

THE WORD AND WORK

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

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Writing from Hong Kong on Thanksgiving Day, 1965, Dennis Allen posed a question that deserves fresh meditation.

What Did It Cost the Father?

Dennis L. Allen

The words of Christ are spirit and life—but it is possible for us to read them glibly and miss their real import. Often it is only after we ourselves have gone through an experience that we are able to begin to appreciate what the Lord is telling us. The wonder of the Incarnation can be found throughout the Bible but one of the best expressions of its full import is found in Romans 8:32. *“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?”*

What did it cost the Father to give up His Son? Who would presume to answer such a question, but we do need to contemplate it. Earthly fathers are not always as expressive of love as mothers, but their love is no less genuine. I recall the time I left home after graduation from college to do mission work in Montana. Daddy had said little about my going and he seldom cried, but he broke down when we parted. As I sat on my suitcase in the aisle (it was war time) as the train pulled away I realized afresh his love and the hurt and cost to him. There have been other partings since then, even more difficult for us both, but he can appreciate better than I what it meant to the Father to send the Son. I have not yet travelled that road.

A father sees things in a different light than his son. That morning when Abraham set out to offer Isaac, the son had no idea of the burden on the heart of the father. With whom could he share his burden? If Sarah had known of what he was to do she would never have consented for Isaac to go. Some burdens have to be borne alone. Abraham by faith offered him up, but God spared him, gave him back to the father, and the lamb took his place. Who can fathom the joy that must have filled Abraham's heart as they descended the mountain!

But God would not spare His own Son. He delivered Him up for us. Why? “There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin; He only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in.”

When fellowship has been close and sweet over a long period of time it is especially difficult to sunder ties. But the Father and the Son had had sweet fellowship from all eternity and even during His days upon the earth they held communion together. But He had come to die and when that dark hour came the Father withdrew His face and allowed His beloved Son to taste of death for every man—*alone*.

It was for this that He was born—for this the Father spared Him not. And so, as we hear again the rejoicing of the angels in heaven and see the joy and exultation of the shepherds, let us not forget the broken heart of the Father—“He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?”



Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

THINK HIGHLY OF YOURSELF

"Who made man's mouth," God asked Moses. Moses, commissioned by the Lord to speak to Pharaoh and the children of Israel, had complained about his lack of proper equipment—"I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." In effect, God's rebuke was saying, "You are under-rating the ability I have given you. When I made your mouth, I made it capable of fulfilling every demand that I will ever place upon it." It is worth noticing that God's answer said nothing about the Egyptian education that Moses had received; from God's point of view, this just didn't exist.

Too many Christians are caught in the same trap that held Moses: "I'm no good. I can't do anything worthwhile. I am worth nothing to the Lord." Nothing could be farther from the truth. In Romans 12:3 Paul says, "For I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think . . ." It is strange that the average believer acts as though he despises himself, while Paul here says that he ought to think of himself highly. This self-demeaning attitude is reflected in one's prayer life; recently a devout Christian said to me, "I don't feel right about praying for things for myself."

A Roman Catholic priest pointed out to me some years ago that, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is included in the Ten Commandments. And this acknowledges that it is right to love oneself. The person who doesn't love himself is a psychological cripple; he will never rightly relate either to other people or to God. Most people who won't admit to loving themselves really do but feel guilty about it.

How highly do you think of yourself? Here's a little test for you. Take pencil and paper and make a list of your good qualities: "I am kind, I love the Lord, I am generous, etc." Yes, your conscience will remind you of exceptions as you go, but you should still be able to list 12 or 15 items without feeling like a liar.

THE OTHER SIDE

But what about all these accusations we hear from the pulpit, that make everybody feel like two cents? And they seem to be based on scripture, too, such as, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

Certainly, this is a part of the truth. "The heart is deceitful . . . and desperately wicked." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Etc. Many such statements are contained in the scriptures, but they refer to that which we inherited from Adam. They must be left to stand as they are written; they underscore the need for the new birth. There is no hope for reform of this old nature which we inherited; God's answer to it is judgment—the cross.

From that same cross flows life—the life of the Lord Jesus. And that life is the source of a new nature for the believer ("If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature"). We can say with Paul, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ." Paul thought highly enough of himself (in his new nature) that he could say, "Be ye imitators of me."

Why then do some Christians continue to browbeat themselves, when they should be thinking highly of themselves? I think it is probably because they continue to identify themselves with the old man (the old nature, the flesh). They have never really understood that baptism means identification with the new life. The "other me," the person I was, is dead and buried; the new person that I am in Christ is a person of whom I can think highly—and rightly so. Guilty feelings about the failings of the old nature must be put away before an individual can really experience "walking in newness of life."

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

I would guess that most of us need to think more highly of ourselves (in the Romans 12:3 sense). To supply what is lacking by mere application of the "power of positive thinking" is utter foolishness—it's good psychology, but there is no spiritual reality in it—according to the scriptures. The Word allows us to think highly of ourselves *only on the basis of the worth of Jesus Christ.*

Here is where we must begin—and end. We need to spend more time considering the resources that are ours in Christ. Consider your worth to Him, the price He paid to purchase you, your preciousness to the Father (1 Peter 2:4-7; 1 John 4:17), the place of privilege you now occupy, His commitment to you, the present high priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus on your behalf, the comforting, keeping, intercessory work of the Holy Spirit, etc., etc. The problem with Moses was that he considered his own resources and God's demands, but not God's resources. This is the situation of the joyless Christian; it is very hard to please the Lord on my income—but it's no problem at all when I'm drawing on His riches.

So—read the New Testament again, giving special attention to *what God has done for you*, and to the provisions He has made in Christ. Especially valuable are Ephesians 1-3, Romans 1-11, and Colossians 1. As these truths "grow on you," you'll see yourself more as God sees you, and you'll begin to think highly of yourself. And then you'll begin to act more like a friend of the Lord Jesus and less like a slave (John 15:15).

Questions Asked Of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



How can divorced and remarried people—those who have not had a Scriptural reason for divorce—be forgiven and accepted in the church without the improper marriage being dissolved?

It is certainly right for us to desire purity in the church, and it must be conceded that there has been too little concern for repentance. Ours is a day of easy “believism” that has little to say about repentance. In too many cases just about anything goes! This is true of marriage problems as it is of many things in other areas of life. Perhaps there is not always the lack of concern that appears on the surface, however. It is often simply necessary to take the word of the individual that he has repented, because we cannot always know hearts. Some marriage situations are accepted because we are *uncertain* about either the right solution or the heart attitude of those involved.

The person who thinks he has all the answers to the problems created by improper marriages and knows all the practical solutions for dealing with the sin involved is either quite inexperienced or terribly blinded to the magnitude of some of the problems. In an earlier day when divorce was almost unknown in the church, simplistic answers were often devised. Some of these are still around and are held by some with a good deal more stubbornness than insight. Today it is a rare church which is not touched by divorce problems, and, as every conscientious preacher or church leader knows who has ever tried to deal with these, the answers are not always simple. This is one of those topics on which we may start out in the Lord’s work with the assurance that we have all the answers “cut and dried” only to discover that the more we learn the less certain those answers seem to be. Now this it not to say the word of God in indefinite or changeable, only that our application of the principles given by the Lord may stand improvement and that traditional answers may not always be right when put to the test.

When a man steals a car, the normal action that would accompany repentance would be the return of that car with possibly even a payment for damages. We find it hard to understand how a man could repent of such a sin and then go on driving the stolen car. The return of the car and the payment of damages is known as “restitution”—restoring for the wrong done. This is, strictly

speaking, a fruit, or a result, of repentance rather than repentance itself; but restitution is a normal result of genuine repentance in those cases where it can occur. Not every sin can be put right in this way, however, for various reasons. A man may kill another and later repent of his awful deed. He cannot restore the life, though he might make a token restitution in some other way. A gossip may spread poisonous slander far and wide, but there is not much way of snatching back what was said so as to correct totally the injustice. Some regard the "stolen" mate (i.e., one rightfully belonging to another according to God's laws) as similar to the stolen car and say there can be no solution except to return him (her) to the former companion. Often this is easier said than done. The other companion may have remarried or may not want the mate returned. There may be children involved, with the responsibilities they bring. One can soon get bogged down in the technicalities so that even a Solomon would have trouble advising what is the exact right course to follow. Many marriage problems are just not like the simple theft of an object. Simple restitution cannot always take place.

I have often advised Christian young people that the best solution to these problems is to avoid them in the first place by the wise and prayerful choice of a Christian companion for life and the avoiding of divorce and remarriage problems. This bypasses a lot of grief, heartache, and uncertainty. Let me stress here that anyone who mistakes my answer as being easy on sin or as not showing enough abhorrence of divorce is missing the point. Divorce can never take place without sin on the part of one partner, and most of the time both are involved in sin. And God's anger is against all sin, including this. He hates putting away (Malachi 2:14-16). Even so, people do sin, and Christ offers forgiveness to sinners. We do not write off as unpardonable those who either before or after becoming Christians have broken God's marriage regulations.

A few solid truths on which to build one's belief in these matters will be helpful. I would suggest the following three.

First, there is only one unpardonable sin, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. If one's "solution" to marriage problems leaves the individual in a hopeless situation where no way of forgiveness of his is possible, then something is wrong with that "solution." Remember that this includes not only the actual matter of the marriage but also related responsibilities. What might appear to be the right form of restitution as to the marriage itself may be a gross injustice to children conceived in the marriage. Let us beware that we do not become so mechanical or lacking in spiritual perception as to "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders" unless we are sure God has bound such a burden.

Second, a key phrase with respect to forgiveness of sin is *repentance toward God*. There are some clear cut cases when one can say there has been no repentance because the fruits of repentance

are clearly absent. There are other cases where the issues are more complex and the fact of repentance, or the lack thereof, may be known only to God. That one man does not always follow the same course of action another followed does not necessarily prove that one repented and the other did not. I can easily conceive of marriage problems in which good honest people are genuinely repentant and are sincerely ready to do the right thing before God, but they know of no solution except to begin where they are and go on. As a preacher with enough experience to have a working knowledge of God's word concerning these matters, I am often unable to advise anything else. God will forgive those who in faith genuinely turn from their sin, and He alone may know whether this has happened in some of the knotty problems. This is not intended in any wise to lend comfort to those who are trying to pull a shenanigan on God so as to come off with a good bargain. We are speaking only of those who are genuine before God.

Let me illustrate that the normally simple case of repentance and restitution may become muddied. The man who has stolen a car may have stolen from one who is now deceased and who has no heirs. To whom does he make restitution? You say that he can give the car or its equivalent to a charity, or such like. Yes, but does the fact that he does not do what a mature Christian might do under such a set of circumstances prove he has not repented? Or is it not a matter that the simple solution is no longer possible?

If it be objected that the begin-where-you-are-and-go-on approach allows a person to benefit from sin, we remind you that God has ways of taking the benefit out of it. There is such a thing as divine retribution in the word of God, wherein the guilt of sin is forgiven but the consequences of sin go on. Jacob the deceiver was himself deceived; David the home wrecker saw much trouble in his own family; etc.

Third, as we have already implied, there may be several factors to consider and one may have to choose the best of several courses of action, none of which is totally satisfactory. To dissolve a marriage would sometimes work great harm on children. That divorces are taking place all the time which hurt children is not the issue; whether a divorce ought to take place in the name of Christianity and righteousness which will blast their lives is the issue. Is there not also a righteous sense of honor that a partner might have toward the other, even aside from children—vows made, years spent as husband and wife, support in age, illness and infirmity—that might be a factor? God hates lying and dishonorable conduct just as He hates wrong marriages.

I have heard the proposal of a "like brother and sister" relationship as the solution when family responsibilities might decree a continued family situation. This is totally unrealistic. God expects abstinence of sex relations until remarriage when a partner is taken in death, but the partner is removed from the scene and does

not continue to live under the same roof as a healthy enticement. To suggest that normal, healthy people who have loved each other and who have found mutual satisfaction in their relationship continue to live together without further relationships is to offer no solution worth mentioning to many. Besides, the public image remains the same.

There are still other factors to consider in the matter of accepting divorced people in the church. Some marriages could appear to be wrong marriages because our knowledge is limited. There is a Scriptural reason for divorce (Matthew 5:32), but it is not always the one offered in the legal procedure. Jewish betrothals were in many respects similar to marriages, and I remember that Joseph was called a righteous man (Matthew 1:19) when he considered putting away Mary for what appeared to be unfaithfulness and determined to do so quietly, without a public smear on her name. Except for the restraint of Roman law, he could have caused her to be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). Some people are merciful even in divorce and do not advertise publicly the real reason for the action. So we sometimes ought to reserve judgment simply because we do not know the facts.

Those who divorce and remarry contrary to God's word have sinned. And unless the sin is repented of and put away it will bring condemnation. What I have tried to point out, however, is that the repentance has to pass God's test and not man's. When the issues are complicated and restoring the wrong is impossible or works injustice and evil, repentance is still possible and God is still able to forgive.

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His Right – and Mine

The Son of Man, as Son of God, was Lord
Of all the universe; His legal right –
Equality with God! He was adored
By heaven's hosts. Supreme divine delight
Was His until He looked to earth and there
He saw man, captive of His enemy!
He, therefore, left it all that I might share
Celestial joys with Him eternally.

Of course, my "legal right" is not the same
As His for it is rooted in Man's Sin,
But I must likewise sever all my claim
To rulership, and die, if I would win
The prize: The Risen Life, God's great high call,
And reign with Christ, triumphant over all.

—Helene S. Royster

Joy at Christmas

Martin O. Massinger

Have you ever tried to write a Christmas article which would really do the reader some good? It is not an easy thing to do. I'll tell you why. If the reader is in favorable circumstances with good health, a comfortable living, loved ones near and congenial, it is easy to say "Merry Christmas." But suppose this is not the case. Suppose that smile on Christmas morning is a forced smile. Suppose there is sorrow down in the heart because of a loved one who is gone, perplexity because of some unresolved problem, worry because of poor health or shortage of money, the shock of having lost a job. How do you say Merry Christmas to someone like that?

Christmas is a strange time. Feelings seem to be greatly intensified at that season of the year. Joy is heightened. But so is sorrow. A lonely person feels even more lonely at Christmas time.

I am aware of the fact that if this article is going to do any more than fill up a page of our little paper and clutter up Uncle Sam's mail a little bit more, it is going to have to go beyond circumstances. People who are already happy don't need any more merriment, and people who are sad will only be mocked by our attempt to make them merry.

How do you get beyond these circumstances that cause sorrow, worry, and anguish? How would it be to withdraw into a world of fantasy? Existential philosophy and maybe a few drugs would move us down that road, or maybe we could go down to the liquor store and buy a little "Christmas cheer."

No. This is not the way. Reality must be faced. And the future must be faced. I cannot live in this present moment alone with no future before me. My dog can do this if he has a nice juicy bone to chew on. But I'm not a dog. I'm a human being.

God's answer in His written Word turns us away from this method of fleeing from reality. Here it is in Ephesians 5:18, 19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Did you notice the place where this singing is located? It is "in your heart." And it is "to the Lord." This sounds like the real thing. In fact, the man who wrote this was himself not in a favorable set of circumstances at all. This is the apostle Paul speaking from his absolutely unjust imprisonment in Rome.

You know, singing with your voice is one thing. Singing in your heart is another. Do you wish you could do that? This is not a luxury for a few specially endowed people. Rather, it is in the will of God for all Christians. In fact, He commands us to rejoice in Philippians 4:4, which is a verse in another letter written by Paul during that same unjust imprisonment. Is it not strange that God should command us to rejoice? He wants His family to be a joyful family, not with a silly superficial grin on their faces, but with deep settled joy in their hearts in any set of circumstances,

favorable or unfavorable.

Another thing. This is not "escape," but it is a facing up to facts. Fantasy will not help. Denying of the facts of sin, suffering, and death will not cause these things to go away. No, a believer is not an escape artist; he is a realist, but a realist who makes use of God's resources.

Now how is this done? How is one filled with the Spirit so that it is possible to sing in the heart? This requires a little explaining, but let us keep it simple. In the first place, joy was ruined by sin in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were perfectly happy and in the sweetest, most intimate fellowship with God before sin came. Many centuries later Christ came to remedy this situation. Sin had to be dealt with adequately, effectively. Before He was born, the angel told Mary that His name should be called Jesus "for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). At His birth the angels' word to the shepherds to fear not was related to the fact that a Savior was born to them (Luke 2:10, 11). This One who was born in Bethlehem grew up to die on the cross and to rise again from the dead on the third day. But God's Word tells us that Christ "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). Thus the great problem was remedied by Christ's great redemptive work on the cross. Those who put their trust in Him are instantly forgiven and become children of God.

But there is more to the wonderful story than that. Forty days after His resurrection the Lord Jesus returned to Heaven, and ten days after that He sent the Holy Spirit down to indwell the Church. This indwelling is true not only of the church as a whole but of each one of us as believers. Each one of us who is saved can say that the Holy Spirit is in our very body. Study of such verses as Romans 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 4:16 make this clear. But what is the filling of the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18, to which we referred earlier? As we yield our lives to the Lord, confess our sins, and walk in constant dependence upon the Holy Spirit, He fills us. And this filling is not evidenced by some spectacular outward manifestation but by that gracious fruit described in Galatians 5:22 and 23 as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control. If we are rightly adjusted to the Holy Spirit by a yielded life, a cleansed life, and a dependent life, then He automatically fills us and produces His fruit. So we see how it is that in Ephesians 5:18 and 19 being filled with the Spirit results in singing in the heart. It is clear, too, that sin in any form quenches and grieves the Holy Spirit and keeps Him from causing us to sing inwardly.

So, if you are saved, what do you do now? Be sure you have turned your body over to Him. Be sure you have confessed to Him any sin that you are aware of. Be sure you are depending upon Him and not upon yourself. Get into the Word of God and enjoy it, and have sweet fellowship with God in prayer. Of course there will be problems connected with all of this. Sometimes it will seem well nigh impossible. But God is ready to meet with anyone who

is truly earnest and desirous to be in close fellowship with Him. Sorrow, perplexities, insoluble problems do not stand in the way. In fact they provide an opportunity for Him to manifest His grace to us. Therefore any one in any set of circumstances can really have a joyful Christmas whether he feels in line with the traditional merriment of the occasion or not. So you see, though I may not be able to wish you a Merry Christmas, yet I can certainly wish you a truly joyful Christmas and pray that it may be so.

But what about our poor convulsed world? What about all this talk of peace when there is no peace and no prospect of it? Will there ever be peace on earth?

Yes, indeed, but it will be God's doing, not ours. Earlier in this century there was much preaching about bringing in world peace on the part of religious leaders who were not acquainted with God's revealed prophetic program. To them the world seemed to be getting better. World War I was going to be the war to "make the world safe for democracy," "the war to end wars." That was the talk during the twenties and the thirties. Then along came World War II and blasted all of these unbiblical hopes. It was a terrible shock to those who were preaching world betterment. So neo-orthodoxy and existentialism were born. Unscriptural optimism was followed by unscriptural pessimism. That is what we have today. To those who do not understand Biblical prophecy there seems to be no hope. In fact, to many there seems to be no God. The whole universe is a wild, meaningless confusion.

What does biblical prophecy tell us? It tells us that the Lord is coming soon to take His own to be with Him. If you care to study this, look up such passages as 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Any day the Lord may come and catch up His true Church, all true believers. But 2 Timothy 3 warns us that there are perilous times coming. These precede the rapture of the Church. It could well be that we are in these perilous times now, the forerunner of the tribulation which will take place after the Church is gone. This time of tribulation, seven years in length, will be a time of trouble such as there never has been on the world. This time in turn will be followed by the Lord's coming in glory to destroy His enemies and to set up His world-wide kingdom of peace and righteousness. Many, many passages in the Bible foretell these glad times in the future. So the Christmas songs that we love to sing that tell of the future time of peace and joy are not mere fantasy, they are based on solid biblical teaching. Passages like Isaiah 11; 35; and 60; Ezekiel 40-48; Zechariah 14 and many others tell of this wonderful time. Then indeed there will be "joy to the world." Then earth will "receive her King" and "heaven and nature sing." Then no more will "sin and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground." He will come "to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found." Then indeed there will be "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

In conclusion let me quote a wonderful prophecy of Isaiah that links the first coming when Jesus was born as a babe and the

second coming when He will reign. I refer to Isaiah 9:6 and 7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

—In *Dallas Bible College News*

The Wonder of Christmas

H. N. Rutherford

Each Christmas season earnest Christians are disturbed over some phase of Christmas celebration. This is understandable, for the real meaning of the season is lost to many people covered up as it is by commercialism, frivolity, and in some cases even debauchery. This is not the whole story, however, there are still many who use Christmas in a way that honors God. Let me suggest that instead of letting present trends in the celebration of Christmas disturb us unnecessarily, that we, as Christians, begin to take advantage of some of the wonders of Christmas.

The Birth of Christ filled His mother and the Shepherds and Wise Men from the East with Wonder. To other spiritual souls like Simeon and Anna, the birth of Christ Jesus was the most wonderful event in the history of the Jews (Lk. 3:18, 20, 25-38). The callous, godless Herod determined he would destroy the babe whom he regarded as a rival to his throne. Over the cradle already hung the shadow of the cross. The birth of Jesus Christ is a thing of never-ceasing wonder to those who love and trust Him. But wonder of wonders, the eternal Son of God, who became incarnate in the form of a babe, was born of a virgin in a lowly cattle shed, because no room could be found for Mary in the inn. When He came into the world, He who made the world and could say, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10), chose to be born and cradled in a manger.

It is a cause of ceaseless wonder that He who was God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16) should be born under such strange circumstances. There cradled in a manger:

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.

May the Lord bless this Christmas meditation to you all and may we all share in the rich blessings manifested to us through the incarnation of the only and uniquely "begotten Son of God."



Viewing The News

EDUCATIONAL TAKEOVER? A reader recently sent me a pamphlet put out by the "Kentucky Vocational Education Association" which contained a paragraph that fairly well expresses an aim of many people in the educational field. It stated that the association was recommending that the general assembly of Kentucky pass "Legislation, giving the State Department of Education the authority to approve all educational programs in Kentucky. It then added, "The education of its people is the constitutional right of the state, therefore, the state has the responsibility of protecting its people from profit oriented educational operations that offer the public opportunities of fast learning, fast profits, and low costs." Later it says that the staff members of the State Department of Education "have been designated the protectors of the educational system in this state and should have the authority that goes with this responsibility." That really is putting mildly what many in the state and national educational associations are working for—the complete control of the education and training of "competition" by church and private schools. There are some who would even go so far as to forbid by law the parents to give moral or intellectual training to their own children, even if this has to be done by separating the children from the parents. Fortunately this extreme group has little influence today, but this country is moving in that direction.

"**BROADCAST HIGHLIGHTS,**" a supplement to the American Security Council Report for September 25, 1972, contained a paragraph that shows how far the United Nations is controlled by the socialist countries (including communists, of course): "The United Nations, bowing to pres-

sure from Communist China, has agreed to drop any mention of Taiwan from its publications and documents, including future editions of the UN's statistical yearbook, which in the past has contained information on Taiwan's population, trade, industry, and other data. Until now, the yearbook has been regarded as the most authoritative source of international statistics. The decision to give in to the Communist Chinese demands was made by Constantin Stavropoulos, undersecretary general for legal affairs at the U. N. The Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan have announced that they will continue to make accurate statistical information available to anyone. The Red Chinese have given no indication whether they will supply true data for the UN yearbook."

AT LAST someone besides a conservative political group has published a valuable article on the way our government is strangling our free trade through the hundreds of regulatory bureaus and congressional laws. Industry Week, a business publication, has written an article entitled "Regulation to Oblivion," published in the July 10, 1972, issue of the magazine and available in reprint at 25 cents each, with a minimum order of \$1. It is worth reading and I cannot reprint even its main points in this short column. Address orders to: Reprint Dept., Industry Week, Penton Plaza, 1111 Chester Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44114 if you want to see the "other side" of his question.

BATTLE LINE, a publication of the American Conservative Union, had a review of a new book with startling information in its issue of September, 1972. The book is entitled *Hazardous to Your Health*, by Marvin H. Edwards, editor of *Private Practice* magazine, and is published by Arlington House at \$9.95. It "deflates

the advocates of socialized medicine" according to the review. In answer to those who are lamenting that we have too few doctors under our present system the author says: "The 344,000 physicians now in practice average out to one for every 630 people—the highest such ratio of any major nation. Since 1965, about 50,000 additional doctors have arrived on the scene, a rise of about 71percent which is three times greater than our total population growth in the same period of time."

THOSE WHO cry out about supposed (and sometimes real) inequities in this country still continue to keep silence about the terrible injustices of communist countries. Recently, for example, the communist Angela Davis said, "I am sure the people who struggled for me across this country and around the world are aware that my acquittal is a symbol that we are going to free all political prisoners and the oppressed." Let us ignore that she was on trial not for being a communist but for alleged help with murder, but also please go through her speeches and writings and look vainly for support for the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners (which appealed to her for help) and for support of a Prague organization known as Citizens' Freedom Movement (which requested aid in publicizing the series of trials of Czech dissidents). It reminds me of those who cry for months about the supposed murder of 23 people in My Lai who were suspected of being enemies and ignore the thousands in Hue murdered by the North Vietnamese.

DID YOU KNOW that the October 15, 1972, issue of the National Laymen's Digest said, "Despite the fact that some 60 have drowned during the past year and their bodies have washed up on the shores of Hong Kong, some 13,500 have reached Hong Kong safely (from Red China) since the beginning of 1972, the largest number to escape across the border since 1962." The Digest then added, "It has been said that all is peace and light behind the Iron and Bam-

boo Curtains. If so, we don't find any statistics showing people using their feet and hands to rush across the borders from free countries to the Communist sanctuaries, whether by walking, running, swimming, crawling or flying!"

DO YOU THINK that there are practically no communists in this country? If so, how can you explain that Patricia Bonner-Lyons, avowed member of the Young Workers Liberation League, youth division of the Communist Party, received 28,000 votes in a Boston primary campaign? . . . or that the Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyite communist group collected 51,000 signatures to get the party on the ballot in Florida, 24,000 more names than needed?—all collected in less than 3 weeks! . . . or that Socialist Workers Party representatives collected more than 45,000 signatures in New York, during the first week of the drive to get their party on the ballot? . . . or that a negro communist running on the Communist Party ticket in Los Angeles got 51,000 votes, according to the Los Angeles Free Press of June 16? . . . etc., ad infinitum.

PARDON ME if the election seems to have triggered me into a review of largely political news this month. The apostasy also continues, but little news has crossed my desk this past month concerning it. The state of our country was well shown in that there were five parties on the ballot in Kentucky working for various grades of socialism and only one that openly stood up for our free enterprise and our republican (not political party but form of government) background. That one party had an almost complete news blackout both here and over the country. Let us continue to pray for "all that are in high places" and to set an example of subjection to the "higher powers," but let us do it as God's free men looking forward to the consummation of our citizenship in heaven. Keep the news and your questions coming to

Ernest E. Lyon
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"The footprint of the savage in the sand is sufficient to prove the presence of man to the atheist who will not recognize God though His hand is impressed on the entire universe." —Hugh Miller

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

SISTER MARGARET REESE CALLED HOME

Word has just been received of the passing of Sister Margaret Reese (Mrs. Alva Reese). The funeral was at Mountain Home, Arkansas, on November 19, 1972. The Alva Reeses were missionaries in Africa for 27 years. They have now been back in the States for 16 years, residing in the area of Odessa, Missouri.

Mabel Bailey,

Bulawayo, Rhodesia,

October 15.

We are thankful to have the new van for Leonard to use in the village work. He, Bro. Velaphi who works with us and Bro. Nymbesi went on an eight-day trip to visit four congregations in the Tuli and Bietbridge areas. They had a good trip over some very poor roads or tracks and in a very remote area. Leonard saw only one white person all week, a policeman with an African policeman who went to investigate a death in the same area. We feel sure the Lord will provide for the payments on the van. It takes a small bed in the back and he is quite comfortable. He can put in his food supplies, a two-burner stove (hot plate) and the tent for his helpers and their bedding, etc.

Today Leonard and I and the boys and Bro. Velaphi visited a congregation about 40 miles from here. We enjoyed meeting the Christians there. Bro. Velaphi had visited the place before, so he was able to direct us.

Jack F. Chrissop,

Cape Province, So. Africa,

October 20.

Here at Steenberg His word goes forth. Cottage meetings are increasing, and souls are being added to His church. This week the Lord added another to His church at Steenberg, eight over the past few weeks. At service the other Lord's day I counted thirty adults plus children, and the little ones are now so many that Sister Terry has to take them next door for their service. Not so very long ago our numbers at Steenberg varied between eight and twelve, and daily we praise His name for the added numbers. For years we have met in the home of Brother Terry, but now the house is becoming overcrowded and our need for a meeting place of our own is now urgent. Our Lord knows this, and having done all that we can, we pray that in His time and way He will fulfill our need. To help in our cottage meetings, the Plumstead congregation is contemplating presenting us with a projector and slides. This will be of great service to Bro. Terry who now undertakes the greater part of this work. Our young men—we have three now—are all

members of Bro. Steyn's preacher training class. Soon now they will take their part in preaching the Word. Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice!

Addie Brown,

Salisbury, Rhodesia,

October 12.

We, too, were grieved over Bro. Garrett's passing. The memorial service for him was held here a week ago Sunday afternoon. Many gathered to pay tribute to his life and work in Rhodesia. There were nine speakers—many good things were said, and several Scriptures suited to him and his life were read. One was Psalm 15. His son, Robert, was one of the speakers. It was a very good service and lasted nearly three hours.

Sister Garrett wrote that she wanted to come back to Africa. She feels she wants to come *home*, I'm sure. Personally I feel she will be happier over here, as well as being so helpful at Arcadia. I hope she can come. I am keeping some of her geraniums for her. She really has a "green thumb" as we say—garden and flowers flourish wherever she lives! She is a sweet Christian. I am sure she feels the loss of her companion very much.

Thomas W. Hartle,

Cape Province, So. Africa,

October 16.

During my wonderful vacation, which as you would have noted, was one of a working holiday, the men within the congregation did very well during my absence. Cottage meetings, film-strip classes and general progress of the work tells us to have no fear that the work will go on, with men of commendation within the Woodstock congregation.

Our regular attendances remain commendable, even the Bible study, with prospective candidates ready to be baptized in the near future. As a matter of fact I visited with the husband (his wife is a member) very keenly interested in baptism. He has been taught by way of film strip lessons, attends our services regularly with his wife. I know this, that when he does decide, he will make an aged mother very happy to know and see her son obey the gospel. Well, there is now much for me to do now that I am back home; bulletins to print, cottage meetings to organize, filmstrip classes to meet, visitation to new contacts of families interested in knowing more about Christ.

With regards to the car funds, I am fully assured that the Lord will see to it in His own time and manner, to grant the needed amount to obtain the car, through which we can rejoice together.

It is impossible for God to forsake those who put their trust in Him. He can just as soon forsake His own word; and what is more, He can just as soon forsake His own nature. —Fenelon

"What Hath God Wrought!"

C. V. Wilson

The Portland Christian School ended its 48th year in June, 1972, with an operating deficit of \$10,500. In order to pay our faithful teachers for each of the forty weeks of school, we had been compelled to borrow that amount, over the year. At year's end, PCS alumni and other friends of Christian education were alerted to this need and the debt was paid off over the summer by voluntary gifts—but that meant "no summer pay" for our 23 teachers.

In August, the PCS Board of Directors met to plan for the forthcoming 1972-73 year. In view of the deficit aforesaid, worldly prudence would have dictated a slashing of the payroll. "Let's cut our coat according to our cloth." Maybe we ought to dismiss a teacher or so. Let's cut back expenses sharply—we must avoid another deficit!

Instead, the directors took just the opposite tack! After earnest prayer and calling upon the God of Philippians 4:19, the PCS directors decided not to walk by sight but by faith. We voted unanimously not only to increase the number of teachers (several new courses were insisted upon by the State Board), but to increase the teacher pay rate by over 12%! And as of this writing (some ten weeks into the new term) God has provided! Truly, "His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear!"

It is our firm belief that the wonderful answers to prayer—about to be recounted—are all because of His faithfulness to those who trust Him and His promises.

II.

It is customary in educational circles to poll each teacher about February to learn whether he or she intends to return in the ensuing fall for continuing service. Your scribe, as a director of PCS, duly interviewed each Portland Christian School teacher in February, 1972, and was assured that each one—as of then—purposed to return in September.

However, our 5th grade teacher called Brother Mullins just about ten days before school opened and stated that approaching motherhood would preclude her teaching the full year. The necessity of a substitute loomed up for after Christmas.

What to do?!? At that stage of the game, suitable qualified teachers had already been booked long ago. Yet Portland Christian had to have a 5th grade teacher—and quickly! Several fine Christian people volunteered their services as "pinch-hitters," but none was professionally qualified. Not one possessed the required academic degrees nor the practice teaching required.

On your knees, again, directors—to Him Who promised, “My God shall supply every need of yours” (not just the financial needs—though they are important—but personnel-wise as well). One evening as he was leaving the Fellowship meeting at the Sellersburg Church of Christ, our principal, brother Mullins stopped to chat with an old friend from Louisiana, “Pie” Istre (Mrs. J. R.) Satterfield. The following dialog ensued:

Mullins: What are you doing these days, Pie?

----*Pie:* I’m just completing my practice teaching for a teacher’s certificate.

Mullins: Izzat so? When can you start teaching?

Pie: Right after Christmas, if I can find an opening then.

Mullins (hopefully): What grade have you been preparing yourself to teach, Pie?

Pie: The fifth grade. I love it!

Mullins: Would you consider teaching 5th grade at Portland Christian School right after Christmas?

Pie: Would I? (And the both could have chorused, “Thank the Lord!”)

“Coincidence,” the world would sniff, turning away. “God’s hand manifesting His continual faithfulness,” we Christians reply. Can you beat that? Can you even “tie it?”

III.

“You’ll have to put a new steam table plus all the fixin’s in your school cafeteria if you want to keep your “A” Sanitation Rating, the health authorities told us last spring. (Easier said than done!)

Fully equipped steam tables come high—right around \$5,000, and we at Portland were operating on a deficit basis at that time! But God’s Word enjoins, “Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake!” And so two of our teachers set out on a prayer-guided search. Discouraging work, that. . . prices of new equipment were “high as a cat’s back” and threatening increases. Finally the Lord directed them to a dealer who had one complete steam table assembly that exactly suited our needs—our available space—and our pocketbook! For \$900 Portland Christian secured a completely reconditioned polished up steam table plus a full line of accessories. The health authorities were not only satisfied but delighted. We are all rejoicing each day as we use it, not only for PCS children but also for special meals like the Fellowship Week lunches, congregational get-togethers, etc. Just another incident illustrating God’s enabling to those who wait upon Him Who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

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During several past state inspections of this Lord’s school, Kentucky authorities (under whose charge we operate) have become increasingly insistent that we add a Department of Industrial Arts. This would offer high school boys a choice of vocational/practical

courses to parallel the Home Economics department where high school girls are taught cooking and sewing. But PCS has had neither classroom space nor teacher available. True, several years ago our school inherited a shop full of various wood- and metal-working machinery; this had been stored in brother Mullins' basement until needed.

About a year ago came a letter from a young Indiana State University man, Jerry Overman, son of the Orell Overmans of Switz City, Indiana. "I am to graduate in June, 1972, from State here," he wrote, "and would love to teach at Portland Christian. (Ed.: His two sisters, Jean (Mrs. Dale McLean) and Joyce have both taught here; Joyce has first grade now.) Would you by any chance need a teacher of Industrial Arts for next fall?" The Lord's timing is flawless! And so the Lord has provided the machinery and the teacher to enable us to comply with the government directive. now all we needed was classroom space.

As we looked around for such space, the most logical location seemed right behind our All-Purpose Building, where we could utilize a common wall and tap onto already-existing electrical, gas, and water supplies. In a series of voluntary Saturday work-parties, friends of Portland Christian and school families have furnished their men-folk (some older, some as young as 12-14 years of age) to labor long, hard, hot hours on the new Industrial Arts Building. First we had to jack up a little white frame cottage and roll it off the site selected. Then the plans were completed for a building to be 51' x 56' x 12', to be made of concrete blocks. 'Way up in northern Indiana a master mason who is also a Christian, heard of the project and volunteered his skilled services—absolutely without charge—to supervise and erect the walls! The Lord enabled us to purchase concrete blocking well below prevailing market prices, the foundation was dug and poured, and the building was "on the way." Nehemiah expressed it well, "So we built the wall, for the people (of God) had a mind to work!"

Almost every Saturday this fall a number of Christian men have volunteered their services, sometimes only 5 or 6, several times as many as 15 to 18. The school provided the lunches and drinks, the ladies came with iced tea on hot days and the Lord gave good Christian fellowship all the time. As it now stands, the walls are complete, the roof is on, the heaters (furnished at a "give-away" price by a brother) are ready for installation and the floor is the only major component yet lacking.

"And the money for all this?" you inquire. The PCHS Alumni Association held a song rally recently at which an offering for this building was received. Many gifts poured into the treasury. A check for \$2,000 plus cash gifts totalling \$650 beside were accepted. As a result of all these gifts and all the labor donated in love, it looks as though PCS will have its \$21,000 Industrial Arts Building (the lowest estimate we received) for an investment of about \$8,000

cash. We hope to dedicate this newest gift from God shortly. We recall that the psalmist wrote, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God and I will declare what He hath done for my soul!" "Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so!"—and it is because of this that these notes are being offered for your edification.

V.

It hasn't been so very long ago that finding teachers qualified both academically and spiritually for the PCS faculty was a matter of considerable difficulty. Not that it's easy now, (though we have learned to depend more on the Lord!), but your scribe is happy to report that several young people—graduates of PCHS—are "pointing" toward teaching positions at their alma mater. They have in mind certain "slots" on the staff, should the need arise. We are looking to the Lord to guide them—and us—together, if it be His will.

VI.

Maybe this squib doesn't belong here, but it's too good to "die a-borning." As I had coffee with one of our basketball coaches this morning, he said, "Did you hear what the basketball coach of Taylorsville High School told me after they beat us the other night?" "No," I confessed. "His team had voluntarily told him that that Portland team was made up of the finest gentlemen they'd ever played against!" (Gives you some little idea what kind of school we're trying to maintain).

VII.

As we go to press, plans are already under way for celebration of our Golden Anniversary next school year. 1973-74 will mark our 50th year and the committee for the celebration of that momentous event is deep in plans therefor.

There will probably be a series of events and celebrations of different sorts spaced out over the entire school year. The plan is very definitely, though, *not* to be pointing to men ("Look what *we* have done in 50 years") but to give God the glory and thanksgiving, where it all rightfully belongs. To this end the motto verse for our Golden Anniversary is Numbers 23:23:

"What hath God wrought!"

Life is Short— "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Death is Sure— "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Sin the Curse— "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Christ the Cure— "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Precious Reprints

Christianity vs. Religion

Frank M. Mullins, Sr. — 1943

Christianity and religion are as different as life and death, or as daylight and darkness. The Indian mother who casts her babe into the river to the crocodiles to appease the wrath of "the god of the rivers" is very religious—but most assuredly, this is not Christianity.

When Paul entered Athens (Acts 17), he found the Athenians were "very religious," but they knew nothing of Christianity or of the living God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Christianity is one thing and religion another—they come from two entirely different sources. Someone drew the following vivid contrast: "Religion is what you do for God; Christianity is what God does for you. Religion is you giving your life for your God; Christianity is God giving His life for you. Religion is you living your life for your God; Christianity is God living in you. Religion is your best; Christianity is God's best. Religion is what you do; Christianity is what Christ did for you on the cross and now does for you as He lives for you, in you, and through you."

Here is set forth the fundamental difference between religion and Christianity. "Religion is what you do;" it originates from the inherent urge in man to worship something. That "something" may be anything from the creeping things of earth and the vilest imaginations of the heart to the highest principles and benevolences of which man is capable. It might find its expression in worship of beauty, or power, or money, or worldly success or pleasure. It might fashion its god out of wood, or stone, or silver, or gold, and bow down before the creation of its own hands. Or man might bow at the shrine of his own image and call it god, or even have his shrine to "an unknown God" and be "very religious," as Paul found at Athens. Such is religion, and the world is saturated with it.

Christianity does not originate with man. It is not a philosophy of life devised or discovered by man. Neither does it find its origin in what man does, nor in what his hands fashion. Christianity finds its origin in only one person. That person is Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, "who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross."

THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

The fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, the purpose of His mission to the earth to die for our sins, the fact of His resurrection and continued ministry at God's right hand as our High Priest, and His work now in the heart of man gives to

the world Christianity. Someone stated this truth in these words: "The potentialities of the Christian life are described in the Bible in view of what Christ has done for us by His life, His death, and His resurrection. It is a great, decisive day in any man's life when he decides no longer to be merely religious, but to be definitely Christian. It costs little to be religious, there is no cross in it."

It is because the death of the Son of God upon the cross is the heart of Christianity that the symbol of the cross has become the symbol of Christianity. But the displaying of an outward symbol does not guarantee that Christianity is behind that symbol. It could be used to represent just another religion based upon some of the principles taught by Christ and some of the rituals borrowed from the Bible. Such a religion falls as far short of being Christianity as any religion that is entirely foreign to the Bible. Christianity is not a "new religion" with new ceremonies—in contrast to obsolete forms of worship, or even in contrast to corrupt forms of worship. Christianity is not a set of rules and regulations subscribed to. It is not even righteous principles incorporated in one's life.

Christianity is the outflowing of an abundant life—the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, who died on the cross to atone for our sins but who is now risen from the dead, alive forevermore, and enthroned at the right hand of the Father on high.

Share your ideas! Michael Sanders introduces a new idea-exchange feature. Here is a place where you can give and receive help on practical problems.

Problems, Possibilities, and Pointers

"Two heads *are* better than one!" How many times have you got a good idea from another person? Or, have you ever learned the solution to your particular problem after sharing it with someone else who has been there? It happens every day.

The purpose of this column is to offer an exchange of practical ideas. The material in this column will not be doctrinal per se. However, doctrinal considerations may well channel or limit some of our thoughts. Again, the material is not to be of a personal nature. This is not a forum for counseling personal problems. The column is to be of a *practical, congregational* nature. Okay?

Before introducing you to the format, let's emphasize the point that *you* are the resource for this column. The profit of this article will depend on the "heads" that we put together.

Now, here is the format:

I. PROBLEMS

Each month you will introduce a practical problem that you are having or have had at your congregation. Please be careful and describe it fully that we will all understand. These problems may

be ones that you have solved. You could then in turn help us in the next division of the format.

II. POSSIBILITIES

As we receive the *Word and Work* monthly we will read over the problem that you have described and then after thought send in a possible solution. It may be that many of the readers have experienced the same problem and many solutions or *possibilities* will come in. We will put them all together for you to consider and choose.

III. POINTERS

It may be that while you are thinking about the particular problem of the month, other good ideas will come to mind. We want them, too! They may not be related at all. Fine! This third division will be for assorted ideas or pointers. I personally have a file labeled *ideas*. Do you? How about sending in a couple each month?

It will take us a couple of months to get rolling. Obviously, there will be a month delay.

* * * *

I. PROBLEMS

This particular problem is one that is common. "We don't get started on time in our worship services!" "What can be done to get started promptly?" "There have been times when we began as much as 15 minutes late."

II. POSSIBILITIES

This is a problem that many of the churches have been able to overcome. The answers may appear obvious and then again not so obvious. How has your congregation been able to overcome starting services late? Share your *possibilities*.

III. POINTERS

A. If absenteeism is hampering your primary, junior, or intermediate class, you may try this one! At the end of each Bible class period allow the class to draw names. The names may be kept in secret. On the following Sunday morning at an appointed time, each class member is to phone the name he drew and be sure they are preparing to be present for class.

B. A similar idea which creates motivation for studying the class lesson involves the members phoning their names earlier in the week to remind them to prepare their lessons. Such an idea may be practical to help form the habit of Bible study in the homes. Friendships will also be strengthened.

That is it! Now that you see how it will work, let's get to work! Please send all correspondence to:

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PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

The Coming World Church

Bill McRae

Faith being denied on every hand is one of the signs that the apostasy is upon us. The capitulation to comparative religions is another indication that we are living in the apostasy.

Dr. D. B. Steiner recently wrote, "One religion is as good as another, we might even find more of Christ in Hinduism and Buddhism than in Christianity." Now that is typical of the comparative religion approach.

I sat on a panel in a university in Dallas not too long ago with four other men, most of whom I suspect were liberals who did not revere the scriptures or Jesus Christ. The man who was sitting beside me said on one occasion: "If you ever hear a man stand behind the pulpit and say, 'This is the truth,' then you will know that that man has not begun to understand Christianity."

That is the comparative religion approach and we have capitulated to that. It is one of the signs that the apostasy is upon us. The invasion of the secular and the carnal into the spiritual is another sign that the apostasy is upon us.

I read recently that the cast of that filthy musical called Hair sang the new musical mass at the Episcopal Cathedral in New York. The mass—supposedly celebrating the death of our Lord Jesus—on this occasion was to mark the third anniversary of that musical Hair and also to celebrate Buddha's birthday and Mother's Day. The mass was celebrated by an Episcopal priest; a Roman Catholic priest read the epistle. A Unitarian political appointee read an address and the antiwar message was read by Dr. Harvey Cox, the apostate Baptist minister from Harvard Divinity School.

Here is the point—Reporters and photographers were so thick that they had to be pushed away from the communion rail at the time for communion. It is this type of thing, the invasion of the carnal and secular into the spiritual that is an indication that the apostasy is upon us.

There are others. There is the rise of the occult, and we see it on every hand. What shall one say about the rise of astrology in America? And this in a professing Christian country. It has swept people off their feet so that today there are untold millions that dab-

ble in astrology. There are forty million doing this; ten million of them will not make an important decision without consulting the stars. Lives are planned by the planets today.

In McCall's magazine I read that for many of today's young people astrology has taken the place of psychology as the personality decoder of our generation. Even up in Canada it has happened. McClain's magazine writes that Canadians are going in for what is probably the biggest revival of astrology since the fall of Babylon. No one even looks at you out of the corner of his eye if you say that you were born under this or that sign.

The Sunday Times of Britain reports that two-thirds of the adult population of Britain read their horoscopes and seven million of them do it seriously.

The rise of the occult is another indication of the apostasy that is upon us. And besides the astrology one could speak of clairvoyance, ESP, black magic, telepathy, palm reading and many other evidences. It's part of Babylon. That is the point, friends, it is Babylon. It is Babel back in Genesis 11, and what we are seeing is going to reach its full bloom during the tribulation period. It is the second feature of the professing church in the tribulation period and we are moving dangerously close to that characteristic.

But there is still a third. The third feature of Babylon in Revelation 17 is its political activism. One of the things that impresses a person reading Revelation 17 is the relationship between the woman and the beast. The beast is the leader of the revived Roman Empire, the leader of the European Confederacy of ten nations, and I want you to notice the relationship between this woman and the beast.

In verse 3, we read, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast." She is dominating the beast. If the imagery means anything to us then it speaks to us of her dominion over the political powers that shall prevail in the world at that time.

Again I think you hear this presented to us in verse 1, where you read that she sits upon many waters, she is in a position of great political influence. In verse 18 we are told specifically that she reigns over the kings of the earth.

One thing that we can certainly expect as we approach the tribulation period is that the professing church will become more influential, more active in national and international politics. And that is precisely what is taking place in our very day and age. The painfully slow movement toward a one-world church—because of inability

to agree on a doctrinal foundation—has led the leaders of this movement to move in another direction, the direction of missions. Now the emphasis in the ecumenical movement is not what doctrine can we agree on and how we can establish a common doctrinal foundation, but rather is; what can we do together?

The Ecumenical Review, the spokesman for the ecumenical movement, in an article recently reported on this dialogue between the World Council of Churches, the Hindus, Moslems, and Buddhists, and this is what it wrote: "The World Council of Churches may have to move away from its position of continuous isolation to one of more positive cooperation with men of other faiths in matters of mutual concern such as, justice, peace, human rights, education, and development and the future of man."

And that is exactly what is happening. We are seeing the church become a political force. That is why Paul Harvey, the noted commentator, some time ago mentioned that thousands of Presbyterians have left the Presbyterian Church USA because of their ten thousand dollar donation to Angela Davis' defense and because of the twenty-five thousand dollars that they gave to the Black Panther defense in New York.

In September 1971 the World Council of Churches had its annual meeting in Bulgaria and allocated two hundred thousand dollars to antiracist groups around the world. Twenty-four organizations were given money; nine of them were liberation fronts in Africa, one of them the Malcolm X University in North Carolina. This is a typical representation of what was done with that two hundred thousand dollars. A rather interesting twist came when the revolutionary government of Angola in exile turned down its offer of \$7500 saying it was a trap and that the World Council of Churches had become political. That is very significant.

The Church Center in the United Nations is heavily staffed and heavily financed. Every major denomination in the U. S. has an office in Washington that is involved in the church lobby.

The *U. S. News and World Report* just about a month ago made this comment, "Showdown in Congress on prayer in schools reveals that spokesmen for religious groups are becoming an important part of the Washington scene. Heeding the pleas of the leaders of denominations and religious groups, Congress rejected the proposed Constitutional amendment to put prayer back into the schools. The outcome was hailed as the greatest victory for the activist churchmen in Washington since they helped push through the civil rights bill in 1964."

Now the point is not that the amendment was a good amendment. I am not sure that it was, I think that it is a good thing

perhaps that the amendment to put prayer back into the schools was defeated. It was not a good amendment in the opinion of many people today. The point is that it was defeated as the result of the influence of denominational men who are involved in the church lobby. And the influence of these men in politics is becoming increasingly great. It is in this year that the churchmen have made their marches to Hanoi and Paris.

The Canadian Council of Churches just this past year has introduced a new ministry, a ministry that is devoted to helping the men of the United States Armed Forces who are draft dodgers and who are escaping from the army. Their chaplain is a man from the University of Wisconsin. It is supported jointly by the National Council of Churches with \$70,000 budgeted every year for it from the World Council of Churches. That is the political activism of the apostate Church of Christendom today.

A recent article in an influential German magazine summed up the new religious move by documenting the emergence of a revolutionary ideology which, it says, and I quote, "Threatens to turn the Church into a political party." That is a third great feature of Babylon in Revelation 17.

For the first three and a half years of the tribulation period the apostate universal church shall control the political arm, and at the end of that three and a half years the political arm shall overthrow the apostate church and establish at that point the worship of the Anti-Christ and the worship of the Beast.

But in the tribulation period one thing is certain—there shall be a politically active apostate church that shall prevail and shall encompass the earth.

We are moving dangerously close toward that very situation. As I read Chapter 17 of Revelation, and as I superimpose it upon the newspapers and magazines that I read, I am impressed with the fact that we are moving very close toward the conditions that shall exist in the tribulation period when there shall be one church, universally united, apostate absolutely to its very core, and controlling the politics of the earth. We are moving dangerously close toward that.

If I take, then, the condition of the professing Church today, and I add to it the other signs that I can find elsewhere in the scriptures, I conclude that the better than twenty signs given to us by the prophets, our Lord, and the Apostles are in a virtual state of fulfillment today.

What are the practical effects of these facts in a Christian's life? What difference will they make in the way he lives? These questions will be answered in the conclusion of this article next month.



What Does the Bible Mean?

Alex V. Wilson

Problems and Principles of Interpretation

Some years ago it became stylish for women to wear their hair in a top-knot, piled on top of their head. A certain preacher detested the new style and determined to denounce it from the pulpit. So one Sunday he preached a scorching sermon based on the text, "Top-knot, go down!" His hearers were overawed by the message, and some of the women decided that their top-knots would indeed go down. However, after the meeting one man asked, "Preacher, I've never heard that verse before; where is it found?" "Matthew 24:17," came the reply. On reaching home the man read the text for himself: "Let him who is on the housetop *not* go down to take what is in his house"!!!

The story is only fiction, of course, but its point is true: You can prove almost *anything* from the Bible if you try hard enough. Using the same Bible, various people arrive at entirely different conclusions. Amid the confusion, many people say, "How can we know whose interpretation is right? You say the Bible teaches one thing, *he* says it teaches another thing, and *they* contradict each of you. Yet you all quote the Bible! How can I understand the Bible? What does it really mean?"

We should sympathize with people who feel that way. The problem is not an easy one. All kinds of ideas claim to be supported by proof-texts from Scripture. Let's notice some examples: 1) A tract asserts that you will be sinning if you use a Christmas tree this December. Why? Because God says, "Learn not the way of the nations. . . for the customs of the peoples are false. A tree from the forest is cut down. . . Men deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move" (Jeremiah 10:2-4). 2) The Mormons use 1 Corinthians 15:29 ("baptized for the dead") to build an elaborate doctrine of baptism-by-proxy for dead people who were not converted during their lifetime. 3) One prophecy teacher believes that the red horse of Revelation 6 stands for Communism—since red is the Marxists' color—and the white horse stands for the U. S.—since its president lives in the White House! 4) Jehovah's Witnesses claim it is sin to have blood transfusions, since God says, "I will set my face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:10-12). 5)

Some people believe science proves the Bible to be false, for Joshua told the sun to stand still (i.e., quit going around the earth) but Copernicus proved the sun doesn't go around the earth, but vice versa. 6) The Iglesia ni Cristo, a Philippine cult, insists that Isa. 46:10,11 predicts the ministry of its founder, Felix Manalo, for God says "I will accomplish all my purpose, calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country"—and the Philippines is in the *Far East!*

Wisdom is needed in *applying* the Bible, as well as in *interpreting* it. In interpretation we ask, "What does this passage *mean?*" In application we ask, "What does it mean *to me?* What shall I *do* about this truth?" Here too problems may arise, especially in the matter of personal guidance.

A guy was trying to find God's will, so he opened his Bible at random, put his finger down and read, "Judas went out and hanged himself." That didn't help him too much, so he tried again, and read, "Go thou and do likewise." That shook him terribly, so he tried one more time: "And what thou doest, do quickly." —Paul Little, *Affirm the Will of God*

That case never really happened, of course, but here is one that did: A Christian young lady in Scotland could not make up her mind whether to attend Bible college at Lebanon or Glasgow. Then she read in 1 Kings 5 that Solomon obtained cedar trees for the temple from Lebanon—therefore the Lord must want her to attend Lebanon Bible College. The school in Glasgow never had a chance, for Scripture never mentions its name.

Having a "word from the Lord" is both justifiable and helpful if the word is first put into its original context and the true meaning grasped. For example, a fellow should not break off his engagement because he suddenly has a "word" from Jeremiah 16:2 ("You shall not take a wife") though this is known nearly to have happened. The perplexed inquirer should first try to discover if his circumstances are similar to those of Jeremiah's, that is, to put the verse into its context. (He should, incidentally, try to discover a few other things as well.) —John Balchin, "An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics" (a helpful essay to which this article is heavily indebted—A.W.)

Principles of Interpretation

There are certain principles of interpretation which can help us discover the meaning of the Bible. This does not mean that the time will ever come in this life when all of us will agree about everything. Even the apostle Peter said that Paul's writings contained "some things hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:15, 16). But we can at least minimize the problems. Also, we do not mean to imply that if we use these principles we do not need prayer or the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul presents the proper balance: "Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything" (2 Timothy 2:7). We must prayerfully depend on the Lord for enlightenment; but we must also think and study with diligence (2 Timothy 2:15).

Therefore let us notice some principles of interpretation, most of which are self-evident. We shall also see some specific examples of the principles.

1. *Interpret the Bible according to the PURPOSE of each passage.* Ask yourself, Why did the author write this? What need was he trying to meet? This will help, e.g., to eliminate the seeming contradiction between Paul and James regarding faith and works.

Another example: The parable of the ten virgins does not prove that $\frac{1}{2}$ of humanity will be saved and $\frac{1}{2}$ will be lost. That was not Christ's purpose in telling it. He Himself reveals its main purpose at the conclusion: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:13).

2. *Interpret according to the CONTEXT of the passage.* Jeremiah 10:5, for instance, shows that verses 1-4 are a denunciation of idols, not Christmas trees! And Isaiah 44:24-28 and 45:1ff show that chapter 46:10,11 refers to Cyrus of Persia, not Manalo of the Philippines!

In John 15:2 Jesus said, "Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit." What kind of fruit-bearing is referred to in this passage? Does it mean soul-winning, or godly character? Does "fruit" mean converts, or good works? The *immediate* context mentions keeping God's commands (v. 10) and loving one another (12ff). And from the context of *the entire Bible*, we see that fruit almost always represents holy character (Isaiah 5:1-7; Galatians 5:22,23; Colossians 1:10). For another example, Philippians 2:12 ("Work out your own salvation") and 2:13 ("for God is at work in you") belong together. To stress either part of the sentence while omitting the other is to put asunder what God has joined together.

3. *Interpret OBSCURE passages in the light of CLEAR passages.* Someone expressed it this way: "Let not that which is obscure rob you of that which is clear." For example, several cults teach "soul-sleep"—that there is no consciousness between death and the resurrection. They base this belief on these statements: "The dead know nothing." "His breath departs . . . on that very day his thoughts perish" (Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 146:4, KJV). Yet Paul wrote, "We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). This passage plus Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 23:42-43; and Acts 7:59 clearly refute soul-sleep. A closer look at Ecclesiastes 9:5 and Psalm 146 *in context* shows there is no contradiction; but if there seemed to be one, the preference should be given to the clearer passages.

Another example of stressing an unclear verse and neglecting obvious ones is the Mormons' practice of baptism for the dead. They base this on 1 Corinthians 15:29, an obscure verse for which at least thirty different interpretations have been suggested! Their own interpretation offers salvation to those who lived and died unconverted. But this goes against many passages: Hebrews 5:9; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:11-15; etc.

4. *Interpret according to the UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL READERS OR HEARERS of the passage.* For example,

in studying the Sermon on the Mount, consider what Christ's audience would have understood His words to mean. In interpreting the book of Revelation, ask, "The disciples in the seven churches to whom this book was first sent—what would *they* have thought John meant by this statement or this symbol?" Of course it is true that this principle will produce only a *partial* explanation of some passages, especially prophetic ones. Sometimes the prophets themselves did not grasp the full meaning of their declarations (1 Peter 1:10-12). So we should not think that the original readers' interpretation exhausts the meaning of all passages, but it is an important place to begin.

For example, some think that "born of water" (John 3:5) means the same as being "cleansed by the washing of water with the word" (Ephesians 5:26). But could Nicodemus have possibly thought that was Jesus' meaning? What *would* Nicodemus think He meant? —that is the key to its interpretation. Edersheim, the famous Jewish-Christian scholar, points out that proselytes to Judaism were baptized as well as circumcised. They were "immersed completely, so that every part of the body was touched by the water." As the former Gentile "stepped out of these waters he was considered as 'born anew'—in the language of the Rabbis, as if he were 'a little child just born.' But this new birth was not 'a birth from above' in the sense of moral or spiritual renovation, but only as implying a new relationship to God, to Israel, and to his own past, present, and future" (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. 2, appendix 11). Since the term "born anew" was already thus used among the Jews, and since John the Baptist was creating a stir by baptizing (not Gentiles but *Jews!*) as a sign of repentance, it seems that this is what the term "born of water" would have brought to Nicodemus' mind. Jesus was saying, in effect, "Sidestepping John's baptism of confessed sinnerhood, you are coming to me as a student needing information from a teacher; instead, you must come to me as a repentant sinner needing a Lifegiver." It is true that God's word is an agent in regeneration (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23), but "born of water" does not refer to that fact.

Again, Herbert Armstrong denies that Lazarus, the beggar in Christ's story (Luke 16:19ff), went to Paradise or was even conscious after his death. Then what did our Lord mean when He said Lazarus died and was carried "to Abraham's bosom"? Here is Armstrong's explanation "A 'bosom' is the breast of a human being, with the arms as an enclosure, or, an intimate relationship. So Lazarus was carried into an intimate relationship with Abraham. Lazarus is here pictured as a Gentile who received salvation," becoming a child of Abraham by faith (Galatians 3:7). But—is that what *Christ's hearers* would have understood Him to mean? Not at all, for to the Jews of His day, "Abraham's bosom" meant paradise. Christ obviously used it with its common meaning.

Next month we shall look at other principles, Lord willing. May the Lord give us understanding and help us to interpret His Word carefully.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: If you are coming to Florida and plan to worship with us, please note that our meeting place on Sunday mornings is Piper High School, 8000 N.W. 43rd Place, Sunrise, Florida. This location is in the western part of Ft. Lauderdale. Sunday evenings we meet at the parsonage, 1320 N.W. 55th Avenue, at 6 p.m. —Vaughn A. Reeves

Ault, Colorado: I appreciate so much all the articles. Always there is an answer to a problem or question that has come to my mind. Thank you again for a good magazine. —Mary M. Klor

Mena, Arkansas: We are enjoying W & W. We think it is improving right along. Please renew our subscription . . . Praise the Lord (for a specific answer to prayer) . . . —Mrs. H. L. Ledbetter

Nashville, Tenn.: We want you to know that you bunch of fruit jars and flower pots are doing a wonderful work for us other earthen vessels. We might never reach the goal without your help. May our good Lord continue to bless you and supply all your needs. —Ada Collins

Cramer and Hanover: Word comes that Bro. Ray Canant has been seriously injured in both eyes and is in grave danger of losing his sight. Prayer groups are being formed and individuals are urged to pray for this brother.

Gallatin, Tenn. October 8 was the second anniversary of the organized meetings of our Korean brothers and sisters. (They meet in the Gallatin church building). A guest speaker delivered the sermon in the special

services that marked the day. Many in the Korean work attended.

Brother Mike Sanders has closed a meeting with us that began October 22.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF PORTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

At the August meeting of the Board of Directors, the chairman appointed a committee to prepare plans for such a celebration. We have completed our 48th year and are presently in our 49th. Next year this time, the Lord willing, we shall already be operating in our Fiftieth Year. Proper notice and celebration are in order. If you have any suggestions, please notify Bro. Bill Smallwood of the 50th Anniversary Committee, Portland Christian School.

THANKSGIVING MEETING

The annual Thanksgiving meeting of area churches was held in the Atherton school building on the morning of November 23. Attendance was good, the contribution excellent: \$4009. Brother Ernest Lyon brought the message and the S.C.C. chorus, directed by Crystal Crowder, gave two messages in song. Sister Bonnie Colwick directed the PCHS chorus.

WORDS OF LIFE

"Words of Life" reaches half the nation late at night over 50,000-watt WHAS, 840 kc, each Sunday, at 11:10 p.m. (EST). The program is also broadcast on Sunday morning at 9:00 on WFIA, 900kc.

Responses are good; costs are high. Cooperation is needed in this area. We need your regular prayer and financial support.

The frightening nuclear powers now being stock-piled are as much surpassed as they are outdated by the power released at Calvary. That power produces perfect love, and "Perfect love casteth out fear."