

# THE WORD AND WORK

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## WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

### HIGH BUT LOWLY

Two seemingly opposite principles combine to make possible the Christian's life and work: the one, the recognition of his high estate; the other the spirit of humility and lowliness. The former without the latter would lead to pride and self-importance; the latter without the former would issue in self-depreciation and degradation. Either without the other would spoil the life and service of the Christian.

We see the two principles working together in fullest harmony in our Lord Jesus Christ. Never oblivious of who He was and whence He came—never losing the dignity of His Divine glory, He lived and worked humbly, and stooped to lowliest service. This combination of conscious greatness and utter lowliness characterized His whole ministry, down to His death on the cross.

The incident of the footwashing recorded in John 13 is the perfect illustration of His exaltedness and His lowliness, working together in loving service. "During supper," we read, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he cometh forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel and girded himself. Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (John 13:3-5.)

### IF WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE

I was reading this passage to a dear old brother, and I had got this far when he stopped me and asked that I read that first part over to him again. So I read—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he cometh forth from God, and goeth unto God . . ." "Yes," said the old man, "when we know that we are going to God we can do *anything*." It was a word of true insight. Our Lord stooped to wash his disciples' feet, not forgetting for a moment His Divine honor, who He was, whence He came, and whither He was going. It was this that distinguished His service of love from mean labor. This knowledge of His high estate was really that which enabled Him to do the lowliest service, and which glorified His act of self-abasement.

### OUR STANDING IN CHRIST

It is therefore of great importance that the Christian should know and be assured of his high standing in Christ—for unless he sees and knows this, both his work and his daily life will fall short of its best spirit. We find therefore throughout the epistles a constant emphasis and oft-repeated declaration of the Christian's high position before God. They are "beloved of God, called to be saints;"

"God's elect, holy and beloved," and "beloved children;" and "if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." The Christian is not his own, he was bought with a price (and what a price!) and is correspondingly dear and precious to Him that bought him: he must not hold himself cheap. They were washed, they were sanctified, they were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:11). They are the sons of God, though now unrecognized by the world, for whose revealing the whole creation waits. They are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, called out of darkness into His marvellous light (Rom. 8:18-23; 1 Peter 2:9, 10). Such are but a few out of the many statements of God's word concerning those who have come to Christ for salvation. Surely high is the name and rank and state which God has bestowed upon His redeemed ones.

#### **DO WE DARE TO BELIEVE IT?**

How timid and diffident God's people are to appropriate the high place and title assigned to them. Many of us—perhaps most of us—would be afraid to boldly assert such things of ourselves. No—we know how weak we are, how undeserving, how far we have fallen short—we really cannot dare to make such claims. We are afraid it would savor of pride and self-exaltation. And, certainly, God hates pride—spiritual pride most of all. We remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. We would far rather stay in the background, not daring so much as to lift our face to heaven, but smite our breasts, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And all this is well and good. Yet when God has forgiven us should we believe Him? when He has washed us should we think of ourselves as white? and if He has appointed us to a high and exalted place—is it pride to accept it? is it humility to refuse it?

#### **THE PRIVATE WHO WAS MADE CAPTAIN**

The story was told that Napoleon's horse ran away with him. A private soldier, seeing the emperor's danger, jumped from the roadside and grabbed the horse's bridle and stopped its mad run. "Thank you, captain," said Napoleon. The soldier caught the point instantly. "Of what company?" he asked. "Of the Imperial Guard," replied Napoleon. The private went right up to headquarters, and presented himself to the officers there as captain of the Imperial Guard. They thought him insane, they threatened to imprison him—but when the emperor was asked the matter was confirmed and the appointment was found to be valid. The emperor's word was enough, and no appeal could be from that. And should not a saved sinner be willing on the authority of God's word, to accept the high station assigned to him by grace? Would it be an honor to God to repudiate it?

#### **WHAT REALLY HUMBLER A MAN**

But would that make us proud? Really, nothing can so humble a man as the grace of God. The Law can humiliate him—but only grace can humble him. The heart of the Prodigal was not broken until his father ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and clothed him with the best robe and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and brought him in to the feast: then, not before,

did he truly know and understand. And the sinner, saved by grace, is not fully conquered till he sees his forgiveness so full and free, purchased for him at such great cost, and the high place given him in the Father's house. It is this that enables him to sing,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were a present far too small;

Love so amazing so Divine

Demands my heart, my life, my all."

And it is this that makes him truly a free and happy Christian.

#### THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW

Now to go back to our starting-point—we do need to know who we are, the high place which God has given us, and the glory to which we are destined, that in the strength and assurance of this we may do our Lord's work, down to the humblest, lowly service. Even in human lives there is a *noblesse oblige*—and great men can, yea, must, do lowly things. One whose position is precarious, and whose prestige is doubtful cannot afford to compromise his rank by humble service. But one who knows what God has done for him, where he stands, what he is, what is the hope of his calling and the glory of his inheritance, is able to serve his Lord in humility, in self-abasement, in tears and trials—while never forgetting his high place in Christ Jesus.

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#### TRUTH OR PREJUDICE?

In my text-book on Logic which we studied when I went to school, the author showed how greatly men's minds are influenced and prejudiced by prospects of loss or gain, advantage or disadvantage. The illustration the author used was as follows:

"If the belief that Jupiter has eight moons would cause the loss of your eyes, nobody would believe that Jupiter has eight moons. They would not even take a look at the evidence."

Now of course it is no matter of concern with us whether Jupiter has eight moons or not; why should one incur the danger of the loss of his two eyes over such a question. Nevertheless the illustration sets forth a great and potent principle which influences men mightily in their beliefs about important things. The consequences of loss or gain that would follow from the acceptance or rejection of certain truths of God's word is apt to affect men's judgments far more than the evidence pro or con, so that they can believe themselves honest in accepting or denying the truths in question.

If for example the acceptance of the "pre-millennial" teaching should have an entail of ostracism, a loss of friends and prestige and open doors, and livelihood—without saying just here whether the teaching in question is true or otherwise—they are heroic souls who in view of such peril can yet examine with clear eyes, and judge truly and impartially the evidence of God's word on that theme.

But should even such pressure be brought to bear on free, simple Christians, by those who call themselves brethren in Christ?

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#### FOR DARK DAYS

Nothing has such power to cast out fear as the firm conviction that whatever our present circumstances may be, or the future may have in store for us, we can never be separate us from the love of Christ. This assurance will enable us to sing on our darkest days, and to rejoice when, without it, we should sink into utter despair.—F. J. Horsefield.

# NEWS AND NOTES

Mitchell, Ind.: "The Lord is greatly blessing us in our meeting here at Bryantsville. There have been fourteen responses to the invitation. Ten of these have been for baptism and the remainder for membership and rededication to the Lord. We had 146 in Sunday school yesterday. We have been having good crowds every night. Brethren from Linton and Dugger have been over some."—Eugene Pound.

Later we learned that eighteen in all responded to the invitation in the meeting at Bryantsville. Richard Ramsey of Louisiana was the evangelist.—Pub.

Sellersburg, Ind.: "We have had two baptisms and one restoration at Sellersburg since Brother Marsh and his son, Tommy, began the meeting at Antioch. Bro. Marsh is now back home and reports twenty-two responses, most of them baptisms."—F. S. Spaulding.

Louisville, Ky.: "Seven came forward in the revival at Ormsby Avenue church during the recent meeting, in which Paul Clark was evangelist. Two of these were by primary obedience to the gospel, the others for rededication and for membership. Our crowds were the best we have had at Ormsby for the last few years. Since the meeting our night crowds have increased substantially. We only hope that this revival of interest will be lasting.

"We were saddened by the Home-going of one of our faithful members, Sister Charles Roberts, a few days ago. She, along with her husband, had been a long time member of the Ormsby congregation. She loved the Lord and His church, and will be greatly missed."—J. R. Clark.

Buras, La.: "The Boothville-Venice church of Christ, Buras, has just closed a revival with Brother N. B. Wright, evangelist. Attendance was good and the messages were soul-stirring and heart-warming. The use of Brother Richard Ramsey's rented loud-speakers let the Boothville-Venice folks know of our activities. Though there were no conversions, the messages brought seasons of refreshing to

the local brethren.

"We had a vacation Bible School in June, having classes at night, which proved very successful. Boothville has just purchased another automobile for the work here, which, though an added expense to the already burdened church, is very essential to the Lord's work.

"There is an opening for a new work at Port Sulphur, La. (about 25 miles north of Boothville), where I plan to hold Friday night services as the Lord leads and supplies the means."—Francis Holde-man.

Gallatin, Tenn.: "Two young men and their wives were baptized here this week and one man came for membership. Brother Crowder is at Mackville, Ky., in a good meeting.

"At Fisherville, Ky., five were baptized and five came for renewal and rededication. Good attendance was had at the Daily Vacation Bible School, which was directed by Frank Gill of Allensville. Brother Jack Curry, their minister, led the singing and gave other valuable assistance."—H. L. Olmstead.

Crowley, La.: "Brother Mullins was to have been in a meeting in Pine Prairie from August 4 to 8, but was unable to make it and we were called upon to help out. Bro. Lowell LeDoux led the singing and did a very capable job of it and also had charge of a children's class just before the services. We had good crowds, averaging from 100 to 140, and two obeyed the Lord. We were happy to have had a part in this work."—Antoine Veldetero.

Amite, La.: Aug. 11; "Recently we held a meeting at the Shiloh church with three young men baptized. Encouragement was given and several boys volunteered to lead singing. This week a group of young people from that church will sing on the radio program at Hammond. There is some good material in this church for future workers, perhaps some potential preachers. On August 10 I baptized a married couple at the same place. This is one of the congregations that was started shortly after I came to the field twenty-six years ago. It now owns a new

masonry building and is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

"There have been two restorations at Amite in the last few weeks. Much sickness and vacations have brought our Sunday attendance record down to an all time low for the past three years.

"Bro. Gayle Palmer of DeRidder has baptized several in visits and meetings at the Big Creek church recently. That church has had twenty odd additions in the last eighteen months.

"Bro. Kenneth Istre, Richard Ramsey, and N. B. Wright have all held good meetings with churches in this community recently. Bro. Ivy Istre is to be with the Pine Grove church in late September for a week's meeting.

"The Amite brethren have under consideration a more determined effort to carry the gospel to the negro race in this town and community."—A. K. Ramsey.

Abilene, Texas: "We were blessed with a good meeting here at South Side in July, when Brother Marsh came our way. Although there were no responses publicly, there was some very faithful seed-sowing. The last part of July and the first part of August we held a vacation Bible school, and the response and interest were good.

"Two adults have been baptized in recent weeks, and one has rededicated her life to the Lord.

"Pray with us that 'Whole-Counsel' preaching and teaching may be blessed by our God in an even greater way here and elsewhere."—Carl Kitzmiller.

Dallas, Texas: The first 19 days in June I was in meetings at Jennings and Crowley, Louisiana. The Lord blessed with eleven responses, of which five were for baptism. Our meeting at Mt. Auburn, with uplifting, spiritual messages by R. H. Boll, was June 23-29. I was in Florida July 16-23, preaching at the Woodstock Park Church in Jacksonville four nights (July 20-23), and the Lord blessed with 14 responses. We also were privileged to have a daily broadcast.

"I preached in a short meeting at the Prairie Creek Church, Dallas, July 28 through Aug. 3, with five additions. Our Vacation Bible School at Mt. Auburn was conducted Aug. 4-8 with splendid interest.

The meeting with the Sugar Creek Church near Warsaw, Ky., was blessed of the Lord with fine interest and nine responses, five of which were for baptism. Two were baptized at Mt. Auburn in Dallas, Sunday, Aug. 17, and Dr. E. V. Wood baptized another the following Sunday.

"Lord willing, I'll be at Parksville, Ky., Sept 30 through Oct. 12, and at East Grand in Dallas sometime in November.

"The Lord continues to bless our broadcasting efforts, using Bro. Dan Richardson in a marvelous way in giving us many open doors. Our regular Sunday 'Good Tidings' broadcast is now going out over six stations, and the Jacksonville, Florida, station has given us time for a daily program. Dr. C. E. Brooks is to be on daily in Mobile, Ala., too."—Robert B. Boyd.

Louisville, Ky.: "Since reporting the progress of the work at South Louisville Church, 5th and M Sts., we have been blessed with a good summer of attendance, although the polio epidemic cut the Bible School by about twenty per Sunday. Brother Ernest H. Hoover, Chattanooga, Tenn., preached during an eight days revival the final week of August. One came for membership, but the revival seemed to bear even greater fruit the Sunday following the meeting, for there were eight responses: two baptisms, one membership and five renewals. To date in 1952, there have been 36 responses for 35 Sundays. Brother Hoover's messages were soul stirring, as fine as we have heard him preach during the five or six meetings during which we have associated with him."—N. Wilson Burks.

Buras, La.: "I have just returned from a three-day meeting with Pine Grove church of Christ, east of Independence, La. The meeting was well attended with a full house every night. The Spirit of the Lord was felt mightily each night. Visitors came from Amite and Oak Grove churches. Pray with us that these brethren may continue to grow in grace, wisdom and in the knowledge of our Lord."—Francis Holdeman.

#### A Home Mission Work

Amite, La.: "Having Been minister at the Seventh and Camp

Streets church of Christ in New Orleans for five years, Brother Richard Ramsey has resigned, and will, Lord willing, move his family to Ponchatoula in a few weeks, where a small beginning has been made and the few brethren on the ground are anxious and willing to go forward. He wishes to make his headquarters there giving some time to that work while preaching from one end of the parish to the other, and over in the adjoining parishes also, proclaiming Christ to all who will hear.

"Friends of the Lord have generously provided him with loud-speakers for his car. He can preach on the roadside, in small settlements, and everywhere people are found. He would ask opportunity

for meetings to follow up in every community. It is a big job. He has been provided with projector and some pictures for Bible lessons.

"We have sought opportunity in the past. Will we accept this one? Will we sponsor this work and contribute to it liberally? Of course, congregations off the field, and individuals too, are invited to share in this missionary work."—A. K. Ramsey, Amite, La.

#### WANT A REVIVAL?

Small church groups that would like to have some preaching services, but are unable to pay for same, are invited to write to Bro. A. Shanks, 107 N. 42nd St., Louisville, Kentucky.

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### A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE

When sixty-five preachers, sixteen student preachers, and around three or four hundred more-or-less consecrated church leaders and Christians otherwise get together for a week of Bible study and fellowship a mountain top experience is certain to follow. This is exactly what took place the first week in September at the fellowship meeting at the Portland Church, Louisville, Ky. Various ones spoke of it as a mountain top experience, and Brother Olmstead put it beautifully in prayer when he spoke of the glory of the occasion and anticipated the down-to-earth problems that we would face as each of us would descend the mountain to our various works.

The speeches began on a high level and remained there throughout. The Lord Jesus was exalted, the grace of God magnified, and the Holy Spirit given a high place in our thinking. The brother who wrote so effectively on "Are We preaching the Gospel" would have revised his pamphlet if he had been present at this meeting. Furthermore the speakers built their messages on the solid foundation of fundamental truth — there was no floating around. Brother Boll's Bible class on Philippians was inspiring and helpful. The open forum scarcely had a discordant note, though different ideas were advanced. The subjects were left somewhat up in the air, and we always felt the need of more time. Yet the discussions stimulated interest in the subject at hand and shed light which opened up the scriptures here and there.

Visitors were entertained in Christian homes. The Wednesday night missionary offering came to \$622, and was distributed among missionaries that had special need. Thanks to the ladies who served noon meals.

Now we would be glad to read the impressions of various ones who attended. Please write us soon and give us the privilege of cutting and editing.

### SPIRITUALLY JUDGED

"There is no security even in the most accurate and comprehensive scholarship without the teaching of the Spirit in the subject matter of the scriptures. Christian translators may often fail through ignorance of idiom; but a worldly scholar can never be trusted at all, spite of consummate linguistic skill, because of his necessary lack of still deeper qualifications. He knows not God and His Son, and has not therefore the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the intelligence of the truth."—Kelly, Minor Prophets, p. 414.

# LEGALISM AND THE GOSPEL

H. L. Olmstead

## LEGALISM DEFINED

In its common usage, legalism means simply "adherence to law." A legalist, in the common sense and use of that term, is one who contends rigidly for or adheres to law. In the vocabulary of our courts, it is one who will contend for adherence to the letter of the law regardless of the equity of the case.

In religion, the term "legalist" has to do with those who preach the doctrine of salvation by works and character (good character), as against the idea of salvation by grace. There are many manifestations and phases and expressions of "Legalism" in religion. In the Galatian Epistle the expression of legalism was to the effect that salvation could not be by the grace of God apart from the works of the Law. If a man became a Christian and kept the law of Moses, and was circumcised, he would be saved, contended the Judaizers. That was an expression of legalism—a contention for grace *plus* the keeping of the law.

Now, Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto a different gospel." He plainly said it is not another gospel, but a different one. He said, "If an angel from heaven, or any man should preach any other gospel than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed."

He continues, "Only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The literal meaning of "pervert" is "turned the wrong way." Paul to the Philippians said, "You are holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:14), a generation that was misguided and turned the wrong way. Now, any expression of legalism that moves men from the grace of Christ is not the true gospel. It may be another gospel or it may be only a perversion of the Gospel of Christ. Paul said that what they preached was a different Gospel.

## SOME MODERN GOSPELS THAT ARE DIFFERENT

For instance, the position that would sweep away with one gesture all of Paul's teaching concerning the atonement, justification by grace through faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and kindred teaching, and focus the attention of men solely upon the moral precepts of Jesus Christ, and say, "All I care for in the teachings of Christ is the Sermon on the Mount and I will stand on that," is moving men away from the Gospel of Christ. Such is not the gospel that Paul preached; it is not like it even. A position that will accept the Saviorhood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time preach in such a way that the emphasis of the gospel is upon what *we* do rather than what is done for us and has been done for us, distorts the gospel.

To my mind, at least, it is a perversion of the Gospel to preach the things we are told to do in order to be saved without preaching, or even before preaching and emphasizing the things that have been done for us. It puts the commands of the Gospel out by themselves

where their meaning and power is largely lost, because they are not in front of the background of man's sin and God's grace. The dark background of man's sin is what makes the Gospel beautiful.

It is a wrong approach and turns the wrong way to merely preach and theologize on the importance of faith rather than to preach things to men that produce faith. What is the use of theologizing all the time about faith and talking about faith? Why not turn loose and preach to a dying world the word of God and let faith form itself? The man won't get it wrong; man cannot get it wrong if we do that. I think it is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ and turns things the wrong way to call men to repentance or try to call them to repentance before they are convicted of sin, and know they need to repent. It turns things badly the wrong way. People merely "join the Church" when that is done.

When the Apostle Peter preached that model sermon on Pentecost, he did not preach on repentance, nor did he preach on baptism. He preached thirty-two verses of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and men cried out, convicted of sin, and said "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He told them to "repent and be baptized, every one of you, into the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," giving the command in one verse. He brought them face to face with Jesus Christ and their own sins; it would be turning things around to preach it differently.

I think it is a different gospel and a perversion of the gospel of Christ so to preach as to cause men to have faith in "faith," or to have faith in "baptism," or in anything else they *do*. We ought to so preach as to cause men to have faith in Jesus Christ and to stake their souls' salvation on belief in what He did for them when He died for their sins upon the Cross of Calvary. It is legalism not to so preach.

I think it turns things the wrong way for a preacher to ask men to repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ unless that preacher has been preaching the things that actually lead men to repentance toward God and will actually cause them to exercise faith in Jesus Christ by being baptized.

It is a deadening perversion of the Gospel as long as I stand upon the legal principle of law for salvation because I will never thereby have any feeling of security or of peace. A man says, "Well, I am going to be saved by always doing the best I can do, after becoming a Christian, and what I lack, God will piece out with His mercy and grace." But you never read that in the New Testament. That is a human gospel that is voiced because the man really feels the weakness of the legalistic position. It is deadening to his joy and service.

Paul said in Galatians 3:12: "What saith the law?" All right. What is the principle of it? "He that doeth them shall live in them." That is what the law says, and that is the principle of being saved by a legalistic view of Christianity. "He that doeth them shall live in them," Paul says. But he says further, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written,

Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The principle of law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," and "He that doeth them shall live in them," but the system of grace through faith says Christ became accursed for us. The principle of law leaves a man without peace, for he has nothing to plead before God but his life.

#### THE ONLY WAY TO PEACE AND SECURITY

Of course, I will never know my sins unless I am convicted of them by the Word of God through the teachings of the Apostles. If I am ever convicted of sin I will know the joy of sin's forgiveness only when those sins are forgiven, but I will never know those sins are forgiven until I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel way in penitence and baptism. So long as I live, if I see things as I see them today, I will tell penitent sinners to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but I am going to put that in front of the grace of God, that men may have a real motive for serving God. Love is the only motive by which we can acceptably serve Him.

David, in the 32nd Psalm had a sense of sins forgiven, and, how he served God from then on out! Isaiah, in the 6th chapter of Isaiah, had a sense of uncleanness, for he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," and the Lord came to his rescue and touched his lips and cleansed him and Isaiah said: "Here am I, O Lord, send me." In the sense of sin forgiven and in the sense of the grace of God, he said that. Saul of Tarsus was touched by God's grace, and he never lost sight of the fact that he was "chief of sinners." He never lost sight of the fact that "by the grace of God, I am what I am," and what mountains of work he did for God.

When a man really knows and appreciates God's free and gracious gift of righteousness and justification, his secret doubts and fears will be gone. He will stand like Paul wants a justified man to stand, when he says, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). Do you? If you don't, maybe you are trying to stand upon a different gospel, maybe you are trying to stand on legal grounds. If you don't, maybe you are trying to fix yourself up good enough for Christ to take and accept. Paul said, Galatians 3:21: "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." That would have been the one. He says in the 7th chapter of Romans that that law was holy and righteous and good. A man would have been a better man, of course, by keeping that law. Paul said, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," but there is not any. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (8th chapter of Romans), God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; . . . That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!" God comes in, in Christ Jesus, and does for men what the law could not do, what no law can do.

—Taken from a Gallatin Sermon.

## 30,000 PER DAY

It has been claimed that the average, articulate person, uses about 30,000 of them per day. There is no doubt but that they constitute one of the most powerful tools in all the world.

They can be used for construction or destruction; for careful setting up or cruel and careless tearing down. With them, homes have been blessed or broken. Many are the hearts which have been secured or smashed by their wielding. Confidence has been blessedly strengthened or brutally strained and snapped by them. In fact, everything in life comes beneath their touch — the whole circle of living, in its largest reach or minutest detail, either for better or for worse, for good or for ill.

Not only the issues of life, but the greater issue of eternity as well! The soul (precious and everlasting) is not separate from their reach. Indeed, these tools can determine the sail of the soul out of this time and world, either for heaven or hell.

Occasionally, through some act or incident, we become acutely aware of their extent and power. And what a strong reaction is set up! Often the form trembles, the face blanches and the heart chills because of the damage which they have wrought and the absolute impossibility of return or recall.

At other times, there is joy unspeakable because of the evidence for good and for blessing which has come forth.

Yes, 30,000 of them a day! What are they, these tools of such power?

They are WORDS!

That's right — WORDS! Letters and sounds formed in the mind, framed by the lips, sent forth upon their mission. Enough per day to fill a good-sized book!

Speaking of words, do you know what might well be called the hardest, heaviest of all words? It is that cruel, ugly, cutting word, "NO." Especially when it is formed by sin-set lips, fired by sin-steeled heart, as the awful answer to the amazing appeals of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The full weight of condemning sin and the dread shadows of Christless eternity, press themselves against that numbing negative.

It is a solemn fact that to you is given the power to use that mighty word, "NO," as your response to the grace of Calvary, the mercy of a crucified Savior, and the love which suffered the slanders of men. How often have you used that word in times past as the Lord sent messenger and message after you, with words of gracious entreaty, tender pleading and most blessed invitation? And how sinfully brave it seemed to serve Him such a saying!

There is many a poor soul in the "blackness of darkness forever" who has now realized the full, damning weight of it — too late and with everything forever beyond recall!

There are far better words for you to take upon your heart right now: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white

as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:18.) Words of a richer kind of power! Words that welcome the wonder of the New Birth (John 3) and New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17. They are in your power to wing forth to the awaiting ear of the blessed Lord Jesus. (John 5:24).

He is so anxious that you shall say them, and not miss them, that He has written them for you in His Book, the Bible. You have only to repeat and so to receive Him. "God be merciful to me, a sinner." (Luke 18:13) How sweet they will be to His ear, and how satisfying to your soul forever!—Edwin Raymond Anderson.

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### MARTIN LUTHER ON "THE WORD"

By the word we must refute and expel what has gained a place and influence by violence. I would not resort to force against the superstitious and unbelieving. . . . Let there be no compulsion. I have been laboring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is of the very essence of faith.

The Mass is a bad thing. It ought to be abolished, and I would that everywhere the supper of the gospel be established in its stead. But let none be torn from it by force. We must leave results to God. It is not we that must work, but His word. And why so? you will ask. Because the hearts of men are not in my hand as clay in the hand of the potter. We have a right to speak, but none whatever to compel. Let us preach: the rest belongs to God. If I resort to force—what shall I gain? Grimace, fair appearance, cramped uniformity, and hypocrisy. But there will be no hearty sincerity, no faith, no love. Where these are wanting all is wanting, and I would not give a straw for such a victory. God does more by the simple power of His Word than you and I and the whole world could effect by all our efforts put together. God arrests the heart, and that once taken all is won. I am ready to preach, argue, write; but I will not constrain anyone, for faith is but a voluntary act. Call to mind what I have already done. I stood up against pope, indulgences, and papists, but without violence or tumult. I brought forward God's word: I preached and wrote, and then I stopped. And while I laid me down and slept . . . the word I had preached brought down the power of the pope to the ground, so that never prince or emperor had dealt it such a blow. For my part I did next to nothing; the power of the word did the whole business. Had I appealed to force Germany might have been deluged with blood. But what would have been the consequence? Ruin and destruction of soul and body. Accordingly I kept quiet and let the Word run through the length and breadth of the land.

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### THE NEW LIFE

God never gives us a call without its being a privilege, and He never gives us a privilege to come up higher without stretching out His hand to lift us up. Come up higher into the realities and the glories of the resurrection life. Shake yourself loose of every encumbrance, give yourself over to Christ that He may stamp upon you His own resurrection power.—W. Hay Aitken.

## THE NINTH LESSON ON ROMANS

Romans 6

R. H. B.

The new line of teaching which runs through Romans 6, 7, and 8, opens with a question which either an objector may have asked, or which Paul asks in order to forestall such an objection: "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*"

Paul's teaching of grace must have been so free and good that a dull believer might have misunderstood it, or an enemy might have turned it into such a false accusation. (See 3:8.) Law-teaching would never lay itself open to such an accusation; but the gospel might. The law could never be so misunderstood; but grace might be so misinterpreted. And Paul had preached grace, wonderful and free. In 5:20 he declared that "where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly." So why not let us sin that grace may abound? Never, never! exclaims Paul fervently. ("God forbid," is not in the Greek. The wording there is "May it not be!"—a strong idiomatic disclaimer of an abhorrent thought or suggestion.) Then he proceeds to set forth reasons why a Christian can not, should not, must not, continue in sin. It is good to note however that Paul does not back-track, nor modify any good thing he has said about grace in order to correct this evil misinterpretation. He does not "explain" himself. He does not look back at all—he goes right ahead. What he had said about grace stands, and let all dogs bark. It is just as he said— just that good and that free and abundant, more than enough to cover all sin. And there is no *if* to be tacked on to that, nor is there any *but* to follow.

### DEAD, BURIED AND RISEN

The first reason why a justified sinner is no longer to live in sin is that *he has died to sin*. This death to sin is not an act of repentance or consecration, or anything the sinner himself did. It is Christ's death for him. Whatever is done for a man, representatively—it is the same in law as if he himself had done it. Now in His death for us Christ "died unto sin, once." (Rom. 6:10.) Therefore we who are joined to Him, who are "in Christ," for whom this act of Christ counts, are dead to sin on the day and moment when we were so joined to Christ. "Or are ye ignorant" (a phrase he uses when those addressed should have known and understood)—"that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death . . ." Note that the death occurs in the burial. The captious question, "Do you bury a live man or a dead man?" has no bearing here. A man is not dead to sin until he is baptized into Christ; and then it is *Christ's* death that counts for him. This death is followed by a resurrection, again *Christ's* resurrection—for if we were joined to Him in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection—so that "like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Compare Col. 2:12 and 3:1.) For our old man— our fleshly self and sinful nature—was crucified with Him. (Compare Gal. 2:20.)

Thus, he says, was the body of sin done away and we are released from the bondage of sin; a point which will be discussed later.

The teaching reaches its practical point and climax in verse 11: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." This now is the all-important thing, without which there can be no real victory over sin. And this is the thing which, we may be assured, most Christians *do not do*—many because they do not even know that this is the thing to do. He says "*reckon yourselves dead.*" That does not mean imagine yourselves to be dead. It does not mean "pretend that you are dead" when really you are not. You *are* dead, *in Christ*, since He died for you. It is exactly the same so far as your standing before God is concerned, as though you yourself had so died. It is a legal fact. God says, Take your stand on it—it is for you, it is yours: claim your right in the matter. To be sure if the man were himself *actually* dead he would not have to *reckon* himself dead. This is a death provided for Him by Christ, a death which Christ, his glorious Head, died for him, a real fact and legally his; yet a fact that must be grasped by faith and asserted, if the value of it is to be ours. When, for example, freedom for slaves was officially announced, it became a fact for all slaves. Their emancipation was accomplished. Each slave did not have to free himself—it was already done for him. But he must accept it and avail himself of it. There were instances when from fear, or in ignorance, or by choice the slave continued in slavery, despite the fact that by law-enactment he had been set free. So there are those who, although this death to sin has taken place on their behalf, do not count on it, but still consider themselves as still the subjects of sin. They still think they must make their concessions to the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, and must give place to the devil. They still grant to sin a certain inevitable control and claim. And Sin takes all the scope you give it.

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The next verse (Rom. 6:12) is very enlightening. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." This shows (1) that if you choose to do so, you can still let sin reign in your mortal body, notwithstanding the fact that, in Christ, you have died to sin. (And (2) that you do not *need* to do so, for he says "Let not." The right and power is now yours to refuse. If by faith you grasp the fact of Christ's death, (not only *for sin*, but to sin) on your behalf, and that that death is truly yours, and you reckon on it, sin will be powerless to enforce its claim and sway over you. In all this you are not dealing with legal fiction, but with realities—just as the scientist reckons on the sure operation of a law of nature. Nor may we stop with negatives here. Not only do we reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but we also reckon ourselves *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord; and so we present ourselves unto God alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Take your place then as one who through Christ crucified is dead to sin, and through Christ risen, is raised with Him, and is therefore alive unto God.

## WHY A CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT CONTINUE IN SIN

In the sixth chapter of Romans three reasons are set forth why a Christian should no longer live in sin. The first was that we are dead to sin by the death of Jesus Christ, which being for us, is counted as ours. The second is this: "*Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.*" (Rom. 6:14.) Time was when we were bondservants of sin; but now the dominion of sin over us is ended. If a Christian still continues in sin now, he does so needlessly. Sin can not now hold dominion over him except by his leave (vs. 12, 13).

But how is that dominion of sin broken? The answer is, by the fact that now "ye are not under law but under grace." For a deep and somewhat mysterious reason the law became the power by which sin gets the upper hand of us. (1 Cor. 15:56.) "For apart from the law sin is dead." (Rom. 7:8). How "sin"—that evil principle that resides in our fleshly nature—takes advantage of us by means of the law and thus gains dominion over us is set forth in Rom. 7 (vs. 5, 7-22). This is true not of Mosaic law alone, but (as the omission of the article in Rom. 6:14, 15 and 7:7, 8, shows) of law in general, all statutory law, all external codes of precepts, written or unwritten, designed to control men's actions. While law to some extent restrains open outbreaks of evil, it nevertheless serves to bring a man into bondage to sin. This will be explained more fully in Rom. 7.

The one point before us at this time is that sin's dominion is broken because we are no longer under law.

If it be asked how it happens that we are no longer under law, the answer lies again in the fact of Christ's death for us. For His death became *ours* when we were baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:5). Now the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth. But "we have been discharged from the law, *having died* to that wherein we were held," and "*ye were made dead* to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. 7:1, 4, 6.)

But if we are not under law, by what is our life and conduct controlled now? The answer is "By grace." "Ye are not under law but under grace." "That as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign in righteousness." (5:21.) And what is grace? And how does grace reign? Grace is God's free favor and goodness to the unworthy. His lovingkindness controls us now. It is as if He said: "You now belong to me; and I belong to you. My interests are your interests; your interests are mine. I have loved you with an everlasting love. Now go, see and find how you may serve and walk to please Me and to advance my glory." Moreover the grace of God comes "instructing us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:11-13.)

This may seem to be all too slender bond, and too weak to hold us in the path of righteousness. What would hinder a man of such wide liberty from going back into the ways of sin? This is the question that is now taken up and answered; and in the answer is contained the third reason why the Christian should no longer continue in sin.

“What then? shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

For, though, in obeying from the heart the pattern of the teaching (i. e. of Christ's death, burial, resurrection: see v.4) we were freed from the servitude of sin and made servants of righteousness—yet, as verse 12 already showed, we were not deprived of the right of choice, nor compelled to live in the new position in which we were placed. We can, if we choose, go back to our old master, and thus again become servants of sin. This the apostle implores us not to do. For were we not delivered from that by the death of Christ, in our obedience to the gospel? (vs. 17, 18). He uses a simple human illustration (v. 19). He reminds them of the former days when they were servants of sin, and righteousness had no claim on them—how aimless, fruitless, shameful was that service. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.”

The final verse sums up the prospect of the servitude of sin, and the service of righteousness respectively: “For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Sin pays wages. We get what is coming to us, and it is all due and well-deserved—an evil, endless harvest. But eternal life is not a wage. If we lived a thousand years and filled up each day with good works, it could not cancel one sin from our record, nor could we earn thereby God's salvation. Eternal life is *the free gift of God*—a gift by grace, 5:15—in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Before we leave this weighty chapter a word must be said concerning the much fought-over subject of baptism, which is mentioned in verses 3 and 4. Some deny that here baptism in water is referred to. But whenever “baptism” is mentioned, simply, and without further explanation, it never means anything else. To put an unusual significance on a word, arbitrarily, just because it suits our preconception to do so, violates the fundamental principle of fair exegesis. The baptism of the Spirit can only be *received*, not *obeyed*; but this is obviously an act of obedience. (See vs. 17, 18.) It is also clear that this step brought them “into Christ” (v. 3). As in Matt. 28:19 it is said to bring men “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”; and in Acts 8:16 and 19:5 “into the name of the Lord Jesus,” so here it is said to introduce us into Christ.\* Baptism is not, as some have thought, an ordinance placed *within* the church; there is nothing *in* the church that is to be done *just once*. All that is in the church is steadfastly and continually to be repeated. (Acts 2:42.) But baptism is once for all; which neces-

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\* Some “cannot see how water can bring us into spiritual union with Christ.” Of course not. The objection is childish. Was it water that cleansed Naaman from his leprosy? Was it the water of the pool of Siloam that opened the blind man's eyes? (John 9.) Was it the tramping around Jericho that overthrew the walls? (Heb. 11:30.) Nay—in each case it was **faith** expressed in obedience (“the obedience of faith”). And what is by faith is by grace. Rom. 4:16.

sarily marks it as initiatory. No magic power, no merit, no efficacy lies in the act itself; but as "the obedience of faith" (comp. Rom. 1:5; 16:26) it cannot be set aside without rejecting the counsel of God against ourselves. (Comp. Luke 7:29, 30.) It is also perfectly plain (so that even those who practice otherwise admit it, a very few partisan extremists only excepted) that the baptism commanded by our Lord is immersion, for it portrays a burial and a resurrection. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.)

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

What new line of teaching begins with Romans 6? What perversion of Paul's teaching on grace is guarded against? What reason does he first give to show that a Christian should not continue in sin? How did we die to sin? When did His death and resurrection actually become ours? What is the practical point for us? (Verse 11.) What do we learn from verse 12? What do we learn concerning baptism in verses 3 and 4? Why does sin no longer hold dominion over the Christian? How is it that the Christian is no longer under law? By what then is he controlled? When and how did he become a servant of righteousness? When a servant of sin, did he bear any fruit? What is his life and prospect now? What does Sin pay its servants? Is eternal life a pay for anything or is it a free gift?

### On Going in Circles

"I seem to be just going in circles!" If this is a trite phrase, it's because it so aptly expresses a common experience. Even if you say it another way, or don't say it at all, you have probably been aware of being caught in a shallow whirlpool, getting nowhere, while others sail past on the full stream of life, to some definite and desirable destination.

How did you get in your whirlpool? Some obstacle just a little too great, combined with an ever-so-gentle tug of influence away from the main flow of God's will . . . some test of faith a little stronger than you've met before, and an unacknowledged willingness to be diverted into shallower channels—because it would be strenuous and costly to stay on the crest of the flood? All right, take the easy path. The adventure of faith is optional. Settle down in your little circle, and ask God to please remove the obstacle. (He won't do it, for that would defeat His purpose. He would make an overcomer of you.) Meanwhile, what of this feeling of frustration? Get used to it, for it will stay with you until you have the courage to go on with the Lord. Better to "risk" all than be haunted by the consciousness that you have disappointed God.

Launch out on the faithfulness of God. Are you afraid, when it is He Himself who challenges you? In your own strength, of course, you would be swallowed up by the obstacles, but no one expects you to attempt it in your own strength. Set your heart on the main current of His will, and your foot on the obstacle, and His grace will pull you over, breaking the vicious circle and bearing you aloft with a new confidence of faith.

# LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts 22:22 to 23:12

J. Edward Boyd

**A PRISONER OF ROME.** The mention of the word "Gentiles" was like tossing a lighted match into a keg of powder. Instantly there was an explosion. The most powerful argument was unable to break down the national pride and unreasoning prejudice of this Jewish mob. In their frenzy they cried out against him, cast off their outer garments, threw dust into the air. The Roman tribune of course comprehended nothing of what Paul had spoken to the people; but from their violent reaction he naturally concluded that he was guilty of some heinous crime. It was his duty to find out, if possible, what it was. A method commonly used for this purpose was examination by scourging, to wring a confession from the prisoner. But when Paul had been brought into the barracks and prepared for the ordeal, he asked a question that both startled and alarmed the Roman officials. "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" Roman citizenship was highly prized, for it was a guarantee of certain privileges and immunities. There were citizens who were such by birth; there were others who had purchased it. The tribune had paid a great price for it; but the apostle asserted that he was born a citizen. But why did he take Paul's word for it? For one thing, the penalty for making a false claim to Roman citizenship was death; so it was highly improbable that one in that position would dare to do so.

Claudius Lysias was perplexed. Since Paul was a Roman citizen, he was entitled to protection. Yet he could not rightfully be kept in prison unless there was some charge against him. And the tribune's efforts to ascertain the crime of which he was accused by the Jews had been unsuccessful. However, there was one more possibility. The chief priests and the Sanhedrin should be able to furnish the information. So the following day Claudius Lysias ordered the council to convene and set Paul before them. Here he stood where years before Stephen had made his defense. As he looked intently into the faces of those elders he probably recognized a number of former associates. It was a tense moment. Respectfully he addressed them. His first statement was an assertion of sincerity. "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." Such had been his life-long principle of conduct. Even when persecuting Christians, he thought he was doing right. We was acting conscientiously; yet he was in the wrong. Thinking a thing is right does not make it right. Indeed, when later he looked back to the time when he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," he spoke of himself as chief of sinners. (1 Tim. 1:13, 15.) But when he learned that he was in error, he promptly turned away from it. A truly conscientious man, one whose heart is open to truth, cannot do otherwise.

It occurs to me that in all probability Paul intended this declaration as the opening sentence of an address to the Sanhedrin. It

would have served that purpose admirably; and he would certainly have been glad to give them his personal testimony, as he had given it to the multitude the day before. But if this was his intention, he was not permitted to continue; the high priest Ananias rudely interrupted with an order to those standing by to smite him on the mouth. Indignantly the apostle retorted: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" The bystanders rebuked him for reviling God's high priest. Paul promptly apologized. He did not consider himself exempt, because he was a Christian, from showing the respect for the appointed rulers in Israel required by Exodus 22:28. Though the man was unworthy, the office was not to be dishonored. Paul understood that, but explained that he was unaware of his being high priest. This seems strange, and many suggestions have been made to account for it: the frequent changes in the priesthood, together with Paul's long absence from Jerusalem; defective vision on his part, et cetera. If we were in possession of all the facts, no doubt the difficulty would disappear. Many questions arise in our study of the scriptures that must remain without conclusive answers because of our ignorance concerning some details.

It is evident that no fair investigation of his case could be expected. As Paul looked around over the council he observed that in its members were both Pharisees and Sadducees. Suddenly he cried out: "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee; touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." What was his motive in making this announcement? It has been suggested that he hoped upon the vantage ground of this common belief to reach some of this party with the gospel. This is a reasonable supposition; for he was always ready to take advantage of any opportunity to win his Jewish brethren to Christ. However that may be, he did gain support from them. The Pharisees were no less hostile toward the Sadducees than toward Christians; and they would welcome a new and powerful ally in their controversy over much debated issues. Some of their scribes stood up in the council and vehemently defended him. "We find no evil in this man; what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him." All the dignity that should have characterized such an assembly was cast aside. The tumult that ensued became so violent that Claudius Lysias feared that his prisoner would be torn in pieces. He ordered the soldiers to rescue Paul by force and bring him back into the barracks.

To the most faithful of God's servants come times of despondency. It had been so with Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah. Was it so with Paul? The Lord appeared to him that night with words of encouragement. We think that he would not have done so unless there had been need. The two preceding days had been days of turmoil, strife, and danger. The apostle had been buffeted and bruised; he was the object of violent hatred on the part of his own countrymen. He had tried to reason with them, he had told them his story, but to no avail. Perhaps this sense of failure was the hardest to bear, as he thought of these things in his prison cell. To talk things over

with a Christian brother would have been so comforting; but we read of no such opportunity. But let us not be too critical of them; perhaps they were not permitted to visit him. There are so many details that we would like to know; but we cannot. And what of the future? It looked hopeless. If he were released from his prison, he would be killed. He had hoped to go to Rome, but what chance was there of that now?

But the Lord was there to supply his need. He was there in his cell, standing by him, speaking to him. "Be of good cheer." Take courage. All is not lost. "As thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem." Commendation is implied here. His testimony had not been heeded; but he *had testified*. The failure was not his. The preacher of the gospel longs for results, and is disappointed and discouraged if he does not see them. But if he has faithfully preached the Word, the Lord is pleased. "So must thou bear witness also at Rome." This was a "must" of the Lord. Nothing would be able to prevent its accomplishment. The way was to be long and difficult—more so than he knew; but his heart's desire and promise to the Roman brethren was to be fulfilled. How it was brought to pass is largely the story of the rest of the book of Acts. I think it was with Paul that night as it was centuries before with King David, when the Lord answered his despairing cry out of His holy hill:

"I laid me down and slept;

I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me.

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people

That have set themselves against me round about." (Ps. 3:4-6.)

### PRAYER AND FAITH

"The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual and inward than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience of faith are never disappointed. I have long since learned that if ever I was to be a minister prayer and faith must make me one. When I can find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer, everything else is comparatively easy."—Richard Newton.

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### FLAVIL HALL

Word has come that Brother Flavil Hall has departed to be with the Lord. Brother Hall was a faithful minister of the Word for many years. He was editor of a department in the Christian Leader during the days of the late F. L. Rowe, and later wrote a great deal for the Word and Work, sometimes under a pen name and sometimes under his own name. He was deeply concerned about promoting a closer fellowship and the spirit of the Master among the people of God. He did some song writing and was co-editor of one or more hymn books. He wrote the music to the well known and much beloved "Jesus Is Our Loving Shepherd." And now Brother Hall sleeps awaiting that day when the Lord shall come, for indeed "He has promised all the faithful That He'll come to earth again; And to glory will receive them, Evermore with Him to reign." We are confident that Brother Flavil Hall will be in that redeemed company. He was willing to go to Him without the camp, suffering His reproach, and now he awaits the glories that are to follow.

# "FAITH OF OUR FATHERS"

E. L. J.

## The Historical and Scriptural Basis of Christian Fellowship And Cooperation

(The editor of this work writes a Resume of fellowship material so far reprinted, and a final Appeal.)

The simple old-line "Churches of Christ," though professing autonomy, do not often act in any great way on the local level—without a nod from their trusted editors and evangelists. Deplore this as we may (it has its good side too), that is the way it is.

The deep crying need just now is a good word to the churches about fellowship—a word long overdue, *from the top*, if we may put it that way; from those (or their successors) who, near 40 years ago, led off from the New Testament ground of fellowship by Christian toleration, and from the historical unity precedents of our pioneer fathers.

It is a solemn thing—that the original brethren in that departure are now all gone, gone on to God, the righteous arbiter, beyond our feeble judging. What they did is done, no matter now about their motives. They meant, no doubt, to do God service; so did the Jews who delivered up Christ, and so did Saul who persecuted Jesus. But they were wrong. Some of them repented, or at least relented.

Brother F. B. Srygley wrote, not long before his death, concerning the attack on the "premillennial" brethren:

"I am afraid that those of us who made the fight early in the beginning of it, had too much personality in the fight."

He also said, in 1939:

"What right has any one to say that one who believes an error should stop trying to teach it? If one is in error, I have no right to ask him to cease preaching error until he learns that it is error." (*Gospel Advocate*, 3-30-39.)

Some of the originals were never more than half-hearted in the fight. We who write this were in those early conferences, and *we know that*. Brother Elam. A. B. Lipscomb, J. C. McQuiddy; and, of course, G. Dallas Smith not at all. They were concerned about reconciliation. Some were later carried along by more aggressive colleagues. (But read below, Elam and Lipscomb 10 and 20 years later). We are not impressed that their successors are wholehearted in the fight today. Since they are hardly as involved as the originals, may we not hope for some good word from them before it is too late; some nod, some brotherly sign or act of fellowship? Could they not say at least what Srygley said in 1939, or even what H. Leo Boles said in 1928? (for there has been *no adverse change* in us since then). Boles said of Brother Boll:

"We differ, as the reader knows; but our differences, and a discussion of them, do not keep me from esteeming him very highly as a brother in Christ Jesus."—*Unfulfilled Prophecy*, p. 411.)

It is certain that nothing short of some daring word or act from the original source can reach out over our troubled "Zion" with healing in its wings. If, from that level, there might go forth a clear

word, to "cease fire" and "ground arms"; to try cooperation on the basis of brotherly love—well, the alienation connected with prophetic teaching would die shortly, and we would all become more considerate of one another and of what the churches could bear, under the general rule, "Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. 14:26.) Of this we have not the faintest shadow of a doubt, nor do we think that any informed and honest man among us, on either "side," would deny the probability of such a result. What other approach can offer so much, so soon? What other means or method can any one suggest for sudden, lasting peace? *There is no other.* It becomes, then, chiefly a question whether *we want* unity or not. We can have it, if we want it; and that without sacrifice of principle or conscience by anyone. For it does not follow that any would be restrained from teaching "truth" or opposing "error." The pioneers were not. It simply means that all that we do would be done in genuine love (1 Cor. 16:14), and by the golden rule.

To the brethren concerned, it would indeed be a step of faith; faith that their doors would remain open, notwithstanding all (and they would); faith that their journals and hymnals would continue in demand (and they would); faith that their positions and pulpits would remain secure (and they would). For God would greatly bless such a step, and there would be "great joy" throughout the land. It is vain and unrealistic, in present conditions, to look for lasting local peace, anywhere, without this change at the higher levels.

There is a small town in Southern Indiana, population only 1500, where the simple church is 120 years old, and numbers hundreds of members, all at perfect peace among themselves. It is a great and active church, with a fine, new, adequate plant, and of high repute in the community. But now, a "gospel tent" is pitched by certain evangelists to try to establish there a "true church of Christ"—on the ground, of course, that the old original is not a true church! No matter (and no wonder) that the town sees "how it is," and the effort ends in failure: the intent was the same: to confuse and divide, or at least to proselyte. Is there no restraining word to these evangelists from those who have their ears? If not, what hope is there of any peace?

But one will say, "Yes, there is another way, a better way than all this toleration: If all would come to the truth on Prophecy" (by which unwittingly, they mean *their* views and conclusions) "we could have peace." (We do not believe it, for the same intolerance and lovelessness would then break out over something else; look 'round and see). But grant it for argument's sake—though it "begs the question," and assumes that the whole prophetic truth lies on their side! Yet, grant it, that when at last we all see "eye to eye" we shall be reunited. But *when?* *How soon* could such a thing be? For would not that method require *complete* mental uniformity, not only on Prophecy, but on *every* line of revelation? If not, what security is there in it against trouble? Desirable as such mental uniformity might be, it simply will not work among fallible men, as all scripture, history, and experience go to show. Nor do we think that any informed and honest man among us, on either "side", would deny the probability of an interminable delay by this method.

What with our early teaching and "raising", our varying inclinations and opportunities for study, our differing teachers, and our great disparity in age and in years of growth—in these conditions it is unthinkable, unrealistic, unscholarly, unscientific, and above all, unscriptural, that being agreed on the primary truths, we should demand or expect mental uniformity of one another in so vast a field as Prophecy.

It is not *this* kind of "same-mindedness" that Paul inculcates in 1 Cor. 1:10, as the context shows: "Now this I mean" (v. 12)—not mental uniformity, but an utter loyalty to the headship of Christ, rather than to Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or any other man. The thing Paul fears for Corinth is the partisan spirit of human loyalties and favoritism; not the inescapable diversity of thinking among free, creedless believers. His "same mind" of 1 Cor. 1:10 is none other than that same "same mind" of Ph. 2:2-5: "having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or vain-glory. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." That is the "same mind" he inculcates in both Corinthians and Philippians.

To the same effect is Paul's great Unity Statement in Ephesians, chapter 4: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence" [meaning *thus* giving diligence, of course] "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

One wonders how our opposing brethren can work *even with each other*, without this spirit: but if they know and have this spirit, and work together by it, *then why not with us?* We may have too often failed of it ourselves, yet we can say this for the brethren of "the premillennial view", those who look for the Lord's coming before the millennium: That never, so far as we know, have they at any time, anywhere, withheld or withdrawn their fellowship from any man, preacher or "layman," simply for his "post-millennial" teaching, or for opposing what he thought was error. One much publicized case of discipline there is on record (35 years ago) on grounds of factious *acts* and divisive *deeds*; but never for opposite *teaching* on prophetic lines.

"But, in that one case, could not the church have been yet more kind and still more patient with the two excluded men?" Grant it, in all its force; and what does it prove? Only what we here are saying—that utmost love and brotherly forbearance is the only way of unity among us weak and erring mortal men.

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As Unity by Toleration was the apostolic way, so it was also the way of all our great and honored pioneers. We extract the following sentences out of our own reprints from them, as they are scattered throughout this work ("Faith of Our Fathers"):

**Barton Stone:** "They (Luther, et al) undertook the unhappy and vain project of making the people think alike. Creeds were introduced, which broke and divided the Christians into opposing sects." (1814.)

"Christians can love one another, and dwell together in unity, and yet differ in sentiment. I hope that we shall give an example of that moderation and forbearance which the scriptures teach." (1841.)

"Among fallible mortals who know so little, the tolerant spirit ought to prevail. A Christian is to be judged by his fruit. If to the profession of faith in Christ Jesus be joined a dependence on Him alone for salvation; if to this be added a holy life, this man, thus professing and acting, is a Christian. What if he may have erroneous opinions; yet they do not become principles of his heart or his life to influence him to err in practice. A person of this character should not be excluded from the arms of charity. In every revival of pure religion the spirit of toleration revives with it, and as religion declines, intolerance increases."—(from **Reminiscences and Sermons**, pp. 50-53.)

**Alexander Campbell:** "The apostle Paul positively commanded all Christians to maintain the 'unity of the faith' and receive one another without regard to differences of opinion. There is only one faith, but many opinions, and many different degrees of knowledge; and Christianity makes allowance for these."—**Evidences**, pp. 295, 337.)

"I can and do make allowance for early and long established habits of thinking and speaking on all religious questions. I can bear with a difference of opinion on a subject so vital (the Atonement). We are not saved by the strength and comprehension of our views, but through obeying from the heart the apostolic mould of doctrine."—(**Harbinger**, 1841.)

"I allow others to differ from me, as I claim the privilege of differing from others. These 'theories' [even the Millerite "Destructionism"!], if not dogmatically propounded for schismatical purposes, are not to become causes of alienation or of excommunication."—(**Harbinger**, 1848.)

"I know of no man of any note in the world with whom I agree in everything; and certainly there is not one in the world that agrees with me in everything. I neither ask nor expect it."—(**Harbinger**, 1847.)

"So long as any man declares his confidence in Jesus of Nazareth as God's Son, that He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification, and so long as he exhibits **willingness** to obey Him in all things according to his knowledge, so long will I receive him as a Christian brother and treat him as such."—(Reply to Bishop Semple.)

"But if private opinions are expressed, are they not to become matters of discipline?" "By no means, unless a person expresses them for the sake of compelling others to receive them, or to exclude them from their fellowship if they do not receive them. In that case he is answerable, not for his opinions but for his practices."—(**Harbinger Abridged**, Vol. II, pp. 38, 39.)

These extracts from Campbell should be sufficient to show that, in his view, toleration of differences, yea of great differences, was not only possible, but right and necessary to fellowship, and that too on every line of teaching beyond the simplest fundamentals.

In these late years, however, to break the force of Campbell's Toleration teaching and practice, and to justify their own intolerance some have tried to find refuge in the great reformer's answer to H. T. Anderson's long article (in the *Harbinger*) on the Throne of David. (1848, '49.) That answer was uncommonly severe for Campbell; but—what has been overlooked—its *severity* was not against the author—"our much-esteemed Brother Anderson of Kentucky"; it was plainly directed toward a younger class which Campbell denominates as "these theological adventurers," "those neophytes," who had evidently irked him with "other kindred notions . . . concerning the state of the dead"—questions that are not at all disturbing us today. The word "neophyte" means a new convert, a beginner, a novice; "boy preacher," we might say today. But Anderson, who was soon to offer the world his "New Translation," could hardly be so described!

No, Campbell did not break fellowship with Anderson. The translator was honored often in the *Harbinger* after that, by Campbell, by Milligan, and by Pendleton, with frequent space and commendatory mention, and with reprints from his translation—yea,

until Campbell's death in 1866 and until the *Harbinger's* end in 1870.

Campbell wrote glowing commendations of numerous "premillennial" brethren, and warmhearted Introductions to their articles and long series of articles in his journal: Begg, Carihfield, McCorkle, Barclay, and others. While more "post-millennial" in his own teaching, and sometimes differing courteously from the authors, he reprinted long essays and elaborate arguments in support of "the pre-millennial view," sometimes even calling attention to their well-nigh unanswerable force, as in the case of the "Twelve Short Reasons."

- John F. Rowe: He published the strictly "premillennial" book, "Letters to Jews and Gentiles," by Ruble, and he praised both book and author to the skies.
- Lipscomb and Sewell: They published and sold Dr. Brents' book with its strong millennial article, and they worked hand in hand with J. A. Harding and John T. Poe who were both boldly and out-spokenly "premillennial."
- E. A. Elam: He said, Dec. 8, 1925, (in letter to Brother Boll)—"As to the 'doctrinal differences,' or 'differences of opinion,' I have hoped that we might get these on a working basis of Christian forbearance and love. I have worked and prayed for this, and have done my best."
- A. B. Lipscomb: He wrote to Brother Boll (Jan. 30, 1925)—"I regret that these doctrinal differences, or 'differences of opinion' continue to disturb the brotherhood; and, as Brother Elam put it, I have hoped and still hope that we might get these on a working basis of Christian forbearance and love."
- F. L. Young: He said at Abilene in 1919—"Shall I disfellowship the good brother whose theory I reject? I have resolved never to make anything a test of fellowship that the Holy Spirit has not made a condition of salvation."
- J. D. Tant: (Letter to Janes, Oct. 2, 1938)—"I hold the same position Boll and H. Leo Boles held in their debate—that these items" (the prophecy differences) "should not cause us to disfellowship each other."
- J. N. Armstrong: He said (Jan. 17, 1939)—"What some do not like about me is that I do not join them in their condemnation of all premillennial brethren. I think those in the church who are true to the conditions of salvation are worthy of our fellowship. This is my rule: What the Lord has made a condition of salvation I will make a test of fellowship. We need to forbear one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Finally brethren, there's not much time left. Party lines are forming fast, the Lord is coming, if death come not before. Our children have grown up in a world of war and strife: and shall they not find peace a little while in the shadow of the church? We confess to falling short of our own beliefs and standards too often and too far; but we have never gone off the old ground—the historical and scriptural basis of fellowship and cooperation. *The Restoration pioneers and early fathers never broke fellowship over these questions. Nobody did—until the great departure in 1915.* Let those who can do what they may to undo that deed and to heal the hurt. To such a step there will be good response.—In Jesus Name, Amen.

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#### TRUTH PASSED ON

What do I know of the essential truths of salvation? Have I a strong, firm grasp of the truth as it is in Jesus? Do I know Him Whom to know is life eternal? And do I know Him with such an intimacy, with such a clarity of Knowledge, that I could help others to know Him too? I would suggest that we put to ourselves these heart-searching questions.

—Dr. Donald Davidson.