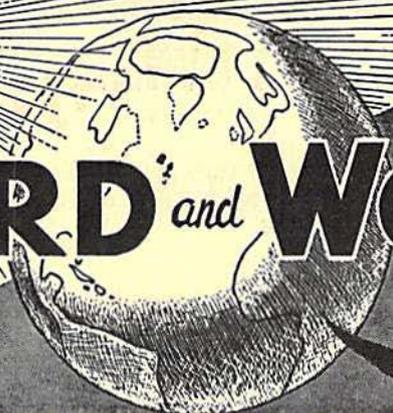


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*"Holding forth the Word of life."*

**JULY, 1986**

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# THE WORD AND WORK

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

Alex V. Wilson and Wm. Robert Heid, Co-Editors

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## A Rich Legacy and Lofty Goals

Alex V. Wilson

It is with fear and trembling that I assume this co-editorship of *Word and Work*. And surprise too, for I had not expected to write any front-page editorials till a few months from now. It is one thing to write articles (my first one appeared in 1958, when I was in college), but another thing to assume co-responsibility for an entire magazine.

*Word and Work* has a rich heritage. Think of its founder and first editor (from 1908-1915), Stanford Chambers. A stalwart defender of the faith and proclaimer of the Gospel. Then R. H. Boll, outstanding editor for forty years (1916-56)! A master-teacher of all the word of God, and especially of God's grace. Then co-editors E. L. Jorgenson and J. R. Clark (1956-62). Faithful, loving, humble men, concerned to build bridges and remove barriers among the people of God. Then Gordon Linscott (1962-75), with his deep passion for our Lord and Savior Himself, and our need to know *Him* (see following reprint). Then W. Robert Heid (1976 till now and still continuing), with his much-needed emphasis by life and teaching on Christian homes and solid family relationships. I praise our Father for each of these men and what they have meant to me and many others.

There's another way of gaining insight into the philosophy and goals of this magazine. Think of its *name*, with its twin emphases of truth and action, belief and behavior, knowledge and service. How important to maintain that balance and avoid lopsidedness. This aim is also stressed by our *motto*, "A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God." We don't want to ride hobbies but provide a balanced diet (though of course at certain times some truths are needed more than others). And note the two Scriptures on our cover: "Holding *fast* the faithful Word" and "Holding *forth* the Word of life." Many folks claim to hold fast to the Bible, but they never hold it forth to others. What a crime! Meanwhile others have lost their grip on God's truth and have nothing worthwhile to hold forth to anyone else. How sad.

Last, I remind you of our *missionary*-letters section, dwindling in size because our missionary force is dwindling in number, alas. The motto of this section, coined by Don Carlos Janes, is "Greater things for God." This challenge is urgent, for a world now holding five billion inhabitants desperately needs to hear God's word and see His work. Please pray with us that this magazine will not soothe but arouse its readers to greater things for our great God.

# REPRINT: Editorial Freedom—in Christ

(This was brother Linscott's first regular editorial, written in October, 1962.)

The *Word and Work* is not chained to a man or a creed or a tradition. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "For freedom did Christ set us free." Occasionally we hear of Christians who seem to prefer not to be free. They would prefer that we all speak or write from a single point of view, with no differences of opinion. They would like for us to "speak for the Church", authoritatively defining just exactly what "the Church of Christ teaches". Brethren—those of you who may feel the same way—I can heartily sympathize with you. It is very reassuring to know exactly what you believe and rather disconcerting to be in doubt.

This past August C. V. Wilson took me to the YMCA with him and gave me a few elementary lessons in swimming. First I had to learn to float. That wasn't easy: I'm used to feeling something solid beneath me. To fall into the water and just lie there was little less than a terrifying experience—at first. Gradually, I found that the water would hold me. I could relax and still not sink, though I could feel *nothing* holding me up. What an experience!

Now the parallel: Human nature naturally seeks a spiritual handrail—an authoritative "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not". The Pharisees, zealous for the law of God, had turned that law—though spiritual in itself—into such a handrail; they could grasp it and say, "Here I stand, firm for God." The development of church dogmas and the Roman priesthood was a similar outworking of this human tendency—the church makes all the decisions. In similar fashion the 19th century "Restoration Movement" in some quarters degenerated into the familiar rule-of-thumb: Four steps to conversion, five items of worship, and two essentials for Christian living; hold to these basic truths and you're all right. It is very solid and reassuring beneath the feet. But it is just as restricting as it is limited in scope. These are but *bits of the truth*, and unable to minister to the whole of our needs.

In contrast, consider the life which is sustained by the Person of Jesus Christ, who is The Truth. In experience, it's something like floating: the edge of the pool is still there, and so is the floor, but neither is any longer a vital source of support. It is disconcerting at first—I speak from experience—to say, "Henceforth, I trust Jesus Christ alone for my salvation, and place no reliance in what I may know—or may have done." But the result is a glorious freedom from the spirit of bondage to fear. Now Christ is our life: we are totally borne along by Him, and free to follow the promptings of His Spirit. Since we are no longer holding for dear life to the handrail of doctrine, we are free to examine that doctrine more carefully and objectively than before. We are free to discover new truths, or to revise beliefs which do not stand careful scrutiny. It is true there may come times when we will be uncertain about this doctrine or that, but

this brings no fear to the heart of the Christian who can say with Paul, "I know HIM in whom I have believed."

To avoid being deceived, correct alone is not fool-proof. The absolute essential is a personal, living knowledge of Him who is the author of doctrine.

## Viewing the News

Jack Blaes



A LONDON NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT THE FRENCH government has been bombarded with letters and petitions from relatives seeking information about loved ones who they believe are still alive after nearly forty years in the Russian Gulag.

Patrick Meney, a Kremlinologist, claims that thousands of Frenchmen disappeared in post-war purges in Stalin's Russia despite Soviet agreements that all foreigners found by the Red Army would be patriated. Mr. Meney suspects that several dozen Frenchmen may still be languishing in Russian Labor camps. Evidently his findings and conclusions have influenced these recent writers to the French government.

One case that has drawn some attention is that of Paul Catrain, a World War II soldier who was reported killed in Lubin, Poland. Some three years ago, relatives of the unfortunate Catrain received a letter smuggled out of the city of Strikhovtsky in Ukraine in which he desperately asked for repatriation. The Russians have disregarded every request for a meeting with Catrain.

In an apparent blunder, the Soviet Novosti News Agency furiously attacked Meney's conclusions, inadvertently revealing that 348 French nationals are buried in a cemetery at Kirsanov, 280 miles northeast of Stalingrad. The French foreign office has denied any knowledge of the cemetery but has requested permission to visit the graves. (*Tradition, Family and Property Newsletter*.)

BUT SO MANY OF THE LEADERS OF THE FREE COUNTRIES don't seem to see it. And only a few of the writers and speakers in the news media seem to be aware of the aims and purposes of communism. Here are some quotes of Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "Communism is a negation of life and represents a mortal disease for all countries. It is the death of mankind. No country is immune from it. One cannot correct or improve communism. One can only try to put an end to it."

"The (USSR) government's interest is to make sure the population's attention will be entirely absorbed by its need to survive, and so people will have no time to think about anything else."

"From the day the Communist system was born, one of its primary aims has been to conceal or distort what actually takes place. By now there is half a century's worth of accumulated falsehoods."

"Marxism is hostile to the physical existence and the spiritual essence of every nation. It is futile to hope that a compromise with Communism will be found or that relations will be improved by concessions and trade. Communism is a denial of life; it is a fatal disease of a nation and the death of all humanity."

THIS IS NOT RECENT NEWS, BUT it is related to what is going on today in places that should know better. On February 26, 1966, Richard Arens, Counsel to the Committee on Un-American Activities, said: "In the leader-

ship of the National Council of Churches, we have found over 100 persons in leadership capacity with either Communist-front records or records of service to Communist causes. The aggregate affiliations of the leadership, instead of being in the hundreds as the chairman first indicated, is now according to our latest count, in the thousands, and we have yet to complete our check."

Quite a furor was raised after CBS's "Sixty Minutes" aired "The Gospel according to Whom?" in which correspondent Morley Safer suggested repeatedly throughout the long segment that officials may be using Sunday offerings to promote Marxist revolutions. Newsweek has spoken to this issue: "Many NCC officials readily acknowledge their sympathy with controversial causes: In their public statements they have frequently been critical of capitalism and US foreign policy and supportive of Third World, liberation (Marxist) movements."

AFTER EVANGELIST BILLY GRAHAM'S VISIT TO Czechoslovakia, some Czechoslovakian imprisoned believers hearing his television interview, expressed "feelings of grief and bitterness" at hearing him speak well of those who regard Christians "as an irksome remnant of bourgeois ideology and obscurantism." They inquired why Dr. Graham "did not seek contact with those suffering for their faith and ask officials about the number of seminary students, or religious books published, and about those who have lost jobs because of their faith." This was reported in *Christianity Today*.

"ONE OF THE STRANGEST AND MOST UNHAPPY DEVELOPMENTS in the churches in recent years has been the emergence of a hard core Left movement. The leftists in the churches make common cause with Fidel Castro and other enemies of freedom. Insight into the arms and outlook of the leftists in the churches is to be found in a fascinating but disturbing article published in the July-August issue of the *Monthly Review*, a Marxist publication. The author of the article, entitled "An Analysis of the Christian Left in the United States," is Kathleen Schultz, a Roman Catholic sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

"Sister Kathleen is not the typical religious. For ten years, she was national executive secretary of Christians for Socialism. According to the magazine, 'She has been active in the Christian Left since 1968.' Her attitude is evidenced by her reference in the article to 'the fact and nature of repression in the United States.'

"Sister Kathleen is hoping and working for the emergence of a 'Christian Left in the United States.' She admits, however, that a 'consolidated revolutionary Christian Left does not yet exist.' She wants Marxists and Christians to work together, hails the example of Nicaragua, and quotes Fidel Castro approvingly. She refers to U.S. imperialism, and says that some church members 'have begun to develop an identifiable socialist political practice.'

"For most church-goers, this outlook is anathema. Marxism and Christianity are at opposite poles. Marxists states, such as the Soviet Union, Cuba and Nicaragua are bent on destroying Christian values. In these and other countries with Marxist regimes, Christian churchmen are imprisoned and tortured. Despite the record of persecution under Marxism, there are those like Sister Kathleen who regard the United States as the land of repression and imperialism and long for solidarity between Christians and the Christian Left.' One wonders: Are these terribly confused people? Or do they know exactly what they are doing?

"It is interesting that the 'Christian Left' in the United States focuses on cooperation with Marxists in Latin America. 'Politically committed Christians,' Sister Kathleen writes, "are finding their voice and perspective through the use of Marxist analysis.' Theirs is not the traditional reading of the Gospels, she admits, saying that the church leftists 'work to develop a stronger "materialist" reading of the Bible.'

"This revealing article makes it clear that the 'Christian leftists' have largely detached themselves from the historic interpretation of Christianity and are engaged in creating a new political religion that is a variant of Marxism. Thus in reading the article, one is led to conclude that there is no such thing as 'the Christian Left,' simply the old Left with all its links to revolution and totalitarianism."—Anthony Harrigan

U.S. Industrial Council  
Quoted in Summit Journal



## THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

### **"Righteousness Comes Only By Faith"**

*It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah." What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (Romans 9:29-33, NIV).*

I am sure you will pardon the overlap with the Scripture quotation I used in the last article in this series. I re-quoted verse 29 here to ask this question: "If it took God's sovereign mercy to preserve a remnant in His chosen nation, how about in the professing church today?" When I see the carelessness with which most church members treat the Word of God and banner His Name about, I thank Him for His sovereign mercy that keeps us going in spite of ourselves. The tendency of so many Christians to be proud that they have received the Messiah that the Jews (as a nation) turned down is a foolish one indeed. When I compare the lack of faith in the nation of Israel in the days Christ was here, with the lack of real faith or trust in so many who call themselves by Christ's name today, I realize anew how much human nature degrades the things of God as he takes them in his own hand. Oh how badly we need a revival, a renewal, a great work of the Spirit of God among the churches in this country and in much of the world today! But remember that there were a few in Israel who received Him then, so you and I do not have to give in to the great tendency today to profess His Name and go our own way. The great question is simple—do we?

The gist of our lesson this time is in verses 30-32, where a great contrast is pointed out. Here contrasts the Gentiles, who did not "pursue" righteousness with the Jews who did pursue something, but that "something" was not righteousness but a "law of righteousness." But, thank God, there is also another contrast, this one in results: the Gentiles obtained righteousness because, like Abraham, they believed God for the seeming impossible while the Israelites (as a whole,

though a few like Paul were exceptions) did not even attain to the law of righteousness they sought because, unlike Abraham, they tried to get it by works, by self effort, instead of believing God and having Him credit that to them as righteousness (see Genesis 15:6 for the reference to Abraham and note the context).

The non-seeker got it, the seeker failed! Quite a contrast to our human motivation, isn't it! We like to feel that we deserve some credit for our efforts and that God will take that into account. What God wants is for us to realize our lack of strength and to trust Him to provide. Remember the words of Romans 3:23 (*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*) and then remember the illustration that many people use to make this point easier to understand: If a large group of people gathered in New York Harbor and all of them tried to jump to England, they would all fall short and the one who did the best would be farthest from the safety of the original shore. That illustrates as well as any human illustration how short we come of the perfection that we must have for the perfect holiness, without which "no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Quit trying on your own and trust Him and He will provide His Spirit to fulfill the righteousness requirement of the Law in you (8:4).

Back in what would be the "dim past" to many of you (in the late 1940s, to be exact) I had a conversation with a Jewish Rabbi that well shows the point Paul is making here. He was a nice fellow, a scholar in his field and a very respected member of this community, and I liked him very much. But he told me that though he could go along with Jesus as a teacher, he could not go along when Paul ruled out law as a means of salvation. He was still clinging to the thought he and others could pass the test when God tests his righteousness of keeping the law. But God wants perfection and therefore Peter well said that the Law became "a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear" (Acts 15:10). That is also true of their descendants and of any Gentiles who feel they can keep the Law (or the Golden Rule or the Sermon on the Mount, or whatever God-given rules they imagine) well enough to please God.

As I said, God is pleased only by perfection and that perfection is found only in Jesus Christ. He kept the Law perfectly (for Himself) and that made Him eligible to take our sins on Himself, die in our stead, and offer us salvation by faith. If you have not taken that great gift He is offering free, then you can not be saved until you do. It cost Him a tremendous price that we will never be able to understand fully in this life, but He paid all the price and now it is free to you and to me. Don't turn your face away from God's great offer given in love.



## Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

*Is Christ now sitting on David's throne?*

No. Only two reasons come to mind as to why Christian people might suppose that Christ is now sitting on David's throne. One reason is that people sometimes try to help God out of what they consider to be a difficulty. The other is that aspiring Bible students sometimes accept rather uncritically the things which are taught them, becoming "parrots" of the teaching of others.

Let's consider this last matter first. It forms the basis for a lot of religious error. A large number of people accept, believe, and pass on what they are taught by others. In theory these may believe the Bible—or like to think that they do. But in practice many believe, pass on, and even vigorously defend merely an interpretation of the Bible that has been taught them. Some of these know some "proof" passages and some of the reasoning of men, and they think they are standing for Bible teaching. They may even learn the set of "proofs" that supposedly establishes those teachings. But in all honesty many of these have not made much of a study of the Bible itself. They have learned a certain set of scriptures and what they have been taught as the proper interpretation thereof. If they have been fortunate enough to have been taught by people who understood the scripture and taught them truth, the result may be fairly good, but if they have been taught a warped viewpoint, the result is likely going to be bad. Some of these may be very good people in many ways. Their love of the truth may be such that the Lord will overrule and give the knowledge they need to live victorious lives in Christ. The fact remains, however, that they have a sort of "second-hand" faith.

Now when such a person as we have described is taught that Christ is now on David's throne and that those who have some other viewpoint are perverters of scripture who are on the road to hell, they may become advocates of the same view, heatedly declaring this to be truth. They may well believe that it is. They may cite a lot of scripture, supposing that thereby they are offering proof. Such a person supposes that the issue is settled by what he knows about it.

I recall an incident from college days. A group of young people, of whom I was a part, were discussing religious matters and one person commented on the "terrible evils of premillennialism." Pretending to less knowledge than I possessed, I inquired, "Just what is premillennialism anyway?" The same young person replied, "I don't know what it's all about; I just know that it is BAD." Unfortunately

some of those who insist Christ is now on David's throne are in the same boat; they just know what they have been taught that He is on David's throne.

But let's move on to the second reason why people suppose Christ is now on David's throne. These may be deeper students of the Bible, aware of many passages of prophetic significance in both the Old and New Testaments. Somewhere along the line, however, they have become anti-millennialists . . . for whatever reason. They do not believe there is going to be any future period when the promises of the O. T. concerning the continuation of David's throne will be fulfilled. They have taken a stand on prophetic issues which requires the concept that Christ is now on David's throne, else God will not have kept His promises. Now these know that God is true, that His promises are valid, and that He will keep His word. Like many of God's saints in facing such a difficulty, these try to help God out of what would otherwise be a serious slip. Since God promised David an heir to sit on His throne (2 Sam. 7:11b-16), and since there is no time (per their understanding) beyond the present age when this can be fulfilled, then it must be fulfilled in the present age. And since there has been no earthly throne over the literal seed of Israel (the people over whom David ruled) for most of the church age, then by some sleight of hand the throne is transferred to heaven and is made to be a rule over the "spiritual seed" of Abraham, the church.

The sleight of hand artist is able to convince people that what could not happen did happen. After all, "We saw it with our own eyes!" The thing about his work is that we know there was some trickery, some diversion of attention, some reason why what we thought we saw was not truth. Most people are amazed but not deceived. The handling of scripture by some who insist that Christ is now on David's throne reminds me of the sleight of hand artist, except that too many people are deceived thereby and suppose that they have been offered proof. Let us notice some examples.

A passage which will be cited in any serious discussion of the throne of David issue is Acts 2:29-31. A booklet dealing with this issue which came to my attention recently makes this a key point in the author's insistence that Christ is now on David's throne. He says: "God raised up Christ to sit on David's throne." Thus far no fair-minded person could object. That is exactly what Peter declared in Acts 2:29-31. He cites this as one of the reasons for the resurrection of Christ. God did not in David himself provide for the unending dynasty over Israel but made that provision through One born of the fruit of David's loins—the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, however, the author goes on to say: "Peter says that the beginning point of that reign was Christ's resurrection." Ah, yes, if he is to make his point that is what is needed, so "Presto! chango!" it is done! But that is not what Peter said. Peter said absolutely nothing about *when* Christ is to sit on that throne. The *when* will have to be determined from other scripture.

Another example of this sleight of hand misuse of scripture by the same author follows. Under a paragraph headed "Christ Will Remain

in Heaven on David's Throne until the Fulfilment of All that the Prophets Have Foretold," he cites Acts 3:19-21 and proceeds to explain that "Christ sitting upon David's throne was one of these" (presumably he means the things foretold by the prophets). In his approach to this passage he makes it read "until AFTER (not by actually inserting the word, but by giving it that force). Put another way, he understands the passage to mean Christ remains in heaven until the restoration of all things, not, as it reads, the times of restoration. The point he attempts to make is that Christ must remain in heaven until after His sitting on David's throne. A careful reading of the passage will show that it says nothing of the sort. It says that He must stay in heaven until *the times of restoration of all things*—not until after those times or until the restoration is complete. Whatever occurs in the times of restoration occurs after His return, not before it.

The only way to have Christ now on David's throne is by such misuse of scripture and by the process sometimes called "spiritualizing" the scriptures. A chief feature of the latter is the taking of promises made to Israel, for example, and transferring them to the church. Now any serious student of the Bible probably recognizes the validity of APPLYING lessons to those to whom the word was not directly spoken. Many things spoken to Israel of old may be applied to life today. Things that happened to Bible characters may serve to teach us lessons today. Even in this we need to be careful that we do not make applications which are contrary to scripture, do not ignore the covenant under which they are given, etc. But the application of lessons from scripture is not to change scripture; it is to recognize God's great principles may be broader and of significance to others than those to whom they were specifically addressed. The "spiritualizing" process assumes that men know enough to decide when God addressed one person or nation but meant someone else. A very common way of handling many of the O.T. promises is to declare that while God spoke them to the Israelites, He will fulfill them to the church. This is a dangerous way of handling God's word.

God may be so gracious toward mankind that some of His blessings are poured out on those to whom they were not specifically promised. The church may receive now and in the future some things that were promised specifically to Israel, but because God is God He will fulfill every promise He has made to those to whom He made it. If I make a promise to Tom Brown concerning his children, I cannot claim to have fulfilled it because I decided to keep the provisions of the promise to Bill Jones' children. I can do what I will for Bill Jones' children, but that will not fulfill my promise to Tom Brown's. There are those who assume God completely cast off the Israelites because of the crucifixion of Jesus, that they forfeited every promise, and that the things promised to them will be fulfilled to the church. These seem to forget that quite a number of promises to Israel were unconditional, not based on their continuing faithfulness. The promise to David of continuing dynasty was not conditioned on Israel's obedience. Moreover, the declaration that God has cast off Israel ignores some plain declaration in the N.T. that God has NOT cast off

Israel (Rom. 9 - 11; esp. 11:1). As though God foresaw the spiritualizing tactic, it is made clear in this passage that it is Israelites about whom he speaks (9:3).

Those who place Christ now on the throne of David have to get the throne of David into heaven. This takes some tricky sleight of hand. David ruled over fleshly Israel. His throne was never in heaven. But by usage of a passage of scripture (1 Chron. 29:23) which speaks of Solomon's throne (and therefore David's) as Jehovah's throne, the feat is accomplished (?). Of course David's throne was Jehovah's throne. When He allowed Israel to have a king He did not cease to rule over them. The whole nation was His. As far as that is concerned, the throne of Nebuchadnezzar and the throne of every other nation, then or now, is Jehovah's throne. There is no power but of God (Rom. 13:1). But why confuse that with Jehovah's throne in heaven? We cannot say that because God is love, therefore love is God. Neither can we say that because David's throne is Jehovah's, therefore Jehovah's throne in heaven is identical with it. The effort would be amusing if it were not done in a serious way.

Jesus tells us very clearly when He will sit on the throne of David (i.e., when He will exercise that right which is now His—Matt. 28:18; Heb. 2:8). It is *when He shall sit on the throne of His glory*. In Matt. 18:27, Peter inquires concerning the rewards of the apostles. He is told that "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." They are to be associated with Him in His reign over (note!) the twelve tribes of Israel. When will He sit on the throne of His glory? In Matt. 25:31, He says, "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . then shall he sit on the throne of his glory."

It is with Israel as Hosea declared: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:4-5).

127 E. Highland Rd., Johnson City, TN 37601

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## GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles

### ABILITY

1. Able to save rough fishermen, Peter, Andrew, James, and John: John 1:35-42; Luke 5:3-11.
2. Able to save despised tax collectors: Matthew, Luke 5:27-29; Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10.
3. Able to save a woman taken in adultery: John 8:1-11.
4. Able to save the chief of sinners, the leading opponent and persecuter of Christianity, Saul of Tarsus: Acts 9:1-31; I Timothy 1:15.

—F. D. Whitesell

## TRIALS

There are three things to remember concerning trials:

1. Trials are the common experience of all of us. No one is immune. Trials are a part of living.
2. Trials are transitory. C.B. Williams translates I Peter 1:6 this way: "In such hope keep on rejoicing, although for a little while you must be sorrow-stricken with various trials." Trials, though difficult, are "for a little while."
3. Trials are lessons that shouldn't be wasted. Though not enjoyable or necessarily good in themselves, trials constitute a divine work for our ultimate good. Jesus never promised an easy journey, but He did promise a safe landing.

—George Sweeting

## ATONEMENT

Christ took our sins and the sins of the whole world as well as the Father's wrath on His shoulders, and he has drowned them both in Himself so that we are thereby reconciled to God and become completely righteous.

—Martin Luther

## THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD

The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart. In it, we find a light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory.

—D. L. Moody

## WHAT THE BIBLE WILL DO

The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.

—D. L. Moody

## THE PURITY OF GOD'S WORD

God's Word is pure and sure, in spite of the devil, in spite of your fear, in spite of everything.

—R. A. Torrey

## ACCEPT THE WHOLE BIBLE

The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.

—A. W. Tozer

## THE BIBLE IS GOD SPEAKING TO US

The Bible is literally God speaking to you. It is God's instrument of salvation (Rom. 10:17; I Peter 1:25) and God's instrument for growing mature Christians (I Peter 2:2). It is the blueprint for the Christian.

—George Sweeting

MARANATHA! (I Corinthians 16:22)

# The Use To Be Made Of Our Faults

Jean Nicolas Grou

This is a very important point in spiritual life; God intends even our faults to set forward the sanctification of our souls, and it rests with our souls whether they do so or not. (Not infrequently we suffer less real injury from a fault itself than from the way in which we deal with it.)

I am not now speaking of people who give themselves grudgingly to God and so commit numberless deliberate faults which can in no way be turned to good account. The souls to which I refer are those who, in spite of all their resolutions against sin, are continually committing faults through impetuosity, weakness or inadvertence. Such people are wont to be greatly surprised and troubled at their faults; they give way to false shame and become fretful and disheartened. But these are so many signs of self-love, more hurtful to the soul than the original fault.

You are surprised at your imperfections—why? I should infer that your self-knowledge is small. Surely you might rather be astonished that you do not fall into more frequent and more grievous faults, and thank God for His upholding grace. You are worried when you detect a fault, you lose your inward peace, and your disturbance lasts hours or days, as the case may be. This is not right. You should never allow yourself to be disturbed, but when fallen you should rise up quietly and turn with a loving heart to God for forgiveness.

The worst evil, however, is when we grow vexed at our faults; as Francois de Sales says, "We are angry because we are angry; impatient at having shown impatience. But this is sorry work, and if you will be honest with yourself you will see that it is altogether pride; you are mortified to find yourself weaker, less holy than you fancied yourself to be; perhaps too your aim was self-satisfaction, you wanted to be able to congratulate yourself on having spent a day or week free from faults. Then you grow discouraged, you relax your devotional exercises and begin to look upon perfection as unattainable."

"What is the use of such perpetual self-restraint and watchfulness?" you ask. "What good does all my recollection and mortification do me, if none of my faults are corrected and I grow no better?"

This is nothing more or less than a snare of the devil, and if you would escape it you must resolve not to be disheartened; but even if you were to fall a hundred times a day, determine to rise up each time, and go onwards. What will it matter though you have fallen in the way if you find your journey's end safely at last? God will forgive the falls: they often are caused by undue haste, which prevents us from taking fitting precautions, or with timid souls from a perpetual looking around for imaginary dangers which causes them to stumble.

Perhaps the holiest men are not always those who commit fewest faults, but those who have most courage, most love and the most free spirit; those who make the heartiest efforts for conquering self, and who are not afraid of a stumble, even of a fall, so long as their progress is certain. St. Paul says that "all things work together for good to them that love God"; and we may be sure that even their faults are included. God permits them to cure our vain presumption and to teach us our true measure. It was so with David. "It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes." Peter fell before he learned to know his own weakness. Paul remained humble amid triumphs granted to his eloquence. Remembering that he had been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," he proclaimed himself the "chief of sinners" hearing a "thorn in the flesh"—all his days, "lest I should be exalted above measure."

Who can doubt that in like manner God will help us to use our daily faults for greater sanctification? All the masters of the spiritual life have observed that God permits the holiest men to retain certain defects, never wholly overcome, in order to teach them how weak they are without His grace, to check any pride because of His gifts, to destroy the lurking remains of vanity which beset the soul, to keep up constant watchfulness, dependence on God and unflinching prayer. The little child who falls as he is learning to walk clasps tighter hold of his mother after he has hurt himself.

Then, too, our faults sometimes lead to opportunities of good which would not else have arisen. Some outbreak of temper or harshness or impatience leads you to humble yourself in reparation. The fault was sudden and not premeditated; the reparation is deliberate and hearty, though it cost you no small effort. Hence it was more acceptable to God than the fault was displeasing.

Again, He sometimes veils real holiness under external imperfections, which readily meet the eye of our neighbor, so as to prevent the praise of men from tarnishing true humility. God is a mighty Master of souls, be it ours to let Him work His way in us. By all means let it be your great object never to offend Him in anything, but when you have committed a fault, strive to be sorry, not for your mortified pride but because you have displeased Him; accept all inevitable humiliation, ask God to turn it to His glory, and you will make greater progress in holiness than by the most precise and outwardly well regulated life if it leads to self-love.

If God requires anything of us we have no right to draw back under the pretext that we are liable to commit some fault in obeying. It is better to obey imperfectly than not at all. Perhaps you avoid the society of certain persons because they make you cross or impatient. How are you to attain self-control if you shun all occasions of practicing it? Is not such self-choosing a greater fault than those in which you fear to fall? Aim at a steady mind to do right, go wherever duty calls you, and believe firmly that God is an indulgent Father and will forgive the faults which take our weakness by surprise in spite of our sincere desire to please Him.

—from *The Alliance Witness*, October, 1958

# Family Living: Your Calendar—An Ally or An Enemy?

by Fred W. Schott

(Fred graduated from Portland Christian High School and was a deacon at Portland Church of Christ in Louisville before moving to Omaha. This article is excerpted by permission from his 2nd book on building strong homes, *Families and Their Self-Esteem*.)

Remember when families ate at the same time every evening, year after year? Supper time at our house was 5:00 p.m. sharp. You could set your clock by our routine. Dad punched out of the factory in the south end of Louisville at 4:30. It took him exactly twenty-five minutes to make it home to the west end. He arrived at 4:55, washed his hands, gave mom a big kiss, and I said grace every night at 5:00. One of our family's strictest rules was, "You have your feet under this table at 5:00!"

Today, my family is lucky to all hold hands and say grace together two or three times a week. It seems no matter how hard we try, the five of us are just going in so many directions that one or more family members is not there.

Ah, the good ole days! But before we get too melancholy—the families of the past were not better families because they ate together with more regularity than our families today. Our families are not inferior because we have trouble eating at the same time each night. Many of the things that interrupt our meal times are healthy: piano lessons, special choir practices, cheerleading, men's Monday after-work basketball league (very important to my mental well-being!), a late afternoon class or seminar. We are not inferior. We are just different, responding to a different world than the one in which we grew up. Further, struggling with overcommitment as we do, our lives are full of wonderful opportunities and experiences.

But my family and most others need to learn ways to take greater responsibility for planning family time. We do have to work harder at that than previous generations. It is most important that we do not just let things happen. Rather, we need to give time, thought, and energy to planning our time. Overcommitment is an overlooked danger to modern family life. I reemphasize: We must take charge of the process. We need to go beyond simply responding to each new crisis or demand on our time.

"OK, OK," I can hear some of you say. "I agree! But how?" It is a simple matter of *Getting Organized*. Develop a system of time management is my first recommendation. This is important. When things get hectic and we sense ourselves becoming overcommitted, if we have a system, we know how to make adjustments, we have confidence, and we will not be overwhelmed. I have a system of time management that I use. It helps me be fair to myself as well as my family.

I discovered the importance of a system and developed one that works for me and many I have shared it with. What I will share here is the basics of a family system of time management. You need to personalize it, add to it, and make your own. It is built around this principle: *proactive calendaring*.

A good calendar is the heart of any system. I use a three-ring binder in which two 8½ x 11-inch pages open to form a week's calendar. At home, the heart of our family system is a large wall calendar showing a month at a time with large daily squares that allow a lot of writing. A simple principle: Writing things down, in the calendar, with enough detail is vital.

We write more than scheduled events in the calendar. Things that have shown up on our calendar from time to time are whose night it is to cook, to wash dishes, or to feed the dog. Sometimes when I have gotten out of the habit of routinely doing something that is important to me, like physical exercise, quiet times for prayer and study of scripture, or guitar playing, I will begin to chart that activity in my calendar. Just keeping a record gets me back into the habit. This is simply a method of self-discipline.

Work to become more *proactive* and less *reactive* in scheduling things on the calendar. Most of the time we react to time commitments. We get notices from school, letters and announcements in the mail, receive phone calls, sign up for classes, leagues, and church activities, and *react* by scheduling all these activities on the calendar. Soon it is so cluttered we have no time left for the family or ourselves. Often by reacting to life's events, we have trouble saying "no" to things we really would rather not do. Or it seemed OK when we said "yes," but all those "so-so" activities build up, making us tired, cranky, and feeling out of control.

By proactive, I mean to determine as a family not only what is important but what we want to do and schedule it in advance. Write it into the calendar, then protect it. Some examples: When calendars begin to look cluttered, someone needs to say to the entire family, "Hey, gang, we haven't been together just as a family, by our selves, in a long time. We need to do something together." So far all we have is a wish. A family becomes proactive when they then go as a group to look at the big calendar, select an open evening or afternoon, and write in big letters "US!" Then everyone agrees to protect it. What the family ultimately does can even be decided later! The activity is not as important as the time.

Proactive calendaring can also conquer the monster television. We really do see it as a monster, not only because of some of the garbage it spews but because it tempts us into spending too much time with it. Once this was becoming a real problem at our house. First we determined how much time was reasonable for us to spend watching television in a week. We then took the Sunday TV guide from the paper and with the children went over the schedule. With a red marker we put a box around certain shows we thought were worthwhile. During the week, the television only came on during those hours. We did this for several weeks until we got out of the habit of

just flipping on the television, having it on, and watching whatever it had to offer.

I am grateful that as a young father I read a book by Pastor Charlie Shedd called *A Dad Is for Spending Time With*. In the book he suggested that fathers makes regular "dates" with each child. I began the practice when our oldest, Laura, was seven. Each month since, I have taken one of my daughters on a date. All three of them seem to enjoy the practice. We have some precious memories. Today they are teenagers, but when they were little, they used to remind me when it was their month for a date. Now I usually have to remind them, but they still seem more than willing. I often ask after we have agreed on a night and the activity, "You're not too big to keep going out on dates with dad?" They always respond with the nicest comments. Even if they are humoring me some, I love it! We have good times and great discussions. It really helps me get to know them as unique people.

Proactive calendaring is what really made these monthly dates with dad a reality. Over the years I have always written our dates into my personal calendar, the same one I use for my business appointments. When I was in private training and consulting, my office in our basement always had my calendar. One day my youngest, Emily, about seven or eight, came bounding into the family room, climbed up into my lap, and with one arm resting on my shoulder and a sweet tone to her voice said, "It's my month for a date, Daddy." We talked about it and agreed on a night. She jumped off my lap and ran out of the room. She reappeared in a few minutes with my calendar under her arm. She strutted over, handed it to me, and commanded, "Write it down, dad!" Even at that age she knew if it was down in my calendar, not only would I remember our date, but I would protect it.

*Protecting family time* is my last suggestion. Proactive calendaring is only effective if we protect it. I have found this principle helpful. When I calendar family time or time with just one family member (Donna and I need our dates too!), or even time for me (*GONE FISH'N* gets put in the calendar occasionally), I try to treat my family members with all of the dignity and respect I would give to a client, my boss, or my church.

To illustrate, if my family has looked ahead and written "US!" on the calendar and a client calls and says, "Fred, I belong to a professional organization. We are having a big meeting. We want you to be the keynote speaker. I think your thoughts on families are so important in today's world. Will you speak to us on corporate responsibility to the family?" my response should be one of the following: "Gee, Mr. Client, I am flattered, but I have a previous engagement that has been scheduled. It is very important. I feel badly but I'm going to have to decline." Or I can say, "Gee, Mr. Client, I am flattered. I would love to speak to your organization. I do have a commitment to another group. Let me see if I can move them to another night. Can I call you tomorrow?"

With the second response I then go to the family, explain the

situation, and see if we can pick another night. I do not feel the obligation to even reveal that the previous engagement is with my family—for two reasons. Many people do not share my values and would pressure me to violate my principle. Second, my calendar, my time, and my family is my business and my responsibility. Pro-active calendaring helps families to say “no” in an honest and sincere way.

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Fred is a leader in the “worksite wellness movement” and is vice president of training and development in a health and life insurance company. Part of his job is writing a series of books promoting families that are strong all-around. His Christian convictions shine through his writings, and both books written so far would be good additions to your church library. You may order them from Central States of Omaha Companies, P. O. Box 34350, Omaha, NE 68134.

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## WHY PRAYER GROWS TIRESOME

R. H. Boll

One thing that has made prayer irksome to so many is the strained, unnatural attitude into which we place ourselves when praying. I am not speaking of bodily attitude, but of the spirit. I feel most comfortable in the presence of the friend who understands me; before whom I can be simply myself without fear of being unkindly criticized or misunderstood; who appreciates, sympathizes, thinks and feels with me; and I call him “congenial”. There are others in whose company I feel more or less constrained and cramped. I am, in fact, not quite myself when I am in their company, but assume, unintentionally, a more or less artificial attitude. This latter kind of association soon grows wearisome. The fault indeed lies with us in such a case, but the fact remains that we are burdened and bored. Now here is the strange thing. Most of us when we go to God in prayer, try to force ourselves into an artificial attitude of heart and are, consequently, very glad to get through and done with it. We have an idea that we must be awfully good when speaking to God; and we “put on”, forgetting the while that God knows us anyhow, and we can’t “make impressions” on Him anyway. If He does not receive me “just as I am,” He would of a certainty not accept me when I am in a false attitude before Him. So it is a great thing for us to take this lesson: You can be just yourself with God, without being in the least cramped or constrained. What were the use of being otherwise? And God appreciates it. He would have us lay our hearts open before Him and show Him our unworthiest thought and tendency, that He may heal us. Go to Him and say: “Lord I have no claims to make. I am this and that. In my self-deceit I hardly know when I am sincere. I do not know even now as I pray whether I am wholly sincere; but here is my heart with all its failings, and my help is in Thee alone.” Such a plea, when based on the blood of Jesus, is effectual—ininitely more so than empty profession and vain praise of God that is not from the heart. —in *Truth and Grace*

## HEROES OF THE FAITH:

# Amy Carmichael of India

Hazel Thomson

The mission bungalow at Dohnavur, India was crowded with young girls. They pleaded for instruction in their newfound faith. They had also come for protection from irate parents. Amy Carmichael faced the parents of the girls who had broken caste. Her only weapon—which won the victory for the girls and established Amy in the community—the love of Jesus Christ.

Soon Miss Carmichael was penetrating deeper into India's culture—to rescue the temple children who had been dedicated as prostitutes to the gods. Wherever she went, she sought to reach and relieve children in moral danger. Altogether, well over 1,000 such children were cared for in her 55 years of missionary service in India.

Compassion marked Amy Carmichael's life—even in her youthful days.

On one windy, wet Sunday morning in Belfast, Ireland, Amy was walking home from church with her family when they saw a pitiable-looking woman carrying a heavy load. The sight startled them, but it also kindled a deep feeling of pity for the unfortunate creature. So Amy, together with her brothers, assisted the woman on her way.

As they passed a nearby fountain, I Corinthians 3:12-14 flashed through Amy's mind: "Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest . . . fire shall try every man's work . . . If any man's work abide—"

The phrase, "If any man's work abide" lingered with her and she pondered its implications.

"We went on," she continued, "and I said nothing to anyone, but I know that something happened that had changed my life's values."

This unusual experience at the age of 17 motivated Amy's life through-out her days as a home-mission worker, missionary to Japan and India, poetess, and author of 36 published books.

As she grew older she became completely self-abandoned. She abhorred the limelight or any recognition of herself.

A typical example occurred at Dohnavur in 1919 when she received a telegram from Lord Pentland, governor of Madras, congratulating her on being included in the Royal Birthday Honors List. She was in line to receive the award of the Kaiser-i-Hind medal for her ministry to the people of India.

She wrote back, "Would it be unpardonably rude to ask to be allowed not to have it? I have done nothing to make it fitting."

She was eventually persuaded to accept the honor, but under no circumstances would she be induced to attend the Madras ceremony.

The oldest of seven children, Amy was born into a comfortable home on December 16, 1867, at Millisle, Ireland.

As a three-year-old she learned a lesson in prayer which she never

forgot. She had brown eyes, but wanted blue ones, so she asked God for blue eyes. Climbing upon a chair before a mirror the next morning, she fully expected to see blue eyes. But alas, they were still brown! Disappointedly she thought God had not answered.

Later, as a missionary to India and dressed in Indian garb, she fully realized what a disadvantage blue eyes would have been in that land of brown-eyed people.

Amy spent three years at a Wesleyan school. Though she felt unduly restricted, and chafed at what she called "petty rules," it was there she came to a knowledge of the Saviour. In Belfast she took lessons in painting and music.

Amy began an outstanding work among girls in Belfast, in a hall given in answer to prayer, which was called "The Welcome." When her family moved to Manchester, England, Amy continued to engage in mission work there, especially among factory girls. Then, due to overwork and difficult living conditions, Amy's health began to fail.

When her health improved, she heard God's call "Go ye." both she and many friends argued against it. But the call persisted. She made plans to leave for somewhere by the fall of 1892, so she applied to the China Inland Mission. But the CIM doctor said she wasn't physically fit for work in China. For a whole year she made various attempts to push doors that seemed ajar. Finally a way opened for her to enter Japan.

While Amy spent only 15 months in Japan, she learned many lessons that prepared her for her 55 years as a missionary to India.

One day she was speaking to a Japanese woman who had never heard the Gospel, and who eagerly absorbed its message. But the woman was suddenly distracted. Looking at Amy's fur-gloved hands she asked, "What are they?"

Grieved over this incident, Amy said, "I went home, took off my English clothes, and put on my Japanese Kimono so I could more fully identify with the people."

She adhered to this same practice in India by wearing native dress.

Another incident that occurred in Japan gave her new impetus in holy living. With other workers, she encountered three devout Buddhist priests preparing for evening worship around a shrine. After listening to the reading of Scripture, one priest responded, "True, true, it must be true. . . . But if it be so, we want to see it lived; can you show it to us?"

Acute neuralgia began to plague her and she became very ill. Despite a change of climate to China and Ceylon, doctors advised her not to return to Japan. Going home to England, awaiting further orders from the Lord, she published her first book, *From Sunrise Land*, relating her Japanese experiences.

In spite of having been rejected for missionary work in any tropical land, she was finally accepted as a missionary to India. Arriving in India on Nov. 9, 1895, she never left the country until her death in 1951.

As a junior missionary Amy was unusual. She was called "Mad-cay" by some because she raced the residency carriage around the

race course on her pony. She recalls doing "dozens of similar mad things."

But two incidents occurred during the training period in India that governed certain principles in her future work.

Associating with a person who was unfair and dominating, Amy felt the "I" in her rising hotly. God spoke to her, "See in it a chance to die." From that day on these words brought "life and release" to her and she accepted each difficult experience as "a chance to die to self."

The other incident involved a fellow worker who wrote home describing the power of Islam by telling a story of a Muslim girl who desired to become a Christian but her parents forbade it. When England received the story they wrote back, "This is too discouraging for home-supporters to have a story end thus." The missionaries were confounded with the thought, "Should happy endings be invented?" Amy revolted against such deceit and determined whatever the cost the truth should be told.

A few years later, when Amy sent the manuscript of her book, *Things as They Are*, describing her work, it was similarly received: "Too pessimistic to put to a public full of nerves." Despite its first rejection, the book was eventually published and reprinted 12 times. It created such a stir, however, that Amy was on the verge of being called home. But it spurred to action thousands of Christians, and Amy knew it paid to let the public know the facts concerning missionary work.

In 1926 Amy severed connection with her mission board and established the Dohnavur Fellowship. It was a venture of faith and God blessed it abundantly.

She lived, worked, played, and prayed with her one big family until Oct. 24, 1931, she fell and fractured a limb. Increasingly confined to her room for nearly 20 years, she wrote many books, and directed the work until other leaders took her place. She died in January 1951 at the age of 83.

"If any man's work abide" was fully exemplified by the life and work of Amy Carmichael.

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## TREASURES FROM AMY CARMICHAEL

Two from among the many moving poems of Amy Carmichael are given here. Her best-known book of poetry is *Toward Jerusalem*.

Then follows a stirring excerpt from her book, *Things As They Are*. As mentioned earlier, when first published in England, this book provoked strong reactions. See if you can tell why, as you read "Thy Brother's Blood Crieth."

### CHANGE THY WILL, MY FATHER?

And shall I pray Thee change Thy will, my Father,  
Until it be according unto mine?

But no, Lord, no, that never shall be, rather  
 I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine.  
 I pray Thee hush the hurrying, eager longing,  
 I pray Thee soothe the pangs of keen desire.  
 See in my quiet places wishes thronging,  
 Forbid them, Lord, purge, though it be with fire.  
 And work in me to will and do Thy pleasure,  
 Let all within me, peaceful, reconciled,  
 Tarry content my Wellbeloved's leisure,  
 At last, at last, even as a weaned child.

•   •   •   •  
**MAKE ME THY FUEL**

From prayer that asks that I may be  
 Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee,  
 From fearing when I should aspire,  
 From faltering when I should climb higher,  
 From silken self, O Captain, free  
 Thy soldier who would follow Thee.

From subtle love of softening things,  
 From easy choices, weakenings,  
 Not thus are spirits fortified,  
 Not this way went the Crucified,  
 From all that dims Thy Calvary,  
 O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,  
 The faith that nothing can dismay,  
 The hope no disappointments tire,  
 The passion that will burn life fire,  
 Let me not sink to be a clod:  
 Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.

•   •   •   •  
**THY BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIETH**

The tom-toms thumped straight on all night, and the darkness shuddered round me like a living, feeling thing. I could not go to sleep, so I lay awake and looked; and I saw, as it seemed, this:

That I stood on a grassy sward, and at my feet a precipice broke sheer down into infinite space. I looked, but saw no bottom; only cloud shapes, black, and furiously coiled, and great shadow-shrouded hollows, and unfathomable depths. Back I drew, dizzy at the depth.

Then I saw forms of people moving single file along the grass. They were making for the edge. There was a woman with a baby in her arms and another little child holding on to her dress. She was on the very verge. Then I saw that she was blind. She lifted her foot for the next step... it trod air. She was over, and the children over with her. Oh, the cry as they went over!

Then I saw more streams of people flowing from all quarters. All were blind, stone blind; all made straight for the precipice edge. There were shrieks as they suddenly knew themselves falling, and a

tossing up of helpless arms, catching, clutching at empty air. But some went over quietly, and fell without a sound.

Then I wondered, with a wonder that was simply agony, why no one stopped them at the edge. I could not. I was glued to the ground, and I could not call; though I strained and tried, only a whisper would come.

Then I saw that along the edge there were sentries set at intervals. were too great; there were wide, unguarded gaps between. And over these gaps the people fell in their blindness, quite unwarned; and the green grass seemed blood-red to me, and the gulf yawned like the mouth of hell.

Then I saw, like a little picture of peace, a group of people under some trees with their backs turned towards the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them, it disturbed them and they thought it a rather vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. "Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite call to go! You haven't finished your daisy chain yet. It would be really selfish," they said, "to leave us to finish the work alone."

There was another group. It was made up of people whose great desire was to get more sentries out; but they found that very few wanted to go, and sometimes there were no sentries set for miles and miles of the edge.

Once a girl stood alone in her place, waving the people back; but her mother and other relations called, and reminded her that her furlough was due; she must not break the rules. And being tired and needing a change, she had to go and rest for awhile; but no one was sent to guard her gap, and over and over the people fell, like a waterfall of souls.

Once a child caught at a tuft of grass that grew at the very brink of the gulf; it clung convulsively, and it called—but nobody seemed to hear. Then the roots of the grass gave way, and with a cry the child went over, its two little hands still holding tight to the torn-off bunch of grass. And the girl who longed to be back in her gap thought she heard the little one cry, and she sprang up and wanted to go; at which they reproved her, reminding her that no one in necessary anywhere; the gap would be well taken care of, they knew. And then they sang a hymn.

Then through the hymn came another sound like the pain of a million broken hearts wrung out in one full drop, one sob. And a horror of great darkness was upon me, for I knew what it was—the Cry of the Blood.

Then thundered a voice, the voice of the Lord. "And He said, 'What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground'."

The tom-toms still beat heavily, the darkness still shuddered and shivered about me; I heard the yells of the devil-dancers and weird, wild shriek of the devil-possessed just outside the gate.

What does it matter, after all? It has gone on for years; it will go on for years. Why make such a fuss about it?

God forgive us! God arouse us! Shame us out of our callousness! Shame us out of our sin!

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## Studies in the Book of Acts

Larry Miles

### **The Second Missionary Journey** *"Paul Preaches in the City of Idols"* Acts 17:16-34

In our last article we studied about the work of the Apostle Paul in Thessalonica and in Berea. The Bereans were willing to listen to Paul and were willing to test his teaching by what they found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Let us always be like the Bereans, in that, we are willing to study the Word of God.

In Acts 17:14-15 the brethren in Berea sent Paul to the coast. Silas and Timothy remained to minister the Word in Berea. The brethren escorted Paul to Athens. Paul gave them instructions to take back to his co-workers in the Berean field. This is where we will take up the lesson. We ask that all follow along in their Bibles. Let's study God's Word together.

#### **PAUL ARRIVES IN ATHENS: Acts 17:16**

In the 16th verse we're told that Paul was appalled by the idolatry on display in Athens. Athens, in Paul's day could not boast the glory it had five centuries earlier. But it still was a city of great fame. We today might be content to explore the beauties of Athens but not the Apostle Paul. He felt it his responsibility to preach the everlasting gospel to the people of Athens.

#### **PAUL REASONS IN THE SYNAGOGUE AND MARKETPLACE:** Acts 17:17

In verse 17 he follows his practice as recorded in Rom. 1:16: "... To the Jew first..." We find him reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and also with the God-fearing Greeks. He spent time also preaching Jesus Christ in the marketplace. James Burton Coffman wrote the following concerning the condition of Athens,

Here in the great pagan, metropolitan Athens, Paul found a disgusting confirmation of what he already knew, namely, that the world through its wisdom knew not God (1 Cor. 1:21).

#### **PAUL COMES IN CONTACT WITH GREEK PHILOSOPHY:** Acts 17:18

In verse 18 Paul comes in contact with Greek Philosophy. Herein

are mentioned the Epicureans and the stoics. Concerning the Epicureans we read this from the footnote of the NIV study Bible,

Originally they taught that the supreme good is happiness—but not mere momentary pleasure of temporary gratification. By Paul's time, however, this philosophy had degenerated into a more sensual system of thought.

Concerning the Stoics, we read on,

They taught that people should live in accord with nature, recognize their self-sufficiency and independence, and suppress their desires. At its best, Stoicism had degenerated into a system of pride.

In the latter part of the 18th verse we hear what some of the people were saying about Paul. Some called him a babbler, some said that he was setting forth strange gods. The reason they said this was that he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. They seemed to view that as two different deities.

#### **PAUL IS BROUGHT TO THE AREOPAGUS: Acts 17:19-21**

It is in these verses that we find Paul brought to Mars Hill. Concerning these verses, H. Leo Boles wrote the following,

This does not mean that they used force to arrest him; they constrained him, or escorted him to the Areopagus; this place also bears the name "Mars Hill." Here had often assembled the noblest blood of Athens, the politicians of highest rank, the best orators, and the most profound philosophers. It was at this place that Socrates was arraigned and condemned. "The Areopagus", as used here, was not the hill, but the council of the Areopagus, which sat in the same hall in the marketplace. We are to think of Paul as being surrounded by philosophers and professors of Athens University, and lecturers who occupied chairs in the university. They asked Paul concerning "this new teaching" of which they had heard. They added that he had brought certain strange things to their ears. Hence they would like to hear more about these things. They make a polite request to him to tell them more about his "new teaching" or "strange gods" which he set forth. They must be commended for their desire to know; they are different from the Jews and others at Thessalonica and Berea, who ran Paul out of the cities.

#### **PAUL'S MESSAGE ON MARS HILL: Acts 17:22-34**

In verse 22 we find Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus. He is answering their questions concerning what he taught. In verse 23 Paul brings up something that had transpired while he was waiting word from Silas and Timothy. He had been walking about in the city and had come across an idol. The idol had this inscription: "To An Unknown God." Paul uses this as a stepping stone to present the truth about the True God. The people of Athens meant this to be a god that they may have overlooked. Paul will tell them that this is the True God. Homer Kent wrote the following,

He used their admitted ignorance as a basis for his message about the true God. Paul explained that God is the creator, the sovereign of heaven and earth, the sustainer and director of all things, and is the Omnipresent One."

In the 26th verse Paul informs them that mankind came from one common ancestor, that is Adam. He tells them that God had made the seasons. He tells them in verse 28 that they should seek after God.

In verse 29 Paul tells his hearers that they are the offspring of God. He informs them that their ideas of God are wrong. They had in mind gods made of gold, silver or stone, gods of graven images. Here in verse 29 idolatry is condemned. In verse 30 the need for repentance is brought out. Paul tells them that the times of ignorance

are a thing of the past. The time of reckoning is here. The certainty of judgment is upon them. He tells them that a day is appointed that He will judge the world in righteousness. He tells them that the One who will do the actual judging is the One that He, the Father, has raised from the dead. That is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul has laid it on the line here on Mars Hill. The people there heard the message of the gospel.

In verse 32 we have the results of the message. Many mocked the idea of a resurrection of the dead. But we're told that others were willing to hear Paul again. Then Paul left the assembly on Mars Hill. In verse 34 we find that some did believe the message of the cross and became a part of the Body of Christ.

We have finished the lesson in the 17th of Acts. We ask all to read Acts 18:1-23. This lesson will get us through the Second Missionary Journey. Always be willing to study and believe the whole Word of God. Remember, spend a part of each day reading the Scriptures. Until next time, *Maranatha!* (1 Cor. 16:22)

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## How To Spot A Cult

by J. Allen Streeter

The question I am most asked when I speak before church and college groups is, "How can I recognize a false cult, and what are its distinguishing marks?" Christians are concerned about the proliferation of the cults in our society; and rightly so! Hopefully, this article will help the reader become more informed about the nature of cultic movements.

1. Does the group under consideration reject one or more of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith? These doctrines would include the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His substitutionary death on the cross as an atonement for sin, His bodily resurrection from the dead and His second coming. Also included under this category would be the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Such groups as Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Wierwille's The Way International deny one or more of the cardinal doctrines of orthodoxy.

2. Does the group under consideration claim to have received extra-Biblical revelations? These would be so-called messages from God that supercede or contradict the Holy Bible. They may be in written or verbal form. An example of the former would be Reverend Sun Myung Moon's *Divine Principle*. To the Moonies, this "revelation" is more authoritative than the Bible. Likewise, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormonism) believes that its "sacred" record, the *Book of Mormon* is God's Word.

Another group that claims to possess extra-Biblical documents is the Children of God. Founder Moses David (formerly David Brandt Berg), contends that his discipleship letters—known as "Mo Letters"—are written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These epistles are accepted by his followers to be God's Word for this dispensation.

The Bible, they say, was God's Word for the old dispensation (before the COG was founded).

The latter type of extra-Biblical revelation may take the form of prophetic utterances, angelic messages, even dreams and visions. When such phenomena contradict the Scriptures or claim superiority to Holy Writ, they must be looked upon as being cultish in nature. Mormonism teaches that its founder, Joseph Smith, was motivated to begin his new religious movement based on an encounter he had with the angel Moroni.

Few people realize that the Unification Movement (the Moonies) was brought to the United States because Arthur Ford, while in a trance, proclaimed Moon to be the Christ for this age! All spiritualistic-type groups (occult) practice some form of extra-Biblical revelation; as do a minority of groups that are Charismatic.

3. Does the group under consideration claim to have the only correct interpretation of Scripture? This is what I call the "sole interpreter's syndrome." The Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science movement) teaches that the Bible cannot be properly interpreted apart from Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy's book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Herbert W. Armstrong, patriarch of the Worldwide Church of God, makes a similar claim. He says that a true understanding of Scripture was hidden from the minds of Christian leaders for 18½ centuries. Then of January 1, 1934, God revealed to him the "plain truth" about the Gospel. Victor Paul Wierwille, the illustrious leader of The Way International, writes: "I was praying. . . And that's when God spoke to me audibly, just like I am talking to you now. He said he would teach me the Word as it had not been known since the first century, if I would teach it to others."

Beware of any group or cult leader who claims to have an inside track into understanding the Bible.

4. Does the group under consideration follow a latter-day prophet who claims equality with Jesus Christ? Jesus warned that many would come in His name claiming to be the Christ (Mat. 24:5, 11, 23-26). Such a person is the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Indian guru, who claims he can establish world peace through Transcendental Meditation. The Church of the New Jerusalem advances that its late founder Emmanuel Swedenborg, was the Christ for this age.

Likewise, the Moslems hold that Mohammed is God's final revelation to man. Not to be outdone, followers of the Baha'i World Faith, proclaim their prophet Baha'u'llah to be the incarnation of God for the final days of human history. (An interesting aside: Baha'ism was brought to the USA from Persia in the early 1900s by the newspaper magnate Hearst. One of the first converts to the sect was President Woodrow Wilson's oldest daughter).

Scripture is clear that "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manner spoke in time past . . . by the prophets, hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1, 2). The Apostle Paul reminds us that "in Him dwelleth *all the fulness of the Godhead*

bodily" (Col. 2:9). One day this *same Jesus* will return to earth to set up His kingly rule (Acts 1:11).

5. Does the group under consideration practice closed membership or conduct secret meetings open only to the initiated? The Mormon's temple rite ceremonies, for example, are not open to either the general public or to the average Mormon. What goes on behind the closed doors of a mormon temple is held in strictest confidence. Likewise, witchcraft has its secret covens, and such groups as the Rosicrucians and the Free Masons have their secret "sacred sanctums" where outsiders are forbidden entrance. Usually to become a member of these type groups, one must first submit himself to a rigid indoctrination process. He is then initiated into the secret society.

It is well to remember the words of Jesus, when He said, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20).

6. Does the group under consideration over-emphasize obscure or minor doctrines? The Seventh-Day Adventists, for instance, stress the importance of obeying the Old Testament laws, especially observing Saturday as the sabbath. The Unity School of Christianity teaches that the doctrine of reincarnation is the solution to man's dilemma; whereas, the Mormons say the secret can be found in the doctrine of baptism for the dead. All these groups major in minor or obscure issues.

7. Does the group under consideration call upon its members to submit totally to the dictates of the sect's leadership? This is often the first step in the making of a cult.

A group that refuses to answer a person's sincere questions about faith and practice; that asks its members to give up their personal possession for the good of the group; and that puts its members through marathon indoctrination classes must be considered cultish in nature. Such organizations as The Way International, est, Lifespring, the Unification Movement and the Rajneesh Foundation practice varying degrees of submission.

8. Does the group under consideration have a defective Christology? Most cults have a false concept of the nature of Jesus Christ. They either reject His full deity or His full humanity. The Christian Scientists, for example, hold to a Docetic view of Christ. They say He was God, but not man. He only appeared to have a human body. The Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, reject the full Godhood of Jesus. They claim that He was a created being. This was an early Church heresy known as Arianism. It was repudiated in the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

9. Does the group under consideration teach that salvation can be attained through a subjective experience? This is the common denominator in all false religious systems. This concept purports that something must happen *within man* (searching for the divine light within), or be done *by man* (chant, meditate, speak in tongues, keep the law, etc.) before he can be saved. Subjectivism makes man the center of the salvation process. Christianity puts Jesus Christ as the

focal point of salvation. The Scriptures teach that salvation is NOT based on anything that happens to me, in me or done by me. The important event is what was done 2,000 years ago on the cross FOR me. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Man's faith is placed totally outside himself and directed to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.—from *The Pioneer*

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## The Prisoner of the Lord

Summary of a sermon preached by John Stott

*And he lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered. (Acts 28:30, 31 RSV)*

Here we reach the conclusion of Luke's narrative and get a glimpse of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles preaching in Rome, the capital city of the world. Yet behind the note of triumph on which Acts ends, Paul must have been tempted at times to doubt and depression. He had been in prison in Caesarea for two years; then came a perilous sea voyage of six months; and now he was under house arrest in Rome for another two years, handcuffed to a Roman Soldier and unable to go out. Paul was an activist by disposition and a pioneer missionary at heart, and it must have been very hard for him to be cooped up in jail and on board ship for the best part of five years, when he longed to revisit the churches which he had founded and to press on to found more. How did he bear these five "wasted years"?

I could picture a lesser man champing at the bit, but not so Paul! In the prison epistles, there is no sign of impatience, still less of bitterness against God. Instead we find him writing about joy, peace and contentment (e.g., Phil. 4:4, 7, 11) because of his confidence in the *providence of God*. It may be asked: Why did God allow Paul to suffer a two year imprisonment in Rome on top of his earlier captivity? I am suggesting that there are at least three reasons:

### *To Preach the Gospel in the Capital City*

Paul had cherished a desire to visit Rome for several years in order to witness to Jesus Christ. For Rome was the most strategic of all cities. Being the capital of the Empire, it was the capital of the world, and the whole known world round the Mediterranean was ruled from Rome. Of course, Rome was not unevangelized. But the church must still have been tiny. Paul knew that if Rome could be won for Christ, if the church could be strengthened, consolidated and catch the missionary vision, there was no guessing what its influence might be! So for years he had set his sights on Rome. Already at his conversion Jesus had said through Ananias "... he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings ..." (Acts 9:15).

So now at last he had arrived, but as a prisoner under guard and not as a free man. However, this did not in the least deflect him

from his purpose. He allowed himself only three days to recover from the hardships of the journey and then sent for the Jewish leaders and told them that "it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain" (28:17, 20). When they came back by appointment a day or two later, he spent the whole day with them expounding the gospel, bearing witness to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from the law and the prophets. Some were convinced by his arguments but others disbelieved, and so he solemnly warned them of the danger: "Let it be known to you then this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; *they will listen*" (v.28). And so they did!

For two whole years he lived on in Rome. Although under constant surveillance, he was free to welcome all who came to him. And to every visitor this chained, vagabond preacher proclaimed the kingdom of God and the good news of Jesus *quite openly and unhindered*. Neither soldier, nor superior officers, nor imperial authorities placed any restriction on his preaching. His hand was chained, but his mouth was open for Jesus Christ.

But this was still not the end. After a year or more (during which perhaps enquires were being made about his case) his preliminary trial took place. Possibly then (or at a second trial later on) the promise of Jesus was fulfilled that "you shall stand before Caesar". We may confidently affirm that the Emperor Nero himself heard the good news from the lips of the apostle Paul. But if not Nero, certainly the Praetorium (the supreme Imperial Court) heard, for Paul wrote to the Philippians that "what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ" (Phil. 1:12, 13; cf. 4:22).

So that was the first reason why God allowed Paul's imprisonment in Rome, in order that he might preach the gospel there.

#### *To Suffer for the Universal Gospel*

We might argue that it was not necessary for Paul to be a prisoner in order for him to bear witness in the capital city, and ask why God did not bring him to Rome in freedom. The answer is that he had to suffer (and be seen to suffer) for the gospel which he had been preaching (cf. 2 Tim. 2:9). This is true both in general and in particular.

a) *In general* nothing tests a man's convictions and proves his sincerity like the willingness to endure suffering. Paul's detractors often questioned his sincerity. They accused him of being a time-server, even a mountebank, and Paul's sensitive spirit was deeply wounded by these allegations. Now he was given the opportunity to demonstrate his authenticity and to show that he was prepared to suffer—even to die—for his faith.

b) *In particular* Paul was suffering not just for the gospel in general, but for "his" gospel. That is, his particular understanding of it as it had been made known to him by revelation. He called it the "mystery" which had been hidden for centuries but had now been disclosed, that the *Gentiles* had been welcomed into the church on equal

terms with the Jews as fellowheirs, fellowmembers and fellow partakers of God's promises in Christ. It was for his faithfulness to *this* message that he had to suffer so much.

On his missionary journeys, it was when he turned to the Gentiles that the Jews rose up in opposition against him. For instance, when he was arrested in Jerusalem and defended himself on the steps of the barracks, the crowd gave him a quiet, respectful hearing until he quoted the words of Jesus to him: "... I will send you far away to the *Gentiles*" (Acts 22:21). At that word all hell was let loose. They waved their clothes, threw dust in the air and screamed "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he ought not to live" (22:22). And it was for his insistence that salvation was by grace alone, through faith in Christ, without the addition of circumcision or works of the law, that he was hated and opposed by the Judaizers.

Thus Paul paid dearly for his loyalty to the freeness and the universality of the gospel. He had to suffer for it to prove the reality of his convictions. And we ourselves today, a largely Gentile church, owe our freedom in Christ and our welcome into the Christian fellowship partly to Paul's willingness to suffer for the truth, and to establish the truth by his sufferings.

#### *To Enlarge His Understanding of the Gospel*

Although Paul longed to be released, to get out and serve the contemporary church, yet as a result of his two year's imprisonment he has bequeathed to posterity four prison epistles which have fed, taught, guided and inspired not only the contemporary church of his day, but the church of every subsequent generation.

Of course Paul did not write all his epistles in prison! Nevertheless, I maintain that there is something distinctive (in God's providence) about the Prison Epistles. It is not only that he had more time to reflect and pray, but that the *substance* of these epistles owes something to his prison experience, and much of the content is particularly *appropriate*. He was chained by the wrist; but his heart and mind were not chained. He was a prisoner; yet Jesus Christ had set him free. He was facing trial and possible death; yet he had *already* risen from death, and was alive in Christ. He was waiting the Emperor's pleasure; yet the supreme authority to which he bowed was not Caesar but the Lord Christ. It seems that the Holy Spirit was using his imprisonment to clarify this truth. In three of his letters from prison (to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians) he sets forth more clearly than anywhere the supreme, sovereign, undisputed lordship of Jesus. There is no higher doctrine of Christ in any of Paul's epistles than in these. The person and work of Jesus are here given cosmic proportions. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ and worked through him; God created everything through Christ and had reconciled all things to himself through Christ; Christ is the agent of all God's works of creation and redemption. In addition, because Christ humbled himself, God has exalted him. All three letters say so (see Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9, 10; Col. 1:15-20).

It is wonderful that Paul, led by the Spirit should emphasize these truths. It seems that through his sufferings he saw Christ's

glory more clearly, and through his confinement he magnified the power and freedom of Christ. What did it matter if he himself was laid aside awhile, or even for ever, if *God* was working his purpose out? The Emperor Nero might imprison him, but a mere emperor could not frustrate the plans of Almighty God! What did it matter if he had to die, when he was already risen and reigning with Christ? It was all a question of *perspective*.

What is our particular problem, temptation or trial? Life can be terribly frustrating and we may not be able at the time to discern any divine purpose in our trials (although all are part of his loving discipline, proving he is dealing with us as his children, fashioning us to share his holiness). But the vital thing is our *perspective!*

If Paul had spent his days contemplating his chain, tugging at it, rattling it, shaking it in the soldier's face, his frustration would have grown till it broke him. He might have gone stark, staring mad. But he did not. His attention was directed elsewhere. The eyes of his heart were fixed on Christ crucified, risen, ascended, reigning and coming again. And he pondered the truth that God had united him with this Christ. So he too was risen, exalted, reigning and would appear one day with Christ in glory. This Christian perspective changed everything.

He knew that *already* he was part of the new order that Christ had established; he belonged to the new age that Christ had inaugurated; he lived in the heavenly places with Christ. Nothing that Nero or his minions could do could alter this. Nobody and nothing could ever rob him either of his present status in Christ, or of his future inheritance with Christ. He was no longer a creature hampered by time; he already inhabited eternity. That is why even in his bonds he was free and why, even in our trials, however severe, we too can be free.

## NEWS AND NOTES

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

I was privileged to attend, at the request of our brethren at Southeast, the North American Christian Convention which was held in Indianapolis, July 6-10. It was a very helpful and spiritually uplifting experience. What a blessing is it to be able to learn from others. I recommend that all of us look to these various gatherings of believers in an attempt to learn from them things which will help us in our work for Christ. Though we may not agree with everything we can still learn and apply to our own work things which will enhance our ministries.

If any of our brethren would be interested in seeing some transcripts of things taught in these four areas, they can call me and I will try to help: Shepherding, Worship, Leadership and Church Growth.

In noting future gatherings, you might be interested in the following: One Body . . . Restoration Forum, April 28 & 29, 1987 at Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary. The North American Christian Convention: Oklahoma City, OK—July 14-17, 1987; Cincinnati, OH—July 5-8, 1988; Louisville, KY—July 11-14, 1989  
God bless you in your ministry for Christ.—Nathan L. Burks

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