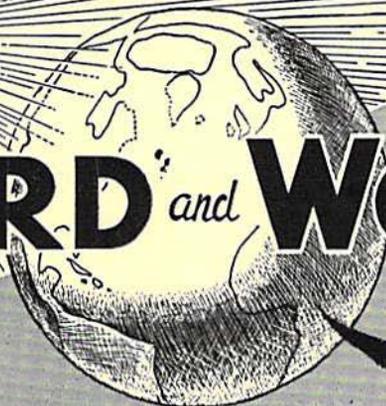


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Talking Things Over

G. R. L.



The fall of the city of Jerusalem to the nation of Israel brings into sharp focus Luke 21:24: ". . . Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." From all appearances, the first part of this has been fulfilled; Jerusalem is no longer under the feet of the Gentiles. However, some have raised the question, Is this speaking only of the city, or does the city here stand for the nation (as we say "Moscow" to mean "Russia," etc.)? This is a valid observation, for "the times of the Gentiles" is that era—beginning with the times of Nebuchadnezzar—of Gentile domination of the Jewish nation. In the year 165 B.C. the city of Jerusalem was freed from Gentile occupation. Until about 63 B.C. the nation enjoyed a kind of independence—but more or less with the permission of Rome, and never in possession of the whole territory given to Abraham. In view of these facts—and the fact that the times of the Gentiles then continued right on—it may be possible that we are still in the times of the Gentiles. (There are some who believe that the times of the Gentiles ends only at the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus to fight on behalf of Israel, as in Zech. 14. Others expect it to end with the beginning of Daniel's 70th week.)

In consideration of this question, I think we should not confuse the "times of the Gentiles" with the bringing in of "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25). The first (a period of time) *could* end with the latter (an event), but it need not necessarily be so. The "times of the Gentiles" speaks of political domination of Israel, and also seems to coincide with God's ceasing to deal with Israel as a nation. However, even after His glory departed from the temple (Ezek. 10:18; 11:23), He continued for a time to send His prophets, and finally the Son. "The fullness of the Gentiles" relates to salvation. We should note that the transition from Jewish to Gentile evangelism (in Acts) was not sudden. It may be that the reverse switch will not be instantaneous either.

We would do well to study these matters further; there are other factors that I have not even mentioned. However, let us not become so engrossed in details that we miss the main point: 1) God is going to stand by His oaths sworn to Abraham and David, with reference to the fortunes of the nation of Israel and the land of Palestine. 2) This age of the calling out of the Gentiles is coming

to an *end*. "The night cometh when no man can work." "Today is the day of salvation." What can you do with a color TV and wall-to-wall carpet after the Lord comes back?



DEATH IN A BRIGHTER PERSPECTIVE

For years I have known that Paul said it is "very far better" to depart this life and be with the Lord Jesus. And I believed it. As a matter of fact, I once wrote a paper on the subject for a college class. In it I cited the testimonies of numerous Christians who paused briefly before crossing over and gave their impression of what lay before them—joy, assurance, peace. I doubted none of them, but still my faith was somewhat academic in nature—it lacked the element of experience which says, "I *know* it!"

Things are different now. Suddenly I *know* what heretofore was but hearsay. What was to many a tragedy has been to me an unspeakable blessing. I speak of the collision at Winchester that took four young lives—and almost the fifth. Of the girls who died, two had been in my classes through high school. I knew them well, and loved them as though they were my own children. The first news of the crash—it was no accident; accidents don't happen to God's children—came as a shock. The blessing was to follow later as various ones of us pondered the event together.

Five weeks earlier Sharron and Barbara were part of a group on a retreat in the woods. On the last evening, as we sat in a circle talking about what the Lord meant to us, Sharron said something like this: "For quite some time now, I have had the feeling that the Lord has some special plans for me, but I don't know just what it is. Here of late, I've been impressed that it is something really big. It's going to be wonderful, and it's going to be soon." Later she privately told a close friend, "I wonder of the Lord is coming back right away. I know I'm going to see Him, soon!" She lived in the joy of that anticipation, and now her joy is made perfect. How can I grieve over Sharron's death, when it is the greatest event of her life?

When I went to the funeral home to view the body that had belonged to Barbara, I was met by her mother. I could hardly believe my eyes. No tears, no sad tale of self-pity, no questioning the goodness of God. Instead, a bright smile, eyes that sparkled with joy, and a testimony of thanksgiving and praise to a gracious and loving Lord. She talked about how Barbara enjoyed spending time with the Lord. "Every morning she was up before the rest of us. How many times I've found her with her Bible or in prayer! If she didn't have to go to school, she might go back to bed later, but her day began with the Lord." And now she was with Him, perfectly and forever! She spoke of the earthly sorrows that the girls would never experience. "Barbara and Sharron were such close friends," she continued, "and Naomi." (Naomi was the lone survivor.) "You know,"

she added, with a note of disappointment in her voice, "It's too bad that Naomi couldn't have gone with them." Very far better! These had been but words to me, but not any more. The commentary of Rose Hutchens gave them reality.

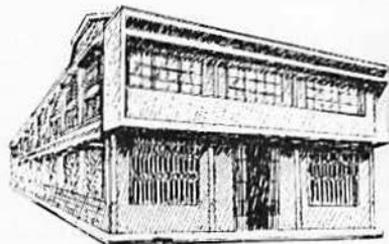
VICTIMS OF OUR CULTURE

While still meditating on this brighter view of death, I ran across a writing that dates back to 125 A.D. It was directed to Emperor Hadrian by the Athenian philosopher Marcianus Aristides, and was an explanation of what Christians believed and practiced. With regard to death, he wrote:

If any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and thank God, and escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby. When a child is born to one of them, they praise God. If it dies in infancy, they thank God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. But if one of them dies in his iniquity or in his sins, they grieve bitterly and sorrow as over one who is about to meet his doom.

This brought a question to my mind: Do we Christians of the 20th century derive our funeral customs—and much of our feelings about death—from the Scriptures, or from our (pagan) culture? Is our departure from this life a defeat or a victory? Perhaps in too many cases it remains a question. A person was a "good" church member, but nobody really knows how he stood with the Lord. It is hard to celebrate a victory when nobody is sure that a victory has been won. Those of us who knew Sharron and Barbara have no doubts about them; it is not hard for us to share their joy. But how many Christians manifest the enthusiasm for the Lord that those girls radiated? Consequently, the general pattern of our funerals follows that of the world—not of much comfort to the bereaved, and not much of a testimony to the world. May the Lord grant us that kind of life that will turn our funerals into victory celebrations unto the Lord!

Manila Fund Report



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Praise the Lord! . . .

and Keep on Praying!

THE INSPIRATION of most Christians today is not the faithful cross-bearing disciple but the successful big shot. -- Vance Havner



Truth Advance Section

Stanford Chambers

Is "the great tribulation" of Rev. 7:14 to be identified with the tribulation of 1:9, as some maintain?

Most certainly not. John was already a partaker of tribulation (in nowise to be minimized) whereas "the great tribulation" is among "things to come." See Rev. 4:1. Compare with 1:19. Note also the promise given in 3:10. "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (tribulation)." Paul is saying in Acts 14:22, "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." Expect that, but pray that you may escape "the tribulation, the great," as promised the Philadelphian type of Christians, and which Jesus requests supplications for (Lu. 21:36).

Teachers and leaders who are not praying as admonished in Luke 21:36 are plainly disobeying the Lord Jesus. They who really "speak as the oracles of God" not only pray as admonished, but teach others also. Some are so wedded to their theories, how can they?

But here is another: Some are saying that the day of the Lord is already upon us, offering as proof the global turmoil the earth is now experiencing.

Such do not believe "escape" is provided. Jesus made the request for prayer in Luke 21:36 and the promise of Rev. 3:10 as well. Moreover, what do they make of His word in Luke 21:28 but an idle saying also? "Begin to come to pass"? "Your redemption" then "nigh," says Jesus. If the present situation (no denying that it is bad) constitutes "the great and terrible day of the Lord," then just when did the beginning things "begin to come to pass"? and just what occurrences and developments constituted the beginning things? If the great tribulation is upon us, then the beginning things are behind us. And if our redemption was then "nigh," it is now nigher! Let those putting this construction on prophecy and fulfillment tell us when the day of the Lord set in, and we can be rather definite, methinks, as to when to expect the Lord Jesus. They set the rapture at the end of the tribulation, so we should by that be able now to set an approximate date for the rapture which (if that position be correct) will synchronize with the end of the tribulation. So nigh and nigher draws the climacteric event! Who but enemies of Christ can be negative or unsympathetic toward His fulfilling His promises? Where stand you? (N.B. Is Jerusalem just now—June 8—being delivered? Then what?) Be warned and be warning.

Jesus called Jonah a sign to the Ninevites; how could he have been that?

Are you amazed at the repentant response to Jonah's preaching? He was a sign unto them, and the response was because the Ninevites recognized him to be such. Jesus shows that Jonah's resurrection out of the jaws of death was the sign. That is, information concerning Jonah's deliverance had reached the people, and when he began his itinerary through the city, his proclamation was heard as Heaven's message, a man brought out of death being the messenger, and "yet forty days" was interpreted (rightly) to mean the door of repentance was open, and so from king to poorest peasant they repented toward God.

What is Existentialism? Can Christians be Existentialists?

Let Christians be Christians. And there is no higher aim than to be Christians only. I never heard of the Existentialism philosophy till after World War II. It started in France, is atheistic, godless, and makes life out to be purposeless. It revamps an old philosophy disapproved by Holy Writ, summed up in "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." I have no time to waste on the thing already condemned of God.

Am I wrong in my assertion that people would sooner dare to disobey God than to go contrary to the modern trend? It seems taken for granted that we must be up to date on the trend and move in harmony therewith. Public sentiment is the world's present dictator.

Take consolation in the fact (you would not deny) that there are exceptions; some there are who are "not conformed to this world," but are transformed by the renewing of "their mind," rejoiced to experience "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." It is their "meat to do the will of the Father." The "trend" is not their God. Fashion is not their God. They are unafraid to be found in the minority, are not afraid of the gang, not ashamed to suffer. But O the pull of the "trend" on the multitudes! Are "soldiers of the cross" to be moral cowards?

They are saying that we must preach the gospel in the language of the street. Please comment.

Is the "language of the street" stable? Not asking if it is elegant or choice language, but is it stable? It changes and changes so rapidly that within a couple of years one has to learn over again. Put the gospel truth in language the hearer understands, but move on to higher ground even language-wise. For does not a higher type of words aid in higher thinking?

What about cremation, now gaining favor with an increasing number of people?

Too paganistic. It will in nowise defeat resurrection, but burial of the body seems naturally to show it more respect. I never viewed a grave with such sweet regard until we laid our darling, baby girl (aged 15) away in one. Now that ground holds the precious body once the habitation of that precious one, hence the grave itself is precious. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?" Though that body decays and no longer

the life," purposes that body shall live again, in renewed form like unto His glorious body. I have not the highest appreciation of that which even has an appearance of lack of due respect. A decent burial offends no one. I do not say as much regarding the uncalled-for gorgeous burial. Of course vastly too much of the Lord's money of which we are accountable stewards is buried in the ground! And even in such matters the concern is chiefly public sentiment (the trend), hence conformity and not God's will!

They say that you disbelieve in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man

By natural creation there is a kinship among all human beings, and by creation God is the Father of all. As Paul told the Athenians, "In him we live and move and have our being." But the brotherhood we're interested in is that of "brethren in Christ," the born-again ones of the human race. They are "born of God" (Jn. 1:12) into the family of God, and rejoice in the Fatherhood of God in the only true sense of the term. "Love the brotherhood," says Peter. But that natural kinship in the flesh is not to be ignored. We are debtors to get the gospel to every human being, every fellow-man.

The Amplified Bible, is it translation or paraphrase? And your estimate of it, please.

It is both, an earnest endeavor to translate every word of the original in the most accurate, understandable way of which the Committee was capable. There are shades of meaning in the original that a single English word does not express. But there are synonyms, and the Amplified supplies those synonyms (which I am glad to know), and from them we get shades of meaning that aid in understanding the word and will of God. I then fall back on my American Standard and find in it a fuller content. I'd hardly attempt to memorize the Amplified. It is clumsy.

Are you acquainted with Hendrickson's book on Revelation, "More than Conquerers"? If so, how do you rate it?

Some years back I reviewed this book. Hendrickson advances the "cyclical method of interpretation." That is, John carries his forecasts through to the consummation, then begins over and carries through on a different line, reaching the same or much the same consummation, then traces through another cycle, and so on. For instance, Rev. 20:1 is the start of another cycle, (disallowing the sequential import of that conjunction "And"), starting with Jesus' casting out demons necessitating His first binding the "strong man of the house." He is that "angel coming down out of heaven." But that is not the way Jesus had come. He came as the Bethlehem babe. Moreover, if that is the sense in which Satan was bound and so fulfills Rev. 20, then the binding had occurred before that, Jesus for it, for He mentions "your sons" as having cast out demons. So "your sons" had bound Satan and despoiled goods of his already! Again, Hendrickson disregards the Savior's own classification of the things John was instructed to write. See 1:19. Note that "the

things that shall come to pass hereafter (after these things)" begin to be revealed to John in chapter 4, not before. See 4:1. Once again, Hendrikson, a man of ability, inexcusably supports the a-millennial view that the present dispensation is the millennium of Rev. 20, ignoring the "times of the Gentiles" of Lu. 21:24, or making said times contemporary with "the times of restoration" of Acts 3:21. "The times of restoration" and Jerusalem not restored! and with Jesus "the Deliverer" and Restorer remaining in heaven! And Lu. 21:36 is bypassed.



Must Christ Be Lord To Be Savior?

Alex V. Wilson

The big youth rally is drawing to a close. Several in the audience have already walked to the front, and the speaker is about to end his first appeal. "If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, come now. Don't wait. You can be saved tonight, if you'll just receive Him as your personal Savior."

No one else comes forward, so the speaker switches his aim to another target. "Now you Christians who've received Christ as your Savior but never accepted Him as Lord, *you* come to the front. Take that step tonight; you really should. Don't continue to reject Him as Lord of your life. Don't just sing, 'Take my life and let it be!' Instead you should sing and mean the whole sentence: 'Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.'" Four other teenagers step down the aisle as he continues talking.

And now the time has arrived for the greatest challenge of all. A hush settles over the audience as the preacher declares, "Now, last of all, there is no doubt that in a crowd of this size there are many young people who should be fulltime Christian workers. God is calling some of you to make that final, greatest sacrifice of all. Don't resist His call: surrender yourself tonight for fulltime Christian service. You'll receive great blessings. Don't be satisfied to have Christ as your Savior only. And don't be satisfied to have Him just as Savior and Lord. Become a fulltime worker for Him. Come to the front now if that is your decision . . ."

Is that scene true to life, or exaggerated? I surely hope it is the latter. Yet, whether or not the details accurately describe some of our meetings, many of us are probably guilty of the twisted viewpoint displayed by that preacher.

Catholics divide Christians into three classes: ordinary believers,

clergymen, and saints. We reject such classifications, of course, but often our outlook is strikingly similar to theirs. Lowest rung on the ladder: those who receive Christ as Savior and are baptized. Second rung: those who receive Him as Savior and also as Lord. Third rung: "fulltime Christian workers." And some would add a still higher rung: the foreign missionary!

This attitude is a tragic misconception of Christian life and service. Many things could and should be said about such a perverted viewpoint, but at present we shall confine our thinking to one question only: Can a person be saved just by receiving Christ as Savior, or must he also surrender to Christ's Lordship? In other words, must Christ be Lord to be Savior? Can we accept His Saviorhood while rejecting His Lordship? To express it yet another way, *must* a believer also be a disciple? Is discipleship optional, or essential?

Answers

First, it is obvious that the New Testament does not distinguish between ordinary Christians and a fully-surrendered class of people called disciples. The words *believers*, *disciples*, *saints*, and *Christians* are used interchangeably. This fact makes the words of Jesus in Luke 14 take on terrific significance. When He said that certain conditions must be met or else "You cannot be my disciples," He was saying, "You cannot be saved." His words were addressed to the multitudes, not just to those who wanted to be "fulltime" disciples and literally follow Him around Galilee and Judea. Therefore, loving Him supremely and putting Him first, bearing our cross and following Him, and renouncing all that we have—these are not take-it-or-leave-it matters which a person may shirk and still hope to get to heaven at the end. These are not optional extras, like white sidewall tires on a car. Rather, these attitudes are at the core of repentant faith. Without this surrender that Christ demanded, there is no true repentance; and without repentance there is no salvation. (See Luke 14:25-33; also 9:23-25; 9:61-62; 18:18, 22-24.)

Second, the core of the New Testament's evangelistic message is not Christ's Saviorhood, but His Lordship. The earliest known statement-of-faith in church history is a two-word Greek phrase, "*Kurios Jesus*"—"Jesus is Lord." This is what the apostles proclaimed: "God has made him both *Lord and Christ, this Jesus*"; "confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*"; "for what we preach is not ourselves, but *Jesus Christ as Lord*" (Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:11; 2 Cor. 4:5). This is what the Christians confessed: "If you confess with your lips that *Jesus is Lord*. . . you will be saved"; "no one can say '*Jesus is Lord*' (and really mean it) except by the Holy Spirit"; "as therefore you *received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him*" (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Col. 2:6).

Evangelist James A. Stewart went through the entire New Testament and compiled an exhaustive list of all names and titles by which the Son of God is called. For example, He is called "Jesus Christ" 105 times; "Christ Jesus" 50 times; "Christ Jesus our Lord"

3 times; "The Lord Jesus Christ" 81 times; etc. His list reveals these significant facts:

Number of times Christ is called SAVIOR,	16
Number of times Christ is called LORD,	653

It is clear that if anyone had told Peter or Paul, "I've received Jesus as my Savior but not as my Lord," the apostolic reply would have been, "Man, you don't know what you are talking about!"

Clarifications

Someone may object, "Paul mentions carnal Christians and spiritual Christians (1 Cor. 2:15-3:3). Is not that the same as those who have received Christ as Savior only and those who have surrendered to His Lordship as well?"

Several observations must be made here. First, even in our decadent age we can hardly imagine what a den of pagan filth, immorality, and iniquity of all kinds Corinth was. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 reveals what sort of people many of these Christians had been before their conversions—drunkards, idolators, homosexuals, etc.: some allowance must be made for their corrupt past and environment.

Second, their sinful condition at the time Paul wrote does not prove that he had originally offered them salvation apart from their repentant surrender to Christ. It does prove that instead of growing spiritually they had veered away from their original commitment to the Lord and had fallen into grievous sins. Paul does not call them to make a surrender for the first time, a surrender which is optional. Rather, he *recalls* them to that surrender which they had once known but were now sliding away from. *Ten* different times in 1 Cor. he exclaims, "Know ye not?" Obviously his meaning is, "You *should* know these things; *once* you knew them; why have you forgotten them?"

Third, Paul's reaction to their carnality was strong. To him a carnal, unsurrendered Christian was a freak, a monstrosity. And so, to remedy the terrible situation he reminds, encourages, pleads, threatens, and reasons with them. He doses them out bitter medicine, for they need it. How do we react to sin in our congregations or in ourselves?

Another objection that is sometimes made, when someone suggests that Christ must be Lord in order to be Savior, is this: "But that is legalism. You are making salvation depend on our good works."

Perhaps an illustration will help here. Does a man have to be experienced in marching, skillful in camping out, and expert in riflery before he can join an army? Of course not. Many new recruits know little about these matters. They are enlisted not because of works (because of their skills and/or experience) but by grace (in

spite of deficiencies they may have in drill, camping, map-reading, marksmanship, etc.). But once they are enlisted, can they then refuse to learn these things? Woe to them if they dare! One may say, "I was not accepted into this army because I was a good hiker; therefore I refuse to go on this march. I don't have to obey the sergeant if I don't want to." The answer of course would be, "Buddy, you did not have to volunteer to join this army. But since you volunteered and they accepted you, you have thereby obligated yourself to obey your officers."

In the same way God freely gives us salvation by grace, when we deserve His judgment. He saves us not because of our works but in spite of them. But when we come, just as we are without one plea, we come with the attitude of surrender to our new Savior-Lord-God. If we come for salvation with the intention of following our own will and rejecting His commands, we only deceive ourselves.

Christ's Lordship over us grows; it extends over more and more of our life as we develop in knowledge. It also must be *renewed*; for times of carelessness or even rebellion may come, and then we must return and surrender anew to our gracious Lord. But the point we must realize is that His Lordship is *essential*. We cannot have His salvation without having Him. And He is LORD.

(To be continued)

"If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will but does not mean to do it, you are not to pamper his belief that he is a Christian, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Do not imagine that the gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to the worldlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment simply by accepting Christ as their Savior, while they are wedded to their idols and their hearts are still in love with sin. If I do so I tell a lie, pervert the gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness."

—Charles Spurgeon.

"From Faith Flow Forth Love and Joy"

"From faith flow forth love and joy in the Lord; and from love, a cheerful, willing, free spirit, disposed to serve our neighbor voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. Its object is not to lay men under obligations; nor does it distinguish between friends and enemies, or look to gratitude or ingratitude; but most freely and willingly it spends itself and its goods, whether it loses them through ingratitude, or gains good-will. For thus did its Father, distributing all things to all men abundantly and freely, making His sun to rise upon the just and the unjust. Thus, too, the child does and endures nothing except from free joy with which it delights through Christ in God, the giver of such great gifts." —Martin Luther.

Why Do the Innocent Suffer?

The Message of the Book of Job

John R. W. Stott

There is no problem in the whole realm of human experience so bewildering as the problem of undeserved suffering. Bereavement, sickness or misfortune suddenly engulfs us. Our mind is baffled and our heart bowed with grief. We can find no explanation and little comfort. The problem is aggravated by the apparent indifference of God. The heavens seem silent, even sullen. We cry out in despair with the psalmist, "Why dost Thou stand afar off, O Lord? Why dost Thou hide Thyself in times of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1).

Many of the Biblical writers are aware of the problem and there are several passages in the Bible in which the subject is considered. But there is one book which is devoted extensively to this greatest of all human problems, and that is the Book of Job, which Tennyson described as "the greatest poem of ancient or modern times." We shall, however, study it not for its literary beauty but for its moral and spiritual message, and we shall find, as Martin Luther said, that it is "magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture."

Let me remind you of the situation. Job, wealthy and upright, is overtaken by a series of appalling calamities. First, by tribal invasion and stroke of lightning, he loses all his livestock, his oxen and asses, his sheep and camels. Next, his seven sons and three daughters are killed in one moment by a devastating tornado. Finally, he himself is smitten from head to foot with boils. Professor Arthur Rendle Short thought that Job's sickness was smallpox. He was so disfigured that his friends hardly recognized him, and his skin infection itched so fiercely that he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself. He then sat, stricken and forsaken among the ashes.

So far, the story has occupied two chapters in the book. The remaining forty chapters are devoted to a debate on the meaning of such suffering, and in particular on the different attitudes which may be adopted towards it. Various attitudes are proposed by Job, by his three comforters, by Elihu and finally by God Himself.

I. THE ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY JOB IS SELF-PITY

He was absorbed with himself and his sickness. At first, it is true, he met his misfortunes with remarkable courage and patience. Even when his wife urged him to curse God and die, he paid no heed. But, as the first week wore on and his comforters sat round him in silence, he could at last bear it no longer. He lost control of himself. His tottering faith collapsed in ruins, and he cursed the day of his birth. "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night which said, 'A man-child is conceived'" (3:3).

The note of complaint and despair continues in nearly every answer which Job gives to the advice and so-called comfort of his friends. Sometimes, he is wildly defiant. He accuses God of cruelty and injustice. He shakes his fist in the face of the Almighty. He

describes God as hunting him like a lion (10:16), shooting at him like an archer (16:13), and pursuing him as the wind chases dried leaves and chaff (13:25).

At other times he is argumentative. He wants to plead his innocence before the bar of God. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat! I would lay my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments" (23:3, 4).

In the end, he lapses into plain self-pity. He wistfully remembers his former prosperity (chapter 29) and contrasts with it tearfully his present distress (chapter 30, especially verses 16-23). He also cries (19:21) "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me!"

Such is the attitude of a stricken sufferer who cannot see beyond his own sufferings. Many folk since Job, afflicted with his calamities, have uttered his curses. Tragedy makes them embittered, morose, hard, and full of self-pity. We do not sit in judgment on them, for we know the frailty of our own nature. But we recognize that self-pity is the worst possible reaction to suffering. It is dishonoring to God; it is unbecoming in a rational human being; and in the case of sickness it is a positive hindrance to the patient's recovery.

II. THE ATTITUDE PROPOSED BY JOB'S THREE COMFORTERS IS SELF-ACCUSATION

Job's three comforters ask him to look not at himself and his sickness but at himself and his sin. Their philosophy is brutally cold and utterly conventional. To them sickness is always due to personal sin. They find in sin and suffering the inevitability of cause and effect. They therefore accuse Job vehemently of secret sin and urge him to repent.

Thus Eliphaz the Temanite says, "Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same" (4:7, 8). Bildad the Shuhite is more outspoken but equally bigoted. Job's children, he says, have been punished for their sins (8:4), and indeed all sinners will perish as surely as the reeds and rushes wither where there is no water (8:11-13). Zophar the Naamathite is the most dogmatic and the least sympathetic of the three. In his opinion, Job's guilt deserves more punishment than he has received, not less (11:6).

When each of these three vaunted comforters has had his say and Job has replied, a second round of speeches begins, and then a third round, in which the same dreary dogma is propounded. Much is beautiful in their expression, but their speeches are full of fatuous platitudes and highly questionable opinions, which are introduced in the Word of God in order to be contradicted, not believed. "The wicked man writhes in pain all his days," says Eliphaz (15:20). "The light of the wicked is put out," adds Bildad (18:5). "The exulting of the wicked is short," concludes Zophar (20:5). But they are wrong! This interpretation just will not do—at least not as a

general and inviolable principle. It is sometimes true that sin brings suffering (though all suffering is not due to personal sin). It is also true that much suffering is due to the sins of others. It is undoubtedly true that suffering is often Satanic in its origin (it was so in Job's case, as is clear from the first two chapters). But the prologue to the book also reveals clearly that Job's sufferings are a token not of God's judgment on him for his sins but of God's confidence in him for his integrity! This is the exact opposite of the thesis of his comforters. There is no Biblical justification whatever for the theory that all suffering is a punishment for sin.

A deadlock has been reached. Job and his three comforters are now silent, having utterly failed to find an explanation of the mystery of the meaning of suffering.

There now enters at chapter 32 a new figure, who occupies the stage for six chapters. He is a younger man. His name is Elihu. He is diffident because of his age to speak, but he is exasperated by the self-righteousness and self-pity of Job, and by the folly of his three comforters. He offers a third explanation.

III. THE ATTITUDE RECOMMENDED BY ELIHU IS SELF-DISCIPLINE

Like the others, he is ignorant of the prologue to the book in which a sovereign God gives a limited permission to Satan to afflict Job, but it is still his conviction that God has a disciplinary purpose in suffering. He speaks of God as a teacher not as a judge. He urges Job to look not at his present physical suffering, but at the future moral and spiritual benefits which might be derived from his sufferings. His thesis is this. God desires to turn men aside from evil and to cut off their pride (33:17). He has many ways of accomplishing this, but He finds man dull of hearing and dim of understanding (v. 14). So He sometimes permits suffering in order to fulfill his disciplinary purpose. When man are "caught in the cords of affliction" God "opens their ears to instruction, and commands that they return from iniquity" (36:8-10). Again, "He delivers the afflicted by their affliction, and opens their ear by adversity" (v. 15). Again, "Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?" (v. 22).

There is undoubtedly much in Scripture and in experience to support this view. It is not the only answer. It is not the ultimate answer. But it is an answer. The heavenly Father sometimes wields a chastening rod because "the Lord disciplines him whom He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:6). The divine gardener uses a pruning knife in order that we may bring forth more fruit (John 15:2). The refiner of souls sometimes casts us into the crucible in order that our faith, thus tested and purified, may redound to His praise and honor (1 Pet. 1:7).

Do not the buds of Christlikeness break into their finest blossom during or after a period of trial? Do not the flowers of faith and fortitude grow best in a sickroom? Does not the Lord Jesus become more real and precious when we lie on our back and are forced to look up into His face? Does not our moral and spiritual per-

spective become adjusted when we are snatched from the fevered rush of life and are transferred into the seclusion and the tranquillity of illness? Do we not come to value our heavenly treasure more highly when we have lost our earthly health or possessions, relatives or friends? God's purpose is to transform us into the beautiful image of His Son Jesus, and one of His methods is to allow us to suffer. Elihu has a real contribution to make in this debate. But his is not the last word.

Job and his four friends are now silent, and at last God Himself speaks.

IV. THE ATTITUDE DEMANDED BY GOD IS SELF-SURRENDER

God answers Job out of the whirlwind (chapter 38). He hurls at him a rapid series of bewildering questions. "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you hunt the prey for the lion? Who provides for the raven its prey? Who has let the wild ass go free? Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Do you give the horse his might? Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up?" For two long chapters God rains upon Job this battery of questions, setting forth His power, His wisdom and His loving providence. Job is overwhelmed with confusion. He stammers a few words, and then lays his hand on his mouth and says nothing. So God's questions begin again; and for two more chapters (40 and 41) they continue. Job is asked to consider behemoth and leviathan, the hippopotamus and the crocodile. In two wonderful chapters, these animals are described, in all their strength, resourcefulness and fearlessness. Again, Job is overwhelmed. "I know that Thou canst do all things," he says, "and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted" (42:2). He is ashamed of his complaints and criticisms. Grievous as his sufferings have been, he recognizes that he has no excuse for doubting or accusing God. So he humbles himself. "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees Thee; therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (42:5,6).

You will observe that God has not answered his questions, He has not solved the problem. He has not unlocked the mystery of suffering. He has simply revealed Himself as a God of power and wisdom and love, and asked for Job's trust. God is concerned rather to arouse our faith than to satisfy our curiosity.

"But," a scientist may reply, "this is intolerable. This is too much. God has given us a brain and means us to use it." Yes, indeed, but there are limits to the sphere in which the finite mind of man can work. Men may indeed investigate the nature of disease, its causes, incidence, symptoms and cure, but no laboratory will ever witness the discovery of its meaning or its purpose. I would even believe that one of the reasons why God has not revealed this mystery

is to keep us proud mortals humble. Our broad horizons are so narrow to God. Our vast knowledge is so small to Him. Our great brain is so limited in His sight. He says to us as He said to Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow? Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, Here we are?" (38:4,22, 31, 35).

The only right attitude towards suffering is worship, or humble self-surrender. This is not a grovelling humiliation but a sober humility. This is not to commit intellectual and moral suicide; this is to acknowledge the limits of our finite minds. This is in a word to let God be God and to be content ourselves to remain mere men. This is reasonable too when we have had a revelation of God like Job's. "But," says a critic, "we have not." Wait a moment! We have, you know. We have had a better and a fuller one. We are much more favored than Job. He only knew the God of nature; we know the God of grace. He only knew the God of the earth and the sky and the sea; we know the God of Jesus Christ. He only knew the God of the crocodile; we know the God of the cross. If it was right and reasonable for Job to worship, it is much more reasonable for us. We have seen the cross. Heaven is neither silent nor sullen. Heaven has been opened, and Christ has descended, and God has revealed Himself in the Christ of the cross. The cross is the pledge of God's love. The cross supplies us with data from which we may deduce the immense and indistinguishable love of God. If He thus suffered voluntarily, can we not trust Him when we have to suffer involuntarily? He is not a distant, unfeeling deity, coldly indifferent to the woes and the sins of men. He entered into our woes when He was born in a stable. He bore our sins when He died on a cross.

What then is the message of the book of Job? It is this. When faced with calamity or stricken with sickness, the mind must be engrossed not in our sickness (for that is morbid self-pity), nor in our sins, for that is introspective self-accusation), but partly in the moral and spiritual profit to be derived from suffering, which is valuable self-discipline, and best of all in God Himself. This is humble self-surrender to the God of power and wisdom and love, who has been fully and finally revealed in the cross. This is the sober, wise realism of Christian worship.

I would venture to say in conclusion that he can best interpret his own sufferings and the sufferings of others who has witnessed the sufferings of Christ. He can best endure the trials of this world who has been with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, followed Him up the green hill called Calvary, and there learned to trust Him as Savior and to surrender to Him as Lord.

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Precious Reprints

Seeing And Believing

R. H. Boll — 1927

"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (Jn. 20:29). So spoke the Lord Jesus to Thomas, once doubting, but now convinced by the testimony of his own senses.

This at once shows that the extreme distinction between "faith" and "sight," or "faith" and "knowledge" are not correct. The fact that one has seen and handled the risen Savior does not make faith impossible. Because he had *seen*, Thomas *believed*. So did the rest of the apostles. Paul saw Him on the road to Damascus and repeatedly afterward; nevertheless, like all the rest of us, he was saved by faith. The life that he thenceforth lived was by faith, "the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). The Lord Jesus pronounced special blessing upon the faith of those who believed without having seen; but He does not deny that they who had seen Him had *faith*.

That shows further that the faith of which the gospel speaks, though for us it includes the intellectual conviction of our Lord's existence, death, resurrection, and exaltation, is something more and deeper than that. If it had not been, those who had visible proof of these facts could not have had faith, but would have been saved by "sight" and "knowledge." But though they had seen, they were saved *by faith*, just like the rest of us. Therefore the faith that saves is something over and above the intellectual conviction that Jesus lived and died and rose again and ascended into heaven. All this *they knew*, for they had seen and witnessed it. Yet, over and above that, they *believed* on Him and were saved *by faith*. And it must likewise be clear that that element of *faith* which they had, despite the fact that they had seen and known so much, is really the essential faith by which men are saved.

THE ESSENTIAL FAITH

What is, then, that essential and saving faith? It was, as we have seen, something more than the perfect assurance of the existence of Jesus, His mighty works and words, His awful redeeming death, His triumphant resurrection, His bodily ascension into heaven. What was this "something more"? It was in the first place the conviction that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. All that they had seen and known of Him did not necessarily establish *this* fact. This was a thing which man could not infer nor reason out nor demonstrate to himself. All the marvellous facts concerning Jesus were susceptible of some other explanation. Like the Jews of whom He said, "Ye have seen me and yet believed not" (Jn. 6:36); like the rulers and priests who plotted His death, though they knew He had raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:47-53); like Israel,

who "though he had done so many signs before them, believed not on him" (Jn. 12:37); like the people who, though evidently recognizing His supernatural power and greatness, said He was John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets (Matt. 16:14)—so in every case. It did not follow that because of these things He was necessarily the Christ, *the Son of God*. This truth lay outside man's natural perception; it could be learned only by revelation, and could be received only *by faith*.

When Peter confessed Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). Flesh and blood—man by his power of research and observation could not have discerned this truth as a certainty; it must be received from God through faith. It is written, "They shall all be taught of God" (Jn. 6:45). By the testimony of the Old Testament scriptures, by the direct voice from heaven (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), and by the word of testimony given by Himself, they heard and believed that He was indeed what He was. It was this faith, expressed in the words, "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28) that Thomas had. This was something over and above what his senses had perceived, though He had seen and handled with his hands the risen Lord. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 Jn. 5:1).

"TRUST AND OBEY"

There is yet another aspect of saving faith which rises above the fundamental convictions of His existence, work, death, resurrection (though it necessarily rests on that)—and that is the element of *trust*. The New Testament faith is never a matter of belief in abstract truths, never mere cold intellectual convictions of any sort. It always involves what we call *confidence*, and that is a committal of one's self and one's interests to the one in whom one trusts. Such trust is always called forth by a need. The sick man trusts himself to doctor and surgeon most utterly; the Alpine traveller to his guide; the child to father or mother for protection; the perishing man to his rescuer. It always involves action and implicit obedience.

Though a man had, like the apostles, seen the Lord Jesus—yea, though he had become convinced that He is the Christ, the Son of God—his faith must rise to the level of trust before it can become operative. It is not mere intellectual assent to this proposition, but the soul's committal to it—and to Him in whom we believe—that makes the saving faith. Hence the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5) is always implied and involved with "faith." Nothing less than this is or can be real faith. The faith that purifies the heart and overcomes the world is that which commits itself to the Lordship of Jesus unto salvation.

FAITH AND LOVE

Such a trust is inseparable from love toward Him who first loved us. The boundary line between faith in Jesus Christ and love to Him becomes indistinguishable. "Whom not having seen, ye love; on whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye re-

joyce with joy exceedingly and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:8, 9). It is "faith working by love."

The thought that when at last we reach our home with God and every veil is done away, that then

"Faith shall be lost in sight,
And hope in glad fruition."

does not set forth the whole truth concerning either faith or hope. Childlike trust in God will be the rule and joy of all eternity, and "scenes of bliss forever new" will keep our hearts looking forward. Faith, hope, and love abide forevermore; and though love be greatest of these, it is inseparable from faith and hope.

Accepted in The Beloved

Ephesians 1:6,7

I could not think a holy thought, without Thee I was dead indeed;
My best endeavor was but nought—but thou, oh Lord, hast met
my need.

And now in Thy beloved Son I am accepted in Thy sight;
No condemnation rests on me—I'm walking daily in Thy light.

It is because the blood Divine hath wrought redemption for Thy
child;

Washed, sanctified and justified, while on me Thy great love hath
smiled.

Thou dost not look on what I am, Thou dost not see my sin or
shame;

I'm covered by the righteousness, and I henceforward bear the name,

Of Him who is Thy well beloved, Thy perfect, holy, only Son;
And looking at His loveliness, Thou dost remember we are one.
Yes, we are one, oh! glorious thought, one now and one for
evermore;

It is too much to understand—I simply praise Thee and adore.

'Tis all of grace, Thy boundless grace, the riches of Thy grace to
me;

I praise that grace, and when at length the fulness of it all I see,
I'll praise Thee as I cannot now, throughout the ages yet to come,
That I, who once was lost, should be redeemed, accepted in Thy
Son.

—A. E. R. in *Kingdom Tidings*

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Alex and Ruth Wilson,
Manila, Philippines June 5.

During the summer vacation from school, Brother Broaddus, several Filipino co-workers and I stayed for a week at Camiling to help the groups of believers there. It is about 100 miles north of Manila. Ruth went also, for two days only, since she had never visited there before in spite of several invitations.

During the mornings Brother Broaddus taught a class on Christian living, I taught survey of the Bible, and we took turns teaching about the church. Some of the brethren there have been influenced by evangelists who urge men to "join the church" rather than to receive Christ. The picture shows Brother Constancio Lucas interpreting into Ilocano for me. He formerly studied at Central Bible Institute, and may now move to Camiling to help the churches in that area. Pray for him and his wife, that God will give them the great wisdom, love, and perseverance needed to deal with the problems there.

When weather allowed, we held evangelistic meetings at night. Two ladies professed conversion and were baptized. D.V.B.S. was held in two places by a C.B.I. graduate and a present student. Many Catholic children who would never come to "church" eagerly attended these classes.

The coming school year will begin around July 10. Of course C.B.I. will begin in its present location, and switch to the new property later in the semester, Lord willing. We thank the Lord for all of you who have given and are giving so generously.

Dennis and Betty Allen,
Hong Kong, June 2.

There have been some subtle changes in the atmosphere of Hong Kong since the recent Communist riots. Many anticipate further trouble. We are still reminded daily to hate imperialists, fascists and British, by the posters plastered on buses—in spite of an order yesterday that all were to be removed. (I would love to have one of these as a souvenir, but after a friend of ours pulled one down and got roughed up by about 30 toughs, guess I'll take a rain check for now.)

Communist school children sport Mao badges and carry red books, and every other student in the Colony wears the uniform and badge of his school. Since many of the schools are operated

by religious or political groups, children are automatically pigeonholed by the uniform they wear. Of course, European children don't need a uniform to set them off as Imperialists! Their blue eyes and fair skin mark them well enough. . . . When the police began to crack down on rioters in earnest, Communist children were ordered to wear plain clothes so as not to be so easily identified! Whose badge do we wear . . . and do we only wear it when the tide is running in our favor?

In Hong Kong there is a minority of Communists, and a group of strong anti-communists. In between there is a sizeable group that waits to see which way the wind is blowing before they decide which side they are on. This, too, has its parallel in the Christian life.

Elaine Brittell,
Sinde Mission, Zambia, Africa June 9.

I just had a cablegram from Maxine saying "*Daddy had a stroke—serious—Lester's here—come if possible.*" I phoned Gladys and she said she couldn't go either. Perhaps God is ready to call Daddy home where he'll be happy for evermore with Jesus and loved ones. Please pray God will work out what is best for Daddy. God has blessed him with 77 years here on earth, so now God may want him to come up with Him. Blessed are those whom the Lord calls home before the tribulation comes upon the world.

There were 21 at the Ladies' Bible and sewing classes at Sinde yesterday. Wednesday the blanket factory gave me two bundles of blanket pieces for sewing classes. Some of the old folks at the Old Folks' Home are blanketstitching around some small pieces to use as rugs in their rooms during this cold season, then some are blanketstitching around the edge of larger pieces for blankets. We will give some blankets to the poor ones and sick ones, and some to orphans and widows.

Rodney and Brenda Rutherford wrote they are going to the copperbelt to help start churches. Ed Crookshank is to join them this month, Lord willing. Brother Pierce will help the teachers at Mapepi Bible College. Sister Pierce will help with the women and children's classes. God is blessing Brother Pierce and he is gaining back his health. Please pray more workers will come to Lusaka and help in the many places around there.

Sixteen were at Bible class at the Training College Tuesday evening. The teacher had each one write what he felt should be done to improve the Christians so they'd be more active in the Lord's work. Then he collected the papers and read all the suggestions and we discussed two problems. It was very helpful. What the church around the world needs is someone to go around and strengthen the brethren, like Paul did. They are willing to go forward and would grow if only they were taught how and encouraged in good works. As some of the students ask, "What is

there for Christians to do in the villages? There are beer-drinks for the non-Christians, dancing, etc. What is there for the Christians?" Yes, it seems the need for leaders is felt everywhere in the world.

E. A. Rhodes

Yokohama, Japan June 26.

Just finished a short meeting here with Bro. Kikuchi of the Old Folks Home. His subjects were about God's love for all mankind shown in the cross of Christ. The parents came in goodly numbers, as they generally do, and the meeting was very interesting. A few of the parents continue to come to the Sunday morning meeting and seem to be interested in the word of God but don't seem to comprehend the difference between the old life in the flesh and what a new life in Christ Jesus could mean by having salvation—eternal life.

We appreciate very much your labors in ministering to the missionaries and your love and prayers for them. Kindly continue to remember us in your prayers that the Lord's will be done and that He may continue to use us and work through us.

Concerning J. A. Brittell,

To All the dear friends who help each month with a remembrance to Jesse Brittell:

Please forgive the delay in replying to your check. On June 3, Daddy arose early and got as far as his door before he became speechless, and to the point of non-response. Soon he had convulsions from which the doctor thought he could not live through. However, after a week in the hospital, he recognizes us most of the time, is able to sit in a chair with help, and responds to conversation in an alert manner. He still has considerable pain in his neck, chest, and back when he tries to raise himself up or moves quickly. Otherwise he seems free of pain or paralysis. Thanks again for remembering him. Pray the Lord's will be done for him.

In Christian love, Maxine Evans.

"The trouble with the world today has neither ethnic nor sectarian origin. The anti-Christ is not produced by a political party, but by the devil himself. . . . The false church is not a denomination, but a coalition of lukewarm wretchedness, misery and spiritual poverty called *Laodiceanism*. . . . The bride of the anti-Christ is called in the Bible the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters (the product of many peoples.)"—G. H. Montgomery.

No Lease On Life

Robert W. Heid



We who are young rarely think of the end of life—we want to live it out. It does seem rather foolish to dwell on this subject when we probably have fifty years ahead of us. It seems less foolish if we have only ten years—or one. The tragedy of May 20 at Southeastern Christian College is hardly unique. Each day we read of the death of people no older than we are, and it means little. But when three or four people whom we have known very well and have learned to appreciate and respect and count as friends are taken away at once, we cannot help but realize, if we are conscious of reality, that God has not guaranteed that we shall live fifty or even five years. Good intentions and good works are no insurance. We fool ourselves when we think that we are so indispensable to the work of the Lord that He can't afford to take us. In fact, it often seems that the best and most useful are taken.

Why does the Lord call Christians home when they could live such useful and dedicated lives? He may want to teach those remaining a lesson; He may touch the heart of a sinner; He may get glory out of a personal testimony. "His ways are higher than our ways;" how true! At any rate no one can presume to accuse God of lack of wisdom; no one can say that God is not good; no one can say that He had no purpose; no one can say that it was not His will.

Some people believe that death and suffering are punishment from God. The Lord Jesus seemed to refute this concept when He said (Lk. 13:4,5): "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay."

But there is another way that life will end other than death. Jesus is coming, and no one should realize this better than we do who live today. There are wars, famines, earthquakes—plainly stipulated as signs of His coming. Crisis rocks the Middle East as nations of the world have arrayed themselves against Israel—can His coming be more than a few years hence? Can you really think that you'll live fifty, or even twenty more years in a world as we now know it? I can't

Are you ready if Jesus Christ comes today? He doesn't promise that there will be a next Sunday or next week! Are you ready to be called through death into life? Or are you going to lose the gamble and wait for trouble?

The Bible is too accurate to be comfortable to the sinner. Prophecies thousands of years old are already being fulfilled to the letter. You must realize that the other ones will come true, too. The very unpleasant prophecies that leave two alternatives—you can live after the coming of the Lord through a time of fire and disease and famine and want and war and earthquake and blood and torture and torment and die a horrible death at the hands of ruthless, savage, satanic men or go to eternal hell where the fire is not quenched and the worm doesn't die, where souls of forsaken, broken, depraved people—the very worst and the very best sinners—cry and gnash their teeth.

But why choose this when there is freely given to all men complete salvation in the Name of Jesus? It's not floating on a cloud and playing a harp; it's service, and the most unspeakable peace and joy that you and I can ever experience. It's not just escape from torment—it's serving the God that made us and saved us—to worship Him.

—In *P. C. S. Broadcaster*



"Parental Ways Get Kickback"

J. H. McCaleb

A physician on the faculty of a large state university said that the actions of college students were a reflection on their parents. He added further that they don't know right from wrong. The title given above, and the following statements, are quotations from a recent newspaper article.

"They're promiscuous because of the jokes they heard at home. They smoke because their parents smoke. They drink because you permitted liquor in your house. Their views on highway accidents reflect your attitude about driving."

It may be that these pronouncements have caused some controversy; however, the general principle is worthy of exploration. There is no question that early environmental influences leave a distinct impression. The fact that some have transcended deeply negative conditions only emphasizes the responsibility to remove those hazards from the path of the many.

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach thy sons, and thy sons' sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord

thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."

Even as Moses, speaking as God's mouthpiece at Sinai, emphasized family obligations regarding a proper environment, so also does God enjoin those duties upon us now.



A Christian Views The News

Ernest E. Lyon

THE CHURCH WORLD TODAY

It is very difficult today to stand back and look at the professing church and get a true idea of what is going on, but there are certain aspects that can be seen and should be studied. In both Protestant and Roman Catholic church circles today there is a division between "conservatives" and "liberals," between fundamental Bible-believing Christians and those who are "modernist" or unbelieving men who profess to be Christians. There are, of course, many shades in between of people who try to "straddle the fence" but one is always more on one side than the other side of that fence and Christ recognizes no neutrals!

The "liberals" in the Protestant world are generally teachers of the "social gospel"—the "gospel" that rejects the need of salvation by the individual and stresses the need of providing for the "here and now," as one expressed it to me. Those people have noted how the fundamental believers have gradually quit showing interest in the welfare of mankind in general and even of poor Christians in particular (thus ignoring the obvious meaning of 1 John 3:17 and similar passages) and they have seized upon this as the center of their substitute for the gospel described in 1 Cor. 15. Most of them do not recognize the origin of their doctrine, but it is centered in the belief that man can "pull himself up by his own bootstraps," that man is the product of his environment and can improve himself till he finally becomes as God would have him (when the name of God is used at all) by improving his environment. This, of course, is the basis of socialism and leads to the atheistic doctrines that are behind "democratic" or "Fabian" socialism as pushed in Great Britain, the U. S. A., and other Western countries, as well as behind the openly tyrannical "national" socialism (Nazism or Fas-

cism) and "international" socialism of the Marx-Lenin type as practiced by Russia and her allies.

Maybe you think this is of no concern to you, since you know no social gospel people in your church circle. Are you quite sure of this? There are tremendous changes taking place in the Church of Christ today. There is a departing from the legalistic we-are-the-only-Christians attitude so prevalent in so many places a few years ago and a recognition that others are worthy of consideration as Christians. This, so stated, is good, but when the foundations of faith are changed there is always the danger that some will leave the true faith and adopt something else. This is happening to more than you realize. A conception that Christ came to establish a good moral society for the equalization of opportunities in the things of this world—such a concept is plainly seen in some of the articles beginning to appear in numerous magazines. When men begin to praise the CHRISTIAN CENTURY and look to Harry Emerson Fosdick and others like him as leaders, they are not on their way to wrong doctrines—they have already arrived!

I didn't mean to spend this much space on the Church of Christ, but may I briefly add that the "liberals" in other Protestant groups and in the Roman Catholic Churches are oriented in that direction usually. The Churches of Christ are not many years behind the Southern Baptists in going into this, and the Baptist convention recently held shows that they are moving very fast in that direction. I can not say whether the increase in socialism in government has increased the acceptance of the social gospel or whether it works the other way; but probably both things work together. The gradual acceptance of socialism in government over the past thirty-five or more years has slowly convinced people that the great need in the world is to provide better housing, better food, better clothing, better education (all at others' expense) and, presto, we have a better people and a better country—and a better church. They ignore the fact that God placed man in a perfect environment, gave him perfect food, perfect housing, perfect (for his need!) clothing, and a perfect education—and he started going backwards mightily fast—and we are going backwards fast now!

A very bad by-product of this situation is the rise of clericalism again—the "clergy" of the church trying to dictate the policies of the government—something this country had prospered by the founding fathers' eliminating it, many of whom had come to this country to escape the clericalism of their day. Sadduceism is in the saddle again, and the Phariseism of the past is changing—but not for the better in so many cases.

The "ecumenical" movement is largely in the hands of those who do not accept the things that most of the readers of this magazine believe—the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the need of salvation and Christ's provision of that need, etc. As they go merrily on their way establishing their huge church organization,

let us who are still looking to Christ for guidance not look aside from Him and be pushed into giving up the plea for unity in Him. Conservatives in any church group can have no real fellowship with the "modernists" (or whatever name they call themselves) who do not believe in our Savior. As those believers are pushed into the background in their groups let us be ready to show them the hand of fellowship. And let us keep our eyes upon God as the socialists in the church try to steer us away by their little phrases and words that belittle others.

NEWS BRIEFS

RICHARD WURMBRAND is no longer with the group called Underground Evangelism but is now working with Mission to Europe's Millions, Post Office Box 11, Glendale, California, 91209. Underground Evangelism is continuing its work as a separate group. Let us not forget to pray for the Christians behind the iron curtain.

RHODESIA is opposed by many in this country on the basis of being a "minority government." It is doubtful if you could find a government backed by more of the people it rules in all Africa outside of South Africa (which is also opposed here). And how about all the communist countries? They are certainly "minority governments."

IN THE UNITED STATES we are taking out of cultivation every year about 7 million acres of farm land (or potential farm land) for many purposes. When will we reach the point of no return and our famine start?

SCIENCE FICTION would seem mild again if the Pentagon had gone ahead and developed a new weapon that scientists proposed, one using the laser beam of light to destroy objects many miles away. Let us pray that our enemies do not develop it.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES, which recently closed down after over a hundred years of publication, has been bought by Union Gospel Press, which will combine many of the SST features into its publications. I don't believe that it will continue Donald Barnhouse's phobia on foreign aid (he was for it) and Urbanus' fight for government utilities!

CUBAN MISSILE BASES have something new—four bases built in connection with schools, so we will have to let them alone or bomb children.

"RECONCILIATION THEOLOGY" seems a good title, but it refers to the belief that modernists have that we just need to realize that we are children of God—without the new birth.

NEXT MONTH I will try in this limited space to show how the governmental situation of today developed. Pray that I will do better than I did with the church situation in this article. It is very incomplete, I realize.

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 21-25, 1967

THEME: FAITH IN THE LAST DAYS

MONDAY

7:30 p.m. Singing Period
8:00 p.m. Will He Find Faith? Chairman, Jesse Montgomery
Howard Marsh

TUESDAY: Theme for the day: Saving Faith

9:30-9:50 Prayer Time Chairman, Ben Rake, Jr.
9:50-10:25 Source of Faith Ben Rake, Sr.
10:25-11:00 Personal-Living-Working Faith Asa Baber
11:00-11:10 Recess
11:10-12:00 Bible Exposition: 1st & 2nd Timothy Carl Kitzmiller
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:00 Blessing of Faith Goff Bedford
2:00-2:30 Faith Strengthened By Experiences Stanford Broussard
2:30-3:30 Open Discussion
7:30-8:00 Singing Period
8:00 Building Upon Our Faith Jack Blas

WEDNESDAY: Theme for the day: The Basis For Mission Efforts

9:30-9:50 Prayer Time Chairman, Robert Gill
9:50-10:25 The Plight and Doom of the Faithless Curtis Lydic
10:25-11:00 "Go and Teach All Nations" Gordon Linscott
11:00-11:10 Recess
11:10-12:00 Bible Exposition: 1st & 2nd Timothy Carl Kitzmiller
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:00 Present Day Resistance to Missionary Efforts Harold Preston
2:00-2:30 Where Do We Stand? Richard Ramsey
2:30-3:30 Open Discussion
7:30-8:00 Singing Period
8:00 Preparation For Proclaiming God's Word Vernon Lawyer

THURSDAY: Theme for the day: What's Happening to Faith Today?

9:30-9:50 Prayer Time Chairman, Laverne Houtz
9:50-10:25 Deception of Ecumenism Ernest Lyon
10:25-11:00 Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures Earl Smith
11:00-11:10 Recess
11:10-12:00 Bible Exposition: 1st & 2nd Timothy Carl Kitzmiller
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:00 The Shift to Materialism and Rationalism Edward Schreiner
2:00-2:30 Faith Versus New Morality in the Educational System David Ringer
2:30-3:30 Open Discussion
7:30-8:00 Singing Period
8:00 Position and Importance of Fundamentalism Robert Boyd

FRIDAY: Theme for the day: Prophecy—The Anchor of Faith

9:30-9:50 Prayer Time Chairman, Bruce Chowning
9:50-10:25 Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled Ray Naugle
10:25-11:00 Other Prophecies Fulfilled Bob Morrow
11:00-11:10 Recess
11:10-12:00 The Faith Method of Interpretation Bernard Wright
12:00-1:30 Lunch and Free Time
1:30-2:00 What Lies Ahead For Us? Jesse Wood
2:00-2:30 "What Manner of Persons Ye Ought to Be" H. N. Rutherford
2:30-3:30 Open Discussion
7:30-8:00 Singing Period
8:00 Overcomers' Faith in the Blessed Hope C. V. Wilson

DAY SESSIONS: Portland Avenue Church of Christ

NIGHT SESSIONS: Sellersburg Church of Christ

Committee: Chairman, Dale Offutt, J. K. Scoggan, Glenn Baber, Robert Heid, Eugene Schreiner; Treas. Thomas Y. Clark, 3316 Moulton Lane, Louisville, Ky.

Hospitality Committee: Herschel Keown, 622 So. 44th Street, Louisville, Ky. 40211. Phone 778-1364; Robert Staley, 200 Allhands Ave., Sellersburg, Ind. 47172. Phone 246-3203.

The Mercy of Jesus

G. B. Shelburne, III

To begin this study, read John 7:53 through 8:11. In some translations this passage may be set apart from the text. This is because its position varies in the ancient Greek manuscripts. Wherever it belongs, the story is generally accepted as having apostolic origin and as worthy of a place in scripture.

The Jewish elders and Bible scholars could not stomach the merciful spirit of Jesus' ministry. It hurt them to see it, for to them the law was everything. They were scrupulously faithful to keep all the commandments (so they told themselves). If anyone else were so weak or foolish as to do otherwise, it was their duty as defenders of God's truth to give him just what he deserved. But Jesus was a threat to their system of righteousness.

Often these leaders tried to maneuver Jesus into a doctrinal or political trap. In the present case, if He refused to agree to the woman's execution, Jesus would contradict the Law of Moses and lose the people's favor. If He caused her to die, He would arouse the Roman rulers, who reserved capital punishment to themselves. But the Jews had forgotten that in a capital case the witnesses must hurl the first stones. Faced with Jesus' challenge, the accusers realized that none was worthy. And there could be no execution without witnesses.

Was Jesus Too Lax?

But what is the Holy Spirit saying to us in the story? It worries some people, who fear that Jesus' attitude ("neither do I condemn you") is too lax toward sin. In the early centuries of the church, some leaders would skip the story in public reading lest it comfort adulterers. It never occurred to such leaders that there was any godly thing to do with an adulterer besides condemning him. Thankfully, Jesus was more interested in reclaiming him for a life with God.

That is what the story is saying. Jesus did not pass over sin lightly; He was far more concerned adultery than the Jewish elders were. (See Matthew 5:27-32; 12:39; 15:19, 20; 19:3-9; Revelation 2:20-23.) Jesus did not minimize the woman's crime by calling it a "mistake" or "anti-social behavior." To Him it was a "sin" (8:11). But, granting the ugly fact of sin, what is to be done with the sinner? Law says, justly, "He is worthy to be destroyed." Love says, "He is worth heaven's best efforts to save him."

Here Is Good News

This is the gospel, the *good news*. The law is not good news; it has always told men that they are condemned sinners. But Jesus brought more: complete forgiveness along with power to be good. "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "You are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). "For God sent the Son . . . not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). Criticized for spending time with people who had missed the mark, Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:12, 13). Whatever our failures, *Christ loves the sinner as intensely as He hates the sin*.

Jesus condemned sin because God is righteous. He forgave sin because God is love. Through law comes judgment against our imperfections. Through grace God accepts us in spite of our imperfections. If God dealt with us simply on the principle of law, we would get what we deserve and none would be saved. But Jesus met the law's demands in His death and now God deals with us on the principle of grace, which is *unmerited* favor. Jesus operated on this principle. If we call ourselves Christians, so must we.

Lip-Service To Grace

We all give lip-service to the principle of grace, but often our religious attitudes are shaped by law alone. Had we been there, would we have approved Jesus' handling of the case of adultery? We fear to really apply grace in religion lest we get "soft" and careless of God's commandments. This shows that we have not understood grace at all.

Jesus was grace personified, yet He was plainer than we are about the need to obey. Grace is not carelessness. It enables us to care more. *Grace produces far more obedience than law alone*. Jesus forgave the woman to enable her to "go and sin no more." Christian obedience is based on "the mercies of God" (Romans 12:1). "The love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor. 5:14; compare 1 John 4:19). Law is not strong enough to cope with human nature (Romans 7:4-25; 8:3); only love can. He who loves obeys freely, from the heart, because he wants to. And sin seems much uglier when it strikes not only at law but also at the Savior who loved us and died to make us good.

Motives For Mercy

When we grow quick to accuse, long on judgment and short on mercy, it is not always because of a zeal for truth. The accusers of the adulteress cared nothing for the law, since they were all equally guilty. They had other motives.

We, too, may be driven by party prejudice, jealousy, animosity, or the superior feeling that comes from dwelling on the sins of others. We may begin to enjoy the business of condemning, while despising the sinner and caring nothing for his fate. We can become religious bloodhounds, sniffing out every appearance of error, and yet possess not an ounce of mercy or fellowship with the Father of mercies. We are not God's children until we share His attitude toward people, as seen in the life of Jesus. —In *The Appeal*

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Miami, Okla.: Please send three copies of *A New Creation*. . . I can't find words enough to tell you how much the *Word and Work* means to me and family. —Mrs. R. V. Higginbotham

R. H. Boll in Portuguese

One of the newest translations published by Orland Boyer in Brazil is *Tessalonicensens*, a commentary on the Thessalonian letters by Bro. Boll. This is another of the "Enrich Your Soul" series of publications which brings to Brazil in paperback form many of the best works available in English. It also includes two rather formidable works—a Bible dictionary and a Bible encyclopaedia.

Lompoc, Calif.: I have read the *Word and Work* for many years, and I believe it to be the best magazine published. —Mrs. Bessie Lang

Another New Book

Some time back I had a note in *Word and Work* telling about the "Money Tree" that was unveiled before me with its green leaves hanging out right in December, and just as I was becoming a nonagenarian. In *Word and Work* also it was stated that following a fall, Mrs. Chambers had been a shut-in requiring someone with her, and that her husband was compelled to be the "sitter," and so prevented from keeping preaching engagements. Being thus hindered by Satan (1 Thes. 2:18; 3:10), while kept in, I have engaged him with the weapon of the pen and sword of the Spirit which the pen helps to wield.

God's grace has been sufficient to get three books published and quite well distributed. But, those "green leaves" have fallen off the tree and have gone with the wind, and I lack the money to put out a fourth book, though the material is ready for the printer. The books are free for the asking for reading and handing on, are not to be shelved. My conviction is that in due time the needed money will be at hand to print and to mail out another printing. Some have vol-

untced aid for the printing and posting, and some others may want a share in the plan and purpose to hinder Satan a bit, and, if so, make known your desire. This is to say THANK YOU to those who have aided, and to Him in whose name we are all to sow the good seed. —Stanford Chambers

Dallas, Texas: We enjoyed rich blessings with Brother Lawyer and his family last week. Good attendance and interest, 8 responses to the invitation (2 for baptism) and record numbers testified to God's blessings upon the week.

Next Sunday night, June 18, we will have Dr. Harry Bucalstein of the American Board of Missions to the Jews with us. He will present a program on "Christ in the Passover," demonstrating how Christ has fulfilled the typology inherent in the ancient feast of the Passover. —Neal Phillips

Winchester, Ky.: Bro. David Schreiner closed a revival here at Belmont Sunday night. The preaching was good the singing was inspiring and some "special group numbers" added greatly to the services. One lady came forward requesting that the Lord have complete control of her life and Eliza Haggard, daughter of one of our deacons, was immersed. —Howard Sawyer

Louisville, Ky.: Would your church like to become the sponsor of David Brown in Rhodesia? \$200 or more would be needed each month, a very small sum.

Sellersburg Children's Home has special need of money in this month of emptying the coin banks. There is need of extra money to cover the payment of \$2,000.00 plus interest on the loan for the new wings. There is also need of extra helpers at the home in case you should know of anyone desiring to help with such a work.—Ernest E. Lyon

Cramer & Hanover News

We have had a wonderful Daily Vacation Bible School under the leader-

ship of Bro. Benny Hill and the splendid and capable faculty of teachers. The Adult Class has especially been wonderful to us with Bro. John Tanner as teacher of the prophetic word. His lessons have been plain and practical. The younger set enjoyed the outing yesterday which was something new to our DVBS.

Bro. & Sister Rutherford report a great trip to Macclenny, Florida, where Bro. Rutherford conducted a very successful six days' meeting with the Ralford Rd. Church of Christ.

Midland, Ind.: I'm thankful for a paper that is published by Christians who declare the whole counsel of God.—Mrs. Osa Griffith

Flores, Guatemala: We have been continuing with regular religious services here at Subin and in La Libertad. We have been happy for some special invitations to study with the people

at Rancho Alegre. We thank God for all of these opportunities, knowing that He has promised that His Word will not return unto Him void, but will accomplish that whereunto it is sent.—J. C. Reed

Salvisa, Ky.: We are averaging over one hundred in Sunday School so far in June. . . . The trustees met last Tuesday morning and spent about two hours discussing the installment of an air conditioner for the auditorium. Finally they decided to authorize the Stewart Warner ceiling type units.—N. Wilson Burks

Fisherville, Ky.: A good meeting is under way, with good attendance. Robert Boyd is bringing some excellent messages, with emphasis upon foundational truths that are so much needed in both personal and church life today.—G. R. L.

Read The Gospels

I wish professing Christians in this day studied the four Gospels more than they do. I know that all Scripture is profitable. I do not wish to exalt one part of the Bible at the expense of another. But I think it would be good for some who are very familiar with the Epistles, if they knew a little more about Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Now why do I say this? I say it because I want professing Christians to know more about Christ. It is well to be acquainted with all the doctrines and principles of Christianity. It is better to be acquainted with Christ Himself. It is well to be familiar with faith and grace and justification and sanctification. They are all matters pertaining to the King. But it is far better to be familiar with Jesus Himself, to see the King's own face, and to behold His beauty.

Ought not the sheep to be familiar with the Shepherd? Ought not the patient to be familiar with the Physician? Ought not the bride to be familiar with the Bridegroom? Ought not the sinner be familiar with the Savior? Beyond doubt it ought to be so. The Gospels were written to make men familiar with Christ, and therefore I wish men would study the Gospels.

Surely we cannot know this Christ too well. Surely there is not a word, nor a deed, nor a day, nor a step, nor a thought in the record of His life, which ought not to be precious to us. We should labor to be familiar with every line that is written about Jesus.

—J. C. Ryle

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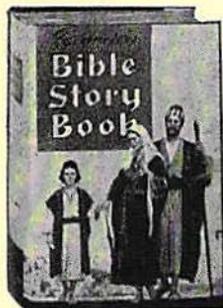
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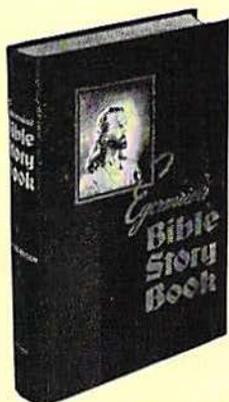
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