

THE WORD AND WORK

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

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God's Family

W. R. H.

A LIFE'S WORK GOES DOWN THE DRAIN

Can you not sympathize with the teacher who sees her students utterly fail in the greatest test of all—the test of their moral and ethical stability? And while you are sympathizing, share also with a multitude of parents, guardians, Sunday school teachers and ministers who have seen their young people succumb to lying, theft, vandalism, illicit sex, dope and alcohol. These “lost causes” are not confined to “the other side of the tracks,” but are so general and so numerous that they have become a heartbreak to every true Christian leader who is informed. What sadness it is to see the pottery marred and broken in the very making! What a disappointment when the plans and dreams are shattered. But it is happening, and the momentum is escalating every day.

Are the parents, the teachers, or the ministers to blame? Young people may want to fix the blame here, but let's see what God has to say. Ezekiel 2:3: “And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day. And the children are impudent and stiff-hearted; I do send thee unto them and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall they know that there hath been a prophet among them.” We also read earlier in Ezekiel (Ch. 3, vs 19), “Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

One of the trends of our day, is for everyone to want to blame his sins upon someone else. The criminal blames society; the thief blames the economy; the atheists blame religion; and the drug users blame their elders. The drop-outs blame the school system, and the vandals are “getting even” with the administration.

This practice of unjustly fixing the blame on another may get along quite well in our confused and crooked generation, but it will not stand a chance at the judgment bar of God. We all need to be hearing again the words from God, as to how He accounts personal

responsibility. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." and again, "each one of us shall give an account of himself to God," and "God shall bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." In Hebrews 9:27 we read, "It is appointed unto man, once to die, and after that cometh judgment."

I am aware that the recitation of these passages of scripture will not take the hurt out of the hearts of teachers, preachers, or the parents of the prodigals; but these words do absolve them of any blood-guiltiness in the matter, when they have given their warnings according to the commandment of God. The student, or the son, or whoever the rebellious one be, needs to hear the word given by John the baptist; "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Nor can the sinners hide themselves behind the "imperfections" of their ministers, teachers, or parents. Jonah was a prophet, with a God-give mission, and he performed it in an imperfect way, with an imperfect attitude. But the city of Nineveh repented. On the other hand, Jesus, the spotless and perfect Lamb of God, came to the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, and they repented not. Jesus said that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for these cities, and the men of Nineveh would rise up in the judgment and bear witness; since they repented at their opportunity, whereas those who had the Son of God to warn them, rebelled.

Yes, I feel for the parents, the teachers, and the preachers; but I *fear* for those students and others who turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of grace. "Today, if ye shall hear his voice, *harden not your hearts.*"

INFLATION STRIKES AT WORD & WORK

As most of our readers know, the cost of everything seems to be going up steadily, with the cost of living rising some 6 to 8 percent each year. This has also reached into the area of printing and mailing, and has recently placed our non-profit organization into a deficit.

Beginning with this publication date, the subscription price will be \$3.00 per year for the magazine, and 40¢ per each for Lesson Quarterly.

It has been about five years since we advanced the price of the Quarterly, and more than eight years since the price of \$2.50 was set on the Magazine. We trust that all of our readers will understand the need for this additional income to keep solvent.

Subscriptions already received for January and February, (our heaviest months) will be honored as sent in at \$2.50

—The publisher

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

EVANGELIST BILLY GRAHAM brings a glowing report of his religious crusade behind the Iron Curtain. After preaching to about 15,000 people at a youth camp, Graham told an aid, "Things are far more open than I had supposed. I have gotten an education in 24 hours. During the last five years my heart has been expanding and changing to take in all the churches of the world. I came here to learn as well as to preach." Later the preacher said that he had changed his thoughts about Communism. He told his hearers that he had come to help build bridges. He noted the differences between the social systems of his country and Hungary but said: "We are bound together as brothers and sisters in Christ." The report says that a choir of fifty young people sang hymns and choruses that are popular in Graham's crusades in the United States." To reporters in New York Mr. Graham said that he found "total separation of church and state in Hungary."

I don't fault any preacher for appearing any place on earth to preach the only message of hope for a hopeless world. As the apostle of old was thankful that the gospel was preached, so am I that these Hungarians (though such a small percentage of them) did get to hear some of God's Word on these occasions. But I am troubled about the impressions these reports make. They are a complete contradiction to reports of persecutions as told by those who have experienced first-hand the horrors of Communism, such as Ministers Richard Wurmbrand, Paul Voronaeff, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Time magazine ob-

served: "To some extent, the visit was part of a broad tactical maneuver by the Communist regime of Janos Kadar. On the brink of the talks on the Helsinki accord, Hungary is eager to brush up its image and counteract complaints about church restrictions from both Hungarian and U.S. Christians . . . Graham, who once said Communism was 'masterminded by Satan,' must be aware of the political mileage the Kadar regime wants to get from his eight-day visit."

JOSEPH STALIN PROPOSED TO destroy this country and he had a plan. "If we can effectively kill the national pride and patriotism of just one generation, we will have won that country," he said. "Therefore, there must be continued propaganda abroad to undermine the loyalty of the citizens in general and the teenagers in particular. By making readily available drugs of various kinds; by giving a teenager alcohol; by praising wildness; by strangling him with sex literature . . . the psychopolitical preparation can create the necessary attitude of chaos, idleness and worthlessness."

"WHO IS JAMES EARL CARTER, JR.?" Of 61 persons recently asked this question only 14 knew at once that he was the President. Just outside the White House, answers to the question were: "I don't know" or "He's the son of the President" or "Sounds like the name of some criminal." A vacationer in Florida said he didn't have the slightest idea who James Earl Carter, Jr. was, explaining: "I'm a Canadian." A 62-year-old maintenance worker, when questioned by The Enquirer's reporter, confessed that he did not know him, or if the

name was familiar to him or not. "Maybe yes, maybe no—I don't read the newspapers." If this is a fair picture of America's attitude, it is little wonder that things are as they are.

REACTION TO MY COMMENTS on Oh, God. A reader expressed disturbance about my comments on OH, God. I invite your comments, and will be glad to give them space if you so desire. Not only about this particular subject, but some other that is on your mind.

A MEMO FROM HEW TASK FORCE says that "HEW should encourage state policies permitting adolescents to receive contraceptives without requiring parental advice. The adolescent must bear most of the risks and consequences of an unintended pregnancy and should be permitted to avoid pregnancy." According to the memo, nearly one million teenage girls become pregnant every year and about 300,000 of them have abortions. So much for sex education HEW style.

IF AN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURER were to put in his advertisement the price of all the accumulated taxes in addition to the price of the car—that is, the taxes on all of the materials that have gone into making the car—the sticker on the \$4,000 model would read: Automobile \$800, tax \$3,200. Let every reader send this bit of information to his congressman, so he will know what inflation really is.

MR. CARTER SAYS he wants to be a missionary after he leaves office.

MEET LIEUTENANT GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO. Don't let the Lieutenant bit fool you, he is top man—no one, but no one - above him. In Nigeria that is. And he is very welcome at the White House in Washington, D.C. The number One man at the White House said that he is pleased that we (count me out) are becoming so friendly with the largest nation of black Africa, calling it an "enlightened and important country." Public executions for robbers have recently been reinstated. A major police headache in fighting the rob-

bers is their tactics of dressing in army or police uniforms and painting their getaway vehicles in military colors. Some arrested robbers have turned out to be deserters from the armed forces, the main source of guns for the robbers since it is illegal for Nigerian citizens to carry arms. Undisciplined soldiers periodically shoot up villages. Sending messages by car beats the telephone service. Just before the recent World Festival of Black and African Arts and Culture held in Lagos, they suspended the practice of roadside whippings for Nigerians accused of traffic offenses. But, according to Agence France-Presse, as soon as the Festival was over things raced back to normal, and the Nigerian soldiers were issued brand new whips with which to crack down on bad drivers. Now, what makes this Black African so enlightened and important? Well, you see it is oil-rich, but the punch line is: it has spent millions of dollars supporting the Communist terrorists attempting to "liberate" Rhodesia. Which African nation is the object of hatred of the White House and its master, the United Nations.

THEY SAY (YOUNG AND CARTER) THAT the worst place for a black to live today in Africa is Rhodesia. And they intend to see that that condition is changed. Keep in mind that they are both American citizens, with a limited, if any, responsibility in this alleged situation. Now hear this: Blacks in Rhodesia are going beyond standing up to be counted. By the hundreds they are flocking to the colors to serve in Ian Smith's Rhodesian African Rifles. Officers asked if the recruits are only interested in the military training and a chance to shoot whites in the back reply that they have full confidence in their men. As well they might. A majority of these recruits are warriors of the Matabele tribe, on the brink of civil war, who do not want to be subjected to the sort of terrorist rule that would likely result as tribal infighting grows more vicious, if the Smith Government backs down. What these black Africans don't want is what the United Nations with Young-Carter "full-steam-ahead" support does want.

ALEXANDER HALEY, AUTHOR OF the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Roots*, is faced with a suit for plagiarism. A Mississippi college professor, Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, has alleged that Haley lifted extensively from her book *Jubilee*, published ten years ago, which told of life among blacks in Georgia before, during, and after the Civil War.

AND JUST WHO IS THE MOST ADMIREED woman in the world? Thought you'd like to know that the annual Good Housekeeping poll to discover this person reports that after counting, checking, and double-checking the 10,000 votes it is none other than singer Anita Bryant. The editors simply couldn't believe it until it was confirmed by much careful rechecking. But Anita was far ahead of the field including Mother Teresa of India

and Rosalyn Carter. The incredulous editors said that only Pat Nixon came close. Underneath it all, dear editors, Americans love a woman who is a woman. The sex symbols are not for the people. And the editors were not only surprised, but were distressed at the outcome. "Love not the truth" is used to describe some.

Mrs. Bryant's controversy with sex deviates may be costly to her personally. NBC television dropped her as the Orange Bowl commentator after nine years on the job. She has been having difficulty finding a producer for her new record, "There's Nothing Like the Love Between a Woman and a Man." And, even though she's been signed on to promote Florida orange juice for another year, there are indications that several others are being groomed for the job.

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



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

Giving Thanks Unto God Through Christ

Most Christians are aware that the only way we can make petition to God is through Jesus Christ. He is our Redeemer, the One through Whom we have become children of God and our relationship to God is through Him. If we were not in Him we would have no relationship to God and therefore no basis for asking Him to do things for us.

But when we come to giving thanks we seem to overlook our relationship to God and forget that every blessing comes from God through Jesus Christ. We need to remember that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17) and He is our Father because His only begotten Son made it possible. When we receive something at the hand of fellow men we, of course, should thank them for being the immediate channel for the gift, but Paul in Romans 1:8 reminds us

by his own way of giving thanks that Jesus was right when He said, "no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6) and that it is through Jesus Christ that the Father sends the blessings. Paul in this first verse after his salutations to the Romans, shows the great importance of giving thanks by emphasizing the fact that he is doing it first, and he gives thanks by coming to the Father through the Son. It is Jesus Christ that is our High Priest and Who, therefore, presents our prayers to God, including our thanksgivings. It is through Him also that we can worship and work in the service of God acceptably. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us of this also in Hebrews 13:15—"Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His Name." Our approach to God is through the one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, as He reminded the apostles in John 14:6 ("No one cometh unto the Father by Me") and as Paul stated to Timothy in 1 Tim. 2:5 ("There is . . . one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus").

Note also that Paul thanked God for every one of the Roman Christians. After all, he had addressed them as "beloved of God" and as saints. For such ones, of such high standing, he now gives thanks. Paul did not know every member of the church at Rome, but he knew that churches then had as ones in fellowship only those who gave no appearance of being unbelievers—a situation sadly not true today. However, it is also sad that very few Christians ever give thanks for every other Christian, reserving their thanks only for those who act according to the standards set up by the individual rather than by the Lord's standards.

Then note the thing about these Christians in Rome for which Paul especially gave thanks—their faith was such that people all over the world talked about it. Christians in Rome, to be sure, had an advantage in being known, for Rome was the capital of the world and people from all over the world traveled there. But, remember, the people who traveled to Rome would not have talked about the faith of the saints in Rome if they had kept quiet about their beliefs or had lived lives that contradicted what they professed. They were professors, confessors, and doers!

We will note a number of things about the Roman brethren in Christ to commend as we look through the letter, things we should commend them for and then imitate them in. Let us begin by letting others know of our faith, having lives that recommend our faith to those who know us. Maybe this is over a month late to suggest it—but this is not only a good new years resolution, it is a good resolution every day of every year.

Carl Kitzmiller is a Minister in Oakdale, Louisiana.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

I am not sure that I understand what preachers and others mean when they talk about believing on the Lord. Can you give me some help?

This is not at all surprising. There are at least two outstanding reasons why it has been difficult for some to understand faith. ("Faith" and "belief" are translations of the same Greek work; there is no distinction between the two.)

One reason is that there are different degrees or stages of faith. Even in the Bible there are some differences in how this and related terms are used in different passages. For example, John (12:42-43) tells that during Jesus' ministry many of the rulers "believed on him." Nevertheless, these did not believe to the point of confessing Him. Instead they feared the Pharisees and being put out of the synagogue, so they did not acknowledge Him. These rulers "believed" and yet they were not regarded as Jesus' followers. Thus it becomes necessary to distinguish between the kind or degree of faith that accepts certain things about Jesus but falls short of being saving faith. Taken together, all of the passages in the New Testament which speak of faith show us very clearly that there is a point at which faith becomes saving faith and that it is possible to believe after a fashion without being saved. Moreover, even in the Christian faith can be weak or strong or exist at several stages in between those two extremes. It is important, therefore, in speaking of faith that we do not attribute to a low degree of faith what the Bible indicates as belonging only to a higher degree. Our world is full of people who believe Jesus lived, who even accept after a fashion the truth that He was God and that He lived and died for our sins. They are not atheists by any means. But neither are they Christians. Their faith has never reached the point of causing a commitment of themselves to the Lord.

A second reason for much misunderstanding of faith is the fact that many preachers, teachers, etc. are not careful to speak with honesty or accuracy what the Bible teaches. Sectarian division is much in evidence even as to what constitutes faith. Some would make almost anything that can be called faith acceptable. In fact, there are advocates of faith who really are unconcerned about faith being in Jesus Christ at all. Their views really boil down to a sort

of positive attitude toward life. Others, in supporting their particular creed or doctrinal position, put saving faith at different points. It is sad that this is the case, but it is. As with many other topics, there is a variety of teaching, and we must be careful to establish just what is Biblical. Love for the truth and a diligent seeking after it with hungering and thirsting (Matt.5:6) is most important. An honest desire to know the will of God and a readiness to follow what one knows is much needed.

Saving faith is more than just a belief in the existence or even the goodness of God the Father, although it includes that and is built on that (Heb. 11:6). The unrighteous Jews of Jesus' day believed in the existence of God, and they supposed that He would be very good to them. Saving faith is directed also toward Jesus Christ. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God (Matt. 16:16; John 8:24; Acts 2:36-38; 16:31; etc.). The preaching of the early church shows this to be the case, for the burden of that preaching was showing Jesus to be the Christ. It is sometimes said that we must "believe the gospel" (e. g., Mark 1:15); this, of course, includes belief in the atoning work of Christ. The gospel is the good news of Christ's death for our sins according to the scriptures, His burial, and His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). But a person may believe in the existence of God and in the basic facts of the gospel, acknowledging that Jesus was God who came into the world in human flesh and died for man's sins, without having saving faith. The demons acknowledge all of this (Jas. 2:19; Luke 8:28). Saving faith acknowledges all that is suggested here, but it also *acts* by responding to these truths. They are not mere facts to be accepted but they call for a commitment of one's life. Saving faith means a receiving of Christ into one's life (John 1:12). If Jesus is the Christ, then saving faith requires me to respond to whatever way He has directed. For this reason we read of obeying the gospel and of obeying Christ, or of the consequences of not obeying (Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9). Saving faith in the New Testament is seen, therefore, to include repentance from sin, confession of one's faith in Christ, and baptism (Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13; 16:30-34; 18:8; Rom. 10:10; etc.). It is not, as some erroneously teach, that these acts are acts of merit added to faith; this is the way for faith to respond when it has become strong enough to be saving faith. Knowing that Christ requires this of us, faith thus responds. Faith has reached the point of surrendering our life to the Lord. These acts are a part of the surrender.

There are those who teach that we can have faith in the Lord without repentance or without baptism. This creates much confusion in many minds. Of course we can have a degree of faith without these acts, but the question of concern is whether that kind of faith avails for salvation. There are those who want the results of faith without the commitment of faith, imagining some to be Christians who are not. Faith can exist apart from the proper responses only

as we have seen—it is not yet strong enough to be considered saving faith. In New Testament times that was never counted as saving faith which did not result in a surrender to Christ according to the teaching of the word.

Let me point out that saving faith involves the whole person—intelligence, emotions, and will. There are truths to be believed, the historic facts concerning God and Jesus Christ. Hence, we must accept the Bible record with our heads. We must believe the facts—that Jesus is the Messiah sent of God, the One who died for our sins, who was raised, who ever lives. But head knowledge is not enough; a person can believe these facts without being a Christian.

Saving faith reaches the emotions as well. “*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10). This brings about a shame of sin and a turning from it, a love for the One who died for us and a desire to please Him. The historic facts are not so much cold data but become grounds for personal involvement with Him. Again, however, we can be emotionally caught up in the things of the Lord without proceeding to a commitment. We can be like the person who gets emotionally involved in a love affair but never gets around to marriage.

The will is also involved. We reach the point where we say, in effect, “I am going to bring my life into harmony with the will of God.” An act of will is required. We make a decision and act on it. There are those today (many of them, in fact) who exclude baptism as an act of saving faith, but in the New Testament it was the point at which people were considered to have become Christians. It is an act of the will, a point to which the person can look back and say, “Here is where I died and was buried; here is where I was raised to new life.” This is the point at which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is promised (Acts 2:38), God’s claim of ownership. Truth lovers, we believe, will not settle for less.

Once we have become Christians we are not through with faith. We must continue to believe. Most passages which speak of believing have the verb in the present tense, signifying continuing action. We must continue to believe the facts concerning Him. We must continue to be emotionally responsive to Him, concerned lest we disappoint Him, grieve Him, or fail to love Him and desire to obey Him. And we must continue to act when faith calls for decision or activity, willing to serve Him.

FOUND IN AN OLD BIBLE

The following was found in the Bible of Rev.. E. E. Shelhamer after his death, Jan. 21, 1947.

“Forget the things that are behind; forget injuries, slights, unkind words; be too big to be hurt; be too great to be unkind; be too busy to quarrel; too strong to permit little annoyances to turn you from life’s big road; too clean to stain your character with any kind of impurity.”

—Source Unknown.



Is God Telling Us Something?

Dennis L. Allen

In the December, 1977, issue of the *National Geographic* magazine an article appeared entitled, "The Year the Weather Went Wild." Snow fell in Miami at the same time there was melting slush in Alaska where it normally is 20-40 below zero. The record-breaking cold of last winter over most of the nation accompanied by widespread drought in the Northern Plains and the West brought great disruption, hardship and economic loss to wide areas of the United States. Last winter's extreme cold cost the nation 3 billion dollars in economic growth and another 5 billion in increased fuel cost.

Most forecasters felt this winter might be bad but not as bad as 1977. As we enter into February, 1978, it appears the weather is going even "wilder" this year. Last week Louisville, along with the Midwest and the East, was brought to a skidding halt by probably the worst blizzard on record for size and intensity. People who thought they could go in any weather suddenly found themselves helpless. We find officials and reporters of the news media repeatedly acknowledging that this is "killer weather" and "we are decidedly not in control". Man is brought to realize there is little he can do until God brings a thaw. "Who can stand before His cold?" the Psalmist asks. Many have had to face that question and scores have lost their lives. Some have openly acknowledged this is an act of God and see in it His awesome power. Others obscure the issue with other terms such as "nature" or "the weather" did this (as if it were a person), or even "the world weather machine," whatever that is. Who invented it, who oils it and keeps it going. It is hard for modern man to acknowledge God.

Is God in control of the weather? The Scriptures give a clear answer, "Yes". From Genesis to Revelation the answer is the same "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. 8:22. Is a new ice age beginning? No. The seasons will continue while the earth remains. This does not mean, however, that God cannot bring upheavals and violent changes in the weather. He brought the flood upon the earth. He also sent the wind that dried the waters up when it was time for the flood to cease.

Elijah prayed and it rained not upon the earth for three years and six months. Again he prayed and the heavens gave rain.

not because Elijah had any power over the weather, but because the God who hears the prayer of faith does. God controls the weather and the earth should fear and stand in awe of Him because of it. The snow that comes, the stormy wind is completely in His control and fulfills His word. Psa. 148:8. We know from Job 1 that Satan also can use the weather. When all that Job had was put within Satan's power, a great wind came from the wilderness to bring about the death of Job's sons. But Satan's power is entirely limited to what God allows and even then He is in control.

Man not only is powerless when God arises to manifest His power in the weather, he also has had to acknowledge that with all his knowledge, technology, computers, etc., that he still cannot even accurately forecast the weather. Some climatologists question whether they will ever be able to make reliable long-range forecasts. Although we are often helped and protected from danger by the forecasts and are grateful for them, yet we also know how often they are wrong. How little man knows even yet of God's ways in the world of nature!

Not only is God in control of the weather, the Scripture teaches that God uses the weather to accomplish spiritual purposes. Just as he used the drought in Elijah's day to turn the hearts of the people back to Him, so He has done time and again. Hear Him speaking to disobedient Israel through the prophet Amos. "I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your palaces; yet have ye not returned to me, saith Jehovah. And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah. Amos 4:6-8.

Notice that God says repeatedly *I* did it. It did not just happen by chance. It was not just the "fickle weather" which has no meaning and no one can explain. "I was in complete control," God says, "and My purpose in it all was to get your attention and cause you to return unto Me."

God does not change. God is still trying to get our attention that we might return unto Him. But apparently it is not easy to get our attention. We don't learn very fast, or forget very soon. He has shown us again that He can bring everything to a halt in a few hours. With all our machines and technology we are helpless before the lowly snowflake. It is all rather humiliating. What could be more fragile than a snowflake? But God likes to use the things that are despised to bring to nought the things that are. He can do it still today even in the physical world which man has come to feel is his domain.

The Lord may also be teaching us some other things. We get so involved in our programs and schedules—things that just *have* to be done. I must be at this place at a certain time. But if God decides otherwise, I find that I don't have to do any of it. Is He not telling us something in this as well. "I am the Lord." "This thing is of me." "Be still and know that I am God."

We are not nearly as independent as we thought we were. We have allowed ourselves to become dependent upon highways and cars and trucks that our way of life cannot function without them. Because of this we make ourselves very vulnerable. When the current goes off our furnaces go off too and many other important services to our homes are stopped. The Lord might be giving us a small foretaste of what a long term oil embargo could do to our whole American way of life. Even our church and school programs would have to be drastically changed if we could not depend on the use of the private motor car. Christian people might do well to be flexible in their thinking and come to grips with what is essential and what is not essential. As the church nears the end of the age we may well be faced with many such problems.

As the end of the age nears we can expect even more upheavals in nature. "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things *begin* to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:25-28.

Signs in the sun and moon will have their effect upon the weather. The roaring of the sea and the billows also indicates upheaval in nature.

Even the beginning of such upheavals the Lord says is the signal for His own to look up and lift up their heads for their redemption is drawing nigh.

As the great tribulation is ushered in we find all kinds of upheavals in the natural world and changes in the weather. At the sounding of the first trumpet there follows "hail and fire, mingled with blood which burns up one third of the trees and grass. At the pouring out of the fourth bowl upon the sun, we find the sun scorching men with fire. The intensity of the rays of the sun reaching the earth is so strong that men are scorched with its great heat. This is a fearful change in the weather sent for the purpose of bringing men to repentance. In Revelation God's judgments come stepwise. God brings judgment and waits to see man's response. When men fail to respond heavier judgment comes.

If it is true that God is trying to get our attention through the weather, it behooves us to listen.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Bible Exposition -- Matthew

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Advent Questions

Matthew 24:1-14

Introduction

Nominal Christians often question the validity of prophetic study. This doubt of the validity of eschatological investigation is usually accompanied by claims that it leads to the bizarre. Odd views are carelessly set out, and embarrassment inevitably follows. For example, students of the 1930's, when it was not uncommon for otherwise sound students of the Bible to tentatively identify Benito Mussolini, the Italian leader, with the Antichrist. It seemed almost obvious to the men who made the identification. Was not Mussolini a Roman, and is not the Antichrist to be head of the revived Roman Empire? Further, was not one of the outstanding characteristics of the Antichrist the fact that he would have "a mouth speaking great things"? And there was no question that Mussolini had a big mouth!

And Mussolini was not the only candidate for the office of Antichrist in the 1930's. There was Adolf Hitler, and many were the attempts to find a convincing way to make his name equal 666, the number of the beast, even if it had to be done in some obscure language by gematria. Gematria was a cabbalistic method of interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures by interchanging words whose letters have the same numerical value when added. Well, enough of that.

Still others believers feel that eschatological study is unrewarding for a different reason. For them it is the difficulty of the subject that daunts them. Is it not true that experienced and mature Christians, even after considerable investigation of prophetic teaching, differ over the basic approach to the matter? Are not some orthodox Christians amillennialists and others premillennialists? Is there not also some revival in the present time of the discredited postmillennial viewpoint? How can we expect to reach a settled conviction over eschatology when such differences prevail? Is it not perhaps best to leave the subject alone?

The two chapters to which we now come in our study of Matthew should forever silence the notion that we ought to avoid the study of the prophetic word, or that such study leads to weird and spooky views. The disciples came to the Lord Jesus, in the light of His words regarding the future, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not

see me henceforth, TILL YE SHALL SAY, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39), and they asked Him for eschatological information. "Tell us," they said, "when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of THY COMING, AND OF THE END OF THE AGE" (cf. 24:3). The question was a question about the tribulation, about the end of the age, and about the second advent. It was a question that demanded of Him detailed prophetic teaching. It indicated that they already knew certain events that were to be expected in the future, and it also indicated that they were curious about them. They had a desire to peer into the future, and the important thing is that JESUS CHRIST CONSIDERED THE QUESTIONS THEY ASKED TO BE LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS, and He did not discourage them or chide them for asking them. In fact, that which follows their questions, the Olivet Discourse, is the longest answer that He ever gave to any of their questions! We ought, it seems, to be very interested in eschatology.

We come, then, to our Lord's great prophetic discourse, and that fact alone makes the study worthwhile. It is uniquely, "the Word of the Lord" (cf. 1 Thess. 4:15).

The doom upon the theocracy has been pronounced, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, (23:38). It was accompanied, however, by the gleam of hope. They shall not see Him, "till . . ." (23:39). There shall be a period of discipline in the history of Israel of indeterminate length, but at the end of it they shall see Him. And the two chapters that follow reveal the *how* and the *when* of Israel's reception of Him in the future. Cf. Rom. 11:23.

Introduction to the Discourse

The connection of the discourse. It might be helpful to say a few words about the general connection of this discourse with the major previous discourses of our Lord in Matthews. That connection may be set forth in this way:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Sermon on the Mount | (Precept) | The kingdom offered |
| 2. Sermon out of the house | (Parable) | The kingdom in abeyance |
| 3. Sermon on the Mount | (Prophecy) | The kingdom anticipated |

One can quickly see that the diagram is that of chapters 5-7 and the Sermon on the Mount, of chapter thirteen and the Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of chapters 24-25 and the Olivet Discourse.

The character of the discourse. Speaking from the standpoint of time of fulfillment, there are three basic approaches that have been suggested by interpreters of the sermon.

(1) First, there are those who have claimed that the Olivet Discourse has already been fulfilled. They would relate its contents to the past. Those who do this usually relate the contents to the destruction of Jerusalem and accompanying events in 70 A.D. It is very doubtful, however, that the description of the prophecy's events

can be harmonized with that past event or, for that matter, any past event (cf. vv. 14, 15, etc.). The questions of the disciples, in which they speak of the consummation of the age, argue against a reference to the past also. In addition, following the destruction of Jerusalem the disciples were scattered, not gathered, as verse thirty-one says. Finally, in verses 29-31 we have what seems a very clear reference to the second advent of the Son, and the destruction of Jerusalem cannot be that event.

(2) Second, there are others who hold that the discourse has to do with the present age and, in fact, is being fulfilled in the *present* age. It is certainly to be noted, however, that there is an absence of any mention of the term *church* in this prophecy. Further, there is specific mention of events that characterize Israel's Seventieth Week as set forth in Daniel's great prophecy (9:24-27). That period of time is future and includes the time of the Great Tribulation. The fifteenth through the twenty-second verses of this chapter refer to that future period and cannot be made to refer to the present age.

(3) Third, it is much better, then, to see the Olivet Discourse as a prophecy that relates to the *future*. It concerns the events of the tribulation period, the period of time that precedes the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom. Verses four through fifteen refer to the future and, if so, it is easily seen that the remainder of the message has to do with the future.

It has been often noted that the discourse has a strong Jewish flavor, with verses 15-22 most strongly of that character. The relation of the discourse to the Temple (cf. vv. 1, 15) and the Mount of Olives (cf. v. 3; Zech. 14:4) tend to support this. There may also be an implied reference to a Jewish remnant, a theme of the Old Testament, in the references to the disciples in the chapters (cf. 24:1, 3).

The content of the discourse. We shall follow a sevenfold division of the discourse (1-14; 15-28; 29-31; 32-51; 25:1-13; 14-30; 31-46). We reject the division of some that the first part of the discourse has to do with Jews and the Return of Christ, the second part with the church and the Return, and the final part with the Gentiles and the Return.

One final point should be mentioned. It is possible that the Lord uses the coming destruction of Jerusalem as a type of the devastation and catastrophe surrounding the Second Advent. We should not rule out completely, then, possible local references to the coming troubles of 70 A. D. It is in Mark and Luke, however, that the local reference is strong.

The Interrogation of the Disciples

The implicit question (24:1). As our Lord walked with the disciples from the temple area through the Kidron Valley towards the Mount of Olives, the disciples evidently were pondering the last words He had spoken while in the temple (cf. 23:37-39). He had

prophesied the desolation of the Temple, and they were finding it difficult to imagine in the light of the beauty of the temple complex of buildings. While on the way they sought to show him the beauty of the buildings. It was, indeed, a beautiful area, and as for the Temple the Rabbis used to say, "He that never saw the temple of Herod never saw a fine building. It was an indirect way of drawing Him out about the statements on the future of the Temple and His kingdom. Is it really true that this "house" of God will become "desolate"?"

Perhaps, too, they had remembered that the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 B. C. had been followed by a time of captivity. Thus, a question may have been raised in their minds about how the temple's destruction related to the promise of the coming kingdom and their ancient hope that the Messiah would reign over the nation.

The important answer (24:2). In the answer of our Lord there is a curious repetition of a phrase that occurred in verse thirty-six, "all these things." There the words referred to all the things of dread judgment that should come upon the nation, including judgment upon the temple. Here it seems to refer simply to the destruction of the city, that is, the "all these things" refers to the buildings of the temple area. There remains a possibility that He included in His thought all the things of dread judgment that He had prophesied would come upon them.

The explicit questions (24:3). While sitting upon the Mount of Olives the disciples approached Him privately. Mark tells us it was Peter, James John, and Andrew who came. "We can imagine how, looking across the valley," Hendriksen writes, "a truly fascinating view disclosed itself to the eyes of the little company. There was the roof of the temple bathed in a sea of golden glory. There were those beautiful terraced courts and also those cloisters of snowy marble which seemed to shine and sparkle in the light of the setting sun. And then to think that all this glory was about to perish!" One can imagine the force, then, of the questions that burst from their mouths.

The full story of the questions is found in the three Synoptic Gospels. There appear to be three questions:

First, "when, then, shall these things be?" (cf. v. 3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7). If the "these things" is to be taken broadly, then Matthew answers this question in 24:4-28. Luke alone gives the connection with the Temple's destruction (cf. Luke 21:20-24).

Second, "what is the sign when these things are about to come to be?" (cf. Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7). The question, related to the destruction of the temple, is not asked in Matthew, and no answer is given to it there (cf. Luke 21:20).

Third, "what is the sign of thy coming and the consummation of the age?" (24:3; cf. Mark 13:4). Matthew alone seems to have

this. The question is answered in verses 29-31. It should be noted that in Matthew the Greek text makes it plain that this is not two questions, but one (the one article before the words "coming" and "end" make this clear).

It seems to me, then, that the disciples' question centers upon the future advent of our Lord and the events that surround it, particularly the events that take place just preceding the coming during the period of the tribulation. If the words of verse three include a reference to the destruction of the city in 70 A. D., then that event is typical of the final catastrophes preceding the second advent. The resultant meaning is much the same.

The Exposition of the First Section

Warning: false messiahs and wars must precede the coming (24:4-6). The answer of our Lord to the disciples' questions begins with a warning that they must learn to discern the true from the false. Not everything that might seem to be a sign of the coming it really that. There shall be false messiahs, who shall come in the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I am the Messiah," and shall deceive many by their blatant lies. The long line of false pretenders includes such men as Bar Cochba (Son of the Star), who appeared in the land of Palestine in about the year 131 A.D., professing to be the "star" that was seen by Balaam long ago (cf. Num. 24:17). He raised the banner of revolt against the Romans, promising deliverance from heaven to the nation. The result was simply butchery. Jerusalem was again destroyed.

There were also the pretentions of Emmanuel Swedenborg, who claimed that the second advent of the Lord was accomplished by a man through whom the Lord was to manifest Himself and teach the doctrines of the New Church. Of course, he conceived himself to be that man!

There was Joanna Southcote who said she was the woman of Revelation 12 and predicted that on October 19, 1814 she would give birth to the Messiah. She is said to have gathered about 100,000 followers, some of whom still look for her reappearing.

In the present day there have been Father Divine and Bishop Homer Tomlinson, the latter having proclaimed himself "the King of the World"! And there will be many others. Those who persist in being misled by these deceivers reveal by their continuing deception that they are not members of the flock of God (cf. 1 John 2:19; 1 Cor. 11:19). The saints persevere in the faith.

The Lord Jesus also warned of wars and rumors of wars (cf. v. 6). It is clear from the fact that we have never been without war that it is dangerous to single out any particular war as fulfillment of the prophecy. One author, Hendriksen claims, has counted 300 wars in Europe alone during the last 300 years. While the wars have been increasing in intensity, it is plain that this prediction is a general one and provides no help for date-fixers.

The expression in verse six, "see that ye be not troubled," could only be comforting to the one who was convinced that *God* had spoken the words. It, thus, is another implicit evidence of His claim to deity.

The clause, "but the end is not yet," warns the reader to look beyond these general signs for the compelling sign of His coming.

The beginning of the pangs (24:7-8). The scene broadens in verse seven, for the warfare becomes international, almost universal, it would seem. As a natural result of the widespread warfare there are famines and pestilences. All of this is accompanied by earthquakes in many places. Again the language is very general and can hardly be used for date-setting. One author counted 700 earthquakes in the nineteenth century alone, and we in the twentieth have had our share.

It is evident here that there is a deep connection between the moral and the physical. The signs reflect the disturbing fact of man's rebellion against God. They are aspects of His attempt to get man's attention, but alas! there has been little response.

In the eighth verse the Lord adds, "All these are the beginning of sorrows." In other words, the time for the birth of the new age has not yet come (cf. 19:28), the figure of speech being that of pregnancy and birth.

Warning: persecution, false prophets, apostasy, and world-wide evangelization (24:9-14). Persecution, distrust, the rise of false prophets, and the proclamation of the gospel shall characterize the age preceding His coming. We have a good illustration of the generic "you" in verse nine. It could not refer simply to the disciples here (cf. v. 10). The statement in verse twelve of the diminishing of love seems to suggest deep backsliding and apostasy in the professing body of believers.

Finally, after commenting on the perseverance of the true believer who remains loyal to Christ amidst the terrible times and receives deliverance from them into the Lord's presence, He speaks of the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom," that is, the message that the kingdom is at hand (cf. 3:2; 4:17), the meaning that the words have in Matthew.

These last words have often been taken out of the context of the second advent and made to mean that the rapture of the church cannot come until the gospel has been preached to the whole inhabited earth (the meaning of the Greek word translated "world" here). The view rests upon the conviction that there is no pretribulation rapture. If the latter doctrine is true, then these words have reference only to the second advent. That coming cannot take place until there has been world-wide preaching. That is the evidence that the end shall soon come (cf. v. 14).

Conclusion

I began by suggesting that nominal Christians often question the validity of prophetic study. A careful reflection upon these verses of our Lord's answer to the disciples' questions will surely bring the conviction that such study is not only valid but vitalizing. The hope of the advent and the kingdom is a purifying hope, and thus morally edifying, and a satisfying hope, for it leads on to the revelation of our Lord in His glory and of God's solution for earth's woes.

I Know I Have Been Called To Preach

Michael T. Sanders

How can a man know? Is there some sign from God? Does an angel visit in a dream?

We chuckle at the farm boy who was ready to start preaching. It seems he saw the letters "G P C" in the clouds. He was thereby convinced that God was saying, "Go Preach Christ." After listening patiently, his Daddy said, "Son, that could men Go Plow Corn."

Another young man was instructed, "Wear a blue suit and carry a Bible under your arm. That is all you need to be a preacher."

Surely there is more to the decision than the formation of the clouds or this simplistic advice.

Sober thought is advised by Paul (See Romans 12:3). Sober thought on these questions will help identify any calling.

Do You Really Want To Preach? The desire will be compelling. It will be reasonable, earnest and recurring.

Do You Have The Qualifications? "What qualifications?" Are you physically able? Paul warned Timothy of "hardship." Can you take it? Are you intellectually capable? W. G. Thomas said, "A man ought to have brains for the ministry . . ." Are you morally qualified?

Do Wise Friends Approve? Ask your fellows. Don't ask your mother. Talk with elders who have known you long and well. Get opinions from the best men in the church.

Do Circumstances Indicate God's Approval? Opened or closed doors can tell us of God's will. Think on Acts 16:6, 7. Are opportunities being presented or urged upon you?

Has There Been A Measure Of Blessing On Your Work? Have your Preaching attempts been helpful to others? Recall your efforts in personal work. Have you led others closer to the Lord?

When you can answer these five questions positively, then you can be assured of your being called of God to preach the Gospel.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

David Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

January 8, 1978

The Waterfalls and Southerton congregations joined together in an evening of fellowship on New Year's eve. Our New Year's service began at 11:15 and ended after mid-night. We saw the New Year in on our knees as we sought God's guidance and blessing for this year. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship.

The congregation at Zengeza has outgrown the house in which the church meets. Bro.. Sheba is being used of The Lord to be a real blessing in that work. We are still waiting for a building site.

Terrorism has come to the outskirts of Salisbury. Our security is in God. With all the uncertainty hearts are more open to the Gospel.

Our daughter, Kim, is visiting in the States this month. Her trip was made possible by various members of our families over there.

Brethern pray for us. May God bless you all with a fruitful year in His service.

Kei Yin & Lai Shung

China

January 16, 1978

Both of us in the church were regret for the death of Mrs. Pong. But on the other hand, we know that the will and love of God is perfectly. In this recent day, we can see the grace of God is above Brother Pong's sorrow. We are also thanks to the Lord for the Church. Last year we have more than fifteen brothers and sisters baptised.

Dollie Garrett

Salisbury, Rhodesia

December 28, 1977

I have been back in Salisbury, since 12:40 a.m., Monday, 19th of Dec. Thought for a while I was going to spend the night in Johannesburg as the ticket attendant said, "the plane to Salisbury is full, but wait until ten p.m., there may be a cancellation."

I prayed that someone would cancel their reservation. They did! Thank the Lord! He has gone before me these past four months in a wonderful way working every thing out for me as I went to the different congregations, that contribute to the upkeep of the Children's Home. I was so exhausted and weary after 14 hours from N. Y. to Johannesburg, then a 4 hour wait before the plane left for Salisbury, another two hours. Robert, Joy, Sharon and Shirley were there to meet me. I was so glad to see them, as I was a bit late getting a letter off to them, forgetting how slow the mail is these days. They took me home with them, and Joy made us all a cup of

hot tea which tasted so good to me. We talked a while and finally got to bed at 2 a.m. So wonderful to be able to stretch out on a bed after 16 hours sitting on planes and a 4 hour wait at Johannesburg. It has taken me several days to relax and rest and get acclimatized to a high altitude again.

I am so thankful to the Lord for being able to attend the wedding of my eldest grand-daughter, Brenda Garrett, to Bobby Heid on August 6; David and I got back to the States the last day of July. We spent a few days with my two daughters, Verna and Anna and then on to Louisville where David's grand-parents, the Braxtons, live.

I was re-reading my diary today and remembering all the places I was able to visit the four months I was in the States. I had slides and a tape Bro. Donald had sent with me that I showed at many congregations of the Children in the Home at Arcadia, also a slide of the Church building at Mufacose that Robert had finished building and Donald Harris did the wiring. I enjoyed very much the fellowship and hospitality at each place I was able to visit. Several places I was not able to visit due to lack of time and opportunity. The fellowship week at Louisville was such a rich blessing to me, also the gracious hospitality at the Ethel Campbell home, where I stayed during that week.

Joy Garrett Salisbury, Rhodesia January 11, 1978

We are thankful to God for a good rainy season here, but it has rather hindered building operations. Also during the Christmas and New Years holidays most building supply companies close their doors for the entire period. Glen Norah restrooms have the brick work completed and the roofing timbers have been cut and painted ready to erect.

Our Watch night service at Arcadia was especially for young people. There was an excellent crowd. After our special singing, Bob's message and refreshments, the men prayed the new year in. There is a special need for prayer here. Despite the troubles of the past year, we have seen many answers to our prayers and have received many blessings from God for which we are thankful.

On Monday, January 2, a holiday, the Salisbury African Churches held an all day meeting at Harare. In the morning Bob spoke on the coming great tribulation and Bro. Patrick Machaga exhorted us to spread God's word in the coming year. In the afternoon, six Sunday Schools gave us special singing, memory verses, and competed against each other in a Bible Quiz. The teachers of the winning congregations received Bibles. It was a good way to begin a New Year.

J. C. and Joyce Shewmaker Columbia, Mo. January 30, 1978

After several very busy weeks sorting, packing and going through much red tape and paper work in connection with leaving Rhodesia, we flew from Bualwayo on December 1, landing in New York December 2 where we spent three days with our nephew Eddie Shewmaker,

and family in Westfield, New Jersey; then flew to California to visit Sam and Nancy, our son and family, who flew back to Zambia Jan. 8; also visited my sick brother, and Joyce's sister and brother whom she had not seen in thirty years. From there we folded back to Abilene to visit Stan, Jo Ann and family (our oldest son) for two days. Ott, my brother, took us to the home of my youngest brother at Hammon, Oklahoma. After a few days there, Claudia, our daughter, flew to Oklahoma City, and drove us back to the home here, in the car we had purchased as I was still a bit unsure of myself in the traffic here.

All our four children and their children were here at Jerry's and Claudia's for Christmas. They had plenty space (using sleeping bags for the children) to accomodate the nineteen of us. Three families arrived on Christmas eve, and by the following Saturday all had dispersed. You can imagine what joy it was to see all our children and their mates in their varying degrees of spiritual maturity on the path that leads from earth to heaven and leading their children along with them. It was just such a blessing we could never have deserved — a fresh shower from heaven.

Joyce had an examination here at the Medical Center on January 6, where they verified the Bulawayo doctor's findings. She had a tumor which had to be removed immediately. She went into hospital on the 17th of January and was operated on 18th. The tumor was reported not to be malignant and she got along very well and is now at our daughter's here recuperating. Once this is over and we have gotten over culture shock, we will be in better position to make decisions as to where we will live. Meanwhile, we will be at our son-in-law's and daughter's home here at Columbia, Mo.

Alvin Hobby **Livingstone, Zambia** **December 5, 1977**

Work at the church here, next door, and in the villages continues as usual. In November, we had about 10 baptisms and 5 restorations. Just now I am reading, correcting and criticizing the Tonga typescript of the book of Acts. After that will be I and II Samuel..

Georgia continues to make steady, but slow, progress. We are hoping for a favorable report after her check-up at the hospital on the 20th of this month.

Elaine Brittell **Livingstone, Zambia** **December 27, 1977**

On Lord's day 2 sisters returned to our Master to serve Him instead of the world. One has 5 children. I know their home will now be blessed as the parents "walk together" in Christ.

There will be 3 funerals this week, of relatives of the saints here. Chief Musokotwane was killed in a car accident on Friday evening. He did so much for the orphanage at Sinde and all the missionaries down through the years. One day we too will be called to our Creator. May each of us be ready to go is my prayer.

Now I am living in the hall at the church and praise God each day. Now I can get on with the typing of Exodus (final copy) for

the Chitonga Bible this week. Work is being done on most of the books. We pray God will make possible its completion so the people can buy God's word easily. Now it is hard to find a Chitonga Bible—first edition which was printed in the '60's.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

January 6, 1978

The holiday season is over and we are well into the New Year. We had a real good watch meeting beginning at 8:00 and ending about 12:30 a.m. I enjoyed it very much. The fellowship was fine. There were speeches, special singing, songs and prayers, etc. The last half hour or more was spent in prayer. Daddy Brown brought the New Year Message on the Sunday morning from 1 Pet. 1:3 to 13. with special emphasis on verse 13. It was good.

We were sorry to bid farewell to Bro. and Sr. Payne on Sunday night. They have moved to S. Africa. They were with us three and one-half years and we will miss them. We will be losing another white family soon. They have been with us about 8 years.

REPRINTS:

Of Whom Thou Hast Learned

Stanford Chambers — 1947

The writer is not one who considers it a matter of indifference "of whom thou hast learned," has little sympathy with the boast, "I accept truth from any source." A teacher who does not even love the truth may give out some truth, but we may well be wary as to the "slant" he may give such truth as he does set forth. And few are infallible in discerning between truth and error on all matters presented for consideration. But as truth is not necessarily made untruth, given expression to by a false teacher, neither is it made *untruth* by reason of some one's loudly proclaiming against it. There IS such a thing as heresy, yet to label a thing heresy does not make it so; on the other hand, a doctrine may pass as altogether orthodox in certain circles and yet NOT be the truth. The charge of "heresy" has been found quite a convenient weapon against the truth itself, and is very generally resorted to by one conscious of his argument falling short of its purpose. Christianity itself has been subjected to the keen edge of this weapon ever since Pentecost. Both the heretic and the heresy are surely to be refused. An error is not necessarily heresy, though every error is injurious in one way or another. To be forever opposing even error is not all there is of virtue. May we ever be admonished to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." "Thy word is truth."

"Pre," "Post," or "Anti"

Here are three prefixes for the term millennial derived from the word millennium meaning a thousand years. (Like our word century for hundred years. Neither the word century nor the word millennium is in our English Bible, but hundred years is, likewise thousand years. The right to use the one term is the right to use the other). So people are either "pre-millennial," "post-millennial," or "anti-millennial." (This last term has been shortened to "a-millennial.") Yes, one or the other; just as e.g., you are either an immersionist or an affusionist. By "the millennium" is meant, "the thousand years" of the twentieth chapter of Revelation.

If one is looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus before the millennium he is "pre-millennial." If he is looking for the millennium before His coming he is "post-millennial." If he denies that there BE "the millennium" he is "a-millennial." Like the term or not, you cannot avoid it. No more can you avoid the term with the suffix "ist" added—any more than you can avoid the term "immersionist" if you believe that baptism is a burial. If Jesus is coming again it will be before the millennium or after the millennium else there is no *millennium*. What is the truth on this subject to which so much space is being devoted in these days, *especially by the negative?*

A fair seeker after truth on any matter is just as willing that it be the one way as the other, as God so wills or so reveals. The writer finds no Scripture which puts the second coming of Christ AFTER the millennium. All the exhortations and admonitions, (and they are almost without number) are to watchfulness and readiness. "Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand," says James. He may come at any time. "No one knoweth the day nor the hour." All such admonitions disallow our placing the millennium BETWEEN us and His coming. So how could one be a "post-millennialist?" Finding, then, in Holy Writ, both the millennium, or "the thousand years," and the coming again of Jesus, how could one be "a-millennial?"

"Where Did You Learn It?"

I cannot recollect who first called my attention to the Revelation passage concerning "the thousand years." Perhaps no one. I began as soon as I came to Christ to read His Testament through. Before ever being called a preacher I recall making use of this passage in trying to save a "good, moral man" who was boasting that in the resurrection he would "stand up as tall as the rest." I turned to Rev. 20:5 and showed him that unless he repented he would not stand up with true children of God at all, that "the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years should be finished. Thus read my Bible at that early age. Not long after a preacher declared the millennium already here. Evidence, the peace sentiment, the settling of labor disputes and other problems by arbitration, etc.

I could not agree. Not long after came another alleging that satan was bound already. That to me was NEWS. I wished to know when. He said at Pentecost. I cited I Pet. 5:8 as stating a fact long after Pentecost. I recall these occurrences as proof that I was "pre-millennial" while yet a boy, though not having heard such a term for it, which is true of many today.

The first human writing I ever read on prophetic lines was by George Campbell. I could not find warrant for his year-for-a-day theory nor for his date setting. Time soon swept away his dates and disproved his theory, yet I never heard him called a heretic. Nor was J. L. Martin called a heretic, mistaken though it turned out he was on "The Voice of Seven Thunders." Surely he made an honest effort to understand "what the prophets have spoken," and who would deny that that was more commendable than to discourage the study of such a vast portion of God's book as His prophets occupy, telling the people that it was never meant that unfulfilled prophecy should be understood. Jesus said, commenting on Daniel, "Let him that readeth understand." (Matt. 24:15).

Moses E. Lard

I cannot recall definitely when I first read Lard (on Romans), but there seemed nothing strange to me in such a statement as e.g., "At His coming the holy dead will be raised, the righteous living will be changed, and the millennium will have set in." So had my Bible read to me. All know that *much* more to the same effect could be quoted from Lard; this is enough to show that without question he was pre-millennial. Order of events: the Lord's coming, resurrection of "those that are Christ's at His coming," His ushering in of the millennium. No one *denies* Lard was pre-millennial.

T. W. Brents

It was while in the Nashville Bible School that I first saw the writing of Dr. Brents. His statement on Rev. 20, e.g., "If it does not express a literal reign with Christ for a literal thousand years, we know not what assemblage of words would be capable of expressing that thought," seemed to me but the natural thing to say on the passage. No one could say such a thing today and not be set down as pre-millennial. Such was T. W. Brents of course.

Harding and Lipscomb

These men were not speculators. They were free and not bound. Never were they found declaring themselves in such a way as to preclude or discourage full and free investigation of any Bible question. Such was the freedom they fought for and *maintained* in their day.

Lipscomb repeatedly declared that he had not made thorough study of prophecy, yet on such matters as he had reached conviction on he unhesitatingly came out, and his comment on Acts 3:21-22,

for instance, is quite revealing: "Heaven must receive Him until 'the times of restoration of all things.' Then "the restoration of all things" must be when Jesus returns again to the earth—the restoration of all things to their original relation to God . . . When Jesus comes again, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and all things in the world be restored to harmonious relation with God, the supreme Ruler of the universe." Pre-millennial teaching. No post-millennialist or a-millennialist are ever found saying such a thing.

Harding, without reservation, taught (e.g., on the parables of the talents and the pounds) that the faithful *are to be made rulers* when Jesus returns, and about this matter he was enthusiastic. We quote him more fully further on, which see.

(To be continued)

REPRINTS:

THE VALUE OF HOPE

R. H. Boll, — 1952

"Rejoicing in hope." Inseparably connected with the gospel and the true religion of Christ is a hope, firm, and well secured, and grand beyond measure; a hope so sure and steadfast that in view of it a man can afford to wait and work in patience; so bright and glorious that its light fills the heart with a strange joy, and in foretaste of possession its reflection shines from the countenance. It was God's will so. The joy and peace of that hope reflected in the faces of His chosen ones is God's advertisement. It was His intent to make it so marked and striking that men would stop a Christian and ask him for an explanation of the radiance that illuminated his face; and he exhorts the Christian always to be ready to "give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15). And why should it not be so? If any man should some fateful evening fall heir to a million of dollars, would it be unreasonable to suppose that his friends next day could read from his expression that a piece of great good fortune had befallen him? But you have inherited more and greater things, ye children of God. And with the inheritance went a writ of assurance, signed by the Almighty God. Yours is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"—kept secure and safe; and the meanwhile you who are heirs of it "by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." No wonder, then, that the next line adds: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." Let a man take true hold of this promise and let it be settled in his heart that God meant it even so, and that it is for him, and the joy will come: a joy indomitable which all the billows of the world's tribulation cannot quench; "though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials." The man learns to "rejoice in tribulations also;" and by

working steadfastness and approvedness, his tribulation actually results in increase of hope and happiness. (Rom. 5:3-11; 1 Pet. 1:4-7).

THE CAUSE OF LUKEWARMNESS

Now for one reason or another there are many Christians who have very much more doubt and dread and anxious misgivings than they have hope. Their lives, too, bear testimony to the deficiency, for the lack of hope results in indifference and weariness, in nerveless, half-hearted work, and possibly quite a little worldliness. But although they are wont to attribute their lack of hope to their very great failure in living the Christian life, the fact is the opposite: their failure arises from the lack of hope. For the hope must come first. They either have never whole-heartedly seized upon the hope God has set before them, or have in unbelief or ignorance abandoned it. But it is not written that they who purify themselves as Christ is pure shall have that hope, but: "He that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) Hope does assuredly grow, just as naturally a man's anticipation is heightened as he pursues his way to a certain goal; but a Christian life from the first springs out of this hope, and it is a case of "to him that hath shall be given." Go back, then, and cleanse your heart and your hands, and begin again: let God, through faith in Christ's blood and intercession, make you a free present of that priceless hope again, and then hold it fast, that you may be an advertisement unto him.

MISREPRESENTATION OF GOD'S GLAD NEWS

The joyless, hopeless, gloomy Christian is a misrepresentation of the gospel (the glad news) of Jesus Christ. He utterly fails in showing forth the praises of God and of making his Lord desirable unto men. For as he "thinketh in his heart, so is he." All over his face and being the legend is written that Christianity is a trouble, a self-torture, a system of making oneself and all around him miserable. Instead of a hope, a severer demand; instead of relief, a heavier burden, an exacting obligation, anxieties, pangs of conscience, naggings of heart, reproach and bitterness! And who would fall in love with such a thing? When Jesus in his wonderful teaching on fruit bearing (John 15) reveals to his disciples the secret of the never-failing source of all the strength and power they need, the Vine, out of whom all their good fruits must be drawn, it is to these as if he had austere demanded that they of their own barren souls should bear the fruit of heaven, and had wound up by saying, not, "These things I have spoken unto you that your joy may be made full," but, "These things I have spoken to you to make you utterly miserable." They seem to say that Christ's gracious invitation to sinners reads thus: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you toil. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: and ye shall find weariness to your souls. For my yoke is galling and my burden is sore." Is it not so in your case? But if it be, delay not to learn and follow a better gospel. Trust in the Lord and

take courage. "O taste and see that Jehovah is good: blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him." Begin by taking refuge in him, by trusting in his salvation. And the same faith by which as a sinner you at first fled to him for refuge will enable you always to obtain mercy, stand in God's grace, rest in his power, and find joy and peace in the hope God has given unto us.

HOPE VERSUS DELUSION

"Speaking of hope," said a brother, "I knew a man who was leading an ungodly life, and not in the least concerned to do better; but, nevertheless, always maintaining that he would 'go to heaven when he died.' Do you hink there was any virtue in that kind of hope?" That was not hope at all: it was merely delusion. And there is a world of that. Not so much of it, perhaps, in the blunt form described above as in various, more plausible, guises. It is Satan's chief object to lead men away from the true hope and give them the false, unfounded one, a hope that putteth to shame. Universalism holds out its lying mirage to the dying souls of men. The "New Thought" and similar cults feed the starving hearts with hollow self-deceived optimism, inducing them to believe that "thoughts are things," and that thinking a thing makes it so, and that to shut one's eyes to evil and ignore the fearful possibilities and expect nothing but good here and beyond is the true way of life. There be many prophets nowadays that heal the hurt of human souls slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, and who strengthen the hands of the wicked with their lying dreams. But the hope of the Christian is not simply a make-believe, a creation of man's fancy. It is a reality. It is secured by God's word and God's oath, "that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." (Heb. 6:18.) It rests upon fact, and that whether a man accepts it or not. It is not indiscriminately for any and every man. It is based on righteousness (apart from which there can be no hope)—a righteousness which is freely given to us by God through our faith in Jesus Christ. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1, 2.) This, then, is its foundation: First, faith in Christ; then justification (or righteousness) through his blood; thus comes peace with God, and access into God's grace; and then rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. This is, therefore, no flimsy spider web of imagination, but a reality resting on a rock sure and tried, and fit to abide the test of eternity. And finally the true hope is unmistakable in its manifestation. Although it is for the lowest sinner who puts his trust in Jesus, it will not suffer him to live on in sin, but will begin to work a great change. It makes for self-denial and purity of life, it exerts a constant pull; it draws him to God. "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) By these marks we may know

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NEWS AND NOTES

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

BRO. CLAUDE NEAL DIES



Bro. Claude Neal, who was associated with Portland Christian School as teacher and principal for thirty-six years, died Feb. 2 at age 89 at Suburban Hospital.

Bro. Neal came to P.C.S. from New Orleans, La., in 1925, the second year of the existence of the school. He taught, with the exception of one year when he was working on a degree, until 1930, at which time he became principal of the school. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 1963.

Bro. Neal also served as minister for 18 years at the Shawnee Church of Christ and 18 years at the Eastview Church of Christ.

A memorial service was held in his honor in the school chapel on Monday, Feb. 6. He was described by those who had known him as a "gentle" and "caring" person. A passage from Acts 11:23 was used to sum up his long life of service. "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."

His wife, Florence Gruver Neal, his daughter, Jane Sprangler, and three grandchildren survive him. Jane graduated from P. C. S. in 1946.

REPORT OF NIGERIAN TRIP

Many churches of Christ opened their doors and their hearts to us, and we found the preachers and the people hungry for God's Word. On several evenings I spoke twice (at different locations), and on some evenings, additional engagements were filled by brethren Lawyer and Gill. (It was wonderful to have these brethren accompany me . . . so very, very helpful in many, many ways!) I spoke twice on the campus of the University of Ibadan to hundreds of students and some faculty members. (We were asked to return . . . and also to speak to students at other Ilesha, but didn't have the time.) The universities, one at Ife and one at "Words of Life" broadcast had prepared the way for many other invitations to speak to other church groups . . . and the preachers and members were ready to hear God's Word fully proclaimed! The minister of one large church, who had corresponded with me a number of times, informed us that he was now baptizing his converts, and that the congregation no longer used instrumental music; and, he indicated that he intended to teach his people that they ought to have the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. (Bro. Lawyer and I each spoke one night to this congregation of several hundred people.) We visited several churches of Christ in Ibadan, and also congregations at Ife, Oshogbo and Ilesa. We met some lovely people, and found them open to the whole counsel of God, and we taught them as much as we could, in such a short time, God's prophetic word. Our hearts are overflowing with praise unto God for giving us such a fruitful ministry!

THE SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES began the Second Semester Monday, January 23. Courses being offered are Poinenics, taught by Gordon Linscott; New Testament—H. E. Schreiner; Survey of Prophecy by Earl Mullins, and Minister's Role by Michael T. Sanders. Actually, the first class-

es—Poimenics and New Testament met on Tuesday, January 24. The other two classes met on Thursday, January 26.

Youth Want To Serve

Gallatin, Tn.: Our young people, under Bro. Dave's direction, are anxious to be used of the Lord in the coming year. It is great to count them among those who will help handle the work ahead of us. One thing they plan to do is visit shut-ins on Wednesday nights. They will take time to visit, sing, pray and read together in the home.

FROM HERE AND THERE

"The trouble with some people is that they won't admit their faults. I don't know why not. I'd certainly admit mine — if I had any!"

I think it would be beneficial if you would set aside a place in W & W for names and telephone numbers of students at Southeastern Christian and others who want to fill a pulpit when ministers are absent.

This would give experience to these young men and let churches know where they can be reached.

sincerely

Barbara Hardin

Could you tell us if there is a "premillennial" Church of Christ in Oklohomia City and also if there is a

Christian elementary school our children could attend. We would appreciate any information you could give us. We enjoy the "Word and Work" very much. We await His return!

—Robert & Pam Scott

Enclosed is check in the amount of five dollars. Please extend subscription for this splendid religious periodical, which we look forward to receiving and reading. Thank you so much.

W. McDade Bennett

I am subscribing for another year, even though I don't expect to read it all. don't read all I get. My eyes are not good for much—any more—and my wife, one year younger than I, can't read to me. We ordered a big print Bible. I use magnifying glass much. I read the Bible regularly and write somewhat. When "Bobbie" Heid and Brenda and his grandmother passed through here and were at worship with us months ago, I found that he was a Christian and asked him to lead the singing. He kindly did. (I wasn't acquainted). Wish he and B. could stay with us 'til Jesus comes.

Luke S. Elston

Maple Manor Homes needs house parents to begin next month. The state has renewed the general license again. Robert Istre, from Louisiana, is to begin as superintendent in August.