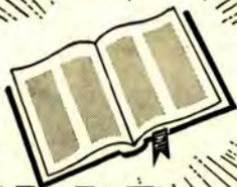


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MARCH, 1979

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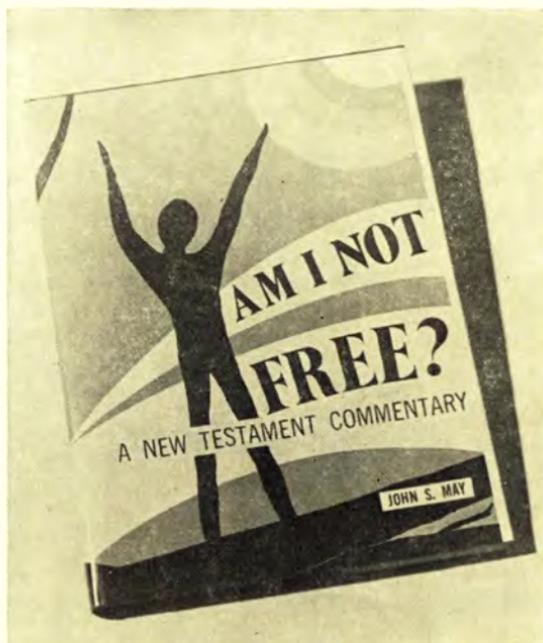
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MINISTERS, TEACHERS, ELDERS

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Robert Heid is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



God's Family

W. R. H.

HOW READEST THOU?

Luke 10:25 tells of an occasion where a certain lawyer (student of the law of Moses) spoke up, making trial of Jesus. He was evidently seeking for "ammunition" rather than information. He was able to quote accurately, and knew what scripture answered the question that he himself had posed. Jesus quickly acknowledged that the lawyer had found the right answer to his own future, simply telling him "This do, (keeping the commandments) and thou shalt live." The Law, which was his vocation, was waiting to be his Salvation. Its strict orders needed personal application.

Reading is not as popular today as it ought to be. We are living at too fast a pace to give time to it. Who wants to waste time reading the instructions before starting to assemble the toy or gadget? Who has time to wade through the fine print before they start filling out their form 1040? Who has patience to read the preface and dedication pages before getting "on with the context" (then, for only a superficial scanning perhaps).

Writing and preaching have both suffered the same fate in recent years, it *must be interesting*, and *brief*, or it will not hold our attention. The long sermon has been streamlined to the point where certain biblical themes cannot be properly dealt with. We need a series for this and a series for that; and many folks miss several links of the chain. In articles, there "is a limit to how much one will read," and we had best not go beyond that limit. But, O, how that limit has been reduced of late. At Word and Work, we have several tracts, by Bro. Boll and others, which are in fact little booklets of 16, 20, or 24 pages. But the trend now is for these 4-page folders that can be perused in about 2 minutes! Tell me, How can you deal with a subject such as Love, or Salvation, or Sin, or Redemption, or the Judgment in so short a work?

The trouble with the Lawyer, mentioned in paragraph one, was his concept of the word, "neighbor." I think that many of the scriptures that we use, have become so familiar to us that We have lost the concept of certain of the words. For example:

What do we make of the word, "God loveth a *cheerful* giver?" Bro. Bernard Wright once pointed out that the Greek word here is

basically our word "hilarious." Some folks talk about giving "till it hurts." What a misconception of the truth!

Again, what is the idea in "Thy kingdom *come*," when you recite the Lord's prayer? The original is a third person imperative (unlike any English form that we have), and might better be understood as: "Thy kingdom—O Father, command or make it to come (happen)."

When Paul told Titus (2:4) that the older women should teach the younger "to *love* their husbands, to *love* their children," the word *love* in this place has to do with physical, natural love. Thus, it indicates that the older women should have learned something about Wife-husband love that was worth teaching, and should assume the task of teaching it. How many of our younger people today do not know about the genuine and deep love between their parents! Was our generation so un-demonstrative that our children couldn't see love manifested amongst us?

The word *Repent*, as used by John the baptist, and in Acts 2:38, is a much stronger word than many sinners realize. Literally, it has the force of "a change of mind for the better, with a strong abhorrence for past sins." This may occur several times in life, but it ought not be a daily experience for a child of God. It takes some light from God and some conviction by His Holy Spirit to enable sinful men to repent. In this sense, repentance is a gift, even as we read in Acts 11:18 that the Gentiles were granted repentance unto life. Sinners had better not spurn God's call to repentance.

When you read, "I *am* the God of Abraham," you may not get the full impact of what God has said. Jesus used this very quotation to prove that there is a resurrection. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." This method of arriving at truth should both astonish and challenge us. What have these words said or inferred, that we have completely missed?

On occasion, it is good for us to read from an unfamiliar version of the Bible, in order for words to catch our attention anew. We might even have to turn back to the American Standard or King James, to see if this was "really there" all of the time, and we just missed it.

Of all books, the Bible is preeminently a book worthy of word study. What a burden of responsibility rested upon those who translated it into our tongue! If you have not read the preface to your American Standard Version, both the Old Testament and the New, you can hardly appreciate the sacredness of the text, nor the need to "handle aright the word of truth."

How readeest thou?

Carl Kitzmiller is minister of the Oakdale, Louisiana Church of Christ and writes the Sunday school lessons for Word and Work Lesson Quarterly.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Doesn't being a Christian mean that one sort of hopes against hope that the Bible is true and that Jesus did what it is said He did? Can a well-educated, thinking person really accept all that he is supposed to about Christianity? Doesn't one have to be a little gullible to accept Christianity whole-heartedly?

Our question this month is not one sent in by a reader of this feature of the magazine but is an attempt to bring together into one several lines of thought which seem to underlie a lot of the indifference toward Christianity that is so evident about us. The kind of thinking suggested by the questions is probably becoming more and more prevalent, and the Christian who takes seriously the responsibility to be missionary and evangelistic with his Christian faith will need to be able to give the right answers. For while not everyone who really wants to ask such questions will put them into words, the questions are often there nevertheless, and they affect the response (or lack of it) that is given to the gospel. These are "questions asked of us" in attitude and action rather than always being spoken, although those who circulate in certain segments of our society will find them also being asked in word.

There have been times and places in the past in our country where the truth of the Bible was not seriously challenged, and even the unbelievers in a community accepted the Bible as unquestionably true and themselves just disobedient to it. Many Christians have lived and died for whom questions about the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, or related issues were never a problem. They accepted the teaching passed on to them from parent and grandparent and community. In some respects it would be desirable if such blessed simplicity could continue. Without having examined the situation critically such ones built their faith on that which was true and wholesome and did not have to contend with such things as are before us. Of course, it may also be true that many of those who remained unbelievers did so because these matters were problems that were never put into words and were unresolved for them.

In any case we can no longer be unmindful of the questions of unbelief. For the most part we no longer live in the isolation from ideas that existed in an earlier day. Modern mass communication media have not only enabled the gospel to go forth but have given

a voice to unbelief. Our school systems and colleges have become in many cases the avenue through which unbelief is even taught. The theory of evolution, however unproven and unproveable, has been widely embraced, especially in educational circles. Beginning with higher education, it has now filtered down to touch in one way or another almost every one of us. In the late 1800's in Germany and moving from there throughout professing Christianity, we have the rise of modernism. This line of thought, which is unbelief cloaked in a religious guise, challenges the inspiration of the Bible, the reality of miracles, the deity of Jesus, and related truths. In short, unbelief has become so widespread and "respectable" that few people today can expect to get by without having their faith challenged by unbelief. We might even add, so prevalent are the many ideas that the person who tries to ignore the challenge of unbelief may indeed be allowing its subtle workings to eat the heart out of his Christianity.

There is no magical capsule of timed-release knowledge that one can take to resolve the problems of unbelief. We do not propose here to deal with the problems in an intensive, detailed sort of way. Space does not even begin to permit it. There is no royal road to understanding and meeting the challenges so that one can avoid study, serious thought, or knowledge of the issues. We do want to make one point—**THERE ARE GOOD, SOLID, INTELLIGENT, SATISFYING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS OF UNBELIEF.** No Christian, young or old, should ever be intimidated into believing that the Christian faith will not stand up to honest investigation or that people of intelligence and sharp reasoning just cannot accept the Christian faith in its fulness. The devil has done a pretty good propaganda job on a lot of people and has convinced them that there may be some good features about Christianity but that much of it just will not stand up to serious scrutiny. As a result we have those who are prejudiced (a pre-judgment, made without having the facts) against the Bible and Christianity and who do not give either a fair hearing. We repeat: There are answers! The Christian whose faith is challenged should care enough to learn and to weigh them instead of meekly selling out to the flesh. Seeing the greatness of what is involved if Christianity is true, the unbeliever who is honest ought to consider the answers instead of deceiving himself.

Many have surrendered on the basis of the assumption that the Bible and the Christian faith are in direct conflict with knowledge and intelligence. Nothing could be further from the truth! Some of the world's greatest thinkers have embraced Christianity. The apostle Paul must have had the equivalent (if not greater than) a Ph.D. degree. He was a brilliant man. Moreover, he lived in a day when there were anti-supernaturalists (the Sadducees). Sharp thinking is not limited to the 20th century; great Greek philosophers had already come and gone in Paul's day. Yet this man embraced Christianity wholly, including the miracles, the resurrection of Christ, blood atonement, inspired Scriptures, etc.—the works! There are many scientists in our day who do not accept the theory of evolution, who do accept the Bible teaching of creation. There are some not-

able cases of men who have been strong, vocal unbelievers who have become Christians and who now defend the faith they once sought to destroy. Any attempt to avoid the claims of Christianity on the grounds that it is not intellectually acceptable is just an exercise in falsehood.

In reality, the only thing that both the Bible and the Christian faith have to fear is the failure of people to honestly investigate. Several men of note have started out to prove portions of the Bible false and have ended up writing a defense instead of an attack. As they investigated they were convinced of the truth of the Bible record. A common mistake is that of assuming that a man very learned in one field of knowledge is necessarily also very capable in another. A brilliant man in one branch of human knowledge may be an ignoramus when it comes to the Bible or the Christian faith. Even prejudice can be just as strong in an educated man as in others, and unbelievers often prove the point. Many an unbeliever, though very educated in some areas of learning, may simply not know what he is talking about as he vents his unbelief. In fact, some of the great, widely-circulated assertions against the Bible have been based on pure ignorance of it and prejudice against it. As men have carefully and honestly studied the issues, the Bible has stood the test.

There is a whole area of study called Christian Apologetics. (Do not confuse the meaning of "apology" as used here with the more common use to express regret; see a good dictionary.) Many very solid, helpful books have been written in reply to the assertions of unbelief and in defense of the faith. These examine the charges, help us to think clearly, point out the weaknesses in arguments, provide help both from the Bible and from sources outside the Bible. Most ministers who are themselves faithful to Christian teaching will be able to guide the disturbed or inquiring student to helpful material that will point out the answers. Surely it is folly to "sell out" on Christianity when we have not examined the evidence.

Now, of course, when all is said and done, being a Christian is still a matter of faith! We cannot prove some of the various teachings and events that make up Christianity in the same way that we can prove a mathematical formula or a chemical reaction. (Don't forget that this same principle is true in many other areas of life, however. Can a man *prove* that his wife loves him? Etc.) But that we must come to Christ by faith and must live by faith not sight does not mean that we cannot have a very solid foundation for faith. God has in many ways given a foundation for a faith which cannot be shaken. Christianity is not a case of "whistling in the dark" or hoping against hope. There is too much evidence to consider, too much confirmation of the Bible in things which can be investigated, too much change in the lives of those who truly follow the Lord, too much difference in the fruits of faith and unbelief for us to suppose that it is untrue.

We recommend that the person who has a problem with unbelief examine some of the material that is available. None of us can have all the thoughts on a subject ourselves; we can benefit from the

thinking of those who are or who have been men of faith. There is also an added influence we need to consider concerning these things. Nothing will help more than a real, searching, intelligent examination and familiarity with the Bible itself. As we have noted, some of the problems of unbelief arise out of ignorance or superficial knowledge of the Book. Moreover, the Bible is written in such a way (and has such an Author) that it creates and sustains faith of itself. It is in a great measure self-authenticating. Those who devote themselves to it with a desire for truth and a willingness to follow and to do the same (John 7:17) will find satisfaction that it is the word of God and that the faith it reveals is worthy of acceptance.

113 N. 6th St., Oakdale, La. 71463

Jack Blaes preaches at the Antioch Church, Frankfort, Ky. and teaches at the Portland Christian School in Louisville.



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

WHO IS JOHN TODD? If you have not asked this question, I'm sure you will. For a well-documented, in-depth article I recommend the February 2, 1979 *Christianity Today*. Both an editorial and a very informative article. This article gives names, places, and dates covering his life as far back as his twentieth year. I quote from the editorial: "Is what John Todd is saying true? No, it is not. Todd was not at the pinnacle of a witch's conspiracy as he claims to have been. He has not launched the key organizations in the Charismatic movement or the modern gospel music industry by signing a few checks for them from witch headquarters. He has not been to many of the places (like Duke University and Viet Nam) he says he has been." You need to be informed about this man, and can be looking for others like him to show on the horizon these days.

REPORTS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES are again circulating about Madalyn Murray O'Hair. It seems

that she has been granted a hearing in Washington, D. C., on the subject of religion and airways by the Federal Communications Commission. Her aim is to eliminate the presentation of the gospel via the airways of America. Her petition has 27,000 signatures to back her position. Many Bible believing Americans are writing the Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20036 to the effect that they should deny this petition which would take away our religious freedom. If you should be led to write, include the number of Mrs. O'Hair's petition as proper identification of it: PETITION NO. R. M. 2493.

A WORLD-FAMOUS EVANGELIST GAVE GLOWING reports of evangelistic meetings in Poland. I don't find fault with him for preaching the gospel there or any where else. But the reports made it seem that there was a favorable climate for spreading the Gospel in Poland. Personally, my intelligence is insulted by such re-

porting. From Richard Wurmbrand's **Jesus to the Communist World** publication I pass on the following: "At least twenty underground magazines are published in Poland regularly, some of them Christian, denouncing the discriminations against believers. Would anyone who had the freedom to publicize his beliefs do it secretly to the risk of going to jail?"

MORE FROM JESUS TO THE COMMUNIST WORLD: In Communist Rumania only 150 pastors are licensed to preach. There are, however, 1100 Baptist churches. There are plenty of other pastors, but the Communists do not allow them to preach because they refuse to preach according to Marx. A licensed preacher in Sibiu, M. Cocariu, in an approved sermon said: "God said, 'I beheld and there was no man among them, there was no counsellor' (Isaiah 41:28). I am in a more favorable situation than God at that time. He has found no man of value; I did—it is Ceausescu, the great leader of our people." This "Baptist pastor" did not remind his listeners that Ceausescu, Rumania's dictator, is a mass murderer of Christians. Another of these government approved ministers, I. Tutcu of Lugo preached: "When the flower petals open in the morning, they whisper, 'Ceausescu,'" "This same thing is chirped by birds; Ceausescu is the message brought by sun rays."

I HOPE YOU ARE NOT TAKING THE "WOMEN'S LIB" movement too lightly. You may have read the report in the *National Enquirer*, Feb. 6, 1979 which says, "Women's Lib leaders admit they were wrong about marriage, men and beauty." This is quite a confession from the lassies on the left, but it is still too shallow to be of much comfort. This movement is as revolutionary as the communist take over of Russia in 1917. It should be of concern when seminary students make such statements as "The concept (to purge sexist language from sermons) is not to exclude God the Father, but to include God the Mother." Quoted from the *Owensboro Messenger Inquirer*, Jan. 3, 1977. And as when Ms. Sue Rich, President of the Episcopal Church Women began

her prayer with these words: "In the name of the mother, the daughter and the Holy Ghost." And directly related to this are these statements from *Revolution: Tomorrow is Now*: "In the light of the enslavement of body and mind which the church has historically imposed on women, we demand that the seminaries:

Immediately stop and repudiate their propagation of sexist, male supremacist doctrine.

Initiate women's studies courses which cut through the traditional male, religious mythology to expose church and other social forces denying women their basic human dignity.

Actively recruit, employ and justly promote women theologians and other staff in all departments.

Actively recruit, enroll, financially aid, and seek equal placement for women theological students.

I have seen nothing to indicate that the ERA movement has made any basic changes, and the article mentioned above leads me to believe that they have really only changed tactics to achieve the same revolutionary purpose.

FEDERAL JUDGE ORDERS IRS to reinstate Bob Jones' tax-exempt status. U. S. District Judge Robert F. Chapman said the IRS violated the fundamentalist Christian school's First Amendment Right to freedom of religion. He ordered the IRS to refund \$21 which the school paid under protest while fighting to keep its tax exempt status.

The sum that plaintiff (BJU) seeks to be refunded belies the importance of this litigation, since resolution of the suit requires a determination of whether plaintiff qualifies as a tax-exempt organization, Chapman said in a 28-page order issued in February of 1979.

POLISH SPIES IN FRANCE. The French equivalent of the F. B. I. has just advised President Giscard d'Estaing that despite his recent meeting with Poland's Edward Gierek, and all the pledges of good will, the number of Polish spies in France is on the increase and they are the most numer-

ous and effective there of all the Iron Curtain block. The conclusion is that Russia is capitalizing on Poland's new image as a not-really-Communist nation, an idiotic notion facilitated by the nomination of John Paul II to the Papacy. But the note the French Government sent Warsaw on the matter was nothing if not diplomatic: It was a polite suggestion

that "activities had passed what is habitually considered acceptable and expressed hope that Polish espionage activities will return to a normal level." There is a strong suspicion that France is not the only nation in which the Russian's have tried to take advantage of Poland's phony new image.

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville, and an elder and minister of the Highland Church of Christ in Louisville.



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

YOU HAVE NO EXCUSE

Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Romans 1:19, 20 NIV.

There are two points in these two verses from Romans that I would like for us to examine for a while. The first of these is that there are two things that everyone can know about God and the second is that these two things make one who does not believe on Him to be without excuse for that disbelief and therefore without a reason for complaining when he is condemned.

There are certain things about any man that others can see and there are certain things that can be known only if the man reveals them himself. I can look at you and know the color of your hair, your approximate height, your approximate weight, *etc.* But until I am told I cannot know a great many other things, and many of these things must be revealed by you.

Paul here in Romans tells us that there are certain things that can be told about God by everyone without that leading to a personal knowledge of Him. But these two things are important and should put one in the frame of mind that would bring God to the point of revealing other things about Himself that would lead to salvation. The two things are often translated "His everlasting power and divinity". The New International Version makes these more easily understood by translating "His eternal power and divine nature."

There are, of course, many millions of people who look at the things that show God's eternal power and divine nature without ever admitting to themselves that they do show those things. There are many reasons for this, but all of them lead to the lake of fire. Some hate the idea of there being a higher power so much that they refuse to arrive at the logical result of comparing things that are made. They remind me of the great scientist who, making a speech to a gathering of England's greatest scientists in 1944, stated that every theory of evolution that had ever been put forth had scientifically been proved impossible but then added, "But since the alternative, divine creation, is clearly incredible, we hold to evolution." Others have been misled by one of the many false ideas Satan puts out to keep their eyes blinded. But whatever the reason, they do not arrive at the logical result of looking at things around them that could not be so if there were not a higher power to arrange them. I like very much the story Whittaker Chambers told in his fine book *Witness* about the moment he ceased to be a communist. He was playing with his first-born child. Suddenly, as he looked down the baby's ear, he realized that the tremendous complication of the way the ear is put together to make it possible to translate air waves into sounds is so complicated that there had to be a planner for this; it simply could not have come about by materialistic chance of evolution. A communist is, of course, first an atheist and his baby's ear made him realize he could no longer be an atheist.

There are countless other things in nature that could not be possible without that "eternal power and divine nature" that is required to bring them to pass, but I will not drive the point home since if you want to know the truth you can find them for yourselves. And if you will not to believe, no amount of evidence would convince you. So, instead, let us think for a moment about that other point I said I want to make: All of this puts you without excuse. Refusing to recognize that this complicated universe had to have a designer does not excuse you from the need of believing on Him. It simply takes away from you the great benefit that comes from knowing Him. And the result can well be, as Paul describes in verses 21 through 23, that you create a form of God for yourself and therefore will be cast off and allowed to go on in foolishness. Knowledge creates responsibility and the knowledge we are talking of is available to every one who has enough intelligence to read these words. Blindness of eyes would not excuse you, for you can still "see" the requirement of an architect for it all. Deafness obviously would not change matters. Your location, your background, nor any other thing can excuse you, for God arranged these things thus "so that men are without excuse." Believe Him and seek to know Him. Then He can reveal to you the many things of His nature, or His love, or His concern for you, that natural objects can not reveal to you. He put you without excuse, but He also supplied all that is needed for you to spend eternity with Him. Let Him have His way with you.

Gordon Linscott is a guidance counselor at a junior high school in Louisville.



IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

Gordon R. Linscott

"Susan! When are you going to put that typewriter away? You've left it sitting out since Friday. Surely, since we went to all the expense to get it for you, you'd think you could be considerate enough to keep the cover on it!"

Susan (not her real name) didn't say anything. She went to the typewriter, removed the sheet of paper that was in it, covered the machine and made her way to her room. As she closed the door and sat down on her bed, she felt tears come in her eyes. Three days she had left the sheet in the typewriter, and her parents hadn't looked at it— or if they had, they hadn't said anything about it. Susan looked at the sheet once again and silently read ...

A Last Cry For Help

Mom? Dad?
Is anyone there?
I made a "D" in Biology
Oh, why should you care
Your appointments, your job,
The bills you must pay
I can't tell you my problems
I'd just be in the way
You never listen to me
Just occasionally hear
You don't know any of my dreams
My hopes or fears
If just once you would hold me
And show me your care
Maybe a shoulder to cry on
A friend always there
You're too busy, though
To hear what I say
I need to be loved
But you just turn away
If you would only realize
That I'm a person too

It would be a lot easier
To say "I love You"
There's still so much more
That I want to say
Maybe someday we'll talk
Before I go away

Note: This is Susan's own work, exactly as she wrote it, punctuation and all.

Over a period of many months, Susan had saved clippings about parent-child relationships from "Dear Abby" and other sources. She left them lying around in conspicuous places—for her parents to find—until one day they got after her for "always cluttering up the house with newspaper clippings."

Brent and Brenda (not their real names) are rather ordinary parents. They are active—very active—church members. Both of them work. Susan is their only child, and they love her very much (after all, didn't they buy her a typewriter for Christmas?). They have the wisdom not to turn her loose in a car of her own, but even without a car she has more than most sixteen-year olds. Brent and Brenda are glad that they can provide for Susan many of the things they never had when they were growing up. They are especially glad that Susan is a good girl, never headstrong or rebellious. Once in a while there's a burst of temper that her parents can't understand, but before long she's meek little Susan again.

HOW SUSAN SEES LIFE

Susan's parents live in a world apart from her. She can't catch their attention even with a D in Biology. They are preoccupied with the demands of making a living. Susan feels guilty; she thinks that she gets in their way. But she yearns to be loved, to be treated as a person, to be made a part of their world. Since it seems that there is little chance of this, she weighs the possibility of "going away"—suicide??

Susan is not unusual (or abnormal). She—and other children—base their judgment of others on what they see. Parents, meanwhile, intend to be seen in quite a different light. On both sides there is always a possibility of misinterpreting a communication, but only the parents are in a position to take the initiative in solving the problem.

Why don't more parents take the initiative in solving family problems? First, they can't believe that a problem exists. Consider Brent and Brenda—there's nothing wrong with Susan. Really, they cannot see that there is a problem there. I run into this several times a day. I witnessed a preacher's son (Church of Christ) attempt suicide a good long while after his parents had been warned. I know a Church of Christ girl—a model student—who ran away from home. These things happen in the best of families. When it does happen, parents shake their heads in disbelief; they have never explored the child's side of the "generation gap."

TAKE TIME TO LISTEN

Solomon gives us a keen insight into human nature in action in communication. "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own opinion" (Prov. 18:2). Most of us would reject the "fool" label, but the description is a near-perfect fit. How often, in conversation, have I found myself not listening but mentally preparing an answer to throw in at the earliest possible moment! Our natural bent is not to "delight in understanding" the other person and his problems, complaints, etc. Much less is this true if it is a matter of understanding a teen-ager, and one of our own children at that! However, we will never even know the youngster's problems—much less understand them—if we do not first turn off the "revealing of our own opinion."

There is a wider application here. Consider the young people from the early teens on up; in some churches they feel they have no significant role. No one seems to delight in understanding them. Everyone appears ready to "reveal their opinions" to them, and they've had enough of this at home.

I am not suggesting that we go back to the "child-worship" which was so common for so long. Listening to our young people does not mean that we follow (or grant) their whims and desires. It does mean that we have time for them, time to talk about the things in life that really matter.

"My old man doesn't care what I do. He doesn't care what happens to me," one youngster said. "... what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline ... you are bastards and not sons" (Heb. 12:7, 8). Children feel this whether or not they reason it through. They prefer punishment to being ignored. At least they know that they are noticed and they belong. Susanna Wesley, mother of 19 or 20, spent one hour each week with one child alone, the rest of the family shut out. No child of hers could ever say, "You never listen to me."

Just a little time for listening—carved out of an already impossible schedule—may very well forestall the spending of countless longer hours with counselors, clinics, and courts. A little self-discipline applied to the ears seems painful for the moment; "later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness ..." And what joy!

Alex Wilson is a missionary on furlough from the Philippines.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY: CRISIS OR PROCESS?

Compiled by Alex Wilson



"Six days after my conversion I became a mature Christian," claimed a youthful believer several years ago. What a sad misunderstanding he showed of what maturity is and how it is achieved.

Various Christians disagree about the entire subject of growth and maturity. Some, like the new convert just mentioned, expect full grown all in one big spurt—*instant maturity*. John Stott comments, "They are looking for a second crisis comparable to the new birth, and are hoping that by it God will accomplish for them suddenly what He has ordained will grow gradually." The result of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives is called "fruit", and fruit ripens over a period of time—not overnight.

A second error is worse than the first. It is smug selfcontentment, with no concern for maturity. Some folks are satisfied to stay as they are, so long as they'll get to heaven (they hope). They are petrified saints. Their motto is, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." They don't want to grow, for growth means change. Such outgrowing of old attitudes and habits does not interest them in the least. Are such people really saved? Only God knows!

Far distant from these two extremes lies the true path of holiness. It is the way of *hunger* of heart, of deep *yearning* after the Lord Himself, of forgetting what is behind and *pressing on* toward the goal (Matt. 5:6 & Psa. 106:9; Psa 42:1, 2 & 63:1; Phil. 3:12-14). It means *growing* in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and *abounding more and more* in love (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:1,10).

Let's examine the important question briefly mentioned already. After a person is saved, should he then *seek some kind of crisis experience* in addition to the justification and new birth he has received? The following quotations provide much food for thought on this recurring question.

Various Types of Crisis Experiences

Keneth Prior, in a balanced book entitled *The Way of Holiness* (128 pages; published by Inter Varsity Press), clarifies the problem for us. The following excerpts are direct quotations from the chapter called "Crises on the Way":

The Christian life normally makes progress by steady growth, and this is what Scripture encourages us to expect. What then do we make of the Christian who claims to have experienced a sudden and decisive change subsequent to his conversion, which has resulted in his Christian life being victorious to a far greater degree than before?

An experience of this kind is not necessarily incompatible with the steady growth which, as we saw, is a prominent feature of the Christian life. It is feasible that there will be times in a Christian's life when he will make more progress than at other times . . . What can be misleading, however, is to assume such an experience to be a normal part of every Christian's life, and think that any Christian who has not had it ought to seek it . . .

Some examples of 'Second Blessing': a) **Recovery from Backsliding.** It is not surprising that some outstanding experiences in Christian life are a recovery from backsliding. The Holy Spirit is grieved by sin (Eph. 4:30) and ceases to fill the backslider. Repentance is then the only road to recovery. If the members of the church at Ephesus heeded the charge, 'You have lost your first love' (Rev. 2:4), this would have involved them in a decisive turning-point in their Christian lives—a crisis experience.

b) **A Crisis of Discovery.** Sometimes great blessings attend the discovery of a neglected truth. For example, many Christians look back warmly on their discovery of the sovereignty of God and other truths connected with it. Verses like 'You did not choose me, but I chose you' (Jn. 15:16) have filled them with a sense of wonder at the grace of God, that He should take the initiative in bringing them to salvation in Christ.

c) **An Awareness of the Cost of Discipleship.** Many who grow up in Christian homes find it easy to make a Christian profession, perhaps less costly than resisting the gospel! So for a time the young Christian is oblivious to some of the issues of bearing the cross. Then he goes into the world where living for Christ is no longer the easy thing it was in the shelter of his Christian home. The matter of discipleship now must be faced, and such an experience can involve a real crisis.

d) **Full Assurance.** There is a difference between a faith which is enough for salvation, and that which is sufficient for full assurance. Not every Christian has the latter. It is for this that we are to seek diligently (Heb. 6:11).

e) **Crises of Guidance.** A young person's discovery of God's will for his life and his appropriate reaction can be a decisive step, with far-reaching effects in the quality of his life.

How then shall we summarize all this? That Christians do have crises no one can deny. They can often be beneficial. But we should not err by insisting that every Christian needs a crisis experience following salvation. Then, too, observe the way these crises vary. We have mentioned only a few. (End of excerpts from Prior.)

The 3-fold Function of Scripture

James Philip's booklet, *Christian Maturity* (published by InterVarsity Press), gives additional insights that will help us. Ponder these quotations:

According to the Scriptures, conversion and consecration are simultaneous, in the sense that no conversion ever really takes place that does not involve a true consecration to Christ. One does not give part of one's allegiance to Christ at conversion, then at a later stage make a complete surrender to Him, called consecration. One does not enter into the kingdom at all except on terms of unconditional surrender. This, in fact, is what conversion means.

But—and this is important—a believer may lose the keen edge of his consecration and fall away from that attitude to total commitment which marked his entrance into the kingdom of God. If he does so, then a new consecration is necessary, and sometimes this is quite as clear-cut and decisive as a conversion

experience—a crisis indeed. But it is necessary to be clear about what has happened. It is not an advantage to another stage of experience so much as a return to the previous one. A great deal depends on realizing this. For obviously, if a believer does not fall away from his first consecration, but follows on to know the Lord ever more deeply, he does not require to renew it again (except in so far as our consecration is renewed day by day and hour by hour, which is not the point at issue here).

Now the ministry of the Word may be said to have a threefold function. It can be (1) illuminative, in that it enlightens the minds of those who are ignorant or confused in their understanding of the gospel. It can be (2) therapeutic, in that it is medicine for those who are spiritually sick. It can be (3) edifying, in that it provides food for those who are spiritually healthy and growing in the spiritual life. It is certainly true that spiritual illumination can take place suddenly. "I see it now," a man may cry, as the truth comes home to him with all the force of a new revelation, and from that point onwards there is a marked difference in his life. A crisis has come, so to speak, in his spiritual thinking.

It is true in the same way that a crisis can take place when the action of the Word on a man's soul is therapeutic, in the sense that it comes to convict and challenge him concerning things that ought not to be in his life. The pressure of the Word and Spirit of God may be such that a crisis—involving a specific thing or person—is precipitated in his heart. Jesus said: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." That is crisis enough in the believer's experience, in that it demands drastic action to put matters right. Similarly, in the sphere of medicine, appendicitis is a "crisis" requiring immediate surgical intervention to safeguard life and health. But this drastic "crisis" requiring immediate surgical intervention to safeguard life and health. But this drastic "crisis-action" in the spiritual realm is therapeutic, and in one very important sense only preparatory to the real business of Christian growth. It removes the hindrance to growth, and makes it possible, but it is not the growth itself, just as surgery removes the cause of illness and makes possible better health in the future.

If a man undergoes a crisis in his spiritual experience, this is likely to be what has happened to him. We should be glad, of course; but we must not misunderstand or misinterpret it, or confuse it to mean that spiritually speaking he has "arrived". On the contrary, he has only now set out on the real road of advance. Now he can begin to grow, when the hindrances have been removed. But to insist, as is sometimes done, that every believer must have a crisis experience before he can know the fullness of God in his life, is as misleading and erroneous as to say that everyone must have his appendix removed before true health is possible. A man who has not slipped back from his first consecration, but has progressed steadily in the spiritual life, does not need the therapy of the Word in this sense, but its nourishment, to build him up and lead him on to maturity. The therapy of the Word merely brings us to the point where new life and development are possible, and this is the beginning, not the goal, of true spiritual life.

Real, effectual Christian experience, it must be insisted, does not begin properly until the believer comes to the obedience of faith in terms of total consecration to Christ. This needs to be underlined in a time when it is all too readily assumed and taught that Christians should be striving towards consecration of life as an ideal or goal, instead of beginning from it as a base, as did all the heroes of faith whose lives are recorded in the Scriptures. Abraham did not aspire to obedience; he began with it (Heb. 11:8), and nothing else can explain the vitality of his walk with God. From the outset Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself," and this alone accounts for the undeviating faithfulness of his witness throughout a long and testing experience. (End of quotation from Philip.)

George Mueller's Experience

One of the outstanding Christians of all time was George Mueller.

He was a man of great faith and prayerfulness, who for decades ran an orphanage in England. Every believer should read his biography. After he reached ninety years, he gave the following testimony. Evaluate it in the light of the principles we have studied:

I was converted in 1825 but I only came into the full surrender of my heart four years later. It was then that my love for money was taken away, and my love for position and for worldly pleasures. God, God alone became my portion: I found my all in all in Him. And by God's grace this condition has remained and has made me an exceedingly happy man. I read a little of the Bible before, but preferred other books. But since that time God has wonderfully revealed Himself to me and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being.

God showed me that His Word alone is to be our standard in spiritual things, and that it can only be explained by the Holy Spirit—that He is the Teacher of His people. The work of the Holy Spirit I had not understood in my experience before that time. Understanding that point especially had a great effect on me. The first evening that I shut myself into my room to pray and meditate over the Bible I learned more in a few hours than I had learned in the previous several months. But the particular difference was that I received real strength in my soul as a result of doing this. The change was so great that it was like a second conversion.

Our generous Father can give enriching and exciting "second blessings"—like Mueller's, perhaps—to people today, when He so chooses. Maybe *you* need one! He knows our needs and how to meet them. But not just a "second blessing"; He delights in imparting third and fourth blessings, and twentieth, and one hundredth as well. His mercies are new *every morning*.

But let's remember He uses endless variety. He never takes a cookie-cutter approach. He is not mass-producing Christians on an assembly-line. He is a creative artist who handcrafts each product individually. Yet His goal for us all is the same: to make us holy.

John Larry Miles, a member of the Portland Avenue congregation, is working in Cincinnati and taking classes at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.



Reflections On The Restoration Movement

Larry Miles

Alexander Campbell: The Sage of Bethany, 1837-1866.

In this essay we are going to deal with many events. The events covered will take us from 1837 to 1866. In 1837 the cause that the Restoration Pioneer loved so dearly, that of Biblical Unity based upon the New Testament, was somewhat fulfilled. There were congregations all over the United States. They numbered in the tens of

thousands. The events that we are going to talk about start in 1837 with Alexander Campbell's debate with the Roman Catholic Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1837 to his death in Bethany, West Virginia in 1866.

The debate that he held with Purcell was the second one that was held in Cincinnati, the other being the one with Robert Owen the infidel in Cincinnati in 1829. Concerning the background of this debate, Dr. Earl Irvin West wrote these words in his book *The Search For The Ancient Order*:

Campbell spoke before the College of Teachers at Cincinnati. This was really an association of those who either were teachers or had been. The group met on October 3, and Dr. Joshua L. Wilson spoke, recommending the Bible as a universal text-book. In a subsequent lecture, Bishop Purcell of the Roman Catholic diocese in the city spoke and denied this. Campbell spoke on 'Moral Culture', connecting the rapid march of modern improvement with the Spirit of inquiry produced by the Protestant Reformation. Purcell took exception, saying the Protestant Reformation was the cause of all the infidelity in the world. Campbell told Purcell if he wished a discussion, that he, Campbell, was prepared. . . . The debate began on Friday night, January 13, 1837.

Robert Richardson, in *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, gives us the seven propositions that were to be discussed. They were as follows:

(1) The Roman Catholic institution, sometimes called the Holy Apostolic Church, is not now nor was she ever catholic, apostolic or holy; but is a sect in the fair import of that word, older than any other sect now existing; not the 'mother and mistress of all churches,' but an apostasy from the only true, apostolic and catholic Church of Christ.

(2) Her notion of apostolic succession is without any foundation in the Bible, in reason or in fact; an imposition of the most injurious consequences, built upon unscriptural and anti-scriptural traditions, resting wholly upon the opinions of interested and fallible men.

(3) She is not uniform in her faith or united in her members, but mutable and fallible as any other sect of philosophy or religion—Jewish, Turkish or Christian—a confederation of sects under a politico-ecclesiastic head.

(4) She is the Babylon of John, the Man of Sin of Paul, and the Empire of the Youngest Horn of Daniel's sea monster.

(5) Her notions of purgatory, indulgences, auricular confession, remission of sins, transubstantiation, supererogation, etc., essential elements of her system, are immoral in their tendency and injurious to the well-being of society, religious and political.

(6) Notwithstanding her pretensions to have given us the Bible and faith in it, we are perfectly independent of her for our knowledge of that book and its evidences of a divine original.

(7) The Roman Catholic religion, if infallible and unseceptible of reformation, as alleged, is essentially anti-American, being opposed to the genius of all free institutions and positively subversive of them, opposing the general reading of the scriptures and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the whole community, so essential to liberty and the permanency of good government.

Considering the aftermath of the debate James DeForest Murch has this to say in *Christians Only*,

The debate with Bishop Purcell served to awaken a considerable degree of sympathy and good will toward Campbell, since Protestants in general were

made to realize that the man they had mistaken for a foe was in reality a defender of the great truths and doctrines they cherished in common.

Alexander Campbell had always had a place in his heart for education. We remember that he started, in his home, Buffalo Seminary. In 1840, there was established a college that is still around today serving the Disciples of Christ. Alexander Campbell received a charter for the college from the State of Virginia and in 1840 Bethany College was established in Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia). Campbell was elected President by the board of trustees. The students arrived on October 21, 1841. The faculty consisted of the following men: A. F. Ross, Robert Richardson, W. K. Pendleton, and Alexander Campbell.

In 1843, Alexander Campbell held the last of his five major debates. The Presbyterians in Kentucky had lost a lot of members due to the Walker and McCalla debates. They wanted to try to regain some of the prestige that they lost so they approached Campbell for another debate. This was to be held in Lexington, Kentucky with N. L. Rice as the opponent. The Moderator was Henry Clay. The theme to be discussed centered on the topics of Baptism and on the Holy Spirit. Campbell as a result of the debate baptized many people including a Lutheran minister in the city.

On Saturday, November 9, 1844, death came to Barton W. Stone. The editor of the *Christian Messenger* died in Hannibal, Missouri. Stone had spent over forty years preaching the Gospel. He was buried first at Hannibal, Missouri, then buried at Jacksonville, Illinois where Stone spent last years of his life. Then the body was moved to Cane Ridge, Kentucky where his remains lie to this day. The first of the Big Four of the Restoration Movement had gone to meet the Lord of Glory.

The next event that we want to talk about is the founding of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849. This convention met in Cincinnati, Ohio and Alexander Campbell was elected President. He remained President for the rest of his life. The idea of a missionary society was not shared by all the brotherhood. There were some who felt that it was anti-scriptural. The first missionary sent out was Dr. & Mrs. J. T. Barclay, who sailed to Jerusalem in 1850. This mission was not as successful as was hoped. The ACMS lasted until 1919 when the United Christian Missionary Society was organized. Although there were some conservatives among the membership of the ACMS, the ACMS is remembered as being affiliated with the "liberal" element in the brotherhood, those in later years identified with Isaac Errett and the *Christian Standard*. We want to bring out the fact that the *Standard* as we know it today, under the editorship of Sam Stone, is not affiliated with the Disciples of Christ but rather with the conservative Independent Christian Churches (the instrumental brethren).

There died in 1854 a great man of God. Thomas Campbell, who 47 years earlier had left his native Ireland to come to America,

went to meet the Lord he served. He had for those years been dedicated to seeking after the Ancient Order. His was a labor of love for the Master. Dr. Richardson writes these words in *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*,

On the 4th of January, 1854, Thomas Campbell terminated at Bethany his long life of faithful labor. Until he was about eighty-three years of age he had continued his custom of itinerating among the churches, which were always happy to welcome the venerable teacher, who was universally recognized as the living impersonation of all the Christian graces.

He lived to be nearly 91 years of age, dying at Alexander's home. He is buried in "God's Acre", the Campbell family cemetery. To show how much Thomas Campbell was loved and respected by both family and the botherhood, we want to quote from a letter Alexander Campbell wrote shortly after his father's death. Richardson, in *Memoirs*, gives us the content.

BETHANY, VIRGINIA, January 24, 1854

BROTHER DUNGAN:

MY DEAR SIR: Health, peace and prosperity to thee and thine! I presume that you may have already heard that my father Thomas Campbell has joined the Church above and entered into rest, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Yes, he has been introduced to Abraham, Issac and Jacob, and to all the spirits of just men made perfect, of which I have no more reason to doubt than I have that he has vacated the family and the church at Bethany. What a balm for all our wounds! 'Say to the righteous that it will be well with him.' I never knew a man, in all my acquaintance with men, of whom it could have been said with more assurance that he 'walked with God.' Such was the even tenor of his path, not for a few years, but a period as far back as my memory reaches; and that is on the other half of half a century.

Of the Big Four, only Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott remained to preach the Everlasting Gospel.

Walter Scott had spent the last 40 years as a co-worker of Alexander Campbell. He had been a teacher, a preacher and an editor. His final ministry was at Mayslick, Kentucky. There he died April 23, 1861. Now only Alexander Campbell remained. The years of the Civil War were next. At the beginning of 1865 Campbell gave up the editorship of the *Millenial Harbinger* to W. K. Pendleton, who had twice been his son-in-law. On March 4, 1866, he died at his home in Bethany. Concerning his death Murch has this to say in *Christians Only*,

In Campbell, The Disciples of Christ lost their most cherished and capable leader. Until he was 70 years of age, he continued to visit the churches and the conventions and to write voluminously. In his latter years he retired to his home in Bethany. Here he continued to meet his friends and the stream of visitors who came from all over the nation to confer with him. In December, 1865, he preached his final sermon. On February 22, 1866, he made his last public appearance. His last illness and death were characterized by the same calm confidence in God and humble reliance on the divine Redeemer that he demonstrated throughout his life.

In the next few months we will be dealing with the second generation of the Restoration Movement. This study will focus on the latter half of the 19th century. Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

DEAD FLIES

Harry Foster in *Toward the Mark*, Vol. 6.

“Dead flies cause the ointment of the perfumer to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly outweigh wisdom and honor” (Eccl. 10:1).

Solomon's Book of Ecclesiastes is full of worldly wisdom, always helpful, and sometimes very penetrating. But we remember that its writer was a man who received special wisdom from God, so we must regard this verse not merely as a pungent comment on human life, but as an expression of a divine spiritual truth.

The picture is a simple one. The perfumer, or apothecary, gathering together his precious oil and his various costly ingredients, weighing and measuring them and skillfully blending them together, is able to produce something delightfully refreshing and fragrant. In a moment of unwatchfulness, he allows one or two flies to kill themselves by getting mixed up in the confection. Being of a particularly unsavory species, although they are quite small, these flies introduce a corrupting influence which takes away all the value of this attractive scent and makes the ointment to be so unpleasant as to be objectionable.

The moral comment is that any amount of wisdom and honor can be marred by a little foolishness. Indeed the more wisdom and honor there is, the more refined and costly the scent, the more damage is done by even a little folly. The spiritual commentary is this: There is an ointment being compounded by the great divine Apothecary; the whole Bible is filled with references to this fragrance and its meaning. In the early wilderness days, in the instructions concerning the tabernacle, men were commanded by God to produce an anointing oil of unique fragrance, with a sweetness that none must try to imitate, which was to represent the indescribable fragrance of our Saviour. Right through the Bible this matter of sweet scent is brought before us as a reminder of the beauty of Christ's character. The very next book to Ecclesiastes is Solomon's Song of Songs, which speaks frequently of ointments, and opens with this testimony concerning the Lord: “Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance; Thy name is as ointment poured forth” (ch. 1:3). The sweet ointment which the Father has prepared is the beautiful character of His Son Jesus Christ.

In the Gospels we are told of the feast which was made for Jesus after the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and concerning the costly ointment of spikenard which Mary there offered it is said that “the house was filled with the fragrance” (John 12:3). This was symbolic of Christ Himself, and in the Epistles we find the same thought transferred to His people, for the apostle was able to say, “We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God,” who makes that fragrance known through us “in every place” (2 Cor. 2:14, 15). This

is a beautiful thought and it should be a great encouragement to us, as we find ourselves in the hands of the great Perfumer. We are not expected to produce the fragrance by our own efforts; indeed according to the Old Testament any attempt at mere imitation will only result in death. It is vain to try to copy Christlikeness; we cannot produce it by any human effort. We are assured, though, that if we truly belong to Christ and follow Him, if salvation is a vital experience, then Christ is in us and the spiritual ointment is present. The sweetness and fragrance are received when Christ is received, and it is His scent and owes nothing to natural efforts. In all humility the apostle was able to declare that we *are* a sweet savor of Christ.

Alas! the most skillful perfumer with his most costly ingredients can find his work hindered and thwarted because of the presence of "dead flies." Flies have a way of seeming to come from nowhere; they are so quick that they are often present when least expected. It may seem that such small creatures cannot have much effect on a large preparation of ointment, but clearly they can, and in the spiritual realm it is certain that just a little element of corruption can spoil the fragrance, displacing it by what is unsavory.

Here, then, is a practical lesson from one of the most practical of the Bible books. It is as though the Lord says: "I have committed to your life, as a believer, the most beautiful fragrance. There is no need for you to be yearning and planning, praying and studying, in an effort to produce it. It is not man-made at all. I have made it and give it freely to you. Christ is in you and you are therefore a sweet savor of Christ to Me. Beware, then, of the "dead flies," elements of corruption which can subtly spoil this gracious purpose of Mine in your lives."

Each of us may ask ourselves just what might be the dead flies which mar the fragrance of our testimony. Speaking generally, everything corrupt can be included under his head of "flies"; anything of sin, however small, can spoil the delicacy of our fellowship with God. In our world corruption flies around us all the time, but what we have to watch is the entry of this intrusion into the purity of our spiritual experience. What are the most common faults which threaten the fragrance of Christ in us? Let us single out a few of our most common dangers.

1. Self-Importance

I suggest that we begin with the dead fly of self-importance. Just a little conceit on our part and the fragrance somehow disappears, though nobody knows just why this has happened. What should be so attractive becomes faintly distasteful and all because of the intrusion of self. We can easily explain away this fault, for self-importance can masquerade under pious descriptions of "*my* ministry" or "*my* responsibilities" or other expressions which act as a cloak to our pride and justify us in our attitude. It is not the name that matters, though, but the dead fly, and whatever pious name we give to self-importance it still makes the ointment of grace to have a bad smell.

Self-importance manifests itself in various and sometimes in apparently opposite ways. You can be determined to have prominence or you can be hurt because you are not taken notice of. I think of two men who were unexpectedly called to the throne of Israel. The first, Saul, began with an appearance of humility while the other, David, proved truly humble. In both cases they could not be found when they were first called. Saul was deliberately hiding, so that when he was brought forward to be proclaimed king he had about him an air of reluctance which subsequent history proved to be unreal. David, for his part, was simply caring for the sheep and was overlooked by his father in this matter of the selection of a king. But the Lord's eye was upon him and Samuel's inquiries eventually discovered him. He too had to be sought out, and what a difference there proved to be between him and Saul. David was not self-conscious at all. He neither came forward nor did he hide; he just gave himself to the humble work of a shepherd. And what a fragrance there was about the life of David from those early days and right through to the end!

2. A Critical Spirit

Another "fly" which can rob life of its sweetness is the spirit of criticism. This can act as just a small element of corruption which robs the atmosphere of what should be delicate fragrance. So easily does a little unkindness or destructive criticism come in, like a fly. And even if it does no harm to the one concerned, it sours our own inner life.

It frequently happens that what could have been a lovely atmosphere of fellowship in the fragrance of Christ can be spoiled by a little thoughtless criticism. So perverse are our hearts that, even in the midst of divine mercies, we tend to adopt a superior attitude to others, blaming them because they do not appear to have the favors which God is showing us. The Lord blesses us. He wonderfully answers our prayers in providing for our needs. But if we are not careful we begin to look down on others whose experience is less sensational, as though there were some merit in us which produced the happy results. So quickly do the flies of criticism pollute what should be the delicate fragrance of pure praise to God. If it is true that the Lord finds a pleasant scent where brethren "dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133:1), then how sadly He is deprived of that delight when they despise or denigrate one another, as alas, they not infrequently do.

3. Impatience

We imagine that the fragrance of the holy ointment was meant to convey a hint of the lovely sweetness of the atmosphere of heaven. A main feature of that atmosphere is surely divine peace. Quiet serenity and delicate perfume go well together. Christ carried this about with Him wherever He went. We are told that He is the same now and always will be the same as He was when here upon the earth (Heb. 13:8), which means that even when He was here among the unsavory conditions of the world He carried with

Him the beautiful scent of a serene spirit. One "dead fly" of impatience would have spoiled that loveliness, but none was ever found in Him.

We regret that this is one of our common failings. We so soon lose patience with people, with ourselves, and even with God. Only by constant appropriation of that divine love which "suffers long and is kind" can we hope to be a sweet savor of Christ unto God. The whole point of this verse in Ecclesiastes seems to be that it is the apparently insignificant ingredient which nullifies the Perfumer's labors, in which connection it may be well to remember that we tend to be indulgent with ourselves over this matter of impatience, as though it were of little or no importance. Yet we agree that there are few more fragrant experiences than to encounter a Christian who is graciously patient under trial. What is their secret? What was Christ's secret? Perhaps we get a hint of it in His simple statement: "My Father . . . is greater than all" (John 10:29). The one who is governed by that conviction will never harbor the dead fly of impatience.

4. Unbelief

Perhaps unbelief includes all other faults. It certainly deprives God of enjoying the sweet scent of Christ in us. Like the fly it may seem very small, and it is certainly most elusive. It is as difficult to get hold of and deal with as any fly, but it must be dealt with if the fragrance of Christ is not to be driven from our lives. Unbelief keeps us from action or drives us into carnal action; it can keep us from praying or even urge us to handle affairs ourselves instead of waiting for God to answer our prayers. It can make us afraid to venture on the Lord or it can make us rush in and take things out of His hands. It is as unpredictable as a fly and—like the flies of which Solomon wrote—it robs life of the fragrance of Christ which characterizes the true believer.

It is interesting to note that Beelzebub means "prince of flies." Unquestionably it is he who labors night and day to move us from the ground of simple trustfulness to reactions of unbelief; and this is not surprising, for he is the sworn enemy of Christ and all that speaks of Him. The sad truth is that when we allow unbelief to settle in our hearts, then the beautiful perfume of what Christ is gives place to the unwholesome evidence of our natural life. In this way God is robbed of the pleasure which He could and should have from us, for the fragrance is first of all for Him and then made available to others. How we need the Lord to help our unbelief!

In conclusion, we can only repeat Paul's words: "We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God." None but the Redeemer Apothecary could ever make such a miraculous ointment as that. The very idea provides us with a new inspiration to be rid of the dead flies which can subtly spoil God's handiwork in us. All Christ's garments smell of myrrh, and aloe, and cassia, "out of the ivory palaces" (Psa. 45:8). Let us so abide in Him that at least a trace of the fragrance may be on our garments too.

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht is a writer, and wife of Bro. Paul J. Knecht, a deacon of the Portland Avenue congregation in Louisville.

WAIT AND WALK

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
—Matthew 12:37

Many religious bodies today resort to sports and various other social attractions if they would keep their members from falling away to, and draw others out of, the world. It seems better to them to compromise than to lose those who would still cling to the Lord at the same time their hearts yearn for the world and its borderline pleasures. If the church does not go far enough in that direction to satisfy, the disgruntled ones may drift back into the world completely. Those however who really desire to please the Lord may flit from church to church until they find one exciting enough to make them feel that their need is satisfied, their longing fulfilled.

These latter may even leave the true church, unwittingly, for lack of ability to identify it, since excitement, which *could be* only a stirring of fleshly emotions, is not necessarily a mark of the true church of the living God. The fact that people leave the church is no proof that it is not the Lord's church. It may indicate the exact opposite. When the apostle Paul was taken, a prisoner, to Rome he was allowed to live by himself with the soldier that guarded him. After three days he called together chief men of the Jews, explained how he came to be there and ended by saying, "Because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." And they said unto him, "We neither received letters from Judaea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." (Acts 28:16-22). We need not be discouraged because the church, we belong to, which and with whom we serve the God of our salvation, is "everywhere spoken against". As we have just seen, this fact, that this "sect" (as the Jews of Rome called it) "is everywhere spoken against" is a very important mark of its identification. Many stalwart Christians, including and since the days of the apostles, have willingly died in defense of that name and all it means. Should we be dismayed because the name we wear and to which we have a right is everywhere spoken against? Or should we change to some other name? Many have, and apparently for this very reason. God forbid that we should do such a thing! His warning is not because of opposers' speaking against His people. Rather (Luke 6:26) He warns of the opposite i. e. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets."

Satan has always worked against the blessed name of our Lord. There seems no end of unbelievers to assist him in that. But more

and more in these later days he enlists Christians. The weak and the newborn ones too often are an easy prey. They make effective assistants because they do not fully realize what they are doing, nor even whom they serve. But the distressing thing is that stronger Christians are becoming restless, looking here and there for some stimulant to their spiritual life. This is no new thing. Isaiah warned about it and gives a preventive for it (Isa. 40:30-31): "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but *they that wait for the Lord* shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." The apostle Paul also spoke of it (2 Cor. 4:1; Gal. 6:9 et al). There must have been some walking in the days of the early church; there was much exuberance, much joy in its beginning with the miracles and signs of the Lord Jesus and the apostles together with the powerful, piercing teaching and preaching that accompanied them climaxed by His crucifixion, resurrection three days later, and still later His ascension back to the Father.

There must have been a lull between the ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8-9; 2:1-4). But after the descent of the Holy Spirit the apostles went out into all the world to preach the gospel according to the "great commission" given by the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20). Those were stirring times. The apostles and their followers did a lot of running and did not grow weary. Churches were established and nourished by the apostles; many believers grew in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and spread the message wherever they went. After the days of the apostles the church flourished for a while, but gradually slowed down. Jesus had said before He went away (Matt. 16:4): "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah..." The sign of the prophet Jonah was the sign of the resurrection (Matt. 12:40) of the Lord Jesus. The miraculous signs ceased, but there was a steadfast preaching of the truth, and Jesus had prayed (John 17:20) for all those that believe on *their word*." (Emphasis mine.)

Some believe now that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) was the fulfillment of Joel 2. The language does seem to indicate that (Acts 2:16), but inasmuch as the time of that fulfillment is specifically given (Joel 2:21-27, 28) as after the Jews are back in their land "never more to be put to shame" that surely, on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, Peter was saying: "This is that Spirit that Joel spoke of" rather than "the fulfillment of the prophecy Joel uttered."

We do not like to walk. However, the church or individual Christians who can walk and keep on walking without fainting if and when the way is long and difficult, is in close touch with God. He is receiving from his Father by faith the strength he needs to keep from falling by the way. A church whose "leaders take the lead" under the Head, even Christ, preaching the truth in love, is neither dead nor dying. For "The word of God is living, and active,

and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The members of such a church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, guided by Him, can in the strength which God supplies mount up with wings as eagles—run and not be weary—walk and not faint, by the grace of our Lord, following the example of our God and Father, who with all the burdens of a world gone wrong, "fainteth not neither is weary."

Centuries ago there was high regard in many for the word of God. The following inscription was seen high up on the inside wall of a church building of those days in Europe:

He took the bread and brake it;
He was the Word and spake it;
And what the word doth make it;
This will we do and take it.

That was the sentiment of many in years gone by. Words, especially those of the highest authority in heaven and on earth are powerful. Now for a simple little illustration from our own day to show that in a minute situation, compared with the other, words are still powerful in their place. Even a child can be aware of this and benefit by it.

A three year old was left with his grandmother for an afternoon. She was to see that he got a nap but his father, to divert his mind from the main object in view, told the little fellow, "Your grandmother is tired. You put her to sleep." Grandmother, a party to the deception allowed him to lead her to the bedroom and they lay down together. The last thing she remembered was his little hand patting her gently on the shoulder. When she awoke the child's parents were standing at the foot of the bed. The child sat quietly beside her on the bed playing with a number of contraband (to him) articles. His father demanded irately of the little one, "Haven't YOU been asleep?" An imaginative person could have heard a spanking crackling in the air. But the child was imperturbed. He looked calmly into his father's eyes without a quaver and said definitely and firmly: "YOU told me 'Put Nawmaw to sleep.'" That settled it.

REPRINTS:

Words of Wisdom

"The greatest threat to the doctrinal purity of a church is not athiests who attack from without, but traitors who bore from within. In many churches there is so little doctrinal discernment that if two men of equally good appearance, education, speaking ability, and personal charm preach there and set forth diametrically opposing theologies, many people do not know the difference."

"It is not healthy to create an exaggerated youth consciousness among young believers. It is natural and right that youth should seek

the companionship of youth, but it is not natural or right for them to withdraw from normal cooperation with older believers in the Church's witness. When they do so, both lose much that is of great value and an element is introduced into the congregation that is contrary to its nature."

"If you were to ask what is the hardest task in the world you might think of some muscular feat, some acrobatic challenge, some chore to be done on the battlefield or the playing field. Actually, however, there is nothing which we find more arduous than saying, 'I was wrong.' "

(From Oakdale Messenger—January 28, 1979.)

A Full Gospel

Certain ones have taken the term, "Full Gospel," and use it to imply that they teach truth others do not. Those familiar with the term know that it suggests a certain doctrinal emphasis. Many years ago, in "Truth Advance," Bro. Stanford Chambers wrote:

"The Gospel of Christ is a 'full Gospel.' That is the Gospel which Paul preached and John and Peter. No other Gospel measures up. But our topic is an expression being heard from many men of many minds and its meaning to them is determined by some certain slant or some particular teaching given by their denomination or party. It may be 'sanctification,' or it may be 'healing,' or it may be 'tongues,' or it may be a certain form of mysticism. The Bible sets forth truth, every truth, and sets it forth in its due proportion. Its offering is a balanced spiritual ration. Declare the whole counsel of God and you embrace every truth. Of course be satisfied with nothing short of a 'full Gospel,' but man's measure of fulness may be very unreliable. 'Prove all things' by God's word, 'hold fast to that which is good.' "

(From Oakdale Messenger—January 7, 1979.)

"Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified."

". . . The church has perpetually faced the problem of the pendulum—moving in reaction from one untenable position to another.

"Our generation is no exception. The pressures are strong to get the church off course in several areas, *but paramount among them is the pressure of experientialism.* We face a tension between doctrine that doesn't produce vital experience and experience that doesn't grow out of sound doctrine . . . today the pendulum has swung heavily and dangerously toward the latter—namely, experience that hasn't grown out of sound doctrine. People are driven more by the authority of experience than by the experience of authority. . . .

". . . how different is the new experiential approach from the objective message of the apostles. The early church did not turn the world upside down by telling people about their exciting experiences, nor was the burden of their teaching concerned with telling

people how to discover the ecstasy of the spirit-filled life. The church had something infinitely larger and more weighty to preach about.

“The point is that evangelism and theology should not be centered on what has happened to the individual. Rather it should be centered on the proclamation of the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ and His work, not about you and me and our life histories. If one checks the book of Acts, he will find the focus on the character of Christ, not on the character of Christ’s followers. Obviously, we do not do away with the fact that one who is in Christ is a new creation, but that is not the heart of our testimony.” —Earl D. Radmacher
(From Rangeland Church of Christ Bulletin—February 11, 1979.)

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

George & Sophia Galanis

Athens, Greece

January 11th

We thank God for His great love toward us, that is like an ocean that fills the bottomless abyss of our heart. We praise Him for great is His faithfulness.

How the Lord blessed our work last year: One thing is true—that the field of Greece is a hard one. Satan has occupied this field for centuries and has sown a lot of fallacies and superstitions in the minds and hearts of our people. To the extent that when we approach them with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ they suspect us of being C. I. A. agents. Nevertheless our good Master, Jesus, strengthened us to work hard all year round, breaking the hard ground and sowing the good seed of the word of God.

Our monthly magazine, *Search & Believe*, proved to be a good and effective instrument to cultivate the hearts of 2,500 souls, leading them to Christ.

We have tried hard to organize Bible study circles in different places of Crete and we have had some success. We however, found out that we need to spend many weeks working hard among them. We are planning to continue our efforts this year also.

Family news: My wife’s health condition continues to be fragile. She suffers of hormonal disturbances and this causes her a lot of other psychological problems. She needs courage and a great deal of hope in the Lord. Would you please pray for her and me?

Winston & Irene Allen

Eagle River, Alaska

January

Our days are very short now and there are many hours of darkness. This is symbolical of the growing spiritual darkness where,

by the grace of God, we seek to be lights in a dark place. Comparatively few people manifest any real interest in the Written Word and the Living Word. Again and again we experience coldness and personal rejection by neighbors who reject the Christ as Savior and as Lord.

Tuesday morning two young girls (about eleven years of age) from broken homes were receiving help and counsel from Irene. They were not in school because they are taking correspondence courses. (Their parents had taken them out of public school because of increasing immoral, anti-Christian problems.)

Tuesday evening we had a Bible class in the mobile home. Though the number was few, there was good interest and participation. A young married couple, Skip and Darla Soto, started coming to the meetings about two months ago and they seldom miss.

As stated in the last "Alaska Messenger", we now sponsor the "Words of Life" program each Sunday at 9 p.m. over a new FM radio station in Anchorage.

W. L. Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

February 2nd

Today, February 2nd, 1979 marks 50 years since we came to Africa to bring the message of God's SALVATION to a people who could neither read nor write, and who knew nothing of the risen Lord.

Many changes have taken place during these 50 years. When we came the African, both men and women wore nothing but loin clothes made of animal skins. The women wore brass bangles on their arms and ankles with their hair plated with red ochre and their upper front teeth missing. These had been removed in a ceremony when they had reached the age of puberty.

All this is now gone. Western civilization is now the order of the day. Today many of the Africans wear as good or better clothes than the missionary. Many drive far better automobiles. There is now a big change over from the African mother carrying her baby on her back. Many now use "baby buggies".

The saddest change of all though is the change of the African Life. Politics and pleasure come before God. An African that I have known for 35 years said to me recently that, "Today the African puts politics first, pleasure second and God third." Last Sunday a half million Africans attended a big "Political Meeting" in the Highfield Township. Churches are empty!

We are glad that we started work amongst the European people some years ago. This work has been very rewarding. During the month of January twenty people have responded to the invitation here at the Waterfalls church. For this, we give all PRAISE and GLORY to the Lord. Amen.

We praise and Glorify God that our daughter Ruth's operation was a successful procedure, she had the operation on the 5th of January, and was discharged on the 10th of January; now home recuperating and resting until strong enough to go back to her normal work again. And with the start of the New Year well ahead already, the . . . attendances at the small congregation I am assisting at Bokmakirrie, morning and evening, have been very encouraging indeed; even the Bible Study I conduct on Wednesday evenings is also well attended, by members and neighbors, averaging about 15 to 16.

And in the home where I am conducting the Bible Study, which is the home of parents who are Christians, and their children are not—a result of these Studies shall be one of a “turning to Christ” and give cause for rejoicing, and I am fully assured it shall be so, Lord willing.

We are planning to reach new homes, and are scheduling already, and with the lessons presented from time to time, which I use to imprint, upon the hearts of Christians, must be such that will be to the Glory of God, and bring about a full dedicated, committed life to Christ, to realize our obligation and responsibility to uphold Christ pre-eminently in our life day by day! But while concentrating on this work, I am still on the ready to be of assistance to others who may need me: in conducting gospel campaigns on request if needs be! And as the year is well ahead, we pray that it shall be a year of rededication to the extent for us all, in lands near and far, to behold and be fully aware that that “harvest is still plenteous, but the labourers are few”, and that we are to be labourers together “with God”; there is no time to idle away our time.

AT BILL AND BETTY'S

EVERY KIND OF WRONG

I went to see Pam Young this afternoon. (She's the young woman whose husband has left her and now she's expecting a baby by another man.) The baby is due in June and she was really very depressed. She seemed pleased to see me though, which I was glad about.

“How are you?” I asked, as I slipped off my coat and hung it over the banisters.

Pam shrugged. “Alright I suppose,” she said. “The Children's Officer has been very kind, although I don't feel I deserve it.”

“I wish you'd get over this guilt complex, Pam,” I said briskly. “After all, what's done is done. You can't go back. Most of us make mistakes at one time or other. We just have to learn to live with them.”

“But I've been such a fool,” Pam said quietly. “I feel I've let everyone down. The children, and the Children's Officer who gave

me that job, and you, and my other friends from the church. I've let Pete down too," she said with a catch in her voice. "He trusted me with the children. I can't think why I was such an absolute idiot." (Pete is Pam's husband who walked out on her a couple of years ago.)

"I wouldn't waste any more tears over Pete," I said briskly. "If anyone has let anyone down, I should think he tops the list. Stop punishing yourself, Pam. You were lonely and fed up and a married man was rotten enough to take advantage of it. So you're going to have a baby. It's not a pretty story I admit, but it's not the end of the world. You'll come out the other side of it, don't worry."

"You're awfully good, Bet," Pam said gratefully.

"I'm not good at all," I said, "So stop handing bouquets around."

I bought out half a pound of tea and a packet of biscuits and put them on the table.

"Special offer in the Supermarket this week," I said, "Couldn't resist them."

"They seem to have an awful lot of specials offers these days I must say," Pam said with a grin. "But thank you all the same."

It was only recently I discovered that Pam has to manage off something like \$90 a week, and that includes her Family Allowance. The Social Security people pay her rent too, and she gets Maternity Benefit now she's given up her job, but even so she has a job to make both ends meet. I felt ashamed I hadn't inquired about her circumstances before, but somehow I just didn't think.

"Have you made up your mind what you're going to do after the baby is born, Pam?" I said.

Pam shook her head. "I still think it would be better to have it adopted," she said, "but the Children's Officer said I should wait until after it's born before I decide, because I might feel differently." "Bet," Pam said, "I've been wanting to ask you. Do you think God forgives people when they've done something like me?"

"Of course he does, Pam," I said quickly. "That's one of the wonderful things about him. However bad we've been, he gives us complete forgiveness if we only ask him, so that we can start over again with an absolutely clean sheet."

"I wish I could believe that, Bet," Pam said wistfully.

"If you don't believe me, believe him," I said. "He tells you about it in the Bible. It's one of the verses I know by heart. You can find it in the little Epistle of St. John right at the end of the Bible."

"What does it say, Bet?" Pam asked.

"*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from every kind of wrong,*" I said.

Pam was quiet for a bit. "If only I could start again," she said, and there was a world of longing in her voice.

"You can, Pam," I said earnestly. "Please, please, believe that you can."

I didn't say any more just then, but I do hope Pam brings up the subject again next time I call.

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NEWS AND NOTES

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

WOODLAND BIBLE CAMP

1979 Schedule and tentative directors:

June 3 - 9	Clean up Week	
June 10 - 16	Jr. Wk. #1	H. Coultas - R. Naugle
June 17 - 23	Int. Wk. #1	E. Pound -
June 24 - 30	Sr. Wk. #1	T. Clark - N. Burks
July 1 - 7		
July 8 - 14	Family Wk.	R. Lewis, J. Rowe, J. Reintjes
July 15 - 21	Jr. Wk. #2	J. Carmichael
July 22 - 28	Int. Wk. #2	R. Hickman -
July 29 - Aug. 4	Sr. Wk. #2	B. Morrow - T. Morrow
Sept. 28 - 29 - 30	Youth Retreat	

May I again assure you that you are the winner when you come and become a part of the WOODLAND FAMILY. Come for 1979 whether as worker, staff, or camper. Come. And may I again remind you to pray for WOODLAND.

-Tooger Smith

Family Week at Woodland, July 8-14.

The evening preacher is to be Robert B. Boyd. A morning class on evangelism will be conducted by Vaughn Reeves, Jerry Carmichael and others will be working with the younger age groups. Tentatively several special groups will be represented - e.g. Teen Challenge, Friends of Israel and Operation Mobilization. A special chicken Bar-B-Q is planned for Friday evening. Arrangements can be made for a self-contained camping trailer to be set up for any who desire them. We should have the requests in by May 1, 1979. The fee is \$11.00 per day additional, as this is a private business in the area.

Others to be involved include Craig Sanborn, Orell Overman, and Leona Rhodes is to be the cook.

Jim Rowe, Jim Reintjes and I have had great pleasure planning together so far and look forward to the greatest Family Week yet. -Dick Lewis

This is the first time I've written to say thank you for the wonderful blessing of the W & W. Am especially enjoying Bro. Larry Miles' articles. -Mrs. Opal Rust

Please re-direct our copies of the Word & Work to our new address on the reverse of this card. We enjoy every issue. -J. C. Shewmaker

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