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SOME MEN ARE STILL BOYS

Now and then I learn of a marriage that has gone on the rocks because the male person of the union has not matured. If he would accept able counsel and be willing to invest a modicum of time to the partnership, there is every possibility (especially to Christians) that he would grow up, and the marriage be saved. But as it happens, because he has not learned to order his own thinking, he first begins to doubt, and then panics, feeling that all the "love" that he had (or thought he had) for his newly acquired partner has flown. In this nervous plight he fails to go to his wife and then together seek out and heed advice from mature persons; but reverts back to "the boys" that were so much a part of his social life before he married, and tries to discharge himself from his newly acquired responsibilities, rather than analyze them. Such a man would suggest abortion to his wife if he learned that she was expecting, rather than to assume the added responsibility of being a parent.

Parents, elders, and preachers need to know how prevalent this immaturity is today, especially among the young men. And, if such immaturity appears to be present, we ought to meet it head-on and do all possible to discourage such from marrying. Just imagine one of the sweet young girls of the congregation giving herself in marriage to a boy, who in three or four months time will tell her "I just don't love you any more. I am not ready for the duties of a husband or father. I think we should both go back to our parents. I miss the gang I used to run with."

Why should a man have a wife if he does not desire to provide for her? Anticipation of providing and sharing is a mark of maturity. Thirty years ago there was an unwritten law that if a man planned to get married, he had better have steady employment and reasonable health. Have we advanced to something better today? I think not.

Why should a man think that he can take a virgin unto himself, and then in a matter of months reject her and toss her out, as it were, into the "used car market"? It is sheer lack of manliness that would even dream of such behavior. Young marrieds and would-be marrieds need frequent reminding that their vows were (or will be) made in the presence of God and witnesses, and that they are "until death do them part." If this seems too confining for them, then they had better
live single for a few more years at least, until they really know what they want.

**IT'S HIS ABORTION, TOO**

Why should any young wife be urged to turn to abortion as a belated form of birth control? A Christian man who would suggest this ought to have his heart examined, in the light of God's word! Everytime there is an abortion, two people are involved, beside the unborn. The responsibility is at least as much upon the male as upon the female. And in the light of man being the head of the family, I would debate that his is the greater guilt than the woman's. If any men or boys who read these lines think that abortion is simply the women's problem, you had better think again. When marriage has been consummated, the two have become one. Even without marriage the two are one. "Or, know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, the twain, saith he, shall become one flesh." (1 Cor. 6:16.) Let no one think that men, because they are male, are thus guilt-free of abortions.

Why should young people marry so quickly that they do not know each other's feelings concerning children in the home? If there were ever some thoughts that needed to be talked out while couples are dating, this is one major point. If there is a strong difference in attitude toward the having of children, that difference should be an immediate "red light" to any further dating. Only grief can lie ahead. If marriage is had and a family is built on such a vastly divided foundation, it will be unfair for any children who might come along.

Nor should we think that a spurt of "Spiritual growth" on one person's part should result in divorce. We may not have grown spiritually as much as we think we have, if at all. I am sure that the closer we come to God's likeness, the better our marriages will hold together, because he ordained marriage and blessed us with the personal capabilities that make it desirable, workable and necessary. Spiritual growth comes from the Lord and His Holy Spirit, and we know that God hates "putting away." (Mal. 2:16.)

Getting back to the beginning, and the matter of immaturity, this can be the case in either the boy or the girl. She, too, may not have grown enough to appreciate her role as a wife. Domestic science and family living may have been boresome subjects to her. She can break up the home of a good man as quickly as a man can ruin the union with a good woman. Such a sin is just as grievous, and such a situation demands the same mature help. Too often the ones called in to help are either themselves a bit immature, or are too closely akin to one to see the picture clearly.

Patience, time, love, and an honest effort to grow up are the helps most needed. All of these, of course, are direct gifts from the Lord, given to those who ask Him. Prayer (it may need to be in secret) by the one who knows God as a prayer-answerer, is the beginning step to get a marriage back on the track, or keep it on an even keel. No marriage should be without prayer.
THE TAX ACT OF 1976 FILLS 413 pages. Some time after it became law, the members of the House issued a 100-page summary of the bill. Later it became necessary to produce a 94-page treatise to clarify the 413-page Tax Act of 1976.

ONLY 19.6 PERCENT OF THE world's population lives in free lands—that is less than one in five, according to Freedom House. More than 86 million persons in the world lost some of the freedoms they had in 1975, observes the Oakland Tribune. And, of the world's 4,019,700,000 people a mere 789,900,000 are living in freedom, the Tribune continues. Emphasizing that Americans can still enjoy the freedoms denied so many persons in this troubled world, the journal warns: "We must not lose sight, as others lose their liberties, that our own cherished freedoms can be threatened. We must be eternally vigilant to protect those freedoms, from within as well as from external forces."

This quote is from The Review of the News, November 30, 1977, and since this article was printed many more have lost their freedom.

I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE REVIEW OF THE NEWS. I find it to be extremely accurate, and far ahead of any other newspaper or magazine that I know of. Some of the news that is later printed in the liberal press probably would not have made its way before the people at all if the R.O.T.N. had not first printed it. For instance they led the way in news about the Council on Foreign Relations and its recent correlate, the Trilateral Commission. You can become a better citizen by reading this paper regularly.

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY attended Illinois fund-raising dinners in 1974 and 1976 for Thomas Tully, then Cook County Assessor. And lo, the base of the Kennedy family fortune in Cook County was soon underassessed. A Chicago Tribune investigation has uncovered the fact that the Merchandise Mart saved at least $4.4 million in real-estate taxes over the last three years because of the undervaluation. Mr. Tully has been in private law practice since 1978 and, guess what, now represents the Merchandise Mart with the Assessor's Office.

JOHN ANDERSON HAS RECEIVED an inordinate amount of media coverage in his sputtering Presidential campaign. The reason? Just consider the results of a Washington straw poll at the recent gathering of the American Society of Newspaper Editors: Anderson headed the list with 109 votes; second was Edward Kennedy (55); Carter (47); George Bush (33); Ford (31); Baker (24); and, last place with the editors, Ronald Reagan (20).

A TEACHER WISHING TO ILLUSTRATE the faultiness of human reasoning presented the following situation to a class of students:

How would you advise a mother who was pregnant with her fifth child based on the following facts: Her husband had syphilis. She had tuberculosis. Their first child was born blind. Their second child died. Their third child was born deaf. The fourth child had tuberculosis. The mother is considering an abortion. Would you advise her to have one?

In view of these facts, most of the students agreed that she should have an
The teacher then announced, "If you said 'Yes,' you would have just killed the great composer, Ludwig van Beethoven!"

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION starts out with more than fourteen billion dollars. It has about twenty thousand employees. H.E.W. from which it was created, had 150,000 employees. By even the new math, the Department of Health and Human Services should have about 130,000 employees. Sorry about that, overburdened and possibly unemployed taxpayer, the H.H.S., what's left of H.E.W. after the Education Department was removed, has 150,000 employees. This is the way we fight inflation. And this is the way inflation keeps on winning. Now, H.H.S. will spend about $220 billion in Fiscal Year 1981, increased over last year by 13.5 percent. It will be by far the largest Department in the government devouring thirty-six percent of the federal budget. And in spite of the "hiring freeze," it has been hiring as usual.

FAT POWER. The nation's fatties are finally tired of being kicked around. Does that mean they are going to go on a diet? Not so McDonald's would notice. They're going to fight! There is a National Association to Aid Fat Americans, which lobbies against discrimination. The N.A.A.F.A. distributes "Fat power" and "Fat Pride" buttons. Cut out all those fat jokes. Minnesota Fats must become Minnesota Wide person. A fathead becomes a bloated cranium. In spite of what you may be thinking right now, this is serious. In California the H.E.W. – H.H.S. told the state Youth Authority that it violated federal regulations when it denied a promotion to a 295-pound cook. The Department says his weight and blood pressure are irrelevant. If he isn't promoted, the Youth Authority could lose federal funds. The Maryland Human Rights Commission say that fat people suffer discrimination almost as much as blacks and other minorities. Pennsylvania has ordered a company in Philadelphia to hire a 340-pound applicant who was rejected as "morbidly obese." I do not poke fun at a person who has a weight problem, neither do I see anything humorous about a civilized government taking such actions. Ridiculous, yes; funny, no.

DAVID NEVIN, AUTHOR OF THE SCHOOLS THAT FEAR BUILT gives his opinion of the new private schools. "Elementary schools teach reading, writing, arithmetic, a little social science and a little physical science. They put great emphasis on reading and old-fashioned rote techniques. They follow the phonics method. . . In spelling, arithmetic and reading they put much emphasis on drill which produces high test scores, and it is on this basis that they claim their superiority to public schools. Given the approach, they are almost certain to improve a child's score and thus to satisfy his parents . . ." One can almost hear the usual condescending term, "simplistic." Mr. Nevin continues his dislike for the "Schools that Fear Built": "For the youngsters, the schools seem to represent homogeneity, solidarity, comfort, reinforcement of ego, a sense of being a part of an elite. They talk(ed) of the tranquil study atmosphere in which it was easier to learn, and gave the impression that there was much less anxiety here than in public school. They described fewer fights and less reason to fight. The fact that their parents support the school and warmly approve of it seems to have a reinforcing effect with the students . . . As one moves through the various new schools, one is struck again and again by the pleasure and comfort the students there find in their parents' approval. If they do well in this school they stand higher and more securely in their parents' eyes." This, of course, is abomination in the eyes of a liberal. But this is the kind of teaching and learning which has produced the greatest Nation of all history in such a short span of time as to be phenomenal. And the kind of education the Nevins praise has brought the same Nation to its lowest point in a very short time. This is what produced the "fear" which built these new schools.

"OUR AIM," SAID SOVIET PREMIER LEONID BREZHENEV, in a talk with Somalia's President Siad Barre, "is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the West depends—the energy treasure house of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure house of central and southern Africa."
I am being told that unless I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and give evidence of this by speaking in tongues, I am not saved. Please help me with what the scripture teaches about this.

I do not know what percentage of modern charismatics believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in other tongues to be necessary for salvation. In fairness it should be pointed out that some of them, as indicated both by personal contact and in their literature, believe the so-called baptism of the Spirit to be subsequent to salvation. It is seen as something in addition to salvation, which moves them to a higher plane of Christian development. When I was first exposed to the position mentioned in the question I found it hard to believe that anyone took such a position. An examination of the "Articles of Faith" of a certain religious body which is relatively popular in the South convinced me otherwise, however. There are those who do not believe that one is saved until the individual has been baptized in the Holy Spirit, and believe that the initial sign of that baptism is speaking in other tongues. Hence, the teaching is, in effect, that one is not saved until he has spoken in tongues.

Such a position could not have been successfully defended even in New Testament times. There is no doubt that there were miraculous gifts given in the early church, but not every Christian spoke in other tongues even in that day! A careful reading of the conversion accounts in the book of Acts will reveal that there is no mention of tongues-speaking in many of them, no hint of it even. Quite a number of the New Testament books make no mention of this or any other miraculous gifts. And Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth where much emphasis was being put by carnal Christians on these gifts, raises the specific question: "Do all speak with tongues?" (1 Cor. 14:30). He is not talking about all people, both regenerate and unregenerate alike. This is concerned with the body of Christ. The context shows that the question could very fairly read: "Do all Christians speak with tongues?" The clearly implied answer is "No." This was one of the special gifts, and it was not conferred on every Christian even in New Testament times.

The book of I John was written in order that Christians might know that they have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). Is it not a bit strange, if tongues-speaking is the sure sign of the new birth, that he does not
mention it? Among the several tests given in the book (keeping God’s word, love of the brethren, the practice of righteousness, overcoming the world, etc.) there is no mention of tongues-speaking. There is a statement (1 Jn. 3:24) that “we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us.” Since all the other evidence John deals with might be described as the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22), there is no reason to make this passage mean anything else. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity in the life of the Christian. There is no such thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13). But do not make that the same as the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” or demand tongues-speaking as its sign. The emphasis in the New Testament is on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 8:12ff; Gal 5:16ff; Eph. 5:18-21, etc.) The sure sign of being a Christian is in living like one, having victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

A good bit of attention focuses by necessity on Acts 2:38. Peter promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit” to those who as believers in Christ repent and are baptized. It is a promise valid to all generations whom the Lord will call. Many have understood this to be the Holy Spirit Himself, given in indwelling measure. As we have seen, the Holy Spirit does indwell the Christian. This is the power of the Christian life, that enabling power which can be used for victory. Inasmuch as Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be “in” believers (John 14:17) and following the beginning of the church He is in all Christians (passages cited above), it has been widely understood that the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38 speaks of this. Those who insist on the baptism and tongues see this as a promise of tongues-speaking power from the Holy Spirit. The issue cannot be settled from the passage itself, for the language would allow either interpretation (Note that we said “allow,” not that it demands the gift of tongues). If the rest of scripture shows tongues-speaking to be a necessity, this passage would represent no denial of it. But unless other scripture shows tongues-speaking to be a necessity, this passage does not establish it or require it.

A major concern that we must have in understanding all scripture is not what we can force it into meaning but determining as nearly as we can what the author and especially what the Holy Spirit had in mind to convey to us. A major mistake is made by the particular religious group earlier referred to in that they confuse the terms that are used. Quoting from their “Articles of Faith,” previously mentioned, we cite the following declaration:

The terms “baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire,” “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and the “gift of the Holy Ghost” are synonymous terms used interchangeably in the Bible.

Are these terms, in fact, synonymous? This is a common error, well known to some of us in the declaration by amillennial brethren that “church” and “kingdom” are synonymous. We might point out that such a human declaration does not make it so. If terms are synonymous then they can be substituted one for the other. That does not work with “church” and “kingdom” and it does not work with the
cited terms referring to the Holy Spirit. If the filling and the baptism are the same, then some people received baptisms of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:4 with 4:8, 31), and Christians, having already supposedly received one baptism of the Spirit in becoming Christians, are taught to seek what would be further baptism (Eph. 5:18).

If we are careless or undiscerning with language and do not discern the differences which God meant to convey, we have confusion. Paul in discussing a related but slightly different issue, in 1 Cor. 14, points out that: "Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war? So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" (vs. 7-9).

There is a passage in Acts 11:15-16 which clearly marks what happened on the day of Pentecost and what happened at Cornelius' house as being distinct events different from all the other experiences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church. When the Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius, Peter remembered something! What? The fact that this was like the events of Pentecost. He cites the Lord's promise of baptism in the Spirit. Now if the baptism of the Holy Spirit had been taking place in every case of conversion between these two events, or even in some of them, then his words are without meaning. The reader should examine this passage and see the inference. Scripture calls the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the coming of the Spirit on Cornelius' household, baptism in the Holy Spirit. There are no other cases in the New Testament so designated! There are verses which promise the baptism (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:3-5, etc.) but these are the only events. The company at Pentecost was Jewish; at Cornelius' house they were Gentiles. We read in 1 Cor. 12:13 that "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit."

The baptism of the Spirit on Pentecost and at Cornelius' household were unusual events. Yet the promise spoken of by Peter on Pentecost was "to you ... and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him." This then is standard, not unusual. Hence, it must not refer to the baptism of the Spirit but to salvation from sin and the earnest of the Spirit given to indwell Christians. In any case, "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is something God has promised. If as a believer in Christ you have repented and been baptized for remission of sins according to the instruction, then know that what God promised He gave. The instruction is not: Repent ... be baptized ... beg, plead, agonize, go to "the altar," etc. ... and you shall receive. It is: Repent ... be baptized ... and you shall receive. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God (Acts 5:32). When one obeys the instruction of God he should then count God as good as His word and know that, whatever measure or gift of the Holy Spirit is in view in Acts 2:38, God did what He promised.

While truth is not disproved by the excesses and abuses of those who hold it, neither is it established because people are able to work up
a simulation of scriptural events. It is interesting to me that many who hold to a present day baptism in the Spirit as manifested initially by a gift of tongues often have to “work up” the Spirit(?). With musical beat, fervent prayer, excitement and emotional atmosphere, perhaps even repeating syllables to help the Spirit (?) enable them to “get it,” an environment is created. There is nothing of this in the New Testament. The work of the Holy Spirit is not something contrived by human means but is done according to His choice. If God offers a gift, then we do not have to plead with Him and beg Him over and over, agonizing and suffering disappointment.

Believer, if you have obeyed the instruction of Acts 2:38, then you have received the gift promised, and you will not have to trick God into giving it nor deceive yourself with self-hypnosis. God has not failed because you have not experienced something someone said you should have. You have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, by that Power put to death the deeds of the flesh and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

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

THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

“What advantage then hath the Jew?”

Since Paul had pointed out in the close of chapter two of Romans that being a Jew by birth gave one no advantage so far as salvation is concerned, he felt it necessary to interrupt his main line of reasoning to give brief notice to the subject that is stated in question form in the title given above. He will go into that and other matters related to it in detail in Chapters nine through eleven, but he stops at this point to ask and answer three questions that give enough answer for one to wait until chapter nine.

After all, the Old Testament had given great and precious promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. Was what he had said already and was about to emphasize concerning all alike being sinners and all alike having to come to Jesus for salvation in conflict with the promises to the Jew? Let us look briefly at this short answer Paul gives to a supposed questioner.

Verse one states the primary question contained in the title above and gives a corollary—“or what is the profit of circumcision?” Paul’s answer, in verse 2, states that the Jew had many advantages but confines his particulars at this point to one advantage—they were intrusted
with the oracles of God. Like most advantages, this one also created a responsibility, to know and obey that word, but we Gentile Christians should never forget our great indebtedness to Jews for our Scriptures. If the book of Job was written down by a Jew, then all the Old Testament was not only preserved by the Jews it was all written down by them, guided of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). If Luke was a Jew or a proselyte to Judaism before becoming a Christian, then all the New Testament was written down by them also under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13). Think of the wonderful privilege they had, how much we should be thankful to them, and how much of a responsibility it put on them to obey God’s commands and then to recognize His Messiah. But while thinking of that, let us also remind ourselves that the having of those Scriptures puts us under a great responsibility also. If you have read the Scriptures and then rejected Christ you are under greater punishment than those who have not had that wonderful privilege. What is your response?

Paul’s second question is in verse three—“For what if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God?” The Revised version translators gave as Paul’s reply to his own question, “God Forbid.” The original language here is very strong and not exactly translatable into English. Others have used “Banish the thought” or “By no means.” In other words, the whole thought is abhorrent to Paul and he quotes from the Septuagint version of Psalm 51:4 to answer the question. God is faithful—a fact of such tremendous importance that we rarely even consider the matter. What if God were like the false gods created in the minds of men? We could believe nothing He said and have nothing to stand on in our faith. Thank God He is faithful.

The third question is double again and given in verse 5: “But if our unrighteousness commended the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visited with wrath?” I have just myself pointed out that the faithlessness of men highlights the absolute faithfulness of God and Paul will reason on that kind of basis in verse seven to ask what is really a fourth question though given as a part answer to the third one, “But if the truth of God through my lie bounded unto His glory, why am I still judged as a sinner?” In the midst of this Paul points out that he is using a human kind of reasoning and repeats his phrase of utter abhorrence of the idea (“God forbid”) to show the foolish consequences of such reasoning. He then ends this section with a quotation of how some people were taking Paul’s teaching of the grace of God and turning it into lawlessness—“Let us do evil, that good may come.” Such a thought does not deserve an answer, so Paul says simply, “whose condemnation is just.” In spite of this, do you realize that there are many today who still believe that the end justifies the means, that a white lie is good if it helps someone, that a murderer is all right if it advances a good cause? There is actually a religious organization that took Paul’s words here as one of their prime maxims!

What shall we say to all of this? Let us thank Jews for what they did in keeping alive the idea of the God and of guarding the copying of His Word and then bringing into the world the Savior; and let us re-
member that as disciples of the Savior we have a tremendous responsibility that goes with the great advantage of being a disciple of Christ, a child of God. Can other Christians and the world see Christ in you?

STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

How many sparrows are you worth?

It was late in the evening; darkness was setting in. Out of the west I saw a tiny bird flying toward the east. It was a sparrow hastening toward some haven from it day's wanderings. Suddenly the little creature flew head-on against a utility wire and fell dead at my feet.

Immediately I recalled something my Lord inspired Matthew to record: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. 10:29, 30). Luke records it this way: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence?" (Luke 12:6) So, from this, we learn that sparrows were so cheap that for one extra penny the purchaser got a fifth sparrow free.

Who cares for the little ole sparrow, anyway? Of what earthly use is such a bird? Down in Texas I've seen County sheriffs blasting sparrows out of the trees around the Courthouse in the late evenings. They are considered pests. And, yet, their Creator takes note of it when even one of these tiny, helpless birds falls to the ground.

In Psalm 145:16, David said to the Lord: "Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing". So, not only the sparrow, but every living thing is watched over and cared for by Him who created them.

Now, remember, that "Ye are of more value than many sparrows". We are created in the image of God. We are destined to live forever—with HIM! And, even now, we have been set over all other creatures of God, as David records in Psalm 8. The very breath of God was breathed into man when he was created. We are akin to Him, we shall be like Him when He comes again (I John 3:1-3).

In Psalms 37:4 The Psalmist writes "Delight thyself in the Lord; and He will give thee the desires of thy heart." Question: "What are the desires of your heart?" Are you afraid of sharing those desires with Him who promises to grant them? Do you talk them over with the Lord in prayer? If not, why not? He knows that you "think them", why not ask Him to check them over for you? If they're not
pleasing to Him, He will grant you “better Desires”, and give you His “Perfect Peace” with His better choice for you. (See Isa. 26:3-4.)

There are more illustrations on Prayer in the Bible, both Old and New, than on most other subjects. A study of these will help us in our own prayer-life. Why is this? Surely our Lord yearns for His own redeemed ones, whom He purchased at such a price (I Cor. 6:19, 20) to talk to Him! His eyes are toward the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.” (Psa. 34:15) So, don’t be afraid to approach Him in prayer. We have this right, granted because His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ died, causing the veil of the Temple (Luke 23:45) to be rent from top to bottom, enabling all of us to enter the inner-sanctum of the Most Holy place,—the very presence of God the Father—(Heb. 4:14-16). What a privilege! What a right! What a Joy! A “toll-free” call, direct to “Head-quarters”. Why not take more and more advantage of such a gracious Gift—such a Right! Remember, “His eye is upon the sparrow”,—but, “You are of more value than MANY sparrows.”

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GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles

In this installment of “Gleanings”, we want to feature the mighty pen of the late Bro. R.H. Boll, who, for over forty years, was editor of the Word & Work. We will be including short paragraphs from “Words in Season” which was his column in Word & Work. It was said that these paragraphs were his writings. So, we hope that these excerpts will bless you.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

The Cross is not only the Divine reason for missions, it is also the Divine method of true missionary work. In His atoning death the Lord Jesus not only once for all obtained eternal redemption for us, but He also set forth the manner in which this salvation and redemption is to be ministered unto men. There is indeed only one atonement, accomplished once for all by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which cannot be repeated or added to. But the Cross becomes the rule and law, the inevitable love-obligation of all His redeemed ones.
“Must Jesus bear the Cross alone
And all the world go free?
No, there’s a cross for everyone,
And there’s a cross for me.”

—December 1923

WHEN PAUL REBUKED PETER
(Galatians 2:11-21.)

“Even the apostles had differences among themselves.”—said one
who was seeking to excuse the contradictory doctrines and dissensions
of Christendom. But he was wrong. There was never any doctrinal
clash between Christ’s inspired apostles, nor could there have been.
They spoke the Word of God. They spoke “as the Spirit gave them
utterance.” They spoke “not in the words which man’s wisdom teach­
eth but which the Spirit teacheth.” (1 Cor. 2:13) As the inspired
spokesmen of Christ there was no divergence or contradiction in their
teachings. But as men, that is, in matters of human conduct, they had
the same battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil as all other
Christians. It was not for any lapse from the true teaching that Paul
so publicly rebuked Peter, but for failure in conduct. The miss-step of
Peter was quite out of harmony with Peter’s own teaching, and had
grave doctrinal implications, which might have ruined the church
forever.

—July 1947

“THE CHRIST WHO IS APPOINTED FOR YOU.”

If Jesus is the Savior appointed for us; if He is the Divinely
appointed High-priest, and the one way by which we can come to the
Father; if He is of God made unto wisdom, righteousness, sanctifica­
tion and redemption—then, knowing this, every attempt to be saved
apart from Him is rebellion; every effort to be good without Him, or
to attain righteousness in some other way, other than by faith in Him,
or to approach God except through Him, is presumption and contempt
of God.

—August 1925

ALL THINGS NEW

“Behold, I make all things new,” says the Lord Jesus Christ. In
Him we become new creatures. He gives us a new life through a new
birth, and with it a new hope; He leads us unto God in a new and
living way. For the old life was ruined, and the old hope lost, and
the old record marred and blotted, and the old way barred. “Where­
fore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are
passed away; behold, they are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17) Note the
words “any man;” note also the “if”—“if any man is in Christ.” And
this is the Lord’s blessed work that He makes new—a work which in
God’s time will issue in “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwell­
eth righteousness.”

—January 1954
Let us understand at once that the grace of God, as set forth in the New Testament, would compromise the righteousness and justice of the holy God—except for one thing, namely, the sacrificial death of God's Son, which atoned for our sins, and left God free to act in grace toward sinners (Rom. 3:26). We need not fear for God's integrity. As Paul said, "what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." "Just and right is he," and we need not trouble to help Him out even if He does not justify the ungodly and offers grace abounding to weak and sinful men.

—December 1954

In our next article, we hope to continue featuring the pen of Bro. R. H. Boll. It is our belief that we today can benefit from the thought provoking paragraphs from yesteryear. So, until next time—MARANATHA!

THREE FAITHFUL WOUNDS

by A. W. Tozer

(CONCLUSION)

And then there's the wound of compassion. Now compassion is an emotional identification, and Christ had that in full perfection. The man who has this wound of compassion is a man who suffers along with other people. Jesus Christ our Lord can never suffer to save us any more. This He did, once for all, when He gave Himself without spot through the Holy Ghost to the Father on Calvary's cross. He cannot suffer to save us but He still must suffer to win us. He does not call His people to redemptive suffering. That's impossible; it could not be. Redemption is a finished work.

But He does call His people to feel along with Him and to feel along with those that rejoice and those that suffer. He calls His people to be to Him the kind of an earthly body in which He can weep again and suffer again and love again. For our Lord has two bodies. One is the body He took to the tree on Calvary; that was the body in which He suffered to redeem us. But He has a body on earth now, composed of those who have been baptized into it by the Holy Ghost at conversion. In that body He would now suffer to win men. Paul said that he was glad that he could suffer for the Colossians and fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ in his body for the church's sake.

Now, my brethren, I don't know whether I can make it clear or not. I know that things like this have to be felt rather than understood, but the wounded man is never a seeker after happiness. There is an ignoble pursuit of irresponsible happiness among us. Over the last years, as I have observed the human scene and have watched God's professed people live and die, I have seen that most of us would rather
be happy than to feel the wounds of other people’s sorrows. I do not believe that it is the will of God that we should seek to be happy, but rather that we should seek to be holy and useful. The holy man will be the useful man and he’s likely to be a happy man too; but if he seeks happiness and forgets holiness and usefulness, he’s a carnal man. I, for one, want no part in carnal religious joy. There are times when it’s sinful to be happy. When Jesus our Lord was sweating it out there in the garden or hanging on the tree, He could not be happy. He was the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

And the great saints of the past, who conquered and captured parts of the world for Jesus, when they were in travail were not happy. The woman, said Jesus, who is giving birth is not happy at the time of her travail, but as soon as the child is delivered she becomes happy because a man is born into the world. You and I are, in a sense, to be mothers in Israel, those through whom the Lord can suffer and grieve and love and pity again to bring children to birth.

Thirdly, there’s the wound of longing after God. This little woman wanted to long after God with a longing that became a pain in her heart. She wanted to be lovesick. She prayed in effect, “O God, that I might want Thee so badly that it become a wound in my heart that I can’t get over.” Today, accepting Christ becomes terminal. That is the end. And all evangelism leads toward one thing—getting increased numbers of people to accept Christ, and there we put a period. My criticism of most of our Bible conferences is that we spend our time counting again the treasures that we have in Christ but we never arrive at the place where any of that which is in Christ gets into us. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, but you can no more buy food with the money still in the bank than you can live on the treasures that are in Christ unless they’re also experientially in you.

So many of us say, “All right, I’ll attend another Bible conference,” or “I’ll take a course,” or “I’ll buy a book.” My friends, what we need is not more instruction; we’ve been instructed to death. Where in the world is there more fundamental Bible teaching than here in Chicago? This is the Mecca of Fundamentalism. This is the Vatican of Evangelicalism. We’ve got notebooks at home stacked high that go back twenty-five years. They tell us of some new sidelight on some text or some new illustration somebody gave to point up a doctrine. But, oh, what weak creatures we are! What joyless people we are!

Note the paradoxes: To be happily forgiven and yet to be wounded and to remember the grief; to enjoy the peace of the finished work of Christ and yet suffer to win others; to find God and yet be always pursuing Him. When Moses saw the glory of God he begged that he might see more. When God revealed to him that he had found grace, he wanted more grace. Remember this: the man that has the most of God is the man who is seeking the most ardently for more of God.

There was a man who talked about “a restless thirst, a sacred, infinite desire,” and that is what I want for my own heart. Among the plastic saints of our time Jesus has to do all the dying and all we want is to hear another sermon about His dying; Jesus does all the sorrowing
and we want to be happy. But, my brethren, if we were what we ought to be, we would seek to know in experience the meaning of the words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

I have been greatly and deeply concerned that you and I do something more than listen, that we dare to go to God like the Lady Julian and dare to ask Him to give us a faithful, fatherly wound—maybe three of them, if you please: to wound us with a sense of our own sinful unworthiness that we'll never quite get over; to wound us with the sufferings of the world and the sorrows of the church; and then to wound us with the longing after God, a thirst, a sacred thirst and longing that will carry us on toward perfection.

_The lack of desire is the ill of all ills;_
> Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod;
> _The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills_
> _Is a jubilant pining and longing for God._
—Frederick W. Faber

Write that sentence down, "A jubilant pining and longing for God."

Almost every day of my life I am praying that "a jubilant pining and longing for God" might come back on the evangelical churches. We don't need to have our doctrine straightened out; we're as orthodox as the Pharisees of old. But this longing for God that brings spiritual torrents and whirlwinds of seeking and self-denial—this is almost gone from our midst.

_God loves to be longed for, He loves to be sought,
  For He sought us Himself with such longing and love;
He died for desire of us, marvelous thought!
  And He longs for us now to be with Him above._
—Frederick W. Faber

I believe that God wants us to long for Him with the longing that will become lovesickness, that will become a wound to our spirits, to keep us always moving toward Him, always finding and always seeking, always having and always desiring. So the earth becomes less and less valuable and heaven gets closer as we move into God and up into Christ.

Dare we bow our hearts now and say, "Father, I've been an irresponsible, childish kind of Christian—more concerned with being happy than with being holy. O God, give me three wounds. Wound me with a sense of my own sinfulness. Wound me with compassion for the world, and wound me with love of Thee that will keep me always pursuing and always exploring and always seeking and always finding."

If you dare to pray that prayer sincerely, it could mean a turning point in your life. It could mean a door of victory opened to you. May God grant that it be so.

(Originally a sermon, this message was later published in The Alliance Witness.)
From Titus 3:4-7 we have already got in former articles two great lessons.

(1) As to the conduct of Christians toward sinners; that we must not speak evil of any man: must not be contentious, but gentle, showing all meekness toward all men.

(2) The true reason for this conduct; that we ourselves also, in common with all men, were miserably and helplessly lost. "For we ourselves also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." We were no better than they; they are not worse than we were. If we are different men now, belong to a different class and order, and living on a different plane, it is due to no excellence or merit of ours. Our deliverance from the lost and ruined condition of mankind ("among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Eph. 2:3), was not because in us was found any peculiar worth or superiority, but solely because of God’s free unmerited goodness toward us—the grace of God.

Now opens an inquiry of the very highest interest and importance: the method of this wonderful deliverance. Let me present again in outline, the statement of these verses (3: 4-7).

THE DIVINE METHOD OF SALVATION

I. When we were saved: "When the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward man appeared."

II. How we were not saved: "Not by works of righteousness which we did ourselves."

III. How we were saved: According to His mercy He saved us.
   1. "By the washing of regeneration."
   2. "By the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

IV. The aim and end of it all: That, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

We will take this up now step by step.

I. WHEN WE WERE SAVED.

God’s first approach toward us occurred when the good tidings of God’s kindness and love to man came to us. Men knew more or less of a Supreme Being; they had some sense of accountability, and
felt some more, some less, keenly, a burden of guilt, condemnation, dread, misery. Many among the heathen felt that their manner of life was not worth the living.

"Upon that pagan world disgust,
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

They had learned bitterly the reality of the awful law of sowing and reaping. There was a very general belief in a hereafter and they were oppressed with the fears of a future retribution. Whether that was a remaining gleam of a primeval revelation, or the simple inference of their own moral sense, we cannot say. But on the whole they were in darkness, with all that darkness means: ignorance, error, sin, despair. To these who sat in the shadow of death, the light of God’s gospel sprang up. It was by His goodness that the Light shone to them; and the Light in turn revealed God’s goodness and love. Thus “the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation;” and thus “the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward man appeared.”

As with them so with us: for no superior good desert of ours, nor for any cause we had control over, did the Word first come to us. When it came it revealed both our own condition more clearly, and revealed God in an attitude of love and reconciliation, the gift of His Son, the blood of the cross, and the way of salvation. That was the beginning to us.

II. HOW WE WERE NOT SAVED

When the Light shone in upon us it revealed nothing good in us which would have given us any ground on which to claim God’s promises. The light showed us up as men “dead in trespasses and sin,” separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” (Eph. 2:1, 12). We were lost and had nothing with which we could have bought salvation, even if God’s salvation had been for sale, which it was not. No amount of silver and gold, nor the cattle upon a thousand hills, could have purchased that which cost God the blood of His Son. Nor could we have earned it. If we could have, then, Christ died for nought. If by valuable service rendered to God, and by good works we could have merited our salvation, the cross of Christ would be a superfluous, and the grace of God be made void. How (if we accept God’s estimate of unsaved man) a man in his lost estate could do works so good, and so many of them, as to commend him to God and to win him a place with God, is unthinkable; and we would surely have to know just exactly how many, how great, and how good, those works would have to be in order to obtain such a reward. If it be said that “a man should do his best”—no man has ever done that, and even the best man’s best will not bear examination at the hands of a holy God. (Job 42:5, 6). If by works of righteousness which he did himself, a man could have procured salvation, salvation would not have been a gift of grace (unmerited favor), but a payment of just desert. “Now to him that worketh,
the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.” Wherever in recognition of a man’s merit a reward is bestowed upon him; or where he is compensated for faithful work done, or where he compensates with faithful service for what he has received, there is no room for grace. “If it is by grace it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.” Rom. 11:6. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” Rom. 4:4, 5.

It is evident that in all these passages the “works” spoken of are works of merit, works by which a man might think to earn and deserve his salvation, and on account of which God would become indebted to him. He cannot and does not mean acts of simple obedience by which faith may be tested. The conquest of Jericho, for example, was not by man’s power or of man’s work, but by faith (and therefore by grace, Rom. 4:16), notwithstanding that Israel had to compass the city about for seven days. (Heb. 11:30). The opening of the blind man’s eyes (John 9) was purely a gift of God’s grace although the man must go to Siloam and wash, and could not have received his sight unless he had done so. Acts of obedience by which faith is expressed and tested, are not “works” in the sense in which Paul uses the word.

The last quoted passage (Rom. 4:5) is worthy of special attention. It states that to him who does not try to earn or purchase salvation by his works, but who “believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” It is not sufficient to believe that God justifies the worthy, those who deserve it, those (if there were any) whose goodness and uprightness is such that God could not in justice do anything else than justify them. We must believe on the God who justifies the ungodly—even those who having deserved nothing but death and perdition, come at God’s gracious invitation to receive from Him free of all charge the gift of His grace, namely, righteousness and eternal life (Rom. 5:17; 6:23). The faith that makes us realize the we are “ungodly,” and utterly lost, and leads us to come to Jesus for mercy and refuge as the gospel directs, is reckoned to us for righteousness. “For by grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works that no man should glory.” Eph. 2:8, 9.

III. HOW WE WERE SAVED.

In opposition to the false thought that “by works of righteousness which we did ourselves” we were saved, the apostle declares that not so, but by His Mercy He saved us. These two methods therefore stand in contrast. The former is an appeal to His justice, the latter depends on His tender pity and compassion toward the lost and ruined. “God being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us—even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved).” Eph. 2:4, 5. Peter tells us that our being “begotten of God” was an act of great mercy on God’s part, 1 Peter 1:3, 23. From beginning to end this underlines the gospel. We were saved not according to law and justice, but according to His mercy. “Mercy glorieth against judgment.” Jas. 2:13.
The apostle specifies two features of this mercy-salvation. The first is, “the washing of regeneration.” “Regeneration” signifies a new begetting, a new birth. The “washing of regeneration” is the washing which is incident to regeneration. The regenerated man is a washed man. The purpose which the laver had in the priestly consecration of the Old Testament, is accomplished under the gospel in regeneration, that is in the New Birth, in which, being born of water and the Spirit, we are washed, cleansed, and purified, and become children of God. The washing consists of the blotting out the past record, purifying of the motives and purposes of the heart, and the purging of the conscience. “Already ye are clean,” said the Lord, “because of the word which I have spoken unto you,” John 13:3. “Purifying their hearts by faith.” Acts 15:9. “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord,” Acts 22:16. “Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water,” Heb. 10:22. The word of faith, the water of baptism, and underlying these, the blood of Jesus Christ, are the factors both in the New Birth, and in the Washing we receive. In being “born anew” we are also washed; and by washing us God saved us.

The second feature is “the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” We are renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. The old man is after the flesh, the new man is of the Spirit. The old mind is fleshly; the mind renewed is spiritual. New views, new purposes and desires, new affections, a new will, displaced the old, warped, perverted. This is the Spirit’s work. In contrast with the works of the flesh, the “old man”, is the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace.

This renewing Spirit (he says) “was poured out upon us ‘richly’,” and that “through Jesus Christ.” The gift went through the hands of Jesus, the risen and exalted Christ. When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the assembly of believers, it was poured out on the church in its beginning, and the actual benefits of that outpouring, and the thenceforward present Spirit, have remained with and in the church and its individual members ever since. As the precious ointment poured out upon the head of the high priest ran down unto the skirts of his garments, covering with its fragrances and unction the whole body (Ps. 133:2), so the Spirit poured out upon Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, was through Him transmitted to all the Body, and each several member thereof filling, renewing, transforming, (2 Cor. 3:18) strengthening (Eph. 3:16). “In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,” and have all been “made to drink of one Spirit”—which is but a different putting of the same fact, according to which we enter into the Spirit, and the Spirit into us, when we get into Christ. 1 Cor. 12:13.

It is notable that here, as in the Savior’s words to Nicodemus, water and the Spirit are conjoined, for both the washing which is by water, and the renewing which is by the Spirit, are involved in the New Birth, in which we become the children of God. For neither do we become sons except through the obedience of faith in the act of baptism (Gal. 3:26, 27), nor could we be His sons without the Spirit.
Rom. 8:9. But “because we are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father.” Gal. 4:6.

IV. THE AIM AND END OF IT ALL

All the salvation thus far spoken of is summed up in one phrase now—“justified by His grace.” Being thus justified, made acceptable to God by His grace, and having become His children, we are also made heirs. For we have been “begotten again unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice...” 1 Pet. 1:3-6. If we are children, then heirs; “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward.” (Rom. 8:17, 18). Eternal life in glory is God’s ultimate thought for us.

Missionary Messenger

“Greater things for God”

J. R. Stewart - Brown Cape Town, South Africa June 9th

Our minister Alan Fraser, and his family will be leaving us, for the States, on the 24th of June and will be away for two years or more. We will miss them very much and pray God’s blessing on them, as they go to preach the Gospel in the States.

Our new Minister, David Savides took over from Alan Fraser, on the 1st of June; we pray that God will bless him and his family, in this great work here for their master.

The Alan Frasers have been here with us for 11 years; the church has made great and wonderful strides in these years. When he started a church of Christ here in Bellville, he started off with about 10 people, and now we are a big congregation, always having visitors, and many have been added to the Church since then, so much so that we had to have the church building extended (a very big extension)—we have a large number of teenagers and children.

Our Vacation Bible School will soon be on the program, if God will so, it will be this month (June).

Some of our workers are getting on in years now, especially myself, now being 73 and cannot do as much as I used to do, but thank God for the years I could give Him, especially those wonderful years on the mission fields in Zambia, and the work here in the Cape among the colored people.

But one is never too old to work for the Lord, by words, deeds, and prayer.
Thank God for the freedom we still have in South Africa, to preach the word of God at all times and occasions—may it continue to be so, for many more years to come, and may we never become weary in well doing.

Alvin Hobby
Livingstone, Zambia
June 24th

The second school term of this year is about half finished. I am still teaching two Bible Classes each school day, out at the Zambia Bible Training Center. And Georgia is teaching fifteen Bible classes a week at the Linda Second School.

Dennis and Anita (our daughter) and their family left Zambia on the 14th of this month to go to the States for about three months. Of course we miss them. We and the other missionaries here are helping to take care of their things and their work while they are gone.

President Kenneth Kaunda has been in town today, and the motorcade has just passed by our house taking him back to the airport. While going through town, President Kaunda is always waving a white handkerchief out the car window. I saw his handkerchief!

It is quite cool in Zambia now. Last night there was frost out at the Bible Training Center. The students wanted to sit outside in the sunlight for their classes.

Day before yesterday, I was asked to speak here at the Livingstone Church of Christ. There were two baptisms. And at the new congregation, at Libuya, there was one baptism.

Joy Garrett
Salisbury, Zimbabwe
June 24th

We at the Children’s Home are fine. It is very cold at nights these days and consequently we have had some colds, but all are able to go to school. We have several young men at Arcadia trying to find employment, but there are very few jobs for the unskilled and many out of work.

Our combined services at Arcadia still go very well. There are still some who have not repented. Please remember this effort in your prayers.

Last Saturday we took all the older children here at the home and went to Mufakose to Bob’s Bible Study on Daniel. There were 140 present. This class had been meeting at Highfields but the brethren felt a change would be profitable for those at Mufakose.

This Saturday we have the wedding of a couple from Givela, about 150 miles away. Robert will conduct the service at Highfields here in Salisbury. They are a fine Christian couple and weddings such as this one are occasions of rejoicing.
What was Jacob's most remarkable act of faith? Why, that is simple, one might think. Of course, it was his experience at Peniel, when he wrestled with the Angel. Did not Hosea write, "In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God. Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor. He found Him at Bethel, and there He spoke with us, even the Lord, the God of hosts; the Lord is His name" (Hos. 12:3-5). And Moses, in speaking of the event, reports that the Angel, the preincarnate Son of God, said to Jacob after the struggle, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed" (cf. Gen. 32:28). But no, the writer of the great faith chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews does not single out that event for mention when describing the faith of Jacob.

Then was it Bethel? No. Was it Mahanaim, when he had the vision of the angels? No. Out of the long career of the patriarch the blessing of the sons of Joseph is selected for inclusion in the Westminster Abbey of Faith, Hebrews eleven. In describing Jacob's faith these words are written, "By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff (cf. Heb. 11:21).

That act evidently had in it the quality of faith that marked out Jacob as one of God's faithful men. The author of the epistle began the chapter by saying, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). His other words about faith as that which looked toward the future with confidence, giving it almost the sense of hope, are illustrated in Jacob's blessing of the sons (cf. Heb. 11:7, 8, 19, 26-27). In fact, the patriarch without any of his fabled guile becomes in the incident an object lesson in the quiet responsiveness of faith to the revelation of God.

In the incident here we are brought to an old man's deathbed. He is said by the inspired author to be "sick" (cf. Gen. 48:1). The word has the idea of being worn down or infirm due to the effects of age and disease. Yahweh, however, is by his side, and the elevated state of his mind at the time is the product of the sustaining power of the divine truth. How important it is that we be filled with the promises of God as we face the Grim Reaper, death!

The evidences of the Lord's presence with his beloved Israel include the fact that Jacob becomes the object of the divine inspiration. He collects his strength, sits up in his bed, and claims Joseph's
sons for himself (cf. vv. 2, 5), and then boldly asks that they be brought to him that they may be blessed. The presence of God is further seen in the fact that he is the mediator of far-reaching divine promises, both to the sons and to Joseph (cf. vv. 15-16, 19-20, 21). And finally, God's presence with him is seen in the witness that Jacob gives to the divine faithfulness in his life. Those memorable words, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all, bless the lads" (cf. vv. 15-16), live on in our thoughts and hearts to the present time as one of the greatest of the biblical tributes to the loving-kindness of the Triune God.

Finally, in the incident Jacob becomes the object of and subject of one of the most revealing acts of Scripture, the crossed hands over Ephraim and Manasseh. But more of that will be said in a moment. In the meantime we turn to the text.

I. THE ADOPTION OF JOSEPH'S SONS

The occasion (Gen. 48:1). This interesting section contains an important theological lesson for liberal theologians. I am thinking particularly of those who oppose the doctrine of the imputation of righteousness to believers on the basis of the saving merits of Jesus Christ through His atoning work on the cross. In a moment we shall see what I mean.

The occasion for the adoption of Joseph's sons is set forth by Moses in verse one. Reports came to Joseph of the illness of his father and, recognizing that the end might be near, he gathered together his two sons and made another trip to the bedside of his aged father to receive his blessing on his sons.

The preparation of Jacob for the blessing (Gen. 48:2). The news of Joseph's coming stirred Jacob and he strengthened himself for the meeting. Evidently he, too, realized that the matter of a blessing for the boys might be one of the reasons for the journey of his son. I can just imagine the family members' reaction as the old patriarch began to rise up from the bed. He sat up amid their admonitions, "Father, be careful! Don't move, you'll hurt yourself. You don't have the strength to do that," etc. But Jacob seems to be the recipient of divine enabling, an enabling that makes him the master of his destiny and death by the providence of God. He shouts out to his other sons, "Get me out of this bed! Joseph is coming, and I must be ready for him. Important things remain to be done." And he sat up in bed and prepared himself for Joseph and his sons. If we put the statement of Hebrews 11:21 in this context, too, then he probably moved and sat by the side of the bed, leaning upon his staff.

The accomplishment of the adoption (Gen. 48:3-7). When his son arrives, Jacob begins by uttering some profound words about the Lord's past dealings with him. He reminds Joseph of how the Lord met him at Bethel and gave him those wonderful promises of a numerous seed and of the land as everlasting possessions. Life had begun spiritually for him at Bethel, and he never forgot that great appearance of the Lord to him.
One of the commentators has pointed out that the picture here is most remarkable,—an old man in his dotage, with his sons about his bedside, but yet in great faith uttering words that have left their mark on the centuries. Barnhouse has then remarked, "If this scene were invented, then the inventor makes Shakespeare look like a scribbling copy boy." What a blessing, of a life in touch with the living God. Some men seem to think that they have blessed their family when they leave them inheritances of land and securities. We have no objection to that, but the greatest legacy a man can possibly leave his family is the legacy of a life lived in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A man can do nothing greater for his family than to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation by the effectual working of God the Holy Spirit.

Then Jacob utters the interesting words, "And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, ARE MINE; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, AS REUBEN AND SIMEON ARE" (cf. v. 5). This remarkable utterance confirms the adoption of Joseph's two sons by Jacob as his two sons, just as Reuben and Simeon were his sons. In other words, the grandsons are to take their place among the sons of Jacob and form two of the tribes of Israel. It is a classic case of adoption. As Dods has said, "Thus did God familiarise the Jewish mind through its whole history with the idea, if they chose to think and have ideas, of adoption, and of an adoption of a peculiar kind, of an adoption where already there was an heir who, by this adoption, has his name and worth merged in the persons now received into his place. Ephraim and Manasseh were not received alongside of Joseph, but each received what Joseph might have had, and Joseph's name as a tribe was henceforth only to be found in these two. This idea was fixed in such a way, that for centuries it was steeping into the minds of men, so that they might not be astonished if God should in some other case, say the case of His own Son, adopt men into the rank He held, and let His estimate of the worth of His Son, and the honour He puts upon Him, be seen in the adopted. This being so, we need not be alarmed if men (here we might insert the words, "the liberal theologians of our day" (SLJ)) tell us that imputation is a mere legal fiction, or human invention; a legal fiction it may be, but in the case before us it was the never-disputed foundation of very substantial blessings to Ephraim and Manasseh; and we plead for nothing more than that God would act with us as here He did act with these two, that He would make us His direct heirs, make us His own sons, and give us what He who presents us to Him to receive His blessing did earn, and merits at the Father's hand." The reference of the act to the doctrine of justification is patent.

After some further words about Joseph's grandsons and how they shall belong to Joseph, not Jacob, the mind of the old man wanders back to his beloved Rachel. Joseph, their eldest son standing before was the apparent cause of the reflection. Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife. He had sons by four of the women, but it was Rachel who had his deepest love. It was a poignant glance backward, and it must have touched Joseph, too, for she was his mother. Like many old men, Jacob's mind wanders and recounts again and again the old stories. Aging preachers do it, too, often telling the same stories over
and over. So, be on your guard, when I start doing it, it will be time to come and tap me on the shoulder and say, “It’s time for the old war horse to be put out to pasture!”

II THE BLESSING OF JOSEPH’S SONS

_The actions of the patriarch_ (Gen. 48:8-14). The wandering of Jacob’s mind makes it difficult for him to return to the present, and that probably accounts for his words as he saw the two boys before him, “Who are these?” His eyes were dim and evidently he had not really noticed them, or had forgotten that they were still before him.

Learning their identity (again?), the old man clutches them to him from the hands of their father and kisses and embraces them. It was an affectionate preliminary to the blessing that follows (cf. vv. 8-10). Jacob was not a man “without natural affection” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:3). He may have been at one time a trickster, but he was a warm one! I can imagine him with his wagon bumper-sticker, “Ask me about my grandchildren!”

Then Joseph, desirous that the official blessing be conferred on his sons, takes the boys from the knees of his father, steps back a pace or two, bows himself to the ground in filial reverence (and he was the Prime Minister of Egypt!), and then pushes the two boys back before his father. Since Manasseh was the firstborn of the two, he pushes Manasseh with his left hand before the right hand of Jacob to make it easy for him to stretch out his right hand and give him the firstborn’s blessing. Ephraim is now put before the patriarch’s left hand.

Now that they were close to Jacob again, he stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of the younger and his left on the head of the older, reversing the normal procedure. Of course, what he did involved the crossing of his hands. The NASB reads, “crossing his hands,” while the AV reads, “guiding his hands knowingly,” that is, by the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit of God. Lexicographers give as the meaning of the verb, “to lay crosswise.” The thought back of the rendering of the AV is, no doubt, still true. But more of this later.

_The contents of the blessing_ (Gen. 48:15-16). Again, one can see what a great blessing it is for a family to have the tradition of piety in its history. Oh! my dear friends and listeners, nurture your children in the admonition of the Lord. You can do nothing better and more lasting for them. Some mothers are more interested in their daughters exercising grace in their feet than in having grace in their hearts, and some fathers are more interested in their son’s ability to hit a baseball or throw a football than in their being able to pray in faith to their heavenly father.

It is said in verse fifteen that Jacob “blessed Joseph” in the blessing that is for “the lads” (cf. v. 16). That is because Joseph is the collective name for the two sons now, and in blessing him he blessed them, for he is their representative and they are represented in him. Cf. 1 Chron. 5:1-2.

The blessing is given by calling upon God in a three-fold way (cf. vv. 15-16). He appeals to the God who wills, works, and wards, someone has said. The three-fold periphrasis is interesting in the light of
the fact that the verb rendered by "bless" in verse sixteen is a singular in Hebrew. It is almost as if Jacob refers to the Triune God in a knowledgeable way, although the doctrine of the Trinity does not have a complete development in the Old Testament. The "angel," of course, is a reference to the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 32:24, 28, 30).

The God to whom he appeals is the "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked," that is, the covenant God, who gave the promises to Abraham and his seed and who steadied the faith of Jacob at so many crises in his life (cf. 28:13; 31:5, 42; 32:9, 46:3).

He refers to God also as "the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day" (cf. v. 1). He does not say that he has always followed Him, but he does confess that he had His shepherd care all the time. It is likely that out of this reference arose the idea that is expressed so beautifully in David's twenty-third psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (23:1).

The reference to deliverance from "all evil" calls to mind immediately the recent statement of the patriarch, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant (AV, "evil") have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning" (cf. 47:9). The two statements are obviously different, and they represent two strangely different views of life. It is not uncommon, however, for us to do just what Jacob did, look at life from the human standpoint and then the standpoint of the divine. How much wiser are we when we look at the brighter side of things! In one case the patriarch's words are all about himself, but in the other he brings God into the picture. The evils are still there, of course, but looked at from the standpoint of the Lord God, they are no longer to be feared. It is something like looking at bare, rocky mountains from the immediate presence of them, like the Rocky Mountains, and then looking at them from a distance, when they become beautiful with their color and snow-capped peaks.

May the Lord enable us to see our lives always in the light of His part in them, and from the distant perspective of the providence with which He surrounds every feature of our existence. I speak, of course, of His saints.

The objection of Joseph (Gen. 48:17-20). Joseph is disturbed by the fact the Jacob has given the blessing of the firstborn to the younger son and seeks to take Jacob's right hand off of Ephraim and put it upon the head of Manasseh, but Jacob will not have it so. He refuses to acknowledge any mistake in what he has done, saying, "I know, my son, I know; he (that is, Manasseh) also shall become a people and he also shall be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendents shall become a multitude of nations" (cf. v. 19). The law of primogeniture is not being upheld again, and one is reminded of Isaac and Ishmael (the older), and of Jacob and Esau (the older). In the final analysis we are also reminded of Adam the first, who lost the right to rule and of Adam the Last, the Lord Jesus, who regained for man the right that the older (in his human nature) lost. God reminds us in these things that nature fails, but grace redeems and restores and blesses. It is to the eternal credit of Jacob that he refused, seeing in what has happened the will of God and evi-
dently feeling that he was led to confer the blessing on the younger Ephraim. The old man, now more like Israel than ever, has cast his anchor in the port of God’s will forever.

It was also a beautiful illustration of the sovereignty of God in His dealings with men. That is a mysterious, but blessed, doctrine of the inspired word.

III THE BLESSING OF JOSEPH

The final words of the chapter record Jacob’s blessing of his son, Joseph. They are memorable words, “Behold, I (emphatic in the Hebrew text) am about to die, but GOD will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers” (cf. v. 21). Happy is the believer who is able to look beyond men to God. God’s great men live, minister, and die, but He, the true refuge, remains (cf. Matt. 28:19-20).

CONCLUSION

What was there about the act of Jacob that made it such a great act of faith that the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews chose it as representative of Jacob’s faith in his great chapter on faith? Well, it contained in it a recognition of the preeminence of God, and it was a signal recognition of the place of grace in the relationship of men to God. Nature, or man touched by sin, is denied, but grace, sovereign grace, is free to bless the unworthy in its own way. He saw God as his Kinsman-Redeemer, for He “redeemed” him from all evil. A new outlook now characterizes the patriarch’s life (cf. 42:36). Seeing His God as Redeemer with a clearer vision than ever before, he worships. Oh! the perseverance of God who has wrought in the life of his wayward patriarch and brought him to this knowledge and position.

What a beautiful picture is left upon the mind of the reader, the picture of the aged man of God conferring blessing upon the lads by means of crossed hands. Is this not a symbolical picture of the fact that the blessing of God upon the unworthy and unlikely younger man illustrates the fact that it is only by the cross of Jesus Christ that we have spiritual blessing from the Lord. God reverses our own position as lost men through the cross of our Redeemer and conveys upon us the blessing of firstborn sons, for we share in the inheritance of our greater Joseph, the Lord Jesus, receiving at the same time the forgiveness of our sins and justification of life. What a Savior! Cf. Rom. 8:1-17; 3:21-26; Eph. 3:6, etc.

AT BILL AND BETTY’S

A Bit of a Coward

About a year ago we started to have Family Prayers; not the long sort of rigmarole that they used to have in Victorian times, with the master of the house reading a whole chapter of the Bible, while the family and servants meekly knelt in neat lines with bowed heads. We read a couple of verses from the Bible, out of which we draw a Thought for the Day, and then have a brief prayer. The whole thing
only takes a few minutes, and it's so simple that the children divide it out amongst themselves, and usually manage to argue about who is going to do what, while they're doing so.

We have it before we start breakfast, otherwise Bill has to dash off to work, and the children leave the table at odd intervals because they have remembered something vital that just has to be done.

We don't have many people who come to stay. With four children, and a mother-in-law, there isn't much room anyway, so people just drop in for a meal, or come for the whole day. That's why it caused a bit of a stir when Bill's young cousin had to come up to London for an interview, and wrote and asked if he could stay the night with us.

"I don't mind sleeping on the floor," Peter offered helpfully. "It's much more fun anyway."

"That's not fair," Paul insisted. "Why should you sleep on the floor, if I've got to sleep in a bed."

"I asked first," Peter pointed out.

"Well, you didn't give me a chance," Paul replied heatedly. "No one gets a chance to say anything when you're around..."

"That will do," I said firmly. "No one will need to sleep on the floor. Pat can have the camp bed in Janet's room, and Ian can sleep in Pat's room all by himself."

"She'd better not snore," Janet said.

"I never snore," Pat said indignantly.

"How do you know you don't snore, when you can't hear yourself," Peter said in an aggravating manner.

"I just know," Pat said. "And it's nothing to do with you, so there."

"If you've all finished breakfast you can leave the table, and go and clean your shoes," I said firmly, sensing one of those pointless family arguments that seem to blow up from time to time.

I was glad Ian was coming to stay with us of course. He's a nice youngster, and I hope he gets this job in London. We shall see a bit more of him if he does.

"I wonder what time Ian will want breakfast?" I said to Bill a couple of nights later, when I was cleaning off the table before going to bed. Ian had just gone upstairs, and the house was quiet for once.

"The same time as us I should think," Bill said. "It will only take him twenty minutes to get to Baylisses, and there's plenty of room on the subway."

"You don't think he'd like it a bit before?" I said thoughtfully.

"What are you getting at, Bet?" Bill asked curiously. "You see, he knows me pretty well.

"I know it's daft," I said, "But I wonder what he'll think about us having prayers. I mean not many people do these days. I'm sure he'll think we're a bit queer."

"So you were thinking of skipping them?" Bill asked.
“Well... No...” I said. “Just having them at a different time—or something like that. He might be embarrassed.”

“You mean—you might,” Bill chuckled, hitting the nail on the head. “But is it right to thrust religion down the throat of a visitor?” I persisted. “If you know he hasn't any religious conviction himself?”

“He's a visitor in our home,” Bill pointed out. “And when in Rome, you must do as Rome does. Anyway, it would be a pretty poor example to pack up praying just in case a non-Christian disapproves. Look, I'll do the reading tomorrow and Pat can do the prayers. That will let you out.”

“You make me feel an awful coward,” I said.

“You are,” Bill teased. “But so was Peter in the courtyard. But afterwards he turned out to be the strongest of the lot.”

“You are nice, Bill,” I said.


BACK TO CALVARY

by Richard Bieber

Whenever a marriage disintegrates it is because the partners have drifted away from the covenant which they made in the beginning—the promise to be faithful to each other for better or for worse.

The same principle holds when you become a Christian. The commitment made at the beginning of discipleship will not automatically hold one faithful to Christ for all time. That bright moment of surrender to Jesus Christ will gradually fade into the past and mean nothing unless it is renewed day by day.

The Christian has to go back to Calvary daily and renew the covenant which God made with him there. If he starts neglecting his pilgrimage to Golgotha, his discipleship very soon begins to die. Then his surrender to Christ, instead of being a pivot around which his life revolves, becomes a bump in the road which is passed over and forgotten.

Through the ministry of Paul, the Galatians had received a vision of the crucified Christ. They saw their sins washed away. They received the gift of the Holy Spirit to go forth and live like sons of God. Their church became a fountainhead of the miraculous. Then Paul left.

In short time the Galatians were far more “religious” than they were when Paul was around. They were having special feast days and fast days and days for this and days for that. They were taking on more complex forms of worship. They were doing all kinds of wonderful things under the leadership of some marvelous new preachers who came through from Palestine. But the power was gone. The liberty of the Spirit was gone. The joy was gone. Even God seemed gone.

Why? Because they had forsaken the ground where they had started out with Paul: Calvary. When Paul was there these Galatians
became Christians by standing on Calvary, looking at Jesus, and believing that His blood had washed away their sins. The blood from the cross touched their guilty conscience and set them free.

But now they had left Calvary. They had gone back into the bondage of legalism. They tried to perfect themselves with their own efforts. “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth as crucified!”

They were no longer looking at Jesus on the cross. They were no longer trusting solely in His blood. And their faith was shriveled.

The place where you become a Christian is Calvary. And the place where you stay a Christian is Calvary. You don’t just look at Jesus hanging from the cross in the beginning and say, “Thank you, Lord,” and then travel on to other things. You stay at Calvary and renew your vision of it day after day. You look at Jesus hanging there and remember that it is His grace that saves you and nothing else. You remember that it is His blood alone which makes you worthy to approach God. You remember that it is His death which makes it possible for you to live as a man or woman of God.

When Christians become blind and proud and stubborn and touchy and chronically depressed, it is usually a sign that they have strayed away from the cross. They are drawing on their own physical and soulish powers instead of the powers of the crucified Christ.

To keep a marriage alive and fresh, keep renewing the covenant with each other daily; to keep your Christianity alive, continue daily to renew your vision of the event that made you God’s child—stay near the cross.

Stay near the cross when you pray. Sometimes we think our fervent manner will cause God to listen to us. God is not impressed. Sometimes when we pray we put our faith in our faith: “Surely when God sees my faith He will answer”. None of these things will make God hear you. You don’t have to do somersaults or work up a sweat. The sweating has already been done more worthily by Him who hung on that cross. He has paid for your prayer. He has made you worthy. Just lift up your heart to the heavenly Father and know that God will indeed hear and answer your prayer, not because of your tears or sweat or anything else, but for Jesus’ sake.

Stay near the cross when you minister to others. The power that enables us to minister anything good to our fellow men never comes out of us. What have you got in yourself that can heal the broken-hearted? What power do you have to lift up the fallen? Even when it comes to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and visiting the sick, if you try to go out and serve your fellow man by your own strength, you will end up crushed under the sheer weight of other men’s burdens. Many a social worker or minister or good-hearted Christian volunteer has ended up enmeshed in the very evil from which he was trying to deliver others, because he lost touch with the fountainhead of God’s grace: the cross. The heavier the burdens, the more pressing the problems, the more intense and disciplined must be your commitment at the cross of Jesus Christ, the place where God made you His child.
Stay near the cross when you suffer. There are people who tell us that suffering automatically brings blessings. They tell us that suffering is bound to bring us closer to God; suffering is much more likely to make you turn your back on God. What is the first thing you always ask whenever you suffer? "Why does God let this happen to me?" You're starting to get peeved with God. And this is the first step away from Him. When you suffer, remember that Jesus not only promised that you would suffer; He pioneered the path of suffering. He took the worst of it. He's there with you. He knows all about it. Keep your eye and your heart fixed upon the cross when you suffer, and the Spirit of glory and of God will rest upon you.

Stay near the cross when you prosper. We know that if a man who has been poor suddenly becomes rich, his marriage is often put under a terrific strain. Suddenly he's a big shot. He has lots of power. All kinds of stimulating people now become his friends. His little wife who struggled along with him during the hard years looks dull and worn and he begins to neglect her.

When a Christian begins to prosper, a similar temptation comes to him. He feels self-sufficient. He is tempted to forget God's grace. What does he need God for? He's got everything. How necessary it is when you prosper to keep your vision of Calvary alive! Look always unto Jesus—"who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, from sin, death and the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death." (Luther)

The abiding place, the place where you must stand if you are to remain God's faithful child, is that place where you stood when you first became a Christian. Never must a day go by when this event is forgotten. Never must a day go by without thanking God for the sacrifice of His Son.

Why did Jesus link His crucifixion to bread and wine? To help us remember. Jesus took two basic foods of the human race and bound them forever to the cross. He gave bread: "This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Remember. He gave wine, "This is the blood of the new covenant, shed for your sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." So that you don't forget.

"God, help us to remember Jesus on the cross. Even when our minds grow dim and we forget everything else, may we remember this. For as long as we do, we shall have Your presence, Your power, Your compassion and Your holy peace." —From Christian Platform

NEWS AND NOTES
"They rehearsed all that God had done with them..."

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