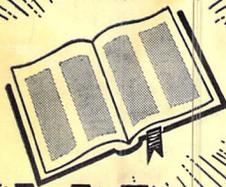
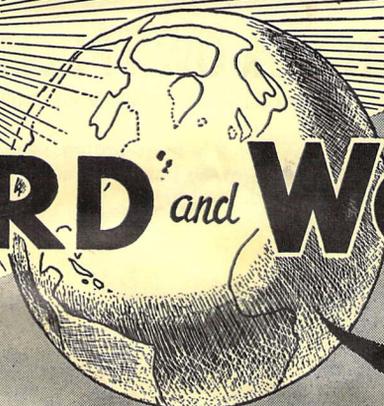


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AUGUST, 1981

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Robert Heid is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



## God's Family

W. R. H.

### "ACCORDING TO GOD'S HOLY ORDINANCE"

This weekend, the Portland Avenue Church was closely involved in three weddings, two of which were on the same day. The vows, in one form or another, contained among other promises, the promise to live together according to God's holy ordinance. This is a big order, a big promise, and one that (like some Articles of War which are read to soldiers on duty every six months) should be brought to mind occasionally for review. This is one of the advantages of married people of several years, attending the ceremonies and hearing again the charge and the vows given to and by newlyweds. We can safely say that in every divorce, at least one of the parties is *not* living according to God's holy ordinance, and perhaps neither.

### WHAT THEN IS GOD'S HOLY ORDINANCE?

Jesus, who knew the will of His Father better than anyone, quoted the Father, as follows: "Have ye not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mt. 19:4-6). This was the primary ordinance of God on this intimate relationship. It has never been revised, suspended or revoked. If we conclude that the last two sentences of this ordinance are from the lips of the Son, rather than the Father, it is no less the ordinance of God. The first portion was given to Adam and Eve at their marriage, where God the Father was officiating. It was before sin entered the world. The portion which we might credit to our Lord Jesus, was chiefly a prohibition of the twain being put "asunder," and was given at a time when "sin was as black as could be," and by the One who was bringing to lost, sinful and fallen men grace and truth.

These newly created beings, Adam and Eve, were clad only in the beauty of their Creator's handiwork. We know that of all couples they were the fairest. As the crowning creation of the Almighty, they were brand new, and totally preeminent, standing in the Edenic center of a new creation that was all "very good." Any veil or train or formal wear would have been as an attempt to "gild the lily" of God's perfect handiwork. They were physically mature but sexually novices,

which is the way of viginity and is still God's best for mankind today. One general order guided them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." No details nor time-table were given, as far as the record goes.

### SOME LATER ORDINANCES

Through the Holy Spirit, we have some other ordinances, which we also include in the scope of the marriage vow:

*"Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."* To the believer, this is the strongest deterrent to the many temptations that Satan aims at the flesh. This injunction reminds us that it is the all-seeing God who will be the one before whom we stand. Fidelity and purity are the cornerstones of honor, particularly in marriage. God is not here giving a standard that is too high for mankind. Rather, it is His firm command. It is for all—not a few who are extra good and morally-oriented in some special way (if there be any such), but it is for all, without exclusion. And it is within the grasp of all. Let no Christian say that the standard is too high.

*"Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands."* In a day that has seen the liberation(?) of women and their ascendancy into the professions and in the market place, the old idea of subjection is repugnant to many. Some women berate their men for various minor faults (actual or alleged as the case may be), and then wonder why their marriages are heading to the divorce courts. The Bible injunction of subjection does not specify to apply only when the husband is a perfect elder in the Church of God. It is to wives, all wives, of all times, and everywhere. It gives the Christian wife the opportunity to make a first step toward marital compatibility. Is not such a step a privilege indeed?

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it."* This command is fundamental, totally enjoyable and thrilling, and possible to a great extent (through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit). God does not command us to do a thing without giving the power to accomplish it. A husband who faithfully strives to keep this injunction cannot be wrong at heart, and his blest wife will gladly subjugate herself to him in love.

*"Ye husbands, dwell with your wives, according to knowledge."* The sentence continues, "Giving honor unto the woman as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life." This means deferring to her weaker stature physically, and considering her as an equal and joint-heir personally. All through the old and new testaments, we find these truths borne out, so that they have become a part of our "knowledge."

*"Defraud ye not one the other."* This plainly ordains a full and enjoyable sex-life for the Christian couple. Any interference or interruption is labeled by God as fraud. Some foolish people use sex as a weapon or some sort of leverage, to bring their spouses to terms. Others feel no desire nor responsibility to render satisfaction to their mate. Lines

(Continued on page 256.)

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

### Jesus, The Sacrifice for Our Sin

In our last article Romans 3:24 was given a translation to make it more easily understood by those who do not understand theological language. By this means, the ASV translation of "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" became "Being declared righteous without a cause on our part by the unmeritable favor of God through the buying back from the guilt and power of sin that is in Christ Jesus." Verse 25 opens with some more hard-to-understand theological language—"whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood." I have wondered many times how many readers of the Bible had any idea what "propitiation" means. The twelve letters in that English word set forth the means by which God, who is holy, could declare righteous and take into His fellowship men who are unrighteous, unholy sinners.

To get across the idea that "propitiation" sets forth, I would like to borrow Hendriksen's translation of this part of the verse: "whom God designed to be, by the shedding of his blood, a wrath-removing sacrifice, (effective) through faith." Notice his translation of the word for "propitiation"—"a wrath-removing sacrifice." The idea for this word comes from the fact that God is holy and therefore must have wrath against sin. The word "propitiation" as used here sets forth the idea that God Himself provided the sacrifice that took His wrath against sin. God laid upon Him the sins of us all and His wrath fell fully, unmixed with grace, upon the Cross of Calvary. It is impossible for us to appreciate fully the wrath Christ took for us on the Cross, but His cry of anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", should give us some feeling for the horrible thing He went through.

It was God's great love, God's wonderful goodness that "made (Christ) to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God through Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Men who know not God have tried to make Christ as a sin-sacrifice out to be a case of the man Jesus stepping in God's way to keep Him from showing His wrath to men. They forget that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," that "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him," that Jesus said, "The cup that my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?". God's wrath was shown when Christ was on the Cross, but it was not wrath

against the sinner but against sin. It was not anger against Christ's person, for Christ was there in loving obedience to the Father. But Divine wrath had to fall upon sin; if it did not fall on Jesus Christ it would have to fall on you and me. God loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son for that very purpose, praise His Name and thank Him forever for it!

It is interesting that the word translated "propitiation" here is translated "mercy-seat" in Hebrews 9:5. The passage is obviously speaking of the mercy-seat, the meeting place of God and man in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Christ is that also, but here in Romans 3:25 the rest of the verse shows Paul is talking about the sin sacrifice or, to quote Hendriksen, the "wrath-removing sacrifice". The reason for the word in Hebrews is probably because it was used to translate the word "mercy-seat" into Greek in the Septuagint translation, the Greek translation common in Christ's day on earth as a man.

Now note that it is through faith that the pouring out of Christ Jesus' blood becomes effective as our "wrath-removing sacrifice." His sacrifice on the Cross was for every man and if every man in the world placed his faith in Christ Jesus then everyone would be saved. We know that has not happened and will not happen, but every single person who ends up in the Lake of Fire will have no one to blame for it but himself. What a horrible thought that will be to have to have as men suffer in that horrible place for eternity.

The rest of verse 25 and all of verse 26 clearly state what I have been saying—that God did this to show His righteousness when He passed over sins in times past and at the present time as He declares men righteous through faith in Jesus. We must wait for another time to discuss this in detail, but to close this time, let us remind ourselves that our justification (being declared righteous) is God's work, not man's. Remember the words of Horatius Bonar, the hymn writer who helped establish the Free Church of Scotland, showing that by works, human effort, or earnings of any kind can no one be saved:

Not what my hands have done  
Can save my guilty soul;  
Not what my toiling flesh has borne  
Can make my spirit whole.  
Not what I feel or do  
Can give me peace with God;  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears  
Can bear my awful load.  
Thy grace alone, O God,  
To me can pardon speak;  
Thy power alone, O Son of God,  
Can this sore bondage break.  
No other work save thine,  
No other blood will do;  
No strength save that which is divine  
Can bear me safely through.

Don't lose the wonderful opportunity of being declared righteous, of spending eternity with Christ and the saved, of avoiding the lake of fire simply because you are too proud to admit you are a sinner and admitting that Christ alone can save you. Come to Him and be saved.

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



## Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

CONGRATULATIONS YOU DID IT!!! So reads the headline of August "Clean Up TV" Campaign Newsletter. "If there ever was any question regarding the effectiveness of the nation-wide campaign to clean up television, that time is now clearly past. Even our most vicious opponents are now grudgingly admitting that the campaign and the resulting parallel programs by hundreds of other groups which it generated, are having a tremendous impact on the television industry. Even General Foods and American Home Products have made such significant improvements that we feel the boycott can now be completed." I appreciate Brother Hurt's fine attitude in extending congratulations to all those who did their part to make the Campaign the success it was, and he is right in doing so, but I want him and the brethren at Joelton who gave excellent leadership in every way to know that their part is greatly appreciated. Thank you brethren, and may you live to serve our Lord many years should the Lord delay His coming!

AN OBSERVATION OF TWO MISSIONAIRES. Matthew and Alice Baldwin observe "the missionary is caught up in his own paradox. Where the liberating Word of God is preached, there is a passion for freedom and human rights, a willingness to sacrifice, and a burning ideological assurance. Communism (religious atheism), fascism, radical humanism, and Islam all equally oppose the missionary's message. Each

of these ideologies is a modern recapitulation of the sin of Babel: an attempt by man to glorify himself by corporate effort without God. Christianity is the single philosophy which rejects this view. Can missionaries be neutral then? Some missionaries are persuaded they cannot."

NEW YORK'S SPECIAL NARCOTICS PROSECUTOR, Sterling Johnson, Jr., estimates the Americans spent \$64 billion for illegal drugs last year, and he expects that figure to increase to \$100 billion next year.

RECENT TEMPEST ON CAMUS OF University of Massachusetts. Students are up in arms. The administration wants to make male and female students stop using the same bathrooms.

LET'S HAVE IT FROM THE PEN OF GEORGE GILDER, a Harvard man. By 1985, evangelical religion will be seen as the most positive force in American intellectual life as it moves to challenge directly the secular humanists predomance in the universities and the media, dispelling the current dark age in American culture, epitomized by the near-depravity and intellectual fatuity of much of the average Ivy League curriculum, network television schedule, and hollywood film, all of which are resorting to shocks of sex violence to make up for the emptiness and banality of secular thought. Intellectual will come to understand that the Moral

Majority is a sensible and moderate response to the great evils it is combating, pressures that are destroying American families and thus unleashing waves of criminality in American cities.

HALF A MILLION SWEDES ARE INDIGANT AND ACTIVE. They have inaugurated an anti-pornography campaign. Members of Parliament of all political parties have introduced bills to outlaw sex shows. Child pornography was banned in 1980 and 20% of the stores in Sweden's largest retail store chains no longer sell men's magazines. "We believed what the sex business people told us," said Hans Nestius, "that free pornography was a humanitarian act to lonely and handicapped people. We were mistaken." Lisa Mattson, a Socialist member of Parliament said, "I never dreamed of the products that came: Child pornography, sadism and what have you." The number of sex clubs mushroomed and became breeding grounds for prostitution, narcotics, crime, and tax evasion.

THE COMMUNIST FORMULA FOR EVENTUALLY taking over the U.S., and hence the world has always been encirclement plus demoralization equals surrender. We are presently being encircled. Modern music, art, literature and films are demoralizing us at an alarming rate. Eventually there will be a media blitz to convince us it is better to be red than dead. That will be surrender. It doesn't seem as far fetched as it did ten years ago, does it?

ATTORNEY ALBERT H. SOCOLOV OF BROOKLYN was recently acquitted of charges of "knowingly laundering massive illegal profits of a heroin-dealing ring. Mrs. Socolov is the former Judith D. Coplon who was convicted of conspiracy to turn over secret Justice Department documents to a Russian diplomat in the 1940's. In 1950 Judith's conviction was overturned because of a "technical fault" in her arrest.

AND YOU THOUGHT IT WAS A "HOUSEHOLD WORD!" Yet there are people in America today who hardly recognize the name. Senator Proxmire of Wisconsin tells of a lady in Harbor Beach, Michigan who sent President Reagan a letter, correct zip code and all, addressed to 9841 Airport Boule-

vard in Los Angeles. That was indeed, the correct address of Reagan's Los Angeles campaign headquarters. The letter was returned to the sender with the notation: "Moved. Left no address." This incident, says Senator Proxmire, "is an example of the type of Postal Service foul-up people keep calling to his attention." He concludes that the service needs a "big dose of efficiency" instead of another price hike in stamps.

PREMIUM GASOLINE SELLS IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES AT THESE PRICES: Venezuela, \$0.31 per gallon; Ecuador, \$0.80; Mexico, \$1.10; Canada, \$1.14; U.S., \$1.45; Argentina, \$2.13; Jamaica, \$2.17; Switzerland, \$2.43; West Germany, \$2.46; Nicaragua, \$2.17; Sweden, \$2.74; United Kingdom, \$2.78; France, \$2.79; Italy, \$3.06; Paraguay, \$4.51; and Uruguay, \$4.64.

APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION PEOPLE have escaped Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos since the Communist conquest in Southeast Asia.

THE VATICAN'S INVESTIGATION OF THE POPE'S would-be assassin. The Church agents uncovered a set of findings in sharp contrast to what came out at Mehmet Ali Agca's trial. They traced Ali's trail from the time of his escape from a Turkish prison on November 24, 1979 to the day of the shooting in Rome. In that time he is known to have visited 25 countries. Some of that time he admitted to have spent in a P.L.O. camp. The Pope's intelligence agents discovered that he entered Iran on February 1st of this year. Contrary to his word that he was in Lebanon, he had in reality crossed Iran's northern border to train in the Soviet terrorist installation at Simferopol in the Crimea. The decision to assassinate the Pope was made in November 1980 at a secret meeting of the Warsaw Pact Ministers in Bucharest. The Soviet Defense Minister, Marshal Dimitri Ustinov, introduced the idea. Orders were sent out from this meeting to Ali Agca in the Simferopol facility to begin firing at silhouettes of Pope John Paul II, aiming at the lower part of his body, particularly the stomach and legs. The lessons included practice at rapid firing in the midst of a crowd. When his training was complete he

began to make brief visits to Rome in order to acquaint himself with St. Peter's square and note all possible avenues of escape. Of course, we are not supposed to have

even the slightest thought that Ali was working for someone else in this matter. Like so much else, "none dare call it conspiracy." But all the ear-marks are there!

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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

*How can I know the will of God for my life—not just in broad, general terms but in everyday matters where the Bible does not speak specifically?*

This question has in view such matters as the choice of a life's companion, acceptance of a job, a move to a given community, possibly the purchase of a house, etc. It deals both with decisions which may involve mostly secular issues and with primarily spiritual issues. Would the Lord have me to be a missionary? And if so, where? As a preacher, where would the Lord have me work? Should I leave a congregation? Where should I go? What stand would He have me take on problem issues? It deals with the bigger matters which have a considerable effect on me and my family, and it deals with some of a lesser consequence where the effects on my life are less evident. It deals with the big route changes which touch the whole course of life and with the little ones which primarily affect the quality of my service and devotion to the Lord.

First of all, we should note that this question deals primarily with the Christian. We are hardly in a position to be seeking guidance from the Lord if we have never accepted His pointed guidance in the matter of committing ourselves to Christ. Guidance is for sons, not the unregenerate. If one really wants to be guided by the Lord, the first step is surely turning to the Lord and becoming a Christian. We would point out that God in His great mercy does sometimes seem to direct the steps of some who are following the light they have or who are destined to be vessels for specific use; this is not a promised right, however, but the gracious choice of a sovereign God. He sometimes hears the prayers of sinners. Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff) is a notable example. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness may find the Lord directing their steps even before they are fully aware of how to be a Christian. None of this changes the fact that once we know our need of Christ as Savior and the way into Him, the first step toward having a life guided by the Lord is to be a Christian.

Next, while there are matters about which the Bible does not speak specifically, one needs to realize that the Bible helps us to know a lot more of the will of God than seems evident at first glance. I know of no better preparation for being guided by God than to immerse ourselves, so to speak, in the Bible. The more we know of God's word the more we will be aware of examples and principles as well as specific teaching, which will have a bearing on our guidance. There is direct teaching that we may not be aware of unless we have spent time with the Bible. Of course there will also be an area where principles will be sufficient guidance. Does the Lord want me to take a job that will require some lying? Or, a prospective mate may seem to have everything in his or her favor, a seeming answer from the Lord in a lot of ways, but there is a problem of an unequal yoke (2 Cor. 6:14ff). No, God's word is not a mere recommendation for what people should do; it is the standard for all Christians to live by. Forget the idea that God is somehow making an exception to His word in our case; He is not. If I have the facts and the job requires lying, then I don't need to persist in prayer as though God would change His mind. If the prospective mate involves the unequal yoke and I am unable to win that one to the Lord, then an attempt to get God to lend His approval is very similar to Balaam's praying (Num. 22). We can multiply the examples of this sort of thing, but the thought should be clear. If God has indicated His will in His word by direct statement or by principle, then a "pious" attempt to get some other answer from Him is not an attempt to discover His will but is the effort of a spoiled child to have his own way.

But what about cases where Bible principles seem to conflict. For example, it is clearly God's will for His people to assemble together in worship, not forsaking this responsibility (Heb. 10:25). But a child is sick (Or, mother is invalid, husband works swing shift, etc.) and it seems that responsible Christian love requires care for them at those hours. Or maybe the job is one of necessary services (nurse, policeman, etc.). First of all, let me be sure there is a conflict and that it is an either/or situation. If we care enough, we can sometimes work out an arrangement that allows for both responsibilities. Don't forget that God knows whether we are using such a situation as an excuse or whether there is a real problem. We recognize, however, that there are times when Bible principles do conflict. In such cases we have to go with the higher principle, and we are in the will of God to do so (Acts 4:18-20).

If we have taken a long time getting down to the question asked, it is in order to emphasize that far more issues can be settled for us by the word of God than the average Christian is probably willing to recognize. We are only playing games with God (or worse) when we try to bypass the written word. This is a primary source for guidance, and many a question needs go no further.

We do recognize that there are matters of great concern where the Bible seems to offer no final answer as to God's will. For example, we know it is His will for the gospel to be preached and that it must be pure and not another gospel. But what is my role in this? Has God equipped me as a personal worker, a pulpit preacher, a missionary,

or some other? Our estimates of our abilities are not always unprejudiced (cf. Exod. 4:10ff). Or, to further complicate this, if it is settled that I am to be a preacher or a missionary, what field does the Lord want me in?

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is guidance. He is given as our Helper. I believe He does guide the Christian in just such matters as we are here discussing. But a word of caution is in order. It is evident to a discerning observer that what some call guidance of the Holy Spirit is little more than following their own feelings or whims. Some seem to have no concern that what they call the leading of the Spirit may contradict the written word. Some seem to think they have a direct pipeline to the mind of the Spirit so that whatever comes to them to do is regarded as His leading, binding not only on them but on others. Satan does not miss too many opportunities, and so we need to be careful that we do not attribute to the Holy Spirit what is at best human feelings and impressions.

Some years ago I ran across George Muller's method of discovering God's will. No one, I suppose, claims it is inspired; I certainly do not. However, I do not know of a better statement of how to discover His will in those things wherein the Bible does not speak specifically. We quote it here for your consideration.

"I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter.

"Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

"Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I did, I would make myself liable to great delusions.

"I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God.

"The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them.

"Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

"I ask in prayer for Him to reveal His will to me aright.

"Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.

"In trivial matters and in transactions involving important issues, I have found this method effective."

Just a word may be in order as to "putting out the fleece" (Judg. 6:36ff) or similar acts. This method seems to have been quite acceptable in O.T. times. The casting of lots was used as late as Acts 1:26

to determine the Lord's will. Some Christians suspect that these things now partake too much of the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees who asked Jesus for a sign from heaven. His answer was that "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 12:38ff). The problem, however, was that they were asking for a sign from heaven while they were seeing many of His miracles and refusing to accept that testimony. Personally, I am inclined to believe such methods may be used if great care is exercised to avoid influencing the answer. On the other hand, the absence of references as to the use of this method in the church age makes me cautious of its use.

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## **"For Such A Time As This . . ."**

Antoine Valdetero

I read with much interest the article in May, 1981 issue of the *WORD & WORK* by J. Richard Lewis "The Miracle of the Enduring Marriage." Especially beautiful was the quote from HYMN OF MARRIAGE of the beautiful sight of an old man and an old woman facing the sunset of life together with gnarled hands and seamed faces. Such beauty shows that two people can go through life and make marriage work.

Homes in America are falling apart at an alarming rate. Divorce is on every hand. With divorce there are no winners. Everyone loses! The man and woman involved lose; the families of each partner lose; the children lose; the church and the community lose. The trauma of divorce can be worse than death. Rejection is perhaps the hardest thing to accept. And where does the Christian and the church fit in to all of this?

The people involved in this trauma need help and ministering too. For too long these people were either ignored or hurtfully put down. But these actions are the very opposite of what they need. Rather than being ignored, they need to know someone cares. Instead of being hurtfully put down, they need help to regain their self-esteem. The church needs to be a shelter for the wounded and the weary.

A situation in a church in a distant city recently came to my attention. A young lady married in the late 50's and moved away. The marriage ended in divorce. She won to the Lord a man who sought her companionship. They later married and had a family. Recently she and her husband returned to her home town and her home church. Her husband is very talented. He can teach, lead singing and works well with young people. All was well until an old

member realized that this man was not her husband of 25 years ago. The elders were called in. They in turn told the man he could not teach, lead singing or pray in the assembly. He, of course, was welcome to come and be part of the "head count" each Sunday. Also, they said nothing about his money—it was welcome. This incident has bothered me very much. Must a couple be punished for a lifetime for what they did 20 or 25 years ago? Is there no forgiveness with us? Instead of the church being a shelter for the wounded it became a vehicle that wounds even more. Someone has remarked that the church is the only army that puts down rather than aids its wounded.

Growing in love should teach us that loving a person is not condoning any wrong in that person. Jesus showed compassion for the harlots and publicans without condoning their sin. We do not withhold a man who was a drunkard or a thief from being used in the assembly after he has become a Christian. Do we view their past so different that they can be totally accepted while others are accepted on a limited basis? Those who are suffering and bleeding seem to be the ones who are hurt again.

Some have said that the only way out is to go back to one's first partner. That partner may have re-married and may now have a family of that union. This seems so out of place—break up two present unions to re-establish an old one where maybe one or both partners could not accept such an arrangement. An additional wrong won't correct a wrong of by-gone years.

About three years ago a person was very critical in my presence of another preacher who baptized a couple who were now married but each had had a previous marriage. I asked this person if they would like to tell these people that they could not go to heaven because they had this unfortunate experience in their background. Of course the reply was "no." It is so easy to be critical when we are not standing in the other fellow's shoes. Doesn't II Cor. 5:17 apply to these people?

I am not encouraging divorce. God forbid that anyone read that into what I have said. I am simply appealing for compassion for people who know enough about hurt and rejection and who need oil for their wounds and love for their distressed spirits.

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## **SOMETHING WORTH SHOUTING ABOUT**

Horace E. Wood

In our day there isn't much to shout about. Though we are an affluent nation and have a high standard of living, more than most nations, yet there is a crisis around every corner. Crime is alarmingly on the increase. We have a shortage of jail space; and no one seems to have the answer to our mounting problems.

There is infection, and incurable disease the world over. They tell us that most everything we eat or drink can cause cancer. A certain Doctor has stated that we all will get cancer sooner or later.

There is doom all around us. Countless numbers of people are disillusioned. The great minds and thinkers of our day are often in despair.

The free thinking playwright, George Bernard Shaw, following the 2nd World War said, "The science on which I pinned my fate is bankrupt. It's counsels which should have established the Millennium led instead to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshipers in the temples of a thousand creeds; and now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith."

What a revealing case of mental darkness by one of the great writers of our time. Man has lost faith in God and also in his fellow man.

Wouldn't it be great to have something to shout about, something to be really excited about?

If you have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your very own, then you have something to shout about. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Corinthian 2:9)

In Romans 5 Paul is counting the blessings. Please open your Bible to Chapter 5. I am reading from the King James Version. We are going to find three very interesting words: they are rejoice, glory, and joy. These three words mean the same in the original Greek. They all mean to boast or shout what God has done.

Verse 2—"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace where in we stand and *rejoice* in the hope of the glory of God." Put a circle around this word "rejoice".

Verse 3—"And not only so, but we *glory* in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." Isn't this something to really get excited about? Something worth shouting about?

Does God's love ever run low? Recently standing on the dam of an East Texas lake I asked my son-in-law if the lake ever got any lower (the water was running over the spill way); he replied no, the lake is fed by springs. The lake is always full and running over. God's love is inexhaustible. His love doesn't stop or diminish when we sin—Something worth shouting about?

Paul says we glory in tribulation. Paul are you out of your mind? Did you ever eat a raw corn on the cob? Isn't good is it? Put this ear of corn in a pressure cooker for a few minutes, then douse it with good old fashioned cow butter, wow, tastes good doesn't it? What made the difference? The heat of the pressure cooker. When God puts us in His pressure cooker of tribulation, sickness, tragedy or what ever, look at the change, God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. Something worth shouting about.

Verse 11—"And not only so, but we joy in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

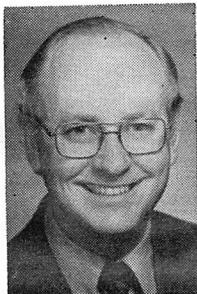
Fleshly man is a rebel, that means war. For us that are saved, the war is over. The peace treaty was signed at calvary. Unlike man's

peace treaty which is so easily broken, the peace treaty at Calvary will *never* be broken. I John 5:13: "... that ye may know, here and now, that ye have eternal life."

The good that is in man pleases man, but the good in man can never please God—when you come to God He wants to see two empty hands—nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling.

We really have something to shout about!

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## The Hand of God in the Reclamation of Palestine

Dr. David R. Reagan

In the last article in this series I made the point that God is definitely fulfilling Bible promises to the Jews in Israel today.

I listed seven specific prophecies that are being fulfilled in modern day Israel:

- 1) The Regathering of the Children of Israel.
- 2) The Re-establishment of the Nation of Israel.
- 3) The Reclamation of the Land of Palestine.
- 4) The Revival of the Hebrew Language.
- 5) The Resurgence of Israeli Military Strength.
- 6) The Re-Occupation of Jerusalem.
- 7) The Re-Focusing of World Politics on the Nation of Israel.

In the last article, I discussed in detail the historical facts relevant to the regathering of the Jews and the re-establishment of the nation of Israel. Let's take a look in this essay at the third prophecy—the amazing transformation of the land of Palestine.

### 3) THE RECLAMATION

When most people think of the land of Palestine they visualize a nomad with a camel standing in barren desert. That image of the Holy Land was accurate before 1948.

At the beginning of this century, the land of Palestine had been under continuous foreign occupation for 1800 years. During that time the ruling nations had literally raped and devastated the country. For example, by 1900 there were only 17,000 trees left in Palestine! The forests full of lions and bears which are pictured in the Old Testament had long ceased to exist. Everything south of Haifa was barren desert. The great valleys—Ayalon, Sharon, Jezreel (Armageddon) and Hula—were malaria infested swamps. The land had become cursed, just as Moses had prophesied (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28—Note especially Lev. 26:32).

## THE PROPHETIC VISION

But the Hebrew prophets had also prophesied that the land would someday be reclaimed as a land of milk and honey. This would occur when the Jews were re-established in the land. Consider this vision of Isaiah:

"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom . . . for waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water." (Isa. 35:1, 6 & 7)

Isaiah proclaims this prophecy again in even greater detail in chapter 41, concluding that when men see the transformation of the land, they will know "that the hand of the Lord has done it; that the Holy One of Israel has created it." (Isa. 41:20).

The prophet Amos says that the ruined cities will be rebuilt and the vineyards and gardens will be replanted. He then quotes an unconditional promise of God: "I will plant them upon their land and they shall never be plucked up out of the land I have given them." (Amos 9:14 & 15)

Ezekiel reaffirms this promised rebirth of the land in graphic language: "And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they shall say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden!'" (Ezek. 36:34 & 35)

## A LAND REBORN

Think of it! A barren, desolate land shall become like the garden of Eden! And so it has. The total transformation of the land of Palestine in only 32 short years is one of the greatest miracles of modern history.

The Jews have planted over 250 million trees. The great forests of Old Testament times are being rebuilt. The climatic impact of these new forests has been overwhelming, resulting in a 400% increase in rainfall.

One of the first reclamation projects which the Jews attempted after the 1948 War of Liberation was the draining of the swamplands. They imported thousands of Eucalyptus trees from Australia and planted them around the perimeter of the swamps. These trees are famed for their water absorbing capacity, and their roots sucked the water from the swamps. The water that was left was drained by the application of modern engineering concepts.

## AGRICULTURAL WONDERS

Those valleys today are the bread basket of the Middle East. In only 32 years Israel has been transformed from a country that could not feed itself into one of five countries in the world that export food.

When you cross the Allenby Bridge that connects Jordan with Israel, it is not at all unusual to see trucks lined up bumper to bumper for miles waiting to transport agricultural products from Israel into

the Arab countries. During one of my recent visits to Israel, I drove through the Sharon Valley. On one side of the road I saw cotton fields and peanut fields as far as the eye could see. On the other side of the road was a banana plantation, and down the road a few miles were acres and acres of citrus groves!

Today, Israeli agriculture ranks among the best in the world. People come from all over the world to study the new agricultural techniques which the Israelis have pioneered. For example, they make extensive use of plastics in agricultural production, covering entire crops with plastic blankets to trap moisture and protect the crops from the blazing sun. Last March I saw strawberry fields stretched out for miles along the Jordan River, all of them under sheets of white plastic.

### WATER MIRACLES

Massive irrigation projects have been one of the keys to the re-birth of the land. Because the Jordan River is an international boundary between Israel and Jordan, little water has been drawn directly from it. Instead, the Israelis have tapped the Sea of Galilee. Daily, they pump millions of gallons of water out of this Sea, lift the water over the surrounding mountains, and put it into a canal called The National Water Carrier that runs the full length of the country to the Negev desert in the south. The result is that the desert is blooming for the first time in modern history.

This Sea of Galilee irrigation project, together with the projects that draw water directly from the Jordan River, have had the impact of reducing the flow of the Jordan River to a trickle. Hardly any water reaches the Dead Sea anymore, and the result is that the Dead Sea has dropped dramatically in its water level. This has caused concern that the decreasing weight of the Dead Sea might trigger major earthquakes along the Rift Valley.

This is one of the reasons that the Israeli Cabinet recently decided to launch the construction of a canal that will channel water from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea. This canal, which has been dubbed "The Med-Dead Canal," will provide sufficient water to raise the Dead Sea back to its historic level. More important, the canal will be used to generate electricity, since there is a drop of nearly 1400 feet from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea.

### PRICELESS RESOURCES

The Dead Sea is emerging as a resource of inestimable value. The Israelis are using modern science and technology to mine the incredible mineral deposits in the Sea.

It has been estimated that the current total value of the Dead Sea's minerals exceeds two trillion dollars! There is little doubt that the Dead Sea will be one of the "spoils" that will motivate the Soviet Union to invade Israel (Ezek. 38:12).

But there are many other "spoils" in the land that should prove equally attractive to the Russians (in addition to the obvious strategic significance of Palestine as a land bridge between three continents). Remember that the Bible says that the land which Israel occupies is

“a good land . . . in which nothing will be lacking.” (Deut. 8:7 & 9)

I believe this verse means exactly what it says, and I therefore believe that the Israelis will soon find large oil deposits in their land. Deuteronomy 32:14 reveals that oil seeped to the surface of the rocks during the time of Jacob. And the blessings of Jacob upon his sons, recorded in Deuteronomy 33, hint strongly at the presence of oil in certain areas of Israel.

### THE LOCATION OF OIL

Some people who have studied these blessings carefully have concluded that the petroleum deposits are to be found in the area of the “crown of Joseph.” This would constitute the areas occupied by the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar, and Asher. Note the map on page 242. You will see that the area given to the two tribes of Joseph—Manasseh and Ephraim—are shaped like the profile of a man. Sitting on this man’s head is a “crown,” composed of the “foot” of Asher and the territories given to Zebulun and Issachar.

Now, note what Jacob said in the blessings to his sons:

- 1) To Joseph—“The best gifts of the earth will come upon your head, upon the crown of your head.” (Deut. 33:16)
- 2) To Zebulun & Issachar—“The affluence of the hidden treasures of the sand.” (Deut. 33:18 & 19)
- 3) To Asher—“Your foot shall be dipped in oil.” (Deut. 33:24)

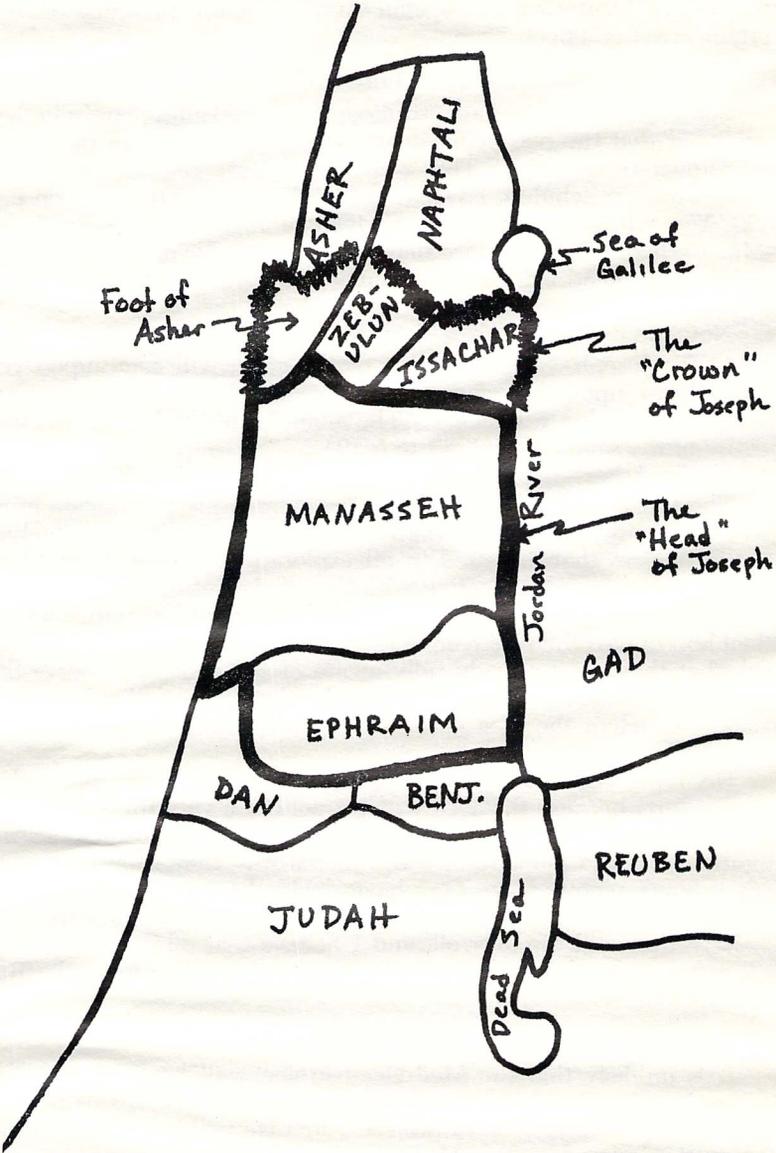
The last time I was in Israel, a member of my pilgrimage group was the president of an international corporation that manufactures seismic devices that are used in oil exploration. When I found out that he had arranged a meeting with the officials of the Israeli government’s oil exploration agency, I shared these scriptures with him and asked him to pass the verses on to the Israelis. He did so and reported back that they were already fully aware of the verses and were thus concentrating their oil search efforts in the area of the “crown of Joseph”—which is the area of the Valley of Jezreel (or the Valley of Armageddon).

He reported that they had experienced little success in their search efforts because the Valley of Jezreel has a very thick and dense layer of rock about 50 feet down which reflects all their seismic vibrations back to the surface. In other words, they keep coming up with a blank picture. So, they have decided to start drilling in the Valley to see what lies beneath this thick and dense shelf of rock. I believe they will discover oil, and I believe that oil discovery could well prove to be the final motivating factor that will propel the Russians into Israel.

### FUTURE RECLAMATION

It is unlikely that the Med-Dead Project will be finished before the Lord returns in glory. But the Hebrew prophets tell us that the Lord has His own Med-Dead project which He will implement as part of a continuing reclamation of the land of Palestine.

Zechariah says that when the Lord returns, the whole land of Palestine will be leveled like a great plain, the high places being pushed down and the low places being lifted up (Zech. 14:10-11).



This vast topological change will no doubt result from the great earthquake that will accompany the Lord's return, for the Bible says it will be the greatest earthquake in history, moving every mountain and island (Zech. 14:4 and Rev. 6:12-14 & 16:18-21).

The city of Jerusalem will be lifted up above the plain like a brilliant jewel on a wedding band (Zech. 14:10 & 11). On that same day, a stream of living water will break forth from the Temple Mount and will flow south out of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:8 and Ezek. 47:1-6). This stream will divide, half of it flowing to the Mediterranean Sea and half of it to the Dead Sea. And Ezekiel says that the Dead Sea will become fresh and will teem with fish! (Ezek. 47:7-12)

### A HOLY LAND

Why such miracles—both present and future—for such a seemingly innocuous piece of real estate? The Bible says that this is “Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12), and truly it is. It has been consecrated by the footprints of the Patriarchs and the blood of prophets and saints. It gave birth to both Judaism and Christianity. It was the dwelling place of God in His Shekinah Glory. It was the homeland of God in the flesh. It is where the blood of Jesus was poured out for the sins of the world. It is where the church was established. It is where the consummation of history will take place in the defeat of the Anti-Christ and his forces. And it is the place from which Jesus will rule the world as King of Kings (Isa. 2 and Micah 4).

Is it any wonder that Ezekiel states that Jerusalem is “the center of the earth and the nations”? (Ezek. 5:5 & 38:12) Or that he quotes God as saying that Palestine is “the most glorious of all lands”? (Ezek. 20:6) The significance of this tiny piece of real estate is perhaps best summed up in Ezekiel 43:7 when the Lord spoke these words to the prophet: “Son of Man, this (Jerusalem) is the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever.” Next month: The revival of the Hebrew language and the resurgence of Israeli military strength. (Lamb & Lion Ministries, P.O. Box 527, Plano, Texas 75074)

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## The Wedding of the Century??

J. Richard Lewis

Great pageantry took place when Prince Charles and Lady Diana were married and became the Prince and Princess of Wales . . . the next heir apparent to the throne of England. The royal dress of the participants, the guards in their splendor, the trumpeters, choir, orchestra, doormen and carriages with their drivers were awe inspiring. It was repeatedly referred to as “the wedding of the century.”

One should not be in haste to think this is or will be the greatest wedding of this century. The most magnificent wedding to ever be held in all of time may take place in the century. Revelation 19:6-9 speaks of this great marriage specifically.

True, Princess Diana, was in Feb. 1981 only a working girl living in London and shopping at the local market. But in a few short

months became the third most powerful woman in England. A busy 5 months of preparation transpired. The bride of Christ will also be called and taken quickly from their earthly work (I Thess. 4:13-18) to be prepared for the wedding. Some seven years may be used for the bride's preparation, not just five months.

Princess Diana dressed in lace and new silk with a long train was lovely. But the bride (the Church) of the King will be dressed in the righteous acts of the saints . . . "linen bright and pure."

Those watching in person or via TV may have thought how wonderful it would be to just work in Buckingham Palace as a door keeper or carriage driver or server of tables. One can imagine the thrill of those dressed in the proper clothes and witnessing all the great events even as workers. To be even a worker in such surroundings may seem too much for which to hope. The Psalmist (84:10) said, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." How true! But held out to every man and woman is the invitation to help make up the bride of Christ.

The family breakfast was such an honored and private affair. Only those close family members were invited. The Lamb is to have a marriage supper (Rev. 19:9). It too will be a great honor, and attended only by special invitation.

If you did not get to go to the great wedding of England or even watch it on TV, don't worry much about it. But know another wedding may occur this century . . . the greatest of all time . . . when Christ takes His bride, the church, in marriage. Make every effort to be ready when the Bridegroom calls. He will not call a second time nor allow time to decide. The decision must already be made. There is no reason for any one to settle for anything less than being a part of the bride of Christ.

Let us work and pray for Christ's soon return and the greatest wedding of all time—the King of Kings to His bride, the Church!



## STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

How refreshing the thought: Our Lord Jesus currently occupied, at the right hand of His Father and ours, praying, not for Himself, but for us—for you and for me! As Hebrews 7:25 reads, "Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Drawing near unto God is our "blood bought privilege"—the shed blood of our Precious Lord. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw

nigh to you", says James (4:8). This is what prayer is all about—since the veil between us and the "Holy of Holies" was rent in two at the death of our Redeemer (Mat. 27:51), access direct to our Heavenly Father is our sweet privilege, for we have been made Priests of God and of Christ. (Each true Believer in Him, with no human go-between here on earth, enjoying a direct call and contact with the Creator of Heaven and Earth.) What an exalted standing is ours! Each one of us, a "Child of the King" (see I Pet. 2:9, 10).

Further precious assurance comes regarding our Great Paraclete (the Holy Spirit who in-dwells us). (John 14:16, 17) "... the Holy Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8:26, 27)

Then, we, in Christ, are blessed by being allowed to be "intercessors" (not because of any accomplishment of our own, but because of our relationship to our "Captain", our Lord Jesus Christ. "Confess therefore your sins one to another, AND PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER that ye may be healed." (James 5:16) Note, that our confession of sin one to another does not mean that we ourselves stand in the stead of our Lord, nor that we can forgive another's sin against the Lord, but rather that we are "confiding" to one another that we have sinned, and we share in praying to our mutual sin-forgiver—the one who paid the enormous price on the Cross in order to loose us from our sins. (Rev. 1:5) **WHAT A PRIVILEGE!**

Of course we enjoy the God-given right to pray alone,—just ourselves, alone with Him who "heareth prayers." (Psa. 65:2) Sometimes some of our burdens are such that we cannot clearly make our innermost known to fellow Believers, but the Holy Spirit knows and reads problems "between the lines" of our thoughts. (Again: Rom. 8:27)

Praise God (The God and Father of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and Thank Him for not leaving us "orphans", but indwells each of us-in-Christ by His Holy Spirit. And praise the Lord for one-another who strengthen each the other in intercessory prayer.

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## **ROMANS:**

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

# **The Christian's Favorite Indoor Sport**

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

"Paul enjoyed his Christian liberty to the full," F.F. Bruce has written, adding, "Never was a Christian more thoroughly emancipated from un-Christian inhibitions and taboos. So completely emancipated was he from spiritual bondage that he was not even in bondage to his emancipation."

The apostle expressed his freedom in some memorable words in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, "For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker of it with you."

Martin Luther said, "A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none." That expression of freedom is harmonious with Paul's thought.

The apostle's concerns in this context have to do with food (cf. vv. 2, 17) and festivals (cf. vv. 5-6). These were things that were problems for the culture of his time. It is clear that these things are not immoral in themselves. For this reason the section is said to be about "debatable things," or "the morally indifferent things." Our concerns today, somewhat parallel to these, are such things as the relation of a believer to tobacco, whiskey, wine, playing cards, the movies, TV, work on Sunday, dancing, and such things. In other words, the relation of believers to the so-called "no-nos" of the spiritual life. Christians have differing opinions concerning these things, often differing over them in different parts of the country. It is in these things that the spiritual pride of believers is often seen. In fact, Ray Stedman is right, when he says that the desire to change one another in these debatable things is "the favorite indoor sport of Christians." We want all our fellow-Christians to subscribe to our own list of taboos, and we take a bit of pleasure in having them submit to us in our inhibitions.

The important question, however, is this: What does the Bible say about such things?

The section which we are to look at is bound together with the preceding one, the apostle still speaking of the application of the righteousness of God to our daily lives. So, the subject is the application of the divine righteousness, which we now possess by imputation through faith, to doubtful things. And, again, I repeat that proper application is only possible to those who have offered the Christian Offering of our bodies, according to Romans 12:1-2.

The Roman church, it seems, contrary to the modern church, was sure of the plan of salvation, yet it had difficulties in the non-essentials, the things that were not necessary for salvation. The modern church is of a different mind. The modern church is in doubt over the essentials, the Roman Catholic Church wishing to accord to Mary a place alongside the Lord Jesus Christ, while the Protestant Church is debating the dignity of the Son, and other important and necessary doctrines. Against such a background of doctrinal confusion we turn to Paul's teaching on debatable matters.

## FOOD AND THE RECEPTION OF THE WEAK

*The command for reception* (Rom. 14:1). The specific debatable things involved the eating of "flesh" (v. 21), the drinking of wine (v. 21), and the observance of certain festival "days" (vv. 5-6).

The apostle speaks of brethren as "weak" (v. 2) and as "strong" (15:1). The weak are those who have scruples regarding the foods, drink, and the observance of certain days. The strong are those who believe that they have freedom to eat and drink what they wish, and to observe days or not.

The identity of the people of whom the apostle is speaking is not easy to discover. It seems, however, that he had in mind both Gentile and Jewish scruples. The Jews had scruples concerning certain meats, for example. They could not eat pork according to the Mosaic Law and, in fact, could not eat beef or lamb, if they were not prepared according to the Law. Thus, it is easy to see that some of the weaker brethren may well have been those with scruples regarding food, derived from their acquaintance with the Law. On the other hand, the Jews did not have any scruples over drinking wine. Therefore, this scruple was probably one that originated in Gentile situations (cf. v. 21). Both Sheed and Barrett are right, then, in seeing the strong as disparaging both Gentile and Jewish believers, or believers affected by both Gentile and Jewish scruples.

The section begins with the Pauline command, "Him that is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (AV). The expression of the AV, "not to doubtful disputations," is literally *not to disputes of doubts*. The point is simply that the believers are to be received into the fellowship of the believing body, but not simply for theological argument, or debate. Bruce suggests, "without attempting to settle doubtful points," and that seems to be the sense.

The expression, "weak in the faith," refers to a failure to grasp the nature of justifying faith, resulting in fears that lead to ascetic opinions.

*The problem* (Rom. 14:2). Paul outlines the essence of the problem in verse two, "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs." The scruples referred to here concern meats and vegetables. Since the Jews in Old Covenant days were not able to eat pork, this may have been in Paul's mind. It would have been interesting to have been present, when for the first time Paul was offered a ham sandwich.

Graham Scroggie speaks of the problem that Paul may have had in mind this way. "The matter of diet even now is not a dead issue; and relative to it the 'strong' brother is in danger of despising the 'weak'; and the 'weak' brother is in danger of judging the 'strong.'"

"A invites B to dinner and puts before him a good joint of pork. He invites B to ask a blessing, and B says:

'O Lord, if Thou canst bless in this dispensation  
what Thou didst curse in the last, bless this pig.'

But B will not have any of the pig. A smiles contemptuously, and B hurls Leviticus xi. 7 at him, 'And the swine, he is unclean to you'; and judges A's loyalty to the Word of God. A tells B to read 1 Timothy

iv. 4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer'; and there follows an argument, which is well spiced with recriminations.

"Meanwhile the pork gets cold; the cook is annoyed; the brethren are rattled; each sticks to his point instead of to his joint; fellowship is broken; and A does not invite B to dinner again.

"How pathetic and tragic! And all over a bit of pork for which A thanks God, as well he may, if he can get it.

"Now, both these men are wrong in spirit; the one for despising, and the other for judging, though both are right in what they do conscientiously. Then why not be tolerant in things indifferent! A should eat his pork, and B his vegetables, and they should have a happy time together 'in the Lord.'

"And as for the observance of days—I remember the time when, in the Highlands of Scotland, the blinds were pulled down on Sundays and the pianos were locked, and no one was allowed to go for a walk. And there are many people today who think it wrong to go to church in any way other than on foot; but where they go astray is in thinking that those who do employ mechanical transport are breaking divine law and are guilty."

And I remember, after preaching in his church on Sunday morning in Glasgow, Scotland, twenty years ago, I was asked by a brother, when I entered his home for Sunday dinner, "Do you have any objections to the reading of the newspaper on Sunday?" When I said, "No," he then went over to a large chair in his living room and lifted up the cushion in it and took from under it the Sunday newspaper, saying, "Some of the brethren in the church think it is a sin to read the newspaper on Sunday. I put it here in the morning just in case they should drop by here on Sunday for a time."

We do have our scruples, and they vary all over the world among the believers. The man who is weak in the faith and has such scruples is usually a man who has not yet discovered the meaning of Christian freedom, and he has usually found it difficult to liberate himself from a belief in the efficacy of works, if not for salvation, at least for sanctification.

*The counsel of Paul* (Rom. 14:3-4). The counsel of the apostle consist, first, of a rule, followed by reasons. The rule is that the strong are not to despise the weak, and the weak are not to judge the strong in the morally indifferent things. The criticism takes, then, two forms. The strong tend to despise the weak for their lack of understanding of Christian freedom in the age of the church. The weak on their part tend to judge the strong for their laxness in spiritual living, thinking that their freedom is not freedom, but rebellion against the standards of the divine teaching.

In a practical way Paul's words mean that we are not to go up to our Christian friends who do not see things as we do and say to them such things as, "I do not see how you, a Christian, can do the things you are doing (or, not do the things you ought to be doing)." Our Christianity is grounded upon our faith in the atoning Christ, not in our commitment to human scruples.

Someone has defined a legalist as a person who lives in mortal terror that someone, somewhere, is enjoying himself, according to Stedman. That is not really the thing that motivates a legalist, but the legalist is one who thinks that he makes points with God, either for salvation or sanctification, by the things that he does in his own strength.

The reasons for the advice of the apostle are given in these verses, too. First of all, God has received the weaker or stronger brother (cf. v. 3c). And, in the second place, there is only one Master, the Lord Christ, and He alone is to do the judging (cf. v. 4). Cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-5.

### *FASTS, FESTIVALS, AND RECEPTION OF THE WEAK*

*The problem* (Rom. 14:5a-b). The second point of difference concerns "days." Evidently the reference is to certain fasts, or festivals, that were still being practiced by some of the believers, probably those who were of Jewish background. One is reminded of Paul's words to the Galatians, who, however, were Gentiles, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Cf. Col. 2:16. Perhaps some were still observing Jewish sabbath days.

*The command of Paul* (Rom. 14:5c). Paul's imperative now is "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." This is the general principle for matters not essential to salvation. Each believer is to study the Scriptures, seek the mind of the Spirit in illumination, and then to follow that which seems to him to be the teaching of the Word.

*The reason underlying the command* (Rom. 14:6-9). The following words are best understood as being true of all believers who become "fully persuaded in their own mind." If convinced of the course of action after seeking the mind of God in the Word and through the Spirit, then it can be said, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks (understand, for his vegetables). For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived (the text probably should read here, "both died, and lived," due to the manuscript authority), that he might be Lord of the dead and the living" (vv. 6-9).

Both the weak brother and the strong brother, when fully persuaded in their own minds, serve the Lord (verse nine makes it plain that the "Lord" here is Christ). We all, whether weak or strong, if we earnestly and submissively seek to follow the teaching that we discern in the Word, live in a slave-Lord relation. God accepts us, if this be true, and we should accept into full communion brethren who may differ with us in the debatable matters.

The ninth verse stresses the fact that the Lord Jesus by His death and resurrection has acquired title to believers. The death is His penal, propitiatory, substitutionary death. The words of the AV, "rose, and revived," are probably not genuine. The text should

read simply, *died and lived* (or, *came to life*, the aorist being ingressive). He obtained His lordship by death and resurrection; in fact, that was the purpose (AV, "that") of His ministry. His lordship is over both dead and living believers (cf. Matt. 22:32). "If Christ is Lord of his people, not only when living but also when dead, it follows," Shedd points out, "that they are under obligation to serve him both in death and in life."

### THE APPLICATION OF THE TRUTH

*The interrogation* (Rom. 14:10a-b). The apostle speaks plainly here to the sin for which most of us believers are liable more frequently than almost all other sins,—criticism. Paul's point is a simple one: Christ alone has the right to judge and, when we do, we are "meddling with God's government." The two questions speak to the two types of people, the first question being for the weak, prone to judge the strong, the second is for the strong, who are prone to despise the weak.

*The substantiation* (Rom. 14:10c-11). The apostle reminds all the Romans that they shall stand before the judgment seat of God (the AV's "Christ" has early attestation, but overall weaker support, and was probably the work of a scribe interpolating from 2 Cor. 5:10). There is no problem whatsoever, if we just remember that the Second Person of the Trinity may also be called "God." God is a term for the essence of the Trinity, while "Christ" has reference to the personal relationships.

The apostle supports the fact of our judgment by Christ by a citation from Isaiah 45:23. In the context of that passage the Yahweh referred to there is a reference to the Second Person of the Trinity and, further, Paul in Philippians 2:10-11 refers that very passage specifically to Jesus Christ. The text clearly states that judgment belongs to Him. That the Son has had judgment delegated to Him is set forth in such passages as John 5:22, Matthew 7:22-23, 25:31, and Acts 17:31.

At the judgment seat of Jesus Christ our attitude to our brothers will be dealt with, as well as our personal conduct (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10), and our service (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

*The conclusion* (Rom. 14:12). Paul concludes with, "So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The words are an emphatic repetition of the thought of verses 4, 10, and 11. All of us owe an account, and the account is owed to God (the words are emphatic in the original text, intended to remind the Romans that God judges). Therefore, no man may judge.

So, the favorite indoor sport of believers is out! We are to be judged by Him alone. We have the assurance, however, that at the judgment He will cause us to stand (cf. v. 4; Psa. 1:5), and, too, that in the meantime He will with enabling grace support us, while sanctifying us by the ministry of the Word of God to us. The facts are, of course, that we are like many of our roads, still "under construction."

One final word. This counsel of the apostle, namely, that we are to exercise patience in our dealings with the saints in doubtful things, is counsel only for those who are "in the faith" (cf. v. 1). If we are not in the faith, then our first responsibility is to respond to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, His death and resurrection for sinners.

May God show us our guilt and His satisfaction by His penal substitutionary death, and may we flee to the cross for deliverance from guilt and condemnation and for the forgiveness of our sins. The truth is beautifully expounded by Paul in this letter in chapter three, verses twenty-one through twenty-six. May we respond to it, leaning upon Christ for time and for eternity.

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## **The Evangelical View of Authority**

John R. W. Stott

There are two fundamental questions in religion: (1) by what authority do I believe what I believe and teach what I teach? (2) how is it possible for a sinner to be saved and to be reconciled to his Creator and God? The first concerns authority, and the second concerns salvation.

It has been suggested that I speak to you about the first, and I gladly do so. I want to talk to you about the evangelical view of authority. There have been in the church three main views about authority. The first is that authority resides in the individual's reason, and that I believe what I believe because it seems to my subjective mind to be reasonable to me. The second view is that authority resides in the Church's teaching and tradition. There are those who say, "I believe what I believe because the church teaches it." This is the ecclesiastical tradition of the centuries. The third view of authority resides in the Word of God, the Bible. The evangelical view of authority is the third.

The fundamental difference between reason, tradition, and Scripture is that whereas reason and tradition are the words of men, however true they may be and however much they may be illumined and guided by the Holy Spirit, they are nevertheless the words of men, whereas Scripture alone is the Word of God. Now evangelicals do not or should not despise either reason or tradition. On the contrary, both have their place in the education and in the application of the Word of God. But tradition and reason have a secondary and subordinate place, for they are subordinate to our primary and supreme authority, which is the inspired Word of God, that which God has spoken.

### *EVANGELICAL VIEW EXPLAINED*

I want to make two clarifications concerning the evangelical view of Scripture. The first is this: evangelicals do not or should not hold a mechanistic view of inspiration. That is to say, God spoke through the human authors in such a way that their words are His words. Yet the process of inspiration did not treat these human authors as dictating machines or tape recorders. The process of inspiration, whatever it was and however we may account for it, did not do violence to the human personality of the inspired Biblical authors. On the contrary, evangelicals are quite clear or should be quite clear, that the process of inspiration was a process operating in persons, not machines. This is quite plain from the different literary styles and the different theo-

logical emphases which are to be found within Scripture itself. It is not an accident that Amos was the prophet of the justice of God, and Hosea the prophet of the love of God, and Isaiah the prophet of the kingly sovereignty of God. It is not an accident that Paul was the apostle of grace and faith, and James the apostle of works, and Peter the apostle of hope, and John the apostle of love. It is not an accident that the Biblical authors are given a different emphasis of truth. The Holy Spirit not only chose these different Biblical authors, but fashioned their temperment, their personality, and their experience in His own divine sovereignty and providence in order to convey through each one a distinctive and appropriate truth. These authors supplement one another.

The second clarification is that evangelicals do not hold a literalistic view of Scripture. Our detractors often say to us that in their opinion we believe that every word of the Bible is literally true. In a sense we do and in a sense we don't. It depends upon what content you give the adverbs literally or literalistically. For example, there are in the Bible a number of anthropomorphic expressions which speak of God in the form of man: His eyes, His ears, His arms, His hands, His fingers, His breath, and His nostrils. But God has none of these because God is a spirit, and He has no body. We do not interpret these anthropomorphic terms literalistically.

Again, there are in the Scriptures poetic figures of speech. When in Psalm 19 we read of the sun emerging as a bridegroom out of his chamber and rejoicing as an athlete to run across the track of the heavens, we are not committed to a pre-Copernican view of the universe. This is a poetic imagery; this is a figure of speech and is not literalistically true. Also, we must interpret every text in the light of the context. One of the best examples is the book of Job. This book is a part of the Word of God. But in the first thirty-seven chapters of the book, Job's comforters say a number of things in the heat of debate which are spoken in the book in order to be contradicted and not in order to be endorsed. It is only when God Himself appears in the last five chapters that the first thirty-seven chapters take on meaning. So you can only interpret each text of the book of Job in the light of the whole context. The principle of interpretation is that we understand the Scripture in the sense in which the author intended us to understand it.

### *AUTHORITY INHERENT IN CHRIST*

I come now to the main question:—Why do evangelical Christians believe in the inspiration and the authority of Scripture? Although it is made very complicated by some of us, the answer is very simple. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God because our loyalty to Jesus Christ requires us to do so. We believe that His authority and the Bible's authority stand or fall together. You know of course that the Bible is divided into two halves, the Old and the New Testaments. The way in which Jesus Christ endorsed the authority and inspiration of both is different, so we must take them separately.

Consider the Old Testament. Our Lord, the Incarnate Son of God, reverently and humbly endorse the authority of the Old Testa-

ment. In no way did He contradict, modify, or disagree with anything in the Old Testament. I shall cite three examples. He submitted to the Old Testament in His own conduct. Come with me in your imagination to the wilderness and to the temptations to which Jesus was exposed. Each time the Devil tempted Him, He replied, "It stands written..." and He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy. Now this is much misunderstood. I have heard preachers say that Jesus threw the Scriptures at the Devil. I don't believe He did anything of the kind. What Jesus did was not to quote Scripture at the Devil, telling the Devil what he ought to do. He was quoting the Scripture to Himself in the presence of the Devil explaining why He, Jesus, would resist the temptation. For example, when the Devil said, "Jump off the pinnacle and God's angels will catch you," Jesus said, "It stands written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" When I was a young man I thought Jesus was saying, "Now Satan, it is written you shall not tempt the Lord your God, so you must not tempt me." But it does not mean that at all. What Jesus is saying is, "It is written in the Scripture that you shall not tempt the Lord your God, so I will not tempt the Lord my God. I will not force His hand by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple and requiring Him to catch me." In other words, "I am under the authority of the Scripture and since the Scripture says, 'You shall not do this,' I am not going to do it." Now to me this is extremely impressive that Jesus the Incarnate Son of God Himself lived under the authority of Scripture. The simple word, *gegrapta*, "it stands written," is quite sufficient to settle the issue because He lived under Scripture's authority Himself in His conduct.

He also submitted to the Old Testament in His ministry. Jesus interpreted His mission, His ministry, and His death in the light of the Old Testament. He was the suffering servant of the Lord written about in the book of Isaiah; He was the Son of Man written about in the book of Daniel. Moreover, He was determined to fulfill what was written of Him in the Old Testament. It was from the Old Testament Scriptures that His sense of compulsion was derived. The Son of Man must suffer: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem and everything written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished." When Peter drew his sword and lunged out into the night trying to defend Jesus and avert His arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to him, "Don't you think that I could immediately appeal to my Father and He would give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?" And after the Resurrection He said, "These are my words which I spoke when I was with you that everything written about me in the law, the prophets, and the writings must be fulfilled."

He submitted in His conduct, He submitted in His ministry, and He also submitted to Old Testament authority in His controversies. Jesus Christ was a controversialist. He was involved throughout His public ministry in debate with the religious leaders of His day. On each occasion naturally and unhesitatingly He referred to the Old Testament Scriptures as the final arbiter in the debate and the criterion by which every word and idea must be judged. He said to the Sadducees, "You greatly err because you do not know the Scriptures."

He said to the Pharisees, "You have a fine way of rejecting the Word of God in order to keep your own traditions." If Jesus Christ gave His reverent assent to the Scripture, Who am I to disagree with Christ?

### NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Now we come to the New Testament. We would assert that Jesus Christ not only foresaw the writing of the New Testament Scriptures as a parallel to the Old Testament, but that He actually commanded the writing of the New Testament and made provision for it through His followers. From the wider group of His disciples, Jesus chose twelve men and surnamed them apostles. In recent years there has been a good deal of research about the meaning of the Greek word *apostolos*. It is generally accepted by scholars today that *apostolos* is the Greek equivalent of *sheliach* of Rabbinic Judaism. The *sheliach* was a kind of delegate or plenipotentiary of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin. He was a deputy or a delegate, but he spoke and taught in the name and with the authority of the person who sent him.

So Jesus chose His twelve and he called them *apostoloi*. Each was His *sheliach*, His personal representative or delegate, so that when He sent them out to teach in His name and with his authority, He could say to them, "He who hears you hears me. He who receives you receives me. He who rejects you rejects me." Having chosen and authorized the twelve, Jesus then gave them an intensive three-year training, keeping them with Him in order that they might be eyewitnesses of His glory and of His mighty works and might with their own ears hear His teaching.

Moreover, He promised them an extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost He would remind them of the name of Jesus, and He would supplement that teaching by leading them into all the truth and showing them things to come. These promises of the Holy Spirit's ministry in John 14, 15, and 16, are primarily to be applied to the apostles and were fulfilled in the writing of the New Testament. And they have only a secondary and derived application to us today. Then after the Resurrection, Jesus added at least Saul of Tarsus, and personally commissioned him as an additional apostle. It is in the writing of the apostles and the apostolic circle that these promises of Jesus and His purpose were fulfilled.

### APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY EVIDENT

There are three ways in which this unique apostolic authority may be thought to be confirmed in our minds. First, it was accepted by the apostles themselves. As we read the New Testament documents we find the authors asserting, depending upon, and exercising their authority. They issue commands. In II Thessalonians, chapter three, Paul says, "This we command you . . . if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him." Now who is this—issuing commands and expecting to be obeyed? This is not the language of the Christian preacher and the teacher today. This is the language of an authoritative apostle of Jesus Christ. In the epistle to the Galatians, chapter four, verse fourteen, Paul says to the readers, "When I came to you, you did not despise me, You received

me as Christ Jesus Himself." Paul does not rebuke them for that. He does not say to them, "You have no business to think of me in these terms." He implies that they were quite right to receive him as Christ Jesus because he came as an apostle of Christ Jesus, as a plenipotentiary of Christ Jesus with the authority and in the name of Christ Jesus, and they received his words as the Word of God.

The apostolic authority was also authenticated by God who bore witness to the apostles with signs and wonders and miracles. The book of Acts ought rightly to be called The Acts of the Apostles. The miracles that were performed by the apostles authenticated their unique authority.

And third, the apostolic authority was recognized by the early church. Bishop Ignatius, for example, at the beginning of the second century could write to a number of Christian churches and say, "I do not issue you with commands because I am not an apostle, but a condemned man." You see, in the immediately sub-apostolic period the leaders of the church distinguished themselves from the apostles. They had an authority that was normative and regulative and unique in the whole subsequent history of the church. There is no apostolic succession. There are no apostles today. The only succession is the succession of apostolic doctrine. The apostles were unique in their personal authorization by Jesus Christ, in the eyewitness experience of Jesus Christ, and in their extraordinary inspiration by the Holy Spirit. If you want to bow to the authority of Christ you must bow to the authority of the apostles because He commissioned them to teach in His name. He said, "He who hears you hears me." Your attitude to the apostles is a reflection of your attitude to Christ. That is why we believe in the New Testament.

### *AUTHORITY—THE REASONABLE POSITION*

Now, let me conclude with these statements. First, to accept Biblical authority is Christian. The conservative view of Scripture is not an evangelical eccentricity. The conservative view of Scripture is the only Christian view of Scripture because it is Christ's view of Scripture. He endorsed the Old Testament, He made provision for the New Testament, and because of Christ we accept the authority of the Book.

Secondly, the ultimate issue in the whole Church of God today is whether Jesus is really Lord. Because if Jesus is really Lord, He is Lord of everything. He is not only Lord of your heart, your will, your career, your money, and your talent, but Lord of your mind. No man is truly converted who is not intellectually converted. And no man is intellectually converted who has not brought his mind into submission to the teaching of Christ. If Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Teacher, then I must derive my views from Him. I derive my views of God, and man, of this life and the next, of duty and destiny, yes, and of Scripture from Jesus Christ. The ultimate issue is, "Is Jesus Lord?" And if Jesus Christ is Lord, then I submit my mind to His Lordship. To trust Him who called Himself the light of the world is not obscurantism. It is sober, humble, Christian common sense.

Thirdly, what do we do with the problems? There are many problems with regard to Scripture. What do you do with them? You

do with the problems of Scripture precisely what you do with every problem about every other Christian doctrine. Let me give you an example. Take the love of God. Every Christian believes in the love of God—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Conservative, Liberal or Radical. Any kind of Christian believes in the love of God. Yet how can we believe in the love of God when we look at the world's problems? Look at the problem of evil, the problem of undeserved suffering, earthquakes, Mongoloid and monster children. Look at all these problems. Some agnostic comes to us and says, "How can you believe in the love of God with all these problems?" You don't say, "Well I suppose I must suspend my belief in the love of God until I have solved all the problems." Of course you don't. You say, "I wrestle with the problems." Yes, you wrestle with the problems; but if you can't solve the problems you say, "I still believe in the love of God in spite of the problems." Why? Because Jesus taught it and exhibited it. That is the only reason I believe in the love of God.

Now, somebody comes to you with the Bible and mentions an apparent contradiction or discrepancy. Then he says to you, "You are an obscurantist. How can you believe the Bible is the Word of God when you can't solve this problem?" Personally I don't reply to such a question by saying, "Well, I must suspend my belief in the Word of God until I have solved this problem." Instead I wrestle with the problem. If I cannot solve it, I say, "I still believe in the Word of God just as I believe in the love of God in spite of all the problems." Why? Because—Jesus taught it and exhibited it. I accept it on His authority as I accept every other Christian doctrine.

My fourth and last point is this. Our treatment of Scripture must be consistent with our view of it. To me, one of the greatest tragedies in evangelicalism today is that we say we believe in the Word of God but we don't demonstrate our belief in it by our treatment of it. Our knowledge of Scripture is so superficial. I urge you to become a life-long diligent student of the Word of God. Believe its promises; obey its commands; and communicate its message. Also, if we say we believe that Scripture is the Word of God, we must seek to live according to Scripture. We must live under its authority, just like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did.—from a chapel address at Wheaton College, 1968.

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### **God's Holy Ordinance, continued from page 227**

of communication, which should be the tenderest and most intimate, are broken down and even cast aside in utter personal selfishness and thoughtlessness. Problems arise that would yield to counselling, but many hesitate to lay bare their frustrations. The few things that can be and are being said in general from the pulpits are not adequate to clear the problems, and often at least one of the partners—probably the one most needing to hear counsel—does not even attend. Elders, ministers, and parents must speak out.

Yes, it is good for folks to attend weddings and hear again the sacred charges and the holy blessings attendant upon Christian marriage. Let all of us who enjoy this blessed estate, be living advertisements of the good things of God that we have received herein.

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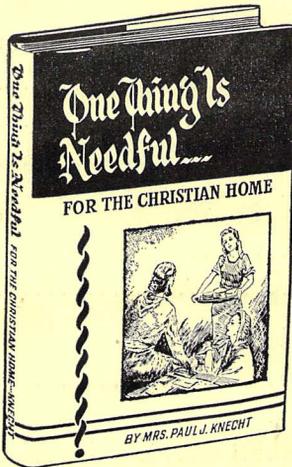
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