist before I got away, a woman of rare beauty at any age, and learned that she had been a music teacher in nearby schools, coaching many a chorus through the years. And she had played the piano at Methodist churches for two generations. I studied her hands--like wine they were made elegant by age. Now, at 93, she has a wheelchair church, six days a week, and still going strong. It is apparent that life is joyful to her. The shadow continues to lengthen, but it is OK.

On the way out I paused at the desk to say to the attendant:

"There were 26 wheelchairs in there, all with women in them except one." Then I asked her, "Will there be more women in heaven than men?" Her reply was classic: "The men are already there!"

I could only lamely reply, *Maybe*.

On the way home I was reminded of how it is presumed, or so it seems, that everyone goes to heaven. Did you ever attend a funeral but what the deceased had gone to heaven? Movie stars, sport stars, politicians, world leaders, they all go to heaven when they die. And why are there mostly women in nursing homes? The men have already gone to heaven!

Someone needs to remind us that it may not be so.

That may have been the most thoughtful part of my experience. All these old folks - all of us - as we see the shadows lengthen and as we decay like grass, do well to ask, Where will we spend eternity? We don't go to heaven just because we grow old and die. It is not necessarily from wheelchair to glory. Dying and going to heaven are not equivalent, as the world (and sometimes even the church) seems to suppose.

What the Bible Teaches about...

THE DESTINY OF THE UNREPENTANT

Part One

Alex V. Wilson

1. What **THREE MAIN PICTURES** does God's Word Use to Portray the Awfulness of Hell?

a. **"The OUTER DARKNESS": Exclusion from Christ's Joyful Feast**

Jesus said, "Many will...take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the [unbelieving] citizens of the kingdom will be thrown **outside, into the darkness**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 8:11,12).

Again He told a parable of a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son, the prince. When he came to see the guests, he noticed a man not wearing proper attire for a wedding. And the man had no excuse for his insulting behavior. So the king ordered, "Throw him **outside, into the darkness**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt.22:11-13; also 25:30).

Thus our Lord pictured the future glory of His people as a great royal banquet: Lights. Splendor. Festive music by world class performers. Fellowship with friends. Jokes and laughter. Food fit for a king. Beautiful bride. Handsome husband. Solemn ceremonies. Loving vows. The presence of the King himself. All the thrills of such a once-in-a-lifetime celebration are used by Christ to portray our upcoming Joy with Him.

But the unrepentant will be banned! Thrown out! They had their opportunities to participate, but now it's too late. They are disqualified. The Groom's friends "went in with him to the wedding banquet," but then "the door was shut" (Mt.25:10). And the Groom Himself tells the others, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Mt.7:21-23). So they stand outside, bitterly grieving in the darkness, only looking in at the Joy they might have had but never will. Hell is like that. The point Christ emphasized in these passages is this: "Think what you'll miss!" And Paul wrote that the disobedient will be "shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thes.1:9). **Think what you'll MISS!!**

b. **The JUNKYARD, the GARBAGE DUMP: Spoiled, and therefore Thrown Out**

This is the idea pictured by gehenna, the word translated "hell" in our Bibles. Literally it is the name of "the valley of Hinnom," which

was located just outside Jerusalem. In OT times the Jews sometimes worshipped the pagan god Molech there, sacrificing their children as burnt offerings to him. Good King Josiah stopped that horrid practice. Then to make sure it would never start again, he made the Valley of Hinnom the garbage depository of Jerusalem. Thus it was a trash-heap, a refuse-pile.

Corpses of executed criminals and of animals were thrown there, and soon became infested with maggots. Thus worms were always present. Junk and trash were thrown there too. Lest the city dump overflow, fires burned day and night to consume all that was flammable. Objects were thrown there because they were worthless, defiled, unclean--and thus unfit to be in the Holy City. They had served a useful purpose at one time--but no more.

Jesus used this garbage dump, Jerusalem's destructive incinerator, to symbolize the gruesome fate of the ungodly. The parallels are striking. He urges us to fear "the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell," the fiery city dump (Mt.10:28). He warns us that if our eye causes us to sin, we should pluck it out! For "it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'" (Mk.9:47-48).

The final clause in that sentence is a direct quotation from the very last verse of the book of Isaiah. There God said, "They will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind." Notice that the idea in Isa. 66:24 is one of disgrace and shame--they'll be loathsome--rather than of suffering (corpses don't feel pain). It was the same in the Valley of Hinnom junkyard. There was no physical torment once the body was thrown there. But the living criminal who would soon be executed faced the prospect of total indignity. The Jews felt that to be deprived of a proper burial was a wretched fate. The criminal knew his dead body would be thrown out with the garbage, become infested with maggots and finally consumed by Gehenna's flames.

Thus hell--the Valley of Hinnom--is symbolic, but expresses an awful reality: The unrepentant person is morally **filthy and unfit for God's holy presence** (symbolized here by Jerusalem, the holy city). More than that, by his sinfulness and refusal to repent, he has made himself **worthless and useless to the Lord. He has turned himself into junk, fit only to be thrown out and destroyed.** How unspeakably sad!

c. The LAKE of FIRE: Torment

(1)Luke 16:19-31, the story of the rich man & Lazarus, is not about hell but hades. (The NIV is inaccurate in v.23, though it corrects it in the footnote; & the KJV in numerous places makes the same mistake of not distinguishing hades from hell.) Yet if hades, the "jail," is this bad, then hell, the final "prison" where the wicked will be sent after the Judgment, will surely be as bad or worse. Notice that conscious pain is clearly mentioned: "**torment**" (2 times); "**agony**" (2 times); "**fire**"; and "**remember**"--no doubt the memories which damned people have will be a source of much anguish. Think about it.

Of course this story raises **unanswerable questions**: Do disembodied spirits feel physical fire and thirst for physical water? Or do spiritual fire and water exist? Or is the fire "only" symbolic of intense mental/moral pangs of conscience and memory? These are "secret things" that we should leave in the hands of God the just and merciful. (Deut. 29:29.)

(2)In Mt.25:41-46 Jesus tells us of "**the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**" But He makes it clear that impenitent people as well as angels will be punished there. For, know it or not, by siding against the Lord they have sided with Satan, the evil one. This passage gives no other details except to call this destiny "eternal punishment." There will be no probation.

(3)Rev.14:9-11 warns us of God's righteous wrath. Whoever chooses to follow the antichrist instead of Christ "will be **tormented** with burning sulfur....And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is **no rest day or night....**" Such words make us wince and shudder, but we dare not evade them. Again, Rev.19:20 & 20:10 say that Satan, the beast and the false prophet will be "thrown alive into the **fiery lake** of burning sulfur." And "they will be tormented day and night **for ever and ever.**"

There is some symbolism in this passage, for we read that death and hades also will be thrown into this lake of fire (20:14). Obviously this means death and hades (which till then have killed men's bodies and imprisoned their spirits, respectively), being needed no more, will be **consumed or wiped out**. It is a figurative way of saying these impersonal forces will be **eliminated**. Yet these verses also tell of some dreadful reality which involves conscious torment for the wicked, as our previous paragraph indicates. And in the case of Satan, the beast and the false prophet, at least, Rev. 20:10 says it lasts forever.

(This study is concluded in the next article.)

What the Bible Teaches about...

THE DESTINY OF THE UNREPENTANT

Part Two (Conclusion)

Alex V. Wilson

We have asked and sought to answer two important questions. In the editorial we asked, (1)**Can modern man believe in hell?** We saw that many don't (at least they consider it a danger to very few people); and some who do take it seriously tend to harp on it in unbiblical ways. Yet anyone who is committed to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, must believe in hell because Jesus unmistakably believed in it. In the preceding article we queried, (2)**What 3 main pictures does Scripture use to portray the awfulness of hell?** We saw that damnation is pictured as the outer darkness, and the garbage dump outside the Holy City, and a lake of fire. Now we proceed to a third basic question.

(3)Will Hell's Torment be ETERNAL?

Rev.20:10 says that for the "UNholy Trinity" -- Satan, the beast and the false prophet -- it will be. "And the devil...was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

But will all other unconverted people suffer the same destiny? Many Christians say, "YES, their torment will also be eternal." However there are a number of Christians who just as sincerely believe, "NO: Their punishment will be eternal, but their torment will come to an end sooner or later." That last statement may sound puzzling; we'll examine it soon.

Each of these views is held by Bible-believers who can quote some Scriptures for support. Let's define the two positions, and then see how they each interpret various Bible passages.

a. The Two Views Defined

(#1)The conscious *torment* of all hell's inhabitants will be **unending, ETERNAL**. This is the **traditional view**, held by most Christians since the days of Augustine (354-430 A.D.). Since it is widely believed, it needs little further definition here. We shall develop its Scriptural basis below.

(#2) Conscious torment in hell will be **TEMPORARY**. It will **differ in duration from person to person according to one's sinfulness, and will end--sooner or later--in eternal annihilation**. This is called the "**conditional view**," because it believes that immortality

(living forever) is not automatic but conditional. God bestows eternal life (that is, unending existence) only on those who meet His condition for it, which is repentant trust in Christ. Others -- the lost -- will exist after this present life only so long as justice requires, and when their punishment is complete they will become extinct. As a leading evangelical preacher wrote, "Banishment from God will be **real, terrible** (so that 'it would be better for him if he had not been born,' Mark 14:21) **and eternal**. The NT contains no hint of the possibility of a later reprieve or amnesty....But will [it] be eternal conscious torment...or will it be a total annihilation of their being?"

Note: Let us make it very clear that this view is **not** similar to the unbeliever's wish that "death will end it all." That view excludes judgment and hell altogether by dismissing the Bible's authority. Also, this is **not** the same as the view held by the Jehovah's Witnesses and the late Herbert W. Armstrong. Their belief is that all the lost will be annihilated right away after their judgment by God. Rather, the conditional view held by some Bible-following Christians believes that after judgment each unrepentant person will be punished in hell for the length of time his sins deserve, and only then will he be made extinct. As Justin Martyr (c.100-165 A.D.) wrote, "Some, [who] have appeared worthy of God, never die; but others are punished so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished."

b. Interpretations of Various Scriptures and Terms:

In the following explanations, less space is usually given to the traditional view than to the conditional. This is due to the simple fact that the former is so much better known than the latter, which most Christians have never heard explained in any detail. The imbalance in coverage, I repeat, is not because we believe either view has all the answers and no problems. Rather it is because, while each position raises hard-to-answer questions, the conditional view may have fewer problems than most people realize. Both it and the traditional view are worth serious study and re-study in the light of God's word. Perhaps some 3rd view is correct! If so, may our examination of this subject discover it.

Now let's examine various Biblical terms and passages in detail.

(1)Eternal Punishment: "[The unrighteous] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matt.25:46).

The traditional view says, The very same word is used to describe the duration of the destiny of the saved as of the unsaved. Therefore if we say that punishment in hell is not eternal, how can we say that life in heaven is? This verse says that both are unending.

The conditional view says, Yes, both "punishment" and "life" are eternal. But there is a difference between eternal punishment and eternal punishing. Jesus used the former term. It is one thing to experience a punishment that is eternal in its consequences: it is another thing to experience a process of punishing that continues eternally. For instance, Heb.6:2 speaks of "eternal judgment." But that means a judgment with eternal consequences, not a process of holding a trial that lasts forever--which would be an eternal judging. The Great White Throne judgment will be held, its verdicts carried out, and then it will be done and over. But its results will continue on without end.

Also Heb.9:12 mentions our "eternal redemption." But this doesn't mean that Jesus' redemptive death continues on and on--for He died for us once for all and then arose from death. But His death resulted in a redemption that will never end or expire in its effects. Calvary had eternal consequences. So we have an eternal redemption, but that differs from saying Christ carries out an eternal redeeming. In the same way, the punishment of the unconverted is eternal, consisting of torment that lasts till justice is fulfilled in each person's case, followed by "destruction" or spiritual "death" (extinction) forever--eternal in duration. This is what is meant by saying that the unconverted will suffer torment that is temporary but a punishment that is eternal.

(2) Destroy, Destruction, Perish: "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." "The way is broad that leads to destruction." "They will be punished with everlasting destruction." "Whoever believes in him shall not perish." (Matt.10:28, 7:13; 2 Thes.1:9; Jn.3:16, etc.)

The traditional view says, The idea of these words is not extinction but ruin; loss, not of being, but of well-being. It is ruin consisting in the loss of life worthy of the name. The verb "destroy" means to render wholly incapable of fulfilling its original design: to do irreparable injury, to unfit permanently for its intended purpose. For instance, a car that is destroyed cannot function any more as a car; but it doesn't become extinct or disappear. So to perish or be destroyed does not mean to be annihilated.

The conditional view responds, These terms do not necessarily mean to be annihilated, but they can have that meaning. For annihilation certainly results in loss of well-being and renders a person incapable of fulfilling God's design for him! (And comparing living beings with inanimate objects like cars proves nothing, due to their basic differences.) It would seem strange if people who are said to suffer destruction are in fact not destroyed. And it is difficult to imagine a perpetually inconclusive process of perishing.

(3)Death, and the Second Death: "The wages of sin is death." "Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile... --their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Rom.6:23; Rev.20:14-15 & 21:8.)

The **traditional view** says, "Death" and "the second death" do not mean annihilation. Rather, the main Biblical idea of death is **separation**. **Physical** death is separation of the spirit from the body. **Spiritual** death is separation of the sinner from God even now, in this life, while he is physically alive. (Eph.2:1-2.) And the second death means separation from God forever. None of these "deaths" means extinction. Rev.20:14b clearly tells us that that the second death is the lake of fire.

The **conditional view** says, These terms do not necessarily mean extinction, but the second death can mean that. It is extremely hard to prove that it cannot have that meaning. For while it is true that death brings separation, it also results in the **termination** of something precious. **Physical** death ends physical life. The **spiritual** death of mankind at the fall of Adam and Eve terminated the spiritual life they had possessed till then. Thus it would seem that the second death would mean the termination of the sinner's very existence, after the just punishment of his sins in hell. It is hard to believe that "death" means unending life in conscious torment.

Also (the conditionalists continue), Rev.20:14b does not say that the second death is the lake of fire. Instead, John says that the lake of fire is the second death! He is not giving a definition of the second death, saying that it means fire. Rather he is defining the fiery lake, telling us it means or ends in the second, final death. The lake is his symbol which he here explains as death; not vice versa.

(4)The Eternal Fire; a Consuming Fire; the Lake of Fire: "Depart from me...into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." "Sodom and Gomorrah...serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire." "If we deliberately keep on sinning ...no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God." "Our God is a consuming fire." "Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Matt. 25: 41; Jude 7; Heb.10:16-17 & 12:29; Rev.20:14-15.)

The **traditional view** says that the fire means fire and the **appalling** pain it causes. Some believe it consists of literal, material flames which will result in horrible torment such as we experience in our

present bodies. Others say it is instead a symbol of dreadful mental and emotional anguish caused by the memory of our foul deeds and neglected opportunities, plus the knowledge of our utter hopelessness forevermore. Luke 16 shows that when this life is over, people retain their memory and conscience. Not only that, but apparently they retain their passions and desires --for which there is no gratification in that eternal world where they are confined.

The **conditional view** agrees that in some passages fire is obviously related to agony and torment (Luke 16:23-28; Rev.14:9-12). Yet in Scripture it is also --and more often-- related to the destroying and **wiping out** of its victims. The main function of fire is not to cause pain, but to secure **destruction**, as all the world's incinerators bear witness. Hence the Biblical expression of a 'consuming fire' and John the Baptist's picture of the Judge 'burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire' (Matt. 3:12; cf. Luke 3:17). The fire itself is termed 'eternal' and 'unquenchable,' but it would be very odd if what is thrown into it proves indestructible. Our expectation would be the opposite: it would be consumed forever, not tormented forever. Hence it is the smoke (evidence that fire has done its work) which 'rises for ever and ever' (Rev. 14:11; see 19:3 regarding Babylon). Jude mentions Sodom as an example of eternal fire. But Sodom is not burning now! God's fire of judgment that fell upon it blotted it out forever. The fire was eternal not in its process but in its results.

Re-read Rev.20:14-15 and note that it says that not only unsaved people but also death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. Do these impersonal entities keep existing there, in conscious torment? No, obviously John is using figurative language here. He is telling us that death and Hades, needed no more, will be destroyed as totally as if they were burned up. They will be abolished, made nonexistent. As the inspired writer puts it literally a few sentences later, "There will be no more death" (21:4). Death itself shall die, and exist no more! Since it and Hades' extinction are symbolically portrayed by their being hurled into the lake of fire, why would not the very next sentence also mean extinction--in this case, of the unconverted? Hell's fire would thus have a dual significance in the case of the impenitent: *first*, the torment of punishment measured out according to their sins; *and then*, the destruction of their very existence.

In Luke 16:23-28, the rich man's "agony in this fire" and Lazarus' blessed condition in Paradise were experienced immediately after they died --during the intermediate state between death and resurrection. This may well be the time when the lost will come to the unimaginably painful realization of their fate. This is not incompatible, however, with their final annihilation later on. And Rev. 14:10 ("tormented in the pres-

ence of the holy angels and the Lamb") may well refer to the immediate results of judgment-day, rather than to the eternal state.

(5) Differing Degrees of Punishment: In previous studies we saw that there will be differing degrees of reward for the saved and of punishment for the unsaved. Matt. 11:20-24; Lk. 12:47-48; Rom. 2:5-6; and Rev. 20:11-13 teach these facts. Elsewhere Jesus said the saved "store up treasures in heaven" by their good deeds on earth. But Rom. 2 says that unrepentant truth-rejectors "store up wrath" from God against themselves on judgment-day (NIV, RSV). And some store up more than others. Here are other versions of that expression: "Your stubborn refusal to repent is only adding to the anger God will have toward you..."; "You are making your own punishment even greater" (Jerus.Bible; TEV). The evil and rebellion of some sinners is worse than others, and the Lord will give to each person according to what he has done.

The **traditional view** says, This means that those who are punished in hell forever will experience differing levels of suffering there. Somehow, in some way hell will inflict various degrees of torment on its inmates, according to what they deserve.

The **conditional view** says, Another, simpler method that God may use to punish the impenitent to differing degrees would be to lengthen or shorten the duration of their pain in hell.

(6) Can Immortal Beings Cease to Exist?

"Those who are considered worthy of taking part in... the resurrection from the dead can no longer die: for they are like the angels. They are God's children..." (Lk.20:35-36).

"To those who by persistence in doing good seek...immortality [or incorruption], [God] will give eternal life" (Rom.2:7). "For the trumpet will sound, the [saved] dead will be raised imperishable, and we [Cns who are still alive] will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality" (1 Cor.15:52b-53). [We Christians wish] "to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor.5:4). "Christ Jesus...has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality [or incorruption] to light through the gospel" (2 Tim.1:10b).

"God, the blessed and only Ruler...alone is immortal"; "God... only hath immortality." (1 Tim.6:15b-16, NIV/ASV).

The **traditional view** says, The first verse quoted above (Lk.20) shows that the human spirit is immortal--that is, un-die-able. Jesus plainly says that those who are resurrected (which includes everyone) "can no longer die." He adds, "For they are like the angels." It is agreed

by all that angels are spirits. Now Jesus makes it clear that angels are immortal spirits and that humans are like them: our spirits are immortal also.

The **conditional view** replies, No, Jesus did not say in Lk.20 that all people, both saved and unsaved, will be immortal after they are resurrected. For He was not talking of a general resurrection of all the dead. The people He specifically mentioned as being unable to die are "those who are considered worthy of taking part in that [future glorious] age and in the resurrection from the dead" --out from among the rest of the dead, who are unsaved. (See Robert Garrett's detailed study of this topic in W&W, 6-98.) Then to make the matter absolutely clear, Christ added, "They [the ones who can no longer die] are God's children." So this passage proves the immortality and eternal duration only of the redeemed. It is silent about the unrepentant.

And note that the same is true of the passages quoted above from Paul's epistles. Every one of them refers only to the saved. "Immortality is never used to describe the lost. This seems to be a strong indication that immortality is a gift from God; it is part of His wonderful "package" of salvation which only the converted receive. It is not an inherent attribute which everyone automatically possesses. Instead it is something to be fervently sought (see Rom. 2:7 above). It is something offered in the Gospel: so only those who believe the Gospel receive it (see 2 Tim. 1:10 above). It will be bestowed on believers when they are resurrected and/or glorified at Christ's return. (1 Cor.15 & 2 Cor.5.) Of course the impenitent will be raised from death too (Dan.12:2; Jn.5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rev.20:11-15), but Scripture never says they will become immortal.

Indeed, the last passage quoted above (1 Tim.6) makes it clear that only God is immortal. He alone has immortality inherent in himself. The redeemed will receive immortality as an eternal gift from Him. But the wicked will not. Instead, after being raised, judged, and punished for as long as justice requires, they will "perish" or be "destroyed" forever.

Dear friends, let us study this subject with open minds and Bibles. But beyond that, let us realize that whichever view is correct (or some 3rd view!), **hell is real, terrible, and eternal in its results. And people we know and love are heading there!** And other multitudes around the world are heading there, despite Christ's death to keep them from that dreadful destiny. Let us implore them on His behalf, "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). Let us spread the warning to "flee from the coming wrath" (Mt. 3:7; Lk.3:7). As the calendar has flipped over to 2000, may our Savior help us take eternity seriously, and make Him known far and wide.

[Note: In the above explanations, views and counter-views, in addition to our own study we have used ideas and a few direct quotations from various writers and reference books. But we thought it would be disconcerting to clutter up the article with numerous distracting quotation marks, titles of books and names of authors. Those who are quoted include (among others) Robert Anderson, S. D. F. Salmond and R. A. Torrey for the traditional view; Edward Fudge, John Stott and David Reagan for the conditional position. Salmond's Christian Doctrine of Immortality (1895, traditional view) and Fudge's The Fire that Consumes (revised edition 1994, conditional view) are both scholarly, very thorough, and Biblically-based books on this subject.]

GOD'S PENITENTIARY

W. P. Nicholson

In these civilized lands of ours we have large prisons. What a shame it is to put men and women in such places of torment, robbing them of their liberties and privileges; separating them from their homes and families, and bringing pain and shame on their friends. Many a time men are in jail because they have committed one crime, and some of them we hang.

We have large asylums all over the land. Thousands of people are kept there against their will. Isn't it a shame to have such places, and treat people like that. You would look with pity on me if I talked like this, and wonder where I came from. You would say, "Don't you know that these people are lawbreakers and insane? It is for their own good and the safety of the country and the people that we put them there."

Do you think we have more sense than God? Who are the people who go to hell? They are men and women who rebelled against God, and refused to be saved by the blood of His Son. What else can God do with them but put them in prison? Surely a man is mad who damns his own soul by willfully rejecting Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Men and women, hell is God's penitentiary; hell is God's madhouse. If you continue to rebel against God, God has a jail for you; and if you are so foolish as to refuse His salvation, God has an asylum for you.

If God had not been love He might have made the way to hell easy and fast, but He has hedged the way there with thorns and barriers, and a man must work hard to get there. He has to stifle conscience again and again; He has to trample over the tears and prayers of God's people. He has to silence God's Word, quench the Holy Spirit, and trample under foot the precious blood of Christ; all this before he succeeds in damning his soul forever.

Thy Brother's Blood Crieth

by Amy Carmichael, longtime missionary to India

The tom-toms thumped straight on all night, and the darkness shuddered round me like a living, feeling thing. I could not go to sleep, so I lay awake and looked, and I saw, as it seemed, this:

That I stood on a grassy place, and at my feet a precipice broke sheer down into infinite space. I looked, but saw no bottom, only cloud shapes, black and furiously coiled, and great shadow-shrouded hollows, and unfathomable depths. Back I drew, dizzy at the depth.

Then I saw forms of people moving single file along the grass. They were heading for the edge. There was a woman with a baby in her arms and another little child holding on to her dress. She was on the very verge. Then I saw that she was blind. She lifted her foot for the next step . . . it trod air. She was over, and the children over with her. Oh, the cry as they went over!

Then I saw more streams of people flowing from all quarters. All were blind, stone blind; all made straight for the precipice edge. There were shrieks and they suddenly knew themselves falling, and a tossing up of helpless arms, catching, clutching at empty air. But some went over quietly, and fell without a sound.

Then I wondered, with a wonder that was simply agony, why no one stopped them at the edge. I could not. I was glued to the ground, and I could not call; though I strained and tried only a whisper could come.

Then I saw that along the edge there were sentries set at intervals. But the intervals were too great: there were wide, unguarded gaps between. And over these gaps the people fell in their blindness, quite unwarned; and the green grass seemed blood-red to me, and the gulf yawned like the mouth of hell.

Then I saw, like a little picture of peace, a group of people under some trees with their backs turned towards the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them, it disturbed them and they thought it a rather vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. "Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite call to go! You haven't finished your daisy chain yet. It would be really selfish," they said, "to leave us to finish the work alone."

There was another group. It was made up of people whose great desire was to get more sentries out; but they found that very few wanted to go, and sometimes there were no sentries set for miles and miles of the edge.

Once a girl stood alone in her place, waving the people back; but her mother and other relations called and reminded her that her furlough was due; she must not break the rules. And being tired and needing a change, she had to go and rest for awhile, but no one was sent to guard her gap, and over and over the people fell, like a waterfall of souls.

Once a child caught at a tuft of grass that grew at the very brink of the gulf; it clung convulsively, and it called--but nobody seemed to hear. Then the roots of the grass gave way, and with a cry the child went over, its two little hands still holding tight to the tom-off bunch of grass. And the girl who longed to be back in her gap thought she heard the little one cry, and she sprang up and wanted to go; at which they reproved her, reminding her that no one is necessary anywhere; the gap would be well taken care of, they knew. And then they sang a hymn.

Then through the hymn came another sound like the pain of a million broken hearts wrung out in one full drop, one sob. And a horror of great darkness was upon me for I knew what it was--the Cry of the Blood.

Then thundered a voice, the voice of the Lord. "And He said, 'What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.'"

The tom-toms still beat heavily, the darkness still shuddered and shivered about me; I heard the yells of the devil-dancers and the weird, wild shriek of the devil-possession just outside the gate.

What does it matter, after all? It has gone on for years; it will go on for years. Why make such a fuss about it?

God forgive us! God arouse us! Shame us out of our callousness! Shame us out of our sin!

An Important Editorial by Sam Stone in Christian Standard, 10/11/98. We agree with him!

Dealing With Different Opinions

It is easy to give lip service to the familiar slogan- "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love." But when it comes down to allowing liberty in matters of opinion, problems arise.

When a person believes something about the Bible, it is easy to move conviction from the realm of opinion and make it a matter of faith. Communications quickly break down with those who differ. When people quit talking and listening to each other they soon become polarized and isolated.

We believe part of the function of CHRISTIAN STANDARD [and W&W - avw] is to provide a forum to discuss vital issues within the context of biblical faith. We don't agree with the opinions in every article we publish; you probably don't either.

In the twenty years that I have been editing the journal, I recall running four different articles about "the perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10. Each article offered a different interpretation. Which one is right? I'm not sure. I've got my idea, and you can have yours. Each essay was written by a person who believes the Bible is true, has studied it carefully, and thinks his or her understanding is correct.

We hold that it is each reader's job to study the text for himself and decide which interpretation is preferable. This is exactly what Paul commended in the Bereans. They searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things they heard were so (Acts 17:11). They did not just take some person's word for it, not even Paul's. They tested everything by Scripture.

Any man may be wrong--whether he is an evangelist, an educator, an elder or an editor--but the Bible is always right. We need to read and study it.

At the same time, we must keep talking to our brethren and hearing what they have to say. If we cut ourselves off from them by not even considering their views, we may miss out on something we could learn. We could, that is, unless we are convinced that we alone already have all the truth and that everyone else is wrong.

Now that's a matter of opinion!

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VOICES From The FIELDS

There is much news from workers around the world. It has accumulated since we had no space in our Nov. - Dec. Issue. We've had to condense due to space (and in a few cases, due to the passing of time since the letters were written). **Especially urgent is news about our sisters Teruko Nakahara and Irene Allen.**

Nakahara Mission Fund Terrell, Texas December, 1999

Our dear sister in Christ, Teruko Nakahara, has decided to go back to Japan and join Michiya and Tomoko in the Lord's work in Shizuoka City. Teruko came to the United States soon after her beloved husband, Shichiro, went home to be with the Lord in September, 1988. We have had the pleasure of her presence in the Dallas area for over ten years. A major reason for her coming here was to give Michiya time to establish himself in the work of the Lord there - but also to be nearer her daughters who live in the states.

Now that Michiya is established in his leadership role, and is well respected by the members of the church there, Teruko feels that it is time for her to return and be of whatever help she can be in the Lord's work in Shizuoka City. In addition, her 70th birthday is in February and as a citizen of Japan, she will become eligible for their national health program and a small stipend similar to our Social Security. For several months she struggled with what the Lord would have her do about her future. She plans to leave on December 14, 1999, and move into a small apartment in walking distance from the church building. That decision has mixed emotions for us as we have enjoyed her presence and we are saddened to see her leave, but we rejoice that she will be once again serving the Lord in the work that she and Shichiro began some 35 years ago.

We plan to keep the financial structure the same as the Lord supplies. Presently, the outflow for the Nakaharas is \$2400.00 per month (\$1300.00 for Michiya and \$1100.00 for Teruko). We wire this to Japan at three month intervals to avoid paying such high transfer fees to banks here and in Japan. During all of 1999 contributions from churches and individuals have not reached this level. For some reason several regular contributors have ceased and/or reduced their giving. Had we not had a small reserve we would have been unable to meet these expenses. We reported in our last newsletter that we were sending Michiya a three month advance because of potential Y2K disruptions. By doing so, the Mission Fund checking account will be depleted. It is our prayer that contributions will be up in 2000 so that we can continue the present level of support. It is needed because the

cost of living is about two-thirds here what it is in Japan. The church there is able to help some but our support from the states is deeply appreciated.

Thank you so much for your prayers and your stewardship for the Nakahara Mission. If the Lord leads you to increase or begin contributions to the Mission, it would be appreciated as our budget is presently very tight. We request that if you contribute to the Nakahara Mission Fund, send it preferably to the address above or to Victor Broadus c/o Missionary Messenger, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington KY 40555. Please do not send personal checks to the Nakaharas in Japan because they will have to pay an extremely high fee to cash the check.

Urgent P.S. by avw: Since brother Yarbrough sent out the above letter, we learned in late Dec. that Teruko has been diagnosed as having advanced cancer. The doctor in Japan gave her only a few months to live! We know the Lord can overrule that. Let us pray He shall, according to His will, and that grace, comfort and strength be given to our sister and all her family. Extra financial aid is needed here too.

Martin & Susan Brooks Mozambique Nov. 20, 1999

From Susan

Here are just a few words about the Hindu and Muslim children at our school. Martin has one of the Muslim boys in his Bible class. One morning he had an upset stomach. Martin prayed for him in Bible class that morning and since then, the young Muslim has been asking for prayer during the prayer request time. Another day his classmates were singing, just for fun, "Jesus, King of Kings, glory, Hallelujah!" He was somewhat peer-pressured into joining them perhaps, but he didn't seem to mind; he seemed to be enjoying himself. I think the Lord must be at work in his heart.

His younger brother, on the other hand, has a bit more of a fighting spirit. The other day he asked his teacher why we were singing about Jesus being the Son of God in all of these Christmas songs. "Because we believe He is the Son of God!" she answered. "But he's not!" the youngster argued. The teacher repeated our belief. It was a bit of an argument. This little one will take some convincing. How sad to think of where his beliefs will lead him if he doesn't change. How important it is that we pray! Even as I write this I'm wondering too what these young people will face if they do turn to the Lord. I also wonder if there will come a day when I don't feel that I have the freedom to write to you about them.

Just a bit about the Hindu child. One of the other children was singing a scripture song that I had taught, but he was being silly, changing the words. As I corrected him, the little Hindu boy piped up and said, "Yes, don't ruin the song; Christian songs are true!" The Lord is at work in his heart, and all around us.

Update Fri, 3 Dec 1999 -- From Martin now

The Bible College is now closed for the holiday season. Fourteen men finished their course work and have returned to their homes in the north. We are hoping to hear good things as they complete their practicums over the next six months. Please pray with us that these men will be used by God to advance His Kingdom here in Mozambique.

Cecil Byrd spoke at the graduation ceremony using Romans 10:1-2 as his text. Our heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites (Mozambicans) is that they may be saved. They are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. This was the situation when our students arrived back in January of 1999. By God's grace, we pray they will present the gospel with zeal and accuracy.

I have been helping to train Mozambican teachers to teach in Christian schools for the children of Mozambique. I taught through the latter part of Genesis and Exodus along with a course on the philosophy of Christian education. Susan helped to teach a class on using visual aids. Others taught about teaching children to read, characteristics of effective teachers, the advantages of teaching in mother tongue language instead of Portuguese, first aid and some other subjects as well.

This next week, this same group of teachers will be doing a Bible Club (VBS) in Machava. We hope to use the building for which we are negotiating to use as a Christian school. In the afternoons, the teachers will be taught how to present the following day's lessons in the VBS. This is the practicum section of the teaching training. Please help us pray for the teachers as they share Christ with the children of the community.

Today is election day in Mozambique. Actually, tomorrow is as well. The two main political parties were the groups that drove the country into a civil war around 1975. The last presidential elections were six years ago. There have been speculations of trouble but as of yet things seem really quiet. Still, prayers are in order. This next week as results of the election come in from across the country, there is the potential for disruptions. We pray whichever party loses will take it gracefully.

Meanwhile, the elections have afforded us a day off of school. Susan is cleaning house and I have spent the morning making plans.

for the next semester of the Bible College. The plans are to have sixteen students. Most of them will come from Zambezia and Nampula provinces about 1100 miles to the north. For \$70 monthly per student we can provide a full college scholarship for these church leaders. This includes transportation, housing, food and a little extra money for personal items and school supplies. If anyone cares to sponsor a student, please let us know.

We currently have over 50 applications for the 16 spaces available. In January, Manuel De Oliveira and I will fly to Nampula to meet the applicants and make decisions on who should receive the available scholarships. Please pray for wisdom and the Lord's leading in this matter.

In February, we will begin the first of a two year program. We want to have the second year students bring their families with them, so by February of 2001 we will need to have completed another student housing unit. It should take about six months to build the unit and should cost around \$12,000. It will be used to house either four families or 16 single students.

Jacob Michael is also starting a school for Good News for Africa in Nampula. He is using two Mozambican men to help him teach basic Bible courses and some vocational skills appropriate to Mozambique. He too is equipped to teach 16 students. That will help fulfill the demand for Biblical training, especially when the men are not able to leave their farming and church responsibilities for an extended time.

That's most of the current news from Machava.

P.S.: One more thing, we have had a lot of rain the last few weeks. Thanks to all who helped us purchase the LandRover. Without it, it would have been very difficult to get out of the center where we live.

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller
December, 1999

St. Petersburg, Russia

We are now living and working in St. Petersburg, Russia's second largest city, situated much further to the north on the Gulf of Finland.

Our main reason for coming to St. Petersburg is to work with a small congregation of Russian Christians that is in need of teaching and leadership. Known as the Narvskaya Church of Christ, this group was organized about 4 or 5 years ago and right now consists of about 20 members. On Sundays, we meet in a music school where we rent an auditorium and a classroom. Other meetings are held in a rented apartment in another part of the city. There are three Russian men

who help lead in the worship service and church work, but two of the three are young and all are inexperienced. Other missionary families have been involved with this work, but, except for one American woman, Stephanie Smith, they are all back in the States now. Paul is responsible for the preaching on Sundays and he teaches a church Bible class on Friday evenings. In time we hope to start a Bible class(es) on Sunday. Eventually, we would like to see this church have a Russian preacher, elders and teachers. From a realistic standpoint, this will probably take several years--especially for development of elders.

In connection with the church work, there are several opportunities to offer English/Bible classes that are great ways for us to make contact with new people. Some of the church members and attendees have been reached in this way. Paul is currently teaching such a class on Wednesday nights. In the future we may be able to have similar classes through an informal arrangement with some English teachers in the public schools.

Additional opportunities and needs include the following:

The need for Russian church leaders is great. We are planning when possible to try to tutor and nurture suitable young men to fill this need. We are thankful to God that two of the men at our church are already attending a Bible training institute and want to be preachers. We are planning to have regular meetings with them.

During the summer several American church teams visit children's camps in the area and through these efforts many contacts are made that we can do some "follow-up" work after the American teams have returned to the States.

Many hospitals and orphanages here are open to accepting humanitarian aid. Work is already being done by others (American Christians) in this area, but there is much still to be done. We will be exploring the avenues open to us in both giving aid and evangelizing.

Also, Virginia will probably be teaching classes as the work develops. The "how to" for much of this is still in the planning stages. We have to work closely with the Russians--for their benefit and ours; American "know-how" often gets you "no-where" over here. Things that should be so simple (and are simple in the US) often turn out to be so complicated and time consuming here. Our ultimate aim is to help the Russian Christians become mature enough that they no longer depend on us and we can move on to other areas. (Of course, as noted above, this may take years to accomplish.)

During the first week of November, a seven-member team of American Christians from Stephanie's home church in Orlando, Flor-

ida, visited us. Arrangements were made to rent the space at the music school for several days and nights. Bible classes were conducted during the daytime and preaching services were held in the evenings. Notices were posted and handed out in an effort to reach new people from the city. As a result, not only was the church certainly blessed and encouraged by this support from the brethren in the States, but several new contacts were made locally. We are continuing to reap results from this special program. Join with us in praying that this seed-sowing will bear fruit.

Robert & Joy Garrett

Work continues to progress. Michael Mangisi, our bricklayer/plasterer has completed the floors in the church building at Kuwacizana and will be laying brick at Goromonzi where the temporary shelter the church has used for many years is finally giving way to a better building. These two buildings are the work and fruit of the local churches without any funds from the USA. Brickmaking is underway for the Epworth building. Most of the churches are growing and increasing. Daniel Kubvaruno, a leader in the Mbare church, is doing the electrical wiring at Mufakose. He and his wife, Rosewinter, are keeping our house at Rockwood and looking after things there.

Bob Morrow and Cleo Russell returned from a four week evangelistic tour. They held meetings in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and in Pietersburg, South Africa. They reported several baptisms and restorations.

Senior Citizens Week at Woodland Bible Camp in Indiana: Joy led the women in four illuminating lessons concerning the Day of the Lord and Armageddon; and I was commissioned to bring the chapel lessons. I spoke on rebuilding the walls of our society that have been broken down. They can be rebuilt only through our being the light of the world. The lessons the other speakers gave were all inspiring and the fellowship was a sweet taste of glory.

David Moldez, president of C.B.C.
Nov. 3, 1999

Manila, Philippines

We rejoice as Central Bible College finishes another semester of training students. We have seen them grow in faith and the knowledge of His word, especially those who are young in faith. One of the highlights of the semester was when students scheduled a mission week. They formed into teams and distributed Christian literature and shared the gospel to people and in hospitals around the vicinity of the college. This resulted in people accepting the Lord Jesus. We also have students who are active in various ministries like pastoring, church planting, conducting home Bible studies, etc. Others are salt and light in the different places where they work. One of our graduates told how the

Lord has used her to start a Bible study group in the office where she works.

Once monthly I also go to Cavite and help two of our students to begin a new church there. After 5 months of meeting, they now have around 30 believers. I also solemnized the marriage of a couple who decided to follow the Lord, and am counseling some people who are considering being baptized. The last time we went there, it was so flooded along the way that we almost were not able to pass through because the water was 2 feet deep. The van made it, but after a semester of transporting students from Novaliches to CBC, and doing mission work, it needs major repairs again. Last week a policeman took down its license number because, after passing through a flooded place, it started to emit black smoke. (Our government lately passed a "clean air act" and they stop vehicles that emit lots of smoke.) We had it conditioned but it still failed twice to pass the test. Please pray it will be in good condition as we begin 2nd semester this month of November.

My heart is truly excited about the many mission works here. I pray that even more CBC students will engage in such work and others will support them. I know the Lord brought me here to do more than administrative work, but to see more students who can be trained and sent to begin new congregations and also engage in missionary work. More poor people have responded to the gospel so that they become spiritually rich.

Brother Earl Mullins Jr. visited and had fellowship with us. He shared with us about some of the ministries there. There were other good results from his being here.

Update on Irene Allen:

Back in November, Sister Allen became very ill and had to be hospitalized for weeks. Her recovery was slow, and her weakness great. Church members aided her, and her son Norman flew up from Iowa for a few weeks. Gradually she improved but it seemed clear she was no longer able to live by herself. Regretfully she left Alaska on Dec. 8 to fly to Iowa, to live with Norman and his family.

Her present address is 401-11th Ave. West, Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577-3711. Pray for her and her family, and all the Eagle River Church, where she is greatly missed. --avw, 1/5/2000

Update on Dennis & Betty Allen

They arrived back safely from China around Dec. 22, in good health and thankful for opportunities to sow seed in some fruitful soil there. More next month.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Tell City/ Lilly Dale Workshop 2000 Presents: Bro. Dennis Kaufman (Christian Counselor) Friday, Feb. 25th at 7:00 p.m. (EST) at the Tell City Church of Christ "An Overview: Equipping the Saints to Counsel in the Power of the Holy Spirit." Saturday, Feb. 26th at 9:00 a.m. "Training People to Connect to each other" (Questions & Answers) Then at 11:00 a.m. "Training People to Understand Resistance to Helpful Remedies" Noon: Lunch provided by Tell City & Lilly Dale Churches. At 1:30 p.m. "Blended Families and Case Studies." **For more information contact: David Johnson at (812) 547-6778.**

Bill Spears Sr....former elder, teacher, and preacher (Orlando, Florida) was called home to be with the Lord this past Christmas Eve. Brethren Ben Rake & Bennie Hill conducted the memorial service in Virgie, Kentucky before burial in the family cemetery.

Irene Allen...who until recently had been a missionary to Alaska, is now living with her son in Iowa. Her address is: Irene Allen, c/o Norman Allen, 401 11th Avenue West, Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577-3711 She sends thanks to all who prayed and wrote during her critical bout with pneumonia. She is still recovering and now making her home with her son Norman.

Announcing: "Christian Crusade for Christ" March 27-20, 2000. This 8th annual meeting is being held at the Ponchatoula Church of Christ in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. Theme: Bible Prophecy and in-

cludes the following speakers: Joe Stone, Robert Garrett, Dale Ziebarth, Harry Coultas, T.Y. Clark, Robert Gill, Kenneth Preston, Orell Overman, and Bennie Hill. **For more information contact Cleo Russell at (225) 294-7814**

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller arrived in Louisville the middle of December. The Lord continues to bless and things are looking good including Satan showing enough interest to know the Lord is at work in St. Pete & Kineshma. The news concerning the elections of the Duma seems to be reason for further thanksgiving and praise. Pray for Paul & Virginia as plans are made to return to Russia. (Bro. Earl Mullins Sr.)

Community Church of Christ: from Ron Flora. At our last business meeting Bro. Henry Ott announced his retirement from the pulpit effective January 31, 2000. In accordance with our contract, he will fill the pulpit until March 31st unless another minister is hired prior to that date. We have formed a pulpit committee to search for a new minister and would appreciate any recommendations from the brotherhood or contacts from interested ministers. It has not been determined whether we will hire someone full-time or part-time; this will partly be dependent on who becomes available. Call the church office (502) 969-2729 or Rusty Delk (502) 477-0552 with information.

SBS Began Spring Quarter on January 3rd, 2000. Classes being offered this semester include: Principles of Christian Education, Joyce

Zimplemann; Hebrews, Jerry Carmichael; Systematic Doctrines II, Alex Wilson; Epistles of Peter/John, Mike Abbott; and Poetic Books, Bennie Hill.

Louis Schuler ...minister at La-Grange recently had quadruple bypass surgery is back home and has a couple more weeks of limited activity before resuming his normal duties. Much prayer has gone up for this good brother and thanksgiving abounds with the Schuler family and fellow ministers.

Report re: Teruko Nakahara, from Moto Numura: Michiya Nakahara just replied to my question concerning his mother, Teruko. Over the weekend she was allowed to come back home, so she did. Then the family found that the bed she used to occupy in the Shizuoka Red Cross Hospital was assigned to someone else, so she needs to stay at home now. Therefore, Michiya wrote me not to visit the family now as she gets easily tired if she were to meet some visiting guests. [See page 26.]

Yesterday, we had thirteen adults all partaking the Lord's Meal while four little ones observed us attending

the Supper. It was a wonderful time of worshipping the Savior while enjoying our rich fellowship in His grace and in that blessed hope.

My wife Yoriko lost 13 pounds within ten months, but now she is doing well.

News & Notes...is what you make it! Don't let up! Keep sending News & Notes that pertain to your particular congregation. Please note my e-mail is bhill40482@aol.com or regular mail at P.O. Box 54842 Lexington, KY 40555. Bennie Hill.

Turkey Creek '99 report: 8 baptisms and 53 other responses. Great revival meetings with Sonny Childs and Dale Offutt. 2 responses on Jan. 2nd, 2000. PTL. — Harry Coultas

With The Lord: Marie Rehorn went home to heaven. She was a faithful, generous supporter of the Lord's work everywhere, including overseas. She compiled articles Bro. Boll wrote through the years on Jesus-&-Prayer, resulting in our book Christ's Teaching on Prayer. (Still available.)

S.B.S. Annual Seminar

March 24-25, 2000

(Fri., 7-9 p.m.; Sat., 9-11:45 a.m.)

**Southeast Church of Christ,
12610 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville**

Theme:

**The Lord's BODY,
the Lord's FAMILY**

FRI. Mar. 24, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

"Diversity With Unity In The Church" -- Julius Hovan

"The Church's Responsibility To Youth" -- Sonny Childs

SAT. Mar. 25, 9:00-11:45 a.m.

"Diversity And Unity In The Home" -- Cameron Cox

Simultaneous Workshops:

"Effective Ministering to and by Senior Saints" -- Hovan

"Effective Ministering to and by Home Builders" -- Cox

"Effective Ministering to and by Youth" -- Childs

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