

THE WORD AND WORK

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

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God's Family

W. R. H.

TO TELL OR NOT TO TELL!

When a Christian begins to witness for the Lord Jesus, then comes the matter of whether certain experiences need to be told; can be withheld; can be hidden for a time; can be shared with some folks profitably, but must be withheld from others because of their immaturity, etc. There are some things that are too holy and precious to be related freely, and yet other saints may have need of the very evidence that our testimony could afford them. Perhaps we need to do as Mary, and "ponder these things in our hearts" many times until their appointed hour for publicizing comes. And, there could be many encounters with the Lord that we would never be able to communicate to others. For example, we are told that we have requests in prayer that cannot be uttered, and that the Holy Spirit takes over for us and presents these needs (in an able way) to The Father.

Examples in the ministry of Jesus range from one end of the spectrum to the other. He strictly charged the man who had been blind to "see that no men know it", and the leprous man to "Tell no man, but go, show thyself to the priest." Yet to the Gerasene demoniac, he commanded: "Go to thy house and thy friends and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." When messengers came from the imprisoned John the Baptizer, asking "Art thou He that cometh . . . He said to them:?" "Go tell John the things that ye see and hear, then listing an array of miracles, which evidences would help John to keep his faith. Somewhere within this broad scope—to tell or not to tell—the Lord's indwelling Spirit will have to guide us.

Doubtless, part of Jesus' reason for not wanting His miracles published during the early part of His ministry, was in order that for a while He might be free from the throngs that would gather. In Matthew 12:15 we learn that the many who were restrained from "making it known" were in fulfilment of Isaiah 42:1ff. "Behold my servant whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth . . . He will not cry nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning flax

will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth." Jesus knew what His mission was: not to gain popular acclaim and power, but to give His life a ransom for many. Too much approval by sinful men could have been a hindrance along the path to Calvary.

Again there were times that to be healed meant immediate pressure upon the healed one from the unbelieving Jewish rulers. The blind man of John 9, after he was healed, was cast out of the synagogue, because he believed on Jesus. Jesus sought him out after he had been rejected, and confirmed him in his faith by a loving interview. This man had been born blind "that the works of God might be made manifest in him," so we can be certain that all of his new life was a constant testimony to Jesus' healing touch.

There were times when the healed were charged to tell no man, but "the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it" (Mk. 7:36). Jesus, in His foreknowledge, knew this would happen, so we can be sure it was agreeable with Him on these occasions, else he could have stopped their mouths. But on the mount of Transfiguration, he told his disciples to "tell no man what ye have seen, save when the Son of Man is risen from the dead." Peter, James and John needed divine help to keep this secret, as Peter recalls later "We were eyewitnesses of His Majesty when we were with him in the holy mount."

Our experiences, when related to some, might help them along the path of faith, while to others, they might confuse and deter. The apostle Paul said, concerning his ambassadorship: "To some we are a savor or life unto life, and to others a savor of death unto death. And who is sufficient for these things?" We are also ambassadors, so the same kind of "savor" problem presents itself today. As stated earlier, only the Holy Spirit is sufficient to choose time and place to share God's gifts of grace.

When is a sick man, (having been anointed), well enough that we can announce his healing? And yet, how dare we not give glory to God? In a case of this kind, the man's own well-being and radiance is sufficient announcement for those who have known him and who now see him. But many at a distance may need to hear also, of what the Lord has done afar off, in answer to believing prayer.

When is a sermon "anointed by the Holy Spirit," and who is to say that such was the case? And yet we ask for the Lord to send forth His word in power! Can finite men in the congregation recognize the activity of the Holy Spirit? Within us, individually, we can, for "His Spirit beareth witness with our spirit."

If one feels called of the Lord to preach the gospel, it would be better to commence the preaching, as the Lord opened the doors, than to announce that he had been called, and wait for someone to put him to work. But later on, to younger associates, it might be much needed that the older one recite the circumstances of his life when he

was lead of the Lord to take up the glorious task of proclaiming words of life.

Generally speaking, our experiences with Jesus can bear judicious telling. We need not catalog all of our sins, hut we do well to speak forth all of our joy. My backslidings are well-enough known already, but God's forgiveness needs to be proclaimed from the housetop. If a special filling or refilling of God's Holy Spirit has opened the door for prayer, or removed some life-long prejudice (racially or sectarian), we do well to give the glory to God.

In Matthew 10:27 Jesus told His disciples: "What I tell you in darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim from the housetop. In these days of darkness we must shine for God. We can follow the admonition of the song:

"Go home and tell, go home and tell, what Christ has done for you.
Go home and tell, go home and tell, that they may want Him to."

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

WE NEED EACH OTHER

The apostle Paul is often called the greatest servant the Lord Jesus Christ has had in all the nearly 2,000 years of the history of the church. I don't think anyone could be certain of that unique ranking, but we will all surely admit that Paul was as faithful as we can imagine, that he was filled with the Holy Spirit on many occasions, that he was used in the conversion of thousands, that he was guided by the Holy Spirit in the writing of much of the New Testament, that he had a position of tremendous importance—and the list could go on and on.

In view of Paul's importance, do you find it strange that Paul longed so much for the fellowship of every Christian high or low, that he felt that every other Christian had something from which he could profit in the Lord's work, and that he wished to be of help to every Christian? Read again Romans 1:10-12 and see Paul state these

things. He prayed that in the will of God he might visit the Roman Christians and said he felt he could impart some good to them and they could do likewise for him. Now I can't imagine how anything I could do would be of help to Paul if I were present with him, but Paul's wording here indicates that everyone of us has something to contribute to everyone else.

I imagine that one of the reasons we nearly all think as I have just described is that there is so little in the way of mutual ministry, so little of the average church member contributing anything to the meeting except having his body present and possibly taking some part in the singing. The Spirit gives a gift to each Christian (I Cor. 12:7-11), we are all members of Christ's body and have different work to do (I Cor. 12:12-27), and God has set each one in the Church for different works (I Cor. 12:28ff), yet to many Christians when the church assembles they are taking part as spectators only, sitting and waiting to be fed instead of using the gifts they have been given. I am thankful for the twelve or fourteen men who take part in the meetings of the congregation with which I regularly meet, but the most ideal situation today falls far short of the united labors in the Lord that the New Testament pictures as the normal thing.

In mentioning the meetings of the assembly I am by no means trying to say that the only place for fellowship and ministry is in the public meetings. Actually there are many more opportunities to minister in the Lord's work in between meetings than in the meetings themselves. Think of the many who need to be taught the Word, others who need to be encouraged, others who need sympathy, others who simply need some fellowship in times of loneliness. You can expand that list many times, but have you been taking advantage of these opportunities? Don't "leave it to the preacher" or shirk your own duty by calling an elder. Remember, the Apostle to the Gentiles felt the need of the ministry of a far-off group of Christians with no apostle present in their regular assembly. Surely the members of your own assembly need your gifts to be put to work in the ways the Lord intended you to do so that the rest of us lowly members can be "established" (Romans 1:11) or "comforted" (Rom. 1:12). Let us truly restore the work of the early church!

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Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Should a person who was baptized in a denominational church be rebaptized when he comes into the Church of Christ?

It would seem to be true from all I can understand in the New Testament that a person can only be truly baptized once. People may submit to acts called baptism, and there are those who may have gotten wet a number of times; but that act which is a part of the new birth, "of water and the Spirit", like a physical birth, occurs only once. For this reason we may hesitate to use the word "rebaptism." If for some reason one has never obeyed the Lord in baptism, no matter how often he has been under the water, then a scriptural act is not a rebaptism but just the only genuine act. If for some reason a person who has been obedient in baptism is again put under the water, this can add nothing to the one true act; it is superfluous. Understanding this can help immensely with the answer to this question.

Before proceeding further, let's eliminate some of the side issues. First of all, let us establish that the "mode" of baptism about which there is no question is immersion. While there are other acts performed today which are called baptism, the baptism of the New Testament is immersion. This is almost too clear to need any proof. We are "buried in baptism" (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Now it may be that the Lord will honor some act besides immersion, especially when the individual has acted on the best light that he had and was motivated by a sincere desire to please the Lord. I do not know! But I do know what is safe, what He has promised to honor, and what is the only thing that I have any authority for preaching. For this reason, everyone who has received something for baptism which falls short of immersion should be immersed. Our God is not a tyrant, but He does require and honor the obedience of faith. If people are careful to follow the revealed way they have no occasion for wondering whether God will accept something less. From this point on in the discussion, we will assume that the baptism we are talking about is immersion.

Secondly, New Testament baptism is an act of faith. One of the necessary prerequisites for it is faith. "He that believeth and is bap-

tized" (Mark 16:16) is the proper order. Those who were baptized as babies or as small children, unable because of age and immaturity to act by faith, should not suppose that they have been obedient in baptism. Further, those of whatever age who submitted to baptism for a trivial reason instead of as an act of faith in Christ need to be baptized. Young people (and others, even) may get carried along with the crowd and be baptized "because Johnny was." Some might submit to please or satisfy a mate, some simply to be initiated into a religious group, or some in other superficial ways. These do not transact business with the Lord. In the scriptural sense, no baptism has ever really taken place until it is an act of faith.

It is not unusual for someone to request baptism on the grounds that they do not know whether or not a previous act was acceptable to the Lord. A spiritual crisis may bring an awareness that possibly we have been holding on to a form, not reality. Or we may discover meaning attached to baptism by the word of God of which we were not aware. Now one must be careful not to deny the existence of true spiritual life no matter how feeble it may be. Repeated baptisms may betray a wrong concept, possibly more faith in the act than in the Lord of the act. But baptism is too simple an act for people to go on through life wondering, uncertain, dissatisfied. The person who in changing religious ties may be doing so because of a better understanding of Bible truths and may have unresolved questions concerning a former baptism. Certainly it is better to submit to another act than to go on in doubt. We do not even have to sort out which act was the real one; the Lord can do that.

But let's suppose that a person comes to one of our congregations who wishes to work and worship with us—he has been immersed; he is satisfied that he acted by faith in Christ; and having been made aware of New Testament teaching, he believes that he has obeyed the Lord. Shall we require such a one to submit to baptism because the one who administered the act was not "one of us"? That is to make baptism sectarian, the very kind of error we would claim to oppose. True, the words spoken over him may not have been what we might have used, and the doctrinal position of the baptizer or the religious party he represents may not have been all it ought to have been—but the question is whether or not the individual baptized transacted business with the Lord. It is a dangerous position which makes the validity of one's baptism rest on the spiritual character or the doctrinal stand of the administrator. There can be little doubt but what some people have been baptized by men who were really unregenerate, but this does not nullify their proper act of faith. It is one's own personal faith, not that of another, which determines the relationship with God.

Now we do not say that there could never be such a difference between the baptism received and Christian baptism as to make some act unacceptable. In Acts 19:1-5 we read of a case in which twelve

men were baptized, having already received another baptism. But the other baptism was John's baptism, probably not very different from Christian baptism in form but quite different in outlook and in the fact that the Holy Spirit was not given. This incident is sufficient to show us that the right act is necessary and that there are basics to be met in baptism—sincerity alone is not enough—but it is also the only such record in the New Testament, so it should not be construed as an example that the slightest technicality renders the act invalid.

“But,” someone says, “doesn't the fact that the man was joined with a group that was in error make null his baptism?” Do we want to measure ourselves by the same measure? Does the fact that a young Christian among us stumbles and does some wrong things—or perhaps believes some wrong things—nullify his baptism? Or do we believe that having become a Christian the only hope lies in being perfect and without sin thereafter? Is not the Christian message that of a Savior who bears gently with the ignorant and erring and who honors repentance? The same grace of God that we claim for ourselves must also be allowed to the man whose error may be in a slightly different way.

A part of the problem behind the question is the sectarian thinking of which people who are non-sectarian in organization and theory may be guilty. I have heard people say that so-and-so “left the Church and was baptized into the Church of Christ.” Of course the Bible stresses that we are baptized into Christ; it is into the church only as a consequence of being into Christ. But in the case of the individual before us, what if the earlier baptism was genuine—was not the individual at that time baptized into the church of Christ? If he made the error of joining himself to something else, did that nullify the Lord's actions?

In summary, there are certain cases when an individual who has had other religious ties, in deciding to be a New Testament Christian, needs to submit to true New Testament baptism. But there may be cases when such an individual has already become a part of the New Testament church and his change is not that of a totally new beginning but a matter of growth in the Lord. Every case is pretty much an individual one. We must be careful to teach what the New Testament teaches about baptism, and the negative teaching which abounds in so many places may require an extra emphasis in a positive way. At the same time we do not want to be guilty of a Pharisee zeal which establishes human tradition and binds what God has not.

Must one be baptized specifically for the remission of sins for his baptism to be valid?

New Testament baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), but nowhere does the scripture say or intimate that one has to be aware of that nor even that such a purpose has to be in the mind of the baptizer before the baptism is valid. Few people ever come to the

Lord knowing beforehand all of the significance of baptism, or of many other matters. If a growth in understanding of its symbolism and significance made baptism invalid, then most of us would have to repeat the act several times. The faith of the new birth centers on Christ, and when He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the belief is in Christ, not in something about baptism.

A baby does not have to understand the biology of reproduction to be born. Even his parents may not have attained a full understanding of all the process. And while the illustration is not perfect (we do exercise some choices in our new birth), it does point out that processes may work without an awareness of every purpose of God. It is enough if we are baptized in obedience to and in imitation of the Lord—to please Him!

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

FEDERAL JUDGE, HAROLD BURKE said, "Cease and desist!" He couldn't just say, "You stop that." Well, anyway, to whom and about what did he get all that upset? It was that evil ole Mrs. Brennan. She and her husband became concerned that the citizens of their fair city, Rochester, N.Y., were getting a bun deal on mail delivery. They decided they would do something about it, like—and I just whisper here—free enterprise. Yea, they made a deal: give us ten cents per letter (not thirteen) and we'll make you glad you did. Well they did, and the Brennans did. They were delivering 2,000 pieces of mail each day in Rochester. Had hired two men, and were paying taxes on earned income. It must be against the law—not as bad against it as dealing in marijuana or even cocaine. No matter that the 300 Rochesterians were happy with their mail situation, now; "You just cease, and above all desist!"

AMERICANS CAN SUPPORT strange things. Witness: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion . . ." Then just a few lines farther: "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedom of others." The above quotes are from a collectivist philosophy of "human rights" which have been drafted into treaty form as various U.N. Covenants on Human Rights. Do look now since President Carter has submitted three of them to the Senate on February 23, 1978. They could be brought up for debate and a ratification vote at any time. There are three such treaties before the U.S. Senate today, and if ratified would carry the full force of law, and as you can see, they contradict the constitution of the U.S.

I don't wish to belabor this point, but I feel it is of the gravest importance, so I must give another example of its perfidy. ARTICLE 19 paragraph 2. "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression . . ." Para. 3. "The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall be only such as are provided by law." And there are others equally as pernicious.

THEY DID IT. The elected officials, distinguished Senators no less. They voted to let a usurper have our Canal. And they voted him vast sums of money to take it. And during the debate, they often praised this communist to the skies. And they often said regarding numerous amendments offered to the treaties, "We cannot vote for these, because it is contrary to the desires of Omar Torrijos, and we don't wish to go against him." All this when they had received the largest amount of mail ever from their own people whom they were pledged to support and defend, begging them to reject the communist favoring treaties. Is it any wonder that people are losing confidence in their leaders?

AND THE POSTMASTER general admitted the private United Parcel Service is making a profit on the same business upon which the government loses money. The U.P.S. is also faster, less expensive, more reliable, gives free insurance up to \$100 per parcel, and makes three attempts to deliver to the government's one.

There's no tellin' what we could do better than the government if we just thought we could. And the thing that we really need government for, elected officials more and more refuse to do.

DR. CHARLES F. WESTHOFF, head of the Princeton University Office of Population Research, says that the birth rate in America is in such a decline that the government may have to start paying people in the future to have children. Such a suggestion seems "ironic and ludicrous in view of our concerns about growth of only a few years ago," Westhoff says in an article in the journal of the

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. He attributes the low fertility rate of 1.9 births per woman to widespread contraception, abortion, and lifestyles that do not include marriage and says that America's population will stop growing in about 50 years. "Under such circumstances," says Westoff, "there is little doubt that some types of financial incentives to encourage child-bearing will have to be implemented—as they already have been in mild form in many European countries."

ANGELA DAVIS, A CONFESSED Communist has been teaching a required course in feminism at San Francisco State University since January 26th. She has declared war on America. "War is what we are talking about," she said, "a general strike, demonstrative actions which will show pig forces what we can do. When people say we are subversive, we should say, **** yes, we are subversive. And we are going to continue to be subversive until we have subverted this whole **** system of oppression." Are those on the inside of that "oppressive" system who hire subversives themselves subversive? Or need we ask?

LET US LOOK FOR A LESSON. Prime Minister Aldo Moro of Italy recently kidnapped by terrorists, and at this writing reportedly executed by his abductors, was really betrayed by his own government a long time before his kidnapping. And it may very well be that he had a big part to play in his own undoing.

Within fifteen minutes of the killing of his five body guards and his abduction, Italian police and securities service tried to swing into action. They needed, above all, an archive of files on every known terrorist in Italy—but they did not have it. As one high official observed: "We are vulnerable because we are stripped. Under pressure from Communist and other Leftist deputies we dismantled our secret services. We were forced to on the pretext that they represented a State within the State. Our files were destroyed to preserve what the leftists called 'civil liberties!'" And this has happened here. We are vulnerable, too.

PRESIDENT PLEDGES CONTINUED support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Three hundred cheering women gave the President the plan they adopted at Huston last November. The 26-point Plan of Action included endorsements of abortion, lesbianism, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Upon receiving the report, Mr. Carter promised to "redouble our efforts to keep the spirit of Huston alive," and says that "I will establish by executive order an interdepartmental agency and will appoint a committee of women to work intimately with Cabinet officers, agency heads, and the White House." Bella Abzug, who presided over the Huston meeting, said, "Mr. President, we welcome and appreciate what you've done, but it is not enough."

TO BE FOREWARNED is to be forearmed. The American Athiest informs us that "British film maker, David Grant, will reportedly come to the United States this year to shoot one of the most controversial films of all times. The film will be based on Danish screenwriter Jens Jorgen Thorsen's much publicized script, "The Sex Life of Jesus." The play portrays Jesus Christ as engaging in homosexual relationships." According to current schedule, the \$1.2 million production will be filmed early this year if a book based on the script is well received before then.

I would like to be better informed about this in order to make as intelligent a protest to the authorities as possible. If you have such information, please forward it to me. I will share it with our readers, and suggest whom we may write.

MY SOUL IS AMONG LIONS

Winston N. Allen

"My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." Psalm 57:4

David wrote the above statement when he was fleeing for his life from King Saul. On this particular occasion we learn from I Samuel 24:1, 2 that Saul with 3,000 chosen men was hunting for David in the rugged wilderness of Engedi west of the Dead Sea. Because of the apparent odds against him from the human standpoint, David summed up the hazards of his situation in these words. "There is but a step between me and death."

Since the time of Cain and Abel the righteous have been persecuted by the wicked; the children of God have been hated and pursued by the children of the devil. Satan "because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" is increasing his evil work of deceiving, enslaving, persecuting, hindering, killing. We see mounting evidence of it on every hand, even in America. In the prophetic discourse recorded in Matthew 24 Jesus said, "and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." The Apostle Paul foretold present-day conditions when he wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous (dangerous) times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (II Tim. 3:1-3). Many Christian young people who are attending public schools have reason to say, "My soul is among lions." Numerous Christians in their daily work live in an atmosphere of impurity,

blasphemy, rejection and ridicule, Satanic pressure and opposition. They know what it is to face each day with the feeling, "My soul is among lions." Yes, the statement, "My soul is among lions," though written hundreds of years ago, has valuable truths and applications for Christians today as we, in a hostile world, watch and wait and work for the imminent return of Christ.

Why did David refer to evil men as lions? People who know not God are compared in the Bible to various kinds of animals. The Cretans were called "evil beasts." Jesus said, "Cast not your pearls before swine," and He described false teachers as "ravening wolves." In order to warn the Philippian Christians about certain men Paul wrote, "Beware of the dogs." John the baptist speaking to a crowd beside the Jordan River said, "Ye offspring of vipers." What is the significance of the appellation "lions"? Lions are strong and swift, cruel and crafty. The lion carefully and silently watches his intended victim, then stalks and pounces upon his prey in an unguarded moment. He is quick to take advantage of any fault or weakness. Or he may give forth earth-shaking roars in order to produce fear and panic. His strategy fits each situation. Satan may work not only as an angel of light; the Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). In and of self we are no match for the fangs and claws of lions; we are no match for Satan and for those under his control.

The often repeated shout in the arenas of Ancient Rome, "Christians to the lions," expresses the attitude of Satan and those in his kingdom today. Their wrath is increasing and during the Great Tribulation, after the rapture of the Church, it will become white hot. Lions show no mercy. Richard Wurmbrand in his book *Tortured for Christ* wrote, "The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe. When a man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil, there is no reason to be human. There is no restraint from the depths of evil which is in man . . . Communism has destroyed all moral sense in them (communist torturers). They boasted they had no pity in their hearts" (page 38). Only God can measure the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Christians now being persecuted and tortured and murdered in Communist countries.

Sooner or later every true Christian in this present evil world will be in a situation where he or she will have reason to say as did David of old, "My soul is among lions." Paul wrote in II Tim. 3:12, "Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18,19).

How should a Christian think and behave in the presence of lions? First of all it is important to remember there is another lion there, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" who promised, "I will never

leave thee nor forsake thee." Being among lions can mean close fellowship with the Lord; many have testified that this is so. The Apostle John wrote, "greater is he that is in you than he (the devil) that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

When among lions it is vital to be calm and manifest courage; they are quick to detect fear and take advantage of it. Repeatedly Christ said to his disciples, "Be not afraid." It has been asserted that the statement, "Do not be afraid" (or its equivalent) is given 366 times in the Bible, once for every day in the year, even for leap year. In a time of great danger David wrote, "Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his Word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:2-4). And in Psalm 4:8 he made this wonderful statement, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

When among lions do not roar yourself. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Meeting hard words with hard words, accusation with accusation, threats with threats has a way of escalating into violence. Romans 12:14-21 gives the course of action for the Christian.

Ask for grace to tame the lions. Saul of Tarsus was quite a vicious lion before he was tamed. George Muller, Billy Sunday, C. H. Spurgeon—the list could go on and on of lions who were tamed because certain Christians were obedient to the Lord's Great Commission and were empowered by His Holy Spirit.

Christians can take courage and comfort from the assurance that persecution by lions will last a comparatively short time and then, by His grace, we will be with the Lord forever. Paul, who knew what it was to be "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (II Tim. 4:17b), gave a brief list of his persecutions in II Cor. 11:23-28. A solid hope enabled him to endure victoriously. He wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:28). The glorious future includes the millennium when the nature of four-legged lions will be changed (Isa. 11:6, 7), followed by eternity with the Lord in the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem.

One final thought: people of the world who are earnestly and honestly searching for truths and reality have the right to ask Christians the same question King Darius asked Daniel the morning after he was thrown by two-legged lions into "the den of lions," "Is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?" What a testimony Daniel's experience was and is to others! What is our testimony as we face the lions? Bringing it closer to home: is thy God able to deliver thee from the lions of worry, covetousness, lust, bitterness, fear, selfishness and pride? We can find reassuring answers in Jude 24; Eph. 3:20; II Cor. 9:8; Heb. 2:18, 7:25; and II Tim. 1:12. Yea, God is abundantly able! Are we willing to trust and obey?

Bible Exposition -- Matthew

The Great Tribulation

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Matthew 24:15-28

Introduction

We have seen in our previous study that, while nominal Christians often question the validity of prophetic study, our Lord Jesus silenced the notion that we should avoid such study by giving to the disciples questions concerning the future the longest answer that He ever gave to any of their questions. Since He did not chide or rebuke them for their interest, we may, therefore, assume that interest in prophecy does not lead to weird and spooky theological views.

It is important, however, that we remember several guidelines in eschatological study. If we do, we shall avoid the false extremes that characterize too much of the contemporary study of the issues of the future. It is from these extremes that the strange and the bizarre views of some students arise. In the first place, we must remember that it is absolutely impossible for *human prophecy* to exist. Human curiosity and human speculation exist, but human prophecy is beyond the human mind (cf. Isa. 41:21-24). I love the deliciously ironic words of the Chinese proverb, "To prophecy is extremely difficult, —especially with respect to the future."

A second thing that we should remember is the weakness of *human interpretation* of prophecy. It was very difficult for the early Christians to interpret the Old Testament prophecies of the first advent with accuracy, especially concerning the details of the first coming. And, while we are cognizant of the fact that the Holy Spirit has now come in a unique way, it is probably to be expected that we shall find it difficult to be certain of all the details regarding the second advent.

And, finally, while the preceding strictures must be kept in mind constantly, we must also remember the necessity and utility of human interpretation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is true that prophetic interpretation is not easy, but we should be worse off if we made no attempt to find the mind of God regarding future things. The Word of God makes very plain that the Christian hope is not only enlightening, but also spiritually edifying and morally uplifting (cf. 1 John 3:1-3).

The subject of the great tribulation, which comes before us in the section of Matthews we are to study now, is one of the giant subjects of the Bible. Large sections of Scripture have to do with it, such as, for example, Daniel, the Old Testament prophets, the gospels, the eschatological epistles of the New Testament, and the Revelation. It is, indeed, as our young people would say, one of the "biggies" of the Bible. I remember an old country saying, "You can't get all

the coons up the same tree!" Therefore, in this study we shall have to be satisfied with a telescopic, rather than a microscopic, approach, laying special stress on the contribution of this passage to the general doctrine.

Perhaps it would be helpful to review some of the important features of the prophetic calendar of the Bible. The major parts of it are the following:

(1) First, the course of the present age will be characterized by the growth of the true church (cf. Matt. 16:13-20), the growth of professing Christendom (cf. 13:1-52), and the growth of apostasy within the latter (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13).

(2) Second, the translation of the church, including the resurrection of the dead saints, the rapture of the living (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18), and the judgment seat of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

(3) Third, the seventieth week of Israel (cf. Dan. 9:24-27), during which a series of prophetic events occur, including the rise of world government and the beast, or the Antichrist, the making of a covenant by the Antichrist with the Jews in the land concerning worship and other matters, and the breaking of the covenant by the beast in the middle of the week (cf. Dan. 9:27).

(4) Fourth, the second advent of Christ (cf. Rev. 19-21-22), with the judgment of Israel (cf. Ezek. 20:24-38; Matt. 25:1-13) and the judgment of the Gentiles (cf. Matt. 25:31-46).

(5) Fifth, the messianic kingdom of Christ (cf. Rev. 20:4-6).

(6) Sixth, the great white throne judgment, where all past accounts of the lost are settled permanently (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

(7) Seventh, the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, or the eternal state (cf. Rev. 21:1-8).

With this in mind we shall now turn to the picture of the great tribulation and related events which our Lord gives in this, His great prophetic discourse.

I THE CONNECTION OF THE SECTION

We have learned from our last study that the Olivet Discourse, the third of His greatest discourses recorded in this book, is the exposition of the gleam of hope suggested by the little word "till" in His lament over Jerusalem and the warning of judgment contained in the lament, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (cf. Matt. 23:39.) The Olivet Discourse explains how Israel, after discipline, shall be received again into the favor of the Lord, and when this shall take place in the program of God.

The disciples had been puzzled over the prophecy of the temple's desolation and had shown Him the beauty of the temple complex (cf.

24:1). That provoked from Him the further more definitive words, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (24:2).

Since this seemed to be the end of everything to them, they then asked Him, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age" (24:3)? The first of the queries is answered in verses four through twenty-eight, and the second is answered in verses twenty-nine through thirty-one.

The "therefore" of verse fifteen introduces the thoughts of instruction and admonition in the light of the coming of the "end" (cf. v. 14). The preceding verses, verses four through fourteen are a general summary of the entire seventieth week of Israel. In fact, the verses describe conditions that shall exist from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. until the end of the present age in the coming of our Lord the second time, but the emphasis rests upon the seventieth week of the future. It is the time of which Jeremiah writes, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (30:7).

II THE INSTRUCTION OF OUR LORD

The occasion for it (24:15). The stress of the section is upon the disastrousness and the suddenness of the end-time events.

The mention of "the abomination of desolation" (cf. Dan. 9:27) standing in the temple has provoked differing interpretations. While Tasker does not explain himself completely clearly, he seems to take the expression to refer to the ensign carried by the Roman soldiers, to which the image of the emperor was attached. The Jews would abhor this, for it suggested idolatry. Hendriksen thinks the words were fulfilled in the past, when Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) erected a pagan altar over the altar of burnt-offering, thus polluting the temple. But he also sees in the prophecy a reference to 70 A.D., when the Roman armies desecrated the holy place (cf. Luke 21:20).

Now, one thing is clear. Our Lord was thinking of the future, for He said, "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation . . . stand in the holy place." In the context of Daniel 9:27 the reference is to the time future to the earthly ministry of the Lord and just before the consummation of the age. Further, the parallel passages in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Revelation 13:11-15 make it clear that the passage refers to the setting up of the image of the beast in the restored temple in Jerusalem during the seventieth week. That is the time reference of both the Daniel and the Matthew passage. Paul very definitely locates the event in the time of the Day of the Lord, and refers the abomination of desolation to the image of the beast set up in the temple. He writes, "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day (that is, the day of the Lord) shall not come, except there come the falling away first, and that man of sin revealed, the son of

perdition, Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he, as God, SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD (he refers to the image of the man of sin), showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

The content of it (24:15-20). Instruction is now given regarding the proper action when the man of sin sets up by his lieutenant, the false prophet, the image of himself in the temple of the Jews. The call to worship the pagan image of a pagan deity, a self-proclaimed deity, is the signal for the abrogation of the covenant made between the beast and the nation at the beginning of the seventieth week. It seems that the act of profanation of the temple is clear evidence to the nation that he is not really a man to be trusted. He turns out to be, after all, a false Messiah. The disciples are warned to give careful attention to what He is saying, for He adds as a parenthesis, "whosoever readeth, let him understand."

The flight of the faithful is to be "into the mountains," an expression thought by many students to refer to Perea, one of the towns of the Decapolis, about 100 miles across the hills of Judea and Moab. The source of this view is the comments of Eusebius in his history of the church and Epiphanius. Whether the disciples at the destruction of Jerusalem did flee to Pella or not cannot be ascertained. The tradition is a fourth century one, and many feel it highly unlikely that any would have been able to escape the Roman armies at the time. The ultimate reference, according to the interpretation I am following, is to the future (cf. Rev. 12:1-18). It is advice for the tribulation believers of the future.

The necessity for sudden flight is stressed by the commands of verses seventeen and eighteen. The need for flight is greater than the need for personal possessions, even a cloak.

The compassion of the Lord is seen in the expression of sympathy for the women who are pregnant or who have small children. The feeling of sympathy is characteristic of Him as He is presented in this gospel (cf. 8:17; 9:13; 11:25-30; 12:7, 30; 15:32; 19:13-15; 23:23, 37). Especially significant is His feeling for women, for their lot was not always good in ancient times.

The command to pray that flight be not in winter, nor on the sabbath day, reflects the fact that persons warned are of Jewish persuasion. Again, the reference is probably to the future, when the nation is again in the land and observing the ancient laws of the sabbath. And that is just the situation that exists today.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to refer to verse twenty often to illustrate that one must read the Bible keeping the age distinctions in mind. An exhortation such as this for the church age, he thought, would not make much sense, for the church is not subject to the laws of the sabbath.

The reason for it (24:21-22). The "for" introduces the reason it is necessary to warn of the perils that come through the breaking of the covenant and the following terrible persecutions. The time that follows shall be a time of "great tribulation" (cf. v. 21).

It is remarkable that some of the commentators on the gospel of Matthew have tried to make the expression "great tribulation" refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. That cannot be. In the first place, history itself has shown that greater tribulation has befallen Israel, as the recent memory of Auschwitz and Buchenwald and the other horror camps with their gas ovens testifies. The Nazi butchers were to the Romans as professionals are to amateurs. In the second place, the words, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (cf. v. 21) echo Daniel's, words which describe the times of the end (cf. Dan. 11:36-45), "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, SUCH AS NEVER WAS SINCE THERE WAS A NATION EVEN TO THAT SAME TIME; and at that time thy people shall be delivered every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1) In other words, the context of the words in Daniel, from which our Lord's words are drawn, indicates that the expression refers to the time of the end of the age. That is confirmed by the fact that Daniel adds that at that time the nation shall be delivered a thing that did not happen at the destruction of the city in 70 A.D. Finally, in spite of Hendriksen's attempt to separate the expression, "great tribulation," from that of Revelation 7:14, "the great tribulation," the two expressions refer to the same time. The article in the Revelation passage is probably used with reference to the Lord's words in Matthew.

The severity of the tribulation period is an important feature to bear in mind in connection with debate over the rapture of the church. Occasionally students, commenting on Acts 14:22 and its reference to the believer's experience of "tribulations" in the Christian life as a necessary thing flowing out of our conversation, claim that the possibility of going through the great tribulation is nothing more than the "many tribulations" (the Greek is plural) through which we must enter into the kingdom of God. The great tribulation, however, is not to be compared with our present trials, as our Lord's words indicate. It is a time of divine wrath (cf. Rev. 6:17), and that fact is a serious consideration in the rapture debate of the present time.

The "elect" referred to here (cf. v. 22) include the 144,000 from the twelve tribes (cf. Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-5) and is, thus, here primarily a reference to the elect from the nation.

III THE ADMONITION OF OUR LORD

The time of Jacob's trouble is not only a time of *disaster*. It is also a time of *deception*, as the final verses of the section show. The words are directed against false messiahs. We are reminded of 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 and Revelation 13:13-15. The "great signs and

wonders" that they perform will be most deceptive. For example, we are told that the false prophet, the lieutenant of the beast, will cause fire to come down from heaven (cf. Rev. 13:13-15). It is easy to see how that miracle might deceive, since a similar one performed by Elijah was the means of distinguishing the true prophet from the prophets of Baal (cf. 1 Kings 18:24). We can imagine the propaganda of the beast, namely, that he is "the god who answered by fire," and that the people, therefore, should "let him be God"!

The words, "insomuch, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (cf. v. 24), are striking. They affirm the impossibility of deceiving the elect and, therefore, witness to the perseverance of the saints.

The words of verse twenty-seven, "For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the son of man be," stress the universal self-manifestation of the Son. There will be no going into the closets to find Him then! As Plummer says, "The final event would be sudden and everywhere visible; there would be no sending of tidings that it was on its way, or had begun in any one place. The Messiah would not lie hidden for a time and become gradually known; His appearance would at once carry conviction as to who He was, and there would be no need to learn this from others." No one will foresee it, and all will see Him at once.

The final sentence, the proverbial saying about the carcass and the vultures (lit., *eagles*), is very general in its force and, thus, is capable of various applications. In the light of the context here it appears to refer to the false messiahs and prophets. A time of crises is often an opportunity for imposters.

The eagles are vultures, and the vultures were the Palestinian Board of Sanitation, useful in the removal of the corruption of the dead carcasses. Thus, the meaning of it seems to be this: The corrupt state of a society that, failing to heed the Word of God, goes running after the false gods will be inevitably devoured by the judgment of God. The judgment will come at the second advent (cf. 13:41).

Conclusion

The great tribulation lays forever to rest the idea that God is only a God of love. "God is Love," said the princely Princetonian, B. B. Warfield, "But it does not in the least follow that He is nothing but love. God is Love; but Love is not God, and the formula 'Love' must therefore be inadequate to express God."

One final word will suffice, and it is, "Whoso readeth, let him understand"!

A Study Of Discipline In The Church

by Alex Wilson

This topic is important, neglected, unpleasant, and complicated!

A. *GOD Disciplines Us, in Love*: "The Lord disciplines him whom he loves" (Heb. 12:6, quoting from Prov. 3). "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). But the Lord also calls on US to discipline each other, in love.

B. *Discipline is Important*: To neglect it may produce anarchy, disorder, and ungodliness. (cf. 1 Cor; 2 Thes.) To overdo it may produce dictatorship, fear, and lack of love. (cf. 3 John)

C. *Discipline is Positive as well as Negative*: The Greek word *paideia* means "discipline" but also "nurture," that is, to help to grow and mature. Compare also the words "discipline" and "disciple," that is, learner and follower.

Thus Leonard Tuggy in "Discipline in the Pauline Churches" defines discipline as "that body of measures which the church employs to secure its own purity and order and the spiritual well-being of its members."

Viewed in this way, Mr. Tuggy suggests that church discipline can be divided into two kinds: (1) General Discipline: a continuing process which aims to prevent sin and promote holiness; (2) Judicial Discipline: steps taken to deal with serious sins if and when they occur.

General discipline is like taking vitamins regularly to stay healthy, or getting a cholera inoculation to avoid catching the disease, or putting alcohol on a small scratch to prevent its becoming infected.

Judicial discipline is like an operation that is needed to remove a cancerous tumour.

Or, to give another analogy, suggested by a Christian electrical engineer: general discipline is like preventive maintenance, while judicial discipline is like "trouble-shooting" problems or breakdowns that have already occurred.

D. *General Church Discipline—the Ongoing, Hopefully Preventive Process*: "In dealing with the problems which arise in the church there is no single action which the leaders are to take.. Rather there is a spectrum of approaches . . . from the very gentle to the quite severe depending on the situation." —Tuggy

Note the following "levels of increasing intensity" found by H. L. Goudge in the pastoral epistles: (1) *Remind* Christians of what they may have forgotten, Tit. 3:1. (2) *Insist* on matters which perhaps are being contradicted by others, Tit. 3:8 ("affirm confidently," ASV; "stress," NIV). (3) *Command*, 1 Tim. 4:11. Here teaching—informing the mind—commanding—confronting the will—are linked together.

(4) *Charge*, 2 Tim. 2:14 (“warn,” NIV): to command with urgency.
(5) *Reprove* or rebuke, Tit. 1:13; 1 Tim. 5:20. “Rebuke them sharply.” “As for elders who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.”

E. The Procedure to Follow If a Christian Sins:(1) Matt. 18:15-17 Notice 4 steps, beginning with general discipline and ending with judicial discipline. “Rule one in dealing with sin is to go at the earliest possible moment to the person involved.” (John White, *Eros Defiled*, IVP)

(2) Gal. 6:1, 2. The verb “restore” is also used to refer to mending fishing-nets and to set broken bones so they will heal properly. Attitudes of gentleness and humility are stressed; but gentleness does not mean ignoring the sin and neglecting to take action about it.

F. Judicial Church Discipline: (1) 2 Thes. 3:6-15. A not-so-extremely-serious offense, but made serious because it was being persisted in: see 1 Thes. 4:11-12; 2 Thes. 3-10.

(2) 1 Cor. 5:1-13. A very serious offense. Notice that the 1st 3 steps of Matt. 18 are omitted here: Paul orders immediate excommunication! Why? “In Corinth the whole church knew what was going on. What is more, they prided themselves in their broadminded attitude and actually fostered the sinner’s defiant lack of repentance. Church members in Corinth were all as guilty as the man in question. The action at Corinth involved the purging of a sinful church even more than the discipline of an unrepentant man” (John White, pp. 164-65).

G. Purposes of Judicial Discipline, from 1 Cor. 5: (1) to provoke the sinner to repent, v. 5. (2) to protect the purity of the church, that other members will not be contaminated by the sinner’s evil influence, v. 6. (3) to protect the good testimony of Christ and His people, implied in v. 1b (they were *worse* than pagans in their conduct in this matter; we should be *better!*).

H. Other passages for Study: Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:10; 1 Tim. 1:19-20 & 2 Tim. 2: 16-18 (same man mentioned).

I. Repentance Should Bring Restoration: 2 Cor. 2:5-8 (It is not certain if the offender mentioned here is the same person mentioned in 1 Cor. 5. See Tuggy or the commentaries.) The sinning member, having been punished (6) and being sorrowful (7), should now be comforted by the assurance of forgiveness and love.

Difficult Question: Does repentance by the sinner bring restoration *All* the way, *Right* away? Should his reacceptance by the church be complete and immediate, especially if his sin was serious?

His repentance fulfills the first purpose of judicial discipline mentioned above (section G), but might the purity and testimony of the church be endangered by complete and immediate restoration?

This question plagued the early church. During periods of fierce persecution by the Roman Empire, some Christians renounced their

faith in Christ and made offerings to the images of Caesar. But after persecution died down, some of them asked to be restored to membership in the church. Church leaders feared that if such deserters were restored too easily, then if persecution broke out again all but the strongest Christians would turn away—planning on a later repentance and restoration!

“Early leaders divided over how to treat apostates and unfaithful Christians. Some wanted to bar them forever from the church; others wanted to let them return to the church after evidence of repentance. Various plans were suggested for bringing such offenders back. One system permitted them to kneel outside the church-building and give evidence of grief during meetings, for a full year—these were called *weepers*. The next year they were allowed to come into the church building and hear the service, hence they were called hearers. The next year they could kneel during the service until time for the Lord’s Supper, when they must leave—such were called *kneelers*. The 4th year they were allowed to stand during the service—they were called co-standers. And finally they were admitted to the Lord’s Supper and restored to fellowship.”

—Robt. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, p. 52

Another example from early church history:

An early Christian book *The Shepherd of Hermas* (between 100-150 A.D.) tackles “a problem of practical Christian living . . . While all Christians would agree that at baptism all past sins were blotted out; what was to happen to those within the ranks of the churches who committed really gave sins after baptism? Were these able to be forgiven? Hermas claims that he has had a revelation from God, to the effect that there is one further chance offered. Persistent sin after baptism is ruled out as inadmissible; but forgiveness is possible for serious offences once, and once only, after public confession and penance. Strange to say, Hermas received most criticism for being too lax!”

—M. A. Smith, *From Christ to Constantine*, p. 40

To us today the early church seemed to be far too harsh and legalistic. To them, churches today would seem far too lenient.

Both God’s holiness and His grace must be upheld as much as possible. “Never minimize sin, but always magnify grace.”

J. *Objections Often Made Against Church Discipline*: (1) It is too severe. Often people make this complaint, and support it with these verses: “Let him who is without sin throw the first stone.” “Judge not, that you be not judged.” But the Same Jesus who made the first statement also gave the teaching found in Mat. 18:15-17. And a minute after saying, “Judge not,” He said, “Cast not your pearls before swine”—which involves some kind of judging!

(2) “You are inconsistent: ‘x’ did the same thing I did, and you didn’t punish him the same way or to the same degree that you are

punishing me.” Of course consistency should be sought, and partiality avoided, as much as possible. But this is often hard because each case differs in some ways from other cases. Often backsliders quit being active members before any discipline can be exercised, so the effect of the discipline is only partial anyway. (That does not mean it should not be carried out, however.)

(3) “God tells us to be forgiving. How then can you punish this person?” Christ said, “. . . *if he repents*, forgive him” (Luke 17:3,4). Discipline is needed to try to bring him to repentance. But in some cases, even after he repents and we forgive him, some penalty may still be needed. See 2 Sam. 12:10, 13, 14 and section “I” above.

K. Some Current Problems and Questions related to Church Discipline: (1) Many churches do not exercise it, so those which do seem to be too severe.

(2) Because there are many different denominations today, a person disfellowshipped by one church may salve his conscience by switching to another church across town. Perhaps leaders there are unaware of the problem, or even don’t care.

(3) What about family ties, if one member of a family is excommunicated and others in the family are also Christians? How should they act in this case?

(4) What sins are serious enough to deserve excommunication, and which sins are not that serious? Extremes must be avoided, wether “witchhunts” or laxness.

(5) What other forms of discipline can be administered besides excommunication? 1 Tim. 5:19,20 mentions public rebuke. Other possibilities: taking away of his public ministry and-or of leadership positions; limiting of privilege and perhaps of finances. What else?

(6) If a sinning Christian is both a church-member and a member or worker for some para-church organization, what responsibilities do the church and the organization have to each other?

(7) The limitations of judicial discipline: Usually it cannot be used against inner, “spiritual” sins—which really are the most serious. How can anyone be disciplined for envy, pride, bitterness, impure thinking, e.g.—so long as these sinful attitudes do not erupt in serious actions?

Thus some Pharisee-type Christians, full of pride, may Biblically and rightly excommunicate an adulterer Christian, and yet perhaps be farther from God than he is!

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Alvin Hobby

Livingstone, Zambia

January 27, 1978

Our rains continue but not as heavy as they were two or three weeks ago. We were able to go to Kasiya Village for the Thursday morning Bible lesson yesterday. But we could not have got there in an ordinary car. Land-rovers are good for mud and sand!

Georgia is beginning to walk without crutches, a little bit at a time, mainly in the house. Last week, she started teaching Religious Education classes in the 7th grade in three primary schools in Livingstone, where the headmasters are members of the church. This amounts to twenty-one 40-minute periods a week.

I have just finished reading and correcting the Tonga type-scripts of some of the Minor Prophets.

Samuel Shewmaker was here a short time yesterday. He and his family plan to settle and work in Lusaka.

Georgia and I moved into this house four years ago yesterday; and, looking back, we do not know what we would have done if we had not found it.

Donald R. Harris

Salisbury, Rhodesia

March 1, 1978

The Social Welfare came pleading for me to take four boys whose African mother ran away and the father who is coloured was put in prison because he had not paid some debts. He drinks too much and just won't take care of the boys as he should. I told them we were just too full but the officer stated that it would only be until this Friday. I finally agreed and we took the boys in and put them in the sick room. Two are sleeping on the bed and the other two on pallets in the floor. The boys are to be sent to Bullawayo to a boarding school there. At least they will receive education and may be able to help themselves one day.

Our spindryer sprung a leak so Donald had to see what he could do about it, found it was the pump and will need a new part. We wash four times a week. Eight boys, eight girls, Donald, Delores and myself to cope with..

I have finished a patch work quilt, Kevsey saw me making it and asked if he could have it when it was finished. So I said, "first there first served." So he proudly has it on his bed for a spread. It was made from curtain material samples someone had given us. Done by machine, even the quilting, no so neat as by hand. We have a new little girl, 4 years old, admitted to the home. She is cute and good so all the older girls want to mother her.

February 13, 1978

We have been very busy here at the Children's Home. We are glad to report that the concrete floor on the new home was completed the 28th of January. It sure took us a long time to get on it again and get it completed. It seems that everytime we would plan to start again, something would happen to offset the plans. That would give us another six months before we have to have anything done according to the Government regulations. The next step will be to put up some corners of brick, but we have plenty of time.

We had to renew our passports before the end of this month. For the past couple of weeks we're really busy getting visas to South Africa, permits, injections, etc. We left Salisbury 7 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 5, and arrived Johannesburg at 10:30 p.m. and checked into a hotel close by for the night. The next morning we moved into a cheaper hotel and went to see about our passports being renewed. We filled out the necessary papers and were able to receive our passports the following morning. We were able to purchase a few items while we were there that we could not find in Salisbury and bring back with us. We returned Wed., Feb. 8th, at 2 p.m. but had some problem getting back through immigration and they had us sit for some time before letting us through. But all went well and we were back at the Children's Home at 3:30 p.m. We bought some chocolates which were not attainable and the children are really enjoying them, and at this writing are about finished.

We would like for you to welcome to our home a new young boy by the name of Stuart Edison age 9, and this past week we admitted another little girl age 4. This little girl is named Virginia and she had no last name. Our oldest boy Francis Ronny found her in some villages that had been attacked by terrorists and had been burnt down and built again. The child was most frightened at any uniform and he and some of his friends would leave some sweets and biscuits in a pile and go away and watch her from a distance. She would grab a few of the sweets and run away. Finally Francis met the mother who had come to visit the child, and he spoke to her about the home here. At first she could not believe him, and thought he was telling lies, but he convinced her, wrote a letter to me and gave it to her to bring. The mother finally brought the child and admitted her here. The child as yet does not speak english, but will soon pick it up. She is a very pretty girl and is doing very well at this writing. We praise God for we know that Christ called the little children to him.

J. C. Shewmaker

Columbia, Mo.

March 7, 1978

We have been delighted to learn of the internal settlement in Rhodesia, and do pray that that land may have peace from the outside enemies and recognition by the world. Many of our brethren and their families have suffered intensely from the guerilla warfare which infests Rhodesia. They stand in need of our prayers. Our Christian men are tired of being called up for service.

The snows have also kept us quite confined of late and more is forecast for today or tonight, but we hope to be able to get out to some of the surrounding places as soon as the winter conditions show signs of subsiding, so that it is safer on the roads.

Joyce's five-week check-up showed satisfactory progress from her operation, and I went into the University of Mo. Clinic yesterday to ascertain my own present health conditions. The doctor seemed to be pleased with my condition.

REPRINTS:

Knowing Of Whom Thou Hast Learned

Stanford Chambers

Part Two of A History of Premillennial Interpretation

A. Campbell

In the first year of my ministry a sister gave me a volume of *The Millennial Harbinger*. Later I have had the privilege of examining all of them. Now a harbinger is a herald, a forerunner. A millennial harbinger would be a forerunner proclaiming the coming millennium. Such did Campbell title his periodical. He was not a-millennial, for he looked forward to the millennium. Nor was he post-millennial, as the following quotations amply show. We quote but a FEW of the many statements by him that we might quote to the same effect.

"No kingdom of this world has yet become the kingdom of Jesus Christ . . . When Christianity gains the throne, Jesus Christ will place it there Himself; and wherever He sets up His throne, from that place shall go forth the law adapted to His subjects in their triumphant state . . . But till Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven His cause and His people can never gain the ascendancy." Vol. I, p. 119 ff. (Post-millennialists and a-millennialists to the contrary. Note his last statement above).

In 1841 he wrote: "With me the term Millennium represents neither more or less than what is described in the single passage where the thousand years are six times named . . . We have had six millenniums of the triumphs of infidelity, impiety, atheism, almost completed; we have the promise of one millennium of the same duration in which the gospel and its friends shall have the ascendancy."

(When will that be? See paragraph above).

In 1843: "In one word, I yet believe in a Millennium—a thousand years—a Sabbath of bliss before the scenes of Gog and Magog are transacted."

In 1849: "But God has not kept them (the Jews, S.C.) these many ages for nothing. He will use them again, and yet again bless all the nations of the earth by the seed of Abraham . . . We hear a rattling of the dry bones. The Jews are intent on rebuilding their city and their temple, and in returning to their own land."

In 1855; re. the Millennium: "The compass and grandeur of that sublime subject demand a concentration of mind paramount to any other subject now on our horizon."

In 1856: "That the Redeemer shall come out of Zion and turn away "ungodliness"—impiety, the fuel of unbelief, 'from Jacob' is an express oracle indicative of some special and glorious interpretation of the Lord Jesus—which may usher in what we usually call 'the personal reign of Christ'—the subjection of all things to Him."

In 1866: "The signs of the times are truly portentous, and all meditative spirits cannot but long to look into the deep significance of the long unfulfilled but yet sure words of prophecy, to see if they give us any foreshadowing of that which is to come. The cry comes up from the waiters, watchers, "Watchman, what of the night?" (This, the year of his death).

(It is to be recognized that in that period around the dates set by Miller and the Adventists for the Lord's return, and the failure of their date-setting (1843-1844) Campbell receded a bit from positions previously taken by him, but our last quotations show that in his later years he had reacted strongly in his hope of prophetic fulfillment).

Christian System, page 311: "Jesus will be universally acknowledged by all the race of living men, and all nations shall do Him homage. This state of society will be the consummation of the Christian religion, in all its moral influences and tendencies upon mankind.

"How far this change is to be effected by moral and how far by physical means is not the subject of this present inquiry. But the preparation of a people for the coming of the Lord must be the result of the restoration of the ancient gospel and order of things. And come when it may, the day of the regeneration of the world will be a day as wonderful and terrible as was the day of the deluge, of Sodom's judgment, or of Jerusalem's catastrophe. Who shall stand when the Lord does this" ? Note Campbell believed the coming of the Lord means "the regeneration of the world."

Robert Milligan

"When Satan shall be bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6) and the saints of the Most High possess the Kingdom (Dan. 7:14,18, 22), the prophecy of Isa. 11:6-9 may be more literally fulfilled than we now anticipate." Comments on Heb. 2:8. All who have read Milligan know that he has written much more to the same effect. Note his previous comments on man's future dominion over the earth. Of such

dominion, Milligan points out, Jesus already crowned is the guarantee. Whatever else may be claimed concerning Milligan these are his words, yet he was not marked.

Walter Scott

"Israel was organized civilly before they were organized religiously; in Christianity this order is reverse. We have received the inner government first; but the time will come 'when the saints,' as Daniel says, 'shall possess the government,' and all power, authority and rule be recovered to God by His Son and His saints." Pioneer Sermons and Addresses, p. 178. Though much more could be quoted from Scott, this is enough to show any who have not read him that he looked forward to the reign of Christ and His saints.

That Stone, Barclay, Creath and others of pioneer day could be similarly quoted will not be denied. Let the reader bear in mind that we are not here concerned as to whether these men were *right or wrong*; what we are saying is that the men called "pioneers" taught things which in our day are being pronounced by some (who have become articulate) "heresy." Clearly that which is called "The Restoration Movement" was BORN pre-millennial. If the teaching was not heresy then, neither is it heresy now. If they are heretics, who thus teach now, then were they heretics who taught so then,—they whose names appear above. Those being marked today find in the teaching of "the pioneers" every point of doctrine to which the present day MARKERS object. But let us refer to another or two of a bit later date.

Daniel Sommer

From boyhood I read Daniel Sommer and heard him. His book "Questions, Answers and Remarks" dates back to the beginning of our century. On Revelation we read "What shall we say to those who declare that Christ will not come again till at the end of the Millennial Age? (So declare post-millennialists S.C.). We may say, 'Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' All such by implication deny that the resurrection mentioned in I Cor. 15:12-54 and I Thes. 4:13-17 means 'the first resurrection' . . . Then when John declares, in contradistinction from the righteous dead, 'But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,' the testimony on this subject is complete . . . They ought not to have any religious theories."

(As to success of this dispensation) "Till that great and notable day of the Lord come, we cannot, from the prophetic word, anticipate a universal return to the original gospel, nor a general restoration of all the institutions of the Kingdom of Heaven in their primitive character; and consequently, we cannot promise to ourselves the universal subjugation of the nations to the scepter of Jesus . . . Meanwhile the original gospel is extensively proclaimed and many thousands are preparing for the day of the Lord; and they are taught by the 'Faithful and True Witness' that the day of the Lord will come as a thief

in the night, and that their happiness and safety alike consist in being prepared for His second advent.”

Beware of Misrepresenting The Dead Or The Living

“Our Special,” First Edition, has been charged with misrepresenting the dead. A serious thing to do; to misrepresent the living likewise. Bearing false witness is forbidden of God. But strange it is that men whose sepulchres we paint and adorn could say things we quote and be honored by the very ones who brand as heretics those who say the same things today! Have we misquoted any man? Check up on us. Did the men we quote mean something other than what they said? Did they say something to the opposite at some other time? Let that be however as it may, **THEY DID SAY THESE THINGS**. If there was no Diotrophes as in John’s day, or no sons of Diotrophes as in our day, to cast them out, it is so much to the credit of that generation of Christians. That a change has come since then is obvious enough. To teach that Christ will come and receive the nations for His inheritance as decreed in the Second Psalm is error deserving of excommunication; to teach (contrary to II Tim. 3 et al.) that we shall convert the world and reign in His absence (?) is doctrine of perfect soundness! And so effort after effort is made to cast out and close doors—doors even of churches established by the men they decree shall be cast out! “Chips out of the old block;” if they are less successful than Diotrophes of old (III Jno. 10) it is no fault of theirs.

But they challenge proof that the men we quote were “modern premillennialists”! Inconsistency manifests itself here. Is one not to be classed as pre-millennial, if he does not believe all that some “premillennials” has fantastically proclaimed. Then we qualify as orthodox! Do post-millennialists want to be held for all the fanciful interpretations presented by their kind? Our challenger is an immersionist. He would say an affusionist was hard put to it should he charge him, e.g., with the fantastic theory of Mormon proxy immersion for the dead. Why does he resort to just such tactics? Is he “hard put?” Evidently.

Our country now over 170 years old is not as old as Christianity was before a single voice was heard declaring for the millennium of peace before Christ’s return. Who does not know that? And when in the third century Origen did speak thus, he was strenuously opposed. Origen was as wrong in that as he was in his universalism and his probation for the dead, the doctrine of purgatory in its incipency. See Qualben, Church History, 5th Edition, et al.

L. F. Bittle

(Until his death associated with Sommer on the Review

Commenting on I Cor. 15:51-52: “Evidently this resurrection and transformation will not include the first three classes mentioned in the parable of the sower, nor embrace the servant who hid his talent

in a napkin. None of these characters will have a part in the glorification which is the first manifestation of Christ's power at his second advent. They must wait until the second resurrection and general judgment. But all Christ's redeemed are caught up into the air to be with Him forever. As a reward for their faithfulness they are made His bride and reign with Him upon the throne of His glory. These being taken away from the evil to come, the people, the Jews and Gentiles, left alive upon the earth, enter into the great tribulation." Goes on to quote Jesus in Matt. 24:29-30 ON the great tribulation and the appearing of the Lord Jesus, and identifies THIS appearance with that foretold by John in Rev. 19:11-21. Says, "In other words His saints already glorified will come with Him to subjugate and judge the nations." Shows that the judgment of Matt. 25:31-46 is *that* judgment, and that His reign begins with His taking "the throne of His glory" as in verse 31. (And this, some *today* stigmatize as "heresy") L. F. Bittle a heretic!

The Future of the Jews

What difference does it make to us,—the future of the Jews? But much is being written and said (on the negative) as though it DOES make a difference; and moreover if the Scriptures speak on the subject, and they do, (Rom. 9,10,11, e.g.,) it is because DIVINE wisdom sees need of our being informed. Indeed it is concerning the Jews that Paul is writing in Romans 11 when he says, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, . . . lest ye be wise in your own conceits." And A. Campbell says knowledge on this subject is "in order to our own edification and comfort." Now, we could afford to differ with Campbell, of course, but hardly with the apostle Paul. See Rom. 11:25.

Campbell

"With Paul, we rejoice in the prophetic drama, and, therefore, anticipate a glorious triumph of grace in the redemption of ancient Israel according to the flesh." More in same volume.

—Popular Lectures and Addresses

1858. "We must, indeed, in order to our own edification and comfort, be fully assured that what is yet future, or unfulfilled in their history, will as certainly be accomplished as that their Messiah came at the appointed time, and appeared in time, place and circumstances in exact conformity to the predictions of their own prophets, and the symbols of their own institution." Then follows Hosea 3:4-5 and this comment: "This passage, though sought to be applied to the Jews in their captivity in ancient Babylon, cannot, as we judge, be sustained, and is only fully verified in their present and their prospective future destiny."—Millennial Harbinger.

Milligan

Two brief quotations to the point, 1856 Volume Millennial Harbinger: "Palestine will certainly be again restored to the dispersed Israelites for an everlasting possession." . . . "At the same awfully

exciting moment, when the whole creation is stirred up against Israel by the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, God pours out the spirit of prayer and supplication on Israel; and immediately they look to Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as did their fathers for King Josiah . . . "This is, therefore, a case of genuine conversion."

That J. W. McGarvey could be quoted to the same effect as to Israel's CONVERSION will not be denied. But we desist.

Other Pre-Millennial Men of Note

An incomplete list: G. Campbell Morgan, H. A. Ironsides, S. D. Gordon, A. C. Gaebelain, A. C. Dixon, J. M. Gray, Will Houghton, R. A. Torrey, The Trumbulls, D. L. Moody, Wilbur Chapman, A. T. Pierson, I. M. Haldeman, C. I. Schofield, W. E. Blackstone, Horatio Bonar, Dr. Ebersheim, J. B. Rotheram, Chas. H. Spurgeon, George Muller, Matthew Henry, John Bunyan, The Wesleys, Whitefield, Dean Alford, John Knox, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Wycliff, and a host of others including poets, hymn writers preachers and commentators. That these men are distinctly pre-millennial will not likely be questioned. And it is worthy of note that NOT ONE MODERNIST is pre-millennial, not one evolutionist, nor pope, nor cardinal. ALL such are either a-millennial or post-millennial. Not so the leaders of the Reformation of the "Restoration Movement."

Leaders and writers of the church of Christ in the earliest centuries are called "The Christian Fathers." These men are so called: Barnabas, Clement, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tertullian, Iraenaus, Cyprian, Lactantius, Tatian, Hoppolytus, Methodius, and others. Among them many martyrs. These all died in the faith that the Lord Jesus would return and would subdue all things and reign over the kingdom of the world. No "post-millennialist" can be found among them. LATER Origen began to MODIFY some of the prophecies by giving them figurative interpretations, and may be said to have introduced views to be classed as post-millennial. From the beginning it was not so. But we let "The Fathers" speak for themselves—the *same* "Fathers" quoted by brethren in discussions on baptism., the Lord's Day and other subjects.

(Part 3 will be presented next month)

NEWS AND NOTES

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

If you had to flee from Communist tyranny in the world today, where would you go?

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Are you in one of the congregations having Seminars? Mini-revivals? please send W&W notice of the planned activity where you worship.

Milligan College Singers

Those attending Highview Sunday, April 2 at 3 P.M. heard an exemplary program. The material was well chosen (some current but meaningful and worthy of performance) Dale Schreiner and the other four from Milligan College had done their "homework" before starting the tour. Chorus members would have benefited by hearing this fine program. A quality program by five musicians who had done preparation that resulted in God being glorified. And, thankfully, they didn't rely on electronics but well trained and well-blended voices naturally projected. Congratulations! Grampa and granma and Pa and Ma Eugene and Patti Schreiner!

The flowers, the birds, the chores invite each of us outdoors, Ormsby members are responding to that invitation with a retreat at Woodland Bible Camp.

Bro. Fields rejoices with the members of the Eighteenth St. church over the baptism of nine recently.

If you didn't find an unbeliever to take along with you to "The Hiding Place" at PCS Friday, April 28, you missed a wonderful opportunity to let Corrie Ten Boom witness to what God is doing in these days.

The efforts made to acquaint us with our lack of real concern for pulpit ministry has very graphically been called to our attention by Bro. Kenneth Briley. To have ten questionnaires out of twelve returned is a greater response than usual, from churches generally. We find that four congregations were urban, three were suburban, and three were rural. Eight ministers are full time; parsonages are provided by six congregations, none

of them provided an automobile. Parsonage allowances are provided by two, parsonage utilities are paid for by six and eight of them provided an automobile allowance. Hospital insurance for the minister is provided by five. Disability by five. A young teacher at SCC several years ago was being praised for his dedication and sacrificial life. The young man suggested that the affluent one exchange conditions with him for the next year, and thereby get the wonderful blessings attendant to such service. The conversation ended abruptly. The local financial support for the pulpit ministry (and we scarcely support at all those who do work of an elder or of those who are cheerful helpers.) I Cor. 12:28 NIV. What benefits does your Congregation provide for your minister? (Not their minister but your minister. If you speak of church members and church affairs as what they are doing, then is it really YOUR church?) How does your support of your minister compare with the \$1.23 per person per week of the survey? Does \$115.28 support your family? and provide funds for the insurance protection and future education.

Young couples who have professed interest in pulpit ministry were guests for dinner on April 7th of those concerned with the lack of ministers. A minister adequately supported is not an expense; you are collecting eternal dividends.

Prayer of a Humble Servant

"Teach us Lord, to serve as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for reward save that of knowing we do Thy will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Lord, I give up all my own hopes and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept Thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to Thee to be Thine forever. Fill me and seal me with Thy Holy Spirit. Use me as Thou wilt."

-Betty Scott Stamm