

# THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLIV, May, 1950)

## A Teacher's Prayer

"Dear Lord, I do not ask  
That Thou shouldst give me some high work of thine,  
Some noble calling or some wondrous task;  
Give me a little hand to hold in mine;  
Give me a little child to point the way  
Over the strange sweet path that leads to Thee;  
Give me a little voice to teach to pray;  
Give me two shining eyes Thy face to see.  
The only crown I ask, dear Lord, to wear  
Is this—that I may teach a little child.  
I do not ask that I should ever stand  
Among the wise, the worthy, or the great;  
I only ask that softly, hand in hand,  
A child and I may enter at Thy gate."

—Selected

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## WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

### WHY THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SEEMS DISAPPOINTING

The "exceeding great and precious promises" of God make a fine contrast with the poverty and weakness of our average Christian experience. Many Christians feel it. Many wonder why it is so. Some satisfy themselves with the shallow explanations furnished freely by leading men who themselves have made the same failure and feel obliged to justify themselves and to reassure their brethren with the thought that it was never meant to be otherwise. Others frankly blame God (cf. Num. 16:14), or, at least, take the position that God's word needs to be taken with many a pinch of allowance; in other words, they surrender their faith, and with it all further aspiration. Others still accept the situation with quiet resignation, hoping still and praying that some day something may happen, that they may "get" something from above, and that then will come the new epoch of the joyous, peaceful, powerful, victorious life of love held out as the New Testament standard. Many are they who are dissatisfied, and many who aspire to a higher, truer Christian life. But few are they who consider that there is a definite reason for their failure, and that in the spiritual as in the natural sphere cause follows effect with the inexorable certainty of law, and nothing comes haphazard. Nor can there ever be different results until there are different antecedents. Now the trouble with this multitude of Christians is simply that they want the better things, but are not willing to meet the cost. They want results without meeting the conditions

under which alone the results are possible. Let us be quite certain of this: nothing prevents the possession of the highest blessings Christ bestows in this life, except something in ourselves—something we can change.

### THE LAW OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"If any man would come after me," said the Lord Jesus. "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." These directions are clear and specific. They enunciate a spiritual law that never is broken and cannot be. Would you come after Jesus? Then the first thing you must do is to break away from that other master whom you have served hitherto—"self." To deny self is to refuse self. Now self demands recognition. It clamors for gratification, consideration, satisfaction. It insists upon strict obedience, and threatens and inflicts punishment where it is disobeyed. Many (and one could wish that they were only "outsiders," but far from it!) are so absolutely under the domination of self that they are really giving self the obedience and homage that is due to God alone. Paul says their "god is the belly." They have a passing tender regard for self—for self's comfort, self's pleasure, self's honor, self's advancement in the world, self's popularity. "And men praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." In thus pursuing self's ends wisely and pluckily they earn also the good opinion of their fellowmen. The whole of the being is then devoted to the service of self. Even if the man be a professed Christian, he can worship and serve God and do good works only to the extent that self permits, which is only so far as that ministers to the satisfaction of self and to the furthering of self's interests.

Have I overdrawn the picture? Would that I had! This is strictly the condition of *most* Christians. It was so even in Paul's time: "For *many* walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. 3:18, 19.) If we want to change this matter and actually follow Christ, the first prerequisite must be to refuse self: to refuse it gratification, all consideration, all vote and voice in the decision of questions; to turn a wholly deaf ear to its commands, to its entreaties, its inducements, its threats—in a word, to refuse it and put Christ in its place. But this is troublesome. That cuts and hurts badly. And we all have a gravitation toward the easier course. So it has happened that many of us have found it more convenient to divide allegiance and make prudent compromise between self and Christ. From that results a Christian life in which Christ is outwardly professed and honored and served, the while self is left in control: a Christian life, too, which knows little of joy, peace, victory—just a common, dreary, dragging, "pretty-fair" sort of Christian life, the only kind thousands know anything about.

### MEETING THE COST

It may come like a shock to the brethren and sisters who have

aspired to rise above the average Christian experience and to lay hold on the promises set before them, to live a life after the pattern of, say, Paul's, and to find the rest of soul which they painfully miss, that the only reason why they have never got beyond the wishing and praying stage of it is simply that they have steadfastly refused to denounce self. The gratification of self is sweet to them, and self stands in high regard, and they cannot bring themselves to treat it with rudeness. To the same proportion the Lord Jesus stands in disregard and slighted. True, some sacrifice has been made, and some concessions to the Lord. But King Agag is saved alive and cheerfully blesses himself with the prospect that the bitterness of death is now past. But the only thing to do is to lead Agag out and hew him in pieces before the Lord. We must slay utterly.

And to make sure that we are giving no quarter, the Lord has stipulated another condition besides the denying of self—namely, to take up *the cross*. The cross stands for full surrender to God. That is what Christ's cross meant to him. That is what the cross means to every one of us. And that is death—the death of self, the end of the self-life, the end of the sin-life; the beginning of the reign of the new life in Christ Jesus, in which the Lord takes the place of self and sits enthroned in the heart, the while self is kept in the place of death. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2:20.) Is it any wonder, then, that those brethren who (whatever their religious profession and activity) really serve self are the enemies (not of Christ, but) of the cross of Christ, and want to hear nothing of it, and denounce as extremists those who insist on the necessary place of the cross in the Christian life? Nevertheless, the way of the cross is the way of life and peace. It follows much more certainly than the morning follows after the night that a heart so emptied of self and surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ must be filled with light and joy and power.

#### THE GOAL OF THE COURSE

The last item of this law of the Christian life is "follow me." It comes naturally after the denial of self and the crucifixion thereof. No man can serve two masters, but each man must serve one master. Christ comes in to fill the seat of rule made vacant, and himself assumes the direction of the life. We follow, not with the struggle renewed daily and hourly at every call of Christ's voice, but upon the foregone conclusion that we are dead to sin and self and there is nothing else to do. There is, of course, constant need to watch and pray and to maintain daily that self-surrender. But now we follow. The result is that we "come after" him—that is, we get to the place where he is going. We shall fill our human task and place on the earth; we shall be satisfied with life and light; we shall have power to witness for Christ and to save others. Then comes the final issue of that sort of life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it

bearcth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor." (John 12:24-26.)

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### "ZION": A Question

A sister in the middle west asks: "Is it right and scriptural to sing concerning Zion, 'Marching to Zion' for instance? What is Zion?"

Answer: Zion is primarily and literally the temple mount in Jerusalem, headquarters of redeemed Israel. But by a figure called metonymy, it is sometimes used for the true spiritual realities, the "heavenly Jerusalem," etc., as in Hebrews 12:22-24; or rather, it is used as *one among* many such concepts. In Hebrews 12 its meaning is not limited to the church on earth, but it is used as one of many connected terms describing heavenly or spiritual joys and realities.

In Romans 11:26 Zion certainly does not mean the church. The Redeemer did not, and does not, come out of the church; the church came out of Him, and it is His body. In Isaiah 59:20 (from which Romans 11:26 is quoted) "Zion" means Israel, or Israel's headquarters, Jerusalem, as that place and nation is to be redeemed and restored to God's favor. (See McGarvey's articles "Why Are the Jews Yet With Us?"). In fact, in the Isaiah passage, the Redeemer comes first to Zion (the temple mount) "and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah." So this is another passage (like Zech. 14 and Job 19:25-27) predicting that the Redeemer will yet stand on the earth; for Paul uses this Isaiah passage of the *future* coming (the Second Coming) of Jesus in Romans 11.

Yes, I think that "Marching to Zion," (also stanza 3 of number 106 in Great Songs) may be sung meaning our heavenly city and home.

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### THE JEW

"O God, you have chosen us of all people to be thy people, but now please let us alone and choose some one else," prayed an unbelieving Jew in a mock prayer.

"You can't bless because we are accursed; you can't curse us because we are blessed." This paradoxical statement sums up the way it is with the Jew.

When the Jew is on the right side he is a power for good; but when he is on the wrong side he is a power for evil.

Jews held all key places in Germany. They were bankers, lawyers, business men, merchants, scientists. The atomic bomb came from a Jew. A woman scientist fled to the United States from Germany, because of Jewish blood, and from her our nation learned the secret.

But above all else, in a spiritual way we owe much to the Jew, for salvation is of the Jew.

# NEWS AND NOTES

Good reports keep coming in from the Hollywood Blvd. Church, Los Angeles. The Sunday meetings, morning and night, are still held in the assembly room at Hollywood Hotel (Hollywood Blvd. and Highland Ave.); the prayer meetings (usually 25 to 30) in private homes, most often with Brother and Sister Pridy in North Hollywood. Sister Pridy is in a wheel chair, and the fellowship is a great comfort to her. Brother James C. Gordon of Long Beach continues as their beloved minister. Gordon Himes and Robert L. Nichols are the elders—as they were for years before at Rossmore Ave. church. Himes writes "The Boulevard church is progressing according to the will of God, and that is just what we want."

Let brethren who travel in the West make note of the convenient location: Hollywood Hotel, Hollywood Blvd. at Highland Ave. This is one of the leading cross-roads of the entire Los Angeles area, and one of the most famous corners in the world.—E. L. J.

Brother A. K. Ramsey, reporting his meeting at Glenmora, La., from April 2 to 9, says in part: "Glenmora church was in fine spirits. The meeting started at high point of interest and continued to improve to the end. Attendance was good at the start and increased through the week, closing with the largest number present. Visitors came from Alexandria, Oakdale, Baton Rouge, Jennings, Turkey Creek, Crowley, Pine Prairie, and Brother Elston of DeRidder was present one night. It was especially pleasing to see the Glenmora people showing interest by their presence. Much of the credit for the success of the meeting goes to Bro. Mayeux for his fine work before and during the meeting. And another large share of credit goes to Brother Ivy Istre who conducted the song service.

"Brother Sidney Mayeux had a wonderful meeting at Oakdale the last Sunday morning of the Glenmora meeting, when a young woman came forward to renew her fellowship with the people of God, and her husband, a Catholic, came

up with her to be baptized into Christ. At the water that afternoon another young man made the good confession and was baptized. Note: the preacher who did the baptizing was once a Catholic, the man who led the songs was once an 'altar-boy' in a Catholic church, and the man who read the scriptures was once numbered in the same faith—when one reads the Bible for himself he soon loses interest in the Roman Catholic faith."—Louisiana Christian.

Abilene, Texas: "We are looking forward to a good meeting at Abilene with Brother J. E. Blansett bringing the messages from May 3 through 14. Already there have been evidence of increased interest and effort. There have been two responses of late, one for baptism and one for membership."—Carl Kitzmiller.

Winchester Ky.: "The Main Street Church here at Winchester has just closed a twelve nights Revival, which was conducted by Bro. John S. May of Ada, Ohio. The attendance and interest were fine, and six persons responded—four for membership, one for rededication, and one for baptism.

"Brother May's messages were inspiring in their clarity and genuine sincerity. He spoke with conviction to our youth and not-too-interested members in encouraging all that it really pays to be all-out for Christ. He could well do this in that he has truly given up all that the world counts gain, to serve Christ. We pray God's richest blessings upon Brother May and his family."—Ben D. Rake.

Johnson City, Tenn.: "There were 70 present for the morning service at the Mtn. View church in the Carter-Sell addition on Sunday, April 9. That is the largest attendance so far this year. We hope soon to be meeting in our new auditorium. We are waiting on pews.

"One confessed her faith in Christ at the Locust Street church Sunday morning, April 9. Good interest and attendance has characterized most of the services in recent weeks."—Robert B. Boyd.

New Albany, Ind.: "The Cherry Street Church at New Albany is to be host to the regular monthly song fest sponsored by the Kentucky Bible College. It is to be at the Cherry Street Church on Sunday, May 21, at three o'clock. Preachers, song leaders, singing groups, and everyone welcome. We have new pews and we wish to fill them to capacity.

"Work at the local church seems to be blessed of the Lord. Our Sunday school has taken on new interest and is doing well. One was baptized the other Sunday. We plan our Vacation Bible School and meeting in June. Pray for us."—Edward E. Kranz.

#### **The Borden Hymn Sing**

The Hymn Sing sponsored by the Borden, Indiana, church, and held in the local high school gymnasium on Tuesday night, April 25, was enjoyed by a great number of brethren, young and old. F. S. Spaulding, Borden minister, presided. Song leaders from various congregations participated in leading songs; choruses and quartets rendered special numbers. A beautiful spirit of unity was demonstrated and hearts were lifted closer to God through the medium of song.

Ames, Okla.: "I was much pleased and encouraged in reading the March issue of Word and Work. I think it was splendid. My attention was attracted to the good comments on the eldership of the church. More attention needs to be given to the procedure of the work and the leadership of the church.

"More wisdom is needed from on high. Preachers and elders need to sit down and council together that the work may go forward and accomplish good. Much hurt is done because brethren fail to sit down together and reason out their work and procedure. It is high folly for elders and preachers to divide and tear down the church of the Lord. We must be united or we fall. May God forgive our shortsightedness and our mistakes."—Monroe D. Hayes.

Gallatin, Tenn.: "We have recently enlarged our auditorium and built a class room addition to our building here. Besides a new baptistry and dressing rooms, the new

addition has a study, nursery, kitchen, two assembly rooms, Sunday school superintendent's office, library room, and seventeen class rooms. Our improvements include a new steam heating plant, new pews, and carpet for auditorium. Many of the classes are decorating their rooms with drapes and paint.

"More of our people are working at the job of building up the real house of God. We have recently had three responses for restoration, four responses for membership and seven for baptism. We covet your prayers for us.

"The congregation fellowships the work of Bixler and Scherman \$100 per month and recently shipped to that mission 430 pairs of ladies shoes and 107 hospital bags well filled with useful things for those who are ill. We are on the air twice each week with our "Know Your Bible Class," station WHIN, Gallatin, Tenn., 1010 on your dial."—H. L. Olmstead.

"Johnson City, Tenn.: "Our youth revival, March 5-12, with John S. May as evangelist, was unusually well attended, and interest was excellent throughout. The brethren here, at both congregations, learned to love and appreciate the Mays greatly. Three were baptized into Christ during the meeting.

"I preached for the faithful, small Burlington church, 3635 Magnolia St., in Knoxville again on Friday night, March 24. These brethren are to be commended for their faithfulness to the Lord, and brethren everywhere should pray for them. Prospects seem bright now for them to have a full-time preacher with them for a while, beginning in June. Lord willing I will visit them again next month."—Robert B. Boyd.

#### **Word from a Young Preacher**

I have been taking the Word and Work for several years now and appreciate it. Received the March issue just this week and happened to turn first of all to "Seed Though" on page 67 where the heading "Beginning with Romans" caught my eye. Your experience has been mine exactly in that "it opened up to me all at once" and "If you get Romans, God will get you." Truly, "The word of the

cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

"For the past three years I have been against the legalistic tendency among many of our preaching brethren. I was in **bondage** to it, but not nearly as much as some. I try always to keep my mind open for new truth, and just recently the book of Romans "opened up to me"! Studying the meaning of the word righteousness from both Lard and Thayer helped a great deal. What a wonderful thrill to know something of the **Grace** of God! Scriptures have been flocking together in my mind to make perfect harmony, which heretofore have had somewhat of a forced meaning. And to climax the whole thing that particular article caught my eye."

England: "We are enjoying our short visit in England among my wife's people. I have had opportunity to visit several of the congregations of the church here.

"The Browns should be arriving in Cape Town within a few days. We look forward to joining them in a new endeavor sometime near the latter part of July. We certainly appreciate our regular copy of the Word and Work. Pray for us! Phil. 1:3."—Vernon C. Lawyer.

Tell City, Ind.: "I think the Word and Work gets better every number. The more I read it the better I love to do so. Brother R. H. Boll's lessons on first pages of April was worth the subscription price. May God bless every one who has a part in this good work."—Mrs. Joe Sandage.

#### Fall Preachers' Meeting

The fall preachers' meeting is to be held at South Louisville Church, 5th and M streets, from September 4-8. A number of men who have not taken part in previous meetings are being asked to speak. At this early date we are asking preachers and churches to arrange meetings in such a way as to allow the ministers, who care to, to attend these meetings. All visiting ministers and their families will be entertained in Christian homes.

Camp Taylor, Ky.: "On the Sunday and Wednesday after our recent Gospel meeting five responded to the invitations; three for baptism and two for restoration and mem-

bership. Last Lord's day another came for a closer walk with God and to place membership."—J. R. Clark.

#### TWO MAY MEETINGS

R. H. Boll is to speak in a Gospel meeting at the Ormsby church, 622 E. Ormsby, Louisville, from May 7-21. Services will be each evening at 7:45.

Orell Overman of Lexington is scheduled to be at the Parkland church of Christ, Southern and Beech, Louisville, at the same date of the Ormsby meeting, May 7 through 21. These congregations are in two distinct communities that need the Gospel. Both houses can be filled easily each night.

#### Dr. Wood Doing Well

Word comes that Dr. Eugene Wood of Dallas, Texas, has undergone an operation on one of his hips. Brother Frank Mullins writes of Brother Wood, "He is doing well after his operation, and the doctors are very encouraged over prospects of much improvement in his condition." Dr. Wood had been preaching at the Fair Park church in Dallas since the recent resignation of Brother Harold Beck.

#### Brother Chambers Ill

Brother Stanford Chambers has just submitted to an operation for ulcers at the Foundation Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana. The operation was serious, but report comes he is doing very well and that the doctors hold out hope for his recovery. We solicit the prayers of the saints for this beloved brother and coworker.

#### ARTICLES ON GALATIANS

We are happy to present the first in a series of articles on Galatians from the pen of Brother R. H. Boll in this issue of the Word and Work. This series is to be continued from month to month until the book is covered.

We would like to call attention to an unusually fine study on Romans 16:17, 18, "Mark Them and Avoid Them," written by Brother Boll for **Faith of our Fathers** department this time. This is a new article and should have a wide reading. We hope to make it available in tract form.

## TARSHISH OR NINEVEH

H. N. Rutherford

I have been impressed here of late with the story of Jonah and I am passing on through the Word and Work some quotations setting forth some most practical teaching about Jonah in his obstinacy and dislike for the people of Nineveh. The first is from "Quiet Talks on John's Gospel."

TARSHISH OR NINEVEH? "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." Why? Because man was in the dark. He sent a man to help man. He used a man to reach a man. He always does. Run clear through this old Book of God, and note that this is God's habit. With greatest reverence let it be said God *must* ask a human for His feet. Even when He would redeem a world, He must needs come, as a Man, one of ourselves. He touches men through men. And will you mark keenly that the highest level any life ever reaches, or can reach, is this: to be a pathway for the feet of a wooing winning God.

John was a man sent from God. And he came. All men are sent. But they don't all come. Some go; go their own way. There was a man sent from God whose name was Jonah. But he didn't come. He went. He was sent to Nineveh on the extreme east. He went to Tarshish on the extreme west; just the opposite direction. Every man is headed either for Nineveh or Tarshish, God's way or his own. Which way are you headed? Some of us Go to Tarshish religiously. We go our own way, and sing hymns and pray, to make it seem right and keep from hearing the inner voice. We do many things religiously but all the time we're headed for Tarshish; our way, not God's. "John was sent and he came, you and I are sent. Are we coming or going? coming God's way? or, going our own?"

THE DEVIL WILL PROVIDE. In 20th Century Christian, March issue, 1950, I quote the following from Jim Bill McIntere's pen: "The subject of the discussion was Jonah. The preaching was being done in an expository manner. Without comment, **Jonah**, chapter one, verse one through a part of verse three, was read. "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai saying, Arise go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it: for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it." The preacher stopped reading and here are his comments:

"This is the story of the man who ran away from God. Jonah was a man who was commanded by God to do a specific thing and in spite of his orders he chose to disobey. Will you notice that when he reached Joppa, determined to flee this obligation, there stood a ship in readiness to take him away from duty. And will you also notice that he had funds sufficient on his person to pay the fare on his voyage of desertion. The point I want you to remember is this: Whenever you get ready to run away from the Lord,

the devil will provide the ship to carry you away and you will more than likely have enough money to do whatever evil or rebellious act you plan. Resist the 'ship' and the 'fare,' so conveniently provided, and obediently follow the Lord."

**SHIPS TO TARSHISH.** A most excellent article appeared in a late issue of the Moody Monthly on this title and the teaching stems from the story of Jonah. These truths are not so because they are found from the sources quoted, but because they ring the changes on the truth as found in God's word, the Book of Jonah.

"Things seem to work out perfectly for the person seeking to escape duty. One never has to wait for the boat. The boat waits for you. At a moment's notice it is ready to sail, leaving unpleasant tasks behind. Even in Jesus' day, men were quick to scuttle up the gangplank and take a ship to Tarshish. "Follow me and help with the work," said Jesus to one. "I've bought a piece of ground and must see it," said the man. And he waved a good-by to Jesus and duty from the deck of the ship bound for Tarshish. The man who had married a wife and the one who needed to bury his father quickly stepped aboard ships for Tarshish.

Amazing, isn't it? The ship is always ready to sail. Ask a man or a woman to do something in the church. With incredible swiftness excuses come tumbling from their lips. Ships have names. And these ships of ours, Tarshish-bound, are no exception. The name of one is *Another Time*. Oh, yes, I'll do the thing whatever it may be; but not just now. Another time. A second ship is named *Another Person*. It was a familiar sight. The Sunday School superintendent was going from class to class hunting a substitute teacher. "Oh, not today, Sam, I'm not as well prepared as I might be. See if you can get somebody else." The consequences are the class of boys leave and roam the streets when a substitute could have held them together while the teacher was hindered by sickness.

At least one more ship plies the Joppa-Tarshish route, its name, *Another Thing*. Jesus said seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things should be added. Ship of *Too Busy*, or *Another Thing*. Putting everything of less importance before the most important thing (Matt. 6:33). Sunday morning golfers ride this ship to Tarshish. Sunday Sleepers, and Sunday Visitors did not get up in time for Sunday School, went visiting or had visitors and missed services. My duty at the assembly was less important, they say by their actions. Home and making a living has priority over the church and obligations to the Lord that bought us. Are we too busy? The word "busy" appears only once in the whole Bible. Then used as a ludicrous excuse: "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (1 Kings 20:40). Every time I tell the Lord I am busy I insult Him. (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5.) The only one to tell you are too busy is the devil.

**NINEVEH WAITS.** It is your call to duty and mine. The ship to Tarshish waits. It represents escape from duty. Which way will you take? Resist the ship and the fare so conveniently provided, and obediently follow the Lord. The ship to Nineveh leads in the

footsteps of Jesus, that make the pathway glow. "These are they who follow the Lord whithersoever He goeth."

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## **"THE BIBLE THAT COST HALF A MILLION DOLLARS"**

Richard Ramsey

Half a million dollars is quite a lot of money at any time. But in the midst of the great depression of the "thirties," half a million dollars became more so than ever a great sum of money. Yet in the year 1933, when the depression was most severe, the British Museum paid that sum of money for a Bible.

Now, you cannot think of many items that could demand a price of half a million dollars. Huge buildings, great ocean liners, gigantic airplanes and the like demand much larger prices. But these things are composed of thousands and thousands of smaller items, and into the construction of the final product there go millions of man hours of labor. And they are of enormous size.

To think of something small enough to be carried around in your hands and yet to be worth half a million dollars is difficult. Perhaps a few jewels, perhaps a few priceless treasures of art could command such a price. In this small list of the most valuable properties a person could buy we must include the Bible that cost half a million dollars.

Of all things to bring such a price it is hard to imagine one copy of the Bible being so valuable. Why, you can walk into any five and ten cent store and buy a dozen Bibles with one day's wages—why would anyone pay half a million dollars for a Bible?

To understand the value of this particular Bible we must speak for a moment of the history that lies behind our modern printed editions of the Bible. You are familiar with the fact that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. The New Testament writers wrote with pen and ink upon a material similar to our paper, called papyrus. It is generally assumed that the original writings have long ago wasted away or were somehow destroyed. Approximately nineteen hundred years have passed since the New Testament books were written. Unless some special care had been taken to preserve the original copies for centuries they could not have helped but to rot away.

Before these original writings disappeared, however, many copies of them had been made. Each copy had to be written by hand, for there were no printing presses in those days. As the church of Christ grew and spread all over the world, more and more copies of the Bible had to be made. Before long there were hundreds and thousands of copies of the books of the Bible.

Now, if you have had any experience in copying something, you know how easy it is to make mistakes. Every stenographer knows how difficult it is to write a perfect letter from the notes or dictation of her boss. So also did the ancient scribes who copied the Bible have difficulty in making perfect copies. As the centuries went by and more and more copies were made, the number of errors

increased. By the time the printing press was invented in the fifteenth century, the number of errors in the Bible had multiplied. It became the task of Bible scholars to correct these errors and to find out for us just what was the original text of the Bible.

One learned man who gave his life to the study of manuscripts in order to find out the correct wording of the Bible was the German biblical scholar, Tischendorf. I wish we had time to tell of his studies and his travels, and of the exciting story behind the discovery of the Bible that cost half a million dollars. Suffice it to say that he found in the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai a Bible which he believed to be the oldest Bible in the world, and therefore the most valuable one to the Bible scholars. He persuaded the monks to give the Bible to the Czar of Russia, and it was placed in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. There it remained until 1933, when the Communist regime, which cared more for dollars than for Bibles, was glad to sell it to the British Museum for one hundred thousand pounds, or approximately half a million dollars. Because it was found on Mt. Sinai it was given the name, Sinaiticus.

Today, it is no longer thought that Sinaiticus is the oldest Bible in the world, but it still ranks among the half dozen oldest and best manuscripts in existence. It is to be dated somewhere around the year 350 A. D. Thus it takes us back in one jump from the twentieth century to the fourth century, and shows us how the Bible read 1600 years ago. Its value to Bible students cannot be overestimated; half a million dollars was not too much to pay for so valuable a book.

Now, here is the amazing thing about the Bible text. I have already mentioned that throughout the centuries a number of errors had crept into the Bible through the mistakes of copyists. But in all these errors, there is not one mistake of any great importance! Most of the errors have to do with the spelling of words, occasional omissions or additions of words, sometimes use of synonyms, and other such minor matters. Not once in the entire Bible in nineteen centuries of copying has a mistake been made which in any way affects the doctrines of the Bible! You may rest assured that the Bible you have today is so close to the original writings of the apostles that there is no doubt that we have the pure truth of God's word preserved in holiness for us.

The Bible scholars Westcott and Hort estimated that less than one one-thousandth of the New Testament shows any significant error, and that in this one one-thousandth no point of doctrine is ever involved. In other words, the New Testament is 99.9 percent unquestioned; and in that remaining one tenth of one percent no essential point of Christian doctrine is ever involved.

Now when it comes to the matter of our English Bible, it must be remembered that English Bibles are translations out of the original languages. There are many good translations, or versions, of the English Bible. The best of them all is the American Standard Version. The New Testament in this version was published in

1900, by competent scholars, using all the best documents and methods in their study. The American Standard Version is specially valuable for its footnotes, which show other possible translations wherever they exist, so that the reader who has no knowledge of Greek can still judge for himself the best English rendering of the thought.

But whether you are using the American Standard Version or the King James Version or the Rheims-Douay version, or any other scholarly translation, you still have a faithful rendering of the word of God. In any version you will still read of the All-powerful God who is an all-loving heavenly Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The soul-saving gospel, first committed to the written page by men inspired of the Holy Spirit, has been preserved through the centuries, and is now available to you today. In order that you and I might have for our own use the word of God, prices as high as half a million dollars have been paid for copies of the Bible.

The question before us now is how much is the Bible worth to us? Do we appreciate the treasure that we have?

There have been times in the history of the world when people realized the value of the Bible. There were times in the Roman empire, and again in the Middle Ages, when it meant death to be found with a copy of the Bible in one's possession. Many brave souls laid down their necks rather than give up their Bibles. To them the word of God was indeed more precious than gold, yea, more precious than life itself.

Efforts have been made to destroy all Bibles, but they have failed. In modern times the effort has been made to destroy the influence of the Bible. Today that is the devil's policy! And ah! how well he is succeeding! With the water of life so abundant all around us, we are still in the position of that ancient mariner who said, "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink." The devil has pushed the Bible out of our educational institutions and public schools, lest the children should read of Christ and be saved. And he has fairly well pushed the Bible out of the pulpit, too. Not many preachers give much serious thought to the Bible in preparing their sermons. The Bible is too old-fashioned and out-of-date for them; they must preach social and economic philosophies and sentimental stories, and so forth, while their people starve for the spiritual milk that is able to make them wise unto salvation.

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### AN ILL EFFECT

Thomas was not present when the Lord first appeared to the Apostles after His resurrection. He thereby missed a blessing and entertained doubts, in spite of the words of the others, until he personally met with the Apostles and had an experience with the Lord. Missing the Lord's Day worship still has an ill effect upon the Lord's disciples. He wants to meet you there!

## PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

R. H. B.

The epistle to the Galatians is very short—six brief chapters, averaging not quite 25 verses each—but how much of teaching, and power is packed away in its small compass! How revolutionary it is, how contrary to man's natural thinking; how contradictory to the notions of many of even professing Christians who think themselves sound and enlightened in doctrine. It will be well for us all to approach this epistle with open, teachable minds and to give God a clean page, as it were, to write on. If we come with foregone conclusions—if we assume to begin with that we already know, in the main at least, what the apostle means to teach; or (worse still) if our mind is filled with prejudice and the blinding desire to uphold some pre-adopted creed or theory—we shall learn nothing. But if we come as little children to learn God's mind, looking unto him as we read and seek to understand, Paul's Epistle to the Galatians will very likely revolutionize some of our views, and if so, let us hope, our lives also.

In the case of this epistle it is necessary to know something of the background and the occasion of it—why it was written; and also its source and authority, and that it is indeed the word of God that we are studying.

As to the reason for the writing of this epistle, that we must learn from two sources: (1) from the book of Acts, and (2) from the epistle itself. The question of its authority involves the apostleship of Paul, his authority as the inspired messenger and spokesman of Christ, which he here claims more emphatically than in any of his other epistles. For after all, the whole value of this writing hangs by that. If in this epistle we have only a man's views and reasoning—let him be ever so wise and able—it might indeed interest us, and we could probably gain some benefit from the study of it, but we could never accept its teaching as final truth; we would have to take it as we do all other writings of men, for what to us it might seem to be worth; what faith we had in it would be based "in the wisdom of men," rather than on the truth of God. And as Paul thanked God that the Thessalonians received his message as the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13), so Paul would surely thank God on our behalf also if we receive the message of this epistle "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe."

In the course of this epistle we are sure to meet with some things which do not accord with thoughts we have hitherto held; yes, we may even find some things that quite upset us. Then if it is only the teaching of Paul, the man, we would feel free to disagree with him; but if here we have the utterance of the Spirit of God, speaking and teaching through His servant Paul, we must subject our mind and judgment to the divine light and truth. Only by such light from above can we ever come to know anything, for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." So

those of us who are entering upon this study are ready to receive the word of this message as the word of God; and thus shall we be enlightened and confirmed in that "most holy faith" which God's word creates in our hearts (Rom. 10:17).

For the background of this epistle we must first go back to the book of Acts, especially to chapter eleven (latter half) and chapter fifteen. A wonderful work had begun in the great Gentile city of Antioch. Up to this time the itinerant preachers of the gospel, members of the church at Jerusalem, who had been scattered abroad in the persecution that arose after the stoning of Stephen and who had gone "everywhere preaching the word," had preached to Jews only. But a few bold men, knowing that they were acting in line with God's will in this matter, broke over and preached the gospel to Greeks also. It was a brave step. Little do we realize the fearful barriers that separated Jews from Gentiles, and the storm of criticism and condemnation such a venture was sure to provoke. But "the hand of the Lord was with them," and great numbers from among the Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. Thus a great church, composed chiefly of Gentiles, was born in the heathen city of Antioch. The brethren in Jerusalem heard of it and wondered. So they sent one of their number, Barnabas, a great and trusted man, to go to Antioch to see what was going on. He came and saw and was convinced that this new work was indeed the work of the Lord. When he "had seen the grace of God," he "was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Then Barnabas sought the help of Saul of Tarsus (our "apostle Paul") and brought him to Antioch. The work of God flourished mightily through the labors of these men. Antioch became the new center from which subsequently Paul was sent forth on his missionary journeys into the Gentile world (Acts 13).

It was when Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch from that first missionary tour that they found certain men from Judaea who had been telling the Gentile Christians that except they were circumcised after the custom of Moses, they could not be saved (Acts 15:1). The result of this teaching was consternation and dismay. Paul and Barnabas took a strict stand against those "Judaizing" teachers. But the seeds of doubt had been sown, and the question would not down. Did this teaching come from the apostles at Jerusalem? Probably these agitators claimed as much. Paul and Barnabas could have settled this question; but the circumstances made it imperative that this matter be taken to Jerusalem, for Jerusalem was the great center of Jewish Christianity. There, and there only, could a final answer to this question be given. And to Jerusalem went Paul and Barnabas, therefore, to confer with apostles and the elders about this question, not for information, but for confirmation. There they rehearsed before those brethren all the work which God had done with them among the Gentiles. "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, it is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them

to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5).<sup>\*</sup> Thus the issue was squarely put. What did the Jerusalem brethren say to this? We can only summarize the proceedings of that day. Notable is the fact that though inspired apostles were present not one of them offered to settle the question by an authoritative dictum. Simon Peter was there; but though to him the Lord Jesus Christ had given authority to bind and loose on earth, he did not decide the matter by an utterance of authority, but his speech was an argument, an appeal to their reason and judgment. John was there, whose apostolic authority was no less than Peter's, but no word from him is in the record. Paul was there; but he did not attempt to settle the matter by a dictum of his apostolic authority: he and Barnabas merely told what God had done with them among the Gentiles. There was first a general free discussion; then a speech by Peter; then Barnabas and Paul rehearsed the work among the Gentiles. Finally James (not the apostle, the "son of Alphaeus" (Acts 1:13), but the Lord's brother, and elder in the church at Jerusalem) summed it all up; and the outcome was that having come to one accord under the direction of the Holy Spirit, they discredited the teachers who had tried to bind circumcision and law-observance on the Gentile Christians at Antioch.

That should have ended the matter forever. But for years after stubborn Jewish legalists did not cease to teach their subversive doctrines. They dogged the steps of Paul into Gentile regions, and tried to undermine Paul's claim to apostleship, and to bring his converts under the yoke of Judaism. Among the churches of Galatia their nefarious work had met with surprising favor. And that was what called forth Paul's epistle to the Galatians.

Paul had been in Galatia at least twice before: the first time detained there by illness—an "infirmity of the flesh" he calls it—which, in Paul's case would mean that he simply could not go any further. And that "infirmity," whatever it was, was of such a nature as might have made him an object of abhorrence, stranger as he was, poor and helpless in their midst. But those Galatians received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus," and if it had been possible (he says) they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul. But now all seemed to be changed. Evil workers, very zealous, as such men often are, had gone about among Paul's friends and converts, had told them that Paul was not a real apostle at all, that he never was one of Christ's Twelve, that his teaching was very deficient and insufficient, that he had suppressed vital truths (notably the necessity of circumcision, and of the observance of the Law, God's own ancient revelation, which Christ had not come to destroy but to fulfil), that Paul himself was a time-server, who could play up to the Jews and the Gentiles as it suited his purpose—and such like slanderous charges. Thus with much plausible argument and persuasion they managed to turn away the hearts of the Galatian Christians, not from Paul only, but from the gospel, and from

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<sup>\*</sup> Note that the question was not whether Gentiles could be admitted—that was no longer in dispute—but what Gentile believers must do in order to their final salvation.

the grace of God in which they had been called, and from Christ crucified, and from all true hope of salvation.

Some may wonder why Paul took the error of the Galatians so very seriously, and why all the severity and vehemence of the Apostle in writing to his beloved Galatians. Some readers of the epistle may even wonder what it was all about; but that would betray an ignorance, all too common, of the real nature of the gospel, which this epistle was designed to correct.

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## SEED THOUGHTS

(While meditating upon the importance of church attendance with the idea of forming some little paragraphs to encourage local Christians to be regular and faithful at worship, the following thoughts came to mind.)

J. R. C.

### FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

On the first day of the week the Lord arose from the grave, appeared to the apostles, Thomas being absent, appeared to them, Thomas being present; on that day the Holy Spirit came down, and on that day the Lord appeared to John on Patmos. If the Lord should come for His own on the first day of the week at 11 o'clock where would you want to be found?

### CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER

On a church sign these words were painted, "This is the gate of Heaven." Underneath on the bulletin board was scribbled, "Closed for the Summer." The Lord's work should go on in season and out of season. Our rest comes after our labors are over. If the church as such should be faithful, then you as an individual should be faithful.

### THE DYING EMBER

The deacon was absent. After church the minister hurried to his home and found the truant sitting by the open fire. The minister sat down. Not a word was spoken. The minister took the poker and raked out a glowing coal to itself. Together they watched it turn black and die. Finally the deacon spoke, "You need not say anything Parson, I'll be there next Sunday."

### A LADDER AND A GATE

Jacob saw a ladder and a gate which led to Heaven and to God. He called the place Bethel—House of God. Even today wherever you find the church of God, which is the house of God, you will find a ladder and a gate, so to speak, reaching to heaven. Of all institutions of the world only the Church points the way to God. Those who by-pass the church miss their way.

### IT IS GOOD TO BE MISSED

It is good to be so regular at church that you are missed when

absent. Can it be said of you on those rare days of forced absence, "Thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty." The Lord's Supper is the Father's table; all His children should be present.

### ABSENCE CHILLS THE HEART

We say, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," but this adage does not apply to church attendance, for any neglect of Christian duty chills the heart. Spurgeon said, "You may have more and more and more . . . of everything Christ has instituted and ordained, especially more and more of Himself, and the more you have the more freshness there will be." What is your experience?

### A GOOD HABIT

The Lord Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. The Lord still goes to worship, for He promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Do you have a similar custom of attending church on the Lord's Day?

### ALL ANTIQUITY CONCURS

"And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, . . ." On what day did the disciples come together? For what purpose? Said Alexander Campbell, "All antiquity concurs in evincing that, for the first three centuries, all the churches broke bread once a week." How may we imitate the faith of the early church in this matter?

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## A Strange Family

The father has never missed church or Sunday School in twenty-three years. The mother has had a perfect record for eleven years. A son has not missed for twelve years. A daughter has been at the evening service every Sunday for eight years.

What's the matter with this family, anyway? Don't they ever have company on Sunday to keep them away from church?

Don't they ever get tired on Sunday morning?

Don't they belong to any lodges, where they get their religion, instead of at their Father's house, or to any clubs, or to anything?

Don't they ever have headaches, or colds, or nervous spells, or tired feelings, or sudden calls out of the city, or weekend parties, or business trips, or picnics, or any other trouble?

Don't they even have a radio, so that they can get some good sermons from out-of-town preachers?

Don't they ever get more good out of reading a sermon from a book?

What's the matter with this family anyway, and why are they so happy and cheerful?

We leave it to you to answer.

—D. H. Friend's Bulletin

## WHAT IS VITAL?

Stanford Chambers

The truth is one, and all truth is important. No truth is to be discounted or considered valueless, as though it were a mere filler of space. Nevertheless the truth that is central and vital to the whole is the Sonship and Christhood of Him who went to the cross and the tomb for us. "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31). This truth is vital. "For, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). But "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). This vital truth must be known and believed by all "from the least to the greatest of them." It is concerning this teaching that John wrote when he said, "If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting" (2 John v. 10). The context shows this to be true. All other Gospel truth is related to this one central truth. None is to be denied, though we may not as yet have come to the knowledge of all truth. And as long as there are babes as well as fullgrown in the Lord, there will be different stages of development in the knowledge of the truth. This fact is not to affect fellowship.

John's word has been greatly abused, has been made to justify sectarianizing on the various tenets on which divisions have arisen. "This doctrine." "This teaching." If any one cometh unto you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting." "This teaching: This eternal security teaching; this close baptism teaching; this one cup teaching; this throne of David teaching; this college teaching; this binding of Satan teaching; this Sabbath teaching; this or that fad or theory on which disfellowshipping is being practiced these days,—John's text is being used without regard to his application of "this teaching." Thus is sectarianism ever defended and ever perpetuated. By their actions—often in words—they say to those who differ with them, "I have no need of thee." The Bible does not permit that, but "full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition, "all in order to be loyal, loyal to the little party without whom loyalty would perish from the earth!

"Thou shalt not teach it." Thus saith the sect-former. By "it" he means what he opposes, for "Who differs from me is a teacher of error." Thus has come about severance of fellowship. For who could comply with all the "Thou shalt nots" of these days? And to do so, were it possible, would be neither to arrive at *truth* nor to *advance* it. To oppose error with the truth is the right of any man; to oppose truth with error, or to hold down the truth unrighteously, is the right of no man. To search the Scriptures and to speak as the oracles of God is plain duty. Freedom of speech is vital, and one need not be blind as to who seeks to curb that right, withholding

fellowship from Christians exercising it, and then charging division to others than those who make unwarranted and unscriptural tests of fellowship.—*Truth Advance*.

## LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

### THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS

**SAUL THE PERSECUTOR.** The first mention of Saul of Tarsus is in connection with the stoning of Stephen. He it was who stood guard over the garments of the witnesses while they were engaged in this wicked deed; and he thus accepted his full share of the guilt incurred. In the fierce persecution which followed he took an aggressive part. "But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." (Acts 8:3.) At a later time he described his activities of this period in fuller detail: "I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." (Acts 26:10, 11.) His honored preceptor, Dr. Gamaliel, had formerly advised caution and moderation in dealing with the leaders of this new movement (Acts 5:34-39); but not so the younger man Saul. He believed that it ought to be stamped out by vigorous measures, and he was devoting all his time and energy to do just that.

**A GREAT TRANSFORMATION.** This determined assault upon the church in Jerusalem appeared quite successful. The disciples were *all* scattered abroad, leaving the apostles alone. But Saul was not content with that. Everywhere they went these disciples were preaching the word. The efforts to extinguish the fire had only cause it to spread. So the followers of Jesus must be hunted down wherever they were to be found, even in foreign cities. Hence it came to pass that one day, armed with letters from the high priest to the synagogues of Damascus, Saul set out from Jerusalem for that ancient city with a number of attendants. These letters had been granted at his own request; his avowed purpose was to bring back to Jerusalem anyone "of the way" who might be found there, whether men or women. Some three years later he returned (Gal. 1:18); but he brought with him no disciples in chains! Instead, he himself had become a bondservant—a slave—of the Lord Jesus, resolved to devote the rest of his life to His service. He had left Jerusalem "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;" when he came back he sought their fellowship. It was so amazing, so incredible, that they could not believe he was one of them, but shrank from him in fear until Barnabas interceded on his behalf, telling them that he had seen the Lord and that already in Damascus he had boldly preached in the name of Jesus. If further evidences of his sincerity were needed, they had it when they saw him willingly

risking his life in Jerusalem, preaching in the name of the Lord and disputing with the Hellenists, until they sent him away to Tarsus.

**THE CAUSE BACK OF THIS TRANSFORMATION.** Naturally the question arises: "What is the explanation of this extraordinary change in the course of this man's life?" For it is not easy for one to make such a radical change, especially when one's attitude and conduct springs from deep religious conviction and has been avowed so publicly and emphatically over a considerable period of time. When it occurs we know instinctively that powerful pressure of some sort has been brought to bear. For one does not lightly give up the prospect of a career that promises to bring wealth, honor, great prestige among one's fellow-countrymen, such as Saul of Tarsus, brilliant student of one of Israel's greatest teachers, had in Judaism. How, then, is his sudden and unexpected change to be explained? Not by the lure of money—he faced the prospect of a sacrificial life. Nor was it the thought of ease—he was to suffer many things for the Lord's sake. Nor could it have been desire for fame or glory from men—he was casting his lot among people who were despised. There is no satisfactory explanation other than that which he himself has given—the story of the experience which came to him on the Damascus road and which brought about a deep and abiding conviction that he had been in error in his attitude toward Jesus and His disciples. And, being thoroughly conscientious and desirous of pleasing God, he had only one course to follow. It is humiliating to admit that one has been in error in a stand taken so openly and positively; but he could not do otherwise and at the same time be true to his principles of life. That it was a costly choice he knew full well; but when convinced that it was the right choice he would make it without hesitation.

**THE STORY OF SAUL'S CONVERSION.** We have three accounts of Saul's conversion in the book of Acts: in chapter 9, where Luke presents it, supposedly in his own words; in chapter 22, which is Paul's address to the Jewish mob in Jerusalem that had been about to kill him; and in chapter 26, which is his famous defense before King Agrippa. In all these the story is the same, although there are differences in detail. (Critics used to insist that there is a contradiction between 9:7 and 22:9. But only a few days ago I was sitting by while a friend was talking over the telephone. "I didn't hear you," I heard him say. To be sure, he heard the sound of the other's voice; but he did not understand what was said. That there is no contradiction here is even more evident in the Greek; in 9:7 the word "voice" is in the genitive, and in 22:9 in the accusative, case. They indeed heard the sound of the voice, but did not understand what was spoken.) All three accounts, together with certain passages in the epistles, should be read to get the complete picture. Let us note briefly the main details of the story.

(To be continued.)

The Lord does not want you to believe in faith; He wants you to believe in Him.

# “FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. I. J.

(For this issue of Word and Work Brother Jorgenson has selected the following unusually clear and forceful article fresh from the pen of Brother Boll.)

## “Mark Them and Avoid Them”

R. H. Boll

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.” (Rom. 16:17, 18.)

This passage of God's word has of late times been much used by some to justify a course of disfellowshipping and ostracising of brethren whom they charge with teaching “premillennialism.” The injunction of the apostle here given is good and necessary, and it means what it says; and if those who by their anti-millenarian brethren are called “premillennialists” come under the head of the kind named in the text, it is simple obedience to “mark them” and “turn away from them.” This point, however, should be carefully examined, lest (as has happened many times in the history of the church) a good word of God should be used to cover up a grievous wrong. Thus, for example, the Jews, demanding the death of Jesus, said to Pilate, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). In this they were perfectly right, and in full accord with God's word as given in the scripture; for if Jesus was an impostor, claiming to be the Son of God, he, according to the Law, deserved to die. But was He an impostor? Was His claim false? That question should before everything else have been carefully gone into, and all the evidence faithfully weighed; and not until He were found guilty should the condemnation of the Law have been invoked against this Man. But that was the very thing His enemies were far from willing to do. The fact was, they hated Him without a cause and were only anxious to be rid of Him; and they saw in this word of the Law a convenient pretext for carrying out their evil purpose.

This is mentioned merely to show how perfectly easy it is to use this kind of injunction to justify an evil design; how easily such a command could be made a weapon of self-interested sectarianism and ecclesiastical tyranny. At any time a group of religious leaders, so minded, could appeal to Rom. 16:17, 18 as an excuse to cast out their brethren for any difference whatever. Therefore, in making application of this passage of scripture, it is paramount first of all to ascertain whether the accused are really such persons as should be marked and avoided. Much is at stake. When men sin against their brethren they sin against Christ. In casting out a faithful brother, we cast out Christ. When we draw a line against a faithful

child of God, we draw the line against ourselves. Here is a matter that should be carefully looked into.

Granting, say, that "premillennial" views of prophecy run contrary to the views of certain brethren—even a majority of them—this alone would not constitute ground for applying the commandment of Rom. 16:17, 18. Nor even if they feel convinced that the "premillennial" belief is erroneous, could they therefore invoke the anathema of Rom. 16:17, 18 on that ground? For, if such a principle were adopted, it would open the door to refusal of fellowship to any who differed with us in any matter. The logical end of such a principle would, of course, be the multiplication of parties and would finally eventuate to put every man in a church to himself. The question then first of all to be considered should be whether those whom we would mark and avoid are such as Paul speaks of in Rom. 16:17, 18. The question therefore is this:

1. Did these brethren who are to be marked teach doctrines contrary to the faith of the gospel?

2. Did they by their teaching cause divisions and occasions of stumbling among their brethren?

3. Are they workers for selfish interest and material advantage?

If in the case of the "premillennial" brethren these questions demand an affirmative answer, then it were right that they should be marked and avoided. But if they are not guilty, the guilt of those who mark and avoid them is great, and to be accounted for at the judgment-seat of Christ.

In defense of the brethren against whom, on the ground of "premillennial" teaching, the line is being drawn by other brethren (for these brethren whom they call "premillennialists" have never in any instance drawn any line on doctrinal grounds against their "antimillenarian brethren)—I would say, in defense of these "marked and ostracised ones—

*I first of all deny the charge that they have "caused divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine" of God's word. For:*

(1) They believe and teach the same fundamental doctrine which their opposing brethren also profess: they believe in the same God, the same Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the same unadulterated gospel, the same New Testament church, the same authoritative and inerrant word of God, the Bible, by which all is to be tested. They follow the same simple practice in worship and in the service of God. They hold in common with all the saints that there is "one body" and "one Spirit," one hope of our calling, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all. So we all profess to believe and teach and so we do.

(2) These brethren who are to be "marked" have never caused any divisions, anywhere, at any time, over disagreement of the prophetic teaching of the Bible. [They do not believe that such divisions are right or necessary.] That divisions have occurred I would not deny; but in no case have they been caused by the brethren who have been stigmatized as "premillennialists"—but only and always

by agitators for the anti-millennial brethren, who demand submission to their views. The procedure followed by those dividers is such as could cause division over any difference great or small.

Here may I quote an excerpt from the writings of a dear friend and brother:

#### UNITY NEEDED NOW

"Furthermore, we plead for unity **now**, that unity which is of the Spirit; yes, even now, before we have time to attain to perfect intellectual agreement, desirable as such agreement may be. We plead for that unity which proceeds by and from those peaceable qualities that Paul lays down as the means to it: meekness, lowliness, long-suffering, forbearance, and love, which is the bond of perfectness (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:14). This is the unity of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit; and it has often been realized in the midst of much diversity, both of doctrine and of judgment; whereas it has often been absent even where intellectual agreement prevailed. Moreover, this is the only unity that leaves men unenslaved and free — free to grow in grace and knowledge, and to go on with God. It stands in sharpest contradistinction to that uncertain, unstable, legalistic unity that is hammered out only by the hardest, and that is maintained only by the threat of excommunication held over the heads of any who dare to differ from the leaders.

It has been said of our civil liberty that eternal vigilance is the price of it. But how much more is constant vigilance the price of religious liberty! Beware! Stand fast! Be not entangled in any yoke of bondage! There is no outside sectarianism so insidious, so enslaving, and so likely to be hidden from our own eyes, as that insipient sectarianism which rises up within. By such influences men who think they are free disciples, and who boast of being undenominational Christians, are as creed-bound as the sects which they denounce.

#### WHEN TRUTH CAUSES TROUBLE

For, if the teachings of any earnest Bible student in our midst, set forth humbly by him as truth, and believed by him to be indeed the Word of God (whether it be what God said in so many words by inspired men, or what must necessarily follow, as he sees it, from the gathering of the scattered scripture-testimony. "here a little, there a little")—I say, if what some such man sets forth as scripture truth may be summarily set aside by another, because he thinks it is opinion and denounces it as such, then our creed is fixed, our bounds of knowledge are set, and Christian growth is ended! And again, if what good and studious men have taught as truth (and often vital truth) — if such teachings may be suppressed by the simple cry that they will "cause trouble," then our faith is man-controlled more surely than any OPA could ever control our war-time regimen. Such a system leaves us just as free in Christ as slaves, and the church of Christ no better than a poor, sectarian little Rome. For it would be easily possible always to prove that any teaching whatsoever "causes trouble," if there were those ready and willing to see to it that it does! And how can we be sure after all that truth, vital needed truth, will never cause trouble? Our great Teacher, though He is the Prince of Peace, has said: "I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. 10:34); and another has told us, by the Spirit, that the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable (Jas. 3:17).

#### "MARKING" AND "AVOIDING"

If any word herein may seem to be accusative or direct, let it be remembered that that word applies only to whom it may justly apply. If there are misguided men today who have caused divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrines which the churches addressed by Paul had learned — those doctrines of lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and forbearance, without which the unity of the Spirit is utterly impossible — then those men must indeed be marked and avoided, in solemn obedience to the Word of God (Rom. 16:17). But let us

understand first what it is to "mark" a man, and how it may be done to the greatest good, and without contributing more to discord than to peace. This is a serious thing to all concerned.

Shamefully indeed have the unity doctrines of the Roman letter been trampled under foot, particularly chapter fourteen! There the teaching is, that even the erring and the weak in faith are to be "received," and borne with, and fellowshipped, rather than "judged" and "set at nought" (vs. 1, 4, 13, 19). That is the "doctrine" which the Roman brethren had learned, at least a part of it; and what "doctrine" could Paul have had in mind more naturally, when writing on "divisions" and stumbling" (16:17) than his own unity teachings as unfolded in chapter 14 (although, through others, the teaching had preceded his own epistle to Rome)? It seems clear therefore that Paul, in the much-quoted "marking" passage (Rom. 16:17) is also condemning those who preach and practice the doctrine of dividing when the true, apostolic doctrine is against dividing; those who go up and down the land egging on the disciples (often the untaught masses) to divide and separate — where before they were at peace and saw no need to separate. The pioneer disciples would never have thought of separation over the issues that are now current. It is a new, artificial condition created by divisive men; and such men, says Paul, must be "marked" and turned away from. \*

(3) These brethren who are designated as "premillennial" are not such as serve their own belly instead of the Lord Jesus Christ. All motives for earthly gain, for positions, for remunerations and emoluments, for prestige and popularity in the brotherhood, are on the other side. No princely salaries are received by even the ablest of those "marked" brethren. If a man would go in to "serve the belly" he would certainly not take up with a maligned and persecuted class like those who are marked as "premillennialists." The worldly advantage lies all on the other side; and to those who in such a case sign up the "creed" of the dominating powers of the brotherhood, the doors of opportunity are open—for "doing more good" (as they would think) and incidentally for getting on in the world! In saying this I am not judging any man's motives: I only say that if one were looking for a way to further his own interests—to "serve the belly" as Paul puts it—he would not seek it among the "premillennialists."

Finally, may it be said that the brethren who by way of reproach are called "premillennialists"—so far as I know them and can speak for them—are committed to no "ism," nor are they beholden to any man's doctrine. They stand for God's word simply, nothing but that, but *all* of that. And in all things their position is summed up in the slogan, "*We are not right, but the Bible is right.*"

So, those who are minded to consider, let them decide as in the sight of God whether or not such brethren are to be marked and turned away from. And as they decide conscientiously, before the Lord, so let them do.

\* From free tract by E.L.J., "Cause, Course, Cure of Division."

#### IS IT NOT?

"That the Lord Jesus will personally descend from heaven and revisit this earth is neither doubted nor denied by any Christian."  
—Alexander Campbell, (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1843, page 49).