

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God."*

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# Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

## THE MOUNTAIN AND THE VALLEY

"Dad, I've just had the most wonderful weekend of my life. God was really there among us, in a way that I had never experienced before." With many other words teenage Roy expressed his new-found enthusiasm for the Lord. He had just returned from a weekend retreat at a campsite in the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Roy's father was pleased, but he had reservations. He warned his son of the inevitable let-down to follow. "Son, a mountain-top experience is fine, but sooner or later you've got to come down into the valley."

Now that is Sound Doctrine if I've ever heard any. I've heard it from all sorts of preachers—even Pentecostals. After all, there's Scripture for it. Didn't Peter, James, and John have to come down off the mount of transfiguration and face a rather unpleasant problem? True. And a certain legitimate application may be made. The atmosphere of a Bible conference or a camp cannot be carried back to work with you the following Monday morning. The *environment* of the mountain top cannot be preserved; however, the *experience* can. Unfortunately, it seems that most Christians have fallen for the saying of the Syrians, "Jehovah is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys" (1 Kings 20:28).

## GOD OF THE VALLEYS

Many a believer will acknowledge that it has been *in the valley* of trouble and despair that he has most often had his "mountain top experiences." Many more bear witness to the fact that it is not at all necessary to leave behind the sense of the Lord's nearness, with the peace and joy He gives. I have asked a young sister here in Louisville to give her testimony to this fact.

Some time ago I was feeling extremely depressed over my lot in life and wondering if I could ever really be happy again. Much time had been spent in prayer and I was trusting in Romans 8:28, and yet I'd received no real relief from my problem; I was trying too hard to work out my problems in my own strength and wisdom instead of just simply casting the whole burden upon the Lord and trusting His strength and wisdom to see me through.

That night there was a real humbling of self before the Lord as I admitted to Him my inability and failure to accomplish anything of myself. It was a cry of desperation as I realized that unless the Lord

did something I was on the verge of a mental collapse. And so I threw myself at His feet and surrendered myself to His perfect will in a way I hadn't done before.

The immediate result was to enjoy a restful night of sleep. The next morning when I awakened, even before I opened my eyes, I was aware that something wonderful had happened. Why, all the depression was gone and in its place was a joy and peace unspeakable! My spirit was so refreshed it was just like walking outside after a spring rain, and my heart just praised Him.

"Thank You, Jesus, for not granting blessing according to the measure of our faith, but giving exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Thank You, Lord, for allowing us to reach the place where we have to admit our own inabilities and depend completely on You. When we begin to see ourselves as we really are, then the glory and beauty and perfection of our Lord becomes even more precious. Thank You, Jesus, for being greater than our circumstances."

How wonderful that the Lord can take a situation that has brought such discouragement and defeat and then use that same situation to defeat Satan's power and to glorify His own matchless Name! Suddenly, there is a whole new dimension to living as the Christian's access to the power of Jesus to live a victorious life is realized. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Such a personal encounter with Jesus has left me with a joy that knows no bounds. Praise His glorious Name! In the strength of this new-found relationship with the Lord, there just naturally follows a more effective personal witness. With head knowledge that has become heart knowledge, we can say with Job: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5).

This young woman's problems didn't go away the next morning—and still haven't gone away—but she is still rejoicing in the Lord and praising His wonderful name. A good many months have passed, and she is still "on the mountain top."

#### HE WOULDN'T COME DOWN

But shouldn't it be so? Otherwise, how foolish of Paul to exhort, "Rejoice in the Lord always." And how odd that he should characterize the kingdom of God by "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17)! We are told that the Thessalonian brethren continued right on "with joy of the Holy Spirit" when affliction came. Evidently Paul and Silas had never told them about the inevitable valley. As for Paul and Silas themselves, when they hit the bottom of the valley—the Philippian jail—they seemed to be having a "mountain top experience."

The story of Elijah and King Ahaziah's troops is not exactly appropriate here, except as an illustration (2 Kings 1). Elijah was sitting on a mountain top and the wicked king sent him orders to come down. Elijah refused to budge—and you can read the rest of it. It is my opinion that Satan's most-used device is to get believers to "come down" from their position of rest and rejoicing in the Lord. Once "down in the valley" the Christian is vulnerable to all manner of temptation. Hence the exhortation, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul" (Psalm 116:7), and the discourse on entering (*now*) into rest, in Hebrews 4.

## NOT "IT" BUT "HIM"

One final word about the mountain top. If it is just an experience, it will indeed soon lose its luster. And the valleys will be deep and dark. If, instead, it is an entering into a new relationship with the Lord Jesus—more personal, more real, more of my life yielded to His control—then there is no reason why this should be left behind. Indeed, this mountain top should be just a temporary stop on the way to "higher ground." We sing it, let's believe it!

Lord, lift me up and let me stand,  
By faith, on heaven's tableland,  
A higher plane than I have found;  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground!

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## *Precious Reprints*

### "Of One Accord"

R. H. Boll — 1925

Unity in Christ is the concord of many varying sounds. It is a "harmony of differences." It does not merely consist in sameness and uniformity, but also in mutually supplementing powers and gifts. We are not one because we have identical conceptions of the truth, but because each has his share in the same Life and in the same Truth and contributes his part to the building up of all. The whole truth is with the whole Body, and no member has it except as he is perfected in the fellowship of all the rest.

It is in our peculiar differences that the possibility of mutual helpfulness lies. Not because we are of the same mold and type, and thought and talent, and manner of expression and ability of perception, and turn and temper, but because we differ in these things, we are bound and welded together into one organism. It is because each supplies what others need and what all have not got, the members of the Body are mutually interdependent. They are also mutually corrective and balancing. Thus they grow up into Him who is the Head "even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15, 16).

This is the unity of God's intention, the symphony of a multitude of instruments under the direction of the Spirit of truth and love in Christ Jesus.

Dwight Pentecost, author of *Things to Come* and other books, is professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. This article was a spoken address and has been edited for publication.

# PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

## The Abomination of Desolation

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel waited for the fulfillment of God's promise of the coming of the Messiah. Messiah came, and when Israel looked at Him, because He did not conform to their concept of the Messiah, they said, "We will not have this man to rule over us."

They deemed the rule of Caesar more beneficial than the rule of Christ. He demanded obedience, He demanded perfection, He demanded that man submit to Him, trust Him for salvation. To a people proud in their own self-righteousness the idea of trusting another for what they thought they could do themselves was utterly repugnant. Because He did not sweep into Palestine and go on down to Jerusalem as a conqueror on a white horse to expel the Roman legions from the land, to cleanse the land from Gentile defilement, they said, "He is not the Messiah at all, He is an imposter." In Matthew 23 our Lord announced the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. And instead of this bringing discouragement and disappointment to the minds of the disciples who heard Him speak those words of doom for their beloved city, it quickened their hope that the Messiah would set up His kingdom. For going back to passages in the Old Testament such as Daniel 11, Zechariah 13 and 14, they were reminded that the prophets had predicted that the Messiah would set up His kingdom and reign; the land would be crushed in a military campaign and the Lord Jesus Christ would remove those oppressors. And so, in their minds they thought that the destruction of Jerusalem was another announcement that the Lord Jesus was about to assume David's throne to reign and rid the land of the scourge of the Roman occupant. And it became necessary for our Lord to teach them the program of the age. The promises awaited a future day when they would be literally fulfilled as God had promised.

The disciples asked our Lord the question, "Tell us, what shall be the sign of the coming, even the end of the age?" What signs will give notice to the nation of Israel that God is moving to fulfill His covenanted promises and bring the Lord Jesus to this earth to sit on David's throne to rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords from sea to sea?

In Matthew 24:4-8 our Lord describes the signs that would fall in the first half of what we know as the tribulation period—the seven-year period following shortly after the translation of the

church into glory as described in John 14:1-3 and 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17. In the first half of the week (seven years) there would be a false Messiah who would bring a false peace to the troubled nations of the earth. That peace would be shortlived and would be taken from the earth, and war and famine, pestilence and death would ensue. In verses 9 through 14 our Lord gave the signs that would fall in the 2nd period of the tribulation period. Israel would become the special target of Satanic attack which would seek to exterminate every Jew so that God's promises to send a Messiah to regather and to reign over them could not be fulfilled. And along with that the message of the gospel would be preached to the ends of the earth, the gospel of the kingdom. He refers to it in verse 14. The good news that the Deliverer is about to come, the King is about to reign, and men are invited to trust Jesus Christ for salvation before judgment falls. Our Lord describes briefly in verses 4 to 14 what the apostle John describes in detail in Revelation, chapters 4 through 19 where the same period is covered; the same signs are referred to, but a multiplicity of detail is added.

I want to direct your attention to verses 15 and following. I want to identify this one known as the abomination of desolation, and identify that about which our Lord is speaking. Our Lord singles out the most important, the most significant, the most unmistakable signs which never could have a duplication so as to deceive the nations. Our Lord said in verse 15, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, Whosoever readeth, let him understand." That is another way of saying, the one who has studied Daniel's prophecy will know exactly what I am talking about. Then He says when you see this one stand in the holy place then let them which be in Jerusalem flee to the mountains, and so on. It is not difficult for us to identify the holy place. Sometimes in the Old Testament He refers to this as the whole city of Jerusalem. And because Jerusalem was the site where the temple was built from the time of Solomon onward, the whole city was called the holy place. More particularly the holy place refers to Mt. Moriah, one of the hills on which Jerusalem is built. That goes back to the earliest history of Israel.

It was on Mt. Moriah that Abraham came to offer Isaac, and from the time of the offering of Isaac onward it was viewed as the place of sacrifice, and the place of sacrifice was a place that was holy unto God. To Abraham that mountain was a holy place because it was there, in obedience to the word of God, he had offered his son. In David's day when he came to establish a capital city he purchased a portion of the city of the Jebusites. The city of the Jebusites was on one of the hills to the south of what we know today as the city of Jerusalem, perhaps a quarter of a mile. David built the walled city, he dug deep wells, he fortified himself. That became the center of David's kingdom and David's reign. But when David desired to build a temple for the Lord

he first of all prepared a piece of ground. And he acquired land that was at that time outside the city of Jerusalem. The same land where Abraham had offered Isaac—he incorporated that into the city of Jerusalem, and that became David's holy place. David was not permitted to build the temple but Solomon was.

Solomon erected his temple on Mount Moriah, the place of sacrifice, the holy place. Because it was here that God would meet with the nation and the nation would assemble to worship God. From the time of Solomon on down to the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586, that one little area was known as the holy place. After the Babylonian exile in 536 the Jews came back and their first work was to clear the rubble and debris out of the old city of Jerusalem and to discover the foundation of the old temple and out of stones of that old temple they began to build what became to be known as Zerubbabel's temple. It was built on the holy place. And from the time of the restoration of the temple under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah on down to the time of Christ that piece of land was known as the holy place.

That holy place was the place of worship. While Jerusalem was the political city, the holy place within the city was the spiritual center. When Jews on the feast day came to Jerusalem to worship, their goal was to come to the holy place within the city of Jerusalem. Their pilgrimage was not complete when they entered the city walls. They wanted to come to the holy place because that was the meeting place, the place of worship between God and man. And when our Lord sets aside that particular area and says it is to have significance in the future, He is identifying a piece of ground that was recognized from the day of Abraham right on down through the years.

Our Lord says that for the Jews who are concerned in following God's timetable the piece of real estate to watch is the city of Jerusalem, and that part of Jerusalem that is particularly significant is the temple area. For our Lord said the abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place. That is, he will occupy the holy place as though he had a right to it. That immediately signifies that this one is diverting to himself all that properly is associated with the holy place. And as God was worshipped there, he will demand to be worshipped as God. As God met with Israel there, this will be the meeting place between the one called the abomination of desolation and those who are under his rule. Our Lord said to watch that particular area, for it is there that this blasphemous imposter will reveal himself.

The prophet Daniel introduces us to this whole line of prophetic truth. Let me say at the outset that this phrase, "abomination of desolation," might be written "the abominable one who brings desolation" or "the abominable one who is the desolation," or "the destroyer." Now this phrase has crept into our language and people who don't have the faintest idea about the Bible or the foggiest idea about prophecy, talk about the abomination of desolation along with the term Armageddon to describe something so awful and terrible that it is indescribable. But the one who

studies the word of God understands what our Lord is speaking about. We find the phrase in the closing verses of Daniel's prophecy, in Daniel 12:11: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." One thousand two hundred and ninety days, forty-two months, three and one-half years from the time that the abomination that makes desolate is set up to the end of the whole program of the abomination of desolation. Daniel goes on to say in chapter 12, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." And so from the time that the abomination is set up until his reign ends will be 1290 days, and then 45 days beyond his reign issues in a time of blessing.

*(To be concluded next month)*

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## The More Glorious Law

Reuel Lemmons

The battle over law and grace will perhaps continue until Gabriel comes. It seldom occurs to us, it seems, that the two are inseparable.

Paul, in his second letter to Corinth, contrasted the glory of Moses' law with the more excellent glory of grace, saying that the law written and engraved on stones had so much glory that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look on the face of Moses who delivered it, but that that glory was a passing thing compared to the glory of the law of Christ.

He indicated that the glory of the law of Christ was that it was written not on tables of stone but upon the fleshly tables of the heart.

Now, a law written in the heart is kept by choice and not by compulsion. The law of a parent may be kept by the child while he is within sight of the parent through fear, but it is the law of the parent in the heart of the child that makes the child obey in the absence of, as well as in the presence of, the parent.

The ministration of the Spirit was so far superior to the ministration of Moses that there really was no way to compare them accurately. It was superior because it was a law of the heart—kept by the individual because he *wanted* to keep it, and not because he was afraid he would be damned if he didn't.

One of the puzzling things white men have always contemplated is the apparent lack of definable law among the Indian tribes. Most efforts to integrate Indians into American society have failed because those who attempted it were not able to break tribal society. Today when you take an Indian out of his culture and away from his tribe to "educate him" and adjust him to "American civilization" you usually destroy him, or else he returns to the tribe. "Civilized" people wonder why. A part of the answer, at least,

is that he has a law written in his heart. He may not have a set of rules, coded and parceled, but there is a strong, almost unbreakable law written in his heart.

The genius of a Christian is that he is able to govern himself without recourse to a set of rules, regulations and codes. The mere suggestion that law might be something different from the experiences of a devoted life is abhorrent to a Christian. He "does by nature" the things contained in the law.

Perhaps the thing that makes men legalists is something that exists in their own culture, rather than something they get from the Bible. It is legalism that differentiates law from the on-going life of a Christian. It is legalism that codifies laws and regulations making them, structured along predetermined lines, more acceptable to those in positions of authority than to those who are supposed to be disciplined by them. Once authority is established it naturally follows that people will find structures and courts through which they may impose their own wills upon other men. Thus they make the mores that are acceptable to them the mores for the rest of society.

Only God has a right to impose upon us predetermined patterns of action. This He does by beginning in the heart out of which all action flows. When the heart is reconditioned by repentance, and rebellion has been replaced by the spirit of obedience, then the law of God is written in the heart, and the obedience that flows is the obedience of faith.

The reason the Indians needed no codified law was that they were by necessity pressed into an intimate relationship with each other in the tribe. Often the tribe was a collection of families related by blood and experiential ties through long centuries in such a closeness that the very thought of external regulation of behavior was absurd. If the tribe could not remain together on the basis of mutual respect and personal self-discipline of each of its members, then it simply vanished. If the body of Christ cannot remain together on the basis of our mutual respect and the rigid self-discipline of each member of the church, then it will vanish.

Law, in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word, does not exist until Christians make a distinction between the various functions of the body of Christ and the various functions of the individual members. Real Christians develop within themselves a law in their hearts that disciplines them to act for the good of the body, and in such a way that they are all merged into one living organism. This can never be attained by the application of external law. The legalist will always have trouble with this principle because he cannot understand how it is that a non-coded system of behavior can capture the essence of Christian life.

In the ideal condition, no restriction is placed upon a Christian unless and until a crisis arises that threatens the existence of the church. Then he surrenders this individual autonomy, voluntarily, lest his eating meat cause his brother to stumble.

—Editorial in *Firm Foundation*



# Viewing The News

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST is first again—this time in ordaining an avowed homosexual as a minister, the first major denomination to do that. He was ordained in a suburban San Francisco church by the UCC's Golden Gate Association. They may not be first by much, for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands recently accepted a report which holds that homosexuality should not be a barrier to a person's becoming a pastor.

MARJOE may be a name that is new to you, but I think it will be well known soon. A Pentecostal evangelist named Marjoe Gortner has made an 80-minute movie of himself (called "Marjoe") showing that he was using evangelism purely to enrich himself and that he was a great fake. The movie was made after he decided to quit evangelism and admit his unbelief, but it was made by a camera crew that attended his meetings under the pretense of being Christians themselves. Mr. Gortner narrates the film, which is now being previewed in New York. The harm to the Pentecostals will likely spill over to all evangelists or revivalists, picturing them all in the minds of the viewers as present-day Elmer Cantrys preying on the hearts and wallets of innocent, sincere church people.

HOBBS STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST in Athens, Alabama, certainly made headlines over the country. The minister's daughter won a beauty contest in which she posed in a bathing suit and he was fired. More newspaper columns have been written deriding the elders of the church, Churches of Christ in general, and modesty in particular than you can imagine. The religious columnist Luther Kinsolving, for example, spoke of the girl as "an impecceably whole-

some young girl who, despite the internationally notorious asininity of her church's elders, still wants to attend a Church of Christ college."

IF THE SALT agreement between the US and the USSR had been arranged by a liberal president who was a known liberal and radical, the people of this country would have thrown him out of office for wanting to put the USA in an inferior position in weapons, but since a liberal president who is spoken of as a conservative did it, the agreement is going through. Every authority on the military that I have consulted has said this puts the USA in a dangerous position.

DID YOU KNOW that U. S. citizens taking \$5,000 outside of the U. S. must notify the customs bureau of that fact? I don't plan to travel that far, and if I did I would not have that much to take, but every new look into "Personal Business by government is another step toward "Big Brother" government.

DURING WORLD WAR II there were at least 17 million civilian deaths due to the war. That was almost as many as those military personnel who were killed, died of wounds, or died in prison. The combined total was close to 36 million. Isn't it strange that none of those protesting the killing of civilians in the Vietnamese war protested when German civilians were killed in the 1940s? And also strange that they do not protest the killings of many times the number we killed accidentally in the deliberate massacres of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

I WAS SURPRISED when the United States Supreme Court in a recent decision struck at the notion that "property rights" are somehow in-

ferior to "human rights." Justice Potter Stewart reminded the readers of his majority opinion that "in fact a fundamental interdependence exists between the personal right to liberty and the personal right to property. Neither could have meaning without the other."

THE COMMUNIST FLAG was presented during the tenth congress of the Baptist World Alliance. The red flag with the hammer and sickle denoting the God-hating government seems a bit out of place in such a meeting and many Baptists thought so too, but that flag received the most applause of the 65 flags presented in the opening of the Congress, according to news features.

"THOU SHALT NOT MURDER" is, of course, the correct rendering of the sixth commandment, and new translations are translating it so. Those people who oppose capital punishment on the false translation of "Thou shalt not kill" were obviously wrong from the many items deserving capital punishment listed in the Law of Moses, but now they have no excuse. But they will continue and crime will get worse.

THE REVOLUTION in Ireland that is tearing up the northern part of that unhappy country is not a religious war but a part of the world revolutionary tactics of the communists. A great many of the guerrillas in Ireland have been brought in to fight, not to help any section of the country. They want control, not justice.

"BUDDHISM fastest growing religion in the nation" was the headline of a Newsweek Feature Service writer during July. The article was dated Los Angeles, but the reader who sent the article to me says that there are lots of Buddhists in Denver. 20,000 Buddhists—70 percent of them non-Asiatic—staged a festival this past spring at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. It is believed that there are 300,000 members of the sect in this country, with about 60,000 converts each year. The organization is called Nichiren Shoshu of America (NSA) and has one simple belief: that chanting the "Nam-myoy-o-enge-kyo" ("Glory to the lotus sutra of the mystical law") will bring happiness to the individual; that once the entire

country begins this chant, all the problems that trouble the U. S. as a nation will disappear.

A MAJOR automobile vice-president stated publicly that the extra cost of anti-pollution and safety requirements by the government will be at least \$873 per car in 1975 plus \$65 more per year for maintenance. I wonder if Ralph Nader will get a foundation to pay the cost!

PROBABLY the most successful Presidential candidate we have ever had never won an electoral vote! At least that statement is true if success by a candidate is getting his platform adopted. Norman Thomas ran on the Socialist ticket for six times without any success and finally quit because the two major parties had adopted his platform and were putting it into law. You no longer live in a republic but in a cross between a democracy (mob rule) and socialism, with democracy about to disappear and socialism to become the law of the land. Government restrictions on business and government in business are both increasing too fast for me to keep up with them. And I can not forget that the great scholar Frederick Hayek called his book on socialism, "The Road to Serfdom."

DURING THE NEXT few years, if there are a few left, the money systems of the world will change considerably. Those in power behind the thrones of the world are working for a world money system. If that happens your American money (except for gold and silver) will become worthless and the world rulers can demand we use their money or not be able to buy or sell. Keep an eye on money changes within our present system.

THE COMMUNIST daily newspaper Daily World has doubled its circulation in the past four years. There are over 50 million people in the world today who claim to be communists and they have enslaved over a billion people. Anyone still think that communism is a weak force?

A VIETNAMESE Dominican priest recently wrote in an American paper: "The Vietnamese people want peace, but not peace in the hands of the Communists. A Communist takeover of South Vietnam means more massacres and perhaps a bloodbath beyond

imagination. It is very shocking to know that when the Communists invaded the South with tanks and other sophisticated weapons; attacked cities and bombarded civilian populations, causing deaths of thousands of innocent people and rendering thousands more homeless, there was not a single word of condemnation or demonstration by the so-called peace organiza-

tions in this country."

MANY THANKS for your continued support in clippings as well as in prayer. Continue to pray for our country and that we may report things that need to be prayed about. Send your clippings to Ernest E Lyon

2629 Valletta Road  
Louisville, Ky. 40205



## Three Views About Israel and the Church

Alex V. Wilson

(Conclusion)

### 3. *The Historic Pre-Millennial View*

Last month in seeking to point out the weaknesses of the non-millennial and the dispensational views, we already revealed the main principles of the third view. They are as follows: There has been, is now, and will be one people of God. It consists of God's elect and redeemed people of all the ages. There is one new man, one household of God, one body, one olive tree (Ephesians 2:13-19, Romans 11:17-24). Members of this one people are called sons and heirs of Abraham (for we share his faith and the promises made to him), and the true circumcision (Galatians 3:7, 29; Philip-  
prians 3:3). It is implied that Christians are members of the spiritual commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12, 13), and we are called the Israel of God (Galatians 6:15, 16). Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ (Galatians 3:28), and there is no indication in the New Testament that God will ever reverse the situation later on by again creating distinctions between Israel and the church.

Then is God finished with national Israel, the Jewish race? No! As mentioned last month, Romans 11:11-15, 25-29 reveals a sudden and full-scale conversion of Israelites to Christ in the last days, as prophesied in Isaiah 66:7ff. (a land born in one day), Ezekiel 36-37, Zechariah 12-14, etc. But when that happens and "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26), what will it mean but that for the first time in history there will truly be a *Christian* nation? As Richard Ramsey wrote about the Israelites mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14:

"The 144,000 are followers of the Lamb. Now, what will these Israelites be except Christians? Will they not become members of the Lord's church when they become obedient believers in Him? Will

not the end of the age repeat the conditions at the beginning of this age, having again a church composed mainly of Jews?" (The Old Testament in the Modern World, p. 13.)

Such a view may be hard to grasp for those who have repeatedly heard that Israel and the church are always distinct. Yet it is not a new interpretation. That's why it is called "historic premillennialism." It is pre-millennial because it looks for Christ's return to be followed by His glorious reign on earth. It is historic because it can be traced back to the early Christians, in contrast to dispensationalism which originated in the 1800's. (All dispensationalists are pre-millennial, but not all pre-millennialists are dispensational.) As one writer explains,

Historic premillennialism had no teaching whatever of a future hope for Israel outside the church. Historic Christian theologians have held that the nation of Israel was a type while the church is the antitype. That is to say that, rather than being two separate entities, one is a fulfillment or continuation of the other.

For examples of this view in church history, the first century *Epistle of Barnabas* teaches that men of Christian faith rather than men of Jewish ancestry are the heirs of God's covenant (compare Romans 4:11-16, Galatians 3:6-29). Justin Martyr repeatedly says that Christians are the true Israelite race (cf. Philippians 3:3).

Irenaeus writes, "As God promised Abraham the inheritance of the earth, and he received it not during the whole time he lived on it, it is necessary that he should receive it, together with his seed, i.e., with such of them as fear God and believe in Him, at the resurrection of the just." He then shows that Christ and the church are the true seed, and partakers of the promises, and concludes: "As neither Abraham nor his seed—those who are justified—have enjoyed any inheritance in it, they will undoubtedly receive it at the resurrection of the just." (*Faith of Our Fathers*, edited by E. L. Jorgenson, pp. 107-8.)

Passing from the first two centuries to the 1600s, we read:

"The Puritans did not believe that there are any special and unfulfilled spiritual promises made to Israel apart from the Christian Church. Most of them believed there will be a great revival in the future, bringing Israel as a mass into the Church."

Let's see how the three different viewpoints look at the New Covenant predicted in Jeremiah 31:31-34. The Lord says, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. . . ." Therefore some dispensational teachers deny that this covenant is now in effect, because its blessings have never been experienced by Israel and Judah and because Romans 11:27 applies Jeremiah's prediction to Israel's future conversion. But the non-millennialist points out that Matthew 26:27, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:5-11, and Hebrews 8:6-13 all declare that the New Covenant *has* been established, with the *church!* Thus he concludes, "You see, the church is spiritual Israel, and God is finished with physical, racial Israel." The historic pre-millennial view says,

"You are both right, and wrong! Obviously the New Covenant is in effect *now*, with the church, which is spiritual Israel. But there will come a time when racial Israel as a whole will turn to Christ, and then they will enter into the covenant just as Christians have through the centuries. In other words, Jeremiah has both *been* fulfilled (Hebrews 8:8) and is yet to *be* fulfilled more completely (Romans 11:27). In the same way, God's promise through Joel of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was originally made to *Judah*, yet it is experienced by the *church*. The prediction was partially fulfilled at Pentecost, and is in effect now during this age of the Holy Spirit, but remains to be completely exhausted in the last days before the Day of the Lord (Acts 2:16-21). As Peter explained on Pentecost, "*The promise is to you and to . . . all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him*" (Acts 2:39). Thus all that was meant by God's promise through Joel will not be fulfilled until God has finished calling men to Christ through the gospel."

### *So What?*

Perhaps now the question should be asked, "What difference does it make about these three views? It all seems rather dry and technical, so why bother to study this matter?" The answer is that our interpretation of many parts of the Bible and our understanding of God's overall purposes will be affected. These articles support the view that there is one continuing people of God, rather than two distinct peoples with differing gospels and ethical standards and destinies, etc. I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that the latter idea often leads people to chop up the Bible in a dangerous way: "This paragraph pertains to Old Testament Israel, that paragraph to Israel during the great tribulation, and the third paragraph to the church." Let us be careful not to assume too much or to read into Scripture what really isn't there. We ought not become overly engrossed in detailed charts about the various ages, etc. Some folks get more concerned about Ezekiel's temple than about worshipping the Lord, or more concerned about the new Jerusalem than about whether their neighbors will get there! Also, let's beware of minimizing our Lord's moral teachings and His demands upon His disciples (e.g., Luke 14:25-35) by saying, "Oh, that was before the church began." Some writers have even claimed that God required repentance from the Jews, but now during the church age He requires faith. Humbug!! Some folks confidently assert that the church cannot possibly go into the great tribulation since that period is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) and since Daniel's 70th week is related to Israel (Daniel 9:24ff.). It is clear that we should be ready for Christ's coming always, yet we should also remember that though the New Covenant and the outpoured Spirit were predicted for Israel and Judah, yet the church has experienced them. We cannot be sure, therefore, that the church will not also experience the 70th week of tribulation along with Israel.

If the historic view is correct, it will affect our interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, especially those related to the future glories of the millennium and of eternity. To what extent will passages like Isaiah 60 and Ezekiel 40-48 be literally fulfilled, and to what extent is accommodated language, or the "language of equivalents," used? I.e., when a prophet predicted the future observance of rituals which were valid in his day but later passed away (e.g., circumcision: Ezekiel 44:9, Galatians 6:15), will that ritual literally be restored or will the fulfillment consist only of the inner spiritual meaning of the ritual? Isaiah says swords will be beaten into plowshares; doubtless the fulfillment will be modernized: tanks will be converted into tractors! To what extent will the fulfillments of other forecasts be modernized to suit the era in which they will come to pass? Note that Revelation 20-22 contains at least seven allusions in Isaiah 60-66 (e.g., cf. Isaiah 60:3, 5, 19; 61:6; 65:17-19; 66:24 with Revelation 21:24, 26, 23; 22:5, 6; 21:1-5; 20:10). Yet, while those chapters in Isaiah often refer to Old Covenant rituals (offerings, sabbaths, new moons, etc.), John omits all mention of them. We find the same relationship between Revelation and Ezekiel 40-48. In some ways the visions of the prophet and the apostle were similar, in other ways dissimilar. Each of them was carried to a high mountain and there shown the city of God. John saw a life-giving river, trees with leaves that bring healing, and the glorious presence of God—as Ezekiel also had seen. But John did *not* see the many Mosaic features which were shown to the prophet: a material temple, Levitical priests, animal sacrifices—including sin offerings. That seems to be very significant, does it not?

John in Revelation adapts these chapters (of Ezekiel) to describe God's redeemed people in their future glory, and removes from them all traces of Judaism. Ezekiel 40-48 is a true prediction of the glorious kingdom of God using the forms with which the prophet and his hearers were familiar—their own dispensation. The essential truth of this passage will be embodied in the future dispensation with forms suitable to it, as outlined in Revelation 21:1-22:5. (New Bible Commentary)

Whether this interpretation be correct or not, it is an important principle to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the fuller truth revealed in the New Testament.

May the Lord guide our study of these questions. These articles are not presented as "the last word," but with the desire to learn more and to be corrected where wrong. Most of all, may these truths stir and motivate us. Is it not true that *every predictive passage in the New Testament is related to some spiritual-moral application?* It is time to wake from sleep, for the coming of the Lord is at hand!

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MARY SLESSOR: Christ was never in a hurry. There was no rushing forward, no anticipating, no fretting over what might be. Each day's duties were done as every day brought them, and the rest was left with God.

# Missionary Messenger

*"Greater things for God"*

J. Miller Forcade

Salisbury, Rhodesia,

June 22

It is 4:30 a.m. in Salisbury, and my day began almost an hour ago. This is my best time to read, study, pray, and write. Later in the day we get some extra rest to enable us to keep going efficiently.

The books for the home are in need of help as little has been done on them since Miss Hollis left. But Tuesday Mr. Wright came over and took the ledger to his place of business. Since then, with Brother Gill's help we have March, April, and May ready for posting.

After some tribulation and some strict discipline the children are much more cooperative. We have been advised to let our "Garden Boy" (Langton) go. The men of the Arcadia church have agreed to assume more responsibility in running this home, and in carrying on the affairs of the church, for which we are thankful to God. Noel, Cleophas, Alistar, and Shawn are teaming up to take their turns in speaking on Sunday night. Brethren Jones and Abraham will take two Sunday nights that are left giving us a rotation of each fourth Sunday night for the speakers. This enables us to do a bit of badly needed visiting in some of the homes of the members and teach in the Morides home—nine children—at their invitation. Wilford Crewe has been here once this week, we talked to two other men until after 12 one night. Waterfalls has invited me to speak there Sunday night of July 9 and that has been accepted. They have invited me to come there on Wednesday to do some special teaching. Invitation declined but I am to go Tuesday night.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

July 27

Daddy Brown and I were at the Camp meeting at Gatooma for the 9th and 10th. It was a meeting for women and the sessions were taught by women, excepting the Sunday meetings. Daddy B. spoke on Sunday afternoon, and showed slides of Israel one night. Brother Simon Nneweyembwa preached Sunday morning. Joy spoke to the women several times; Sister Forcade spoke on Saturday morning. Dora couldn't get there on account of sickness and I got asthma (there was so much dust) so Joy had to take my subject and bring a lesson. She had to take Dora's place, too. Joy is very capable and truly loves the Lord. The meeting was a success and blessed by the Lord. The "older" African women had

the night sessions and taught the younger women according to Titus 2:3,4.

Thos. W. Hartle

Cape Province, S. Africa

July 21

Just after I had forwarded my last news report on the 13th of June, that very evening Mrs. Dorothy Van Der Berg, the wife of one of our members, was baptized into Christ. Following this great occasion a Mr. and Mrs. Heldsinger were also baptized on the 20th. These baptisms and decisions for Christ were the outcome of filmstrip classes having been conducted in the homes of these families by Brother Nockie, our Hebrew Christian, and Brother Manuel; with men such as these, the work must grow to the glory of God. Then followed our series of gospel meetings, held from the 3rd to the 9th of July, with a guest speaker. The theme was "The Power of God," and attendance each evening was commendable. Six precious souls were baptized into Christ, and we can truly say the theme of the meeting became a reality. And those members who assisted, bringing friends to the meetings each evening, shall have their reward.

Many families are still opening up their homes for cottage meetings and film strip classes and we are looking forward to many more precious souls being baptized into Christ very soon. Our regular attendances at all services at Woodstock remain commendable. I will be starting a film strip class in the home of a family in the Kensington area, about 7 miles from my home next Wednesday evening, the 26th of July. We can pray that saving results might follow, since we have been there before.

At Woodstock we have as yet not received final letter of purchase for the ground already allocated in Hanover Park, a large township. I hope it will come soon, since the men are eager to start building. In the meanwhile we are sketching plans of the type of building we would like.

I would like to close with expressing as a family our deep appreciation to individuals and churches who have repented so lovingly towards our card fund. So far we have received \$550, praise the Lord, plus a gift from a brother here in Cape Town of about \$200—total then up to date, \$750.

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*That night I hauled my 111 pounds (which felt like 222) out of that bed and fell on my knees. It was rather a strange feeling to be on my knees, head bowed and eyes shut tight; for in all my years of praying, I had never bowed my head. Always I had looked up from whatever position I happened to be in at the time. Now I confessed to God that I was a sinner and asked his forgiveness . . .*

—Jeanne Robinson

# The Table of the Lord

Charles G. E. Chilton

There is an atmosphere that is conducive to creative thinking, one that lends itself to musical composition and literary endeavor.

There is also an atmosphere that is conducive to creative living, and that is associated with different phases of the Christian life: fellowship with the Word of God and the people of God and in the circle of prayer.

Such an atmosphere is discovered in a unique sense as we gather around the table of the Lord.

Why did Jesus institute the Lord's table? Not to give us a mere rite, for this would but issue in empty form. He gave it to us to keep before us the centrality of the cross. "This do in remembrance of me."

Around the table of the Lord we find an atmosphere in which the self-life cannot live. This truth was in the mind of the poet when he wrote: "Jesus, keep me near the cross." The Moravians of Wesley's day spoke of "living in the wounds of Jesus." The apostle Paul declared: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Here is the proclamation of the believer's identification with his Lord in His death, burial and resurrection. But more than this, here as believers we reveal the burning of a living hope that is bound up in our bridal relationship with the coming Bridegroom—"till he come."

There is a distinct line of demarcation between the celebration of the Jewish Passover and the institution of the Lord's table. It was during the course of the observance of the former that the Lord Jesus made the tragic statement: "One of you shall betray me." John, the beloved disciple, asked the question, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus replied: "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop." Having received the sop, Judas "went immediately out: and it was night." It was night in a twofold sense.

It is quite evident that it was not until Judas went out that the Lord instituted the Lord's table. Both a careful reading of the story and the essential atmosphere which it creates must serve to confirm and establish this finding.

It is quite true that there are points and phrases common to each feast. Both point to a deliverance: the first setting forth Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the Lord's table setting forth the fact of the believer's deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. In the latter the type finds its fulfillment in the Antitype—Christ the heavenly Lamb.

In our present meditation three things become focal: *the statement—the supper—the significance.*

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," said our Lord. This statement admits us into the

inner sanctuary of the heart of Jesus. It has recorded for us the hidden longing of His heart.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is not to pander to idle curiosity, but to identify and magnify a universal point of time. "When the hour was come." Jesus always moved in keeping with God's timetable. He is never ahead of time and never behind.

The hour is now reached when we leave forever the old covenant and are brought into the wealth and wonder of the new. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

We should be careful to observe that Jesus did not say, "With desire have I desired to eat *the* Passover with you." It is not *the* Passover, but *this* Passover. We might set this forth as a demonstrative adjective: it places it, designates it, identifies it. It sets it up and apart from all that has gone before. It gives color and character to this feast. It brings us not simply to a Passover but to *this* Passover, thus bringing us to a universal point of time.

This is the last Passover that God recognized. It was not the last Passover, but the last He recognized. The Passover lamb had in type pointed to Him who was to come as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

"When the hour was come." The hour had come when the plan and purpose of His coming might be fulfilled. This is the focal point of time. Jesus has reached the place in His great mission when He is to die, the Just for the unjust, when He who knew no sin is to become sin for us. Thus He desired to eat *this* Passover with them before He suffered. It was for this He came.

The *statement* brings us to the *supper*. Here is the dividing line between the old covenant and the new. Jesus partook of the Passover feast until He came to the last cup.

During the feast of the Passover the cup was circulated four times. Opinion seems to differ as to the significance of the first three, but we are sure of the fourth. The fourth was the cup of joy, and it came as the symbol of God's great salvation.

The Lord's table is the place not of sadness, but of joy. Isaiah writes: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted."

It is in this association that we find the deep significance of the words: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast." It is the feast, not the fast.

When we come to the heavenly throng in the Book of the Revelation, they are not sighing but singing. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

The Lord's table is the place for song. It is to be the center of praise and of worship. Salvation issues in song. Redemption issues in rejoicing. Expiation finds its sequel in exultation. Propitiation is wedded to praise.

When Jesus told the story of the returning prodigal, He created the atmosphere of the feast. "They began to be merry." God seeks praise from us. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." If we have not the experience of joy, it must be because we have the partial thing rather than the precious thing. Salvation always voices itself in song.

Here we enter the initial movement of the Lord's table. Jesus said: "Take this." At this point He did not partake of the elements; He dispensed them. "Take this cup and divide it among yourselves. I am not drinking it again until the kingdom of God shall come." By His broken body and through His shed blood He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

There is much controversy as to what Jesus meant by His statement. When did the kingdom of God come? It is true that He is going to share with us in that feast of "the marriage supper of the Lamb," and this must supply added color. But did He not receive vinegar at the cross? Vinegar is from the fruit of the vine. It is sour wine. He tasted that for us, and in His dying He made possible the way of forgiveness and in His resurrection the means of our justification. "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, . . . saith, I thirst."

All things were accomplished. All things were now ready. The fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness. The gospel feast was prepared. "Come; for all things are now ready." Now all may come. "Whosoever will may come."

So He took bread and broke it and said: "This is my body, which is broken for you." We must make much of these two words: "*for you.*" Now we may feed upon Him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

What, then, is *the significance*? "He took bread. . . He took the cup." He did not partake Himself. He gave it. It was the symbol of "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." (See Hebrews 10:10.) It was given as the symbol of His shed blood which He gave for the life of the world. "You take it. You drink it. . . in remembrance of Me."

If this means anything at all, it surely means that the table of the Lord is to be central in our worship.

The force is found in the word "remembrance." "In remembrance of me." This is not simply the remembrance of a past event: it is far more than this. It is the keeping before us of a living reality—that which makes for the centrality of the cross in life and living.

Jude left us this significant exhortation: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How are we to keep ourselves in the love of God? Only through a heart remembrance of Calvary. This is far more than a mental act; it is essentially emotional.

Things in the head can be forgotten, but things in the heart can never be forgotten: they are held up to consciousness, worshiped and feared. They sit upon the throne of the heart and mold character and control destiny.

The psalmist knew the significance of such remembrance when he said: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." The same truth is discovered in the words: "Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (NASV). Then again it was Paul the aged who wrote to the young man Timothy: "Remember . . . Jesus Christ."

We truly live as we live in the wounds of Jesus. Not only do we live in the constant assurance of our salvation through the finished work of the Redeemer, but we move in the way of sanctification and song.

God brings us to and keeps us in the atmosphere and emphasis of Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (NASV).

—In *The Alliance Witness*

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## Some of the Future is Certain

H. Robert Cowles

A symposium at the University of Texas earlier this year convened an elite group of thinkers and men of affairs to consider for three days "problems of the twenty-first century."

Financed by J. R. Parten, a Texas millionaire who identifies himself as a "small farmer," and C. B. Smith, Sr., a local Volkswagen dealer in Austin, the symposium was organized by Dr. Joe B. Frantz, a professor of history at the University, in honor of the late Texas historian, Walter Prescott Webb. It consisted of five public sessions at which select ones of these world's best minds formally expressed their opinions, and five closed sessions where debate proceeded with no holds barred.

The symposium proved a dismal failure.

"Suppose a bunch of superintellectuals held a conference in a cave ages ago and asked what will life be like one million years ahead," postulated Loren Eiseley with somewhat questionable logic. "I would be curious if any of them, squatting in that cave, ever envisioned anything like this. So let us just be a little careful—it is very hard to see into the future."

Dr. Daniel Bell, a Harvard sociologist, thought that life would have to be much more regulated a few years hence. "What individuals want for themselves becomes a nightmare in the aggregate," he declared. "When almost everybody wants a house on the lake five minutes from the center of town, the result is chaos.

This means that in the twenty-first century more and more social regulation will be required."

Sol. M. Linowitz, lawyer and former ambassador, was even more pessimistic: "We have the know-how to do almost anything. The real question is do we have the know-what and know-why," he commented.

So wide did the debate range, according to *The New York Times* report, that H. Max Gluckman, a British anthropologist assigned the task of summarizing the three days of deliberation at the final dinner, simply threw up his hands in despair. "I can't do it—it's really impossible," he said, and offered a toast to the Queen instead.

Those of us whose thinking is guided by the Bible cannot help but regard with a little pity this spectacle of eminent intellectuals groping helplessly for some sort of substance.

Not that we have all the answers. Indeed, there is reasonable question as to whether the present world order will survive into the twenty-first century.

Although many self-appointed prophets have brought disrepute to their profession by too dogmatically declaring the course of future events, we can authoritatively forecast certain things.

First, perilous days are ahead as mankind, increasingly pleasure-bent and lawless, races on his self-centered collision course with God's judgment (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Second, there shall be wars and rumors of war (Matthew 24:6) Mankind's search for world peace will continue to be in vain.

Third, a Western confederacy of ten nations shall unite under a double-dealing world ruler whose promises of benign and altruistic leadership will all too soon turn into carnage and horrible tribulation (Daniel 7:24-25; Revelation 13:1-7).

Fourth, two of the world's present-day giants, Russia and China, shall enter the arena of Middle East conflict, only to be defeated by supernatural forces (Ezekiel 38:14-39:5; Revelation 16:12-21).

But another event is also certain. In the midst of selfishness and greed and wars and Antichrist, the real Inheritor of all things, whose right it is to rule, will intervene in history. "In flaming fire" He shall take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. . . in that day" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

On that great consummation, and the reign of righteousness which shall follow, we fix our sights. It is against those certainties that we cry out for men to be reconciled to God and thus spared from the wrath to come.

It is with these judgments in mind that we "pray always, that (we) may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36)

—Editorial in *The Alliance Witness*

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# I'm Confused, Lord

Fred W. Schott

I'm confused, Lord—

Seems I only write like this  
When I'm confused.  
Can you help me, Lord?

Help me not to depend  
On what comes from these  
Sessions with my pen  
For that clear thinking  
And peace of mind  
That comes only from you.

Only use them, Lord,  
To help me sort it all out . . .  
My feelings  
Frustrations  
Doubts  
Fears  
My joys—  
Often even my joys confuse me.

Anyway,  
What I'm confused about  
This time Lord,  
Is this matter of tongues again.  
And I thought it was settled.  
I thought I had it all figured out.  
The formula  
Seemed correct.

All I had to do  
Was try.

I tried—  
Nothing happened—  
No "pentecostal" experience.

Now all there remained to do,  
"I tried, Lord,  
Now it is up to you.  
Give it to me whenever  
You want me to have it.  
I'm open, Lord."

Still open, I hope,  
Anytime you wish, Lord.  
Yet when my brother,  
One who shared my formula—  
Our formula—

Is anxious to tell me of  
His new "experience"  
Why am I confused?

Confused  
Because now it's not settled.  
Did my formula really mean  
That I put the matter,  
Conveniently  
In a closet  
Where no commitment  
Is required?

I hope that is not the case.  
Yet . . .  
Lord, I only want to seek  
After those things  
You speak to my heart about,  
Whether or not  
You have spoken to my brother.

Lord, I need help now  
On several things.

First,  
Teach me  
To genuinely praise you!  
And thank you  
For my brother's  
New feeling,  
New depth  
To which he has gone with you.  
Help both these expressions  
To speak to a genuine  
Feeling in my heart.

Help my brother, Lord,  
Not to press it upon me,  
Nor let it interfere  
With our fellowship  
That has become to me  
So real  
And so dear.

Help me, Lord,  
Through covetousness  
Or jealousy,  
Not to seek something  
That you do not want for me.  
And help me not  
Refuse to receive edification  
Through my brother  
Because I have closed

My mind  
And my heart.

Lord,  
Keep me open.  
Keep out anything  
That would hinder my view  
Of You  
And what you want of my Life.  
Lord, keep me open!

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## Keepers at Home

Wilma Vasey

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children; to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

I am thankful for the vital teaching on this portion of God's word that I was fortunate to receive during the early years of my Christian life. It created within me a great determination to exercise these principles if God was pleased for me to serve Him in this capacity. Being a housewife and mother today I can joyfully testify is one of the greatest ways Christian women can serve Christ.

In these mad days of hurry and scurry many women are as busy as their husbands making money. It is of great concern to me to see this condition gradually creeping into the church and feel we need to give this more attention. Therefore, it is vital that Christian women, especially those who are older and have successfully reared their children, do more teaching and encouraging mothers and wives to be in the home loving and caring for their own families. If we consider Philippians 4:11 it can help us all to be content with what God has blessed us with, and we won't desire to work just to acquire *extras* for the house that the budget won't allow. I realize that sickness or misfortune sometimes makes it necessary for some to work away from home for awhile, and God surely gives strength during these times.

There is a good Bible example of the unfeigned love and faith in Lois and Eunice as they taught Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5). We all know godly grandmothers and mothers who have set a high standard and have challenged us to be better wives and mothers and to love our husbands and children, and we thank God for them.

It is my desire to encourage mothers to be content with the duties at home and be happy to train up their children in the Lord while they are small. The reward cannot be compared with any job regardless of pay. Many of us who worked before marriage were happy to exchange our jobs for the home God gave us. Witnessing your child becoming a Christian brings a rejoicing of the soul and more than repays the efforts put forth. Likewise it takes much effort to train them well so they will grow up to be stable, effective workers in the Vineyard. We must not lose valuable opportunities granted us during these precious years we have them in our homes. It could determine where they will be throughout eternity. Regretfully parents wish they could re-live these years again. Helping our children find and develop their talents for the Lord is so important. As they learn to use their talents in their young life it gives them a feeling of being needed and helpful, and they will want to have a definite part in the Lord's work.

May God bless each one of you Christian ladies who love your home, husband, and children enough to give your ALL to them in fulfilling God's commandments. He created woman to be a helpmeet (Genesis 2:18). Also God teaches that a wife is to do her husband good and not evil all the days of her life (Proverbs 2:18). So by being *keepers at home* we can take our place in God's divine plan. Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (Proverbs 31:25).

—*Voice of Evangelism*

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## Four-Letter Words

Mrs. Paul J. Kuecht

There are lots of four-letter words in the English language and, presumably, in any language. Already I have used four, and one more that in the singular form (word) has four letters. It is impossible to escape them. And so in French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc.

What is meant then, by this phrase "four-letter words" as it is commonly used today, is not found in the meaning of the words themselves. It has a smutty ring as many of today's words have. Words that were clean, good, and useful a few years ago are now understood by too many as expressions of vulgarity. It is too bad that our English language is degenerating to such a level—for usage makes the language. The downward moral trend drags the language down with it. Some words that were strictly avoided in my school days in the early years of this century are now brazen enough to be in my dictionaries. This is the way the world goes in everything—the trend is definitely downward.

But there is one little four-letter word which few people, if they ever knew it, have any use for now. It was quite acceptable some years ago and meaningful. No stigma attached to it then. Now, in many quarters it is considered legalistic and, in an ever-widening circle is disregarded and therefore ineffective. Instead we are taught to use the word "cooperate" or the expression "follow instructions." Why? Because no one wants to accept the little four-letter word "obey." These other words can bring the same result if heeded and therefore be effective. They are more often heeded because they have not yet acquired the stigma attached to the four-letter word, "obey."

The Bible says, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." This means of course to obey God and all to whom He has delegated authority, i.e. civil rulers (1 Peter 2:13-17); husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-2); parents (Ephesians 6:1-3) and qualified church elders (Hebrews 13:17). Under "parents" would also come teachers or sitters for children who are left in their care.

Incidentally, while we are on the subject of four-letter words let us consider one other thought. Many whose vocabulary is well sprinkled with vulgar four-letter words, and some other folk, claim they cannot read the Bible because they cannot understand it. To them I urge, "Try it!" Look at a copy and see how many of the words are four-letter words or less. Many with more than four letters are still one or two syllable words and most others are simple everyday familiar words. The Holy Scriptures are written in understandable words. The greatest words in it are short ones. One of them is the One we all will face some day, God. Only a three-letter word, but a big word. The four-letter word "Lord" is also understandable. The three-letter word "Son" describes His relationship to God, the Father. "Lord" indicates His relationship to the believer. What simpler words anywhere than these: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)?

Two words, the last to be mentioned in this article are: "Holy," a two-syllable four-letter word meaning separated from sinners and from the world as such; and "Spirit"—two syllables but how much they mean! The Holy Spirit dwells in those who have become followers (in subjection to) of the Lord through faithful obedience to His word. He gives power to live the Christian life and sheds love (another four-letter word) abroad in the hearts of His people (Ephesians 3:20-21; and Romans 5:5).

Little words, but how tremendous their meaning! How easy of understanding for those who want to understand! (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 2:1-5). How profitable to obey! What hope they give for the future and what power to obtain that hope!

There is no excuse for misunderstanding the four-letter words. And if you read with an honest heart you will come to know some longer ones, such as are found in Hebrews 6:14-20.

*Summary of the sermon preached in All Souls Church on October 13, 1968, at the Service for Doctors.*

# **A Christian Philosophy of Life and Death**

John R. W. Stott

I have chosen a topic today which is of inescapable concern to every practising physician, namely a philosophy of life and death. He is engaged every day in the struggle to preserve life and to postpone death. The question naturally arises: what is the nature of this life he seeks to preserve, of this death he seeks to postpone?

The apostle Paul gives us his answer in Philipians 1:21—"To me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

I beg you not immediately to dismiss this statement as the vagary of a fanatic or a fool. For Paul was neither. As he writes he is a prisoner in Rome, awaiting the emperor's pleasure. The greater part of his life work has been done. His three heroic missionary journeys are over. The gospel of Jesus Christ has made its triumphal progress (described in the Book of Acts) from Jerusalem, the capital of Jewry, to Rome, the capital of the world. For God's Word cannot be chained.

But Paul is in chains. In such a situation, confronted by the possibility of a death sentence, he does not utter empty truisms. No. This is the philosophy of life and death which has sustained him for several decades. He means it with every fiber of his being: "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

## *1. A Christian Philosophy of Life*

What is life, its meaning and purpose? It is tragic how few people ever ask this ultimate question, and how many who ask it find no adequate answer.

Some are content to regard man as nothing but the product of a blind evolutionary process. Dr. Desmond Morris in his book, *The Naked Ape*, published this year and subtitled, "A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal," describes man as a "vertical, hunting, weapon-toting, territorial, neotenus, brainy, naked ape, a primate by ancestry and a carnivore by adoption." Is man then at base only an animal? Is human conduct nothing but a series of automatic behavior patterns, released by various stimuli, as behavioral ethologists would have us believe?

Others, who look for a meaning to life but cannot find it, lapse into existential pessimism, like Hobbes who called life "nasty, vile, stale, brutish and short."

Yet others seek to escape from the life to which they can find no meaning through the deceptive enticement of drink, sex or drugs. At this year's conference of the British Association, Dr. W. D. M.

Paton, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford, expressed the opinion that Britain was in the middle of an epidemic of drug dependence looking, he said, for a chemical short cut to the feelings normally engendered by successful mental or physical effort.

From these superficial, cynical or escapist attitudes to life, it is a relief to listen to the apostle Paul—"living to me means simply Christ" (J. B. Phillips). This is not a meaningless combination of words. Nor is it a vague, sentimental devotion to a Christ of human fantasy. It is a precise commitment to the Jesus of history, who is now our contemporary. We must interpret it in the light of the rest of the Philippian letter, which is full of Christ and also refers to the four goals which men are seeking.

First, *acceptance*.

Perhaps nothing is more damaging to the human psyche than rejection, nothing more conducive to health than acceptance. And at its heart the Christian gospel is good news of acceptance, primarily with God our offended Creator and Judge, but also with each other in that fellowship of forgiven sinners called the Church.

How do we find acceptance? Paul writes of his own conversion. Once he trusted in himself that he was righteous. But then he came to say: "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss . . . in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Philippians 3:7-9 RSV). So acceptance with God is not a human achievement, but a divine gift through the work and merit of Jesus Christ, who died to take away our sins and gives us His righteousness instead.

Secondly, *direction*.

The second great need of man is a chart to show him the way and a compass by which to navigate. How are we to evaluate the opinions of men? What ideals should we follow and what standards adopt? Paul would reply: "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself . . ." (2:4-8 RSV).

Thirdly, *power*.

Ideals are of little value if we lack the power to attain them. So Paul writes of his eagerness to know more of Christ "and the power of His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). He adds that the indwelling power of Christ was adequate to support him in all his trials: "In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13 RSV).

Fourthly, *hope*.

The problems of the world are so grave today—war, racism, dictatorship, refugees, the population explosion, world poverty and

hunger—that many have given up hope. The Christian has no glib solution. At the same time he does not despair. He acknowledges his duty as a citizen to stand for justice, love and peace. But he also knows that the final solution to these problems lies beyond history, when Christ comes again in glory to establish His perfect kingdom of righteousness and peace. On this he sets his hope: “Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ . . .” (Philippians 3:20, 21 RSV).

What is so impressive about all this is not just its relevance to our situation today, but its Christ-centeredness. Whichever way Paul looked, he saw Christ. He refers successively to Christ’s life, death, resurrection and return. He found direction from the mind of Christ, acceptance through the death of Christ, strength through the power of Christ’s resurrection and hope from the certainty of His coming again.

This is the Christian life as much for the ordinary Christian in the secular society of the twentieth century as it was for the apostle Paul in the Graeco-Roman world of the first. At home and at work, in solitude and in company, every Christian (not least the doctor) can find Jesus Christ transforming his perspective, ambition, standards, values and relationships.

## 2. *A Christian Philosophy of Death*

There is more talk in medical circles about death today than there has been for many generations. This is due to the dawn of the era of cardiac transplantation. Of many ethical problems surrounding transplant surgery, the greatest concerns when the donor may be said to be dead. It is now claimed that “death” is a relative word not an absolute, and that there are degrees of “deadness.” It is also said, no doubt rightly, that we must give up defining death in terms of the cessation of heartbeat, and must now define it in terms of the cessation of all electrical activity in the brain, as recorded by the electro-encephalogram. In May of this year a conference of some twenty-four leading heart specialists at the headquarters of the World Health Organization in Geneva said that a man could be regarded as dead when his brain had “totally and irreversibly” ceased to work.

This new scientific definition of death is important, because of its ethical implications, but we need more than this. We need a philosophy of death, which will enable us to confront it unafraid. For death is the most democratic of all institutions. It is no respecter of persons. It is the one event from which no human being can escape.

Yet, if few find the meaning of life, even fewer face the reality of death. It has been well said that Victorians faced the fact of death, but were embarrassed by the facts of life. We Elizabethans, on the other hand seem to have a compulsive fascination for the facts of life; our embarrassed silences are concerned with death. The sheer inevitability of death makes this attempted evasion the more foolish.

Mind you, the Bible recognizes that in itself, apart from Christ its conqueror, death is a pretty grim tyrant. It is called in the book of Job "the king of terrors" and in I Corinthians "the last enemy." The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of those who "through fear of death" are "subject to lifelong bondage."

But one of the many new things introduced into the world by Christianity is the mastery of death through the victory of Jesus Christ. The contrast between pagan and Christian views of death was immediately dramatic. Archaeologists investigating some of the ancient Roman cemeteries came across a common inscription on pagan tombs consisting of the seven letters NFFNSNC. They discovered that these letters stand for the Latin words *Non fui, fui, non sum, non curo*: "I was not, I was, I am not, I do not care." But Christian inscriptions from the beginning were utterly different: "He sleeps but lives" and "He went to God."

It is the same today. Bertrand Russell can write in one of his books: "I believe that when I die I shall rot, and nothing of my ego will survive. I am not young, and I love life. But I should scorn to shiver with terror at the thought of annihilation." Yet does one not detect even in this statement a note of resentment at the finality of death? In contrast to this, when old Henry Venn, the retired Vicar of Huddersfield, was told that he was dying, the prospect made him so jubilant and high-spirited that his doctor said the joy at dying kept him alive a further fortnight!

What is the cause of this contrast between Christian confidence and non-Christian stoicism or despair in the face of death? It has to do less with man's certainty about death itself than with his uncertainty about what lies beyond death. It is not death men fear; it is judgment. And from it Jesus Christ sets His people free: "He who hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

Listen also to Paul in our text: "To die is gain" (verse 21). Further, "My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (verse 23). His expression is a remarkable one. He uses neither the single comparative "better", nor the double comparative "more better", but a triple comparative "much more better," as one version renders it "very far better."

This is plain Christian logic: everybody for whom life means Christ will find death to be gain, because it will bring him more of Christ.

Such was Paul's philosophy of life and death. It raises Christianity out of the prosaic nonentity to which the Church has often condemned it into a new dimension which it was always meant to have.

In its essence Christianity is neither an ethic, consisting mainly of rules, nor a dogma consisting mainly of rituals enjoyed by a steadily diminishing religious minority. No. Christianity is Christ—Christ the Lord of life, Christ the Conqueror of death.

# NEWS AND NOTES

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

Harland VanNote, 66 of Derby, formerly of Saybrook, Ill., died Monday, Aug. 14 on a farm near Derby, Indiana after apparently suffering a heart attack.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth; a daughter, Mrs. Beulah Hill of Phoenix, Ariz., two sons, Curtis of Fairburg, Ill., and Paul of Bellflower, Ill.; 12 grandchildren, a great-grandchild; two brothers, Ivan of Saybrook, and John of Ivesdale, Ill.; and a sister, Mrs. Elda Faucett of Pensacola, Fla.

Following the funeral service at Saybrook, Ill., eleven members of his family were born into the family of God: Paul and MaryAnn VanNote and daughter, Christine Ann; Curtis and Judith VanNote and children Jeffery, Stanley, Dennis, Randall, Christopher and Dana. There was a real season of rejoicing as these turned to Jesus. —Bob Morrow.

Mackville, Ky.: We had Orell Overman to hold our meeting July 24 thru July 30, with good attendance and one precious soul added to the Lord's church, and three who rededicated their lives to the Lord. We thank the Lord for His blessings.

On August 6, I resigned as minister of the church here after 7 years. As of this date I do not know where I will go. —Asa Baber.

Anchorage, Alaska: Our constant prayer is that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers to this needy field to strengthen the small nucleus and extend its witness. What a help it would be if several Christian families would choose to move here for the sake of the Lord's work. Summer here is fast waning. Snow can be expected in less than two months. —Irene Allen

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: We are undertaking many things in the next few months which we all hope and pray will be to the edification of the Lord's Body here. After much prayer and discussion we have now purchased a used school bus and are now bringing some to church who have not been attending. Mac Reeves is taking charge of this endeavor and it is promising to become a great tool for this area. In the next few weeks we are looking for our attendance to increase.

Preparation is now being made by the Christians here for a strong effort toward our spiritual growth this fall. This will be the first time we are trying to work together in an organized way to accomplish God's will in our lives. We are calling this effort "Come Alive and Grow!" and pray that as we study, pray, and work together we may begin to realize our spiritual potential in order to prepare ourselves for numerical growth.—Vaughn Reeves

Louisville, Ky.: The 25th anniversary of the first annual Christian Fellowship Week has come and gone leaving a blessing behind it. Many of those who attended that first conference in 1948 missed sadly some outstanding speakers of that time who are now with the Lord. But in some other aspects this was the best ever.

Speakers for this year were well chosen and surely used of the Lord. Fellowship was good and much Christian love manifest. Meals supplied by ladies of the local congregations were reported excellent and well attended.

Those who came from a distance travelled in the safe-keeping of the Lord.

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*We encourage our readers to send news items for this department. Write to us at The Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky, 40212.*