

JANUARY, 1984

DON'T PUT WORDS IN MY MOUTH

Page 2

Guide For Living: KNOW - RECKON - PRESENT

Page 4

HOW OLD IS THE EARTH?

Page 7

LOOK AGAIN AT SOME OLD BOOKS

Page 12

"THE KINGDOM"—WHAT TO EXPECT

Page 18

MEET JUSTIN MARTYR

Page 23

THE DOOR OPENED TO THE GENTILES

Page 28

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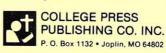
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In This Issue

God's Family — You're Telling Me What I Believe? — W.	R.H.	-	-	1
Thoughts From Romans — "Know—Reckon—Present You — E. E. Lyon	ursel -	f" -	-	4
"Of Course" Christians	-	-	-	6
Questions Asked of Us — Carl Kitzmiller	-	5	-	6
Viewing the News — Jack Blaes	-	-	-	9
Can You Count The Stars — Michael E. Moore	-	- 1	-	11
"Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed - Alex V. Wilson	· · · "		-	12
MISSIONARY MESSENGER	-	-	-	15
An Open Letter to an Opponent Debater — Robert L. Sh	ank	-	-	17
Gleanings – Larry Miles	-	-	-	21
Is It Possible To Understand Unfulfilled Prophecy? — Frank M. Mullins, Sr	-	=	-	22
Heroes Of The Faith—Justin Martyr — James C. Hefley	-	-	-	23
Christian Conduct — Grace Ferguson	-	-0	-	27
Studies in the Book of Acts - Larry Miles	-	-	-	28
NEWS AND NOTES	_	_	_	39



God's Family

W. R. H.

YOU'RE TELLING ME WHAT I BELIEVE?

Back in September I received a letter from a brother in Denver, Colo. asking for some information on "the whole question of millennialism" and with the letter was enclosed a 24-page booklet whose cover had been lost, but whose first page bore the title "When Christ Comes Again . . ." I am not sure whether or not I sent any material at the time, but I plan to send him a copy of this issue, which also features the beginning portion of an article by Bro. Robert L Shank, that certainly sheds true light on the subject. Reading through the little booklet that came with the letter, I was reminded again how many times there are the grossest of mis-quotations, either in ignorance or of purpose, that are violently injected into any debate of a controversial subject. I had only gotten to page two of the booklet when the words, "Louisville," "Word and Work" and "R.H. Boll" caught my attention.

After beginning with a fairly acceptable introduction of "Premillennialists" the writer began to tell the world what we think, with reference to the revealed word of God. Some quotations follow:

"The doctrine makes God a respecter of persons in flat contradiction of the Word of God. The doctrine proposes that the Jews are God's favored race of people and that eventually He will give them a favored place in the millennial kingdom." But it was God Himself who first called Israel His chosen people. There are so many references to bear this out that no student of the Word would deny it. Nor is the Jew's place in the millennium above that of the Christian, who is corporately the Bride of Jesus Christ and will rule and reign with him the thousand years. Christ Jesus Himself taught that there would be diversity of rewards in the next life, but God will not be a respecter of persons as if to bless the Jews only, or the Gentiles only.

"The doctrine rejects the mediatorial priesthood of Christ. It denies that He is now king, and affirms that He will only be king in fact and act upon the earth when He comes again." This is a plain misrepresentation of fact. Certainly He is my Mediator, my Priest, and my King now. As Lord of true believers, He reigns in every regenerate heart. But some day the truth of Psalm 2 will actually be realized, with many other messianic promises of Holy Writ.

"They reason that Jesus, while upon earth, attempted to establish the kingdom God promised and prophetically described in the Old Testament." Again, someone is trying to put false words into my mouth. Jesus did the will of the Father, exactly and completely, in His 33 years on earth. When he uttered "it is finished!", the crosswork of salvation had been done, and all the sins of mankind, past, present, and yet to be, were laid upon Him, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." In fact this was fundamental to establishing of His Millennial kingdom. All of heaven is seen praising Jesus for His worthiness (Rev. 5:9) "for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and madest them to be a kingdom, and priests; and they reign upon the earth." Revelation 14:1 gives a foreview: "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion." Of course, to have a righteous kingdom, there must needs be a provision for men to be made righteous. The church age is just such a time, when by grace, through faith, sinners can become clothed in the righteousness of Christ. But why should we be so blind, or so nearsighted as to be unable to rejdice in God's other glorious doings which will follow this Church age? Romans 11:25: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins." Many folks today are ignorant, indeed, of the plain import of this passage.

"The premillennial theory (?!) makes the church of relatively little importance in God's schedule of Redemption." It does no such thing all of redemption is by the blood of Jesus, and all who have applied that blood for their sin-cleansing, make up the church. The Church is God's instrument in the "saving of souls" business. The coming millennial reign of Christ Jesus will be God's governing and rewarding business. He has a lot of ancient promises that will need to be fulfilled. The church, being the bride of Jesus, not only during the thousand years, but through eternity, is in nowise demeaned by our simply accepting and believing what God has promised for her.

"The doctrine, if followed to its logical conclusion, excludes us Gentiles from God's grace." You don't have to follow the Millennium to its conclusion. It is the conclusion of all preparations for eternity with God. Peter opened the door to the Gentiles when he preached to Cornelius, and from that day until Jesus calls His church, that door of salvation is open to Jews and Gentiles alike.

"The theory of premillennialism vitiates the gospel of Christ." This writer must not have known what we, who look for the return of our Lord, really believe. The gospel is not on trial, nor impaired in any way, if we also hold the blessed hope that "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." What did Jesus mean here? Was he telling us to pray for the earth to experience the kingdom glory, a time when God's will will be done on earth? I think so.

Don't let debaters and antagonists tell you what you think!



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Know - Reckon - Present Yourself"

Before continuing on through the sixth chapter of Romans for thoughts that should be of help to us in each verse, I would like to stop once more and take a look at the first fourteen verses of the chapter for three things that we are told we must do to derive the maximum benefit from the wonderful truths contained here.

KNOW

Three times the word "know" and the continuous one "knowing" are used in this passage, in verses 4, 6, and 9. In the New King James version the word "know" is used in a passage indicating something that many Romans did not know in verse 3-"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" Paul, as I pointed out before, says that some things happened to them whether they knew it or not, but he carefully explained those things to them so they could take full advantage of what had happened to and for them. He wanted them to know that they had been buried with Christ through baptism into death so that now they should walk in newness of life, in the likeness of His resurrection. So many Christians seem to feel that Christ has done a great deal for them (and He has) in providing the means of their sins being cleansed away so they might be born again, but they forget that to be born again means now you have a new life, life from above. You have not now turned over a new leaf-you have a new book to write in. And you write in it in a life that has the Holy Spirit to make Christ's life real in us. Do you really know that, or is it just an unreal but believable doctrine to you? Make it real, as the other two words here urge you to do.

The second use of the word is found in verse 6—"knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." In spite of this plain statement, just think of how many times you have heard dear staints pray, "Lord, forgive us of the many sins we commit every day." That is like saying that the Lord did something for us but He didn't quite accomplish His purpose and we are left still slaves to sin. If you must be a slave, be a slave of Jesus Christ and do His will! He bought you and has the right to use you, and He wants your willing cooperation in the things He wishes to accomplish through you.

Don't turn Him down!

In verse 9 Paul says again, "knowing that Christ, having been raised

from the dead dies no more. Now if we are in Christ, and we are, and Christ is not subject to death, neither are we. We have eternal life, life to be lived unto God even as Christ (remember He was truly man as well as truly God) lives unto Him. And again, remember that Paul does not tell you to feel you are dead and have new life, he tells you you have it and you should know it. Do not doubt God, Who is here speaking through the Apostle.

RECKON

Our second word is another one easy to understand—"reckon." You are to count on what you know, to reckon it is true so you can live The importance of doing this is well illustrated by an old party trick that you may or may not have come across. At parties it used to be a common thing to play some different kinds of games than what are used these days. One of those was to take one person in the party into another room while arrangements are being made for him to try to do a "hard trick." He is brought back into the room, shown a very strong board which is standing a few inches above the floor on bricks. He is then blindfolded and told his problem is to stand erect on the board while two strong young men raise it off the floor. To reassure him there is no danger two others stand by his side and let him put his hands on their shoulders. Gradually then those two kneel down so that the unsuspecting victim feels that he is being raised off the floor. By the time the shoulders get out of his reach he, if he does not know the trick, begins to wobble and finally to fall off to the floor only a few inches away. If the victim knew the trick, he could "reckon" himself as still being on solid boards near the floor and stand there without That illustrates what Paul wants—he wants you to reckon or count yourself as dead to sin, as alive unto God and therefore to live that new life He provides. If you feel you are still at the mercies of sin and must have strength of your own to overcome, you will fall. So Paul says in verse 11, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Note then the thing you can keep from doing-"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts (v. 12).

PRESENT YOURSELF

The final one of these three things we are to do is found in verse 13—"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." I could not present myself to the commander of Company A at an army installation, for I am not a member of his company. But I am a member of the Lord's army and I should not allow my members to be used by an enemy. Instead I constantly present myself to my Commander for His use in whatever way He sees fit. There is not space here to go over the ways He wants to use you, but a brief look at verse 14 will show you one of the great consequences of so presenting yourself—"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

For five chapters Paul has been showing us our need and the way God supplies that need that we might have His righteousness and live

for Him. Now Paul has shown us three things that we should do to take advantage of this—know, reckon, and present ourselves. Do not delay another day. Or, to use army language—Don't be away without leave!

If you are not a Christian, may I point out again that Christ not only has paid the price for your sins, He has given new life to all who will trust Him and will provide all the talent and whatever else is needed to live for Him. Trust Him and enter into eternal life.

"Of Course" Christians...

A Chinese student came to this country to prepare himself for preaching. As he was getting settled in his room, he said to his roommate, "Are you a Christian?"

"Yes," replied his new friend. "My grandfather was a Christian. My father was a Christian. So of course I am a Christian."

The Chinese student looked at him thoughtfully and said, "In China there are no of course Christians."

This Chinese student touched on a basic truth. The fact that our ancestors were Christians does not make us Christians. A vital Christian experience cannot be passed along intact from generation to generation like an antique chair or a silver tray. It is a living, dynamic thing that goes on inside us when we bring our lives in tune with God.

—Selected



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

In light of Paul's teaching on the Christian's relation to the Law (Gal.; Col. 2:13, 14; Eph. 2:14-16; etc. Cf. esp. Col. 2:16, 17), please explain his actions in Acts 21:17-26.

Some Bible students believe Paul was simply influenced to do that which was inconsistent with his teaching and that he erred. This was humanly possible. He was a man, and he was subject to some of the same influences which might beset any man. Even as an apostle it was not impossible for Paul to sin or to fail in his conduct. We have the specific case of Peter who, on one occasion at least, played the part of the hypocrite (Gal. 2:11-12). Inspiration does not mean that every act, everything in the life of the individual is perfectly in the will of God. Inspiration simply means that God overruled in the act of prophesying and in the written records so that there is no error and

that His message is proclaimed. Paul was a faithful servant of God,

but he could have sinned.

I do not personally believe that happened in the case before us. God would in some way have made it more evident that he did sin. Peter's hypocrisy was denounced. We can be under no illusion that he did right or that similar conduct on our part under such circumstances would be right. If Paul did wrong, then it is seriously misleading that the account does not in some way indicate that. "But is that not the very point of the passages cited in the question?" someone may say; "Does not the rest of God's word point out the error?" And we have to say: "Not necessarily." Some observance of the law was allowed to Jewish Christians without any rebuke.

Paul fought the Judaizers on every front. He is the outstanding spokesman for salvation by faith. The very passages cited above are from his pen. It is not that he could not have sinned, but in the light of his experiences, his ministry to the Gentile, and the troubles he had with Jews defending the law, the more likely direction of his error would have been away from the law. Having been freed from legalism, he might have gone so far as to deny any legitimate observance of the law. The purpose of his action was to convince the Christian

Jews at Jerusalem that this was not the case.

So far as I can tell, the motivation Christian Jews had in continuing in certain features of the law is what made the difference. Those features which had social significance or moral value but which did not attempt to earn salvation by human merit seemed to pose no problem. The moral standards of the ten commandments as well as those elsewhere taught were still valid. Certain customs were kept. Even circumcision, if it was not perceived to be essential to salvation but simply spoke of Jewish identity, could be allowed. Paul caused Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3) to keep him from being an offense to the Jews. Paul's motivation in those observances he kept was not that of trying to live by the law but rather that of becoming a Jew to the Jew (1 Cor. 9:20). He avoided unnecessary offense. He did not make an issue of trivials unless someone read too much into those things. Note that in Gal. 4:10 and Col. 2:16 the concern was not for the acts themselves but being in bondage to such things or allowing these things to be the standard of life.

Paul was a brilliant man, not too likely to have been talked into something stupid or wrong. He was a seasoned traveller who had been exposed to a wide variety of experiences. He would hardly have lost his head because of the multitudes at Jerusalem. He was not a mere greenhorn-come-to-town who was confused by the unusual. He was not a novice who was carried away by pride. Even when we do our best to avoid offense, we may find that we have not succeeded with everyone. Paul had that problem. But I believe he simply sought to act in wisdom toward his brethren and that his conduct in no way conflicted in this mind with instruction he might have written to those

in danger of being enslaved to the law.

"But did not his imprisonment prove that he was wrong? He would never have been a prisoner if he had not been involved in this observance," it may be said. It is true that while he was in the temple

certain Jews saw him and seized the occasion to create a riot. But two things need to be noted. Paul might have been in the temple without the matter of the vow. His enemies were not very concerned with just accusation. Not having this occasion does not mean they would not have used something else. Secondly, Paul was destined to go to Rome in some way, so we cannot assume that the arrest and the matters which followed were not in the will of God for him. He used the whole series of events for a lot of preaching to some otherwise unlikely hearers. Not every "evil" that befalls the Christian does so because he is being chastened for some disobedience.

While Paul could have done wrong, I believe he is a far better judge of what should have been done in this matter than you or I at this distance. He would have understood the significance of his actions and the effect on that particular people. In view of his clear understanding of the danger of legalism, I have to give him the benefit of the doubt and say that he was simply following his principle of

becoming all things to all men.

Do not some sciences, e.g., geology, require a much older earth than the Bible allows? Does not oil exploration work require the Christian to accept the idea of an old earth?

While the Bible does not give us specific figures to allow establishing an exact age for the earth, it very strongly suggests that man's presence on the earth is a much shorter period than that adopted by evolutionists. Ussher's chronology, adopted as a part of the authorized version of the Bible, is a human addition and is not necessarily correct. We might allow a few thousand years more back to creation than he does without destroying the integrity of the Bible. Even so, the Bible does not seem to allow us to talk in terms of hundreds of thousands or millions of years for man's existence.

The so-called "gap theory" is presented by Scofield (Scofield Reference Bible; see notes on Gen. 1) and others. It declares that the creation of Gen. 1:1 took place in the dateless past, and God brought judgment on earlier beings, possibly the angels, and that this resulted in the earth being "without form and void." Then in Gen. 1:3, there is a new beginning. Hence, there is an indefinite period which gives scope for all the geologic ages. Without necessarily giving approval of the estimates or dating methods of the evolutionists, this view would

find no problem with long ages for the earth itself.

A second possibility is that God created age in the earth at creattion, including the existence of fossils, oil, etc. He did create Adam a grown man, therefore without necessity of certain years for growing up. He had the appearance of a full grown man apparently when he was but one day old. God is able to have created age in the earth. We have no specific evidence for saying that He did this; it is only a possibility.

A growing number of scientists believe that much of what is attributed to great age was produced in the earth by the flood of Noah's day. This would have caused great upheavals of rock layers, great cataclysmic changes in the earth. This could have distorted the measurements which are based on conditions as they now exist. To a

great extent the long ages are merely guesses which have been made so as to allow for the evolutionary process. The methods for dating are based on the assumption that decay rates, for example, have always been the same, and these do not allow for the effects of cataclysmic changes.

Recently a prestigeous magazine was caught in an error by a reader, who wrote the editor. The editor's reply was: "Like others before us, we repeated an old error." In various guesses of age, there has been a repeating of a lot of old errors. Picking up the estimates of one who wears the title of scientist and passing them on may be very

common, but it is not really scholarship.

I suppose most modern training in geology has pretty well sold out to the evolutionary concept, and many of the terms, explanations, etc., tend to perpetuate those concepts. The Christian needs to be careful that in adapting to the language of this study he does not surrender his faith in God and in the Bible. The evolutionary theory is still a

theory, and it is one full of holes.

We need to be careful that we do not impose some interpretation on the Bible that it does not require and that proves to be an embarressment, but we do not ever need to fear taking a stand upon the proper interpretation of it. The various sciences have had to change a lot of concepts that were at one time considered true, while the old Book still stands.

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

WHILE SPAIN IS AT TIMES RE-FERRED TO AS AN "OPEN DOOR", there are only 36,000 professing believers in the entire nation. A missionary of many years service said that he had yet to see even one Spaniard truly enter the Christian life.

GRAMAT, FRANCE WAS THE SCENE LAST SUMMER OF four days of evangelistic meetings. Those who came from distances were used to traveling—they were Gypsies, members of the World Gypsy Evangelical Movement. 15,000 Gypsies, who are members of the movement, gathered to witness to the saving power of Christ and to welcome their fellow Gypsies

into the fellowship. According to Jean Le Cossec, who founded the movement thirty years ago, when one member of a family becomes a believer, usually the whole family follows.

"WE CAN EITHER SAVE THE PUB-LIC SCHOOLS or we can save education. To do both is an impossibility," Don Feder.

THE VATICAN'S SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC ED-UCATION recently released a document reaffirming Catholic teaching on human sexuality declaring that the family is "the best environment to accomplish the obligation of securing a gradual education in sexual life. Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must also be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in education centers chosen and controlled by them. The Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles." The document states that the state has an obligation to safeguard its citizens against "every form of sexual violence, degrading dress, permissiveness, and pornography, and the improper use of demographic information."

ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE FLASHED A WARNING two weeks prior to the explosion in Beirut that killed 239 American servicemen that something was brewing, but the report was unheeded. On October 15th American agents observed and photographed two men who arrived on a Soviet plane and were immediately whisked away in a black limosine with a military escort. They were followed by three other cars loaded with K.G.B. agents and members of the Syrian secret police taking them to a major terrorist training camp on the outskirts of Dasmascus, which also doubles as the Palestinian organization known as Saika. These new arrivals were identified as high-explosives experts from the Bulgarian secret police. Even this knowledge, which was in the hands of the White House by October 19th, did not result in taking any increased precautions against the possibility of terrorist activities. At the time the terrorist truck crashed into the Marine compound, the guard at the gate was not allowed to have his rifle loaded.

SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MID-SEPTEMBER (1983) a trial program using "debit cards" in Santa Clara County was announced by Atlantic Richfield Co. and Bank of America. Motorist visiting Arco stations in the county will be able to charge gas on a card and their purchase will be automatically deducted from their checking account and be deposited to the station's account. The Bank of America is the first bank to have a world-wide centralized interactive computer system. This could well be a trial balloon to take us into the "cashless" society.

WOMEN EXPLOITED BY ABORTION was founded by Nancy Jo Mann.

In 1974 Nancy had a "safe, legal, saline abortion." Also, after a series of operations and weeks of antibiotics to curb the infections, she had a complete hysterectomy which she had not bargained for. She had not bargained for the torment which attacked her spirit and led her into four-and-a-half years of drug addiction either. Because of her experience in abortion, and because she wants to save other women from these experiences, she founded WEBA. "I believed that if women knew what was going to happen to them 80 to 85 percent of all abortions would never take place." Ms. Mann says.

"WE DO KNOW THAT HOMOSEX-UAL PRACTITIONERS ARE, on the average, among the most dangerously diseased and contagious subpopulation of our times," says Dr. Paul Cameron. Homosexual acts are responsible for causing at least 21 percent of hepatitis B in general and at least 64 percent of sexually transmitted hepatitis B. These queer people are responsible for carrying 88 percent of all AIDS cases. The director of the Center for Infectious Disease admitted that AIDS is a broader health problem than was at first thought. This disease is almost-certainly fatal and extremely costly and was started and is mainly transmitted by practicing homosexuals. The possibility that all cases of AIDS can be traced to the queer community has not been ruled out. It seems that the straight community is going to be forced to take things in its own hands and force the government to protect itself from the risk that AIDS will veer from its current death march through the homosexual community and lay waste to millions of innocent lives as well. For the first time in our history most states have no laws outlawing homosexual acts.

"MONEY IS NOT THE ANSWER,"
—SAYS PRESIDENT REAGAN. America's schools are in need of fundamental reforms the President informed the National Forum on Excellence in Education last month in Indianapolis. If a lack of money alone held the answer to education's sad plight, their problem would have been shrinking instead of growing. The reformers which are very evident include: The need to restore good, old-fashioned discipline in the classroom; end the drug and alcohol abuse that plagues "hundreds and thou-

sands of our children"; raise academic standards by giving students more work to do and requiring them to spend more time in school; encourage good teaching by paying teachers on the basis of their competence and merit; restore "parents and state and local governments to their rightful place in the educational process" and keep the Federal government out teach the basics students "to abandon vocational and college prep courses for general ones" that prepare them higher education pointed out that country, students "for neither work nor higher education " Mr. Reagan also "in schools across the country, students are being taught the dangers of nuclear weapons and the burdens of national defense. Well, let's

make certain they understand not only the price of defending America, but the price of failing to." Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, says that the President is "doing nothing more than making speeches urging other people to do something about reforming schools." One thing for sure, Mr. Shanker can understand pain English.

A LAW IN CONNECTICUT PERMITS PARENTS OR TEENAGERS at sixteen to legally end their family ties and responsibilities. At the end of the first year, 110 petitions had been filed, 27 of them by parents. Only 20 cases involved a teenager with a prior record of delinquency.

CAN YOU COUNT THE STARS?

A Devotional Study

by Michael E. Moore

The special care of God for His own is graphically portrayed in a lovely hymn that is often called a children's song, but it is a hymn that's meaning can become clearer and dearer to all Christians as they mature in their relationships to the Father. When I was very young, I learned this hymn and now I recall vividly many worship experiences when we sang it outdoors, while looking up at God's creation. Appreciation of this hymn has grown through the years. As high school students, we sang it with an exchange student from Austria and then I realized that the song was not only for our youth group in southwestern Missouri but that its message was for the whole world. I became especially aware of its Germanic origins as our Austrian friend sang it in German.

Background of the Hymn

"Can You Count the Stars" was originally written in German by Johann Wilhelm Hey (1789-1854) author of children's songbooks. He included it with several other children's hymns in the appendix of a book published in 1837. The three stanzas began with the words "Weist du, wie viel Sterne stehen." The theme of the poem was expressed as God's care for His creatures, (Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology, 1892 edition, pp. 520-521). Various translations of the hymn have been made through the years. In 1931, the English hymnal Songs of Praise contained a translation of stanzas 1 and 3 which began, "Can you count the stars that brightly twinkle in the midnight sky?" When E. L. Jorgenson compiled the masterful Great Songs of the Church, he included his translation "Can You Count the Stars of Evening?" which was copyrighted in 1921. This translation reveals Brother Jorgenson's talents of translating and writing in poetic form. When the editor of a recent Mennonite hymnal was choosing German

translations for a new hymnal, he included "Can You Count the Stars of Evening?" (*Christian Hymnary*, 1972). The compiler had spent time in Poland and Germany and had collected hymns for his people who often conduct entire services in the German language and he selected Brother Jorgenson's translation.

The Meaning of the Hymn

Consider the great thoughts of the hymn. The first stanza is reminiscent of Psalm 147:4, "He telleth the number of the stars. He calleth them all by their names." A similar statement is made in Isaiah 40:26. How many times have children of God considered God's handiwork and marveled at His wonderful power. (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 8:1,3.) Not only do the heavens tell of His power, but they also reveal to us His care and providence for His children. Truly John Needham wrote:

"How vast His knowledge! How profound! A deep where all our thoughts are drowned, The stars He numbers, and their names He gives to all those heav'nly flames."

The second stanza reminds of God's care even to small creations of nature. Even the birds are objects of His concern (Matthew 6:26).

Shall He not remember thee?

The third stanza brings the message clearly to us that God has not forgotten us. God cares for us whether we are waking or sleeping (Psalm 3:5). Children of God of all ages need a special sense of His care. He cares for us (I Peter 5:7). Surely this great fact helps to give us the confidence that we have a loving Father who provides for His children. Thank God for this great hymn that reminds us of His care. Even though it is classified as a children's hymn, its thought is profound. May we all sing it with a growing realization of its wonderful truths.



"Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed..."

Alex V. Wilson

It sounds as though Paul was a phonograph record with the needle stuck in a groove: "Do you not know? . . . Do you not know? . . . Do you not know? . . . Do you not know? . . . Eight times within four chapters he sounded that refrain, as he rebuked various evils the Corinthians were committing. Obviously he thought their sin was due largely to ignorance, careless forgetfulness, and moral blindness. He was amazed and grieved at their spiritual stupidity. (I Cor. 3-6).

How would he feel about us? Too often we also are not transformed in conduct because we don't renew our minds.

A Christian, whatever stage he may have reached, is always engaged in a double process—unlearning the erroneous, self-centered ideas of his unregenerate days, and learning the God-centered truths consistent with the divine life within him. He has been taken from the ranks of those who 'live... in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them' (Eph. 4:17, 18). He now has a new nature, "which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator' (Col. 3:10). -Robert Horn

Notice those terms used by Paul: minds; understanding, ignorance; knowledge. We desperately need knowledge and wisdom. We need much more than that, admittedly; but the fact stands: we need knowl-

edge and wisdom.

Last month we saw the importance of reading and study, if we are to know and be wise. Now a further thought: as you read, include books from the past, not only current ones.

Our Legacy from Earlier Ages

A. W. Tozer advises, "Stay away from the religious books that specialize in bright jackets and offer to 'thrill' you. The taint of commercialism is upon them." And then he makes this remarkable statement: "C.S. Lewis suggests that we read seven old books to one new one."

Wow-what could Lewis have meant by that? Maybe he was deliberately exaggerating, but he must have had something in mind. I am guessing that it was this: Every age has its fads and emphases, and along with them its omissions and blind-spots. And reading "old" books is a major escape-route from the prison of our era's quirks and limitations and lopsided viewpoints.

Are You Blindfolded?

This fact was stressed in a chapel-talk at a Christian college a few years ago. The speaker was James Packer, author of Knowing God

and one of today's leading Evangelical theologians.

Packer talked about the blinders or blinkers which were put on the bridles of horses that pulled carts in city traffic in former days. The horse could only see what was directly in front of him, because everything on either side was blocked out of its vision. "Thus the horse, seeing so very little, would be kept quiet and not be distracted by other things. And the blinkers did keep the horses quiet, but at the cost of keeping them from seeing a great deal that was there. And there are blinkering factors which narrow our vision when we study Holy Scripture and we need to be aware of what they are."

You say, "What are you talking about?" This: You and I are children of, and therefore victims of, traditions. We are victims because we are children of the Protestant tradition, of the Evangelical tradition, of our own denominational tradition: some of us Reformed, some of us Baptist, some of us dispensationalists in background, some of us from separatists backgrounds. Now all these traditions have brought us strengths and we ought to be grateful for them. But they, all of them, can serve as blinkers, narrowing our vision from things which folk from other traditions can see.

Sociologists call this "cultural prejudice," and it keeps us from seeing a lot of what is there in the Bible.

Well, if our various church backgrounds not only give us insights which others lack but also blind us to aspects of truth which others see, how can we overcome our blind spots? What can serve as spiritual eyeglasses to cure our near-sightedness? Packer says, "We ought to take very seriously the privilege of practicing fellowship with our Ohristian brothers across the ages by reading classic books from the past."

Doing this will set us free from the tyranny of being tied to our own time. One of the naive but potent prejudices of our day is that we are wiser than our fathers, that nobody had really much of a clue about anything until we, in the second half of the 20th century, came along. To puncture that conceit, we really must get back to the big men, to reading the classics. . . .

It's tyranny to be tied to one's own time. It's tyranny when only the present fills our thoughts and we don't know anything about the riches of the past. . . .

The Christian ought to draw on the riches of other traditions beside his own. Let him not swallow the bones: traditions are never 100 percent right, just as they're never 100 percent urong. Prove all things and hold fast that which is good

they're never 100 percent wrong. Prove all things and hold fast that which is good is the Scripture method to follow here.

The writers he specifically recommends are Luther, Augustine, Cal-

vin, the Puritans, etc.

Vice Versa, Too

I've found a couple of good examples of the blindspots Packer warns us about-but in reverse! That is, in these cases modern writers are more proficient than some past authors were, for they were strange-

ly silent about some important sujbects.

Puritan preachers in the 1600s like Richard Baxter, Thomas Goodwin, and John Owen were tops in teaching about holy character, and how to combat the world, the flesh, and the devil-Satan himself. They surpass most modern writers in those areas. But Wilbur Smith surprisingly discovered that "in the 10,000 pages of writings of Richard Baxter, not one reference can be found to the activity of demons, outside of the Gospel records of our Lord's life on earth." The same is true with Thomas Goodwin and also in the more than twenty volumes written by John Owen. "John Wesley devotes one page to the subject, but not as an active force in his own day." Jonathan Edwards' writings also don't really deal with the problem of modern-day demon activity.

So in that area, some spiritual giants of the past don't measure up to some present-day writers. (However, beware of crackpots who see a demon under every bed.) Here's a second example: Any textbook in systematic theology which is still published and used more than a century after it was written must be classed as outsanding. In this category are the works of Charles Hodge and A. H. Strong, both of whom taught and wrote in the 1800s. Yet notice a suprising and sad blind-spot. "In three volumes with 2260 pages published in 1871, Charles Hodge devotes 13 pages to the Holy Spirit. Augustus Strong gives barely 10 of 1056 pages to the Holy Spirit. Neither deals with the subject of spiritual gifts" (Hummel). So here again is a subject where most past writers will probably not measure up to current one like Michael Green (I Believe in the Holy Spirit), David Howard (By the Power of the Holy Spirit) and Charles Hummel (Fire in the Fireplace).

14

Nevertheless, our main thesis is valid: on many subjects, we can benefit greatly from studying the outstanding writers and writings of the past. They can expand our knowledge and experience of God, help us see things from a new perspective, and supplement our spiritual diet.

Here are some antiques which God has used to minister to me during the years: From the 1400s: The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas a Kempis. From the 1500s: The Freedom of the Christian Man, by Luther. From the 1600s: The practice of the Presence of God, by Brother Lawrence; and Alarm to the Unconverted, by Joseph Alleine. From the 1700s: A Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life, by William Law; and The Journel of John Wesley. From the 1800s: Lectures on Revivals of Religion, by Charles G. Finney; and Holiness, by J.C. Ryle. Several of these classics, especially the earlier one, are available in condensed form and modernized English, which helps a lot if you can find them.

See you at the bookstore! (Or library).

Missionary Aessenger "Greater things for God"

Timothy Nakahara

Shizuoka City, Japan

December 1st

Season's Greetings in the Precious Name of our Savior Jesus Christ. Once again the time has come for us to consider afresh the wonderful love that God has manifested in His only begotten Son that came down to this dark and sinful world of men in order for life to share, hope to give and blessing to enjoy. Because of His coming into the world, our life's perspective has utterly been changed from total despair to full and hopeful eternity. Yes, Jesus came with His Cross bearing even at His Birth, and that's all for us sinners. God has given us the greatest Gift ever given to men and oh, how we should give praise and honor due to His matchless Name!

Now we want to take this opportunity to express our gratefulness to you for all the kindnesses you've shown to us througout this passing year 1983. Our life and work of ministry are wholly dependent upon the blessings God provides for us through you, to whom we're greatly indebted. And our sincere prayer to God is that He'll bless you in every way with His abundant loving-kindness, especially at this Special Season of the year.

Two of our girls are coming back to spend the Christmas Holidays with us for the first time in eight years, and needless to say, we're counting days and hours as the time of arrival draws closer. They're to arrive at the International Air Port at Narita on Dec. 20th and will

stay until the close of the month of January. We're all excited over it, for we haven't been able to get together for Christmas for eight years. So we're thankful to God for such an opportunity He's provided us with at this time. Teruko has seen some improvement in health and lost much weight. She still works for the Gideons International here in town three days a week, going back and forth by bicycle. As for me, it is probable that I'll have to undergo an operation on my right eye sometime early next year, if the Lord is willing. I appreciate your prayer very much.

The work here is a little slow but steadily growing. We only have had three new converts in 1983 against ten we'd expected and worked toward. Another daughter of Mrs. Abe was baptized in October and we're very happy about it. But she is still kept from accepting Christ in baptism, though as far as coming to services, her husband doesn't seem to bother her and she continues to come. We would like you to pray for her and her husband in a special way. We still have several other truth-seekers among us and we hope all of them would turn to the Lord next year.

Our regular monthly visitation is still going on and because of it we have had three new young ones added to our S.S. and we're working on their parents as well. We now cover some 250 to 300 homes each time distributing gospel tracts and Christian papers. Most of our work is being done outside the church through a co-operative or personal witnessing. Your support of prayer and of financial aid are so much appreciated and we know what you've done for us is kept in the Book of Life and on the last day you'll be rewarded accordingly. We would like you to continue your prayer for us and the work in Shizuoka even in the year 1984.

Now we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Very Meaningful and Happy New Year!

VIRGILIO TORREFIEL, President of Central Bible Institute, Manila Dec. 7th

There has been a great and rapid change for the worse in our political, social, and economic life since you left in May. Hundreds of industries have closed shop and many others are still about to close due to the government's near-bankruptcy. Thousands are laid off in a matter of months and it will still continue.

Prices of commodities have gone extreme high. Soap which used to cost under 4 pesos now costs 10 pesos per bar. Rice used to be 2.20 pesos per kilo but is now 3:80 pesos. Sugar which formerly was between 3 and 4 pesos per kilo is now 7 pesos. Some of the basic commodities are not even available in the markets due to panic-buying, hoarding and the closing of factories.

The government of President Marcos has proven to be very ineffective. Some of its decrees even violate the constitutional rights of the people. Almost every day there is a rally by someone—businessmen, religious leaders, professionals, students, or labor groups—asking reforms from the administration. Every day is suspenseful because we don't know what will happen next.

Editor's Note: The following Open Letter summarizes a discussion that Brother Robert L. Shank held with Wayne Jackson, as part of the Denton (Texas) Lectures on November 17, 1983. Brother Shank was first introduced to Word & Work readers in June, 1982, when we reviewed his latest book, Until the Coming of Messiah and His Kingdom. Several of our readers purchased his book at that time. In August of 1982 we published a timely article entiled "Should Christians Support Israel?" We feel that all of our readers will be helped by the present open letter, which unfortunately, we must divide into two or three parts.—Ed.

An Open Letter to an Opponent Debater

Robert L. Shank

Dear Brother:

After knowing of you a long time, it was a pleasure to meet you at Denton. I must say that you demonstrated there that your reputation as a debator is well deserved. Your presentation in the Discussion Forum was an excellent statement of the popular arguments offered in support of the amillenarian doctrine which has largely prevailed among churches of Christ in recent decades.

I was sorry that you confined yourself to the customary appeal to interpretations of a few "proof" passages (all of them debatable) and declined to respond to categorical passages and considerations I offered

which are not debatable and are totally decisive.

You did not respond to the obvious fact (which I presented orally in my fifteen-minute rejoinder) that the church of Christ in the present age does not fulfill the conditions prophesied of the Messianic kingdom in Dan. 2:44, 34, 35 (a kingdom "consuming all these kingdoms" and becoming "a great mountain filling the whole earth"), and in Dan. 7:14, 27 ("all dominions shall serve and obey him"), and in Isa. 2:4 (universal peace, no more wars among the nations). I was sorry that in the question time no one mentioned this point, but the silence is

understandable. The consideration is unanswerable.

You did not respond to my quotation of Jer. 23:5-8, which discloses that God will "raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth," and "in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely," and "the seed of the house of Israel" shall be gathered "from all countries whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land." You say that the reign of Christ (David's "righteous Branch") on the throne of David began after his resurrection and ascension. Regardless of whether he is to reign as King on earth in the future (as I believe) or only in heaven in this age (as you believe), it remains true that it is "in his days" when he reigns as King that "the seed of the house of "Israel" will be gathered "from all countries whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land," and "in his days Judah shall be saved (cf. Rom. 11:25-29) and Israel shall dwell safely." Dear brother, if you can cite historical proof that these things prophesied to occur "in his days" when the King reigns have occurred since Jesus began his reign in heaven following his ascension, tell me about it, please. If these things have not happened since Jesus took his seat at the right hand of the Father in heaven (to

share the Father's throne while he awaits his own throne, Rev. 3:21), then obviously they must happen at some time in the future. When?

You did not respond to the question of the significance of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32, see UNTIL pp. 210-212 for a resume), a totally decisive passage. No eschatological construction contrary to the implications of the prophetic Ode of Moses can be valid. I am sorry that my good friend Furman Kearley (who said at ACU/Feb. that the Song of Moses is "a poetic history of the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness" rather than a prophecy of Israel's future) has not replied to my letter of May 20 asking him to comment on the import of Deut. 31:16-30, the background of the Song of Moses and God's definition of its meaning and purpose. In view of God's definition, it is beyond question that the Ode of Moses is a cardinal prophecy projecting the history of Isreal from the time they entered the Land after the death of Moses until the time of their ultimate restoration in the Land under the favor and blessing of God, for which cause the nations at last will rejoice (Deut. 32:43). The restoration must follow a worldwide dispersion and exile (vs. 26, 27, cf. 30:1-6) and must also follow the inauguration and present-age mission of the church (v. 21, cf. NT allusions: I Peter 2:9, 10, Rom. 10:19, 11:11-15, 25-32). Brother Kearley's long delay suggests that he is having some difficulty composing an answer to my simple request. Perhaps you can help him find biblical proof that Deut. 31:16-30 does not indicate that God intended the Song of Moses as a prophecy of Israel's future after they entered the Land following the death of Moses, or biblical evidence that God was mistaken about what really would happen in Israel's Brother Kearley's problem is that if he acknowledges God's future. definition of the meaning and purpose of the Song of Moses and its obvious prophetic implications, his eschatological construction will collapse. Amillenarians cannot acknowledge the prophetic significance of the Ode of Moses without abandoning their erroneous eschatology. But to be honest with God is worth any inconvenience, and it is wiser to "level" with God now than to wait until that Day when it will be Too Late.

You relied heavily on your interpretation of Acts 2:30ff (debatable) whereby you presume to establish that Christ can reign as Messiah only in heaven in the present age. But you declined to respond to my appeal to Acts 3:18-21 in which Peter declared to "men of Israel" that if they will repent, there will "come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" by reason of the fact that God will "send the Christ (Messiah) who has been appointed for you, even Jesus, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old" (Acts 3:19-21 ARV, Peter here anticipates the national repentance foretold in Script, see UNTIL pp. 49, 63, 96, 157, 258-260, 341). Jesus, the Messiah appointed for Israel, will remain in heaven only until the time for "the restoration of all things," as God has foretold "by the mouth of his holy prophets." At the time of restoration, God will send Jesus back to earth to reign as Messiah. We are not at liberty, dear brother, to build constructions on Acts 2 which ignore and are contrary to Acts 3 (and many, many other passages).

You did not respond to my appeal to Jer. 31: 35, 36, in which God declares that Israel can "cease from being a nation before me for ever" only if the ordinances of the moon and the stars "depart from before me, saith the Lord." I say again that you confined yourself to customary interpretations of a few "proof" passages (all of them debatable) and made no response at all to my presentations of categorical passages and propositions from the Scriptures which are not debatable and are totally decisive.

Your platform technique as a debater was superb, and I have no doubt that all that you said was completely convincing to most of the auditors present, who already shared your view and position, and for whom you were their spokesman and champion. But your failure to respond to any of the categorical passages and propositions I put be-

fore you would not go unnoticed by any unbiased observer.

Let me now comment briefly on several matters mentioned in our exchange at Denton. First, early in your fifteen-minute rejoinder, you said, "He says that in Matthew 16:19, when Jesus said I'll give unto thee the keys of the kingdom, that is not the church." I protested that I have not said any such thing. You said, "We might have to quote you on that...I'll just check it out in a few moments. I don't want to misrepresent you." But you did misrepresent me, for you let the charge stand, and it will remain in the minds of all who heard you at Denton, and in the minds of all who hear the tapes. Please do take time to "check it out" ... you will not find any such statement in UNTIL or in any of my writings, for such is not my understanding. The church is in view in Mt. 16:19.

I believe that your assertion proceeded from your assumption that such a statement represents my position (debaters dearly love to put words into the mouths of opponents) and from your enthusiastic preoccupation with Mt. 16:18, 19, reflected in your presentation of "a new premillennial version" of the passage (p. 508 in STUDIES IN HE-BREWS), which you imply I would accept, but which I totally reject. No one could believe more firmly than I that the church is now the kingdom of Christ on earth, over which he rules from heaven. This should be clear from my paper on "The Kingdom and Reign of Christ," and it is also made clear in UNTIL (pp. 343f, 355f) and in my monograph "The Biblical and Historical Foundations of Premillennialism" (soon to be published in THRUST, with a response by Byron Denman of Lawton, Okla.), both of which you have had for many months. also must protest your statement (p. 507 SIH), obviously aimed at me, that "anyone who alleges that the kingdom has not come, and yet who attempts to observe the Lord's supper, is woefully inconsistent." say again that no one can believe more firmly than I that the church is now the kingdom of Christ on earth, over which he rules from heaven. The fact that it is a proleptic kingdom (by reason of the fact that it anticipates the coming of the kingdom of Christ in a larger dimension when he comes to rule over the nations) takes nothing away from the fact that it is now the kingdom of Christ on earth for the present age, and has been so from Pentecost.

The phrase "heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18), which you charged me with avoiding because it would confront me with difficulty, is a term which embraces all that is yet future in God's purpose, including all that is implied in the prayer "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," and including the final manifestation of the kingdom in the new heaven and earth. In no way does the phrase militate against the coming interim Messianic kingdom, which according to Paul will be attended by the promised restoration of Israel (Rom. 11:12, 25-29, cf. Acts 1:6, 7). Incidentally, if Pentecost marked the answer to the prayer in Mt. 6:10, the kingdom is not overly successful, for the will of God is not yet being done on earth in the same manner and extent as in heaven. The kingdom for which we must continue to pray, as our Lord taught us to do, awaits the coming of the King.

Let us consider the matter of our Lord's parable in Lk. 19:11-27. At Denton you quoted me as saying that "when Christ went into the far country to receive the kingdom, he did not actually receive the kingdom; he only received the investiture of the kingdom." You also quoted me as saying in UNTIL that "when Christ went to heaven, he received the investiture of the kingdom; when he comes back he will be inaugurated as king; and when he finally sits down on the right hand of the Father, he will be coronated as king." Please cite any such statements in UNTIL. Nowhere in UNTIL (nor anywhere else) have I made any such statements. (I wish you could be as concerned to understand me as you are eager to refute me.) Please see UNTIL pp. 255f, where I affirm the following "The King's investiture occurs in heaven (I quote Dan. 7:13, 14) ... the inauguration of the kingdom and reign will occur on earth at the coming of Messiah-King (I quote Dan. 7:21, 27) ... the *coronation* of the King will occur on earth when Iesus assumes the throne of David at Jerusalem and receives the royal crown last worn by the faithless Zedekiah" (I quote Ezek. 21:26, 27). See also the references to Mt. 25:31, Lk. 1:32, and Jer. 23:5,6, and comments, which follow the above statements. Let me point out to you that the investiture in heaven is not of the kingdom, but of the King, when he is given the kingdom and authority to rule over the nations (Dan. 7:13, Ps. 2:8,9, Rev. 19:15, 12:5, 2:25-29). The inauguration on earth after the King's return will be of the kingdom rather than of the King (Dan. 7:21-27, Rev. 20:11-20:6?), and the coronation of the King will not be "when he finally sits down on the right hand of the Father" (he is seated there now, and has been since his ascension), but will be after "the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him," when "then he will sit on his glorious throne" (Mt. 25:31) when "the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David" (Lk. 1:32) and the "King will reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23:5) and "the nations (will be his) inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth (his) possession" (Ps. 2:8) and his kingdom will be "a great mountain filling the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). Then, instead of sharing the Father's throne in heaven as he does now, Christ will sit on his own throne (Rev. 3:21, note the contrast between "his throne" and "my throne")-a throne that is particularly Christ's ("the throne of his father David," given to him by the Father, Lk. 1:32, Isa. 9:6, 7), on which throne Jesus will reign on the earth over the nations (Rev. 19:15, Ps. 2:8, 9, sharing his reign with the faithful of his churches (Rev.

2:25-29, Rev. 20:6). Please see UNTIL p. 445 for the real-life background of Christ's parable in Lk. 19. The sequence of investiture, inauguration, and coronation is completely consonant with the custom of the times in the days of the Roman Empire and the Second Commonwealth of Israel, and totally familiar to our Lord's disciples to whom he addressed the parable. (Incidently, I do not understand why you suggested at Denton that the audience might need to consult a dictionary for the meaning of "investiture," and why you declared that I "invented the language" of investiture. I am sorry you quoted me as saying that Christ will be "coronated" as king. "Coronate" is an adjective derivative of the substantive coronation, and there is no such verb as coronate. Never have I used any such word as "coronated.")

Continued next month.

GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

FORGIVENESS AND GOD'S GRACE

Yet God's grace must cover all our failings—both those sins in initial conversion and forgiveness, and those daily failings as a Christian with which the honest believer is well aware. The church's ministry is both the preaching and practice of redemptive grace, mercy and forgiveness.

-Joseph P. Jones, in Integrity

THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

Paul depicts the holiness of the church in terms of the relationship between man and wife. Christ is the head of the church as the husband is of the wife; the church is subject to Christ as the wife is to the husband. And then he speaks of the cord that binds: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 4:25-26). To sanctify means to make holy. Jesus made the church holy through love, by giving himself up for her.

Leroy Garrett, in Restoration Review

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TODAY

The Church of Christ today in looking back upon the apostolic experience, which is expressed in scripture, finds its norms for being the Body of Christ. It is not necessarily to be like this or that church in the scriptures, but out of the apostles' experiences at Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, etc. emerges the will of God for us. We are not necessarily to do what the apostles did in those churches in all the particulars, for these differed from one church to the next; but we are to do for our age what they did for theirs: glorify Jesus Christ before men! The source for this is in their word and example as inspired by the Spirit.

-Leroy Garrett, in Restoration Review

REALITY BEHIND REALITY

"Our eyes are fixed, not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are unseen: for what is seen passes away; what is unseen is eternal."

-II Corinthians 4:18

MARANATHA

"As the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

-Matthew 24:27

Is It Possible to Understand Unfulfilled Prophecy

There is no difference between understanding unfulfilled prophecy and any other scripture. It is simply a matter of believing God, whether He speaks of things in the past, present, or future. Unfulfilled prophecy is God foreseeing, foreknowing, and foretelling what is to happen in the future. . . . Read Isaiah 46:9, 10-"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me: declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done: saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; ... yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it." In this passage, that which sets God apart from all others that may be called gods is the fact that He has the power to "tell the end from the beginning," and to speak and then bring it to pass, to purpose and do it. Anything is difficult, yea, impossible to a heart of unbelief that is very simple to the heart of faith. If one will read God's word believing He is God and there is none else, unfulfilled prophecy will be just as simple as fulfilled prophecy. One believes fulfilled prophecy simply because God said it would happen and then God said it did happen. Therefore, understanding of fulfilled prophecy is simply resting one's faith in what God said. Even so, with unfulfilled prophecy. In 2 Peter 1:19, the Holy Spirit speaks with reference to prophecy and states that we do well to take heed thereto, "as a lamp shining in a dark place." A lamp is of no value except as one can see by it. Prophecy is God's lamp shining into the darkness of the future by which we may see God's plans and purposes.-Frank M. Mullins, Sr., in the "Evangelist"



HEROES OF THE FAITH JUSTIN MARTYR

James C. Hefley

"These Ohristians actually eat human flesh!"

"That's true. A merchant from Corinth told me how one assembly actually killed a man and drank their fill of his blood."

Justin's heart chilled as he heard these charges against the despised

followers of the Nazarene.

"And some of the shameless things they do in secret. They use secret passwords and meet at midnight in caves for their ceremonies.

I say the sooner the empire is rid of them the better!"

Justin, a young pagan philosopher of the second century, turned and walked away from the group. How many times had he heard similar charges against the Christians! And until lately he had believed them.

Living barely a hundred years after the crucifixion of Christ, he was aware that Christianity was an illegal religion, since the emperors pledged their support of worship to the pagan gods. This made confession of Christ grounds for punishment. The Christians spoke of a kingdom, and the Roman rulers were apprehensive of what might hap-

pen if too many pagans became Christians.

But Justin was deeply stirred by the Christians. They were frank to confess their faith—even if it meant being beheaded or thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. Their godly living began pulling up his doubts by the roots until finally he could say: "Shame, shame on the guilty, who charge upon the innocent the crimes of themselves and of their gods." But while the young philosopher was leaning toward the illegal religion, he was not quite ready to take the step that would make him Christianity's greatest defense lawyer and give him a niche in history's Hall of Martyrs.

Justin was born at Flavia Neapolis, in Samaria, about A.D. 100—the approximate time when the Apostle John died in exile. His father, Priscus, bore a Latin name; his grandfather, Bacchius, a Greek name. By birth and education he was a Gentile heathen. As a youth he inherited a considerable fortune along with an insatiable desire to find the highest truth. Could a man know God? Could the deepest longings of his soul be satisfied? Justin decided to devote his life to this search and, donning the threadbare cloak that marked him as a philosopher, he began his journey.

"Instruction about God is unnecessary," a Stoic teacher told him. The Stoics taught that "the world is God's body." Hence they felt it a foolish quest to seek for God. "Virtue is the important thing," they

maintained. Justin turned sadly away.

"Let's settle upon my fee first and then we will study together," a Peripatetics told him when he inquired. The Peripatetics were carrying on the philosophy of Aristotle, and Justin felt perhaps they could help him in his quest. But he dejectly turned aside, feeling the man was only interested in money.

A celebrated Pythagorean teacher attracted him. "I would like

to become your pupil," young Justin told him eagerly.

"You wish to discover the happy life then?" When Justin nodded. the teacher continued: "Then are you acquainted with music, astronomy, and geometry?"
"No," Justin frankly admitted.

"Then I cannot accept you as my pupil," the teacher replied.

The seeker went away discouraged. Before he could know God, must he go through a long course of preliminary training? Then he heard of a Platonist who had come to his city. "This man will instruct me," he assured himself.

For a while Platonism charmed him, but it never satisfied his thirst "Flee the world and you will become like God," Plato to know God. had taught. "Slough off the bodily prison and seek to return into the world of pure spirit." Justin tried hard to put a lock and chain upon his bodily desires, but yet the emptiness of soul was still there.

Then he began to notice the despised Christians-particularly the way in which they faced death. The more he observed their wholesome conduct and willingness to suffer a horrible death rather than deny Christ—the more he found himself in sympathy with their cause.

While living in Ephesus he went for a walk in a lonely field near the Mediterranean seashore. As he paced up and down, he noticed a venerable old man. He turned and stared quizzically at the man.

"Do you know me?" asked the old man.
"No," Jutin replied.
"Why then do you gaze on me so fixedly?"

"I did not expect to meet anyone in this quiet spot."

"I have come to look after some of my household who have left me. But why are you here?" the man asked.

"I am here to exercise my reason," was Justin's answer.

"Does philosophy confer happiness?" the stranger queried.

"Yes," Justin assured him.

"But what is philosophy and happiness, young man?"

Justin answered, "Philosophy is the full knowledge of reality and the clear perception of truth. Happiness is the reward of such knowledge and wisdom."

But what do you call God?"

"The changeless cause of all other things," was Justin's stock

definition from the philosophers.

"Then can one know God without hearing from one who has seen Him? The philosophers have not heard Him nor seen Him. How can they judge correctly?"

Justin replied by quoting Plato's view. "God can only be discerned by the mind, and then only when the mind is pure and well-

disposed.

"I would refere you to teachers more ancient than the philosophers, who spake by the divine Spirit and foretold the future. They proved themselves by their predictions and miracles."

Justin liked the confident manner in which the old man spoke.

"Pray above all things that the gates of light may be opened to you," the sage continued. "These things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man to whom God and His Christ have

imparted wisdom."

Justin never saw the aged man again, but he later wrote: "Straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Moreover, I wish that all, making a resolution similar to my own, would not keep themselves away from the words of the Saviour."

Justin did not discard his philosopher's cloak. Regarding Christianity as the only true philosophy, he set out to bring other educated pagans to Christ. When men would see him clad in his thinker's robe they would customarily say, "Hail, philosopher!" This provided an open door to tell them about Christ and the truth that was in Him.

Justin was baptized and became a wandering teacher. There is no record that he was ever ordained. Soon he became a familiar figure in early church communities located in Ephesus, Alexandria, and Rome. He never married but gave himself wholly to his nomadic

teaching.

His major work became that of pleading the cause of Christians

before their slanderers and persecutors.

Curses were ringing out in Jewish synagogues against the Christians. Rabbis forbade all discussion of religious topics with the despised people. But Justin in his *Dialogue with Trypho* tackled the Jewish opposition head on by astounding them with his familiarity with the Old Testament. He contended to the Jews from their Scriptures that Jesus was the predicted Messiah.

Christianity's most formidable opponent, however, was the state. Antoninus Pius was ruling in Rome when Justin wrote his First Apology about 150. The "illegal religion" was showing itself to be a power. Heathen temples were being deserted. Worship of the state gods was neglected. Heathen priests and senators were crying, "Annihilate them!" "Christians are atheists," they charged. "Their religion"

gion has no temples, altars, idols, or sacrifices."

Philosophers, pagan priests, artists, and tradesmen joined in the battle as their income began slipping away. Religious charlatans who made a business of magic and sorcery felt keenly the competition of the Christians. "Too many customers are lost to the atheists," they howled.

When a flood, earthquake, or natural disaster occurred, the Christians were blamed. "The old gods are punishing us for permitting the followers of Christ to increase," was the warning handed down by pagan priests.

Justin flung himself recklessly into the battle. He challenged emperors, rebuked false philosophers, and corrected the slanders of the

tale spreaders.

"It is unjust to condemn Christians for the mere name's sake without hearing their cause," he wrote in his First Apology addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius. "Christians are no atheists; they worship God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The state has nothing to fear from them. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. The empire has no better subjects than the Christians. Look at the change in

their character and lives since they left the service of demons. They are chaste, pay tribute, give to the poor, avoid swearing, and love all."

Nearly ten years later Justin wrote his Second Apology addressed to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Here he declares that "Wicked men and demons unite to murder the Christians." He tells of two Christians who had been punished only a few days before with death—because they confessed the name of Christ.

In 163 Justin and several other Christians were brought before Rusticus, perfect of Rome. An account from church history pre-

serves the record of the trial.

"Obey the gods at once, and submit to the kings," Justin and his friends were told by the judge.

"By obeying Christ we do no wrong," Justin protested as a spokes-

man for the group.

The heathen judge sneered back. "What is your main dogma, wretch?"

"We believe in one God, and in Jesus Christ His Son," Justin meekly replied.

"Where do you assemble?"

"Where each one chooses and can. The God of the Christians is

not circumscribed by space."

"And where do you worship?" the judge continued, still sneering.
"Above one Martin at the Timiotinian bath," he told his accuser courteously. Then he added, "And if anyone wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth."

"Are you not then a Christian?" Rusticus demanded. "Yes," was the philosopher's straighteforward reply.

The judge questioned Justin's five friends—three Roman men, one woman, and the other a "slave of Caesar."

Turning back to Justin, he inquired, "If you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe you will ascend into Heaven?"

Justin replied with confidence, "I know and am fully persuaded of it.

"I order you to sacrifice to the gods," Rusticus thundered.

"But no right-thinking person falls away from piety to impiety," Justin calmly answered.

"Unless you obey, you will be mercilessly punished," the judge

threatened.

"Do what you will," Justin and his friends answered. "We are

Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols."

The group was questioned no further. Rusticus pronounced the formal sentence of scourging and beheading. Justin and the faithful Christians were led away to their death.

And so the philosopher who had succeeded in his search for truth suffered death because he refused to renounce his faith. He had faithfully argued the case of the Christians throughout the empire. He had penned two *Apologies* and a *Dialogue* that remain classics in Christian literature 18 centuries later and contain a wealth of information about the life and worship of the early Church. In dying, Justin, son of Priscus, acquired a new name—Justin Martyr.

Today Justin is recognized as the greatest of early apologists, or

defenders, of the faith. From him such leaders as Irenaeus and Tertullian of the next generation borrowed copiously. He was a pioneer in blazing a path from pagan philosophy to Christian faith, as he found Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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Christian Conduct

Grace Ferguson

It is past time that someone should call attention to Christian

conduct for both young and old.

Our poor young people see so many, many bad examples i.e. in their parents and in other Christians. It is no wonder that young people become disillusioned, and give up trying to be Christ-like or, to live for Christ.

Where do you and I come into the picture? Where? Where? All the time, wherever we are, because at all times we are to be examples. Our very conduct and lives should speak, "Christ in you,

the hope of glory".

About our homes: parents should never permit themselves to tell a so-called white lie. There is no such thing, and don't ever think that you fool your children, you don't. Neither should parent ever cheat, regardless of how small the matter. I know a young girl that left home because her mother told her a lie, and what a terrible, unhappy, experience she had for a number of years. Her mother didn't want her to be hurt. But Oh! Oh! the sorrow that she caused, because of a lie to protect the daughter.

Now to our young people: regardless of what you see, and hear, never permit anything to ship-wreck your faith. You do not have to give account for anyone except yourselves. Your faith must be in

God, the Father, and Jesus Christ your Savior, the Son of God.

Their faith must be rooted in the word of God, and their conduct governed by the word of God. Now as to conduct:

Let your conduct be above reproach at all time.

Dating seems to be a hazardous time because boys and girls do not limit themselves to Christian girls and boys, but they take in the field, or so it seems. Christians should only go with Christians,

period.

Young girls should have a limit as to how near a young man is permitted to approach her. Hugs and kisses are taboo. If you should happen to go with a young man with roving hands, don't be embarrassed to stop him. Tell him off at the first offense. In fact don't go with him the second time, turn him down flat and mean it. If you don't you are asking for trouble. If you have to sit at home, it will be with dignity and honor, and Jesus will recompense you for being faithful in your conduct.

"And, what so ever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Col. 3:17

"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or what so ever you do, do all to the

glory of God." I Cor. 10:31

If just these two scriptures were taken seriously, and we as Christians, whether old or young would model our conduct accordingly, what a testimony we would have.

Whatever we do, it would be to God's glory. If it wouldn't glorify God then don't go, and have no part of it, or in it. God will

richly recompense you for your faithfulness.

May God help us to be shining example of His grace, purity, and excellence.



Studies in the Book of Acts

Larry Miles

Acts 10:23-48

INTRODUCTION

The tenth chapter of the Book of Acts is one of the most important in the narrative of Luke. Before the events in this chapter, Christianity had, for all practical purposes, been a Jewish religion. The followers of Jesus had not gone into all the world. Now the time has come for Gentiles to hear and respond to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Cornelius had been instructed by an angel of the Lord to send to Joppa and get Simon Peter to come and tell him what he must do to be saved. To read the narrative about the character of Cornelius, one might think that he was already a saved man. No doubt he possessed more good qualities than some who were already in the Body. But being a good and moral person will not make it. Concerning the salvation of Cornelius, he was saved the same way that you and I were saved. God does not depart from His plan to redeem man.

We have left the messengers of Cornelius in Joppa. We encourage all to follow along in your Bible and try to learn more about the Book of Books as we continue our studies in the Book of Acts.

PETER'S JOURNEY TO THE CITY OF CAESAREA: ACTS 10:23-24

In the 23rd verse we're told that Peter followed the command of the Holy Spirit and went with the messengers from Cornelius. Verse 24 tells us that the journey from Joppa to Caesarea took more than one day.

While his trusted servants were away, Cornelius was busy assembling a crowd to hear the Apostle of the Lord proclaim a message from the One True God. He cared enough of his relatives to invite them to

share with him in this joyous occasion.

THE APOSTLE OF THE LORD ARRIVES IN CAESAREA: ACTS 10:25-27

Verse 25 tells us of the first meeting of Peter and Cornelius. The narrative tells of the response of Cornelius to Peter's arrival. Gareth Reese writes the following,

Does Cornelius meet Peter at the city limits, or are we to picture what Luke next records as taking place at the door of Cornelius' home? Probably the latter. Picture the commander of 100 men, in full dress uniform, bowing down to Peter. In Eastern countries, it was usual for persons to prostrate themselves on the ground before men of rank and honor. Cornelius first would have knelt, and then bowed forward until his forehead touched the ground. The word translated 'worshipped' (proskuneo) is the one that tells us that Cornelius bowed before Peter in an act of extreme homage. It is possible, by such an act, to express worship to God, but Cornelius' knowledge of the true God probably keeps us from

In the next verse Peter makes sure that Cornelius harbors no thoughts of him being more than a man. He helps him to his feet and assures him that he too is only a servant of the Most High God. In verse 27 Peter enters into the house of Cornelius to find many people assembled to hear a message from God.

PETER TELLS THE GROUP ASSEMBLED WHY HE CAME TO SPEAK: ACTS 10:28-29

Peter then informs those who have come to hear him of why he was willing to come to speak to them. He tells them that according to his upbringing it is unlawful for a Jew to mingle with Gentiles. Gareth Reese writes.

When Peter says "foreigner," he uses a word (allophulos) which is carefully and kindly selected to avoid the use of "Gentile." There is no such delicacy of feeling in Acts 10:45 and 11:3. Such social segregation as Peter here says is "unlawful" was not explicitly commanded by Moses; but it did seem to be implied in his law, and was the common understanding of the Jews. Moses did forbid intermarriage with the pagan nations in the land of Canaan, and he did discourage participation in their idolatrous practices. This prohibition the Jews (especially as the Pharisees interpreted the Old Testament) extended to social activities of all kinds, and understood they were to have no friendly relationships or commercial transactions with Gentiles. The Strict Jew would not enter a Gentile's house, nor sit at the same couch, nor eat or drink out of the same vessel. Now God had not commanded such segregation as the Jews interpreted; but Peter had been so taught that he feels a bit uncomfortable entering the strange surroundings he just has, so that he goes on to explain why his conduct is so different from what the ordinary Jew's would be.

The Apostle then relates that God has shown him that these practices were wrong. God has hold him that he should call no man unholy or unclean. Peter has learned that all men can come to saving relationship with the Lord. Peter then asks Cornelius to explain why he sent for him.

CORNELIUS EXPLAINS WHY HE SENT FOR PETER TO COME: ACTS 10:30-33

Starting in verse 30, Cornelius relates the events of the previous four days. Reese gives us a breakdown of the events in his book, New Testament History: Acts,

Four days, or parts of four different days, have passed between the visit of the angel to Cornelius and Peter's arrival at Caesarea. On the first day the angel

appeared to Cornelius, and the messengers were dispatched. On the second, the messengers arrived at Joppa, about noon. On the third, Peter and the rest started for the city of Caesarea. On the fourth, they arrived at the home of Cornelius.

Cornelius further explains to those present that it was four days ago at the same time as now, i.e. 3:00 p.m. that the angel appeared to him. In verse 31 he relates what the angel said to him. The angel has told him that his prayer has been heard. Verse 32 tells us that he was told by the angel to send for Simon Peter. In verse 33, Cornelius expresses the fact that he appreciates that Peter took the time to come relay the message of God to him and his friends. Peter had overcome his prejudice and had been willing to be with Gentiles in order to obey the Lord. Cornelius then tells him that they have assembled to hear what the Lord has to say through His servant Peter.

PETER'S PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS: ACTS 10:34-43

In verse 34 Peter begins his message before the assembled house-hold of Cornelius. Peter says that he has come to realize that God is not one to show partiality. This implies that before Peter felt and believed otherwise. In verse 35 Peter tells us that wherever there is one who is seeking after God, God is willing to accept him. That person is a candidate to become a Christian.

In verse 36 Peter tells those assembled that God's message to man was preached through Jesus Christ. He tells Cornelius that Jesus is Lord of all. Peace is available to all through the personage of Jesus

Christ.

Starting in verse 37, Peter reminds them of the events of the life of Jesus Christ. He tells them that they are aware of what has happened. Peter is speaking from first-hand knowledge since he was present with the Lord of Glory when these events transpired.

Peter begins with the first miracle, that of changing the water to wine at Cana of Galilee. Peter then reminds his hearers of the ministry of John the Baptist. Peter takes us from the baptism of John to the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearance of the Christ.

In verse 38 Peter tells them that it was God who anointed His Son with the Holy Spirit. He tells them that in all the good He did, the

Father was with Him. Dale has written these words,

Peter has presented each of the members of the Godhead. God anointed or set apart Jesus for the work he was to do, and he imparted to Him the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus in the work of redemption the three are present—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In verse 39 Peter says that we are witnesses of these events. We were present when they happened. What I am telling you comes from firsthand knowledge. F.F. Bruce writes the following,

Peter emphasizes that he and his colleagues are eyewitnesses of all these things, which took place all over the land of Israel. Yet Jesus' acts of mercy and deliverance, he goes on, did not prevent Him from being put to death—and put to death by the means upon which the O.T. scriptures pronounced a curse, for they killed Him by "hanging Him on a tree."

But the story does not end here. Jesus was unlike any other religious leader in the fact that He conquered death. He was raised from the dead on the third day. Peter then tells his hearers of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. F. F. Bruce writes further concerning this matter,

Again, as so often in Apostolic preaching, comes the pointed contrast between men's treatment of the Christ and God's treatment of Him: the very one whom men put to death is the one whom God raised to newness of life on the third day. There could be no doubt about this: He appeared to many witnesses—not indeed to people at large but to those selected by God to see the risen Saviour, Peter and his fellow-disciples. They could bear certain witness to His resurrection, for they had not only seen Him alive again after His passion but had even eater and drunk with Him. This was decisive proof that it was no bodiless phantom that appeared to them.

In verse 42 Peter tells them that Jesus commanded them to preach the good news to the people. They were to "solemnly testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead." In verse 43 Peter says that the prophets bear witness to Jesus. He says that all who come to Jesus in true obedience will receive the forgiveness of his or her sins. God does not depart from His plan to redeem man.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROCLAMATION OF GRACE: ACTS 10:44-48

It was while Peter was proclaiming the good news that the following event occurred. Luke refers to it in these words, "The Holy Spirit fell upon those who were listening to the message." Gareth Reese writes the following,

Those who are intended are Cornelius, his relatives and close friends. This is a second example in Acts where we are specifically told that it is a case of baptism with the Holy Spirit. This does not seem to be comparable to the Acts 2:38 "gift" of the Holy Spirit, for that comes when a penitent believer is immersed for the forgiveness of his sins; and these men at Caesarea in Cornelius' house have not yet been immersed. Nor does the Holy Spirit come, in this case, by the laying on of an apostle's hands, which suggests that this is not what we have called "spiritual gifts." In the case of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit came as He did on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 11:15 tells us.

F.F. Bruce writes also of this event,

Peter had not yet finished his address when the "Pentecost of the Gentile world" took place. The Holy Spirit fell on all his listeners. But the order of events differed markedly from that which was seen on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, so far at least as the hearers of the apostolic message were concerned. The hearers in Jerusalem were exhorted to repent and be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the experience of the hearers in Caesarea reproduced rather that of the original company of disciples at Jerusalem, on whom the Spirit descended suddenly. Peter indeed, draws a parallel between the household of Cornelius and the original disciples than between the household of Cornelius and the three thousand who believed on the day of Pentecost.

Verse 45 tells of the amazement that came upon the believers who came with Peter. They were surprised that God would grant this to Gentiles. J. W. McGarvey writes the following remarks.

If Peter had finished his discourse, promising them the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit on the terms which he had laid down on Pentecost, and had baptized them, these brethren would have taken it as a matter of course that they had received the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38. And if, after this, Peter had laid his hands on them and imparted to them the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, as in the case of the Samaritans, they would not have been greatly surprised. The considerations which caused the amazement were: first, that the Holy Spirit was "poured out" upon them directly from God, as it had never been before on any but the apostles, and, secondly, that this unusual gift was bestowed upon Gentiles.

In verse 46 those present heard the Gentiles speaking with tongues and exalting God. In the last part of the 46th verse and continuing into the 47th Peter asks the following question: "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did can he?" J. W. McGarvey comments on this verse,

Let us now recall the fact that Cornelius had been directed to send for Peter and hear the words whereby he and his house should be saved, 11:4. Peter has come and spoken those words. He has told the company of the Christ, in whom they now believe. He has told them to be baptized, and in the next verse we shall see it done. What the pious, prayerful, and alms-giving Cornelius had lacked of being a Christian has now been supplied, and nothing has been required of him but to believe in Christ and be baptized.

In verse 48 we have the Apostle Peter commanding them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. He is then asked to stay on for

a while.

In our next essay, we will strive to cover the first eighteen verses of the 11th chapter of Acts. The lesson will be called "Peter defends his action in Jerusalem." Until next time, MARANATHA!

NEWS AND NOTES

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

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It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. Lighthouses do not ring bells and fire cannons to call attention to their shining. They just shine.—Moody

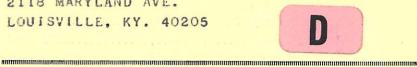
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