

# THE WORD AND WORK

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## CHOOSE CAREFULLY

A careless word may kindle strife;  
A cruel word may wreck a life.  
A bitter word may hate instill;  
A brutal word may smite and kill.

A gracious word may smooth the way  
A joyous word may light the day.  
A timely word may lessen stress;  
A loving word may heal and bless.  
—Selected

## WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

### THE WORLD'S FEAR

When the word came to Ahaz, King of Judah, that Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) had made alliance with Syria, and that their combined forces were advancing against Judah and Jerusalem, "his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble in the wind." (Isa. 7:2.) It was then that God sent His prophet to Ahaz with a message: "Say unto him, Take heed and be quiet: fear not, neither let thy heart faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands." As for their purpose to crush Judah and set up their own kingdom in Jerusalem, God said, "It shall not stand neither shall it come to pass." But—with this word of warning: "If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established." (Isa. 7:3-9.) Then the prophet foresees a great terror—the uproar of nations in the end-time. In regard to that also God re-assures His people, and admonishes them not to fear their fear—that is, the world's fear, "nor be in dread thereof." One fear alone is needful: "Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (Isa. 8:9-15.) The Apostle Peter, writing to Christians, quotes these words. It was not a message to them alone, but of abiding meaning to God's people in every time of dread and terror. God's people must not be carried away with the world's panic. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, and though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains tremble with the swellings thereof." (Ps. 46:1-3.) And, again, and always, this word holds true for them: "In returning and in rest shall ye be saved: in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isa. 30:15.)

### THE GREAT FEAR OF TODAY

These are days of dread and fear—and not without cause. The world is face to face with unnameable terrors. "There can be no

peace or security," said Secretary Louis Johnson in a recent speech, "*so long as the world is threatened by an aggressive totalitarian power, an attack from which may come at any time, suddenly, and with unpredictable fury.*"

### **KNOWING OUR TIME**

Blind indeed must they be who do not perceive the extraordinary and ominous character of our times. The signs are everywhere and in everything—at home and abroad, nationally and internationally, socially, politically, industrially, religiously, morally, spiritually. On every side lawlessness, corruption and disruption, strife, upheavals, everywhere the signs of the breaking up of nations and of the existing world-order. Humanity is manifestly on the threshold of a crisis, world-wide, radical, catastrophic—such a crisis as man has never known. We are entering upon apocalyptic times. It is as if God had at last risen up out of His place, and is coming forth to punish the world for its iniquity. (Isa. 13:11; 26:21.) Already it is true that men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens are shaken. (Luke 21:26.) The atomic bomb and its possibilities have gripped the hearts of men with fear for a season; now a devastation a thousand times more powerful and terrible is emerging out of the scientific workshops, and bitter necessity is driving the government to the construction of this most terrible weapon of destruction, well named the "hell-bomb." Here and there we still hear the piping flute of optimism; yet the voices of sober official spokesmen do not lend themselves to dreams of peace. In fact the more thoughtful public realizes that the half has not been told, and that the authorities are bent rather to prevent general paralyzing panic.

### **WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

The practical question today is, What shall God's people do? We read in 1 Chronicles 12:32 of certain men of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." We need such men and such counsel today. In those days, as now and always, the many did not know the character of the time in which they lived. Though the hand of Jehovah is lifted up, they see it not. (Isa. 26:11.) They do not see God's hand in anything. "They regard not Jehovah, nor the operation of His hands." (Isa. 5:12; Ps. 28:5.) "Behold ye despisers" said the Lord to such men, "and wonder and perish; for I work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you." "How is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" said the Savior to the people of His day. (Luke 12:56.) And, again, "Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." (Matt. 16:3.) But it is not enough that we should be able to discern the time—it is also needful that we should know what the time calls for, what we ought to do, and how we may fall in with God's will and purpose in our season.

### **"IN QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE"**

What then shall we do? First of all let us see to it that we are

not carried away with the world's fear. "Fear not their fear, neither be troubled." And how avoid that? The apostle answers, "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." (1 Peter 3:14, 15.) Which brings with it a deep assurance of His love and care. Therefore it is written, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body." (Col. 3:15.) Thus, in a time of world-wide consternation, when a mighty conqueror came sweeping in from the East, did God reassure His people Israel who dwelt in Babylonia: "But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend--thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth and called from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away: Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, and I will help thee, and I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. 41: 8-10.) This was to be their antidote from God against the world's craven fear and terror. As then so now. "What time I am afraid," said the psalmist, "I will put my trust in thee"; and then, rallying, he adds, "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid." (Ps. 56:3, 4.) We may ere long need this blessed assurance. Let us take hold of it now.

#### **LOOK UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS**

The Lord Jesus in His prophetic sermon as recorded in Luke 21 has something more to say to His own: "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." (V. 28.) The things of which He speaks are those that cause men's hearts to faint with fear. (V. 26.) Not when these things are coming to pass, but when they "begin to come to pass" they are to look for their "redemption" from on high. (Comp. Phil. 3:20, 21.) For there is a promise of escape from all the things that shall come to pass and that they shall "stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36.) The whole conclusion is an admonition to watchfulness and faithfulness, prayer and godly walk. (Vs. 34-36; comp. Rom. 13:11-14.)

#### **ALWAYS ABOUNDING**

What more can we do? The answer is that these are precious times in which to work for the Lord—to do all we can while yet it is day (for the night cometh when no man can work). "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (- Cor. 15:58.)

"O that each in the day of His coming may say,  
 'I have fought my way through,  
 I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!  
 O that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,  
 'Well and faithfully done  
 Enter into my joy and sit down on my throne.'"

# NEWS AND NOTES

## From Colis Campbell

Totsuka, Japan: "We are grateful to the Lord that about half of the debt on the church property has been cleared. Now if those of you who are interested in the Lord's work will pray and work with us I am sure the remainder will soon be cleared. I like to think this is the Lord's work and He is well able to care for His own if we will humbly and sincerely lay it at His feet in prayer.

"During the past month another was baptized and one old lady has departed from this present life. A young man was baptized at Yokohama a few weeks ago. Before he was baptized he was trying to get permission to enter a denominational school to prepare for church work. Now we have hopes that he will some day be a church worker of the Lord's church. We are thankful to the Lord for the power of His word."—Colis Campbell.

Abilene, Texas: "Our attendance at the worship service has been rather good most of the time. Sickness has kept quite a few from being as regular as usual, though the faithfulness of some is manifested in their being present even with physical weaknesses. The Lord continues to bless us with peace and spiritual growth, for which we are thankful."—Carl Kitzmiller.

Dugger, Ind.: "During the month of February interest and attendance continued to increase here in Dugger. Four confessed their Lord and were baptized. One reconsecrated herself to the Lord for greater service. All of this places a greater responsibility upon the leadership of the church. May we be thankful and humble."—Maurice Clymore.

Amite, La.: "We are still having capacity house attendance at all of our points of worship with additions and restorations reported. Richard Ramsey, and N. B. Wright of New Orleans are regular visitors to this section, preaching at several out of town points. Our bi-monthly Sunday afternoon song rallies are an important part of the field work. Our weekly broadcast in the Amite section is bearing fruit. The writer,

A. K. Ramsey, expects to assist, the Lord willing, Glenmora in a homecoming meeting beginning Sunday, April 2."—A. K. Ramsey.

Oakdale, La.: "We are planning for a home coming meeting at Glenmora, La., with Brother Ramsey doing the preaching and Brother Ivy Istre to lead the songs. We hope to have a great time there 1st week of April. Pray for us."—Sidney Mayeux.

Ottumwa, Ia.: "Last week the writer acted as third moderator at a debate on the instrumental music issue, which lasted for six nights. Sessions were held at the Midwest School of Evangelism, Ottumwa, and the discussion is to continue for six nights at Cedar Rapids. James Brown, who expects to go to La. for gospel work, defended the pro-instrument position, with Burton Barber as moderator. James Nichols, a graduate of Abilene College, who works with a church in Cedar Rapids, Ia., opposed, with F. B. Shepherd acting as moderator.

Disputants were more nearly agreed than is usual in debates of this kind, since Brown and others from the School of Evangelism defend instrumental music solely on the basis of the claim that it aids the individual to sing. They oppose its use during the communion service. In opposing missionary and aid societies, in principle they are in agreement with the non-instrumental churches, and they are outspoken against worldy entertainment.

"The writer feels that too much time was spent on discussion of points having only an indirect bearing on the issue, such as the question whether singing is worship, or an expression of worship. Earnestness was manifested by both debaters, but, we believe, that no bitterness resulted, and that a little progress toward unity has been made."—Frank S. Graham.

## A Year-End Revival

The New Year's eve watch-service at Mount Auburn was one of the greatest it has been our privilege to attend. For the past twenty years we have been in a watch service each New Year's eve almost

without exception, some with much larger attendance, some with special speakers and elaborately arranged program, but this is the first one which closed with the entire audience responding to an appeal to those present to reconsecrate their life to God. (The building was about half-filled at midnight.) This response was not by holding up the hand, but one and all, old and young, came forward to stand in the place of sinners coming back to God—there was not one left in the seats.

Together we confessed our sins to God, our failures, our love and faith, and our desire for a closer walk with God and our willingness to be used of Him in a greater way than ever before. It was indeed a glorious time of revival, and this spirit of revival has continued throughout the month of January—six adults have accepted Christ and been baptized, and five others have returned to God and reconsecrated their lives to His glory. Pray that God may continue His work in our midst!

A. J. Istre, Stan Broussard, Mack LeDoux, and Eugene Mullins and wife, were greatly used of God to bring about this glorious response to God's call. All were at home for the Christmas holidays from the Kentucky Bible College at Louis-

ville, Ky. The three young men had come up from Louisiana to make the return trip to Louisville in the car with Gene and Mary Lou. Each brought an inspiring testimony into the service and were among the first to re-dedicate their lives to God's service.—Frank M. Mullins.

#### Back to Louisiana

Brother Harry Prather, a native son of Louisiana, has been in Louisville, Kentucky, for several years. During that time he graduated from Portland Christian School, found himself a help meet, and has been regular minister at 17th and Main mission for several months. But now he has moved to Crowley, Louisiana, to be of service to the Lord in his home state. He speaks both English and French and will greatly strengthen the Cause of Christ in his new field of labor.

We see some very good friends on our expired list. Why not renew promptly? It is so easy to neglect and allow your subscription to lapse entirely.

If you are unable to renew, but want to read the Word and Work, you might wish to ask about being added to our free list. This list is limited to a thousand names, but some are now paying and we are adding new names.

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#### A. CLAUDE READER

Brother A. Claude Reader, one of our most efficient and greatly beloved ministers in the Louisville area, recently departed this life to be with his Lord. He served as elder of the Portland Avenue church for many years. Even while serving in this capacity he began to do evangelistic work and was instrumental in bringing many souls to Christ. For the last several years he has served as minister of the Jefferson Street church of Christ. During his ministry this congregation has grown into a fine, strong congregation. Brother Reader has been in great demand for weddings and funerals throughout the years. Besides serving as minister, he has also acted in the capacity of elder of the Jefferson Street church, being officially appointed. He was preacher, counsellor, comforter, soul-winner, feeder of the flock, restorer of the straying, and a helper of many. He was very humble, counting other better than himself; though able to rebuke and exhort with all earnestness, he was characterized by a cheerful countenance. He, as a true elder, was given to hospitality, apt to teach, and had under him a lovely, well ordered family, his wife and children being devout workers for the Lord.

The funeral service was held at the Jefferson Street church. Brother R. H. Boll and D. H. Friend brought words of comfort and helpfulness to a great overflow audience of friends and loved ones. Brother Reader will be missed by many and long remembered for his faithful work in the Master's vineyard.

—J. R. Clark.

# LEGALISM

H. L. Olmstead

(This enlightening article is taken from a sermon delivered by Bro. Olmstead in Gallatin, Tennessee.)

In its common usage legalism means simply "adherence to law." A legalist, in the common sense and use of that term, is one who contends rigidly for or adheres to the law. In the vocabulary of our courts it is one who will contend for adherence to the letter of the law regardless of the equity of the case.

In religion, the term "legalist" has to do with those who preach the doctrine of salvation by works and character (good character), as against the idea of salvation by grace. There are many manifestations and phases and expressions of "legalism" in religion. In the Galatian epistle the expression of legalism was to the effect that salvation could not be by the grace of God apart from the works of the law. If a man became a Christian and kept the law of Moses, and was circumcised, he would be saved. That was an expression of legalism—grace *plus* the keeping of the law.

Now Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him who called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6). He plainly said it is not another gospel, but a different one. "Which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel of heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:7, 8). The literal meaning of "pervert" is "turned in the wrong way." It never loses that idea. Paul to the Philippians said, "You are holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:14), a generation that is misguided and turned the wrong way. Now, any expression of legalism that moves men from the grace of Christ is not the true gospel. It may be another gospel or it may be a perversion of the Gospel of Christ. Paul said that the troublers at Galatia preached a different gospel.

For an example, the position that would sweep away with one gesture all of Paul's teaching concerning the atonement, justification by grace through faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and kindred teaching, and focus the attention of men solely upon the moral precepts of Jesus Christ, and say, "All I care for in the teachings of Christ is the sermon on the Mount, and I will stand on that," is moving men away from the gospel of Christ. Such is not the gospel that Paul preached; it is not like it even. A position that will accept the Saviorhood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time preach in such a way that the emphasis of the gospel is upon what we do rather than what is done for us and has been done for us, distorts the gospel. In trick mirrors that they used to have at fairs you beheld a distortion of your image—your figure was either broadened or made too tall, and yet there was some resemblance. So it is with a distorted gospel. It is not the same gospel even though every

feature is in evidence to a more or less degree, yet out of its true proportion.

It is a perversion of the gospel to preach the things we are told to do in order to be saved without preaching, or even before preaching and emphasizing the things that have been done for us. It puts the commands of the gospel out by themselves where their meaning and power is largely lost, because they are not in front of the background of man's sin and God's grace. The dark background of man's sin is what makes the gospel beautiful. It is a distortion of the gospel not to put it in front of the proper background and color. It turns things the wrong way.

It is a wrong approach and turns things the wrong way to merely preach and theologize on the importance of faith rather than to preach things to men that produce faith. What is the use of theologizing all the time about faith and talking about faith? Why not turn loose and preach to a dying world the word of God and let faith form itself? Men will not get it wrong; they cannot get it wrong if we do that.

It is a perversion of the gospel of Christ and turns things the wrong way to call men to repentance or try to call them to repentance before they are convicted of sin and know they need to repent. When the Apostle Peter preached that model sermon on Pentecost, he did not preach on repentance, nor did he preach on baptism. He preached thirty-two verses of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and men cried out, convicted of sin, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He told them to "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) He brought them face to face with Jesus Christ and with their own sins: it would be turning things around to preach it differently.

It surely is a perversion of the gospel of Christ so to preach as to cause men to have faith in faith, or to have faith in baptism; we should so preach as to cause men to have faith in Jesus Christ and to stake their soul's salvation on belief in what He did for them when He died for their sins upon the cross of Calvary. It is legalism not to so preach.

I am persuaded that it is a degrading perversion of the gospel to ask men to stand upon the legal principle of law for salvation after they have turned to Christ, for they will thereby never have any feeling of security or of peace. A man says, "Well, I am going to be saved by doing the best I can, and what I lack, God will piece out with His mercy and grace." But you never read that in the New Testament. That is a human gospel that is voiced because the man really feels the weakness of the legalistic position. It is deadening to his joy and service. Paul says in Galatians 3:12: "What saith the law?" what is the principle of it? "He that doeth them shall live in them." That is what the law says, and therein lies the principle of law-Christianity. But Paul says further, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The prin-

principle of law leaves a man without security and without peace for he has nothing to plead before God but his life, while the system of grace offers security and peace through faith in the blood and righteousness of the One who became a curse for us. When put to the test none would dare say that he had actually done the best he could. Then you had better find a better plan of salvation to stand on, because that one is shot all to pieces. "On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand."

Legalism is a deadening thing because it takes away the chief motive for doing for the Lord—love. It is strange what men will do from various motives. They build up parties, they make converts; they organize churches; but without love these things are all sounding brass and clanging cymbals. We will never know the love of God until we know it in the sense of His blessed forgiveness of our sins. One can never know that these sins are forgiven until he has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel way, through penitence and baptism. So long as I live, if I see things as I see them today, I will tell penitent sinners to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but I am going to put that in front of the grace of God, that men may have a real motive for serving Him, for without love men cannot render acceptable service to God.

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#### POST-MILLENNIALISM

Post-millennialism (it includes a-millennialism), a theory of interpretation first propounded by Origen in the third century and given new impetus in modern times by Whitby in his "New Hypothesis," has made quite a general sweep over Christendom. The Church of Rome as a whole has always advocated the theory, all cultism accepts it, all of modernism, and, sad to say, a very large portion of those committed by profession to "restore the primitive order and the New Testament church." And, believe it or not, these last are becoming the most ardent contender for the faith once delivered unto the saints by Origen of all to be found in all the post-millennial ranks. Never can you find any people these days so loyal to their creed or confessions of faith as those are to their unwritten creed. Now an unwritten creed is just as unscriptural as a written one, and can be made a more dangerous thing, being as it were a hidden dagger—a dagger that even faithful missionaries do not escape. Post-millennialism is deserving of sterner rebuke than has as yet been administered. It spares not preacher, teacher, missionary or church that refuses to sign on the dotted line. The greatest religious crime (no difference how faithful to God's word) so they say by actions, is not to subscribe to post-millennialism. It is not only required that you be agreeable on the one hand, but you must set all others at naught. They thus out-pharisee the Pharisees, and sectarianize beyond all but the fewest of "sectarians." Thinking people will not long be a party to this religious dictatorship by men.—Stanford Chambers.

# GOD'S ELDERSHIP

(From manuscript left by Don Carlos Janes.)

## THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL

Age and experience contribute to wisdom, and for leadership wisdom is an element of immense importance. Naturally then elders, seniors, would be selected for such responsibilities as go with the oversight of either small or large communities. As long ago as the demise of Jacob, we read of elders of Pharaoh's house "and all the elders of the land of Egypt," who went up with Joseph to the burial of his father in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 50:7). From the feast of the passover in Egypt (Gen. 12:21) onward, we hear of "the elders of Israel." After the settlement in Canaan we read of "the elders of his city" as the persons who were to send for and deliver a criminal to "the avenger of blood that he may die" (Deut. 19:21). We hear of "the elders" in the days of the Judges (Judges 2:7) and in the period of the kings when "David and the elders," clothed in sack-cloth, "fell upon their faces" (1 Chron. 21:16) while the chief of Israel confessed his sin in ordering that the census be taken. In the captivity, they are still mentioned (Ez. 10:14), and at the restoration of their capitol, "the elders of the Jews builded and prospered" (Ez. 6:14). In 1 Macc. 7:33 (Apocrypha) they are still referred to, and we are familiar with the fact that with apostolic authority elders were appointed "in every church" established in that first great and notable trip of the convert of Damascus from Antioch to Cypress and Asia Minor (Acts 14:23).

## ELDERS IN THE CHURCH

These men to whom God has given the oversight of the local assemblies are referred to by several other names which are more or less descriptive of the work they are to perform. In 1 Tim. 3:1, we have "bishops" from a Greek word which means "overseer"; in 1 Peter 5:4 they are, by inference, "shepherds," and in Acts 20:28, "to feed" is literally *to shepherd*. We read of the "presbytery" in 1 Tim. 4:14, and in Acts 11:30 the same Greek noun is translated "elders." The "pastors" of the New Testament are literally shepherds. So elders, bishops, shepherds, pastors, and presbyters are not five different classes of officers in the church of God, but simply so many designations of the one class which Peter says is to exercise "the oversight."

Each time the Holy Spirit has told us the kind of men to put into the eldership, he has used not the language of expediency, preference or option by saying that they should be this or that, but the language of imperative necessity, "must be." 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7. This "must be" is given by the same Spirit and in the same identical language of the "must be" in John 3:7, "Ye must be born anew." It therefore follows with the certainty of inspiration that unless men can be found who are what the Holy Scriptures say they *must be*, elders cannot be appointed.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Combining the two lists of first Timothy and Titus we learn that those who occupy this honorable position of high responsibility and vast importance "must be without reproach (blameless), the husband of one wife, temperate, (self-controlled), sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt (qualified) to teach, no brawler, no striker, gentle, not contentious, no lover of money, one that ruleth well his own house, having children (that believe) in subjection (who are not accused of riot or unruly) with all gravity, not a novice. . . . he must have a good testimony from them that are without, not self-willed, not soon angry, a lover of good, just, holy, holding to the faithful word, able to exhort in the sound doctrine and convict the gainsayers." The record which three times uses the expression "must be" does not say in what measure or to what extent these items are to be present, but it undoubtedly says they *must be* there and no one should overlook this in appointing overseers for the church, nor should any Christian be guilty of attempting to break the force of the very word which the church has been commissioned to uphold (1 Tim. 3:15).

## APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

If there is no particular method of appointment, then any course which is decent and orderly (1 Cor. 14:40) will do. And if we are left to select a method of procedure, surely we are at liberty to select the very same course that was followed in apostolic times. So, whether it be universally agreed that the method for us is revealed or not, we are safe in doing just as they did. In the matter of deacons, the disciples were to select seven qualified men whom the twelve would appoint, and when the seven were set before them they prayed and laid their hands upon them (Acts 6:1-6). The apostles said they would appoint them. What they actually did was to pray and lay hands on them. Therefore the appointing action was by prayer and imposition of hands. It Acts 14:23 we read of prayer and fasting in connection with the appointment of elders. If the Scriptures reveal a way, this (fasting, prayer, laying on of hands) is the way. If the Scriptures reveal no way, then this way will do and no other can do any better.

## DUTIES OF THE ELDERS

It is interesting as well as important to observe in the very language of inspiration what the office or work of these men really is. In three simple words it is comprehended: feed (Acts 20:28); watch (Heb. 13:17); rule (1 Tim. 5:17). In a sentence, it is to "take care of the church of God" (1 Tim. 3:5). In words well worthy of study by both shepherd and sheep, Peter defines the work and describes the manner in which it is acceptably executed, saying: "The elders therefore among you I exhort: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, making yourselves ensample to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be mani-

fested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:14). The elders (and we would do well to use as many terms for this office as the New Testament does) are the overseers of their respective assemblies, God's under-shepherds upon whom He has placed the responsibility of such care as the church needs. We should no more be willing to change their office than we should be to change the music God placed in the worship, or to change the terms of pardon which Heaven has made, or to substitute sprinkling for baptism, or to use cider for "the fruit of the vine," or otherwise to alter the arrangements of our Father in heaven. The work of elders and evangelists are in some respects similar, but they are by no means identical and it is a very serious and far-reaching error when the latter supersede the former.

#### THE DIGNITY OF THIS OFFICE

The dignity of this high office, the highest in the church on earth, is evidenced by many things. In the first place, any man (whether recognized as an elder or not) who possesses the noble qualities which these men must possess is by these very things exalted to a high plane of holy living and deserves to have the love and respect of all others who have not yet attained to such eminence in the scale of Christian being and doing. The more men of this type we have the better off we are and the more we put ourselves in their company, the more we consider "the issue of their life, and imitate their faith" the better we shall be ourselves.

As heads of any worthy association or company, they would be deserving of respect. As overseers of God's church, they are none the less entitled to it. The fact that theirs is "a good work" indicates the worthiness of the workers. The sick man was to "call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (Jas. 5:14). Surely men who were to perform such a service as this would be entitled to honor among the members. That they are men of age and experience, men of families, entitles them to respect. When the Antioch Christians sent famine relief "unto the brethren that dwelt in Judaea" they sent it "to the elders" (Acts 11:30). It is unscriptural to receive an accusation against an elder "except at the mouth of two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. 5:19.) We are taught, "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father" (1 Tim. 5:1). This father-and-son relationship involves honor and respect as does also the fact that "they watch in behalf of your souls as they that must give account" (Heb. 13:17). And "the elders that rule well" are to be "counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). They may be supported in the work, for "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (V. 18). At this point, Paul's fine language to the Thessalonians seems in place: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:12).

## A CHAIN OF ERROR

From the year 100 A. D.; "The changes were rapid and radical, profoundly modifying many of the fundamental conceptions of Apostolic Christianity and laying the foundation for the Roman and Greek Catholic churches."—McGlothlin. "In the second century, . . . the bishop came to be regarded as higher than the elders."—Pardington. "Power rapidly became centralized in a few bishops who became archbishops . . . of principalities such as Antioch, Alexandria and Rome."—Moncrief. So rapidly did heresy grow that by 250 A. D. five new offices had been developed, Subdeacons, Acolytes, Exorcists, Readers, and Janitors, which were filled by selections made by bishops. This chain of error began by unduly exalting an elder.

In our times, the tendency among disciples, supposedly loyal to the Bible, is to minimize the eldership. Some congregations have no "elders" and do not seem to care. In some cases there is only one elder. Real elders are rare. Evangelists are being settled among the churches (which is not wrong if they "do the work of an evangelist," 2 Tim. 4:5), and elders more or less cease to feed, watch and rule; they fail to "take care of the church"; do not "tend the flock of God, . . . exercising the oversight . . . willingly, according to the will of God . . . making (themselves) ensamples to the flock," while they "exhort in the sound doctrine and convict the gainsayers" as they "labor in the word and in teaching" and keep "watch for your souls as they that must give account." The church suffers in the partial darkness which comes because the evangelist has eclipsed the elder.

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## A GREAT NEED

Mrs. Paul Knecht

Sister Brown, who spent 21 years in Africa working among native women, spoke recently to a group of Christian women on the subject of women teachers. She read from Titus 2 through the first 5 verses and emphasized the responsibility of the aged women to teach the younger.

She also pointed out what they are to teach, i. e., "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

These are important, fundamental things and the need for them is great at home as well as abroad. Christian homes in this country are so far below God's standard, generally, that a failure in the teaching of these needful things is everywhere evident.

Young people are feeling the loss and waking up to a real need. They want the gospel that will not necessarily improve their environment, for many of them have no such need as that, but that has the power to insure their family relations regardless of environment. One young woman who heard Sister Brown said afterward, "It would pay to be a native African to get such teaching as that.

We don't get it here. I am trying to *teach* a class and I need to *learn*."

She voiced a need others are feeling. They want a personal acquaintance with the Lord. They want to know Him not just by word of mouth, as when His word is taught to the mind only, but in their own experiences. They need help to store that word in their hearts and apply it to their own lives. This work is enjoined on aged women and cannot be done as well by anyone else. A man teacher, wholly devoted to the Lord, can teach many good things in a way that women can accept them, but there is a line (that God has set) beyond which he cannot go, simply because he is a man, with Christian experiences peculiarly masculine. How many young women teachers of children feel keenly the need of being taught while older women are still hiding the leaven in three measures of meal!

Leaven, when used as a figure always represents an evil influence. The only place where it symbolizes God's good things is in the parable of the kingdom of God and the woman (Matt. 13:33 and Luke 13:20, 21). God's good food can become a curse when not handled according to His word, as the manna that bred worms and stank.

That there is a responsibility resting also on the young cannot be overlooked. Jehovah said to Moses (Ex. 12:26) "And it shall come to pass *when your children say to you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say . . .*" etc. There are older women who would be glad to teach the younger if they realized they were ready for that teaching. Many young people have not reached the point of inquiry. Yet it is true that some ask and receive unsatisfactory answers. One mother is said to have replied to her daughter, "I didn't know anything when I married and you are no better than I. Find out the best way you can."

Surely such answers are rare. It is true, nevertheless, that we are failing our young people. Worse, we are failing God. But He is ever faithful. If those young women who have no older ones to teach them, look straight to Him He will not fail them. There is a fine illustration of God's goodness to women in the story of Ruth. This story of the gleaners has been used to encourage women to go out after souls. That is all right provided they stay where God put them, behind the men.

But really Ruth was gathering *food* for herself and Naomi who, though older, was unable to provide a living. Ruth gleaned profitably, for God took notice of her. Young women today will do well to follow Ruth's example, remembering always John 7:17. For while God gave the public proclamation of the gospel into the hands of men, and much good, earnest teaching comes through them, you may be sure that those young women with faithful hearts, who *glean* for themselves and those dear to them in the word of God, will *find* that the Lord of the harvest has taken notice and let fall many handfuls of purpose for them; that they may know Him and be found able to teach the younger at such time as they, themselves, have entered the class that He calls "aged women."

# CAMP TAYLOR CHURCH

J. R. Clark



## EARLY HISTORY

My earliest recollection of the Camp Taylor church of Christ was in 1922, at which time Brother Augustus Shanks had a mission in a small one-room structure. I was out a few times back in those days, thus inheriting an early interest in the Camp Taylor work.

The group got a better foothold in the community through some tent meetings and soon started to meet in an old club house in the community. Next they moved into a long barracks building, where they met for a few years. In 1925 a frame church building 30 by 45 with full basement was completed on the present site, Kentucky Avenue at Hickman. In more recent years a basement structure 40 by 48, to provide additional class rooms, was joined to the rear of the building.

## PRESENT STRUCTURE

During the latter part of 1949 our building was completely redone in brick with a new front added and some changes made in the auditorium and basement, including new basement windows. A great dedication was enjoyed on Sunday, January 15, with Jonah W. D. Skiles as speaker at the morning service and a song rally in the afternoon, at which time several visiting ministers brought brief words of encouragement.

## MINISTERS THROUGH THE YEARS

Early ministers of this congregation were Brethren Shanks, Maurice Clymore, Philip Bornwasser, A. Claude Reader, O. S. Boyer, and

Marion Haines. Others who did some regular work for the Lord here were Tona Covey and Noble Bibb. Don Carlos Janes did much in early preaching to mold the missionary spirit of this congregation. In more recent years came Jonah Skiles, Elmer Ringer, Paul Duncan, and J. R. Clark, the present minister.

The church has enjoyed a consistent average growth since its beginning. Last year its total offerings came to around \$10,000. Average attendance has been better in 1949 and thus far in 1950 than at any time in the history of the church.

### GOSPEL MEETING SCHEDULED

From March 19 to 29 several ministers of the Louisville area have been invited to speak a night each in a special series of Gospel meetings. The speakers are Jorgenson, Kranz, Marsh, Friend, Roll Crowder, Addams, Burks, P. Clark, W. H. Allen, and Winston Allen. The Camp Taylor church urges her neighbors and friends to share this season of refreshing with them. Come at 7:30.

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### WHAT ROAD ARE WE TAKING

Strikes, and threats of strikes, are with us again. Some are in progress now. Others have been scheduled. Bitterness is evident in many quarters. All groups claim to be right.

I have just finished reading a pamphlet prepared by a certain union outlining in detail its side of a controversy. The presentation is convincing in many ways. I have also studied the public statements of the refuting body. It is evident to any reader that there is a wide disagreement in the two points of view. Which one is right?

From time to time, the written testimony of religious controversies has likewise come under my observation. Here, again, the prospects offered by both sides appear convincing. Which one is right?

There is only one answer. Every man must determine for himself what truth is. He dare not trust entirely the claims of any other. He must prove every statement to determine its accuracy. Vehemence, tub-thumping, and name calling do not enhance the value of a man's words. It would seem logical to view with suspicion any presentation that requires the use of such crude tactics to establish its worth. And yet, how often we poor, unthinking sheep follow blindly the arrogant claims of self-seeking leaders. We even become angry when these leaders are proved to be wrong and untrustworthy.

To know the truth, one must want to know the truth. He must seek earnestly. He must be willing to give the time and mental energy to the task of sifting out truth from the error that surrounds it.

It would appear that most of us are too lazy and indifferent to find the truth. It is imperative that we appraise ourselves before it is too late. We may find that the lazy allegiance we have been giving is to the enemy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.—J. H. McCaleb, in *Chicago Christian*.

# LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

## PERSECUTION AND DISPERSION: THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA

**A GREAT PERSECUTION.** Until the death of Stephen the church in Jerusalem had suffered but little molestation. The officials of Judaism had indeed made two attempts to suppress the preaching of the gospel by threats; but their efforts had been unavailing. With the martyrdom of Stephen, however, there began a determined assault upon the church with the evident intent of crushing it completely. In the forefront of this onslaught was a young man named Saul, a Pharisee, a native of Tarsus of Cilicia. He had been a student of Gamaliel in Jerusalem; but he did not adhere to the "let-them-alone" policy of his teacher. (Acts 5:38.) At the stoning of Stephen he is pointed out as the one who stood guard over the garments of those committing the deed, and as one who was consenting unto his death (thus assuming equal responsibility with the others); now with characteristic vigor he takes a leading part in the persecution, laying "waste the church, entering into every house" to seek out not only the men, but the women also, who were followers of the Lord Jesus, and to have them put in prison.

**THE DISCIPLES SCATTERED.** But how true the words of Gamaliel proved to be: "For if this counsel or this work . . . is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them." (Acts 5:37, 38.) The very efforts that were made to destroy the movement became the means of its spreading and increasing. What may have at first seemed to the disciples a great misfortune turned out to be a real blessing. For some considerable time they had remained in Jerusalem, enjoying the delightful fellowship of one another in the Lord. But it was not the Lord's will that they abide always in Jerusalem. "And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) Perhaps they had forgotten that; and perhaps they were loath to leave the comforts and joys of Jerusalem for the unknown difficulties and trials of the regions beyond. But the situation suddenly changed: men and women were being imprisoned in Jerusalem; sometimes they were put to death; danger lurked everywhere. "And they were all scattered abroad . . . except the apostles." Why this exception? We are not told. But it did serve one good purpose: it revealed the fact that the gospel could spread independent of the apostles' leadership. For those who "were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." Such was the missionary zeal of the early church.

**PHILIP IN SAMARIA.** The greater part of chapter eight is devoted to the evangelistic work of Philip, one of the seven, as he brought the good news first to the multitudes in Samaria and then to the traveller on the Gaza road. The preaching of the word to the Samaritans was a definite step forward in the preaching of the gospel. Heretofore it had been offered only to "men of Israel," in-

cluding those who were proselytes to the Jewish religion. Even the apostles were slow to grasp the truth that it was for all nations; their deeply-rooted prejudice against other races survived in full vigor. And the attitude of the Jews toward the Samaritans is concisely expressed in John's gospel: "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4:9.) Yet they had much in common. The Samaritans were worshippers of Jehovah. Their Bible was a somewhat altered version of the Pentateuch. They entertained hopes of the coming of the Messiah who, when He came, would declare to them all things. (John 4:25.) And their claim to blood-kinship with the Jews (note, for instance, that the woman of Samaria spoke of Jacob as "our father Jacob"—John 4:12) must have had some foundation in fact; for it is known that renegade Jews settled among them from time to time. It was to these people that Philip came proclaiming the Christ, doing signs, and bringing much joy; and we are told that "when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

**PETER AND JOHN IN SAMARIA: THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPARTED.** News of this success of the gospel reached Jerusalem; the apostles sent Peter and John (a strange procedure indeed, if Peter were pope!). When they arrived and saw what had been done, they "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." This brief account gives rise to difficult questions. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," said Jesus. (Mark 16:16.) And, in a passage where the context clearly shows that the Holy Spirit is in view, Paul declares, "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Saved<sup>o</sup> people are members of Christ's body; and "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. 12:13.) Baptized believers, therefore saved, members of the body—yet the Holy Spirit was "fallen upon none of them!" However, if it is correct to regard this bestowal of the Spirit as a special gift (a superadded thing, one commentator calls it), imparted only on rare occasions and for some special purpose in each instance, the difficulty vanishes. We are inclined to believe that this is the true explanation: that they did indeed possess the Holy Spirit as do all Christians; but in the sense in which His presence is demonstrated by miraculous manifestations, He was not yet fallen upon any of them.

But why was the Holy Spirit on this occasion given only through the laying on of the apostles' hands? It was not so at the house of Cornelius. Peter was there indeed; but while he was speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as it had on the apostles at the beginning. And there was no apostle present when Saul of Tarsus received the Holy Spirit in Damascus. Evidently, for one thing, He works as He will and as each occasion requires; He is not limited to certain methods and means. There may have been reasons in the mind of God which are hidden from our view; but there is one thing which

seems fairly clear. Hebrew Christians would be inclined to look with suspicion upon these Samaritan converts, especially since their conversion had been brought about by a Hellenist without direction or authority of the apostles. If there had thus developed in the early church two hostile groups, what a calamity it would have been! And in no other way could it have been more effectively demonstrated that this movement in Samaria had the full indorsement and blessing of the apostles. Thus any tendency toward disunity on the ground that it lacked apostolic sanction was forestalled.

**SIMON MAGUS.** When Philip came to Samaria the people, "from the least to the greatest," were under the spell of a sorcerer by the name of Simon (now commonly known as Simon Magus). He had so amazed them by his deeds of magic that they spoke of him as "that power of God which is called Great." But such works of darkness cannot long survive in the light of the gospel; and when the Samaritans turned to the Lord "Simon also himself believed; and being baptized he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed." Here was something greater than he had ever been able to do! But an even more astounding demonstration awaited him: when Peter and John came they imparted the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands. Evidently there were some miraculous manifestations as on other like occasions. Philip had been able to work miracles; these men could give that miracle-working power to others. Simon's shrewd mind saw possibilities in that. He would like to have such power, and was willing to pay for it. Peter's stern rebuke was to Simon perhaps the most amazing thing of all; here were men who were not interested in money! He became an humble suppliant: "Pray for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me."

This incident has given rise to much questioning and discussion. There are those who say Simon's conversion was not genuine. We have no justification for saying so. The same thing is said of him that was said of all the others: he believed and was baptized. No hint there of hypocrisy! But he was so soon guilty of a grievous sin which brought upon him such a stern denunciation from the apostle! It should be remembered that conversion does not always immediately eradicate old habits of thought and life and lift one out of the realm of severe temptation. The Corinthian Christians, called saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus, are a testimony to this. Even Peter received a stinging rebuke from his Lord (Matt. 16:23) and afterward sinned grievously. Furthermore, the apostle speaks to him, not as he would be expected to do to one without, but rather as to an erring Christian: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." To deny the genuineness of Simon's conversion is, in this writer's opinion, to miss one great lesson of the story: the hope held forth of restoration to the Lord's favor after such a grievous sin. Whether Simon did turn, or whether, as tradition (not too reliable) has it, he became a hopeless apostate, is another matter, and one concerning which we have no certain knowledge.

## SEED THOUGHTS

(Gleanings from R. H. Boll's Bible Classes.)

### TO THOSE WHO DIG

One does not look at a rare painting as he does a comic picture. The latter he can take in at a glance, but the painting must be studied to be appreciated. We enter the art museum and see a man standing before a masterpiece. He views it through a magnifying glass. He steps to one side and views it from another angle, and another, and another. This goes on for hours. The next day we may happen around again and there is the same man studying the same painting. This may continue for a month. The difference lies in the fact that the painting has depth. The same is true of good poetry and good music. The Bible is like that; it yields its finest gold to those who dig.

### BEGINNING WITH ROMANS

"When I became a Christian," says Brother Boll, "reasoning that I should begin with the epistles, I rolled up my sleeves and went to work on Romans. I had not gone far until I found myself just reading words. I leaned back in my chair and thought, 'Will I ever get anything out of Romans?' The redeeming feature of my experience lay in the fact that I kept on studying. When I saw Romans it opened up to me all at once. If Romans puzzles you, puzzle over it. If you get Romans, God will get you."

### THE DAY OF VISITATION

"Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." 1 Peter 2:12.

A certain devout servant of the Lord, who worked in a coal mine, was handed rather rough treatment by his fellows. They called him parson and made contemptuous and belittling remarks about him, but he was not swerved from his righteous course and open testimony for the Lord. It so came about that the mine was caught in a disaster and the men were trapped underground. In their time of trouble the men turned to this Christian man for counsel and leadership. They gave their lunch pails and their lamps to him that he might ration their food and light for the duration of their imprisonment. He prayed with them and talked to them about the Lord. After being rescued they testified that without the help of this Christian man they could not have survived.

### AT FACE VALUE

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matt. 5:42.)

A missionary was teaching on the sermon on the mount. In his next lesson, which included "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," he just knew that the men would ask, "Do you believe that?" If he answered in the affirmative, they would borrow all he had. They were shame-

less beggars. He talked the matter over with his wife and prayed over it, coming to the decision that he would teach it as it was in spite of consequences.

Surely enough one of the men asked, "Do you believe that?" "Yes, I do believe it," answered the missionary. Then the man asked him for his shining mirror, which he gave to him. Then the rest of them, emboldened by the example of their fellow, cleaned him of everything he had, furniture and all, and gleefully carried it all away.

Sadly the missionary and his wife stood in their now empty room and lifted their voices in prayer to the Lord, putting the matter before Him. Even while they were praying they heard the chief talking roughly to the people.

"You should not have taken all these things from the good missionary and wife"; he said, "take everything and give them back to them at once!"

There was a scurrying of feet and one by one every item was restored to its owners. Thus was the Word of God exonerated without loss to God's own.

### DESOLATIONS OF THE HEATHEN

An ex-missionary thanked God that he had lived in the land of Bibles. He knew what a blessing it was, for in heathen countries they have no Bibles. Imagine what it would mean to have the Bible taken away from you: to have the written Word erased from your mind and memory, and for every Bible, Testament, portion of scripture and quotation to be blanked out. What a flood of darkness and despair would come into our hearts! If one can imagine such a mental and spiritual disaster he can appreciate more the desolation of the heathen, who are literally without God and without hope in the world.

### THE STORY OF TWO BOYS

A preacher tells the following experience, "When I was a boy I had a great desire to own a pistol, but I never had enough money to buy one. I had a friend that was less fortunate than I, for he managed to purchase one of these deadly weapons. I recall spending a night with this friend and we talked late, as boys will. Later I lost track of this friend.

"In God's good providence I heard the Gospel, turned to the Lord and became active in Christian work. It was our privilege to conduct services in the Nashville jail (here I preached my first sermon). One day I went with others to conduct a meeting in the jail at which time I was surprised to see my boyhood friend as an inmate.

'What are you doing in here?' I inquired.

'Bob, I have gotten into awful trouble,' he replied. 'I was at a picnic and a fellow said something that made me mad. I whipped out my gun, shot him in the throat and killed him.'

Why did I escape such a thing as that? Surely God was very good to me in denying me my foolish desire and in leading me into His service."

# "FAITH OF OUR FATHERS"

E. L. J.

We offer now another article, beautiful and scriptural, from the able pen of James Challen, highly honored preacher and writer among the "pioneers" of Restoration days. Manifestly, this student had reverently traversed again and again that most neglected field of Holy Scripture, the prophets of both Old and New Testaments, those men who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. Rich indeed are his gleanings; and richer still as the essay moves upon its way, this month and next.

## "THE KINGDOM"

By James Challen

It is not without design that the kingdom of God is so often spoken of in the New Testament as "The kingdom of the heavens" (Gr.). We have often observed a deep meaning in words and expressions used by the Messiah and his apostles, which the more careless reader has overlooked. In nothing is our folly more manifest than the attempt to explain away or to ignore the sayings of Christ or to accommodate them to some theory of our own. The Jewish nation missed the Messiah and rejected him when he came by adopting this fatal mistake; are we not liable to fall into the same error in regard to the second appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ? They spiritualized the prophets when they spoke "of the suffering of the Christ"; and we are doing the same, when they and the apostles speak "of the *glories* that shall follow." The danger to us will be greater than to them, inasmuch as we fail to be warned by their example or instructed by the additional light we have on the subject.

We have done well on the restoration of the ancient faith; shall we not leave our work but half complete if we neglect the hope? The past, as it looks to the present salvation, is secure for all coming time; but the future, as it anticipates the eternal salvation at "the appearing and the kingdom" of our Redeemer, is not so clear. We need but apply the principles of interpretation to the latter that we have done to the former, and the results will be glorious.

The field of prophetic scripture is to many unexplored. We should seek to enter into it. It is a part of Immanuel's ground and rich with all that is precious and good. It is the Eden of Scripture—a garden which the Lord has blessed. It is a large part of those divine oracles "given by inspiration of God," and "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness."

It is no easy thing to divorce our minds from prejudice or free ourselves from the traditions of the fathers. We may encounter as much opposition in reference to the prophecies which look to the future, as we have met in reference to the plain teachings of the Messiah with respect to the gospel, or "the present truth." But we are bold and courageous and Canaan is before us. . . .

*The pre-millennial view of the second advent of Christ was held by all the "Fathers" in the first two centuries of the church, is all must admit. Those who lived nearest the apostles and were*

contemporary with them held to it. This is something in its favor. When the church became secularized by its connection with the empire, it gradually diminished its hold upon the doctrine, and favored the idea of progress and Christian civilization as all-sufficient to fulfill the hopes of the prophets, and to realize their grand prospective delineation in regard to the ultimate triumphs of the truth over error, and light over darkness, and good over evil. Origen, by his system of allegorical interpretation, mingled with the philosophy of the Greeks, threw endless confusion upon this, and all other subjects found in the scriptures of truth. Then came, for one thousand years, the dark ages in which nothing shone but the gilded temples, the glittering crowns and jeweled tiaras of the papacy. Rome and its priesthood; its shrines and its altars; its feast days and fasts; its ritual and offerings; its wealth and its kingdom, were the only millennium the church then needed or desired. It was the Eden of the sensualist, the paradise of the serpent, the kingdom of the clergy—the empire of Satan!

A few of the faithful still lived in the mountains; in caves and in dens; or in unbroken forests; or hid themselves in the catacombs beneath the imperial city. They retained the ancient faith, and hope; but they were persecuted and slain. But there was light in their dwellings. They lived in Goshen—all beyond them was Egypt and Babylon.

After the Reformation by Luther, the scriptures were taken out of the cloisters in which they had been buried, and the "one hope" again gladdened the heart of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and others. The same destiny for the church, which gave such a mighty impulse to the faith and hope of the "Fathers" and the first Christians appeared anew. But in process of time the union of church and state—never fully recovered in Europe—deadened the religious sense of the people and prepared the way for a system more in accordance with the pride and ambition and hopes which everywhere prevailed.

Dr. Whitby, of the church of England, a man of transcendent genius and learning, is the author of the modern theory of a Spiritual Millennium. It was gradually accepted and has been sustained by popular vote until this day. He acknowledged that it was not the ancient faith; and he gave it as an innovation upon the established theories of the purest days of the church. . . . The world, according to this theory, was to be converted by the rapid increase of light, by the gospel and these accessories, and finally reconciled and redeemed; the golden age of prophets and apostles would be restored and the earth be filled with the glory of the Lord. What with the new impulse given to the world by the recovery of the lost arts; by the revival of learning; by a more Christian civilization; by a knowledge of the exact sciences; by a cultivated taste; by a sounder philosophy, by railroads and steam power; by the printing press and the telegraph; an universal peace—Paradise—would be restored, and heaven come down as before the eating of the fatal apple!

We were all captivated by this grand thought in regard to the future. We supposed that by this time our fondest hopes would

have been realized, and that the work would be done. But "where is the wisdom of the Scribe? where the disputer of this age?" "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The sects stand just where they did—only in a worse condition. They see and feel the necessity of union, but dare not sacrifice denominationalism to obtain it. They still cowardly compromise the truth or withhold it for the sake of party. Destructive substitutes, resting on tradition, on inferences and customs, have displaced the positive institutions of heaven. Human authority has legislated out of the kingdom the laws and ordinances of the Christ; and human creeds have superseded the divine. Each party aspires after the preeminence, and hopes for a millennium by absorbing all the rest. Ecclesiasticism is exalted above the church of Christ, and numbers have claimed as their special right the prestige of "orthodoxy." The rights of conscience have been trampled under foot by the usurpations of the assembly and the synod, the associations and the conferences. The apostasy is as huge as ever. Rome still stands impregnable. The Church of England is still the church of Henry the Eighth. The Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Methodist Churches are as far apart as ever, and not half as pious as they were a hundred years ago. Paganism holds on as in the past. Mohammedanism is still alive. "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people."

According to this theory, judging from the past, a spiritual millennium never will come. It would take a million years for any one sect to swallow up the rest, even if it had all the learning, wealth, and influence which the world could furnish; and what would be the result? The goal could be as far removed from us as it now is. The theory must be wrong, or there can be no "last days," and no hope for the "restitution of all things." . . . .

But enough has been said on this subject to prepare the way for the introduction of our theme—"The Kingdom of the Heavens."

In every single case, so far as we have examined the Gospel of Matthew, the plural form of "the heavens" is used in connection with the kingdom. Consult the following in the Greek: Matt. 3:2; 10:7; 5:3; 10:19; 18:3; 8:21; 16;19. There may be exceptions, but this is the rule.

We can not suppose that this formula happened by accident, or was made without design, or that our Savior would have used these words unless for some definite purpose; nor can we suppose that the "Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation," who brought all things to the remembrance of the apostles as taught by the Savior, would have employed this phraseology unless it had a value which could not otherwise be expressed. Matthew wrote his testimony for the benefit of the Jews, and he is the one who most frequently uses these words, "The Kingdom of the Heavens." Mark, Luke and John usually speak of "the kingdom," or "the kingdom of God." The reason why Matthew employs this term may be, that as he wrote for the benefit of his own countrymen, who were familiar with the writings of the prophets, they would be better able to understand its meaning

and feel its importance. Examples illustrating it are abundant: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak." (Deut. 32:1.) "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." (1 Kings 8:27.) "Our trespass is grown up into the heavens." (Ex. 9:6.) "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens." (Ps. 55:26.) The law, the prophets, and the Psalms speak of "the heavens" as the abode of God and of angels. It was, then, in perfect harmony with this, that the word in the plural form is used by the Savior in reference to the throne and kingdom he came to introduce.

The kingdom of God had its origin not in heaven, but in the heaven of heavens. It came from the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, on which the Messiah now sits, and where the "heavens do rule." It has no lower origin than this, and can have no higher. Our Savior said that His kingdom was not of this earth; and it has no sympathy with the atmospheric heavens over which the prince of the power of the air presides, and which shall be destroyed by fire. It is emphatically from above—"above all heavens," into which our Prince has entered.

We know but little of these ancient heavens, their extent and glory, or the thrones and principalities therein; their division, ranks, and orders; but whatever they may be, however vast and extensive their dominion, they constitute but one kingdom, one empire—"the kingdom of the heavens." It may be illimitable, and beyond all conception glorious and sublime. Jehovah is its King. He is called so, not because He has borrowed it from the language of earth, but as having lent it to those who bear office among men. Human government is but the shadow of the divine, and its official dignitaries but images of what is real and personal in the heavens. "The kingdom of the Heavens" is not a figurative expression, but most literal. It symbolizes the only empire that shall stand forever. It can not be shaken—never shall be moved. "The kingdom of God," as established in the earth under the reign of the Messiah, is only a part of the celestial and the heavenly. . . .

"What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein

Each to other like, more than on earth is thought."

As a reward to the messiah for His sufferings and death, "The heavens received Him," and will retain Him until He shall come in the clouds to earth again. The kingdom of the heavens was transferred to Him by the Father, and he is now the ruling sovereign of the universe. He will one day be proclaimed as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The whole intelligent universe and all worlds have been put under His dominion and control. He is the Head of all principalities and powers. The Son of Mary, the Son of God, is the heir of all things. This is the grandest thought in the whole compass of divine revelation. It is the most enrapturing, soul-cheering, soul-ennobling conception ever made known to man. . . .—James Challen, quoted by Mathes in the book, *Western Preacher*, Bedford, Ind., 1865; pp. 170-184, Vol. 1.