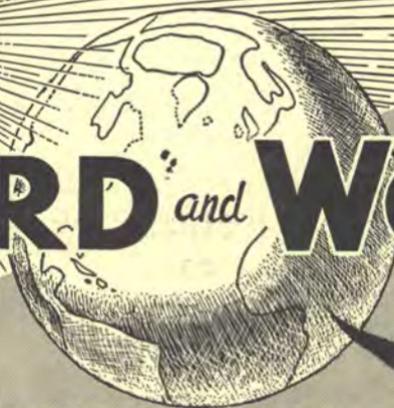


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Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

“. . . And sin no more”

“I don’t need someone to tell me to stop gambling. I need someone to give me permission to stop, because something in my head says I can’t.” This statement by a gambler to his psychiatrist reflects the feelings of a lot of people. They’ve been told and told—by themselves and others—“Quit eating so much! You need to lose weight!” “If you don’t quit drinking it’s going to kill you.” “You ought to give up smoking.” “You drink too much coffee; you need to cut down.” “That is something a Christian doesn’t do; you need to stop it.” But how often all the precepts and all the good intentions meet with failure. “Something in my head says I can’t!”

We shouldn’t be surprised; this is what Romans 6-8 is all about—*How* is it possible to “walk in newness of life”? We’ve been well schooled to acknowledge what that walk should be, but “how to perform that which is good I find not.” In answer, many pulpits prescribe more law: Do, do do! “Pray more, read your Bible more, give more, witness more.” But Paul says, “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3) Since when is spiritual power derived from self-effort? (And that is what Galatians is all about.) Salvation is the work of God, not the self-ordering of a life according to a biblical formula.

Permission to go free

It is significant that the Lord Jesus described His mission in terms of release (Luke 4:18). “He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives . . . to set free those who are downtrodden.” The character of His ministry was to underscore this fact. He brought freedom to the demon-oppressed. To the sick He did not say, “Eat your vitamins! Get your exercise! Take your medicine!” but “You are set free from your infirmity.” “Take up thy bed and walk” was more than a command; it was a *permission* to do what the man had long desired but couldn’t do. “Go thy way and sin no more” could likewise be construed as a simple command, “Quit your sinning.” But what kind of salvation is that? We can get that

from Moses without Christ or Calvary. "Sin no more" is a permission to be free of the curse that bound us—whether it be alcohol, or gambling, or over-eating.

This squares with what we have in Romans. "Sin shall not rule over you"—why?—"for you are not under law but under grace." Romans 6:12 is a specific permission to be free from sin's grip (Chapter 8 explains how it can be so.). The force of this verse is lost in most English versions because we have no imperative in the third person singular (except for a few expressions such as "Long live the Queen!" and "Down with Castro!"); so they substitute "you" (second person plural) as a subject. A number of translators recognize the difficulty and render it: "Sin must not rule you," or "Sin is not to reign in your mortal body." This is a permission to disregard the demands of sin, permission to disobey the commands of the flesh (e.g., "You've got to do this to keep your job"). "Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). This is the order—first, release from the power of sin, then glad obedience in the service of Him who set us free.

"Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

Saints and Sinners

When some fellow yields to temptation,
And breaks a conventional law,
We look for no good in his makeup,
But Lord, how we look for the flaw.

No one asks, "Who did the tempting?"
Nor allows for the battle's he's fought.
His name becomes food for the jackals,
The saints who have never been caught.

I'm a sinner, O Lord, and I know it.
I am weak, and I blunder and fail.
I am tossed on life's stormy ocean,
Like a ship that is caught in a gale.

I am willing to trust in Thy mercy,
To keep the commandments Thou'st taught,
But deliver me, Lord, from the judgment
Of the saints who have never been caught!

—Anonymous

Grace—to the Worst and the Best

R. H. Boll — 1938

God's word often moves in extremes. Most of us are average people, and our condition lies between the extremes of human character. For this very reason God showed His dealings with extreme cases, that the case of the average man might be well included. Side by side, in two successive chapters, the Lord shows us His attitude toward two human beings as far removed from each other in circumstances and condition as the poles—the one on the summit of human excellence, the other in the depths of degradation. There are no doubt some in the same condition, respectively, as these two, but the vast majority of us are neither as high as the one nor as low as the other; and what the Lord said to them applies, therefore, to every one of us.

Nicodemus

The first was Nicodemus—a Pharisee, one of the strictest sect of the purest religion the world knew. Not only that, he was “a ruler of the Jews.” Those who knew the stringent, almost unreasonable standards required of a member of the Sanhedrin, know that this man's blood was of the purest, and his conduct unblemished, his reputation and character irreproachable, humanly speaking. The person that appears in the next chapter is a woman of a low race—the mongrel race of the Samaritans, hated and despised by the Jews, and that with more or less good reason. Nor was she a good specimen of even that race, as one finds in the worst of families and surroundings here and there a sporadic saint; but her record had been execrable, and she had apparently lived for the flesh in its worst tendencies. Now with these two, with one of the best men of the best race on earth and one of the low members of one of the lowest races, the Lord Jesus held conversation and spoke to each according to the need. He met Nicodemus with the startling announcement that unless he were born again he could not see the kingdom of God; and except he were born of water and of the Spirit, he could not enter into the kingdom of God. If He had said that to the Samaritan woman, it would have seemed vastly more reasonable. That her birth, her heredity, her character, were too mean and low for her admission into the kingdom of God, and that she must throw it all away and begin life as a new creature—that would be nothing so strange; but if the best man on earth, a scion of the stock whose were the promises, is insufficient, and must abandon his high name and claim and cast away his advantages of birth, character, good works, be circumcised of all his old self, and begin a new existence as a new creature—that is staggering.

We can almost sympathize with Nicodemus' perplexed question, "How can these things be?" For the natural man counts on his morality and makes much of his goodness. But the word of the gospel sweeps all such foundation from under him and sets his feet upon a Rock and gives him a true righteousness which is not his own (Philippians 3:3-9). But the fact that it was Nicodemus to whom Jesus said, "Ye must be born again," lays the same necessity upon the best and most moral men today, and, as a matter of course, upon the meanest and lowest also.

The woman at the well

No less surprising and wonderful was the speech of Jesus to the poor and dissolute woman at the well of Samaria, who, according to Jesus' own word, had had five husbands, and was at the time living with a man who was not her husband, and had thus offended against the most fundamental moralities. To her, Jesus freely, without preliminaries, offered "the gift of God"—namely, a "living water," whereof a man might drink and never thirst, but it "shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life" (John 4:10, 14).

If it had been Nicodemus to whom Jesus made the offer, we would have said: "Yes, naturally so. A man as good and as great as Nicodemus is worthy of such a gift. Build up your character like Nicodemus and you may have the living water, too." Or: "Blood will tell; that living water is just for those who are by nature and heredity fit for it, but not for outcasts and sinners." The fleshly man delights to reason that way. It pleases his pride. He likes to think, "God will save anyone worth saving." But God commendeth His own love toward us in that He sent His Son to seek and to save that which was lost. He comes to us, not because we are worthy, but because we need Him.

Now the very fact that it was precisely to the degraded Samaritan woman that our Lord made this promise and held out this incredible prospect, putting it within easy reach, is the guaranty that the same promise is to all. We are probably not as low in the scale by human measurement, as that woman, and so the Lord would not probably withhold that promise from us on the grounds of our greater sinfulness. But if we were as low, or lower, it would yet be for us, if we but trust Him and boldly lay hold on it. On the other hand, to men of Nicodemus' rank and type comes the same promise. For the woman of Samaria must be born again as well as Nicodemus, and Nicodemus may have the living water as well as the Samaritan woman. But Jesus held out the necessity of the new birth to the noblest, lest at any time any man should exalt himself above it; and the promise of the living water to the degraded one, that none may think himself excluded from it.

Grace levels all distinctions.

The Love of God

Asa Baber

The greatest thing in the world is not the inventions of man, as great as they are. They make life much more pleasant, but the greatest thing is the love of God. That being true, the greatest ignorance is not knowing God's love. The greatest need in the world is this love in the hearts of men, actuating their lives. This would dispel greed, bickering, injustice. War would be abolished; love will right all wrongs.

This love is a threefold experience. His love is bestowed upon us in salvation (Eph. 2:4). "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us. . ." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). His love wrought in us produces sanctification. His love is manifested through us in service.

The dimensions of His love are breadth, length, height and depth. Breadth—God so loved. . . Length—He gave His only begotten Son. Depth—That whosoever believeth. Height—Have everlasting life. This text is illuminated by the little word so. Acts of sacrifices of men can be traced to some motive or appeal, but not God's (Romans 5:8). "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us." Between sinners and the wrath of God stands His love. His is distinctive love. He is self-sufficient. What He does is always an expression of what He is; He is unselfish, pure, tender, kind and faithful.

In 1 John 3:1 He asks a question about this kind of love. Man has not been able to explain this love completely because the expression means, "from what country does this love come?" Man has never known this kind of love.

Calvary is the channel for this love. God's wrath was poured out on Christ as the sin bearer; this expresses His love for sinners. His love looked beyond the Cross; He saw us redeemed. Hebrews 12:2 reads "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God." God needed us to bestow His love upon. He loves us as He does His Son (John 17:23). "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

His love is a chastening love. Some one asked, "Is God punishing me?" In the light of Calvary's love, why should He? This is one aspect of God's love that is misunderstood. The word "chastening" means "child training." Proverbs 3:11, 12—"My son despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction, for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

Let us accept this love.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

What Lies Ahead?

Willis H. Allen

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The hearts and minds of people in our time are, with reason, much perplexed and disturbed over moral, social, and political conditions which exist in our world. Men are everywhere "fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming upon the world" (Luke 21:26). In our country, most of the penal and mental institutions are filled, many of them beyond capacity. Similar conditions exist in almost every country of the world. Men everywhere are asking, "What lies ahead?" Statesmen (?) are straining every nerve to find the answer. Only students of the word of God have the answer for what is ahead for both saint and sinner. The Bible alone supplies us with sufficient revelation of God's plans and purposes regarding the destiny of this present world, and the glories of the world to come. In this brief article, we shall content ourselves with such truths as pertain particularly to the child of God.

Of all people in the world, the Christian has the least cause for alarm in the midst of these conditions, so far as his own destiny is concerned; his future is assured through Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:1, 11; Luke 21:28). The Christian's outlook is a glorious one. This writer seriously affirms that ministers of the word of God are failing in their solemn duty if they do not bring to anxious hearts the truths of the Bible concerning the future. Such reluctance must be due either to a failure to study these matters, or to think of them as having no real purpose—either of which reasons is culpable. I recall a conversation I once had with a man whom I loved very much, in which I referred to a series of sermons I had recently preached on "The Second Coming of Christ," and he said: "You had better leave that alone; you don't know anything about it." And he was a Christian, who has since passed on to be with the Lord. His attitude, as in the case of many, was doubtless occasioned by the widespread charges that any teaching on the subject was "speculative."

That there has been much unjustified speculation on this subject we freely admit, and decry. But if we "do not know anything about it," it is our fault; for the Lord has told us much; and *what He has said* we must receive and teach, if we are faithful to Him. Preachers have been heard to say that there are so many "practical

things" set forth in the New Testament for the present life that demand our attention, we ought to preach about those things, and not become "bogged down" in matters pertaining to the future. As a consequence many Christians have come to feel that any teaching concerning the coming of Christ is inconsequential and unnecessary.

Yet the New Testament abounds in affirmations of the surety of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, which centers in His coming. It is "an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever" (Hebrews 6:19-20). The "doctrine" (if you please) of the return of Jesus Christ occupies a more *prominent* place in the scriptures than does that of baptism. In the New Testament alone it is referred to more than three hundred times. "*Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13, emphasis ours). And this is given as an incentive in the admonition of the preceding verse: "Instructing us to the intent, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Can we think of anything more "practical" than living as we are here admonished?

Let us take a brief look at 1 John 3:2-3. Here John declares that we *now* know what we are (children of God, through Jesus Christ), but we do not yet know the nature of our future state. With our present faculties we cannot fully conceive it. Jesus assures us of the happy state of the Father's house, and bids us take His word for it (cf. John 14:2). But John here adds that at the manifestation of Christ, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is." Is that not enough for us to now know? not only that we shall "ever be *with* the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:17), but also that we shall be *like* Him—"conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21). What a glorious hope is ours! On the one who possesses it, "this hope" has a purifying effect (v. 3). Many Christians, by their words and actions, seem to reverse this order in their thinking: they think that purifying must come first, then the hope. John says that "every one that has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he (Christ) is pure." It is part of God's gracious plan that it be so. It is ensured in the fact that in this hope the true believer is ever clinging to a living Savior. This again emphasizes the practicality of the matter.

In his two letters to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul teaches some very important truths on our theme. Some of these deeper truths (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-12, esp. v. 5) he had told them on his first visit to Thessalonica, which could hardly have been more than four weeks (see the historical record in Acts 17:1-9). Each of the five chapters of the first epistle closes with a reference to the coming of Christ: 1:9-10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23. Most of the Thessalonian Christians had been converted from paganism. They were evidently looking forward with happy anticipation to the Lord's

coming. But as time passed a perplexing question arose in their minds: some of their number had died, and they wondered if their departed loved ones would miss the glories connected with His coming. Paul evidently learned of this problem from Timothy when he came directly from Thessalonica to join Paul at Corinth (Acts 15:5).

This gives the background for the apostle's words of encouragement in 1 Thes. 4:13-18, assuring them that they have no need to sorrow as those "who have no hope." Their loved ones who have "fallen asleep in Jesus" God will bring with Him. For them death is not the end; it is represented by the metaphor of sleep, which is quite common among all peoples. It is particularly significant in the case of Christians. For them, to die is gain; they depart to be with Christ, which is "very far better" (Phil. 1:21, 23; 2 Cor. 5:8). Indeed, it is not the real person which is placed in the grave (or its equivalent); it is only the body, the tabernacle in which he sojourned while here. But even that body is not forsaken or forgotten by the Lord. When He descends from heaven, "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," the living ones will not take precedence over "them that are fallen asleep": *first*, "the dead in Christ shall rise;" *then* "we that are alive . . . shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Note that Paul gives this description "by the word of the Lord" (v. 15); i.e., it is not his own conclusion, but a special revelation from the Lord (see Gal. 1:12; 2 Cor. 12:1). He brings out the same truth, but in less detail, in 1 Cor. 15:50-54 (q.v.). There he reveals a "mystery: we all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed"—not gradually, but instantaneously, "in the twinkling of an eye." The bodies of those who sleep are raised incorruptible, at the same time the living mortals are changed into immortality. Then, and not until then, may it be said in reality: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thes. 4:18). Much more might be added, but we stop here for the present.

GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

Our God is the God of the supernatural and impossible. Why should our life be so limited and so unworthy of His greatness and His all-sufficient grace? "All power," He says, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth . . . And lo, I am with you always."

Literally, it means "Look for Me every day to manifest My presence and power in some glorious way." And it is still true in this sense as well as a higher sense that "Unto them that look for him shall he appear."

Let us "expect great things from God." —A. B. Simpson.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Is it wrong to ask the Lord for guidance by the use of a sign—something, for example, like Gideon's fleece?

The Lord once called certain people "an evil and adulterous generation" (Matt. 12:39) for seeking a sign. On the surface this seems to rule out the practice suggested by the question. A closer look however, should make us aware that signs were refused to these people because they already had the greatest of signs in their midst and were unwilling to heed them. A miracle-working Jesus, speaking words such as man had never spoken, was in their midst. He had offered ample evidence as to who He was. They said, "Show us a sign," meaning, in effect, "Give us some evidence so compelling that we have to believe it, whether we want to or not." Jesus refused to do that, though He did promise an outstanding sign, which was fulfilled in the resurrection.

It is assuredly wrong for us to ask for a sign if we are ignoring all of the signs and all of the light the Lord has already given us (Cf. Lk. 16:27-31). The Bible provides ample guidance in many matters. The will of the Lord is already so evident in so many matters about which one does not need to ask—just obey. So one should be careful not to ask the Lord for what amounts to walking by sight instead of by faith. One should be careful about laziness in digging out His answers from His revealed will. It is wrong for me to say, "Lord, I don't like your ways of growth and study, just give me a private answer so I can by-pass all that. (Lord, I deserve preferential treatment.)" I simply must not forget the high place that God has given to His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The Holy Spirit is a very important part of knowing the Lord's will. He takes the Word and helps us to understand it and, no doubt, helps our infirmity in a number of ways. We should certainly pray for His help and seek guidance from Him. Accuracy of language will serve us well here, however. Some modern Christians talk as though they sort of have a private line to heaven and claim the Holy Spirit tells them this and that, some of it even in clear conflict with the written Word. We must beware of mistaking our own feelings, thoughts, and impressions as an inspired message from the Lord. Speaking presumptuously in the Lord's name is a

serious offense (Deut. 18:20-22). I believe the Holy Spirit can guide our judgments and evaluations, giving us impressions of what we ought or ought not do in certain cases; but, even so, the difficulty of distinguishing between the leading of the Holy Spirit and the desires of the flesh makes this somewhat less than a certain conclusion. I have found that His help is very often given in bringing to mind a "thus it is written," or in helping me to apply Biblical principles.

There are times when it seems desirable to have a reasonably definite answer from the Lord in matters about which the Word does not speak specifically. I do not believe an enlightened seeking of a sign on the order of Gideon's fleece (Judg. 6:36-40) to be wrong provided we are careful not to use it wrongly. The early disciples *prayed* and cast lots in choosing a successor to Judas (Acts 1:23-26; Cf. Prov. 16:33; 18:18). Notice their prayer—show us whom *Thou* hast chosen. I believe that prayer removed the element of chance. This type of thing is used often enough in the Bible that I see no good reason for ruling it out; on the other hand, it is used infrequently enough that one should use it with care. Some assign such acts to the old covenant period and before the giving of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but this is not necessarily a valid conclusion. We know too little of how even inspired men such as Paul discerned the Lord's will to be dogmatic in the matter.

There is an added danger to be avoided. If we would use this, we must choose a sign that allows for a high degree of impartiality. "Lord, if you want me to go to Africa, send me a personal gift of half a million dollars," hardly qualifies as an impartial sign. We must be after the Lord's will, not personal gain or benefit.

A fine young Christian woman recently startled me by declaring that she did not like quiet worship services. But how can we worship God in the midst of confusion and noise?

Human beings are creatures of habit, and much of what we prefer may be determined by those habits. Modern students may study with a radio blaring and amid confusion, and I have heard students declare they can study better under such conditions. With my own need for quiet in mind, I find this very hard to believe, and I find myself wondering how deep an impression the study is making. But then I also know that human beings are quite adaptable to circumstances. Some people have greater powers of concentration than others and thus are able to shut out the conflicting sounds and activities.

Worship to God is a matter of what proceeds from the heart. Certain forms of worship can take place under very noisy or distracting conditions. One can bow his head in a boiler factory and utter a prayer in true worship. Those shouting "Hosanna" at the triumphal entry (Matt. 21: 8-11; Lk. 19:37-40) were certainly wor-

shipping, being caught up in the focus of attention on Jesus. While noise and confusion do not of themselves generally promote worship, we do realize that quiet is not an absolute essential for worship.

There is a great deal to be said for a quiet and orderly worship service, however. Christians at Corinth, with stress on certain gifts of the Spirit, were reminded that all things were to be “done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26), that “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace” (14:33), and that all things are to be “done decently and in order” (14:40). The reverential fear with which we are to approach God (1 Peter 1:17; Heb. 12:28-29) is such that all the extraneous activities and sounds tend to be reduced to a minimum. Honesty forces us to admit that many distracting sounds and activities in an ordinary church worship service arise from a lack of this reverential fear, not from true worship.

Although there is a boldness to New Testament worship that did not characterize the old (Heb. 10:19; 12:18ff), this is not to be interpreted as familiarity and an easy-going carelessness. A change of covenants did not change the God we worship and did not greatly change the basic attitudes of worship. We should not miss the fact that the temple of Solomon was built without sound of axe or hammer (1 Kings 6:7). Habakkuk (2:20) declares “Jehovah is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.” The circus or football game type of conduct and mentality has no place in the worship of God.

It is also true that silence does not guarantee worship. Some mistake a frozen formality for reverence. It is not. We can eye the neighbor’s hat or notice the shabby clothes on the Jones’ kid, all in silence. But such abuse is not a good reason for turning to confusion.

Likely most of us find that the fewer distractions the better. When our voices should be heard in corporate worship (as in singing, e.g.) let them be heard—even as the great voice if there are that many of us (Cf. Rev. 5). But let us have reverence for God and concern for our fellow worshippers so that we do not distract from our reason for being together. Many church-goers exercise very poor habits in worship, habits that betray a lack of awareness of God’s presence.

What is the significance of the outline of a fish to Christianity?

The outline of a fish seems to have been one of the very early symbols of Christianity. During times of persecution it could be used in ways that more evident symbols could not. We are reminded that a number of the early disciples were once fishermen and that Jesus had several things to say and to do that involved fishing. It is not at all unlikely that this may have had some influence on the choice. The main reason seems to have been a curiosity of language, however. The Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, is formed as an acrostic

from the Greek words for "Jesus Christ of God the Son, the Savior."

Iesous — (*Jesus*)
Christos — (*Christ*)
Theou — (*of God*)
Uiou — (*the Son*)
Soter — (*the Savior*)

The "ch" and "th" each are represented by one letter of the Greek alphabet.

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How Can He Sleep?

Dick Hillis

There is no "give" in that cement sidewalk. There is no "spring" in that grass mat. For a pillow he has nothing but a folded arm, and his only protection from the cold is a short wadded jacket.

But his life has been harder than that bed. He slaved from sunup to sundown to support a family of six. Then the Communists came and his hard little world became harder. When fields and family were taken from him, he fled. Now life itself has lost its meaning. It's a wonder he hasn't gone mad or committed suicide.

In his shattered world sleep becomes his only friend. It enables him to forget the past with its tragedies and the present with its hunger and hopelessness.

Tonight I am spending a restful hour in a comfortable chair writing. At nine o'clock I will enjoy a juicy California orange. At nine-thirty I will be relaxing in a warm bath. Before ten I will drop off to sleep between clean sheets on a Beautyrest mattress with a pillow made of down under my head.

More than that, my family is all with me enjoying the same comforts. I have a home, a salary, and a car. There will be food on the table in the morning. And the future looks even better than the present.

We are a Christian family. The peace of knowing that heaven is ours takes away the fear of death. In our little world all is so good—and I sleep so well.

Isn't it true that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"?

The man on the sidewalk—he has so little. I have so much.

I know God loves him even as He loves me.

I know Christ died for him even as He died for me.

I know he has not heard this message because I have not told him.

How can I sleep?

We should be sure we know **what** last days we are talking about.

Peter's and Paul's "Last Days"

Dee L. McCroskey

Peter's Last Days

"And it shall come to pass in THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

Paul's Last Days

"This know also, that in THE LAST DAYS perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Tim. 3:1-2).

When we speak of "the last days" in the Bible, we should be sure we know **WHAT** last days we are talking about. For Peter's "last days" and Paul's "last days" are not the same last days. Many Christians, even preachers with a good deal of Bible knowledge, are confused about this, and fall into serious error.

First of all, Peter's prophecy speaks of a great REVIVAL, whereas Paul's prophecy of the last days speaks of a coming great APOSTASY. Paul speaks of the last days of the present age of grace. Peter speaks of the future revival of the people of Israel during the Tribulation age.

If you read on in Peter's address (Acts 2:17-21) he quotes the words of the Prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32). He speaks of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, the sons and daughters of Israel prophesying—all of which will take place when the Lord Jesus returns to set up His millennial kingdom.

But if you read on in Paul's prophecy of the last days (2 Tim. 3:1-5 and 4:3), you will see that he speaks of the present last days, when men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; when children will be disobedient to parents on a world-wide scale; and nations will be filled with trucebreakers and traitors; when religion (a form of godliness without divine power) will hold sway the world over; when religious seducers and deceivers will wax worse and worse. Who can deny that these things are now happening, that we are now in Paul's last days?

But Peter's last days are more related to the people of Israel, and will reach their peak in the latter part of the Tribulation time.

As pointed out in the Scofield notes, the "last days" as related to Israel are "last" not with reference to this dispensation, "but with reference to the whole of Israel's history."

Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel." Joel's prophecy began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, but the most of it is to be fulfilled in a future day. There will be wonders in the sky, the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood BEFORE that great and notable (or terrible) "day of the Lord" shall come. The Tribulation judgments will be followed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth, and the millennial blessings, when even the animal kingdom will be changed (Isaiah 11:6-9), and God's Spirit poured out upon all flesh.

The hope of all believers in the present age of grace is that great event which we call "the rapture," when the Lord shall come in the air and catch up all the saved to be with Himself (1 Thes. 4:14-18). One of the old meanings of our English noun "rapture," was the act of carrying someone off to another place or sphere. It is commonly used for the expression "caught up" in verse 17.

But the details of the "rapture" are said to be a "mystery" or sacred secret (1 Cor. 15:51), and only revealed through Paul. This was not given to Peter, and was even "hard to be understood," as he writes in 2 Peter 3:15-16. When Peter speaks of the coming of the Lord, as in the third chapter of his second epistle, he is not speaking of the rapture of the Church, but rather of the actual coming of Christ to set up His kingdom.

Likewise, when Peter speaks of "the last days" (2 Pet. 3:3), he is referring to the general last days that culminate in the Tribulation time and finally, the return of the Lord to earth.

When Peter quotes Joel, he says that in that day "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That will be the most essential part of the way of salvation during the Tribulation period. But when Paul quotes the Prophet Joel, he uses only this one statement from it, that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). That is the most essential part of God's salvation plan for this age also. Back in Genesis 4:26 men began "to call upon the name of the Lord," and it has been God's way for man ever since.

—In *Last Day Messenger*.



WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE: There is but one question of the hour: how to bring the truth of God's Word into vital contact with the minds and hearts of all classes of people.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Samoa: "John knows his people and their customs"

We plan to leave here August 2 and go to Lewiston (Idaho) via Denver.

Jim says he's happy and content to leave Samoa at this time as he has done the two things he came to Samoa to do—trained men to take over the mill and filing room (he's been Mill Superintendent for some time) and established the Lord's church. We have actually baptized only seven people here, but felt it better to thoroughly teach those we did convert. The Lord surely has done a marvelous work here. The first Samoan man converted—the John we told you of last year—is truly a wonderful Bible student and ready to put what he learns into practice. He is apt and anxious to teach others and also a man that others accept. The change in his life is indeed a wonderful testimony to what God can do with a man who turns to Him wholeheartedly.

We feel it would be a sad mistake to send a "missionary" here, for John knows his people, their language, their needs, and their customs. We are trying to raise funds to buy the group a pickup, as there are requests for Bible studies from villages too far away to walk. There are three couples here who are ready and willing to study all night if called upon.

There is so much I could tell you but will just say Praise the Lord for His blessings. We feel He is taking over here and sending us on our way, the better for having witnessed his marvelous works. (New address: 139 24th Street, Lewiston, Idaho 83501). —*Jim and Gladys White*. Jim is the brother of Odessa White Davis.

Converts in Capetown

The new car is running most wonderfully, praise the Lord! I only put in petrol once a week, isn't that just wonderful? Hallelujah is all we can say.

I must give God the praise that my wife's operation was a success. She is recuperating at home now, and we have one of our local district nurses to come every third day to dress the wound until my wife sees her specialist. As a family we just solicit the prayers of all that she shall be well.

Our series of meetings from the 11th to the 17th of June was a great success. The theme was, "How shall we escape?" Well there was rejoicing in heaven, among all of us, when on the final Lord's Day morning a young married lady, Barbara Johnson, and a young unmarried girl, Patricia Tejada, came forward to be baptized.

One of our young brethren, Freddie Ford, baptized before he was married in 1948, forsook the Lord, was away for 25 years; however, his sister made an effort to contact him. Freddie in turn expressed his wish to come back, and asked if I would pray for him and help him come back home! He attended a few services; I went and showed him a filmstrip entitled, "The Way Home." To make the story short, it resulted that last Lord's Day evening he was at the service, and after the meeting expressed his full purpose and desire to ask God to forgive him, to bring him home. Isn't that just something worth shedding tears for, and giving God the glory for His saving and forgiving mercy? —*Thomas Hartle*, Capetown, South Africa, July 17.

In Alaska, Bible classes and building plans

This evening I am scheduled to conduct a Bible class in a Fort Richardson home. This is by request of two military families and I have been asked to deal with the question, "Where are the dead?"

On Sunday (July 8) thirty-nine were present for the morning worship service. This is the most we have attempted to accommodate in the mobile home, and increased attendance emphasizes the need for a larger and more adequate meeting place. In anticipation that go-ahead signals will soon be received for the excavating and concrete work of the planned new church building, as time and strength permit, I am cutting down and removing spruce and birch trees from the building site on the church lots. It now appears that the basement structure will cost at least \$22,000. \$5,000 is now available.

Our most recent slide-tape presentation (no. 8) may be obtained by contacting Bro. Hall C. Crowder.

At the top of the prayer list for the work here we would suggest the prayer request given by Paul in Ephesians 6:18-20, namely that we will have the enabling of the Holy Spirit in boldly preaching and teaching the Word. —*Winston Allen*, Eagle River, Alaska, July 19.

The Bible in Tonga

I just had a letter from Iris Elder asking if I could help with the typing of the Tonga translations for the revised Bible. The gospel of Mark is supposed to be to the printers by August 15. Tomorrow, Lord willing, I hope to begin helping her with the typing. God is good to let me help with the typing so others can do the translating, etc. Lord willing, they will do the whole Bible in Tonga, so there will be many, many hours of typing. When three more women finish their quilts we will stop sewing until the translations are typed, Lord willing. Please pray that all working in this program may be blessed to make all of it work together for the glory of God. —*Elaine Brittell*, Livingstone, Zambia, July 18.

Scripture class in Rhodesia

J. C. is very busy studying this week. He has been advised by one high school principal that there'll be no scripture class there be-

cause of examinations.

At present, we are having scripture class once weekly with Brother and Sister Chadzko, who are new converts recently moved here from Umtali. They feel they are very lacking in Bible knowledge, as he was a Catholic and she was of the Church of England. They felt that was one thing very lacking in those religious bodies. They are a pleasure to study with.

The Baileys flew out of Bulawayo for Canada last Friday, via England. They plan to be gone three months. It doesn't seem that it has been eight years since they were over. But then it has been over ten years since we went to the U.S. —*Joyce Shewmaker*, Bulawayo, Rhodesia, June 28.

Moto will visit Korean Christians

I want to share with you the praise and thanksgiving for God's cares upon Brother Rhodes. He wrote me with his own hand! I am so glad that he is better now. He can be reached, c/o Mr. Robert A. Rhodes, 11 Wallingford Drive, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

His leaving Japan for the states was a very sad experience for us here, but nevertheless we rejoiced in it for it would be the best for him, we thought.

I plan to conduct our 7th annual Bible camp at Motosu Lakeside for our own Hachimanyama group, and already 105 have registered. We hope to have a wonderful time in the Lord. I also plan to visit Korean work this summer. I plan to visit as many churches of Christ work as I can. My family will go with me for a mission survey trip to various parts of Korea. Political unsettledness and some sanitation problems make us a bit uneasy, but we believe God will overrule after all.

Some of my YMCA students are now at U. of L. studying for the summer, and I hope someone or churches in Louisville area will invite them to churches. —*Moto Nomura*, Tokyo, Japan, July 18.

"I can see where the Lord did prepare us"

It seems we are getting used to the things around about us and thanks to the tireless effort of Bro. and Sis. Forcade we are receiving the training we need. I believe they have been used here to a better way than some might believe. There are some changes that will be made as time goes on, for no two people work the same in everything. The major parts of the work shall continue as it has in the past. There is still much Delores and I need to learn and we are most grateful to The Lord for the Forcade's guide in all these matters. We have already started teaching in the schools when the schedule requires. There are half-hour classes to smaller children twice a week at Ardbinne, twice a week from Moffett here at the Church building and I teach one hour again at Morgan High School on Friday afternoon. I never dreamed that I would be so involved in the work of the Lord and also to give the message every Sunday morning at church worship service. None of these things are being done by myself for it is the Lord Jesus who is the one

working through us. We just didn't have the training to do all these things or the complete understanding as we should. At least this is what we thought when faced with these things. But as I look back I can see where the Lord did prepare us for most all of this work we are faced with. The work with my own church at Prairie Creek in Dallas, Texas as treasurer and teacher of the junior high age as well as high school age. And Delores with the beginners and with me in the youth group, so we find that we are not as lost as we might have thought.

There are still some here in the home that have not accepted the Lord Jesus as their own so pray that this might come about. We praise the Lord for this great time we are having with these children and not only these but all the others we are coming in contact with. We want to do the will of the Lord and we thank each of you there in our homeland for your part in this work. Keep us in your prayers and we are keeping you in ours. —*Donald Harris*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, July 16.

Forcades may return to U. S. in October

About noon on June 26 Brother Harris phoned from the Salisbury airport telling us they had arrived at last. It would be an understatement to say that we were glad to have them for we had been eagerly awaiting their coming for seven months. Brother and Sister Harris are willing and eager to learn and to serve and they have already taken over much of the responsibility and work of superintending the Arcadia Children's Home. We had prepared the children of the Home and the Arcadia church to receive them favorably and everything seems to be working out well.

Esther and I are making tentative plans to leave Salisbury late in September, hopefully, via Israel. Our travel plans have not been completed but we hope to be back in the U. S. in October, the Lord willing. We are thinking of taking a bus from New York to New Orleans, possibly on across the continent to California, making some stops enroute. For \$99 we can travel where and when we please for 21 days. This may be the cheapest and best way for us to do some of our travelling because we can extend the time to 90 days for \$198.

Reports reaching us are that R. L. Garrett and family are to return to this country in the next few months, and that Sister Dollie Garrett is to accompany them. It is possible that they shall arrive in Salisbury before we depart. In some ways that would be desirable as it would give us an opportunity to be together a few days to talk over the problems and possibilities of the Lord's work in this area in addition to helping the Harrises with the work until Garretts arrive.

No definite route has been planned for our travels in the U.S. and if you have a special interest in our coming your way it might be well to write to us soon because we are beginning to plan. By taking a bus from New York we could see some of the U.S. that we have never visited in addition to seeing some of our friends and loved ones that it may not be possible to visit again otherwise. —*J. Miller Forcade*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, July 26.

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



Viewing the News

WATERGATE continues to fill the newspapers, to pad the radio and television schedules, to reveal how far political people will go to discredit someone who is caught doing what they have done, to give the communists a wonderful opportunity to propagandize for their form of slavery and against our freedom, to disgust a great many people, to reveal to many the depths of iniquity in high places, and to do a great many other things—most of which are harmful and none of them worthwhile that I know of. While this was going on President Nixon gave Governor Rockefeller of New York the opportunity to have a press conference in the White House to launch a drive to study the future of our country. Many feel that Mr. Nixon is grooming Rockefeller to succeed him.

THE CHARISMATIC movement (basically tongues and healing with outward expressing of joy) is continuing to grow among Catholics. A large group of teenage Catholics have been affected. A group in Cincinnati, for example, called Teens Encounter Christ, were the subject of an article recently by Ben L. Kaufman, religion reporter in the Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS are among the many religious workers that are using the name of their church to fight union battles. They forced unionism by the Chavez marxist group in the vineyards of California and are trying the same thing in lettuce farms. Now they have branched into clothing and are trying to get people to boycott Farah Manufacturing Co., an El Paso, Texas, company whose products are sold over the country.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST gets a lot of headlines with-

out the "United" being there, so the Churches of Christ get the blame for a lot of their liberal doings. Recently the governing synod of that denomination provided \$370,000 bail for nine persons convicted of racial disorders in Wilmington, N.C. The nine are appealing their case and the UCC group has judged the judges and found them innocent.

THE FILM of "Jesus Christ Superstar" seems to be stirring up more controversy than did the stage production, if that is possible. Apparently evangelical Christians can protest no harder than before but the "liberals" of all kinds have been joined by some Jewish organizations in the protests against the film because they say it portrays the Jews as being deliberate murderers of Christ and is therefore "anti-Semitic." The blasphemy of the picture and the original story against Christ is ignored, of course.

THE "UNITED" Church of Christ got headlines as "Church of Christ" in our local paper in June and received publicity because they were to "abolish sexist official terminology." They no longer are to say "brethren in Christ" but "kindred in Christ," not "mankind" but "humankind," not "chairman" but "chairperson" and not "he" but "he or she" when including everyone. It reminds me of the comic who said that he no longer says "a mailman delivers my mail" but "a person person delivers my person."

A FOUNDATION housed in Glide Memorial Methodist Church of San Francisco recently gave a \$5,000 grant to a self-avowed prostitute to organize a "craft guild" for prostitutes!

FREEDOM OF SPEECH was dealt a great blow, it seems to me, when the

government took away the license of Dr. Carl McIntire's station WXUR, even though the government's own examiner had recommended that the license be continued. Whether you agree with Dr. McIntire or not, regardless of how great a nuisance you may think he is (I don't know him myself and wouldn't do many of the things he does, but I do not judge his motives) or regardless of how much you may admire him, it is obvious that thousands of stations in the country deserve to be banned before his. It is possible that Dr. McIntire may move his station to a ship over three miles offshore, incidentally.

AN INTERESTING definition of pornography came to me recently in an article in The Miami (Fla.) Herald. Adon Taft the Herald Religion Editor, quoted a Rev. Rudolph McKinley as defining pornography as "anything that depicts a human being as animal or subhuman." Mr. McKinley also pointed out that behavioral scientists says that if you "tell a person enough times that he is bad and he will be bad," yet they keep saying men are like animals, thus, according to them, making men think like animals.

THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD lost a valuable contributor when James DeForest Murch died during June. Bro. Murch known to many of us in Louisville, had served the Lord in many ways for a great many years. He will be missed all over the world, for he had made many friends among Christians everywhere.

THERE ARE NOW about 600,000 abortions a year in this country, according to news services. That means 6 million in ten years, in case you want to imagine the result to the future of this country. To add to the much confusion on this subject, the National Council of Churches recently distributed a "study paper" on abortion, a paper that treated the subject entirely without reference to the Bible teaching, if the quotes I have seen in newspapers are any way to judge. It does recommend lots of social items to help, including "better means of contraception and programs to make these easily available to all who wish them"—including "to persons in their teens, but in a context of education about human sexuality and responsible sexual behavior." In spite of the great harm that has been done by modern sex education the NCC recommends more

of it.

SOME ALCOHOL FACTS digested from an NBC program on the subject: 70 percent of the people in this country now drink, about 100,000 being killed each year by it. One third of that number are killed by drunken drivers—more than all the murders by robbers, rapists, arsonists, and muggers. In one year after the law in Michigan changed to allow eighteen-year-olds to drink, there was a 125 percent increase in auto accidents by youths.

THE ICCC (International Council of Christian Churches) held its eighth World Congress in June in Cape May, N.J. Delegates and observers came from all over the world and from most of the 201 church bodies that have been certified for constituent membership in the council. Dr. Carl McIntire is president of the ICCC.

THE CONTINUING Presbyterian Church is a new denomination formed from conservative churches that could no longer work under the leadership of the liberals that had control of the southern Presbyterian group.

A FRIEND has given me 5 copies of the gist of the press conference Gov. Rockefeller had in the White House. Rockefeller plans to change the United States Government. If you want a copy just write me and I'll send a copy to the first five requests I receive.

"TEACHING of Religion Under Court Guidelines Urged" reads the headlines of an article dateline Dayton, Ohio, back in June. Strangely, it was Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, founding editor of Christianity Today, who will probably get blamed for this recommendation, for the article tells first of his talk at a symposium, in which he said that a religion of secularism may be replacing traditional religion in the public schools. The "teaching of religion under court guidelines" would inevitably end up in a "religion," not Christianity, being taught.

THE LOVE-MAKING between the National Council of Churches and the U.S. Catholic Conference apparently is over, due to an NCC blast against tax credits to parents for tuition paid to parochial schools.

A STRANGE thing hapened when the NCC asked to be allowed to take sides with Billy James Hargis as a

"friend of the court" in the fight of the IRS to keep Hargis' Christian Crusade from being tax-exempt. Strange bedfellows brought together on this one item because it is a threat to any group that takes a position contrary to the administration in power.

"CLERGYMEN" now have a professional organization they can join, the Academy of Parish Clergy Inc., modeled "after the best aspects of medical specialists' academies." An organization now with 700 members from over 40 denominations, the APC includes among its missions "continuing education, a code of ethics, finding better ways of sharing problems and successes of parish work, and strengthening ties between men and women in the pulpits." One of the featured speakers at a convention was noted to have "expanded traditional modes of pastoring to include a jazz ministry,

theater-at-noon for businessmen, all-night 'soul marathons,' other concerts and special programs for minorities. Incidentally, nothing was ever mentioned of the evangelistic program, which would be for the majority!

IF YOU WANT to throw your money away or give it to a subversive cause, you might contribute to the drive for \$42 million being jointly undertaken by the liberal seminaries at Harvard, Yale, Vanderbilt, Notre Dame, Chicago, Union Seminary in Manhattan and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

MANY THANKS to those who sent in items for this month's column. I wish I could thank each of you personally. Keep them coming to
Ernest E. Lyon
2629 Valletta Road
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"Do What You Will, I'm a Christian Now!"

Anonymous

My home is in Timbuctoo, Mali. My parents are strict Muslims of a northern nomadic tribe. Our tribe hides the children because they are required to go to school. Periodically, government officials come around to collect school age children. One day while my sisters were drawing water a government man saw them. My father was ordered to send them to school. Only one of the girls was of school age and since my father did not wish to send a girl, he sent me in her place. For the first time in my life I went to live in the city.

There are missionaries in Timbuctoo but they cannot hold open children's meetings. We school children were warned many times not to go near their house. I had heard that prizes were given to children who memorized verses from the Bible. I wanted to win a ballpoint pen badly, but I knew there was a Muslim guard who watched to see who went into the forbidden house. Fortunately, I heard of a hidden doorway in the back where the children could slip in secretly. I learned the verses quickly and soon had my pen.

My elders had always told me that the Christian Bible blasphemed God. Instead, I found that it glorified Him. After visiting and talking with one of the missionaries, I realized that she was telling the real truth about the Bible. I had also been told that

Christianity was for the white man. I firmly believed this, for I had only seen white people who preached about Jesus.

When I was fourteen, a missionary offered to send me to a Christian camp held in the southern area where the Muslim influence is not so strong and where there are a few more Christians. I really wanted to go, but how could I get permission from my parents? I made up a story. I had made good grades in school and was at the top of my class. I told my parents the government was sending me to camp as a reward. They believed me and off I went.

To my surprise I found that all the teachers and counselors at the camp were blacks. I realized that Christ was not only for the white foreigners, but for the Africans as well. On the third day I gave my heart to Jesus. Shortly after that, the police came looking for me. My parents had found out the truth and demanded that I return immediately.

“Do what you will; I’m a Christian now,” I told my parents. My father beat me until he could beat no more. Then he tied me to a pole and left me to dangle. During the night he got up several times to beat me some more—he was that angry. Each time my mother passed by she would hit me. Both of my parents demanded that I turn from Christianity, but I replied, “No, I am following Jesus now.”

At last my father gave up on me and kicked me out of the house. I went to my uncle but he yelled, “Go away. Do you think I will put up with you as a Christian?” Finally I found a man in town who would take me in. He had been in the army and had known Christians in other places. No doubt he was not a strong Muslim. I earned my keep by hard labor, daily hauling wood and water, as well as keeping up with my studies.

At school, we students always sat two to a bench. Now I had to sit alone and eat alone. If I went out on the street the other children would throw rocks at me. The Muslim teachers refused to grade my papers. Such are the pressures applied by the whole community to prevent a break-away from the Muslim faith.

The teachers passed me from grade to grade though they did not want me to get my graduation certificate. The Lord intervened in a wonderful way, however. When the school inspector was changed, I found to my joy the new man was a Christian. I quickly went to my teachers and told them I would report them if they did not grade my papers. Grudgingly they gave me passing marks, but I still feared this would not be enough to earn my certificate. I knew only three thousand out of ten thousand students were picked for that honor. Although my chances were slim, I had one hope. If my papers were sent to the capital, no one would know me there and I would be judged impartially. I prayed, “Lord, if You give me

that certificate, I'll go to Bible School." Praise God, He gave it to me and I came here to Ivory Coast to study the Bible.

When I give my testimony, students talk about my hard lot and all that I have suffered. This is my reply: "I have suffered nothing when you look at Jesus." —In *Worldwide Thrust*

Achsah's Springs

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

Caleb's offer

Caleb was one of the two survivors of the wilderness wanderings. At the age of 85 years he asked for and got the hill-country in Palestine—that part of the land which was infested with giants—" . . . the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified:" but he said, "It may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake." So he brought his petition to Joshua, the only other survivor, now leader of the forces of Israel. He reminded Joshua of the promise of Moses to him concerning that land on the day he brought back a good report of it (Joshua 14:7-12). Joshua and Caleb had been together in bringing that good report but he mentions only himself. Joshua seems to have followed his lead at that time (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9). At any rate Joshua accepted his plea without question and "blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance."

After driving out the three giant sons of Anak, Caleb went up against Debir or Kiriath-sepher. Then it was that he made the offer recorded in Joshua 15:16. "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." J. F. & B. says that was to strengthen Othniel who was later to be judge of Israel. Certainly it was calculated to try the mettle of the young men perhaps with the need for future leaders in mind. Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb took it and received the reward.

Achsah's request

But Achsah was not wholly satisfied with Kiriath-sepher, which lay in the northern part of the Negev region, about halfway between Hebron and Beersheba, which was in the South, hot and dry. So she asked her father for springs of water evidently in an adjacent field, for she had moved her husband to ask of her father a field. She added her request to his and gave the reason for it—the springs of water. "And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs" or the upper and lower springs. Like her father she had asked and received.

Various spiritual applications have been made of this, the upper springs being compared to spiritual blessings and the nether springs to the temporal or earthly blessings. It might also signify the church, the bride of Christ, asking and receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:13, 14; 2:1-4). The word of God is sharp and powerful. It led the apostles into suffering and death. Only by the Holy Spirit were they able to endure their lot. The ground of the truth needs and must have the water of the Spirit in order to produce its fruit for the Lord.

This has also been applied to home life. God's word for the home (literally understood) is a strong and true pattern for the home, but is possible and effective only in the power and joy of the Holy Spirit. Woman was created a help suitable for man. Though she was at that time co-ruler with him (Genesis 1:26-28) she was nevertheless an *assistant* ruler. After she sinned he was to rule over her (Genesis 3:16). In the New Covenant she is no longer under his feet being ruled over, but is restored by faith to the place given her before the fall. In the new creation she is to be voluntarily and lovingly subject to him. The ideal relationship is attained only in the Holy Spirit. If the husband be not filled with the Spirit his wife's lot will be hard and dry indeed. How great her need for the steady flow of the Spirit in her own life! The husband who is disobedient to God may be won over by her loving obedience in the Holy Spirit. That is not an absolute promise but is held out as a desirable possibility by Peter (1 Peter 3:1, 2).

While man is the head of the home the wife has an important place in it. She is to bear children, rule the household, love her children and love and obey her husband zealously as unto the Lord doing good works in His name (in her husband's too, for she wears it). But women sometimes feel a bleakness in their situation if the husband's work keeps him away much of the time and his main interest seems to be in it or if for other perhaps selfish reasons he withholds from her loving, sympathetic companionship. She feels left alone with family cares while other women, it may be, are co-laborers with him, sharing a common interest with him. From the wife's point of view her position as homemaker can be a hard one, dry and unappreciated in a lot of cases. Too many times she unwittingly makes it worse by rebelling, either actually or in her chafed spirit. Her hope is set not on God but on her husband; if he fails (or if not for that matter) she has no anchor for her home.

She may not know or care that under God she is its builder, but she is. In all His teaching for the home He speaks first to wives. In Proverbs 14:1a, He says, "Every wise woman buildeth her house; . . ." The wise woman *builds* and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Having made a beginning she seeks by prayer and study of the word of God (Proverbs 2:1-5; James 1:5) the wisdom needful for the home. She finds (1 Peter 3:5) that holy women who obeyed their husbands aforetime hoped in God (this

helps her to a far vision and right perspective. God sets a price far above rubies on a woman with a meek and quiet spirit. He suggests that in such a spirit of obedience she may win the husband who is disobedient to God. If she has failed in the past she arises like the prodigal son and goes to her Father with words of contrition. Like the daughter of Caleb she asks Him for springs of water for her home (Luke 11:13 ASV). She drinks freely of the Water of Life (John 7:37-39), until it becomes in her “a well of water springing up unto eternal life” and giving spiritual vigor and power to her family. In that new strength for daily life her obedience attains the quality and the scope God wants it to have (Galatians 4:6), for the love of God drives out the aloneness.

Is it any wonder that God patiently holds the faithful woman to the training needful and chastens (that she may escape judgment) when she gets out of her place of subjection? “If any (wo)man thirst, let (her) come unto me and drink . . . from within (her) shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive” (John 7:37-39).

The Flight

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

What lovely lyrics are sung about
Departing this life by sea!
And well we cherish the beautiful art
And language of poetry;
But when I depart for Heaven Land,
And our Father's housing there,
I shall not embark on a sailing ship;
I am going home by air!

Whether I start alone or amid
A numberless, raptured throng,
God maketh the clouds His chariot,
And the angel arms are strong.
Whether by angels or chariot,
Ah, journey so fairest fair:
A ransomed soul in flight to its Lord,
Through skyways of the air.

—Sara Elizabeth Sprouse



Concern

J. H. McCaleb

"Those whose work takes them constantly into close proximity with suffering sometimes develop what might be called the insulation of familiarity. One thoughtful traveler said, after wandering through the streets of Hong Kong with their smells and sights and hurts, 'I was ashamed of my comforts.' But in our comfortable homes in pleasant suburbs, we are insulated from, and not troubled by, involvement in the haunts of wretchedness and need."

These few lines have been lifted from a column edited by Harold Blake Walker. The sentiment expressed projects indeed a haunting sense of reality. Most of us have seen pictures of the crowded tenements of Hong Kong. Some of you, perhaps, have been there. Even the public housing areas have nothing of luxury about them. People still take turns in sleeping in the beds that are too few for the great numbers who need them desperately.

I happen to know at least two missionary families that are living in these same quarters and are using their rooms, and other similar ones, for meeting places. They are of the people, and working with the people where they are. There is a bond of common experience between the seekers and those sought.

Most of us who read these lines are probably living in comparative ease. All do not have the capacity for heroic sacrifice, but every one can become involved in the spiritual and physical wretchedness that surrounds us by contributing from the storehouse of blessings that God has granted us.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY USURPED

"Among the gospel churches, Christ is now in fact little more than a beloved symbol. 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name' is the church's national anthem, and the cross is her official flag, but in the week-by-week services of the church and the day-by-day conduct of her members, someone else, not Christ, makes the decisions. Those in actual authority decide the moral standards of the church, as well as all objectives and all methods employed to achieve them. Because of long and meticulous organization it is now possible for the youngest pastor just out of seminary to have more actual authority in a church than Jesus Christ has. . . ." —A. W. Tozer.

What Time is It?

Martin O. Massinger

Earlier we raised the question, "What is this world coming to?" We sought the answer to the question from certain chapters in Isaiah. We found that chapters 24 and 34 were examples of many Biblical passages that predict a terrible time of judgment for the world. We also found that Isaiah 25 and 35 presented an entirely different picture, that of a time of world-wide prosperity and peace and joy. Thus we presented in brief form what God has given to us in the Bible concerning the future of the world, mainly an approaching time of awful judgment followed by the reign of Christ over a world purged and renewed and filled with joy and peace. Then we went to the New Testament and found another type of prophecies, those that predict for the true church the return of Christ to catch up His own true believers before the awful time of judgment breaks. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and other similar passages were cited in this connection. It was pointed out that this event, called the rapture, could take place at any moment. It would be followed by the tribulation and then by the earthly reign of Christ, called the millennium. We concluded the article by listing several indications in the present world situation that the tribulation could be very near. Let us devote a little more space to these indications. These are things that have never been true before in the history of the world, but here they are before our very eyes.

We first mentioned the most important of all these indications of the lateness of the hour. It is the establishment of the Israeli republic in 1948. For many, many centuries there has not been an organized Jewish state. But now there is. And this is necessary for the fulfillment of prophecy. Ezekiel 37 presents the famous vision of the valley of dry bones. These bones scattered over a valley are interpreted in v. 11 to be the whole house of Israel. They are scattered, dead, and hopeless. But in the vision two things take place: first vs. 7-8 picture them coming together to form a lifeless corpse with no breath in it. But v. 10 pictures the breath coming into them and their becoming an exceeding great army.

Apparently we are at present between those two events. The nation has become reunited, but spiritually it is still a corpse. The glad day of Israel's salvation as a nation, pictured in v. 10 and interpreted in v. 14, is yet future. Further, Daniel 9:27 prophesies the fact that the great, wicked prince that will come, commonly known as the antichrist, will make a covenant with Israel for one week, that

is for seven years. But how could a covenant be made with the nation Israel unless there were an organized nation in existence? Until 1948 there was none. Now there is. This is of greatest significance.

In the second place there is the transfer of old Jerusalem to Israeli authority as a result of the six days war in 1967. What the immediate future may hold, no one knows. But obviously Biblical prophecy requires that Jerusalem be in Jewish hands during the tribulation period. Zechariah 12:2-9 and 14:2-3 present a siege of Jerusalem by the nations of the world, and Jerusalem is occupied by God's people Israel.

One element of this picture is not clear yet but could easily develop in a brief time; that is, there is no Jewish temple such as is necessary for the fulfillment of 2 Thes. 2:4. This verse tells us that the man of sin will sit in the temple of God and claim to be God.

The third line of truth which has prophetic significance concerns Russia. Ezekiel 38 and 39 presents the great prophecy of a nation in the north, the head of a confederation of nations which will be hostile to Israel and actually invade the country. The north is mentioned three times in this prophecy, namely in 38:6 and 15, and in 39:2. This invasion will be brought to an abrupt end by a great supernatural work of God described in the last few verses of chapter 38, and the ignominious return of only one-sixth of the original army is seen in 39:2. It is certainly significant in the light of Biblical prophecy that within our lifetime the Soviet Union has emerged as a great godless power of the first order and that she displays very sinister hostility toward the Israeli republic.

A fourth kind of prophetic teaching concerns what is sometimes called "the revived Roman Empire." In Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2 the fourth great world empire, the successor to Babylonia, Media-Persia, and Greece, was obviously the Roman Empire. But the closing part of this prophecy never was fulfilled. The same thing is true of the parallel prophecy in Daniel 7 concerning the four beasts: the latter part of the prophecy concerning this fourth beast likewise has never been fulfilled. As comparisons are made between these chapters and Revelation 17, there emerges the prophecy that the Roman Empire will be revived and conclude its history in the end time. This final form will include a ten-kingdom confederacy. This is particularly clear from Revelation 17:12-13. This prophecy makes the present European Economic Community, otherwise known as the Common Market, of more than ordinary interest. This is emphasized by the fact that the Treaty of Rome, which brought this organization into existence in 1957, envisioned not only an economic, but ultimately a political union of western European countries. Though there have been delays, yet the idea persists and progress toward this goal is perceptible. Without presuming to prophesy, one

may at least be permitted to be interested in the strange parallel between this present organization and the prophecies mentioned above. How soon a united western Europe could become a reality no one would dare guess.

In the fifth place Biblical prophecy reveals a great ecclesiastical power in the end time. This is pictured by the scarlet-clad woman of Revelation 17, riding the beast which, as indicated in the above paragraph, apparently represents the revived Roman Empire. This religious power has a world-wide influence indicated by such expressions as "many waters" (v. 1), and "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (v. 15) and finally "the kings of the earth" (v. 18). The description of her attire characterized by purple and scarlet color and by gold and precious stones and pearls, the cup in her hand in v. 4, and her location on the seven mountains (v. 9) strongly suggest Roman Catholicism. A study of Hislop's famous book, *The Two Babylons*, would be necessary to understand the significance of the name Babylon given to this woman in v. 5. It all points to Rome. But at the present time we see not only Roman Catholicism with her worldwide influence, but also the ecumenical movement in Protestantism. The latter is as far removed from the truth as the former. And the two are trying their best to get together. Obviously they are having their difficulties but it is certainly within the realm of possibility, in fact, probability, that they will be united and together form one great false world church headed up by Rome, filling the world scene, and dominating the revived Roman Empire even as the woman rides the beast. But this domination will become so intolerable that ultimately, as Revelation 17:16-17 indicate, this hated ecclesiastical power will be destroyed by the secular power. It is not difficult to see how the present conditions could well be leading into the end time conditions described in the Bible.

In the sixth place the Bible describes in Revelation 18 a great world city called Babylon. This city is described as a commercial center of world-wide importance. This is seen in such expressions in v. 11. At the height of her glory this city is destroyed in one hour. Now what is there today that would correspond to this city? Nothing as yet. But anyone who studies the progress of the land of Iraq, which occupies the same territory as ancient Babylonia, will be impressed with the great development that is taking place there. It is an oil-rich country, and the revenue is being used for the development of the nation. This includes such things as hydroelectric power, agricultural development, navigation of the rivers and canals, public education. The present modern city of Baghdad is situated only about fifty miles from the site of ancient Babylon. One has no right to predict, but the founding and building of a great city on the site of ancient Babylon in a brief span of time is surely within the realm of possibility. This thought is rendered even more interesting by the growing importance of the Middle East in world affairs.

Certain world conditions likewise add their part to the overall similarity between the present day and the composite prophetic picture. There is no doubt that the lawlessness of today is unprecedented in scope and intensity. Obviously there has always been lawlessness, but that does not change the uniqueness of this present condition. 2 Thes. 2:3 speaks of the man of lawlessness of the end time, whose coming is preceded by the mystery of lawlessness in v. 7. Although the man of lawlessness or the antichrist will not be manifested until after the removal of the church, apparently the closing of the church age will be characterized to a lesser degree by the same conditions, for in 2 Tim. 3:1-9 we read of "perilous times" in the last days. It could well be that we are in those perilous times today.

What present day reader could fail to be impressed by the fact that the word "sorceries" in Revelation 9:21 is a translation of the Greek word *pharmakeion*, easily bringing to mind drugs? The same is true of the word "sorcerers" in Revelation 21:8. Evidently the present absolutely unprecedented scourge of drug use is a forerunner of even worse conditions during the tribulation.

The prophecy in Revelation 9:1-12 of evil spirits being poured out of the abyss indicates a prevalence of occultism in the end time. The present craze for things in this sinister area makes one wonder how near we might be to the end time.

Other world-wide problems such as pollution, population explosion, worldwide unrest seem to point toward a general breakdown. This will lead people to cry out for a great leader who can solve the problems of the world. First there will be a false leader, the antichrist of the tribulation period, who will be destroyed by the true Christ, the Lord Jesus, at His coming in glory. He will finally unite the world, and He alone can solve world problems.

When all of these things are added together, they so strikingly resemble Biblical prophecy that one is justified in looking upon the similarity as more than merely coincidental. The Bible speaks of "seeing the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Thus it must be that when the Lord's coming draws near, it will be possible, not to set dates, but to sense the nearness of the day. Does not this justify the kind of comparative study we have just made? Shall we then as the Lord's people obey the injunction of Hebrews 10:25 not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as we see the day approaching?

And would it not seem to be the part of wisdom for any unbeliever who may read this page to put his trust in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior while there is yet opportunity?

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Salvisa, Ky.: We had a wonderful week in early June with Paul Clark. The singing, the attendance, were above average, and hearts were touched. We have had one baptism, two memberships and one renewal lately, before and after our revival. VBS was accomplished with good teaching and attendance. Bro. James White did an excellent job of preaching on July 15. The undersigned is to be in a revival at the Salem Church in Cynthiana the first week of August. —N. Wlson Burks

Huntingdon, Tenn.: I wish to continue receiving the Word and Work as I feel I have received much spiritual benefit and encouragement. The writers—or a majority of them—are less denominational than most writers in articles I read. I am just trying to accept and consider all Bible teaching and apply it as best I can.—Mrs. Alma Ross

Robert Gill has arrived in Louisville on his return from Salisbury, Rhodesia. . . . **Carl Ketcherside** probably took a few lumps on the head from some of the brethren for his lead article in the July *Mission Messenger*. People who are sure they have the plan of salvation won't want to read it. 139 Signal Hill Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63121.

Sellersburg, Ind.: Prayers were requested by several more members during the last few assemblies of our meeting. These young people exhibit a desire to follow our Lord with a closer walk, and we praise Him for their display of humility, in acknowledging sins and seeking forgiveness. We had a total of twenty-one responses to the invitation during the meeting. Praise God! —Kenneth E. Lawyer

WESLEY SPARKS

Our deep and sincere sympathy is extended to Sister Spaulding and her daughter and grandchildren in the sudden homegoing of Brother Wesley Sparks. He was a man of great ability in the home, in the community and in

the church. He was one of the members of the Board of Directors for the Maple Manor Christian Home. His wisdom and fine judgment will be greatly missed. He manifested such a wonderful interest in this work. The Board and Staff will feel his absence very keenly. May the Lord richly bless and comfort his family and loved ones who remain. —Howard Marsh.

Portland Avenue Church, Louisville: Harold House, a boy for whom the church has been praying was buried with his Lord in baptism, August 8. Although he has been ill for some time and had to come in on crutches it was his desire to make a public confession and be baptized before the public assembly. We rejoice in this and continue to pray that the Lord will heal his body. He is not yet eleven years old. —Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

Highview Church, Louisville, Ky.: Brother Patrick will be starting a class on prophecy the 2nd week in September. If you are interested, please sign your name and what mornings you can attend. (Or get in touch with H. E. Schreiner, phone 969-8647.)

100th BIRTHDAY

Mrs. R. V. (Lucy Scoggan) Cheatham celebrated her 100th birthday on July 12, 1973. Formerly a member of the South Louisville Church Sis. Cheatham has been a member of the Highland Church for the past twenty-five years. Her love for the Lord and her love of other Christians has been an inspiration to many for years. In full use of her mind though confined at home in body, she continually gives thanks to the Lord for His many blessings through the years and for the many years she has been permitted to serve Him. A host of relatives and friends remembered her with beautiful flowers, gifts and cards on this special occasion. We at Highland have been greatly blessed by her prayer and phone ministry and are thankful to the Lord for her continued presence among us. —Ernest Lyon

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