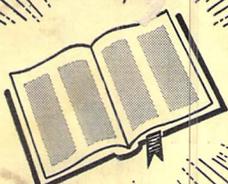
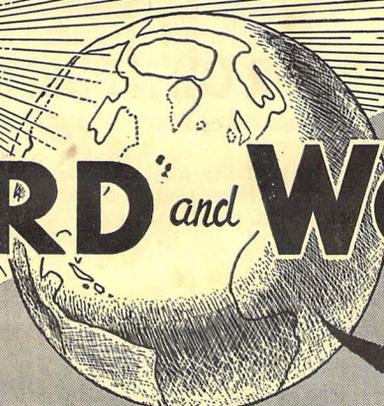


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WHO IS MY BROTHER?

p. 194

Are You Sharing the Good News?

p. 203

"...My Spirit upon all flesh"—Youth Too!

p. 207

Prayer — Thank You Lord

p. 208

Is Christianity Stale for You?

p. 212

Hallelujah for Genuine Fellowship!

p. 213

Select "Religious Books" with Care

p. 216

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p. 217

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The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December for \$4 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address \$3.50, by the Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40212

Vol. LXXV

JULY, 1981

No. 7

In This Issue

God's Family — Whom May We Call On For Prayer? — W.R.H.	194
Viewing the New — Jack Blaes	196
Questions Asked of Us — Carl Kitzmiller	198
Thoughts From Romans — "Jesus Paid it All" — E.E. Lyon	200
Your Church—A Chummy Club or A Rescue Mission?	202
"You Can Win Men" — Paul E. Little	203
Youth — Mark Miller	207
Studies On Prayer — Jesse Z. Wood	208
"Free Indeed" — Dr. J. Miller Forcade	209
Gleanings — Larry Miles	210
What Is Wrong With Christianity — H.H. Adamson	212
Let's Take Off Our Masks — Maryanna Johnson	213
Spend Wisely For Religious Books — J. Richard Lewis	216
Reprints: Fossilization — R. H. Boll	217
Romans: The Mercies of God and Living Sacrifices — S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.	218
NEWS & NOTES	224

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God's Family

W. R. H.

WHOM MAY WE CALL ON FOR PRAYER?

Occasionally there is a discussion on the subject of fellowship, and it can remind one of what Will Rogers said about the Congress of the United States. He said, "Congress is a session that begins with a prayer and ends with an investigation." How often do our meetings on fellowship begin with some prayers and end with some castigations? Some of us ministers have taken on a burden too grievous to be borne, when we set ourselves to examine, judge, and approve for "general consumption by the congregation" the every utterance in the public assembly. Yes, there may be things said or done that will need public correction, but the time to correct them is when they occur. Why waste time trying to anticipate every wrong comment that may be made, and then try to plug up every hole in the fence to keep it all from happening?

Fellowship discussions usually get around to the question "Who is my brother in Christ?" and then follows more argument than agreement. Then, "Who can hold our protracted meetings?" "Who can lead the public prayers?" "Whom can we use at the Lord's table, or to lead the singing?" Let me ask one more question, which may clear the air a bit. For what purpose do we have our weekly meetings? Is it to have a clinic of doctrinal orthodoxy, or a time of praise and prayer and communion with our risen Lord? You may say, "It ought to be both!" Amen! But in many places, cold orthodoxy has numbed the feeling of so many that fellowship (in the biblical sense of *koinonia*; sharing, partnership) is all but impossible for them.

Who Can Pray? God will have the final word on that question. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you, and when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." "The Pharisee prayed thus with himself . . ." "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss; that ye may spend it upon your pleasures." If I know that a visitor (or a member) in the congregation stand condemned before these and similar scriptures, then I may well refrain from calling upon him to embarrass himself and the congregation by public praying.

I wish I could hear again a pastoral prayer that I heard from the lips of Dr. Francis Schaeffer in a Sunday morning worship service in Rochester, Minnesota last year. But like so many other prayers, it was not recorded down here below, so it is only available in the library of God.

In my simplicity, in the past, I have called on a person to dismiss—he declined—who was not a Christian at all, as he told me later. What judgment do you suppose is stored for me because of this error? I surely cannot qualify to judge the servant of Another. “Before his own Lord, he standeth or falleth. Yea, and he shall be made to stand, for the Lord hath power to make him stand.”

Who, at the Lord's Table? We have considerable less scripture to go on here, as to ruling anyone out. Surely only believers would want to serve. All who commune including the servers should do so in a worthy manner. All should discern the Lord's body (in meditation, with childlike faith, we should see, in our mind's eye, Him, being lifted up on the cross, and His blood being poured out). “This do, in remembrance of me” Jesus said. What other criteria would you like to add? Always the same song? Always the same scripture from I Cor. 11? Always someone makes a “talk?”

Years back we took the Lord's supper to a nursing home at New Haven, Kentucky. To my surprise, nearly everyone accepted the communion and partook. I didn't have time to check out their “pedigrees.” When our summer meeting came along, twelve of them were baptized into Christ! What brought the response? But credit where credit is due—these had been in a State home in Frankfort, Kentucky before being moved to New Haven. And someone had bothered to have “Sunday School” for them week after week for a long, long time. Others had labored, and we entered into their labor.

“Who should hold our Meetings?” Generally speaking, if we intend to propagate our persuasion, we should use our own preachers and teachers to do so. (If our “persuasion” is not worth propagating, we ought to seek God's reviving.) But I would be glad to have a gifted, Spirit-filled man speak to us, even if he differed on some points of theology. If he spoke error, the elders should take note of it and make proper correction. If he exhibited a deeper spirituality than we are experiencing, we should profit thereby. We want all of our neighbors to accept us on such a basis, but somehow we are reluctant to accept them.

In the great, universal body of Christ, past and present, all of the members severally are knit together. We see and accept this in our local congregations, but our peripheral vision is out of focus, so that broader fellowship is to a great extent unstudied and untried.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.” (I John 4:7)

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

GOOD NEWS OUT OF WASHINGTON. The National Zoo in Washington reports on Tomoka, star gorilla, that he was a bag of bones and so badly crippled by arthritis that officials were about to put him to sleep to end his agony only twelve years ago. Tomoka today bounds about like a teenager, is a healthy 300 pounds, and a "very specimen of a gorilla." The suffering gorilla was treated with tetracycline and anti-inflammatory drugs which wrought the amazing results in his health. The researchers say that tests of these treatments may have developed the potential for preventing and curing the dreadful disease. It is estimated that 31 million Americans suffer from all forms of arthritis and that there are 900,000 new cases a year.

E.R.A. SAUDI ARABIAN STYLE. Emancipation of women has reached Saudi Arabia where the men are increasingly concerned that women with widening interests are no longer dutiful. One husband recently wrote to a newspaper in Riyadh to complain that his "educated wife insists on discussing everything instead of doing what she is told." Another husband expressed shock because his "educated wife quit teaching at his request but insists on having household servants." He feels that it was better before education because "now wives argue, and don't take care of the house."

IT MAY HAVE BEEN WORSE FOR THE SHEIK had his wife attended an American school. Under a new program in New York City's public schools that denies promotion to pupils deficient in reading, 24,745 students, or one of every five seventh graders, are being

held back. Until now most pupils have been permitted to continue to the next grade, even though their performance was not satisfactory.

THE VERN MYERS FINANCE AND ENERGY LETTER of April 25 says the industrial revolution, supported by abundant cheap energy, is ended. Our society is entering a period of change, and the biggest thing we have at stake now is not our money but our freedom. The whole world is now entering recession.

PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAN WAY is the name of a recently organized group formed to attack what they call "the religious-oriented New Right." It has targeted ministers Jerry Falwell, James Robison, and Richard Zone as surrogates for the estimated 35 million religious American conservatives who are now speaking out on political and public issues. Serving on the Advisory board of the organization are: Norman Lear, president of the National Council of Churches, Lane Kirkland, President A.F.L.-C.I.O., Ruth Carter Stapleton, and whiskey magnate Edgar Bronfman.

PRESIDENT REAGAN CALLS HER "OUR HEROINE." None other, of course, than Jeane Kirkpatrick, America's Ambassador to the United Nations. Recently both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* published slurs on "our heroine" which backfired. This particular bit of bad-mouthing was first spread in the U.N. pressroom by a journalist aligned with the Communist-backed Palestine Liberation Organization who is in daily contact with a hostile foreign government. Two days later, key U.S. newspapers published identical

stories but attributed them to unnamed aides to Secretary of State Haig. Both Haig and President Reagan immediately exposed them as fabrication.

The principled and courageous Ambassador Kirkpatrick regularly exasperates the international Left. Invited to the recent meeting of the infamous Bilderberger group, she blasted Bilderberger efforts to move America's foreign policy to the Left. Just one reason she is quickly becoming the "heroine" of most Americans today.

* * * * *
CARTOONIST WRIGHT IN THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL BULLETIN draws three persons speaking in unison saying: "This Israeli bombing of Iraq's nuclear facility is outrageous! irresponsible! irrational!"—and the third person, representing World Opinion, is saying apparently to himself, "And a relief!" And I say Wright is right on target. In an election rally at Haifa, Prime Minister Begin calls Hussein a "blood-thirsty tyrant" and says that "we won't allow any enemy of Israel to develop weapons of mass destruction that can be used to obliterate the Jewish state. Weapons of mass destruction designed for use against Israel will be destroyed wherever they are before they become a threat." And it is still up to a sovereign nation to decide when an enemy state becomes a serious threat. The Israeli's used eight F-16s (built by General Dynamics) and six F-15s to fly cover for them. (The F-15s are built by McDonald Douglas.) While flying over Arab territory, the pilots spoke Arabic and convinced ground radar stations that they were Jordanians on a training flight. Each of the eight attacking F-16s carried two 2,000-pound "General Purpose" bombs. Many of these had been fitted to allow them to penetrate the thick walls of the container building before exploding against the reactor itself. The reactor was destroyed, and the container building was badly damaged and knocked off its foundation. It probably cannot be salvaged.

* * * * *
A COMPARISON MAY BE IN ORDER BETWEEN THIS ISRAELI mission and the American attempt to rescue our hostages held illegally in Iran a year ago last April. The Israelis, flying American-built aircraft, had no mechanical failures to mar their mission. The

Americans had almost unbelievable failure to three out of eight of the helicopters taken on their mission. Not a single Israeli was even slightly injured, while eight American servicemen lost their lives without even being seen by the enemy. The Americans left behind on the desert, without a single enemy in sight, what we should suppose to be some very valuable military equipment for a gift to the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Israelis left behind a job not quite complete, but they dropped the last 2,000-pound bomb that did not explode. It was not intended to explode. That bomb was so equipped and designed that the Iraqis would be forced to detonate it themselves to clear the ground for work crews. Thus the Israelis forced the Iraqis to finish the job for them. It seems to me that we could use a bit of Israeli know-how as to how to defend and protect our country.

* * * * *
NEWSWEEK SHOWS ALARM ABOUT THE "PREACHER-POLITICIANS" of the Moral Majority. It says that during the November Political campaign the MM transformed the terms "liberal" and "liberalism" into synonyms for godlessness and immorality. Now the editorial writers note that the MM has "shifted its terminology and tactics to confront a new bogeyman. The target is what Christian fundamentalists label 'humanism'—and their campaign against anyone they regard as humanist threatens to become as virulent as the anti-communist crusaders of the 1950s." The Moral Majority is by no means the only Americans who oppose the Humanist movement. In exposing Humanism in the *New York Times*, Rabbi Samuel Turk writes as follows: "The (Humanist) manifesto is a clarion call and an hysterical attack against those who believe in a supreme Being and in the moral values promulgated in the Bible. It declares immoral the imposition of a religious creed upon young people before they are able to consent. Accordingly, millions of parents who seek to inculcate their children with religious values and transmit their faith to them are engaging in immoral activity. The full acceptance of the doctrine could lead to religious persecution such as is practiced in atheistic Russia, where

religious people suffer untold hardships for attempting to rear their children in the tenets of their faith." And, like Mr. Wright the cartoonist, Rabbi

Turk is "right on target." Humanist have declared war to the end on any who "trust and obey" the God of the Bible. And they are playing for keeps.

Carl Kitzmiller is minister of the Oakdale, Louisiana Church of Christ and writes the Sunday school lessons for Word and Work Lesson Quarterly.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

How do we know that the last week of Daniel's Seventy-week prophecy is yet future?

The reference is to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24ff.

The surmise of the average English reader of this passage is probably that it speaks of seventy weeks of days. This illustrates how we tend to bring our own culture and concepts to the word of God and read them into it. Our usage of week is virtually limited to a period of seven days. All the prophecy declares, however, is that seventy "sevens" are decreed upon Daniel's people. It could be seventy seven of days, months, years, or any other time period. In reality we discover it is years, not days or some other period, because of the events which mark the beginning and the close of the sixty-nine of those weeks. Beginning with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem sixty-nine weeks run their course, and after the sixty-ninth week the Messiah is cut off (vs. 25, 26). Without trying here to work out the technicalities of which command is in view or of calendar changes, we know that it was approximately 483 years (69×7) from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah to the crucifixion of Christ. Hence, the fulfilled portion of the prophecy enables us to determine what time period is being spoken of. Since the sixty-nine weeks are weeks of years, then the seventieth is also a week of years, or seven years.

While all of the prophecy was future to Daniel's day, sixty-nine of those seventy weeks have now long since had their fulfillment. They cover the period from the Babylonian captivity (or specifically, from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem) through the inter-testament period and down to the death of Christ. In passing we might point out that this portion of the prophecy is a most accurate identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. Our interest now especially focuses on the last, or seventieth, week, however. The natural assumption would be that the seventieth week follows the sixty-nine consecutively. Yet, when we try to fit it into such a time frame we run into several difficulties. One difficulty is that seven years from Christ's crucifixion does not bring any distinct event of

such significance as v. 24 requires. The completion of the seventy weeks is to "finish transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place." Just a casual glance tells us that these things will not be completely accomplished until the second coming of Christ. Moreover, no such leader came on the scene at Christ's crucifixion as is presented in v. 27, making a covenant with Daniel's people for seven years and breaking that covenant after three and a half years. In short, there is nothing identifiable immediately after Christ's death which answers to the seventieth week of the prophecy.

Another difficulty to a consecutive seventieth week is found in the words of Jesus Himself. In Matthew 24, where the general theme is the second coming of Christ (see v. 3), Jesus speaks of the abomination of desolation (v. 15). He specifically refers to the prophecy in Daniel. According to Daniel, the ruler who dominates the seventieth week will set up the abomination of desolation. Yet Jesus associated that event with His second coming. Jesus warned those living when the abomination of desolation is set up to flee because it will mark the beginning of the great tribulation (v. 21), an event that just immediately precedes the Lord's coming in glory (v. 29). Thus, Jesus did not indicate that the events of Daniel's seventieth week would follow immediately after His crucifixion but placed them at His second coming. This is a compelling reason for believing that this seven year period is yet future.

Again, when we study the beast of Rev. 13 there is a remarkable comparison between him and the ruler who makes and breaks the covenant with Israel. Most notable is the fact that he has authority to continue forty-two months (or three and a half years).

We do not learn from Daniel that there is a great break (some have called it a parenthesis) between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. Such may be implied in that the Messiah is cut off "after" the sixty-ninth week and yet that event is not placed in the seventieth week, but there is in Daniel no clear declaration of an intervening time. It is not at all unusual for events of the first and second comings of Christ to be merged in O.T. prophecy, so this is not something unique to this one passage. It is when we add the truths of N.T. prophecy that we discover the great interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. In all matters it is the sum of God's word that is truth, and in no matter is that fact more relevant than in the study of prophecy. New Testament truths are the key to opening the prophecies of Daniel (cf. Dan. 12:9 and Rev. 22:10).

Many students of prophecy think they understand why this age of grace—the church age—intervenes between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. Certainly it was not a matter of chance or accident. The church, though unrevealed in O. T. times, was in God's eternal purpose. You will note, however, that it was Daniel's people and "thy" holy city which were the subjects of the prophecy. This prophecy is concerned with Israel! And with the rejection of Christ, Israel was sidetracked nationally. It is only when He has completed His work

with the Gentiles that He again begins to deal with Israel as a nation (Rom. 9-11; etc.). The clock will begin to run again for them at that time. Just as in a football game the "time out" periods do not advance the clock, so Israel is in a "time out" period. There is much in prophecy to show that they will again be specially dealt with by God, and since that is future the events of the seventieth week are future.

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Jesus Paid it All"

Romans 3:21-28 is often called "The heart of the gospel" or "The heart of the message of the Bible." I agree with that and would like to add that verses 24 and 25 are "The heart of the heart," for in them the Holy Spirit guided the Apostle Paul to summarize the wonderful news of the gospel of Christ. For a short while together let us look at this wonderful good news and then apply it to ourselves as it is given in verse 24. Let us start with the verse as given in the American Standard Version of 1901 and we will end with a personalized version that we will get out of our study. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24, ASV).

Now that our hearts may be thrilled by this wonderful verse, let us look at the several words here that are not generally understood. Paul starts with "being justified"; do you really know what that means? Actually it is what many like to call a "court word," for it is one word in the Greek and it describes a pronouncement, not a condition. To understand what I mean, imagine yourself in court before a judge; after both sides have been presented the judge looks at all the evidence and gives his pronouncement—"Not guilty." Now it may be that you were guilty of the charge, but when the judge gives that decision you now are looked upon as not guilty, innocent in the eyes of the court. The word here translated "being justified" is like that. It pictures us standing before the supreme Judge of the universe, God, Who looks at all the evidence against and for us and declares us righteous, for a simplified translation of the word is simply "to declare righteous." In the rest of these two verses the apostle is going to tell us how God could look at sinners like you and me and declare us righteous, but here, for those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is

enough to know that God has declared us righteous and we stand before Him as ones who are righteous. To make a personal application of this statement here, just say, if you have placed your trust in Christ, "I have been declared righteous."

The next word in our verse is "freely," a word that at first seems to need no further explanation, but I want us to understand just how free our salvation is. Rather than burden you with many passages in which the Greek word is used, let us confine ourselves to looking at a translation of it in John 15:25, where Jesus said of His enemies, "They hated me without a cause." "Without a cause" is a translation of our Greek word here in Romans 3:24. Jesus gave His enemies no just reason for hating Him. Oh, yes, they had lots of reasons by way of the sin in their own hearts, but there was nothing in Him that was worthy of hatred. So Paul is here telling us that our being declared righteous is without a cause on our parts. The cause has to be found in the nature of God Himself, the God Who is love and Who desired to have a way of bringing us back to Himself. But, to take our personalized translation one step further: "I have been declared righteous without a cause on my part."

Now Paul adds three other words in the ASV that should further thrill our hearts—"by His grace." "Grace" is a word we can not possibly do justice to in this short discussion, but the finest way of explaining what it means I have heard was the answer given in a Bible Class by a young student: "Grace is the unmeritable favor of God." Grace is not only God's favor that we have not earned, it is favor that we cannot earn. It is the means by which God found, as our passage will later say, how He could save the undeserving sinner and still Himself be the Righteous One, the Judge Who always does what is right. Our personalized translation now becomes: "I have been declared righteous without a cause on my part by the unmeritable favor of God."

The rest of this sentence can easily be understood together: "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That requires, of course, an explanation of what "redemption" means. There are three different Greek words used for the idea of redemption and all three of them had their origin in the slave trade of that day. By one of these, one is said to redeem a slave by simply buying him at the slave market, paying the price of taking him out from under his former master. But that leaves the slave in the market ready for resale, so there was another word meaning to buy and then take out of the slave market. But that one left the possibility of returning the slave to the market and putting him up for sale at a later date, so the word we have in Romans 3:24 was also used. It simply means to pay the price for the slave and then set him free. To the one who has set me free from being a slave of sin and He did that by paying the tremendous price for me and now I am free forever. My personalized translation now becomes: "I have been declared righteous without a cause on my part by the unmeritable favor of God through the buying back from the guilt and power of sin that is in Christ Jesus." Can you say that and mean it? Can you know that it is true? You can if you know the Lord Jesus Christ, having trusted Him to have taken your sins upon the cross of Calvary, dying for you that you might not have to experience eternal death.

But, if you can't say that honestly, you are still a slave of sin, a citizen of the kingdoms of darkness, on your way to an eternity of suffering. Come to Christ and be saved.

Your Church — A Chummy Center or A Rescue Mission?

On a dangerous sea coast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little life-saving station grew.

Some of the new members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the life-station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely, because they used it as sort of a club. Fewer of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life-boat crews to do this work. The life-saving motif still prevailed in the club decoration, however, and there was a liturgical life-boat in the room where club initiations were held. About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had black skin and some had yellow skin. The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a showerhouse built outside the club where the victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon life-saving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another life-saving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.—Selected

"YOU CAN WIN MEN"

Paul E. Little

EVANGELISM is one of the keys to spiritual health. I like to call it the fizz of the pepsi cola in the Christian life. If you are involved in evangelism, the Christian life sparkles and has verve. If you are not involved in evangelism, you find very often that the Christian life is stale and vapid and tasteless. When a Church congregation is not involved with people on the frontiers, they turn in on themselves and start to "pick fleas" out of each others hair. But when people are turned to the world around them, there is a whole new atmosphere.

PRAYER, for instance, is transformed when we are locked in the spiritual struggle for the souls of men. Have you ever come away from a prayer meeting feeling worse than when you went because it was so depressing and dead? You could predict who was going to say what when and in what tone of voice and the exact vocabulary with the certainty of a railroad timetable. You knew it because you had heard it so many times before. Such a group has lost the vision for evangelism.

On the other hand, if you have been in a prayer meeting where people are involved in attempting to win people for the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find a meeting where there is vibrance and almost an electric atmosphere in the air.

BIBLE STUDY is transformed, too. Are you having a problem with Bible study being academic? Become involved in evangelism and your whole study of the Word of God will take on new color.

FAITH becomes revolutionized as we become involved in evangelism. To see a person transformed by the Holy Spirit in front of our eyes does more to lift our faith index and make us convinced supernaturalists than fifty lectures on the subject. In fact, it is amazing how those who are involved on the frontier seeing people changed by the power of the gospel do not have all these problems about the church's relevancy today. They are seeing God at work.

Evangelism then is one of the keys to spiritual health. There are a number of figures of speech in the New Testament that describe us in our role as evangelists and as witnesses. One is in Mark 1:17. Simon and Andrew were walking by the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord came along and said to them, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." That little word "become", by the way, is a great encouragement to me, because it indicates the possibility of becoming something that I may not be at the moment.

One of the first lessons we learn from this figure of speech, "fishers of men," is the painfully obvious lesson in retrospect that in order to catch fish we must go where fish are. We are rather amused by simple Simon, who sets up a barrel, drops in his little line and is very saddened because he doesn't catch any fish. And we think, "How stupid can you be? Fish don't come and jump in barrels: you have

to go where the fish are.” But what do we do in evangelism? We set up barrels and we invite the fish to come jump in, and we are very sad when they bypass us by the droves. As Harold Wildish said one time, “The Holy Spirit cannot save saints or seats. There have to be some non-Christians.”

Sometimes in our communication of the gospel we are speaking to ourselves and nobody else. The gospel has not lost its power because there is no response; it is simply that there are few or none there to respond to the invitation of the Spirit. There is a place for evangelistic meetings to which we invite people, of course, but basically the method of evangelism that the Lord taught was to go where people are.

Now this has several implications. One is that we must realize that separation from the world is not the same thing as isolation from the world. I believe that in our times many well meaning and devoted people have become victims of what can only, in terms of its effects, be a heresy, and that is that the index of spirituality is the extent to which you can have absolutely nothing to do with non-Christian people.

This was a problem in our Lord's time. The Pharisees said of Jesus, “Why does this man eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” Our Lord replied, “Don't you understand, those that are well do not need a doctor but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:27-32). In His great high priestly prayer Jesus said, “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15). So this is not a new problem, but it is a devastating problem unless we see through it.

If you want to prevent the spread of measles, what would you do with a person who had measles? You'd put him in an isolation ward in a hospital with everybody else who had measles. If you were the enemy of men's souls and wanted to keep the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ from spreading, what device would you use? Wouldn't you try to persuade Christians that the essence of spirituality would be to have nothing to do with those who are around them and to spend all their time with each other? You would have won the battle without firing a shot. We must go where fish are if we are to catch fish.

There is a second implication. Sometimes the non-Christian in all good faith and generosity says, “Come with us to do such and such,” or “Here, have such and such.” And we respond almost instinctively, “No thanks, I don't do such and such. I am a Christian.” Bang, you can hear the iron curtain clang down. Some think to themselves, “My, I had a tremendous opportunity to witness.” But in my opinion we have done two very serious things. One, we have condemned the person out of the hand as a pagan in a way that he really doesn't understand. Secondly, we have garbled the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ because we have suggested that inherent in being a Christian is not doing whatever it happened to be at the moment he asked us to do. There are thousands of non-Christians who do not do any of these things. Yet that does not make them Christians. The point is, we have not really gotten to them on the crucial issue. We haven't

communicated the gospel until we get to the basic issue. The tragedy is, very often we are treating symptoms rather than the basic disease. The non-Christian's basic problem is that he does not know the Saviour. Until we get him to know the Saviour it is useless to try to reform these other things. And if we insist that he conform to our behavior pattern before we talk to him, we are going to have a very small audience.

With non-Christians we must look for that which we can honestly commend, and if we are alert, we can find it. And when a person invites us to do something, you might say, "No thanks, but let me know when you are going to do such and such." Immediately make an alternative suggestion so that you do not seem to reject him or his friendship. We do not need to be apologetic about it. If you invite a non-Christian to play chess and he is not interested in chess, he does not hem and haw around about it and say, "Well, no thanks, I don't play chess. I am a non-Christian." He just says, "No thanks, chess leaves me cold, but when you are going to play Ping-Pong, let me know."

Another profound lesson that comes to us from this figure of speech, "fishers of men", is that in order to catch fish we must throw out the net. Basically, it is a matter of introducing in a conversation, in a natural way, some spiritual aspect or line of thought to see how the person responds. Some of us go into a "clerical clutch" when we get to the gospel. We tighten up and we can see people backing away, because as we clutch, they clutch. If we relax, they relax. We must ask God for wisdom to talk as naturally about the Lord Jesus Christ as we do about other things.

There is one series of questions that I have found particularly useful, though there is no "formula" of course. These questions are only springboards that may help you get to the crucial subject.

The first question can be asked after there is a reference in the conversation to anything even vaguely religious (this happens all the time if people read the newspapers; there is some religious allusion in the press almost every day). Say to a person very casually and in the same tone of voice that you talk about the weather or sports or your children, "By the way, are you interested in spiritual things?"

Now that is a very simple planned question and it draws just one of two answers. One is "Yes." The other is "No." If the person says "Yes," two questions can follow, and knowing what you are going to say next can eliminate ninety percent of your nervousness. A lot of us may know how to make the first break, but then we don't know what to do next, and when the person responds we fumble. An hour later we think of the perfect retort, but by that time it is too late. The second question is, "What do you think a real Christian is?"

The average person will define a real Christian as one who reads the Bible, or prays, or goes to church, or gives money, etc., etc. Then you say, "Well, you know, that is what a real Christian does, but that is not what a real Christian is." Then go on to describe to him that a real Christian is one who is personally related to the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and explain a little bit of what this means.

If you discover there is real interest, the third question is, "Would you like to become a real Christian now?"

You will be amazed at the number of people who are just waiting to be asked. They are in a sort of spiritual fog. They would give anything to have certainty of forgiveness of sin and eternal life, but nobody has ever told them how. Many students have said to me, "This is the first time anybody has ever told me how."

Now suppose the person is not interested. Drop it! You do not have to force the gospel on people who are not interested. You cannot do the Holy Spirit's work for him.

We also have an opening when people share their problems and frustrations with us. We can say, if it has been true of us, "You know, Mary or John, I know exactly how you feel. That used to be a problem for me until I had an experience that completely changed my life. Would you like me to tell you about it?" And they will answer, "Yes."

There is a third lesson to be learned from this figure of speech, "fishers of men." There has to be a drawing of the net. The reason some of us have not introduced a person to the Saviour is we have never popped the question. Maybe we have gotten to know people. Maybe we have built a bridge of friendship. But we have never come to the point of saying, "Are you or aren't you?"

The first is, "Well, have you ever personally trusted Christ? Or are you still on the way?" To say, "Have you ever personally trusted Christ?" defines it sufficiently that the person who does not know what you mean will usually say, "What do you mean by that?" This is the opening you are looking for and you explain what you mean.

But more often people will say to me, "That is exactly how you describe me. I am still on the way." Then I say to them, "That is interesting. How far along the way are you?" Without the slightest embarrassment they will tell me exactly where they are in their thinking. They may not even believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived. They may believe He was merely a great philosopher and teacher. Or it may be they know the gospel better than you and I do and their problem is not lack of information but simply not responding to the information they have. In either case, we can know exactly where they are in their thinking and adapt ourselves to meet the particular need.

The third question is, "Would you like to become a real Christian now and be sure?"

What is the next step in faith and obedience for you in the area of evangelism? Is it to pop the question to somebody whom you already know?

Is it to throw out the net with some people you have gotten to know casually? Or is it perhaps to begin to build a friendship with someone of your circle of acquaintances?

Whatever it is, I hope that what the Lord says to you today you will do with a heart that is responsive and obedient, in love for Christ and for others.

YOUTH

Mark Miller

Our topic for discussion at Portland last Wednesday was focused toward the youth in our churches. There seemed to be some specific questions which everyone was concerned about. For example, "What are the older Christians doing wrong in relation with the youth," and "Why have the youth in our churches seemed to dwindle to a very small number?" One question that everyone was particularly concerned with was, "What can be done about it?" This subject could turn out to be very touchy. We could easily divide into sides and start throwing complaints and grievances toward one another. However, that is not how Christ would have us to look at any subject! At this time, let us put down any "one-sided" views that we have and let's look at our youth in our churches in a Spirit of love.

There is a passage of scripture that I feel is important when looking at our situation today. It is a passage that for years has puzzled me as to its meaning. "Your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2:28). For the longest time I thought that visions had priority over dreams. That left me with the attitude that young men were being led by the Spirit more than older men. On the other hand, I never could find anything in the scripture to verify my theory that visions were more important than dreams. I nevertheless gave up my theory and went back to the drawing board as to what this passage means.

I could see plainly that God used dreams many times in displaying His divine will. Nebuchadnezzar is a perfect example of how God uses dreams (Dan. 2:1 & 28). I could also see that God uses visions too (Rev. 4:1 & Eze. 11:24). So finally, I came to the conclusion as to what Joel was trying to say. God is going to use "all flesh". He is not going to play games when it comes time to have His will done! He is going to use old men and He is going to use young men. However, He will use the old men differently than He will use young men, just as dreams are different than visions.

Needless to say, there are some people who go around with whistles hanging around their necks and they blow these whistles almost every time the Spirit starts to move in our youth! There have been many programs where the Spirit has been grieved because of blown whistles. After reading Eph. 4:30, I somehow feel that we ought not grieve the Holy Spirit. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

So what should the older Christians do in regard to the youth in our churches? The question is not simple, neither is the answer. But let us try and search for an answer. First of all, older Christians should support the youth in any way that they can. The youth need to know that there are Christians behind them that will be there when needed. The wiles of the devil do not go only to older Christians, they go just as hard to younger Christians as well.

Secondly, whistles should be hung in the closet! If a young person or group of young people do something that is in question, go to them and ask them about it. More problems can be ironed out by facing them head-on, than by blowing whistles and stirring up the water when the ones involved are not even present! Let us admonish one another in love.

Finally, the Word of God should be taught in its fullest. What older Christians find easy in the Word, may seem to be difficult to someone younger. It is not the teacher who helps the youth, nor is it the preacher. It is the Spirit of God working through the Word of God that produces faith, love, joy, peace, and understanding! When the Word of God is not taught, the youth are not the only ones who suffer. So let us remember that God is wanting to use all flesh, young and old. God will use both young and old to do His will so let us not stand in one another's way. Read Numbers the 22nd chapter and see how God used a mule to do His will, then ask what you can do!



STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

Mothers make a special note in their "Baby Book" when "Baby spoke his or her "first word"; and special note is made when the child first puts two or more words together. Others may not recognize what "Baby" has said, but Mother understands, and Mother is thrilled when Baby says "Tank-oo, Mommy" (She knows it means "Thank you, Mommy"—and it thrills her no end!) And, later, Dad, too, when the boy or girl he loves so dearly, says, "Thanks, Dad".

Second only to the words, "I love you", are the words, "Thank you." Few other words or expressions mean so much as these two. They are sweet to hear, and they are sweet to repeat—from the heart.

Our Lord Jesus thanked His Father that He had hidden the great Truths from the "(worldly) wise" but revealed those truths to His Own dear ones. (Matt. 11:25)

In Biblical language, "Praise" is synonymous with "Thanks" when directed toward our Lord. The great chorus in Psalm 107, verses 8, 15, 21, and 31 says, "Oh that men would praise Jehovah for His lovingkindness, And for his wonderful works to the children of men". The Psalmist David Thanked (or Praised) God more than any other of the inspired writers of the Word. David, having committed a great sin of adultery and murder, cried out, "I have sinned". When he said this, God's prophet said to him, "God has 'Put-away' thy sin". (2 Samuel 12) Now see David's great Psalm 51, where he cries out in deep grief and repentance toward God! Then, ever afterwards,

in his writings (inspired of God for you and me) David continued to "Praise" or "Thank" his Lord that God had put his sin "behind His back"—as Isaiah would say it (see Isa. 38:17c)

Prayers without "Praise" are only "half-prayers". Our Lord is listening for words of appreciation for what He has "already" done for us, or given to us! We cannot repeat too often the story of Luke 17:11-19. Ten men were healed of a dreaded disease. Upon seeing that fearful leprosy instantly disappear, as they ran to obey the ordinance of the Law regarding leprosy, they "never looked back"—they just kept on running. But one man, turned back to say "Thank you" to the Great One who had healed him! The Lord's "feelings were hurt", as we would put it, because of the inappreciation of the "nine" who "forgot" to say "Thank you, Lord". The Psalmist David, never forgot! Nor should you or I.

When we stand before our Lord Jesus, to receive our awards for service, we won't "Claim the fifth Amendment" to save us from our sins, but we will "claim the Blood of Christ" for our cleansing, for we are "brands from the Burning". We've been plucked out of the fire "Guilty", but found "Guiltless" by Him who has cleansed us, washing us in His precious blood! Should we not even now, abound in Thanksgiving and Praise to Him who has "gone through the fire" in our stead—on the Cross? (Read Zach. 3:1-5, and Rev. 7:13-17.) "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving." (Psa. 95:2)

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"FREE INDEED"

JESUS SAID, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31, 32)

The Jews boasted to Jesus of their freedom. Citizens of the United States can boast of their political freedom. Also we have much greater religious freedom than most of us are aware of or appreciate. But these alone do not make us free people. JESUS SAID, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. If therefore the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:34-36)

No sensible man wants to be a slave to sin. No one is proud of losing his temper or not holding his tongue while angry. Alcoholics are usually ashamed of their drunkenness. Criminals often kill their best friends, because they are slave to drink or drugs, and spend the rest of their lives regretting their tragic deeds.

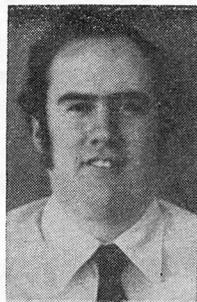
By His death and resurrection Jesus loosed a power that can free any one from his bondage of sin. No one needs to continue in the cruel bondage of sin. Because "If therefore the son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:36). "Wherefore also he (Jesus) is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 10:25). If you desire to be free from your bondage (sin) Jesus is ready and willing to help you now. Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may be too late.

—Dr. J. Miller Forcade

Larry Miles, a member of the Portland Avenue congregation, is working in Cincinnati and has taken classes at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.

GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles



COMING PEACE

Roll on ye engines of the war
The day is close at hand,
When God's great earth you'll cease to mar,
And men shall understand.
When men shall understand 'tis God
That only peace can give,
When lands where warriors once have trod,
Shall glow with men who live.
For truly man shall live in peace,
With nations satisfied;
A time when wars at last shall cease,
(For which we long have sighed).
No more our son's shall march away,
No more the cannons roar,
The knowledge of the Lord that day
Shall reach from shore to shore.
For Christ alone shall reign supreme,
And peace to all shall bring.
This wondrous earth He shall redeem,
And all men then shall sing.
The swords to plowshares we shall beat,
And pruning-hooks from spears,
The reaper shall the sower meet
A full one thousand years.
So tune your lips to sing His praise,
And set your hopes above.
Do not entangle with earth's maze,
But rest in His dear love.

—J. L. Addams

FAITH

Faith takes Thy promise Lord,
Thy every word believes;

Goes to the throne on wings of prayer,
 Eternal life receives.
 Faith says, "Thy will be done,"
 Tho' by the chastening rod,
 Dear friends and health be gone,
 Faith leans alone on God.

—SELECTED

LAW AND GRACE

Two boys were in an orchard one day eating apples. One boy noticed a tree with especially nice apples and said, "Let's eat some of those apples." The other replied, "No, Daddy told me not to bother them, because he was saving them for a special purpose." "Aw, he won't miss just a few." But in spite of all his pleadings the other would not be moved. Finally the one persuading said, "Your Dad's so good he wouldn't do anything if he did catch you; mine would beat my hide off." The other replied, "That's just why I wouldn't want to do it, because he was so good to me."

—R. H. Boll

HOW TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

S—eriously (Acts 17:11; II Tim. 2:15)
 E—arrestly (Josh. 1:9; Ps. 119:11)
 A—nxiously (John 20:31; Ps. 119:9)
 R—egularly (Acts 17:11; Ps. 1:2)
 C—arefully (Luke 24:27; II Tim. 3:16, 17)
 H—umbly (Luke 24:45; James 1:22)

—The P. H. Advocate

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew is first in telling the gospel news;
 Mark follows next with the same sacred story;
 Then Luke, beloved physican of the Jews;
 And John, detained the last on earth from glory.
 Luke wrote another book to teach and guide us—
 The Acts of the Apostles, this we call;
 He tells us how they labored, preached and suffered,
 And that our Lord from heaven called Paul.
 Paul called by grace became a great preacher;
 A letter writer too by power divine:
 Fourteen Epistles left by this great teacher
 Bright with each truth of our salvation shine.
 Letters to the Gentile churches first instruct us:
 Romans the righteousness of God declares;
 Corinthians First says how in Christ Paul glorified;
 Corinthians Second strength our weakness bears.

Galatians bids Christ's liberty hold firm;
Ephesians shows predestining love;
Phillipians church beloved, the apostles crown;
Colossians sets our Lord all power above.
Thessalonians First declares the heathen turned
From idols false to wait our Lord from heaven;
Thessalonians Second that, when the world is burned,
Jesus shall be "admired" by all forgiven.
In Timothy First Paul thanks for grace abundant;
In Timothy Second he says his race is run;
Titus he urges to be sharp with sinners;
Philemon to rejoice a slave's a son.
The Epistle to the Hebrews was written, showing
The true High Priest is Christ the Lord of all;
And the blood of bulls and goats, in old time flowing,
Were types of Him who ransoms from the fall.
First, Second, and Third of John, joyful and loving;
Jude bids us warmly for the faith contend;
Revelation made to John by Jesus, proving
Christ knows and orders all things to the end.

—SELECTED

It is my hope that these illustrations have been and will continue to be a blessing to all those who read this column. So, until next time we bid you farewell in the Name of Jesus Christ who is our Blessed Hope and our only Hope.

MARANATHA.

What Is Wrong With Christianity?

Christianity is just what it has always been. There is not, there never has been, and there will never be anything wrong with Christianity. The world as such has always been the enemy of the church. Christianity has not changed; the world has not changed; hence, we must look elsewhere for the trouble. Here it is: The friends of true religion and many, many members of the church have grown sinfully indifferent to their obligations to Christ and to His appeals for a godly life. Solid indifference in the homes of church members which breeds a low standard of morals has just about chilled the church to death. Prodigal fathers, gossiping mothers, beer bottles and wine flasks in the home have hatched and are brooding a generation void of parental respect and untaught in the sacredness of divine things.

Christianity had its birth on a cross, and that signifies sacrifice, reverence, and consecration. Wholeheartedness is such a big word that many do not care to use it nor even contemplate its meaning in relation to the Christian life.

But is there no way out? Yes, there is a way out. We need a new generation of Christians that will read the Bible on their knees and know that gospel obedience means much more than simply being

baptized, and the the Christian life means much more than taking the communion on Sunday morning, then leaving the house of worship and waving the long good bye till next Sunday morning. The church needs servants, not masters; it needs example, not dictation; it needs followers, not leaders; it need piety, not popery.

A view of the old rugged cross and a dying Savior, with His spirit and teaching embodied in our lives, is the only thing that will convert the world and exalt the church to its rightful place before God and men. He who does most to preach the full gospel and live the devoted life of a Christian will do most to bring about that blessed result.

Christianity is all right, give it a trial.

—H. H. Adamson, in *Word and Work*, 1941

Let's Take Off Our Masks

Maryanna Johnson

There is a sense of strain and frustration among many active church members, an underlying unrest.

Gradually it seems to be dawning on hard-working Christians that activity is not necessarily a sign of progress. And that their real goal is not to run the busiest beehive possible, but to bring healing to a sick world and wholeness to a broken community. But why isn't more of this kind of thing happening?

I am convinced that the difficulty lies in a sickness, a sickness which has reached epidemic proportions within our churches—even our best evangelical churches.

The problem, I believe, is that our congregations are composed of people who are not whole themselves. No matter how active they are, an assortment of estranged individuals cannot bring healing to others. Though we are with other people the majority of our waking hours, most of us are going it alone. This aloneness is what constitutes our sickness.

An elevator full of people is not a group, it is a collection. And this is the fate of too many of our services, classes and committee meetings: we collect around a given purpose for a given amount of time, and when we disperse again, we are virtually unchanged.

In our collected condition we may have accomplished some task or been exposed to some truth, but somehow, too much of the activity took place outside of us, leaving us untouched at our depths. And because Christianity is a matter of being related to Christ and to one another in the depths of our being we didn't achieve what we needed to.

When I open my New Testament, I am startled by the contrast; here I find evidence of a depth and intensity of sharing which issues in a new dimension which shows through everything that is done, whether it is praying, corresponding, making decisions or meeting difficulties. When these early Christians got together, things began happening to them and to those around them. When we Christians today get to-

gether, why is it that so little seems to happen, either to us or to those around us?

For one thing, we don't realize that this kind of closeness is what we are hungering for; we know something is missing but we don't know what. And, for another, we are not prepared to pay the price involved in relating to God and others in this way.

Most of us live our Christian lives alone. We sit at the feet of one preacher or teacher and receive large doses of spiritual nourishment designed to meet the needs of the entire group; the rest we try to get in small doses at home. The missing element is something in between the large, general dose and the small, individual dose. We might call it "community"—the informal sharing of loving Christians who build up one another in the faith.

This may take place in various ways, but it is unlikely to take place in either of the previous contexts: seated beside other people in a meeting, or meditating alone in one's room. It can even fail to occur in a small group, if the group is operating according to sub-Christian motivations.

A group of housewives had been meeting regularly for Bible study. However, certain factors in the situation had reduced it to a less-than-Christian group. There was an invisible dividing line between the "spiritual" and the "unspiritual" members—or was it invisible? (The former met early to pray for the latter!) Some of the women knew their Bibles well and made this fact very obvious; this intimidated and even drove away others who had little or no Bible knowledge. There was a strong emphasis on correct terminology and a standardized "Christian experience". And there was little freedom to disagree with the leader or the dominant element.

Then came the day when the woman chosen to lead the group was experiencing so much personal turmoil that she felt she could not lead the study. How could she teach about maturity and stability as described in Ephesians 4, when she herself was immature and unstable? In her distress she turned to her pastor, but he advised her to be honest with the other women about her condition. "Tell them you're 'all shook up'" he urged. The woman was horrified at the prospect of "losing face" in this way; after all, she was one of the "spiritual" members of the group!

However, after she had led the Bible study, she found herself confessing to the other women that she had not been living up to the marvelous truths which she had been talking about. Her embarrassment was only exceeded by her surprise when the woman at the left began unburdening herself also, sharing her failures and needs with the group. The next woman did the same, and the next, as freedom to drop their masks became contagious and spread from person to person. An interesting feature of this spontaneous sharing was that while they would begin by acknowledging their own struggles, they would often end up by pointing out another member of the group who was strong in the area where they were weak. And so by the time this kind of sharing had come full circle, each one had been built up by the loving appreciation of someone else in the group.

What had happened to breakdown the walls between these Christians? To change mere congeniality into genuine fellowship, intellectual discussion into personal sharing, talking about the Christian life into experiencing it together? In this particular group, the vicious circle was broken when one person became honest about herself.

More of us should be breaking out of our aloneness into this kind of experience with each other, but we won't until we realize that the prerequisite is honesty about ourselves, and that this first step will cost us something. After all, we have put a lot of effort into keeping up a "spiritual front", and tearing off our mask involves pain and humiliation. In fact, we may have worn our mask so long that we have fooled even ourselves into thinking this mask is our real face!

The rewards are great, however. For one thing, putting on a front is a great deal of work, and being genuine can often turn out to be a profound relief. Counterfeit Christian fellowship is exchanged for the real thing.

A young Christian fed on this kind of spiritual nourishment will grow with astonishing speed; an older Christian will become refreshed and vibrant; and a congregation which encourages the formation of intimate groups will find new vitality permeating the old forms into which its life had settled.

To many people, the pastor is either an idol to worship or a convenience to use in time of need and then ignored the rest of the time. Some of these same people have a way of complaining that their pastor is not warm and human, but it is difficult to be warm and human when one is treated like a function instead of a person.

We must learn to become partners with our pastors; to realize that the ministry is not the pastor's but the church's, and the responsibility of each member; to realize that the pastor, as a member of the Body of Christ, needs the same kind of tender loving care that he is expected to dispense so freely, and that if he were receiving more, he would have more to give. Instead of enumerating the ways in which our pastor fails us, we should ask ourselves, "Where am I failing my pastor?"

Some pastors are under severe financial or emotional strain; all of them respond to evidences of interest and confidence. One pastor came to a service all aglow because a member had given him a magazine article which had been of great interest to him; this had "made" his day. And there are even people who call the pastor or come to his office, not to ask for help, but to share a new experience or insight which might give him a lift.

Because of his "pedestal posture," a pastor is not free to express his needs; it is up to the congregation to size up his situation with imagination and concern, and then do something about what they see. When "pastoral care" begins to include the pastor as well as the people, his whole ministry—and theirs—will take on new life. Even a pastor (most of all, a pastor) cannot go it alone.

Christian leaders are often tempted to fake a maturity which they do not possess, so that their followers will not be disappointed. The

result is that sometimes the most needy persons are those in the most responsible positions. Their admirers project on them a perfection which no human could possess, and then proceed to leave them alone; perfect people obviously do not need the help of mere mortals!

A pastor of my acquaintance has found it effective to have a "pool" of Christian people of various backgrounds on whom he can call for assistance. If he is in contact with an unbeliever who has recently lost a mate, he likes to put that person in contact with a believer who has recently had this experience. If he is dealing with an alcoholic, he is on the look-out for a Christian who has fought this battle. The best way to convince an unbeliever that Christ can meet his need is to expose him to a Christian who has found his Lord a very present help in the same trouble.

Christ did not leave us here on earth to work out our salvation and service as individuals; nor can we do it en masse. It is true that He worked both with individuals and with crowds, but most of His time was spent with a team of 12; these He taught and trained, and then sent out to teach the world.

This same strategy is essential in our day. We cannot walk alone; when we try it, we shrivel up spiritually and our step falters. We cannot work alone; when we try it, we become overburdened and frustrated, and our service suffers.

There is a legend about a man who went down to hell to look the place over and saw everyone starving and wretched and dirty and after watching them for a while he discovered the trouble was that all the people in hell had stiff arms and couldn't feed themselves or take care of themselves. The sight depressed him and he was delighted when he was then given a chance to look at heaven. In heaven everyone was sleek and healthy and laughing and happy. It looked just the way heaven should. But as he watched them he observed a curious thing: The people in heaven had arms just as stiff and unbendable as the people down in hell. But the difference was that the people in heaven were feeding each other.—*Christian Platform*

Spend Wisely For Religious Books

J. Richard Lewis

The growth in recent years of opportunistic religious writers is alarming. With all the comments about T.V. and all kinds of live entertainment, one would think no one is reading. It is quickly evident that much reading is taking place when one is in a bookstore, secular or religious. The number of new books is amazing and also alarming.

Christian people need to be reading and with time being such a precious commodity no one wants to waste time reading books of poor quality. There are unbelievable amounts of money being made in the book markets, and materialistic temptation is certainly not on the decline. Capitalistic religious writers are becoming a blot on

the religious publication industry. It is also a shame that we as Christian people are so easily "taken in" by these opportunists and waste the Lord's money and time on such books.

Many of the biblical writers read widely. Paul, for example, quotes a Greek poet (Acts 17:28), a prophet of Crete (Titus 1:12), and wanted books brought to him while in jail (II Tim. 4:13). So God's people today need to be reading widely.

Bible reading must be of first importance to the child of God. Regular, habitual, reading of the Bible needs to be a part of every disciple's life. Besides this regular reading, the Christian needs to be in deeper study in some part of God's word. Only after Bible reading and study is other religious and secular reading to occur.

The following are some suggestions to assist one in avoiding the charlatan religious writers.

1. Watch carefully the area of popular religious themes; e.g. the occult, the end-times, counseling and other sensational topics. A rule of thumb is: buy the most reputable writer and the earliest published book in the current craze. The later ones, as a rule, have little to add and are generally of poorer quality.

2. Closely scrutinize the books by popular religious people before buying them. The temptation is particularly strong for them to compromise their principles. They have acquired some notoriety and by publishing almost anything with their name on it gets it sold whether there is any content or not. Sadly to say when books follow sudden popularity the content is usually found to be in great need.

3. Beware of books published by a prominent religious personality who is in need of money for some big project. If one wished to support their cause, that is one thing; but, if one is looking for true spiritual content—forget it. Such books are fund raising projects. These first three are felonies. Two misdemeanors follow:

4. Watch carefully when some well-known name is displayed prominently on the cover. Often they are not the writer at all, but only recommend it or write the introduction or maybe only one chapter.

5. At times a book is published with one title in hard-cover and then another title in paperback. Oh, there is a note to that effect somewhere in small print. I am still upset over wasting time & money on just such a trick.

Every true disciple of Christ will be a student of *the* book and will also make every attempt to spend money and time wisely on other religious writings.

REPRINTS:

FOSSILIZATION

R. H. Boll — 1932

A fossil is a thing that was once alive, or was formed from once-living substance, which after death became *petrified*, that is, was

turned to stone. A fossil is lifeless. It cannot move or grow or change its condition. It is hardened and senseless—a mere form without life or power!

Now there are human fossils also—men who have really ceased to live, though still existing, whose minds and hearts no longer function, who no longer grow, or go on, or can take in further truth. They have learned what they have learned, once; then the door was closed, and now their thought moves only in the circling track of mechanical repetition of the same bit of truth, long since become lifeless in them, or in the same rut of error, never questioned. The old prophet said of them, "He cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:22.) In the shape and impress their mind took long ago, they solidified, and such as they are they are and evermore shall be.

It is a mistake to call such men orthodox, or safe and sound. Orthodox means "right-thinking," but these do not think at all, except in the worn habit-channel of long accustomed cerebration. "Safe" they may be—they certainly never have disturbing ideas; but after all, they are not *sound*, for true soundness comes only in going on in Christ and the exploring of Him.

It is worth the while and the pains to keep alive and grow (for all living things grow) in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is good for us to go back to the Word often (to *all* the Word), with minds swept clean of all we think we know, and to learn again and anew at the feet of Jesus like unto little children. But be sure it is *to Him* that you go, and that you do not drink at any and every fountain. False progress is as fatal as petrification (2 John 9). But *in Him* are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and grounded in your faith as ye were taught abounding in thanksgiving."

ROMANS:

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

The Mercies of God and Living Sacrifices

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Roy Harrisville begins his comments on Romans Twelve, verses one and two by saying, "Now to what is vulgarly and erroneously called the 'practical' portion of the Romans letter." Of course, he's right. The preceding chapters in the epistle, in which the great doctrines of soteriology and eschatology have been expounded, are all very practical chapters. What can be more practical than right thoughts about God? All of life is affected by them. In fact, all life that please God can only issue from right theology, right thoughts about our Triune God.

It is true, however, that with the twelfth chapter of Romans we come to the chapters that have an ethical stress. The theme of the righteousness of God is still in view (cf. 1:16-17), but here salvation develops in life. The righteousness of God is seen in all the spheres of human activity, in the civil life, in the difficult decisions concerning doubtful things, and in the church relationships that the believers have.

So, we move from stress on principles to stress on practices, from doctrines to duty, from divine revelation to human responsibility, and from the *credenda* to the *agenda*, or from the things to be believed to the things to be done. But all are practical. The two sides of the truth, the doctrinal and the ethical, belong together, and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

It is important to notice that the passage is written to believers, and that the truth now inculcated by Paul is for them. The apostle begins with, "I beseech you therefore, BRETHREN..." We are saved by faith, not by dedication, and the latter is the emphasis of Paul at this point. Those who say, "The Golden Rule is all the religion I need," do not understand Christianity. They mean by that, it does not matter how I neglect God and His Word, so long as I do unto others as I would have others do to me. God, however, says the first commandment is to love Him. If men fail there, what hope can there be of loving their neighbor? Those who disregard the claims of God will just as easily, if not more so, disregard the claims of men. One can be sure of that. We can never love our neighbors, if we do not first love God as He is set forth in Scripture. The first table of the Law must come first in experience as well as in history.

The passage before us is an important one on the will of God, which we may think of in two ways. There is, first, the predetermined will of God, which theologians call the decretive will of God. It is that will of God by which He purposes or decrees whatever shall come to pass (cf. Eph. 1:11). His moral, or preceptive, will is the rule of life which God has laid down for His moral creatures, indicating the duties which He demands of them. The former is different for each person, and it is only learned after the events of life. The latter is the same for every person. It is not always fulfilled, as the former is. Many times "Thy will be done" is not done! Cf. Matt. 6:10.

Paul has a technique for finding the will of God in the latter sense, and in the two verses that open chapter twelve of Romans he expounds his idea. We turn to it now in our study of the epistle.

THE GREAT REQUEST

The motivation for dedication (Rom. 12:1a). The "therefore" which opens the chapter is the fourth important one in the letter (cf. 2:1; 5:1; 8:1). The apostle is introducing inferential truth from the preceding chapters. And what he will do is press the entire Old Testament rite of sacrifice into symbolic service to New Testament Christianity.

The "mercies of God" are the motivation for a dedication of our bodies to the service of the Lord. The mercies of God are so compelling and majestic that it would be impossible to expound them satisfactorily. From divine election through divine effectual grace on to the fullness of justification, sanctification, and glorification range the divine mercies. They are the product of eternal love and are conditioned by nothing but divine grace. In other words, they are free and unconditional. That we should be dragged from the miry clay and set upon the solid rock, with new songs of salvation ringing from our hearts, is enough to incite any true child of God to loving devoted service. Motivation comes from mercies, not merits of ours.

Thus, the first step in knowing God's will and in dedicating ourselves to the Lord is the knowledge of a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Seneca, the noble moralist, wrote,

"Move upwards, casting out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

He knew nothing of the motivation of mercy shown sinners by a gracious God.

What comfort one draws from grace. "I am reminded of a pretty little church that was recently built and consecrated in the Bernese Oberland," Luthi writes. "Inside it you can see one single Bible text: on the front of the pulpit is written: 'Be doers of the word' (Jas. 1:22). I can picture the members of that mountain community weary from their six days toil, visiting their House of God on Sunday only to find that even here they are exhorted to work! The words, 'Be doers,' must be the last straw for them. The Apostle goes about things more mercifully, for God is merciful: throughout eleven long chapters of his Letter to the Romans Paul has tirelessly preached what God has done for us, and not until the twelfth chapter do we hear the words: 'I appeal to you.' But even now that he has changed over the giving the Christians in Rome directions for their behaviour, he still addresses them as 'Brethren,' reminds them of 'the mercies of God' and and refers to 'the grace given to me' (3)."

It is in this spirit, the spirit of Watts, that he writes:

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

The content of the request (Rom. 12:1b). Here is the second step in the discovery of the will of God, the presentation of our bodies. The language is sacrificial language, although the word "present" is not used in the Greek Old Testament of any offering. It is used primarily of the service of the priests in the Old Testament, and the reason for its choice may lie in the fact that this offering of our bodies is not a bloody offering.

The tense of the verb is one that refers to the act of dedication as a definite act. What is meant by "body"? Probably in this context it means something like "our being in relation to the world."

The act, being a definite one, is like the "I do" of marriage, or of induction into the service. It is an "I do" with continuing responsibilities, to say the least. One should note, too, that the word is *present*. It is not *yield*, although the verb is sometimes translated that way. That is a passive idea, and it suggests a resistance not found in the word. Further, it is not surrender, which also has the idea of reluctance associated with it. Many years ago I heard the founder and the first president of Grace Theological Seminary give a message on the text. He spoke of the glad giving of the verb, illustrating it in this way, "Let us suppose that on my next wedding anniversary, if by some unusual good fortune I should remember the date!—my highest ambition is to be Mrs. McClain's second husband!—I should buy some jewelry for her. If in giving it to her I should say, 'I'm yielding this to you,' or 'I'm surrendering this to you,' she might not think that I was very happy about the gift. The apostle speaks of the free and happy presentation of his body to the Lord for His use for time and for eternity."

When one reflects upon the human body, it is amazing that He wants it! But He desires to use our bodies for the glorification of the Son of God and for the gathering in of all His elect.

And how reasonable it is to give him the key to all the doors within the house of our bodies! The door to the library, the door to the kitchen, or the dining room, the door to the recreation room, all of the doors' keys are to be His. It is unreasonable to give the key of the soul to God, and that of the body to the devil.

The description of the sacrifice (Rom. 12:1b). Paul by the words "living sacrifice" implicitly draws our minds to the slain sacrifices of the Old Testament ritual, who involuntarily went to their deaths. He would have us voluntarily give ourselves to Him.

Is it not a marvel of grace that those described in chapter three, verses nine through twenty, should be a gift pleasing to Him?

The apostle adds that this is "your reasonable service." The word rendered in the AV, "reasonable," is probably better translated by the adjective *spiritual* (cf. RSV; NASB). The internal worship of the mind and heart is that to which he refers, contrasting that with the outward rites of the Levitical cultus of the Old Covenant. Cf. John 4:23-24.

THE PROCESS OF REALIZATION

The outward side (Rom. 12:2a). The continuing process is the third step in the finding of the will of God. Our situation is as we have already boarded the ship for the faraway land of the blest, but our ship is still moored to the mainland. And the mainland is still attractive to us. We would like to get off again, for the mainland of our former home is a temptation to us. We would like to live and act like every other person and not be "different," as the saints are. As someone has put it, "The man who wants to avoid being a stranger in this world at all costs is not fit for the Kingdom of God." James is right in saying,

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4).

We are only temporarily moored to the mainland, and our real home is the New Jerusalem. Let us be conformed to that wonderful, heavenly place.

The word’s, “be not conformed,” represent a Greek verb that has to do with the outward side of things. Its root is the Greek noun for *fashion*. As Godet has said, do not take as the model of your life the fleeting, superficial fashions of the age, its fashions in religion, its fashions in philosophy, and its fashions in morals. They are all relative and transitory. Only the truth of God is true and eternal; humanism is doomed to extinction. We are not to be spiritual time-servers, but faithful to the truth we profess to believe, making the Word of God our axiom by which we live in the midst of a wicked generation.

Characteristic of our day is the self-centeredness of culture. What is important is my happiness, and that *my* needs be met. People even leave church for another, “because my needs are not being met.” Ray Stedman has said, “What is the spirit of this age? It is to seek my personal happiness. If the advancement of self is the basis for all life, then the goal of all life is my happiness. You hear that one on every side. Unfortunately it has infiltrated the church as well. Christians talk this way just as much as anyone else. They say, ‘The reason I am working and living is to have my needs met, my desires fulfilled.’ I hear people talking about church this way: ‘I’m thinking of leaving this church and going to another one.’ If you ask them why they’ll reply, “Because this one doesn’t meet my needs,” as though the only reason for ever going to church is to have your needs met! That is the thinking of the world, the spirit of the age.”

The inward side (Rom. 12:2a). The fourth step in the discovery of the will of God lies in transformation of the inner life of the believer. Nonconformity to the outward fashion of the age is not enough. The apostle would have us be conformed to Jesus Christ, what he says is sure to eventually happen. He would, however, like for this to begin now. Cf. 8:29.

The word translated, “be ye transformed,” is a word that refers to the inward substance of things. The root is found in Philippians 2:6, where the apostle speaks of Christ being “in the form of God.” It is clear, as many students have pointed out, that the phrase, “in the form of God,” means that Jesus Christ possesses the essential attributes of deity. Thus, here in Romans 12:2 the word “transformed,” built upon the same root as the one in Philippians 2:6, refers to an inner change that is more than a superficial one. It touches the very substance of our being. For the same root see such passages as 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Philippians 3:21.

If one asks, “How can I constantly be in the process of being transformed?” the answer is found in the text. It is by the renewing

of our minds. And if still another question is asked, "What is the renewing of our minds and how is it accomplished?" the answer is before us. The renewing of our minds is the manner of transformation, and since the mind of Christ is found in the Word of God, it seems plain that the renewing of the mind is to be found in the contemplation of the Scriptures. Something must happen in our spiritual thinking, if we are to see life and see it in the light of God, or as God sees it. That comes only through the Bible.

THE GREAT RESULT

The apostle concludes the section by writing, "that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Cf. 12:2c. This is the result of the taking of the steps mentioned previously, the initial belief in Christ, the presentation of the body to the Lord God, the non-conformity to the fashions of the age, and the transformation of the inner being by the renewal of our minds through the Word of God. In the taking of these steps one discerns, "proves," the will of God. The word rendered by "prove" means to "learn by experience," according to Weymouth. We often wish He would drop down from heaven a map for us. This He does with His preceptive will, found in the Bible, but His particular will for us can only be found by trial, by the experience of life.

Just as the weaver's pattern is only seen as he progresses in his work, so we discover the will of God for us as life continues. As far as the accomplishment of His purposes for us is concerned, that will be found in the submissive response to the will of God as it is found in His Word. Prayer and action in the light of what we have already had revealed to us leads on to the proving of His good, and acceptable, and perfect will for us. May the Lord enable us to realize it.

Ray Stedman asks at the conclusion of one of his studies, "Now, what are you going to do with your life? Are you going to wrap it up in a napkin of affluence and bury it in forty years of self-indulgence? That would be the dullest experience you could have." For an exciting and significant life present your bodies to God as a living, voluntary sacrifice.

There is a story about a memorable sermon preached by James M. Gray on the text we've been looking at. As he finished he leaned over the pulpit and said in an impressive way, "Have you noticed that this verse does not tell us to whom we shall give our bodies? It is not the Lord Jesus who asks for his. He has His own body. It is not the Father, for He remains on His throne. Another has come to earth without a body. God could have made a body for Him as He did for Jesus, but He did not do so. God gives us the indescribable privilege of presenting our bodies to be His dwelling place and to be used by Him. Cleansed by the blood of Christ, they are acceptable to be used as He sees fit (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

NEWS AND NOTES

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

I enjoy the Word and Work, and find a lot of inspiration in the contents thereof.

Thank you very much indeed for sending it on.

Yours in Christian love,
(Mrs.) J. R. Stewart-Brown

* * * *

I do enjoy the Word & Work.

Thanks,
Clarence G. Norman

Enjoy reading all the news from everyone.

Thanks,
Emma Lowe

CENTRAL LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

GLENMORA, LOUISIANA

NOV. 16 - 19, 1981

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Rooted and Grounded in Him; Established in Your Faith—Antoine Valdetero

Tuesday

Rooted and Grounded in Love—T. Y. Clark

Series: What God Has Done (Pentecost to 1800)—Richard Ramsey

Rooted in the Bible—J. M. Forcade

The Relation Between Roots and Fruit

Rooted in God's Grace—Stan Broussard

Wednesday

Rooted Up—Dale Offutt

Series: What God Has Done (1800's, Restoration)—Richard Ramsey

Fruitfulness in Evangelism—Robert Boyd

Fruitfulness in Teaching—Victor Broaddus

Growing in Fruitfulness—Howard Marsh

Thursday

Nothing But Leaves—Carl Kitzmiller

Series: What God Has Done (1900s)—Richard Ramsey

Fruitfulness in Worship—Vernon Lawyer

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