

# THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLIII, October, 1949)

## A PRAYER FOR YOUTH

Take my life, O Father, mold it  
In obedience to Thy will;  
And as ripening years unfold it,  
Keep it true and child-like still.

Father, keep it pure and lowly,  
Strong and brave, yet free from strife,  
Turning from the paths unholy  
Of a vain or sinful life.

Ever let Thy might surround it;  
Strengthen it with pow'r divine,  
Till Thy cords of love have bound it,  
Father, wholly unto Thine. Amen.

—Selected

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## WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

### MAN'S LOW ESTIMATE OF THE CHURCH

"Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God." So says one of our old hymns. But more glorious and wonderful things than ever were said about Zion are in God's word spoken of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church is not much accounted of in the world today, and even among religious people it is not too highly esteemed. The emphasis is placed on personal and individual salvation—and certainly too much emphasis could not be given to that. But in emphasizing one side of the truth, the other side is often lost sight of. "The church will not save you." is a slogan often heard, which is quite true, if rightly understood. But the impression is left that the church is of small moment and of no special importance, and is in no wise connected with our salvation. And that is *not* true.

As for the worlds' estimate of the church, we need not wonder. The world neither knows the Lord, nor does it know what the church is, nor its purpose and mission in the world. It seems often to be thought of as a club of good people (or people who pretend to be good, but are not always good); or as a sort of benevolent society, or social service organization, that is (or should be) engaged in all sorts of philanthropic or political enterprises for the betterment of the world and the general uplift of humanity. The world's low estimate of the church may also be partly because of present

day conditions in Christendom. To sweep the whole thing aside as of little consequence is an easy solution of a complicated problem. The claims of the multiplicity of sects and denominations, ancient and modern, is to say the least, somewhat confusing, and an inquirer would hardly get any clear idea of the New Testament church out of that situation. And so it happens that the church is little set by, and the true teaching of God's word concerning the church is little known or understood.

## EKKLESIA

It is a vast subject, and in these paragraphs I can only point out a few outstanding facts. The word "Church" in the original, is "ekklesia," a term in common use at the time, and designating an "assembly"—a *called* assembly, as the literal meaning of the word would indicate. As in many other cases, God selected an ordinary word, but gave it a new and richer content and meaning. His "assembly" is the number of His elect, His redeemed ones, called out of the world through the gospel, and united by vital bonds one with another and with Jesus Christ their Lord. It is not an institution of the world, for it is not of the world even as He is not of the world; yet it is *in* the world, and that for a purpose. The church is represented in the New Testament in various aspects, of which I select three outstanding ones.

1. THE CHURCH IS THE HOUSE OF GOD. "The church of God, which is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). It is called the house of God because He is the builder and the sole owner of it, and also dwells in it. In the Old Testament dispensation God dwelt in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple which Solomon built. However, it was not the real actual dwelling-place of the Lord, for "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands," a fact which was even at that time well understood. Yet the temple of Solomon was the most magnificent and the costliest building ever erected on the earth. The materials were of the most precious, and every stone and every piece of timber was cut to measure in forest and quarry; and the house went up without sound of saw or hammer.

"No workman's steel—no ponderous axes swing—

Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric springs."

When finally the building stood complete, Solomon offered the great prayer of dedication; and when he had finished praying the glory of the Lord came down and filled the house. Then and thenceforth it was the house of God.

This new house of God, the church, is built of rarer and costlier material and for it a price far exceeding the fabulous sum of the cost of Solomon's temple was paid. It is a spiritual house built up of living stones, built upon God's one Foundation (for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3:11) and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God," says Paul to the church at Corinth, "and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the

temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy and such are ye" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). For this temple He paid a staggering price—nothing less than the blood of Christ; for it is "the church of the Lord, which he purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Nothing in all the universe of God ever cost so much nor could anything else cost so much again. Clearly then we cannot rate the church as an unimportant thing. And like the Temple of old, the church, when it is what God wants it to be, is the pivot and center of God's work in the earth, the point of contact between God and man.

2. **THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.** "He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). God put all things in subjection under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). This is a greater and more wonderful conception, surpassing even that of the spiritual Temple. The head and the body constitute a living whole, not only an organization but an organism. To Him who sits on the right hand of God, far above all principality and power and every name that is named, the humble church is united by a vital bond, even as a man's body is joined to his head, sharing the same life and the same Spirit which animates both head and body; and whatever affects the body affects the head—yea, chiefly affects the head. Saul had the first intimation of that on the road to Damascus, when the Lord of glory spoke from heaven and said unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The persecution of the church of God was felt by the Head in heaven, as a thing done unto Him; nor can any good or ill be done to Christ's church without doing it to the Lord Jesus Christ. As His body, the church is also His instrumentality for doing His work in the earth. The work *He* would do, the work *He* wants done, in the world *He* must do through the church, and can be done by the church alone.

3. **THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.** Among the Jews, matrimony had two distinct phases: (1) the betrothal, which was far more than the "engagement" signifies among us: it was in fact a preliminary marriage. Thus Mary, though only betrothed to Joseph, is called "his wife"—"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." The church, though as yet imperfect, is already bound to Jesus Christ as His betrothed. "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy," wrote Paul to the church at Corinth—for I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). In a great passage, Eph. 5:22-33, the apostle commingles the thought of the Body and the Bride in one picture—seeing that two in wedlock are "one flesh." Here he states that "the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself also the savior of the body." Again, "Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church"; and "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself;

for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and the church."

As the Bride of Christ, the church's paramount trust is that she be true and loyal to her husband. The friendship of the world is spiritual adultery, James tells us (Jas. 4:4). The true church which holds by her Lord in this world cannot expect to be loved by a world that hated Him and cast Him out. She is called to share His reproach and rejection. As He is, so is she in the world. Inasmuch as "He suffered without the gate," it is her lot also to "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come" (Heb. 13:12-14).

If then He was despised and rejected of men, His church can never expect great things in the world. It is "through many tribulations" that she must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). All the teaching and exhortation directed to the church in the New Testament, envisions her as a poor, weak, suffering church; and never as glorious, triumphant and powerful. The day of her glory is future. It is tied up with the return of Christ. "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. 3:4). And "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to usward" (Rom. 8:18).

So, the bride waits daily for the coming of the Bridegroom, and her hope is set on Him. In that day He will "present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing," but as "holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then, we that are alive, that are left shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:16, 17). Forever with the Lord! John heard a great chorus of joy in heaven, as the voice of many waters, as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:6, 7). That is the celebration of the heavenly nuptials, when the perfected church is joined in the final unbreakable bond to her heavenly Bridegroom, to be His and to be with Him for ever, evermore.

Surely the church is something different and infinitely greater than men know; and to be in it and of it is as high a privilege as man can have. It seems indeed as if the great enemy had gone to special lengths to corrupt and misrepresent and degrade the church in the eyes of men. The present state of things in Christendom reveals as much. But Christ is over all and in His own time He will bring the hidden things to light, and show His finished work. Mean-

while His saints find comfort and strength for the way in His sure word of truth and anticipate their morning of joy. We are reminded of the true and beautiful words of our hymn:

“The Church’s one Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation by water and the word;  
From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

“Elect from every nation, yet one o’er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation, One Lord, One Faith, One Birth;  
One holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses, with ev’ry grace endued.

“Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore;  
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.”

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#### BIBLE SUNDAY

The American Bible Society has requested that we announce the second Sunday in December as Bible Sunday, at which time we are asked to give added emphasis to the Word of God and, if possible, take an offering to aid in their work of supplying Bibles for all the nations of the world. The Society is devoted exclusively to the translation and distribution of the Word of God without comment. Thus far the Bible or portions of it have been translated into about 1100 languages and dialects.

Because of the unusually open doors in many countries since the end of the war, the American Bible Society has been unable to keep up with requests for the Word. Take for example the distribution program in Japan.

From the end of the war to December 31, 1948 the American Bible Society has sent 141,000 complete Bibles, 1,665,552 New Testaments and 672,542 Gospel portions to Japan as well as paper and binding materials for publication of Bibles in Japan.

A campaign for the distribution of ten million copies of the Scriptures in three years is under way in Japan. It is planned to distribute two million copies during 1949; three million in 1950 and the balance of five million copies in 1951.

Those in or near Louisville may contact the Society’s local representative, W. P. Gordon, by calling Taylor 7160 for literature or other material on Bible Sunday.

While Christians are taught not to observe days, yet we may well put special emphasis on the Bible in connection with our regular Lord’s day worship on the Sunday designated. The American Bible Society has done a great good work in translating and distributing Bibles to various peoples of earth.

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#### WILL YOU PRAY?

For some time **Lessons on Romans** by R. H. B. has been out of print. This book has proven a great blessing to thousands in the past, and we believe that it should be reprinted in order that its ministry may continue. Will you pray that God may supply the necessary funds to put out a new edition in the near future?

# NEWS AND NOTES

## A GOOD WORK STALLED

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: "I am sorry that I could not make it to the meeting this year, but I hope to do better next year. The work here is holding its own with some little growth. We average from forty to fifty in our Sunday School. The adult attendance has shown a rather encouraging growth.

"We are still 'stalled' on the church building. We have the walls up, and the top on, but had to stop because of lack of funds. Our neighbors keep asking us: 'When are you going to finish that new church?' A check-up this morning shows that of the \$2000 we borrowed we still owe \$1189.50. Apparently the house will just have to stand there and wait until we get the debt off our shoulders before it can be finished. If we can continue we will have it off in seven months. But it is a crushing burden on so small a church."—Brady M. Green.

The above report was taken from a personal letter. Read it over again. These good brethren would be freed to do a greater work for God if they had the money to pay that debt. Has the Lord intrusted some of our readers with some extra funds that might be used for this work? It doesn't seem exactly right for money, in the hands of brethren, to be idle when the Cause of Christ is suffering for the lack of it. The Word and Work would be happy to relay gifts to Brother Green.—Pub.

Tell City, Ind.: "We are very busy now in our work. I baptized 19 in the A. E. Findley meeting at Lilly Dale. I have a large class of young people to teach and with which to work."—P. L. Winchell.

Frankfort, Ky.: "The work at Antioch is going along very well. Brother Frank Mullins, who was with us in a meeting in August, was greatly used of the Lord in bringing rich blessings to the church through his spiritual messages. This was one of the best attended meetings since I have been here. Visitors from Louisville, Lexington, Winchester, Cynthiana, and from the surrounding community attended the meeting.

The Lord added to our number thirteen precious souls: eleven by baptism and two by membership. To God be all the praise!

"I was with Brother Quintia Raison in a week's meeting in the tent on Drennon Creek in Henry county the last of August. The meeting was well attended with much interest among the people of the community. The Lord gave us four souls for our hire. Pray for this little mission."—Asa Baber.

Brother Frank Mullins has just recently been confined to the hospital for an operation, which proved to be successful. He was soon released from the hospital and busy in a meeting at Pine Prairie, Louisiana. His son, Eugene, states that Brother Mullins was to be at Crowley, La., on October 2 for the dedication of their new building.

Louisville, Ky.: "Brother J. E. Blansett, Dallas, Texas, recently conducted a highly spiritual and very profitable meeting for us at Rowan Street Church. Capacity audiences were at every session, with overflow crowds the two Sunday nights. Twelve were added, nine of whom were by primary obedience. The church was encouraged to press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus."—R. A. Zahn.

Lexington, Ky.: "I began a meeting at Parksville, Ky., last night. We had a good crowd with a fine congregation of saints. Bro. Winston Allen is held in high esteem in the Parksville church. We had a great song rally at Cramer and Hanover church in Lexington yesterday afternoon."—H. N. Rutherford.

Detroit, Mich.: "We have just put in a concrete baptistry. We hope to have it ready for use by the time our meeting starts (Oct. 2). Our attendance has been very good for some time. Yesterday we had 63 in Sunday school."—J. Scott Greer.

## J. Paul Slayden

Chattanooga, Tenn.: Bro. Paul Slayden died at his home, 729 Mississippi Avenue, Chattanooga, Tennessee, on September 15. He had been ill for several months. He is

survived by his wife and one son, J. P. Slayden, Jr., who is a special agent of the F. B. I. Brother Slayden was among the strongest preachers in the brotherhood. He taught at David Lipscomb College, Potter Bible College and later was president of Sabinal Christian College in Texas. He received his Bible training from J. W. McGarvey, famed Bible teacher."—E. H. Hoover.

Beginning October 16 Brother H. L. Olmstead of Gallatin, Tenn., is to conduct a meeting at the McCallie Avenue Church in Chattanooga, where Brother E. H. Hoover is minister.

We have a call for a copy of the Boll-Boles debate. Any who may have a copy to sell may contact this office. We could use several copies.

Orell Overman has been in a meeting in Hapeville, Georgia. Report comes that he has been doing some excellent preaching for the edification of the church there. His sermons have been earnest, scriptural, and strong. Bill Cook is the minister for the church at Hapeville.

#### ANNUAL MEETING AT BOHON

"The first Lord's day in September was the closing day of our revival at Bohon, Ky. Brother Overman, our evangelist, was at his best, delivering wonderful messages from the "grand old Book." Five confessed the Lord Jesus as Savior and were buried with Him in baptism and two others took membership. Bro. Demus Friend came two nights with a group of singers from various churches in the Louisville area, which added much to the meeting.

"The Vacation Bible School was the best we have had. Brother Rice of Lexington and Brother Harold Preston of Ebenezer were of great help in the class work.

"The work at Bohon continues to grow. We have mid-week meetings on Wednesday nights and young people's meetings both Saturday and Sunday nights with good attendance.

"The Lord willing, Brother Overman will be with us in his fifth consecutive meeting next year."—G. B. Whitenack.

Dugger, Ind.: Our revival effort,

which closed last night, will be remembered as one of the best. Attendance and interest were exceptionally good from the beginning to the close. Twenty-six responded to the invitations extended. It was a time of rejoicing for the church. Our responsibility has become greater. Brother Hall C. Crowder of Jeffersonville, Ind., the visiting evangelist, did his part well. His strong appeals for God's way of life led many to repentance."—Maurice Clymore.

Johnson City, Tenn.: "I was with the Berea church, near Sullivan, Indiana, in a series of meetings recently. Four responded to the invitation. One came for baptism, one for restoration and to place membership, another came for membership, and one came asking the brethren to pray for him. We enjoyed the fellowship with the Berea brethren, and also with many brethren from various congregations in the vicinity.

"Lord willing, I'll be with Ben Rake and the Main Street Church, Winchester, Kentucky, Oct. 12-23. We look to the Lord to enable us to accomplish His will and purpose in this effort."—Robert B. Boyd.

#### SPAULDING-ALLEN

We are happy to announce the marriage of Winston Allen and Miss Irene Spaulding, September 10, at the Borden, Indiana, church in the presence of a large number of friends. The bride's father, F. S. Spaulding, performed the ceremony. Both of these young people have been faithful workers in our office in the past. Irene has for several years been in charge of the Great Songs office and has recently taken over some of the work of the Missionary Office. Winston is serving as president of the new Kentucky Bible College and preaches regularly for the churches at Ebenezer and Parksville. They are making their home at 512 North 26th Street, Louisville, Kentucky.

Brother Augustus Shanks, who is known by many brethren in this area, has recently begun missionary work in Crittendon County, Kentucky. Let us stand behind him in this work with our prayers and fellowship. His address is Route 1, Repton, Ky., C/o Royce Crisp.

# THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY

H. L. OLMSTEAD

The greatest need of our times is a clearer conception of the meaning of Christianity. One of the greatest mistakes being made today is the tendency among Christian believers to take one element of the Christian religion for the whole; consequently one-sided appeals are made, which to many minds either do not appeal, or else result in group Christianity with tightly drawn sectarian lines.

1. The first one-sided conception with which we wish to deal is that religion is *intellectualism*. The Greek Sophists, who set aside all traditions and standards of truth and goodness, contended that the individual must be the final authority, that each one should think through for himself the facts of human conduct and find the fundamentals of virtue and knowledge. This philosophy finds its counterpart today in modern life in those who define Christianity as being a system of thought, nothing more than a life guided by reason. We freely admit that correct thinking is fundamental, but we deny that the acceptance by the reason of any so-called system of thought is the same thing as a Christian experience. "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8.) "Seeing the Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, . . ." (1 Cor. 1:22, 23.) Beware of the philosophy of men.

2. The second one-sided view is that of *emotionalism*. This was seen in the older type of revivals. Religion was considered as the possession of ecstatic emotion, manifesting itself in groans, tears, shouting, and the like, as a necessary concomitant of the new life and the final evidence of a new birth and a change of heart. The degree of the emotion is usually just about the amount they are taught to expect, and methods favorable for producing these effects are used.

True religion involves a proper relationship, first, to God and then to man. Also it is true that there can be no relationship without emotion. Proper emotion is normal and necessary. No one can love his wife or mother without emotion, much less can he love God without the deepest emotion. But emotion is not Christianity, but the consequence of proper choice and action, being based upon proper relationship to God.

3. Another one-sided view of Christianity is that it is *ritualism*. Strictly speaking, ritualism is an aspect of ecclesiasticism and no essential part of faith. We know that worship to God must be performed by acts, and against such acts as are set forth in the scripture we, of course, have nothing to say, but insist on their hearty performance by all believers in our Lord. However, those who think that joining the church, being conformed, attending the meetings, reading the Bible and partaking of the communion to be the whole of the Christian religion are deceived. Loyalty to an institution

or a group with its appointed services, performances, and set practices is not necessarily the same thing as loyalty to Jesus Christ. Dead formalism is the enemy of all life. The evil of all evils to be dreaded is that Christianity shall become institutionalized and lose its vital content. (Isa. 1.) God must not be shut up entirely to sacred days, sacred places, sacred services. He must permeate all life because He is greater than any place, all days, or sacred services.

4. Perhaps the most popular view today is that *altruistic service* to our fellow man is the sum total of Christianity. To such nothing else matters; what we think, how we feel, or whether we worship or not makes no difference—just so we love our fellow man. James 1:27 is quoted glibly, at least a part of it. The desire to do some social service in the minds of many is equal to the love of God, to faith in Christ, repentance from sin, or worship. The doctrine of the cross, the necessity of a personal relationship to God, the need for regeneration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are all ignored.

What then is the true meaning of Christianity? Christianity always means the right relationship of man to God through the person of Jesus Christ, the right relationship to God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ. Such relationship is the only thing that can enlist the highest and best that is in man in service either to God or to his fellow man. Man cannot neglect God and at the same time love his fellow man. Neither is it possible for men to love God apart from the finished work of the Christ on the cross. Man does not know love as an experience until he knows the love of God in Christ Jesus. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). We only can understand what love is in the light of the cross, as revealed in the other John 3:16. All the exhortations to brotherly love, expressed in sharing this world's goods with our brother (1 John 3:17) is therefore based upon the atonement made when Christ laid down His life for us. We have no sufficient motive for laying down our lives for the brethren or for serving mankind in a way acceptable to God except the cross.

There can be no right relationship to God unless the question of man's sins and alienation from God be settled. This cannot be settled by intellectual apprehension of the Christian system of thought, by any violent expressions of emotionalism, by ritualistic observance of forms, nor by practical service to my fellow man. Man must first find that answer by faith in the ransom that Christ paid in keeping with His words in Matt. 20:28, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

If Christianity is knowledge, it means the ever-increasing knowledge of the love of God in Christ Jesus. If it is emotion, it is the feeling of ever-increasing harmony of the soul with God. If it means service, it means the ever-increasing spontaneous obedience to God. If it means worship, it means the constant adoration of the soul of man who loves God because He first loved us and sent His Son to die for us. So the whole question of what God requires resolves

itself into the old question of personal faith in the Deity, Sonship, and sacrifice of Christ in which is involved the essential doctrine of personal conversion and regeneration, for which neither intellectualism, emotionalism, ritualism, or altruism is a substitute.

## CHRIST'S TEACHING ON PRAYER

(In the Gospel of Luke)

R. H. B.

Immediately after the parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke 18: 1-8) by which He taught the value of perseverance in prayer, the Lord added yet another lesson. This was spoken to those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought"—the sort of religionists of which the Pharisees were outstanding examples in Christ's time, but which are not altogether rare in our days. Pride of any sort bars our access to God. There are three chief sorts of pride: social pride, intellectual pride, spiritual pride; and the ugliest of these is the spiritual. The Lord had never any need to resort to fiction for His parables; and in this case also He simply portrayed what happened, was happening, or might happen, any day. "Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican." The Pharisee "stood" and "prayed thus with himself" (as though his prayer had stopped there). And here is what he said:

"God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get."

Now, indeed, it is something to be thankful to God for, if we have been kept from gross transgressions, and of we have not fallen into depths of sin and wickedness. To whatever circumstances this be due—whether to early training, godly parents, favorable environment, faithful, loving friends, or good teaching—it was of God's mercy. For all of us have the seed of crime in our fleshly nature which under certain circumstances would break forth in deeds of wickedness. Like the psalmist, we have, every one, cause to thank God for that He has "delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." (Ps. 116:8.) But it was not in such a humble spirit of thankfulness that the Pharisee prayed—nay, he was praising himself and commending himself, and setting himself up as some superior specimen of humanity, as one who was well worthy of God's notice and favor. Such is the "old Adam" when he becomes "good." A little boy coming in from school, said "Just think, mother, I am the best boy in school." "Well, good," said mother—"did the teacher tell you that?" "No," answered sonny, "I noticed it myself."

But the worst of it was the Pharisee's contempt for the publican. It is ever the mark of the proud self-righteous that they compare themselves favorably with others, and look with disdain upon those who do not come up to their standards of excellence. And in that

Pharisee's heart there was no concern, no pity, no compassion, no regard for such people as "this publican." Plainly the Pharisee did not know himself nor did he know God. Is it possible that there may be some modern "church-people" who are like that in their attitude toward the sinful and erring?

#### THE PUBLICAN PRAYS

Not like the Pharisee who stationed himself boldly at the front—the publican in deep sense of unworthiness, stood afar off, and would not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast, saying, "God be thou merciful to me a sinner." He had nothing to say for himself, no plea to make, except this plea for God's mercy. Someone has said that there are just two kinds of folk who approach God: there are those who say, "Something in my hand"; and those who say "Nothing in my hands I bring." The publican came near by the lower road.

And what was the Lord's comment on the matter? It was brief and simple: "I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Once more in the gospel of Luke does the Lord Jesus have a word on prayer. It is at the close of His prophetic sermon (Luke 21:5-36). He had foretold and forewarned His disciples of the terrors that should befall the world introductory to His coming in glory—yet making a distinction between His own, and those who are of the world. For, as Paul told Christians in 1 Thess. 5—"God appointed us not unto wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Thess. 5:9)—so here: when these terrible things of His prediction shall *begin* to come to come to pass (He tells His disciples) "look up and life up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) But with this re-assurance He adds a warning:

"But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come on *you* suddenly, as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, *making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of man.*" (Verses 34-36.)

It is here that prayer counts—"supplication," that is earnest, fervent prayer—and this will avail to their escape out of the calamities and distresses which will come upon the world. The words our Lord used here are very strong and emphatic; literally rendered the concluding words would read thus: "[that ye may] be *stationed in front of the Son of man.*" We could hardly fail to connect that with the precious promise of 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, and the warning, yet encouraging, words that follow after it, in 1 Thess. 5:1-10. These who are "caught up" do indeed "escape all these things that shall come to pass," and they "shall stand before the Son of man," to behold His face, and to be with Him for ever. And to this end we must watch and pray.

## SEED THOUGHTS

### MORE LOVE NEEDED

A lady once saw a boy beating another boy unmercifully. She said to the bully, "Why are you beating that boy?" There was a lull in the fight as he looked up at her and said, "I just don't like him." This explains much rangling and abuse found among professing Christians. There is too much hatred and prejudice when there should be love and good will. "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. . . . But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Gal. 5:13, 15.)

### OPENING THE FLOOD GATES

It was a bad day for the church when infant baptism was introduced. It broke down the barrier between the world and the church, for now, with the irresponsible and the unregenerate added to the fold, much evil that would otherwise have been without, was brought within the precincts of God's holy church. Thus the line between the church and the world was obliterated and the church of the Lord was shamed in the eyes of men.

### THE JEW-GENTILE PROBLEM

The Jew who is dispersed among the nations of the world, is marked off from those among whom he dwells by his looks, his religion, his customs, and his shrewdness. All of this poses a problem to the nations and gives rise to anti-Semitism, all of which cannot be explained on human grounds. (That the devil hates the Jew is evident.) Some one tells a story about two boys who played marbles together. When the day was over, always the same boy had the marbles of the other. Then the other boy would try to "knock the daylight out of him." This is the Jew and Gentile question all over again.

### WHOSE NAME SHALL WE WEAR?

After hearing a young preacher, a man said to him, "I can't see why you are not willing to wear the name of Alexander Campbell. He was a great preacher. He stood six feet tall, erect, often leaning on his gold-studded cane, and the words flowed from his eloquent lips. Though he spoke for hours at a time, men hung upon his words, spellbound, oblivious to the passing of time. Now why are you unwilling to be called by the name of so great a preacher?"

The young preacher gave a wise answer. He said, "I realize that Alexander Campbell was a great man, but I think the Apostle Paul was greater. If I were to wear the name of a man I would rather wear the name of Paul, but Paul said for Christians not to wear his name. "Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephaz; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12, 13.) "But if a man suffer

as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Pet. 4:16.)

#### LONG-FACED RELIGION

A sour-faced churchman said to a little boy, "Don't you want to be a Christian?" "No," answered the boy, "not if it makes me feel as you look."

#### A DOUBLE GRIP

The pavement was as slick as glass. A man came into the church house and said to the preacher, "Brother Boll, I have an illustration for you. As my little boy and I came along on the ice I told him to take hold my hand. I warned him that if he turned loose he would fall, but that as long as he held to my hand he would be safe." Brother Boll answered, "Yes that is a good illustration, but I wish to ask you a question. "Did you grip his hand a little yourself?" "Why yes." "Well, that adds to the illustration, does it not?"

"Keep yourself in the love of God, . . . Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy." (Jude 21, 24.)

#### IMMORTALITY RAMPANT

"Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (2 Pet. 2:11.) Immorality has invaded everything. Pick up a magazine—not even the most low-down—and often you see evidence that the editor is keeping his ears close to the ground so as to please the people. They are either insulting the American people or a wave of immorality is sweeping the country. As Christians, let us abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Even if we miss some of the pleasures of this life we have something better in the world to come.

#### WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

A young lady was working at one of the spinning machines in a large textile mill in the East. Suddenly some of the threads became tangled, so she endeavored to manipulate some of the controls to remedy the situation but it only grew worse. She tried other measures—all to no avail. Soon the threads became so hopelessly tangled that she threw up her hands in despair and burst into tears. The machine was stopped and the foreman called. He asked her how she ever got the threads into such a mess. Through her tears she replied, "I did the very best I could." "No you didn't," he replied. "The best you could have done would have been to call me when things first began to go wrong." So in our daily problems and difficulties, the best we can do is to go to God at the beginning of our difficulty.

(More gleanings from longhand notes taken from Brother Boll's Bible classes.)

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"Difficulties are God's errands, and when sent upon them we should esteem it a proof of God's confidence."—Beecher,

# LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

## THE SERMON ON SOLOMON'S PORCH

The section of the book of Acts which we now consider (3:1 to 4:31) concerns Peter's second recorded sermon, with the miracle which furnished the occasion for it and the opposition which was stirred up by it. A lame man was marvelously healed; amazed, the multitudes gathered around Peter and John; Peter took advantage of the situation to preach Christ to them and to call upon them to repent; vexed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead, the Jewish authorities arrested them, kept them in prison over night, and brought them before the Sanhedrin for questioning. Peter and John boldly stood their ground and gave testimony concerning Jesus and His resurrection. But the rulers refrained from punishing them, merely ordering them not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. Released, the apostles returned to their own company and told them what had happened. They all united in prayer to God that He would grant them boldness to continue preaching the word and that signs and wonders would still be done in the name of Jesus. It is a beautiful story of the faith, zeal, and courage of those early days; let us examine it in greater detail.

**THE LAME MAN HEALED.** Here was a remarkable demonstration of divine power. During the entire forty years of his life this man had been unable to walk; yet suddenly he sprang to his feet and went into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God. Not only were his ankle bones strengthened, but the skill to maintain balance while standing, walking, and leaping was instantly imparted to him also. The man had asked for alms; but he received something far better. Is it not often so? The promise of Jesus, "Ask, and ye shall receive," does not necessarily imply that one will be given the particular thing requested. Paul's petition for the removal of the thorn in the flesh was answered by the Lord's assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord is able to do far above all that we ask or think. And if, in his ignorance and shortsightedness, the child of God asks for a stone, will not the heavenly Father give him a loaf instead? The lame man's joy and gratitude were unbounded; yet not for his sake alone was the miracle performed. It afforded an excellent opportunity to preach the gospel to the astonished multitudes; and this is what Peter did.

**DETAILS OF THE SERMON.** First, the explanation of the miracle. Peter took no credit to himself or John; it was not by their own power or godliness. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Servant Jesus . . . And by faith in His name hath His name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Note that it is "His Servant Jesus" (rather than "Son," as in the King James version. The same word occurs in the Greek translation of Isaiah

42:1 as quoted in Matt.12:18.) It seems quite probable that Peter's intention was to convey to the minds of his Jewish hearers that Jesus of Nazareth, Whom they had caused to be put to death and Whom God had raised up, was the servant concerning whom Isaiah had spoken centuries before (Isa. 42:1; 49:5; 6; 52:13; 53:11)—the One for Whom they had been looking to bring deliverance and blessing to the nation. (Note the other terms, familiar to them from their scriptures, that Peter used in his discourse with reference to Jesus: the Holy and Righteous One; the Prince, or Author, of life; the Christ, or Messiah; the Prophet of Whom Moses had spoken in Deut. 18:15; and again, at the close, this word Servant occurs.) This Jesus, as the Servant of God, was still working wonders—such wonders as He had wrought while on earth; only now He was working through the members of His body, men who were gladly being used for His honor and glory.

Following this explanation and the testimony concerning Jesus and His resurrection that accompanied it, we have Peter's earnest plea to these "men of Israel" to repent and turn to the Lord. Already he had bluntly charged them with killing the Prince of life; but if there was sternness in that, tender compassion now seems manifest as he says: "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." How like the words of Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" Does their ignorance, together with the fact that the prophecies concerning the sufferings of the Christ, were thus fulfilled, absolve them from guilt? No, indeed! It is necessary that they repent, even of the sins committed in their blindness. They must turn humbly to Him Whom they had formerly rejected. If they do so, three results will follow: their sins will be blotted out; seasons of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord; and He will send the Christ—the Messiah Who has been appointed for them—and this Christ, says Peter, is Jesus.

To whom do these promised results here apply? To all men, individually, or to the nation of Israel? The blotting out of sins is indeed promised to anyone, Jew or Gentile, who receives Him. And joyful experiences of sins forgiven and Christian fellowship may well be spoken of as "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." But how can we thus fittingly apply the third? Individuals did then, and have through the centuries since, come to the Lord; their sins were forgiven and they were spiritually refreshed; but the Christ did not then come, nor has He yet done so. He has remained in heaven until now. Yet the sending of the Christ is as definitely a promised result of their repenting and turning again as the blotting out of sins and the seasons of refreshing. So the question calls for careful examination.

First, this sermon is addressed expressly to "men of Israel." The listening multitude was composed of Israelites. They were the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God had made with their fathers. (3:25a.) Moreover, to these men of Israel, familiar as many of them doubtless were with their scriptures, these words of Peter

would bring to mind certain predictions of their prophets. In our limited space we can do little more than refer the reader to some of these passages. When he spoke of the blotting out of sins, they would perhaps recall Isa. 44:22 and Ezek. 36:24-28;37:23-27. (These passages should be read in the light of their context, noting that it is "the house of Israel" that is in view.) When he spoke of "seasons of refreshing," such prophetic visions of peace and joy and prosperity would come to mind as those found in Amos 9:11-15; Isa. 11:1-10; 35:10; 60; Jer. 31:1-14; Ezek. 36:33-36. And when he mentioned the sending of the Christ—how well they knew of Him as their coming triumphant king, to be set upon the holy hill of Zion and to receive the nations for His inheritance! (Ps. 2.) Eagerly they had looked forward to His glorious and beneficent reign, as portrayed in Psa. 72 and numerous other prophecies.

What, then, did these words of Peter mean to them? Simply this: that if they would change their attitude toward Jesus and acknowledge Him as their Messiah, God would send Him to them to inaugurate His righteous reign just as the prophets had foretold, the sins of the nation, even that of crucifying the Lord of Glory, would be blotted out, and the happy era of peace and prosperity would be ushered in. Shortly before His death Jesus had addressed the city which stood as the head and representative of the nation: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"—and why had He not done so? "And ye would not!" And then He added: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth"—never again? No, He didn't say that, but "till ye shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" (Matt. 23:37-39.) And now Peter, standing on a porch of the temple in the beloved city, cries out, "Repent and turn again"—acknowledge Jesus as your Messiah and He will come to you with all the promised blessings; but again there was the same response—they would not! Individuals did obey and the number of men came to be about five thousand; but officially the answer was arrest, imprisonment, threats, persecution, continued rejection of Jesus; and He has not yet come back to them.

After thus calling for repentance and declaring the blessings that would follow from it, the apostle adds concerning Jesus: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." The statement is not that Jesus must remain in heaven until the restoration of all things (as some suggest by their interpretation of the passage), but "until the *times of restoration of all things.*" The language is clear; the sequence of events plain: Israel acknowledges Jesus as her Messiah, her king (see Hosea 3:4, 5); He comes to rule and bless (this is not to be confused with His coming into the air for His church, as in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, which will have already taken place); the restoration prophecies will then be fulfilled.

And what is meant by the "restoration of all things"? Com-

menting on this expression in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Mr. Thayer says: "The restoration not only of the true theocracy but also of that more perfect state of (even physical) things which existed before the fall." We believe there is scriptural justification for this view. Let the reader examine the description of the times of the Messiah as given in Isaiah 11:6-9, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Also Paul's teaching concerning the creation in Romans 8:19-22: subjected to vanity, in the bondage of corruption, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, hoping for deliverance from this bondage into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Answering a query concerning the restoration of all things, Brother David Lipscomb wrote many years ago (we quote in part): ". . . The relation which the world originally sustained to God was broken and destroyed when man, the ruler, rebelled against God . . . Disorder in the laws of the material world came as the result of man's sin against his Maker. When Jesus comes again, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and all things in the world will be restored to harmonious relations with God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe." (Queries and Answers, page 360.)

Thus the Lord's original purpose concerning the earth and mankind will be accomplished. Israel will be restored to her destined place under her great Messiah-King as He sits on the throne of His father David ruling with a rod of iron. "For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of." (Rom. 11:29.) And the Gentiles will come in for their share of blessings also. Peter suggests that in quoting what God said to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Acts 3:25b.) Isaiah had declared of the Servant of the Lord (42-21) that He would "bring forth justice to the Gentiles." Paul's statement in Romans 11:15 is significant on this point also. In the meantime, while the Lord Jesus remains in heaven, the gospel is to go forth to Jew and Gentile to bring salvation to all who will receive it. By that means He is now taking "out of them a people for His name." (Acts 15:14.)

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"Even the darkness has a message of cheer. The shadows point to the dawn. As I wake in the twilight of the morning, I often see the glimmer of the street-lamps falling upon the walls of my chamber, but in a little while a lamp-lighter passes by and turns out one after another, leaving the room in deeper darkness than it had been at any time during the whole night. Yet I know that he is only putting out the street-lamps because he knows that in a little while the sun will rise and flood all the heavens with its light. So the darkness heralds the dawn."—A. J. Gordon.

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"When men are subdued by force, it is only for a while, for their hearts are not won; only their strength gives out. When men are subdued by moral conduct their hearts are glad within and their submission is sincere."—Mencius.

## OUR MIGHTIEST WEAPON

Our scientists succeeded in unleashing and turning upon our foes the basic power of our universe—atomic force. The world is still reeling from the impact of it. The atomic bomb did more than to destroy two Japanese cities; it awakened people everywhere to the plain, yet awful truth that, unless the Lord intervenes, man has now within his grasp a weapon which literally can devastate the earth and blot out every living creature. This realization is all the more fearful when we consider the fact that the constant recurrence of war is clearly prophesied in the Scriptures. So long as men are unregenerate, so long as sin reigns in the human heart, so long as God is ignored and forgotten, just so long shall we have “wars and rumors of wars.”

Surely we are hastening on toward the end of the age! Yet the days to come may show that the things which have happened are for “the furtherance of the Gospel.” New highways and skyways have been opened; vast territories have been made available; progress has unlocked many doors long closed; the banner of the Cross may be planted where the flags of war have been unfurled.

### ATOMIC ENERGY NOT THE GREATEST FORCE

Many have spoken of the atomic bomb as the most destructive weapon ever conceived. This is true, but it is not our mightiest weapon. Our mightiest weapon is not material, but spiritual. Of necessity it must be so, “for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). Powerful as it is—two thousand times more powerful than any bomb previously devised—the atomic bomb is but a weak and puny thing compared to our mightiest weapon. The atomic energy thus released has been used for destruction, but our mightiest weapon is destructive only of evil and constructive only of good. Of course, I speak of “the word of God which is living and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4:12). Since it is two-edged, it is destined both for offense and defense. With it, the believer attacks the strongholds of Satan and sin; with it, he protects himself from the assaults of temptation. We speak of it as living and powerful yet, strangely enough, we do not seem to believe it! We face the amazing spectacle of denominations, churches, organizations and individuals professing to believe that the Bible, God’s Word, is eternal, unchanging, living and powerful, and yet neglecting and forsaking it for philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, human wisdom and experience.

### BACK TO THE BIBLE

From time to time the cry is raised, “Back to the Bible!” For many it is not a question of coming back to it, but simply of coming to it at all. Theoretically, they believe in it; actually, they do not. They use it as a convenience to save time and effort. They use it

to give a religious flavor to their messages. They use it to provide catchy phrases and unusual topics. They use it as a point of departure and never return to it. They use its words and profess to build upon it, but they know nothing of its power. Perhaps the saddest element of all is that many of these are sincerely seeking to serve the Lord. They simply do not know that there is "a more excellent way."

#### PREACH THE WORD

Preachers must come to the realization that they are not called to be eloquent, or original, or unique, or spectacular, but to "preach the Word." The only great preacher is the preacher of the Word of God. The power is not in the preacher, but in the Word, and through the Spirit, who carries it to the heart of the hearer.

In his biography of D. L. Moody, *Bush Aglow*, Richard E. Day states that a woman in Brooklyn once said to Mr. Moody: "We have plenty of preaching in Brooklyn, but if you will tell us something about the Bible, it will be blessed to us." Moody accepted the challenge, prepared a simple Bible reading, and "the ravishingly sweet fires of God at once came down." Moody himself is responsible for the statement: "A man cannot be convicted by any means save the Holy Spirit's working through the Word."

Jonathan Goforth testified: "I think I can safely say that, during the forty years that I have been on the foreign field, I have never once addressed a Chinese audience without an open Bible in my hand from which I could say, 'Thus saith the Lord!'"

Yes, the preacher must realize with a passionate, intense, earnest conviction that he is called to preach the Word. But there is another consideration. His people must want and expect him to preach the Word. Many a preacher now playing around with short historical essays, brief literary gems, little, inoffensive sermonettes, or excursions into the field of social service, could be brought to the necessity of Bible preaching, if his people came to him and lovingly, earnestly, and sincerely laid the challenge before him. "Like people, like priest" is as true as "Like priest, like people." A preacher on fire for the Lord may do much to transform a congregation, but a congregation on fire for the Lord may do much to mold their preacher. Many a congregation yearns for the plain, unvarnished preaching of God's Word. Many people with hungry hearts come to church and receive a stone for bread, but perhaps they are partly to blame; they may never have prayed that their minister might truly "preach the Word"; they may never have opened their hearts to him in such a way that he was driven to the Word for every message. What is true of the preacher is true also of every Sunday school teacher, and of all who have the responsibility of leadership in the life of the church.

#### IT SHALL NOT RETURN VOID

According to numerous statements in the Book of Acts, it is the Word of God which grows and is multiplied, not the personality, reputation, or ability of the workers. "And the word of God in-

creased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts 6:7). "But the word of God grew and multiplied (Acts 12:24.) "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20. Compare those statements with the reports of the average church today! Look at the picture clearly. There is a cold formalism which forbids evangelistic fervor. There is a sleepy indifference which banishes concern for the lost. There is widespread worldliness which robs the churches of any real, vital testimony. Thousands of churches have abandoned their Sunday evening services; others have given up their prayer meetings. Many churches now close their doors entirely for the summer months. Some carry on, but there is neither heart nor power in their activities. What has happened? There is "a famine of the hearing of the words of the Lord." In some sections of our beloved country, the preaching of a Gospel sermon is the exception rather than the rule. All too many of our theological schools have forsaken the "living fountains of waters" and are hewing out "broken cisterns." Hosts of young men leave such schools and go to their fields, not as prophets whose hearts have burned within them as Christ opened to them the Scriptures, but as social reformers inspired with the vision to build a new world upon the wisdom of sinful man!

What of the thousands of supposedly orthodox churches which seem bereft of power and impotent in the face of the world's tragic need? Can it be that we have laid aside our mightiest weapon? Can it be that organization without spiritual life, and sound doctrine without personal application, and nominal lip service rather than sincere heart service, have taken their toll? There is a way back! Individually, and as churches, we must "take the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God." I am firmly convinced that any church whose minister and people will constantly and continually magnify the Word will experience an outpouring of power from on high. So mighty is this weapon that there are no limits to what can be accomplished.

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"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29). Where is our faith in the Word of God? Why should we conduct ourselves as though there were more power in our words than in the Bible? We must preach the Word, but we must preach the Word to people and not to empty pews. Pastor and people, by public proclamation and personal testimony, must use this mighty weapon!

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11).

—K. Owen White, in *King's Business*.

# “FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

Writing in regard to “the misrepresentations and exaggerations of a few “bigoted partisans,” and after characterizing anathemas against him as “a tissue of falsehood,” and exposing, by irrefragable documents, the immoral character of Mr. Winter, one of its chief prompters, Alexander Campbell asks the following questions. How very much up to date the line (which we have italicised) sounds!—J.

“Who is making divisions and schisms? Who is rending the peace of the churches? Who are creating factions, swellings and tumults? *We who are willing to bear and forbear or they who are anathematizing and attempting to excommunicate?* Let the umpires decide the question. For my own part, I am morally certain they who oppose us are unable to meet us on the Bible; they are unable to meet us before the public; and this I say, not as respects their talents, acquirements or general abilities, but as respects their systems. Thousands are convinced of this, and they might as well bark at the moon as to oppose us by bulls and anathemas. If there be a division, gentlemen, you will make it, no I; and the more you oppose us with the weight of your censure, like the palm tree we will grow faster. I am for peace, for union, for harmony, for co-operation with all good men. But I fear not you; if you will fling fire-brands, arrows and discords into the army of the faith, you will repent it, not we. You will lose influence, not we. We covet no persecution, but we disregard it. We fear nothing but error, and should you proceed to make divisions, you will find that they will reach much farther than you are aware, and that the time is past when an anathema from an association will produce any other effect than contempt from some and a smile from others.”—Memoirs of Alexander Campbell. pp. 323, 324.

I have read where Alexander Campbell said that when he undertook to answer or decide a Bible question he never allowed anything he had ever written or said to occur to mind so as to influence his decision. He simply wrote or said each time what he thought right. True, he was charged with being inconsistent with himself. He may have been, but few have been more nearly consistent with the truth.—G. H. P. Showalter, editorial in “Firm Foundation,” 12-9-1941.

“Unless what we learn of prophecy, of the Lord’s coming, of the age to come, as well as any other truth, makes us more humble, more obedient, more loving and Christlike, we have indeed learned in vain.”—R. H. Boll

## BRITANNICA ON CHRIST’S REIGN ON EARTH

Unless anyone should think the Biblical teaching on the “Millennium” as given in the 20th chapter of Revelation and throughout the Prophets is a “modern conception” we subjoin here an ex-

tract from the coldly impartial *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition; Article "Millennium."

#### **Britannica Notes on The Primitive Belief**

"Faith in the nearness of Christ's Second Advent, and in the establishment of his reign of glory on the earth, was undoubtedly a strong point in the primitive Christian Church. In the anticipations of the future prevalent among the early Christians (c. 50-150) it is necessary to distinguish a fixed and a fluctuating element. The former includes (1) the notion that the last terrible battle with the enemies of God was pending; (2) the faith in the speedy return of Christ; (3) the conviction that Christ will judge all men, and (4) will set up a kingdom of glory on earth. To the latter belong views of the Anti-christ of the heathen world-power, of the place, extent, and duration of the earthly kingdom of Christ. etc. . . . But even here certain positions were agreed on in large sections of Christendom. Amongst these was the expectation that the future kingdom of Christ on earth should have a fixed duration—according to the most prevalent opinion, a duration of one thousand years. From this fact the whole ancient Christian eschatology was known in later times as "Chiliasm"—a name not strictly accurate, since the doctrine of the millennium was only one feature in its scheme of the future.

". . . Justin (*Dial.* 80) speaks of Chiliasm as a necessary part of complete orthodoxy, although he knows Christians who do not accept it. That a philosopher, like Justin, with a bias towards an Hellenic construction of the Christian religion, should nevertheless have accepted its chiliastic element is the strongest proof that these enthusiastic expectations were inseparably bound up with the Christian faith down to the middle of the 2nd century. . . .

"After the middle of the 2nd century these expectations were gradually thrust in the background. They could never have died out, however, had not circumstances altered, and a new mental attitude taken up. The spirit of philosophical and theological speculation and of ethical reflection which spread through the churches did not know what to make of the future.

#### **GIBBON'S TESTIMONY**

Gibbon, never accused of sympathy with such teaching, says: "The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was the preceptor of the son of Constantine. It appears to have been the prevailing sentiment of orthodox believers." . . . "As long as this error was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians."

The historians, Mosheim, Neander, all others of note, are unanimous in stating that the church of the earliest centuries was pre-millennial. All show that changes came with the rise of the papacy. The Church of Rome has consistently opposed the teaching from the

beginning until now. This is a significant fact.—Stanford Chambers.

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#### “WHITBYISM”

Dr. Duffield of Princeton, N. J., says: “The doctrine of a Millennium *before* the advent of Christ is not to be found in any of the standards of the churches of the Reformation: by several it is expressly repudiated. It is a modern novelty, suggested but 150 years ago by Whitby, and avowedly as a ‘new hypothesis.’”

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#### JOHN T. HINDS, ON “THIS GENERATION”

A querist in Kentucky asks for the meaning of Mark 13:30. The part of the verse meant reads as follows: “This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished.” The verse is a part of Jesus’ answer to the questions of the apostles respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and his coming.

If the term “generation” is to be taken in its ordinary sense of lifetime, it would have to apply to the Lord’s coming in judgment on the Jews in the destruction of their city. This does not agree very well with the words, “all these things,” which by a reasonable construction includes his entire answer. The Greek word has a variety of meanings, one of which is “race.” That is the meaning that gives the easiest solution to the problem. It was a prediction that the Jews as a race, or people, would not cease until all the things mentioned had been accomplished. They are still with us and no prospects of their extinction.—John T. Hinds, in *Gospel Advocate*, April 14, 1932.

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#### “THOSE KINGS”

“I know that the traditional theory claims that Daniel [2:44] had reference to the Cæsar kings, where he says “In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever”;

But let it be borne in mind that when Christ was upon earth there was but one king, Cæsar.—*Christian Leader*, Nov. 13, 1900 (author unknown).

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#### HOMILETIC PARAGRAPHS

46 years ago, R. H. Boll wrote these true words of warning, in commenting on Acts 20:

The saddest point perhaps is that from among themselves, of their own number, the traducers should come. The generation of Judas is not dead yet. The danger to the church comes from within. He does not mean this in the first place of those who by honest mistake are propagating error; but of those heady, ambitious characters who, to have pre-eminence and leadership, speak perverse things among the disciples; the “smart,” overbearing, “rule or ruin” spirits that are found in most communities. And also it happens that for the love of money, or the fear of man, or some such weakness, able men, beloved and esteemed among the church, become

instruments of creating ungodly divisions and occasion the destruction of souls. It is then that we must learn how to pluck out the right eye and cast it from us, when it causes us to stumble. Sometimes it seems quite as hard to deal with such men as to cut off a member of one's body. Yet it stands written: "Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them." And if we love men more than Christ and his cause, "we cannot be his disciples."—*The Way*, October 15, 1903, page 931.

#### C. H. ROBERSON'S HISTORICAL TESTIMONY

Though the good brother who wrote the following paragraph may have changed his views, or renounced his former interpretations on certain prophetic scriptures—we hear that he has—such a change cannot weaken his own **historical testimony** on the subject, which we now quote from this scholar:

"The distinguishing characteristic of the millenarian theory is the remarkable series of waxings and wanings it has had at different periods. It seems that during the early centuries it obtained a prevalence that was so general that it may be quite properly mentioned as catholic [that is, universal].

After the lapse of the first three centuries, a gradual change of opinion was wrought as pertains to the theory. This change was brought about by the combined influence of secular prosperity, and by the activities of Origen, Augustine, and Jerome against it.—C. H. Roberson, in *Firm Foundation*, April 7, 1942.

#### IRENAEUS ON THE ANTI-CHRIST

Ireneus, Second Century (180 A. D.), refers to 2 Thess. 2: "He (*Antichrist*) shall come . . . not as a righteous king, neither in lawful submission to God, but in impiety, unrighteousness and lawlessness. . . . He shall put down idols so as to persuade men that he is God. He shall exalt himself as the only object of worship. . . . Concerning him, the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaks."—Irenaeus, "*Against Heresies*," V. 25, 1.

#### DAVID LIPSCOMB ON 1 THESSALONIANS 1:10

"To expect the coming of his Son from heaven, whither he ascended after God had raised him from the dead. The coming of the Son of God to reward his servants, and to execute wrath upon his enemies, is an item of faith kept more constantly before the disciples by the apostles and inspired teachers than by the teachers of the present day. When taught now it is too often so featured as to make a party or divisive body to the neglect of other truths. It should be taught in connection with other vital truths as a fundamental Bible teaching. The expectation of the return of the Lord to execute justice and judgment ought to be kept before the people. The apostle connects the raising of Jesus from the dead with the deliverance of the Christians from the wrath to come.—From an unpublished commentary on 1 Thessalonians, sent in by J. W. Shepherd.