

THE WORD AND WORK

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WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

It was to *Nicodemus*, a Hebrew of Hebrews, of the stock of Israel; as touching the law, a Pharisee; a ruler of the Jews, that the Lord Jesus declared the necessity of the New Birth. "Except one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . Ye MUST BE born anew." Surely no language could have been chosen to set forth more perfectly the indispensableness of this thing. The necessity of it is absolute. No man can have any part or share in the kingdom of God except only on condition he be born anew. (John 3.)

NICODEMUS

The Lord selected Nicodemus for this teaching. If any man could have disputed the necessity of the new birth it would have been Nicodemus. If *Nicodemus* must be born again then all men must. All the grounds upon which men might imagine themselves exempt from the necessity of being born anew—Nicodemus could have pleaded them. "Lord," he might have said, "I am of the noblest stock of men—one of thy own nation and people." It matters not—thou must be born anew. No man's natural birth, be it the best, entitles him to a place in the kingdom of God. "But Lord, I have been a worshipper, devout, zealous, having been taught from a babe the holy scriptures." Yet Nicodemus must be born again. "But Lord, my life is blameless: I have walked in God's commandments according to the law. I am of the Pharisees—the strictest adherents to the scriptures. I am a teacher, a leader, a ruler in Israel." But for all this there is but one hope and chance for Nicodemus—the one same chance that by the grace of God is open as well for the Gentile and the publican: "Ye must be born anew."

The necessity for the New Birth lies then in our very humanity. No man's heredity, no man's natural virtue, no man's training or education, no man's good works or worship, piety or morality, can answer. He must be born again. Such a one as Nicodemus, a nobleman among Jews; or the Gentile Cornelius, a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, who prayed to God always and gave much alms to the people—they must alike be born again. There is no exception in this matter. Nothing will take the place of it. Without the new birth all is vain: there can be no entrance into God's kingdom. Why this necessity?

THE NATURAL BIRTH

A birth is the beginning of a new life—a life not before possessed.

The thing born is first *begotten* and that—whether in the vegetable, animal or spiritual sphere—always through *Seed*; and is brought forth a new creature. The nature of that creature depends on the birth from which it took its rise. The nature of the seed that imparts the life determines the nature of the life, and the kind of creature that is brought into existence. A human being has been begotten of man's seed; for here, as elsewhere, the law says "after its kind." (Gen. 1:12.) "Adam begat a son in his own image after his likeness." That which is born of Adam's humanity is human; or, as the Lord said it: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." By this birth one becomes a member of the human race, the race of Adam; a partaker of his nature. And this human nature, the Lord Jesus declares, is not fit to enter the kingdom of God. They must all be born again if they would have a place in the kingdom. This much is clear. But what is the matter with our human nature? Why is humanity as such excluded? And what sort of birth is this "new birth"? And how is it to be accomplished?

WHY A NEW BIRTH?

The first of these questions, touching the unfitness of our fleshly human nature for the kingdom carries with it the indictment of all the race that sprang from Adam. It is in its very nature warped and ruined. This fact is not only revealed to us in scripture, but has been more or less recognized even by pagan philosophers and teachers of all lands and ages. There is one thing that marks all the world of humanity—all that are responsible—they are without exception every one *sinners*. "There is no difference: they have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23, 24). But this universal fact has its great underlying and universal cause: it is always a *corrupt tree* that brings forth evil fruit. To quote from an abler pen: (Alexander Campbell, *Christian System*, page 30):—

"There is therefore a *sin of our nature* as well as personal transgression. Some inappositely call this sin of our nature 'original sin,' as if the sin of Adam was the personal offense of all his children. True indeed, it is; *our nature was corrupted* by the fall of Adam before it was transmitted to us; and hence that hereditary imbecility to do good, and that proneness to do evil, so *universally apparent in all human beings*. . . . All inherit a *FALLEN*, consequently a *SINFUL* nature, though all are not equally depraved."

The same writer adds that under those circumstances, "it is impossible" for "man in his present preternatural state . . . to do anything absolutely pleasing and acceptable to god." (Comp. Rom. 8:8).

This is enough. The ruin of humanity is a universal condition that pervades and affects the quality and the very nature of our human life. It is not only a question of the sins they commit, but rather of the sinful nature from which those sins spring. It is not simply what men *do*, but what they *are*. Manifestly an outward or superficial treatment could not reach the seat of that trouble. Pardon and remission of sins alone could not help it. Mere reformation and

suppression of evil deeds would not meet the need. Though one pluck every black feather out of a crow, it would be a crow still; and when the feathers come back they are black as before. Though one prune and trim a thorn-tree, and remove all the thorns, and cultivate and develop it, it is a thorn-tree for all that: it can never bear apples. "How can a man be born when he is old," asks Nicodemus, "can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Ah, and what would be the good of *that*, even if it could be? That would leave him precisely what he was before—a man of fallen nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." There is where the tragedy lies. Many a man thinks he would give all to have ten or twenty years of his life back again. And for what? Oh, he thinks he could avoid the errors and failures he has made, if he were allowed to have his life over again. Perhaps he would— but he would certainly make other blunders, and commit other wrongs, and worse ones than the first it may be. Did not the life he has lived spring from within himself, out of his very nature and being?

"The Brook—though changing water, bed, and course,
Remains that brook: it cannot change its source."

What his deepest need calls for is not a new start, but a new start with a new nature. Hence the necessity of the New Birth.

"WATER AND THE SPIRIT"

In regard to the expression "born of water and of the Spirit," there has been no small controversy. Many (among them some great and noted commentators) insist that *literal water* is meant here. Others (among whom also some honored names are found) insist as strongly that "water" here is used in a figurative or spiritual sense. Instead of entering into this contention, there is a shorter and more practical way by which we can settle the question for ourselves. The first gospel sermon "by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:12) was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36). After explaining the supernatural demonstration witnessed by the multitude, Peter took up his theme—Jesus: first Jesus of Nazareth, the man; then Jesus crucified and slain; then His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God. Then he brought home to them the fact that they were guilty of the murder of Him whom God had made Lord and Christ. Conscience-stricken the hearers asked what they could do about it; and Peter by the Holy Spirit gave them the answer: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 37, 38.) Then, we read, that those who received the word were baptized, and there were added to them in that day about 3000 souls. Question: Were these born again? Then go thou and do likewise. For, certainly, if one receives the same gospel which they received, and responds to it in the same obedience of faith, even as they did, his state and standing is now the same as was theirs.

"THE BEST AND THE WORST"

In two consecutive chapters of John's gospel, (3 and 4), we

meet two extremes of human conditions. In the third chapter the Lord Jesus Christ is seen dealing with Nicodemus, whose character represents the best of human perfection. In Nicodemus we see the fruit of the culture of the best earthly stock. In the *fourth* chapter of John the Lord Jesus deals with one who may well represent the dregs of humanity—a member of a low mongrel race, and one of the lowest members of that low race—the woman of Samaria. Now it is of the greatest interest and importance to us to note the difference in Christ's dealings with these two. In His talk with Nicodemus, to Nicodemus' great perplexity and dismay, the Lord stressed the inexorable necessity of a new birth. To the woman of Samaria He mentioned no such thing. Instead He spoke to her of a wonderful water of life which would satisfy all her thirst for evermore; and offered her the same freely for the asking.

Now we may wonder indeed how this could be. Why was it necessary for Nicodemus to be born again, and no such necessity was set before the Samaritan woman? And it would seem to us that Nicodemus would have been grateful for such a free offer of that wonderful water of life: why did not the Lord offer it to him? Why all this difference? Are there different gospels and different ways of salvation for different people? The answer is No: the word to Nicodemus and the gracious promise to the woman of Samaria are one and the same.

THE NEW BIRTH AND THE WATER OF LIFE

The new birth is a figure of speech. But there are figures that represent realities. It is indeed a birth, a real birth. For as in all other births there is a begetting—an impartation of life through seed; and the bringing forth of a new creature. On the other hand the living water, which if a man drink he shall thirst no more, this also is a figure of speech, and stands for a simple reality—namely the impartation of a new life—a life from God—which also necessarily results in a new nature and being. But there was a necessity for setting the matter before Nicodemus in one way and before the woman of Samaria in another. Nicodemus did not know his need. If any man could have trusted in his natural virtues and advantages he felt sure that *he* could. And like others of his class he really did trust in them. The necessity of the new birth which Jesus declared to him meant nothing less than the sweeping away of all that Nicodemus had been banking on. All his natural claims, all he was and all he had done was as nothing. For the new birth was not only a new beginning, but being that, it meant also the cancellation of all that went before. It left no room for name or claim. If only by a new birth men can be acceptable before God, then all alike are cast upon the grace of God for salvation. And so it is. Even his Jewish pedigree, however much it may profit in other ways, is of no avail in this matter; for *salvation*, whether it be the Jew's or the Gentile's, must evermore be of grace, and cannot be claimed as a right by any man on any ground. God has concluded all under sin that he might have mercy upon all. Nicodemus must be made to

understand this. Hence to him the teaching of the necessity of the New Birth.

THE GOSPEL OF THE OUTCASTS

The case of the Samaritan woman was utterly different. She had nothing to bank on, either by birth, or conduct, or character. In dealing with her the Lord did not have to remove any false reliance. It was not difficult to convict her of her need as a lost sinner. To her, therefore, the Lord Jesus at once opened up His gracious promise of the water of life. In accepting that she also came in for the new birth, which she needed as much, yet not more so than did Nicodemus. "To as many as received him," be they whatever they may, "even to them that believed on his name, gave he the right to become children of God"—children "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This goes for the Samaritan woman as well as for Nicodemus. And did He not skilfully lead her to faith in Himself as the Christ, the Savior of the world? (See John 4:25, 26, 28, 29, 39, 42.)

TO EACH AS THE NEED REQUIRED

Our Lord's wise adaptation of His teaching to the state of the sinner is now easily seen. Let us suppose for a moment that the Lord had said to Nicodemus what He said to the Samaritan; and to the Samaritan woman what He said to Nicodemus—and imagine what the result would have been. If He had offered to Nicodemus so freely and graciously the gift of the living water—what would Nicodemus, and his fellow Jews, yea, and all the rest of the world, have thought? Why, they would have said "To such a good and noble and deserving individual as Nicodemus, Christ would naturally give His best." They would have concluded that this gift was coming to the noble Jew and that the Lord in recognition of his worthiness, offered to bestow salvation on him without further question. But an error more deadly than that it would be hard to conceive of. Or if He had said to the woman of Samaria, "Thou must be born anew"—why, of course (all the Jews, and all the self-righteous moralists would have said)—such people as these, and all low-down classes, must needs be born anew; but those of us who by birth and culture are of a nobler sort—we need no such change. And this, equally, would have been as fatal an error as the other. Furthermore it would have been entirely unnecessary to bring home to the poor woman, what no doubt she already knew well enough—the worthlessness of her life, and her unfitness to enter the kingdom of God as she was. She made no claim, and it would have been superfluous to prove to her that she had no claim.

But to Nicodemus the Lord Jesus said almost harshly, Thou must be born anew; and to the low Samaritan He said, I will give thee the living water for the asking. The New Birth was really needed by both alike; and also the same promise of the living water was in the free loving grace of God to both. And the one who was born anew also received the living water; and the one who received the living water was thereby also born anew. Wonderful are His ways in truth and grace to the children of men!

NEWS AND NOTES

Sellersburg, Ind.: "The Lord's work at the Cherry Street Church of Christ is doing fine with visitors at the various services. The Lord has added his blessings to our efforts which has resulted in a gradual growth both in numbers and in spirit. One was baptized last Sunday. Our bus is a great help in getting new ones interested."—E. E. Kranz.

Amite, La.: "The little crippled girl next door, Julia Mae Lee, left us to be with her Lord on February 25. She did so much enjoy the singing at the church the night you (Brother Jorgenson) were with us. She just forced herself to go that night. For about forty-five days I sat beside her bed every afternoon at three o'clock and read scriptures to her and had prayer with her. She was a wonderful Christian.

"Our new building is progressing nicely. We are in the market to borrow \$5000 to complete the job and, of course, we must have it before the building is completed. But we will have a usable building when completed, and that should not be later than June 1.

"Our local work is showing some signs of new life and interest among some new folk. Our good brother Ward Hayden died on February 27. He was 74 years of age."—A. K. Ramsey.

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: "The work down here is about as usual. We are at work on the church building, but progress is slow. We had a sad death in our little congregation recently, the 12-months old baby boy of our song leader, Brother Geer. Our attendance and interest hold up to its usual figure: around 40 in Sunday school and around 30 for preaching. We have received several donations toward the building as a result of the appeal run in the last issue of the Word and Work."—Brady M. Green.

Lexington, Ky.: "We had three baptisms and a renewal of interest in the church work, especially among the children."—Orell Overman.

Oakdale, La.: "We are to have another meeting here in Oakdale,

Lord willing, beginning June 13 or 14, with Robert B. Boyd of Johnson City, Tennessee, doing the preaching. We intend also to book several mission meetings in and around this city of 6500 population, where opposition is strong and membership small. The few that are here are very faithful. We solicit the prayers of all the faithful."—Sidney Mayeux.

Dugger, Ind.: "We are having an increase in attendance this year over last year at the same time. I think the Sunday school averages about ten more per Sunday than last year. Our Thursday afternoon classes have held up fine all winter, with from thirty to forty each week. We are planning our Vacation Bible School to begin May 16. We plan to study the book of Exodus."—Maurice Clymore.

Abilene, Texas: "We are still rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord to the work in Abilene. Public responses are few, but the growth that has come from those who have been neglecting to continue in the work is heartening. Pray with us for a great revival of spiritual power among us."—Carl Kitzmiller.

Glenmora, La.: "Plans have been made for Brother Frank Mullins to hold a meeting at Glenmora, beginning Sunday, April 17. It has been some years since Brother Mullins has preached here, and many are looking forward eagerly to hearing him again."—J. Edward Boyd.

Jennings, La.: "David Broaddus, Jack Mitchell, and Kenneth Istre, students of Harding College, visited us the second Sunday in March. Kenneth led singing and David preached at the morning service; David gave a brief account of his experiences in China and the Philippines at the young people's meeting; and the three young men gave talks at the evening service which were a blessing to us all."—Ivy J. Istre.

"Nineteen-three have been baptized through our efforts in the past two years. Others are almost persuaded. So we press on with much joy and prayer for the work. Brother Colis Campbell and wife are with

us now and are working in a good way. We are confident that they will do a good work."—E. A. Rhodes, Japan.

Revivals Scheduled

Brother H. N. Rutherford of Lexington, Ky., is to be with the Shawnee church, Louisville, in a meeting beginning April 17. The local minister Willis H. Allen, will start the meeting on Sunday and Brother Rutherford will arrive on Monday, Lord willing.

The UNION YOUTH REVIVAL is slated for Ormsby Ave. church, 622 E. Ormsby, Louisville, from May 22-29, with John H. Adams of Jacksonville, Fla., as evangelist.

Jesse Bibb is planning to use a gospel tent in a mission effort at Jeffersontown, Ky., starting May 15. It is hoped that Cedar Springs and Fisherville congregations, nearby, will lend their moral support to this effort to win souls.

The Highland church of Christ is announcing a meeting with her new minister, Hall C. Crowder, from May 8 through 22. Brother Crowder has already endeared himself to his people and to the brethren in Louisville. Attendance at all services at Highlands is unusually good.

Sellersburg, Indiana, is to conduct a youth revival from May 29 to June 5. This is an annual event and is always well attended.

J. R. Clark is to be with the Fair Park Church in Dallas, Texas, in a meeting, beginning Sunday, May 1. H. E. Beck is minister of this congregation in the deep South and, according to reports, is doing a fine work.

Later gospel meetings will be announced in next Word and Work.

1949 Clubbers

Quite a number have responded to our appeal for club-lists to the Word and Work this year. Robert B. Boyd of Johnson City, Tennessee, tops the list again this year with over a hundred. Mrs. George Leffler of Louisville, Ky., is next with 54 in her fine club. At least one other sent in 50, some sent as many as 30, and others on down to four.

Read Faith of Our Fathers

Many cooperated in forming a great club of 1000 choice names,

who are to receive the Word and Work for one year through the compliments of the "Faith of Our Fathers" department, which appears each month in keeping with the will of the late Don Carlos Janes to promote a better understanding among brethren, through these reprints from the revered pioneer fathers. The letter F after your name on the envelope identifies you as a member of this club. **It is hoped that several whose names are on this list will wish to pay for their own subscriptions, so that other names can be added.**

Winchester, Ky.: "I have just returned from a meeting (Youth Revival) with the brethren at Johnson City, Tennessee. The attendance and interest were fine. It is most encouraging to find a congregation where the young people are interested in the carrying on of the Lord's work.

"The young men at Johnson City led the songs, read the Word, led in prayer, and conducted the service generally during the revival. They did it well too. During this short meeting, there were four responses to the gospel invitation.

"Brother and Sister Boyd are being used of the Lord greatly in this fine work.

We, here at Winchester, are planning our spring revival to begin on April 20 and close on May 1. Bro. John H. Adams will bring the messages."—Ben Rake.

\$214 Received—More Needed

"A letter from Brother Green states that \$214.00 has come toward completing the church building at Ft. Lauderdale in response to my recent a ticle in Word and Work. Much more is needed; but, as Brother Green says: 'Every bit helps just that much.' We have right now just a little over three hundred dollars in the treasury. I doubt that will finish up all the pylasters, buy all the lumber it will take for the forms for the beltcourse, pay for the concrete to pour the beltcourse, and pay the colored help we will have to hire to pour this job. But God is able, and by his grace, we will win in time I feel sure.'"—R. B. Boyd.

Johnson City, Tenn.: "Our annual Youth Revival, as usual, was a great blessing to the Lord's work

here. Brother B. D. Rake of Winchester, Ky., was our evangelist. It was a return engagement for Brother Rake, and he endeared himself anew to our folk. Services were conducted at the Locust St. church, but it was really a joint meeting between the Mountain View church and the Locust Street church. There were four responses to the invitation during the series, one for restoration and 3 for baptism. We had 134 in Sunday School the first Sunday of the meeting, and 119 the last. On the last Sunday of the meeting the Mountain View brethren put on a special effort and had 64 present for Sun-

day School.

"The first Sunday of April marks the 3rd anniversary of the Mountain View church, and we hope to have a record attendance at all services. We also hope to soon start work on completing the church building.

"Lord willing, I'll be in Jacksonville, Fla., early in May for an evangelistic effort with the Woodstock Park church, where John Adams ministers so effectively. I also hope to help the Piedmont Ave. church, Greenville, S. C., in a tent meeting, in late May. Bro. Henry Harding is doing a fine work in Greenville.—Robert B. Boyd.

W. H. CRAIN

Mrs. Parker of Houston sends us the following notice from *The Houston Post* of her father's death on March 21. Brother Crain was known and loved by many of us in Louisville where he had visited more than once. He was full of faith, meek and gentle, and had stood, according to his light and ability, for the "whole counsel of God."—J.

Funeral services for William H. Crain, 81, father of Mrs. Bonnie Parker, an employee of the business department of *The Houston Post*, will be held at 4 p. m. Wednesday at the Fogle-West chapel.

Mr. Crain, a retired laundryman and insurance salesman, died Monday afternoon in the Memorial hospital. He lived at 3704 Watson. Born in Murfreesboro, Ark., Mr. Crane moved to Houston in 1898. He helped organize the first Church of Christ in Houston. Burial will be in the Resthaven cemetery. Burton Coffman will officiate.

TRUE UNITY

Some one has pointed out that the real obstacle to the world's belief is not a lack of union among the various Christian denominations, for the world cares nothing for the Church of Christ or its divisions—it only uses its divisions as another excuse for indifference to the claims of Christ, and dislike for His true people. The world will no more believe from a union of merely nominal Christians, than it would from a union of bricklayers or physicians. External uniformity, without the Spirit of Christ, is, at best, but a poor negative thing with little spiritual significance. But when one in whom the Lord Jesus dwells comes into the presence of one to whom Christ is supremely precious, there must inevitably flow true fellowship and communion. It is the bond of love for Christ which annihilates every bit of sectarianism—not mere external uniformity. Water cannot rise above its own level. He, to whom the Lord is all, will be loved and revered by true Christians everywhere—for he that loveth God will love his brother also. And he, on the other hand, will honor all real Christians in every place.—A. C. Harrington.

Christ is everything. He is everything to the heart of God, and He desires to be everything to the hearts of His people. That it may be so with you is the highest blessedness I can desire for you.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES COOPERATED

Stanford Chambers

Some jobs are too big for one congregation to do. The Lord of the church allows them sometimes to be so. He allowed the famine to come over all Judaea that other churches, not affected directly by the famine, might cooperate in the relief. It was to be made manifest that the need of relief on the part of the saints in one region appealed to the regenerated hearts of saints in other regions. That was good for those relieved; it was *more* blessed, the giving to their need. An important resultant was the consciousness thus developed that all were members of the one divine family. That is very important.

But the churches would not have made up their bounties for such relief (2 Cor. 9:6) if they had not been informed. Paul, others also, brought the needed information to them, and made appeals for the funds, received the same (sometimes returned for it, after obtaining a promise) and carried the "alms" to his people (and God's) at Jerusalem. This does not exactly conform to the theory sometimes voiced to the effect that we should make our needs known to God only. The late D. C. Janes was often confronted with this idea as it was urged against his slogan, "The brethren will do more when they are taught more."

Nor was it divinely planned that each congregation should act in entire independence in the matter of relieving the famine-stricken portion of God's family. The churches were led not only to work on the same big job, but to *recognize* that it was a co-operative work. Churches (plural) appointed a man to travel with Paul in the matter. "And we have sent together with him (that is, with Titus) the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel . . ." (2 Cor. 8:18, 19).

Note also: (v. 23) "Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker . . . or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches . . ." So churches have approved example for cooperating consciously and purposely on the job which is too big for one, and may jointly appoint men to service. It is not hereby intended to admit that God is not equal to the task, however big. He could do the thing without His family's help, but it would not then be a family affair as He manifestly wishes; and so, while He could and might do the thing Himself, such is not to His liking.

The execution of the Great Commission is also too big for any congregation. The apostle sought to enlist all in the great work. He "robbed other churches" in order to establish the Cause on a proper footing at Corinth. Philippi sent "once and again" to his necessity, and would have done it more, but for lack of opportunity. Paul says that when he was in Thessalonica, Philippi was the only church that did that—implying that others would naturally be expected to do so.

These things are written by way of example for us. No church liveth to itself alone.

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON PRAYER

R. H. B.

THE POWER OF UNITED PRAYER

In Matthew's gospel there are yet several other precious teachings concerning prayer. One of these comes in connection with directions as to the church's united and concerted action in matters of discipline. The Lord adds to that a general word, applicable always, everywhere, for the encouragement of His own. "Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19, 20).

A deep saying, and full of meaning! Private prayer has its own place and value, and nothing can take the place of it (Matt. 6:6). But a petition made by two or more of His people jointly has a peculiar force of its own. As in the O. T. promise—"One of you shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight"—so here, as to prayer, the effectiveness of petition is intensified when two or three join in together. "If two of you shall agree," He says. The Greek word is *sumphoneo*, "symphonize"; as if to say, when two or three together join in a symphony of petition unto God, without jarring note of discord. It is more than mere passive agreement between those who pray. The two or three are to pray in unison of heart, each with the same earnestness of desire as the others. Such prayer must be and will be answered. It needs not be said that the conditions which always attach to prayer, are implied here also; but these limitations are not meant to cast doubt on the efficacy of prayer. The conditions of effective prayer are directive and constructive, not destructive; and no prayer of faith is ever lost.

But these who thus pray in concert must be of His own; and, it is assumed, of course, that they are "on praying terms with God." They are gathered together, two, or three, or more, *in His Name*—that is as His people, representing Him before God. The phrase is not merely "in His name," but, literally, "unto His name"—as if they had gathered around His Name. This can only mean that their recognition of His Name—their faith in who and what He is—is what drew them together to pray. The sure efficacy of such prayer is due to the fact that on such an occasion, in such an assembly, the Lord Jesus Christ is present; "there am I in the midst of them." Hardly would it be a common, casual request that would so draw them together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus; but it would be when hearts greatly burdened and troubled, or otherwise deeply concerned, as for the condition of the church, or the need of the world around them, or some personal distress and emergency, that they would be so drawn together to unite in fervent supplication. Such prayer must and will have its answer, saith the Lord.

THE LESSON OF GETHSEMANE

Another teaching is contained in one sentence, short, but how

meaningful! It was in Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus had brought three of His disciples nearer than the rest; and to them He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; abide ye here and watch with me." "And he went forward a little, and fell on His face and prayed. . . . And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" (Matt. 26:38-41). As recorded in Luke (22:46) "Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Once before, in the Lord's Prayer, had Jesus taught His disciples that by prayer they might be kept, not only from sin itself, but from the very temptation to sin—"Lead us not into temptation." And that were an immeasurable boon and advantage. For none of us can count on our ability to withstand temptation; and though it must sometime be faced it is better far, when so it can be, that we be not tempted. Hence this prayer. In answer to such petition we can escape many a trial and test.

Now this was the great crisis—the hour of the Evil one and the power of darkness (Luke 22:53b). Satan had desired to have them that he might sift them as wheat (Luke 22:31). They might yet escape the brunt of the great temptation by prayer. But a strange drowsiness (was it only natural?)—came over them, and the Lord who wanted them to watch with Him found them sleeping. "Prayer is better than sleep," says even the Muezzin's call. And there is a time when all hinges upon timely prayer, and when sleep is fatal. Thus the apostle Paul admonishes Christians, in order that they might be able to stand "in the evil day" to watch unto prayer (Eph. 6:13, 18). The hour of Gethsemane was a time of supreme spiritual peril, and prayer was just then the paramount necessity. But the disciples slept. They might have avoided the force of the great test that was coming, had they prayed. They were indeed devoted and loyal to the Lord Jesus, but the flesh was weak, as in all of us it is. Prayer takes hold on the power of God; only in the power of His might can we stand and prevail. The second time the Lord returned to them, and found them sleeping; and when He came the third time He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest. Arise, let us be going: behold he is at hand that betrayeth me." Which meant, "It is too late now—you may as well sleep on. See, already yonder comes the traitor with his horde." Prayer-time was past. Prayer must be made in its time. Men may sleep away their one golden hour, and often do. Many do not pray till it is too late. And, oh what sorrow and heartbreak they might have been spared! Even if by the mercy of God there be forgiveness and restoration, how much better to prevent a fall than to have the broken bones healed afterward!

Before we leave the gospel of Matthew we must note one short sentence found in the Lord's great prophetic discourse, the "Olivet Sermon" (Matt. 24, 25). It is not the prophetic import of Christ's sermon that concerns us here, but a thing he said incidentally about

prayer—a word so casually dropped, as to seem only an incidental remark, and yet of far-reaching and tremendous significance. Here it is:

“And pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on a sabbath.”

It is difficult to explain this saying without going into the whole prophetic context, which here we cannot do. Sufficient it is to note that the Lord is here warning his disciples of a terrific danger, and that He points out a special event which must be the signal to them for instant flight. In a related passage this event is the encirclement of Jerusalem by a hostile army. (Luke 21:20, 21.) Whatever the occasion, the flight must be immediate and swift, if they were to escape the threatening disaster. If their flight were in the winter it would be hindered by weather and floods, or even by snow and ice. If it were on a sabbath, the gates would be shut, and with no means of transportation available. Without inquiring further now as to when or how such a situation would arise, let us notice just this one point: In answer to the disciples' prayer the time and season of the impending catastrophe can be changed. Their prayer would alter the decisions of the enemy, change his plan and strategy and the time of his action, and the movement of the hostile army. We are almost tempted to ask, Does the Lord really mean that? Is it possible, is it thinkable, that the prayers of a few poor people could have such a vast result? Evidently so. Here then we learn something of the power and possibilities of the Christian's prayer. He, to whom His children pray, holds the hearts of kings in His hand. (Prov. 21:1.) In answer to the petition of His people the history of the world may be changed; wars and conflicts deferred; disasters avoided; and much suffering and distress spared to them, and, incidentally, to their fellow-men, because of their prayers. Hence also the apostle writes, “I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior . . . (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

The present hour is full of grave forebodings and Christians have indeed great reason so to pray now.

“I believe it is for the safety, comfort, and happiness of all true Christians to expect as little as possible from churches or governments under the present dispensation; to hold themselves ready for tremendous convulsions and changes of all things established; and so to expect their good things only from Christ's Second Advent.”—J. C. Ryle.

Some like to reprove and rebuke others, but refuse to accept any reproof, rebuke or correction offered to them.

God's system of teaching and worship is perfect. It meets the needs of His disciples in every congregation, small or large, wherever it may be. In this respect it differs from a mere set of rituals which impose outward observance of things.—W. J. Johnson

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF THE BOOK. On the desk before me is a copy of the New Testament, 552 pages altogether (and a few lines over); and when I open it at precisely the mid-point, I discover that I am at the 11th chapter of Acts! Preceding this book are the four gospels, telling us the good news concerning the Son of God, with special emphasis upon His death and resurrection. The third of these Gospels was written by a Gentile physician who, after making a careful investigation of the facts, set them down for one whom he addressed as "Most Excellent Theophilus"; and the book of Acts is his continuation of the story—volume II, as we may well express it, of a production which is of inestimable value to all those who love the Lord. We may well be grateful to God for having given us, through Dr. Luke, this account of the rise and early progress of Christianity. But the book of Acts is not only a continuation of the story of the Gospels; it serves also as an introduction to the epistles which follow. Without a knowledge of its contents, much that is contained in them would scarcely be intelligible. Every child of God should be well informed concerning the things written in this book.

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK. The most generally used title, "The Acts of the Apostles," is misleading. It covers too much ground. For it suggests that we have at least a rather full account of the work of the entire apostolic group, whereas most of them are given only brief mention in the first chapter. Except for the story of Stephen in chapter 7 and that of Philip in chapter 8, the rest of the book is devoted almost exclusively to the activities of Peter and Paul; and the brevity of the record made it necessary to leave much of *their* work untold. "Acts of Apostles," the title used by Rotherham in his "Emphasized New Testament," is better. But this does not cover quite enough ground; for Stephen and Philip were not Apostles. The suggestion that the book should be called "Acts of the Holy Spirit" has merit; for the Spirit's presence and guidance is manifest throughout. They were told to wait for His coming, and not until He came upon them in amazing demonstration of power did they enter upon their appointed ministry. It was a filled-with-the-Holy-Spirit Peter who calmly faced the Jewish council and declared that the Jesus whom they crucified was their only hope of salvation; and when he and John were released and returned to their company, and these disciples prayed to God concerning the threats that had been made against them, the Lord answered by filling them all with the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who directed Philip to join the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch and caught him away when his work there was done; and it was He who instructed the church at Antioch to separate Paul and Barnabas for their appointed work and sent them forth on the first of the great missionary tours. In these and other passages we see the Holy Spirit witnessing, empowering, in-

spiring and directing in the ministry of the Word. We shall of course continue the use of the customary titles; but let us never lose sight of the fact that it is the Spirit who is predominant throughout.

THE THEME OF THE BOOK. "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up." Thus Luke states the theme of his first volume, and at the same time suggests that of the second. Note the word "*began*." It is not "what Jesus did and taught," but what He "began to do and to teach." His work was not yet finished at the time of His ascension; it must continue. And the agency of its continuance was to be His body—not, to be sure, the physical body which He used during His earthly ministry, but that body which is made up of redeemed men and women, the body of which He is the head and they are the members, the church which He has purchased with His own blood and in which dwells the Holy Spirit. Not long before His crucifixion Jesus had said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto the Father." (John 14:12.) And it was the purpose of Luke to give an account of some of these greater works which Jesus was to accomplish through those who believed on Him. It is the story of fervent evangelism, of laborers going forth into fields white unto the harvest, of Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus proclaiming the good news of salvation in His blood, first in Jerusalem, then in all Judea and Samaria, and finally to the nations beyond. But the story is unfinished; abruptly it ends with the great apostle to the Gentiles a prisoner at Rome, awaiting his trial before the imperial court, and yet not ceasing to preach Christ and Him crucified.

WHAT IS NON-SECTARIAN CHRISTIANITY?

It may safely be assumed that members of the Churches of Christ desire non-sectarian Christianity. This has been their historic plea. For that matter, a majority of the intelligent people of non-Romanistic Christendom yearn for it, and a great many of them, many of us may be surprised to know, are working for it diligently and devotedly. The issue, therefore, is not whether it is desirable but what it is. Striving for vaguely defined or wrongly defined objective tends toward fanaticism.

Non-sectarianism is not to be indentified with holding to or contending for formally correct doctrines and practices. This has its place, but there is something more basic involved. Formally correct doctrines and practices may become shibboleths and party symbols. There is no indication that the Corinthian church was divided doctrinally, yet sectarianism was rearing its head. Their sin, as reflected in 1 Corinthians 1-3, consisted in cliqueishness, each clique exalting its favorite preacher to the place in their devotion which Christ alone should have held. One of these cliques even exalted Christ in a divisive, sectarian manner! To refrain from a practice or a teaching merely because "the sectarians do it" does not insure our

own non-sectarianism, for our very refusal may be colored by party-ism.

Many well-meaning people of both past and present have identified non-sectarianism with uniformity of faith and practice. An element in the background of the struggle between Anglicanism and the Non-conformists in the days of Queen Elizabeth and following was the Anglican desire for a uniform faith and practice throughout the realm. It was one of their boasts that no matter in what part of the kingdom an Anglican might find himself, the worship in the local churches would follow the same pattern. Uniformity has reached its acme in the Roman Catholic Church. Yet who can ascribe non-sectarianism to these bodies *per se*? Still it must be said, of Anglicanism at any rate, that there are men in it whose sincere devotion to the cause of a united church is unquestionable! There is no religious body in all of Christendom which is absolutely free from sectarianism, just as there is no such body where the torch of non-sectarianism has been completely extinguished.

These factually supported conclusions, if accepted, lead us to look for the essence of non-sectarianism or vice-versa, not in the external structure of "Christendom," but in the spirits and attitudes of individual Christians. It was a bad *spirit* which Paul rebuked in the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal* . . ." Spirituality and carnality are terms which describe the inner man. And Paul wrote these words in the course of his condemnation of their sectarianism. To be sure, it manifested itself in their outward conduct, but the source was in their hearts: ". . . for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife (the outward manifestations), are ye not carnal (the inward cause)? The unity Paul recommends is a "unity of the Spirit," (Eph. 4:3), and this Spirit dwells in us (Rom. 8:11). One may profess belief in formally correct doctrines and engage in formally correct practices, but with a sectarian spirit. Furthermore, this sectarian spirit in the *man* will insinuate itself into his beliefs and practices (unless these are purely ritualistic and mean nothing to him) and their "correctness" will not save him from sectarianism. Until a "right spirit" is "renewed" within him he cannot but be sectarian, regardless of his utterances. Non-sectarianism is something which is woven into the warp and woof of a Christian's character; it belongs to the *man*, not to his public or private utterances nor to the formal structure of the organization to which he belongs.

Since the foundations of non-sectarianism lie in the character and not in holding this belief or practice instead of that, then it is actualized in the life of the individual through regeneration and progressive sanctification, just as any other element of God-likeness is. It is only "in Christ" that the principle of carnality, the source of sectarianism, is overcome. When we "put on Christ" and "crucify the old man" we put to death the divisive tendency of the natural man. When Christ takes up His abode in our hearts the barriers to genuine community are transcended. He "draws all men" unto himself, and "in him" we are all one man. His church is the community

which is thus created by Him; it is His "body."

Note that the Christian community is constituted by a common trust in and devotion to a person, Jesus Christ, and not by the acceptance of a dogma. Dogmas are intellectual formulations of particular points of view. Now the way a particular person's mind works is a part of his unique individuality. Two men may agree on a formulation of their faith only to discover upon further discussion that some differences do exist still. It is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to have absolute uniformity of understanding. There are too many diverse elements which go to make up a person's understanding. Unity cannot mean conformity; it is a common attitude toward Christ, and must make room for diversity of understanding. If you and I both love the Lord Jesus Christ, there is all the foundation for community that we need. Furthermore — and this is important — there will be freedom to discuss our differences openly and frankly; common understanding is arrived at in no other way. And such discussion, mind you, is not free if it can proceed only after certain things are set aside as sacrosanct "fundamentals," not open to discussion. There need be no fear that such freedom will impair the community so long as Christ is kept central. If we keep Him central there will be love for others for whom He is also central; Christ draws men together, and in the community which is thus created anything can be discussed from as many sides as there are to the question. If such open discussion causes separation, then it is not Christ, but a dogma which is central with us. All the creedalism and all the ritualism in the world cannot subdue the carnal spirit, which is the source of "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties." There are people today who observe identical "modes of worship," yet who could not be induced to observe them under the same roof at the same time. There are people who would outline the "plan of salvation" identically alike, yet who are anathema to each other. It is only where Christ is central that there can be non-sectarianism. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

Now this doesn't mean that "it makes no difference what one believes, just so he is sincere." The disastrous effects of wrong beliefs can be documented *ad infinitum*; witness the Inquisition or the New England witch hunts. There are those who go astray and there are those who are "babes in Christ." Education will always be an indispensable part of the church's work. But education can proceed only in an atmosphere of mutual respect, forbearance, and longsuffering. It is a practical denial of the Lordship and Saviorhood of Christ to deny a fellow-Christian my fellowship or to hound him out of the brotherhood simply because he and I do not agree. Those who exalt Christ in their hearts will have mutual love, the *sine qua non* of non-sectarian Christianity.—Robert E. Box, in *Chicago Christian*.

What will become of those cut flowers to-morrow? They will fade. So truth that is separated from Christ will fade away.

"LOOKING TOWARD THE JUNIOR COLLEGE"

Winston Allen

The current session of the Louisville Christian Training School is scheduled to close May 20. Classes now meeting are: first year Greek, and Missions, taught by Dennis Allen; Church History, LaVern houtz; Bible Geography, Claude Neal; English, Rebecca Doty; Biblical Introduction and The Bible and Science, Winston Allen, and two sight singing classes taught by Brother Willis H. Allen. Brother Boll's classes closed April 1. In the large Friday night class (attendance of one hundred or more) everyone was greatly blessed by the lessons on "Great Doctrines of the Bible." "Types and Anti-types" was the theme of the Thursday morning class. In the afternoon meetings the books of Mark and I and II Corinthians were studied. These classes taught by Brother Boll have been used of the Lord and their influence goes on and on. Many more should avail themselves of the opportunity to study the Bible with a man who has devoted his life to studying, living and teaching the Word of God. The humble aim is not "to put something over," but simply to find out what God has said.

The importance of Christian education cannot be overemphasized. If you sharpen your tools, God will find work for you to do. Other things being equal, the Christian worker who has the best training will be the most efficient instrument in the Lord's hands. He gives each person all the scope he can use. Because the fields "are white already unto harvest," it is of paramount importance to "give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."

Little fault can be found today with the 'quantity' of education in our land. A greater percent of the population is attending school now than ever before. Applying Daniel's prophetic statement in Daniel 12:4 to secular learning—"even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." But education hasn't brought the desired results. Even Dr. Butler of the University of Chicago made this significant statement:

"We live no longer in the expectation that the millennium will come through education. We once thought that if we were in condition to found good schools and to bring the boys and girls under the influence of a good education, we could finally put a stop to all unrighteousness and sin. But the fact of it is that education with reference to this point is a total failure. Men do not act according to their best knowledge, but they do the things they love to do. It matters not how high we may educate the understanding, the man can, in spite of it, be a slave to his passions. Mankind do not act according to their best knowledge and wisdom, but do the things they love to do. While education of the intellect may cause its possessor to beware of the grosser sins, it may at the same time be only a means of making the man more cunning."

In advertisements we often see or hear the statement, "Accept no substitutes." The underlying cause today of the trouble in the educational world is the accepting of substitutes. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said to His people, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living

waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." There were two sources of water for the children of Israel in the region around Jerusalem: one was fountains or springs, and the other was cisterns hewn out of rocks. During the five months' rainy season the cisterns were filled and could then serve as reservoirs during the dry season. But it was not unusual for the rocks to crack and allow the stagnant water to escape. The cisterns were poor substitutes for springs.

Modern education (including much so-called religious education), like Israel of old, has forsaken God, the Fountain of living water, and has hewn out cisterns that can hold no water. It has substituted for the Word of God the devil-inspired theory of evolution which appeals to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the vain-glory of life." It has deified man, humanized God, air-conditioned hell, ignored the cross of Christ and brought heaven down to earth. Modern education "feedeth on ashes" (Isa. 44:22); thus it not only fails to nourish the soul, but it actually poisons.

The Bible is the true university. It alone can serve as our guide and light. Every subject should be taught in its proper relation to the Bible, for the Word of God and the Works of God are in perfect harmony. The main Textbook, the Fountain, in Christian education is the Bible.

This fall, under the direction of the elders of the Portland Church and the Board of Directors from various churches in this area, the long hoped-for Junior College will open, the Lord willing. A new building is to be completed this summer. The present Training School is to be incorporated in the new college. Besides a number of Bible courses we hope to offer courses in English, Biology, Greek, History, Mathematics, Bible School Pedagogy, Music, Speech, Personal Work, Missions, Typing, Shorthand, etc. A number of teachers with masters and bachelors degrees are to be associated in the work. In order to help meet expenses, approximately thirty-six dollars a term will be charged for tuition.

We give this preview of the plans for the benefit of prospective students but mainly that individuals and churches will be inspired to pray for the work. It was begun by faith; it can progress only on the basis of faith. "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it." We believe the promise and exhortation in Matt. 6:33 should be the basis upon which to operate a Christian College. Note Matt. 6:33. Substitutes fail. When schools look to the world or to the brotherhood for support, there is a grave danger of catering to, or being controlled by, principles which are not always in harmony with the Word of God. It is better to look to God who owns the earth and the fulness thereof. Looking to God to meet every need as it arises will be a testimony for the God who hears prayer, and will be a constant motivation for His *dependent* children to keep close to Him and to put His kingdom first. God does not fail. Our prayer should be that we will not fail Him.

The greatest asset to the school will be the development of a spirit of prayer in many individuals and congregations for this

work. The needs must be kept constantly before the throne of grace. Through prayer God influences the hearts of men. Brethren, let us accept this challenge and go forward. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

"IT HAS ALL BEEN FULFILLED"

R. H. B.

There seems to be a remarkable consensus among numerous writers and leaders in the church, to the effect that most, if not all, the great prophecies of the Bible have long since been fulfilled, or, at least, are in process of fulfilment.

Thus, for example, we are told that the nation of Israel has long since got all that was promised her, has failed, has been cast off, that all her "gifts and calling" have really been repented of and revoked, and that God is through with them forever.

Or again—when we read in Dan. 2 of the Stone that smote the great Image of Gentile world-power and sovereignty, reduced it to small fragments, "like the chaff of the summer threshing floor," and then carried away by the winds into the nowhere—that all this has all come to pass long ago.

The prophecy that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as waters cover the sea was fulfilled away back in the days of the apostles, and so that, too, is a thing of the past.

As for the binding of Satan—he is bound now, or is being bound more and more all along. Also the saints are now reigning over the nations with a rod of iron ("figuratively" of course!). The Great Tribulation also is all past (it happened A. D. 70) and the Man of Sin, or the Antichrist, has long since appeared.

The "regeneration," when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, and the apostles sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel—we hear, is the present dispensation, which began 1900 years ago. Also "the restoration of all things" is now progressively going on. Yea, the first resurrection is past already, or it is taking place in the baptism of believers; and the 1000 years are past, or merely figurative of such good times as we are seeing in these days—or perhaps they do not mean anything special.

Any fact or scripture-statement which seems in any wise to clash with these sound and accepted views, must be interpreted "spiritually" or as "highly figurative," or, better yet, be let alone as unintelligible and as not being essential to salvation anyway. And if any will not agree with these sound conclusions he must be "marked" and "avoided" and excluded from Christian fellowship.

But the humble reader of God's word, wonders why the Lord gave us such a strange book, containing so many misleading things; and whether after all anything that is written there is to be depended on for what it says? Or, on the other hand, might it be that those "past-fulfilment" champions, despite all their great and mighty talk, are wrong? That would be awful—and yet quite possible. And wisdom is justified of her children.

THE PEACE OF GOD

A. C. Harrington

One of the great characteristics of the Gospel of Christ is that it offers peace—peace to the suffering and anxious heart of humanity. In such a world, what is more to be desired? The Savior was not merely entertaining men with empty promises. He did not speak of a land of dreams or of some ideal existence impossible of attainment. He spoke words of truth and soberness. We may experience it if we will, by the grace of God. Let us consider this in two aspects:

1. PEACE OF CONSCIENCE. The torments of an awakened conscience are often intolerable, worse than punishment or even death. Sometimes we hear of people who surrender voluntarily to the police under the pains of guilt; others seek supposed refuge in suicide. Some day the burden of sin on the conscience of even the best woman, or the noblest man will be found too terrible to bear. Well it were if discovered now in this life before it is too late—while we still may flee to Christ through Whose blood alone there is peace!

2. PEACE OF HEART. This is what thousands are seeking. But who can give peace like the Prince of Peace? Oh! what peace of mind and heart we should have if we were really and simply trusting in Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth. Richard Williams tells how (in a diary found with the sea-washed pulp once his body) on the coast of Patagonia when he was sick and helpless, Christ filled his poor heart with peace and joy. Elizabeth Stirredge, an early Friend wickedly imprisoned for her religious belief, said that the blessing of the Lord "made the prison like a palace unto us." Nearly two hundred years ago Darcy Maxwell lost both her husband and only child. She was then but nineteen. Christ became her all, and her diaries tell how on many occasions during a useful but lonely life Christ filled her heart with His promised peace. John 14:27. In Christian biography we find many illustrations of this great reality. How may we have it? He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

CONSIDER

W. J. Johnson

He who believes that he can prove anything by the Bible expands his imagination out of proportion.

In opposing unscriptural views of others we should exercise great care not to offer our own in their stead.

As Christians only we should hold and encourage no other position than to believe and teach from the viewpoint of the scriptures. We cannot scripturally hold any part of the Bible or passage in it as private truth; every scripture is profitable and must be preached (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:1-8).

The church of Christ, according to the scriptures, is not a denomination or sect. It is wrong to class it as such. But a sect may adopt the proper name and leave out much of the contents.

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

Preparatory to a clear and strong article by Barton W. Stone in favor of “the premillennial view” of Christ’s Coming (as James Challen calls it), we offer these gracious encomiums upon the famous author’s life and character. They are taken chiefly from Elder John Rogers’ preface to “The Biography of Elder Barton Stone.” We follow these with a portion of the Stone biography, really an autobiography, as it was written by himself. Stone died on November 9, 1844, when he was short of 72 years old. The Biography was not published until 1853. Our older readers know well the fame and honor of Stone’s name, as a reformer along with the Campbells; and our younger readers will profit by being told.

The essay by Stone on “the premillennial view” is scheduled to appear in this department next month, perhaps the next two months. Following Stone, we shall exhibit the clear and definite “premillennial views” of two other honored stalwarts of the Restoration movement, Walter Scott and Moses E. Lard. And there were many others!—J.

“The writer believes that Barton W. Stone, the much abused and persecuted Barton W. Stone, was one of the greatest and most consistent Reformers that has appeared in any age since the apostacy.”—John Rogers.

“It is seldom we are called upon to record the death of one so much beloved, so highly gifted or so eminently pious.”—*Christian Message*, Vol. 14, No. 7.

“Our much admired and beloved Elder . . . this venerated and venerable editor.”—Alexander Campbell.

“That time-worn and honored saint . . . Elder Barton W. Stone. . . he fell covered with glory, yea, he triumphed in death.”—Dr. David Morton, his physician.

“Our beloved father Stone has gone to heaven. . . he was truly one of the excellent of earth. I doubt whether there was a purer, better man than Elder B. W. Stone. . . Those who are now pleading for the union of Christians upon the Bible alone are as much indebted to Elder Stone, if not more so, than to any other man.”—T. M. Allen.

“Take it all in all, his like, we fear, we shall not shortly see again. . . Farewell, excellent spirit, till we meet in the spirit land! Farewell, philanthropist, and benefactor of thy race!”—Aylette Rains (“whose praise is in all the churches.”)

“We feel that his place cannot be filled. . . He fought long and hard, and died with his sword in his hand.”—Love H. Jameson.

“I have differed with him on some points, but while I have a spark of true religion, I cannot be separated in heart from as good a man as Barton W. Stone.”—David Purviance.

“He had frequent paroxysms, caused by the acuteness of the

pain (in his "last moments"); and while suffering the most, he would talk fluently on some passage of scripture. He would give the Greek of any passage, and its correct translation. Singing soothed him into calmness, and he awaited the call of the Lord. He remained calm and composed to the very last moment, in the perfect exercise of his mind, and left the strongest testimony a mortal man could give of the complete victory he had won over death."—John A. Gano, funeral address, Cane Ridge meeting house, June 22, 1845.

"He was greatly misunderstood and misrepresented by his former brethren and others, and even down to the present day these stale slanders of Father Stone are circulated and believed by many. . . . He was emphatically a teacher, a fine scholar, a clear-headed and logical reasoner, a sound Bible critic."—Elder James Mathes, preface to "Works of Barton W. Stone."

"Barton W. Stone became one of the leading figures in the Restoration Movement. Churches were established throughout Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio."—Luther G. Roberts, *Gospel Broadcast*, Sept 25, 1941.

BIOGRAPHY OF BARTON W. STONE

(Written by Himself, with Additions and Reflections by Elder John Rogers)

CHAPTER X

Since the union of the Baptist association, as stated in the last chapter, nothing worthy of particular note occurred till the period when Alexander Campbell, of Virginia, appeared, and caused a great excitement on the subject of religion in Kentucky and other states. "Some said, He is a good man; but others said, nay: for he deceiveth the people." When he came into Kentucky, I heard him often in public and in private. I was pleased with his manner and matter. I saw no distinctive feature between the doctrine he preached and that which we had preached for many years, except on baptism for remission of sins. Even this I had once received and taught, as before stated, but had strangely let it go from my mind, till Brother Campbell revived it afresh. I thought then that he was not sufficiently explicit on the influences of the Spirit, which led many honest Christians to think he denied them. Had he been as explicit then, as since, many honest souls would have been still with us, and would have greatly aided the good cause. In a few things I dissented from him, but was agreed to disagree.

I will not say there are no faults in Brother Campbell; but that there are fewer, perhaps, in him than any man I know on earth; and over these few my love would throw a veil, and hide them from view for ever. I am constrained, and willingly constrained, to acknowledge him the greatest promoter of this reformation of any man living. The Lord reward him!

In the year 1826, I commenced a periodical called the *Christian Messenger*. I had a good patronage, and labored hard to make the work useful and acceptable. After continuing the work for six years, brother John T. Johnson became united as co-editor, in which re-

lation we continued harmoniously for two years, when the editorial connexion was dissolved by my removal to Illinois. The work I still continued, with short intervals, to the present year, 1843.

Just before brother Johnson and myself united as co-editors of the *Christian Messenger*, Alexander Campbell, of Virginia, had caused a great excitement in Kentucky, as well as in other states, on the subject of religion. He had received a complete education in Scotland, and became a preacher in the strictest sect of Presbyterians. In early life he had immigrated into America, and under conviction that the immersion of believers only was baptism, he joined the Baptists. Not contented to be circumscribed in their system of religion, by close application of the Bible he became convinced that he had received many doctrines unauthorized by Scripture, and contrary to them, and therefore relinquished them for those more scriptural. He boldly determined to take the Bible alone for his standard of faith and practice, to the exclusion of all other books as authoritative. He argued that the Bible presented sufficient evidence of its truth to sinners to enable them to believe it, and sufficient motives to induce them to obey it—that until they believed and obeyed the gospel, in vain they expected salvation, pardon and the Holy Spirit; that now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

These truths we had proclaimed and reiterated through the length and breadth of the land, from the press and from the pulpit, many years before A. Campbell and his associates came upon the stage as aids of the good cause. Their aid gave a new impetus to the Reformation which was in progress, especially among the Baptists in Kentucky; and the doctrine spread and greatly increased in the West. The only distinguishing doctrine between us and them was, that they preached baptism for the remission of sins to believing penitents. This doctrine had not generally obtained amongst us, though some few had received it, and practised accordingly. They insisted also upon weekly communion, which we had neglected. It was believed by many, and feared by us, that they were not sufficiently explicit on the influences of the Spirit. Many unguarded things were spoken and written by them on this subject, calculated to excite the suspicions and fears of the people, that no other influence was needed than that in the written word; therefore to pray to God for help was vain. The same thing had been objected to us long before, and with plausibility too; for we also had been unguarded in our expressions. In private conversation with these brethren our fears were removed, for our views were one.

Among others of the Baptists, who received and zealously advocated the teaching of A. Campbell, was John T. Johnson, than whom there is not a better man. We lived together in Georgetown, and labored and worshipped together. We plainly saw that we were on the same foundation, in the same spirit, and preached the same gospel. We agreed to unite our energies to effect a union between our different societies. This was easily effected in Kentucky; and in order to confirm this union, we became co-editors of the *Christian Messenger*. This union, I have no doubt, would have been as easily

effected in other States as in Kentucky, had there not been a few ignorant, headstrong bigots on both sides, who were more influenced to retain and augment their party, than to save the world by uniting according to the prayer of Jesus. Some irresponsible zealots among the Reformers, so called, would publicly and zealously contend against sinners praying, or that professors should pray for them; they spurned the idea that preachers should pray that God would assist them in declaring his truth to the people; they rejected from Christianity all who were not baptized for the remission of sins, and who did not observe the weekly communion, and many other doctrines they preached. The old "Christians," who were unacquainted with the preachers of information amongst us, would naturally conclude these to be the doctrines of us all; and they rose up in opposition to us all, representing our religion as a spiritless, prayerless religion, and dangerous to the souls of men. They ran to the opposite extreme in Ohio, and in the Eastern States. I blame not the Christians for opposing such doctrines; but I do blame the more intelligent among them, that they did not labor to allay those prejudices of the people by teaching them the truth, and not to cherish them, as many of them did in their periodicals, and public preaching. Nor were they only blameable; some of the Reformers are equally worthy of blame, by rejecting the name *Christian*, as a family name, because the old Christians had taken it before them. At this posterity will wonder, when they know that the sentiment was published in one of our most popular periodicals, and by one in the highest standing among us.

It is not wonderful that the prejudices of the old Christian church should be against us, and that they should so unkindly upbraid me especially, and my brethren in Kentucky, for uniting with the Reformers. But what else could we do, the Bible being our directory? Should we command them to leave the foundation on which we stood—the Bible alone—when they had come upon the same? By what authority could we command? Or should we have left this foundation to them, and have built another? Or should we have remained, and fought with them for the sole possession? They held the name *Christian* as sacred as we did; they were equally averse from making opinions the test of fellowship; and equally solicitous for the salvation of souls. This union, irrespective of reproach, I view as the noblest act of my life.

In the fall of 1834 I moved my family to Jacksonville, Illinois. Here I found two churches: a Christian and Reformers' church. They worshipped in separate places. I refused to unite with either until they united together, and labored to effect it. It was effected. I never suffered myself to be so blinded by prejudice in favor of, or against any, that I could not see their excellencies or defects. I have seen wrongs in the Reformers, and in the old Christians; and in candor have protested against them. This has exposed me to the darts of both sides. I have patiently suffered from both, but the day is at hand when all errors shall be disclosed, and the righteous justified from every false imputation.