

"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The **WORD** *and* **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of life."

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1980

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God's Family

W. R. H.

Balm For The Broken Heart

"... he hath sent me to bind up the Broken-hearted." —Isa. 61:1

While not minimizing the number of broken hearts to whom the Lord Jesus ministered in his day, we can rest assured that there are more today than this old world has ever known. The population increase, and the increased activity of Satan are the only factors we need to consider, to know that there is more woe upon mankind today than ever, and it is waxing worse and worse. Just this week I heard that the divorce rate of marriages in the U.S. is now one out of two!

There are many tragedies that are heart-breaking, but as a single category, broken marriages leads all of the rest. And the scars of a broken marriage are beyond measure. Since the whole family is involved, broken marriages are like a catastrophe with a chain reaction. The adults experience a collapse of their marital bliss, and find themselves in a morass of bewilderment and heartache. Often health or financial stability are either involved or soon to become involved, compounding the strain of survival. And, when children are involved, whatever their ages, scars are inflicted that never fade away.

It is little wonder that Satan, knowing that his time is short, should be so relentless in this particular field of battle today, as he tries to suppress the work of the Lord and His church, in meeting the life-challenges of a fallen world! Current issues of our day, such as woman's lib, new (?) morality (?), deviate life styles, abortion, etc., are only the symptoms of spiritual warfare against the integrity of the family. While not being surprised by these things, we certainly should not be resigned to them, either. In words of the poet, "With our Great Captain in the field, we must prevail, we cannot yield!"

Two social problems are rampant in the world today. One would be defined as immaturity, and the other, insecurity. And if family life and Bible teaching continue to be waning, these problems will be (and already are) compounding themselves.

Insecurity is a childhood disease. We cannot say expressly, what all is involved in it, of course. But we can suspect that fighting of the parents, desertion of the children, absence of natural affection, day-care enrollment, dearth of family vacations, picnics, recreation times,

and just plain loving conversation all have played their part. As a case in point, breast-feeding has long been known as an important source of both physical and emotional development. We can thank God that among some of our young mothers, this grace is being re-established, but to many others, the more they can dis-associate themselves with the day-to-day living of their children, the better they like it. And so the incidences of insecurity have multiplied, and cast their shadows over much of our adult life. Selfishness and self-preservation become the chief motivations, and the finer traits of love, laughter, and self-sacrifice are crowded out. The seeds of materialism and the welfare state have been planted, and already they yield their undesirable fruit. There are exceptions, naturally, where the close physical association with the child cannot be maintained, and the Lord knows and can give special help if we earnestly seek it.

Immaturity is a simplistic term that we apply to those whom we wish would "grow up." Just when *has* a young person grown up? Physically, at one time, and mentally and emotionally at another. The delay of either the physical or the mental is no great problem, until society places them in some role where they are unable to function. Generally maturity of judgment trails behind maturity of body. It is for this reason that our laws set the age of 21 as the legal age for young men. It is hoped that by this time, their judgments will be adequate to meet the responsibilities of citizenship. But today we see students "changing their major" time and again, changing churches, changing their life-styles, changing their whole life-outlook, changing their marriage vows for the old gang, and their parents for their peers.

In our opening line, is quoted Jesus' recitation of the Isaiah prophecy that said that "He came to bind up the broken hearted." Truly, there is help with the Lord. There "is a balm in Gilead to heal the sinsick soul." Jesus left us with only one commandment: that we should love one another, but this commandment contains the answer to all of the social ills of the world, including the broken marriages. If both parties in a union were filled with love, there would be no heart-breaks of this sort. But quite often, one of the two does possess genuine Christian love, while the other flaunts it. What to do? Keep on loving. It will supply patience, compassion, forgiveness, intercession, understanding, and wise counsel. It will keep the door open for God to do miraculous work. That work will be within the hearts of both parties—most especially blessing and sustaining the one who has been wronged, so that the hurt can heal completely.

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Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Should Christians, and especially should churches, get involved in politics?

Our national election will be a thing of the past before this answer appears in print, so something of the immediate relevance of the question will be lost. Perhaps the fact this particular election is over will enable us to weigh the issues more fairly, however. This is an important matter in that as the Lord tarries there are yet other elections and occasions for knowing the best answer to the question.

The question has no direct answer from scripture. There is no specific "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." Rather, we will have to use our judgment based on principles set forth in the word of God. One of the problems with this is that in the application of those principles we do not all arrive at the same answer. I know of Christians whom I respect highly who insist that it is the Christian's responsibility to be actively involved in politics. Others whom I respect just as highly see this as a somewhat futile thing and one which dilutes and hinders the Christian's greater task. There is no doubt that we are to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," but just what did the Lord mean to include in that?

For many centuries and in many places politics has not been a great concern because the citizens of many nations have had little direct voice in how the nation was ruled. The early church lived in a society that did not extend voting rights to the citizens. They lived, so far as they could in obedience to the Lord, obedient to the secular laws, paid their taxes, and had little if any voice in public affairs. Paul as a Roman citizen did not hesitate to use the advantages of that on several occasions, but there is no information concerning his involvement in the governing process. During the Reformation and afterward, which in great measure coincided with some great social and governmental changes, one of the issues raised was whether or not Christians could hold public office or participate in the ruling process. Even so, the question of real political involvement has been raised primarily in the era when our own government and others patterned after it have existed. In other words, it is for the most part a relatively modern issue. Is it a burdening encumbrance to be avoided, a privilege, or a responsibility to be met?

There is a popular position which says the Christian should take an active part in politics, using his influence for the forces of righteousness. While some denominational churches have long taken stands on political issues and have made official pronouncements, there has been a strong emphasis toward non-participation among many of the more conservative churches. Perhaps one of the things some of us see as significant is the fact that the further a religious group drifts from the Bible the more active it tends to become politically. Conservative non-participation seems to be changing, with some of these not only saying a Christian should be actively involved in politics but that the churches themselves should work actively in partisan causes. An effort to maintain a neutrality with respect to the two great political parties is more and more being declared weakness and failure. Is the change based on a growing realization of the right application of scriptural principles, or is it the result of secular forces or lower spiritual vitality in the church?

The writer's position is that the Christian needs to be very, very careful about politics, and that churches which get involved stand a very great chance of losing much more than they gain, either for themselves or for others! We need to be the salt of the earth, but we need to count the cost to see which way we are most able to do that without suffering dilution. My concern for churches is not so much for the tax-exempt status of the church as for the misplaced emphasis and the addition of another stumbling-block to the stumbling-block of the cross. There is a cost to being involved in politics, and I suppose each of us will have to decide if the gain is worth the cost. My own personal judgment is that in most instances it is not. There are those occasions when as a Christian I would want to exert all the force I could to decide an issue, when right is pretty much on one side and wrong on the other. Moreover, there may be local situations where I can have some influence on the outcome. God forbid that we should be cowards in the face of real issues of spiritual significance. But for the most part the issues are not so specific. "All it takes for evil to win is for the good folks to stay home and not participate," it is said. Of course, *if the choice is between black and white*, that is true. But in most elections the choice is not between black and white but between two shades of gray that are hardly distinguishable! Because of the cunning and deceitful propaganda campaigns that accompany a lot of elections, what seemed to be a vote for righteousness may turn out to be a vote for a rascal! One may in all sincerity vote for the darker shade of gray. There are those who thought the forces of righteousness rode with their vote four years ago who are now ready to declare differently.

What are the costs? There is a time cost. If there is to be any great significance to our efforts, we have to influence others—we have to campaign for our party or our man. That takes time. Oh, that Christians would work as hard at winning souls and doing spiritual work as they are willing to do for the party! The good must not become enemy of the best. Christians have a full-time job taking care of matters of higher priority, it seems to me. There is an influence

cost, especially to preachers and churches. The political preacher or church may alienate the sinner from hearing the gospel because he does not agree with the political views. In the rearing of children we have to say "no" so often that it is good to say "yes" when we can. In the church there are so many matters which require a stand that we ought not go out of our way to create others or to give offense if so little is to be gained. I'm much more interested in the conditions under which a man spends eternity than I am some of the relatively minor conditions which will affect his life here and now. I remind you that a high percentage of the decisions are not between absolute right or wrong but deal with issues that are somewhere in between. If we are not careful we can stir up a lot of righteous indignation over whether or not we are to get a tax cut. There is a moral and spiritual cost to the person who gets actively involved as a politician. "Not everyone in politics is dirty," someone says. And I agree! But in a majority of cases if he goes very far or stays very long the system which keeps him there will leave its stain. A man entering politics may not be dirty, but in order to retain the position he wants he may have to satisfy a lot of people who are dirty. In order to achieve any high office a man owes a lot of political debts and comes under the domination of a lot of ungodly men. Of course, there's Daniel. But Daniel did not come to power by popular vote and he did not stay there for that reason. Politics sent him to the lion's den. God, not man, gave Daniel his position.

What are the benefits of participating? "We can influence our government for good, create better living conditions, help put down evil, etc.," it is said. Can we? Sometimes, it may be. But how can people who at best are a minority (we still travel the narrow way) expect to dominate where the majority rules? Furthermore, the church vote (using "church" in its broadest sense) historically is not generally very discernible; "Christians" line up on both sides of most issues and pretty well lose any distinct voice. My hope for a better world here and now is not based on the ballot box or the right candidate but on an Almighty God who hears the prayers of His people. Now "politicizing" does not necessarily rule out praying, nor vice versa, and I know we should not sit back waiting for God to do something He expects us to do. But is that the job He has given Christians—reforming the world, withholding evil, etc.? Is not our job the evangelizing of the world and helping in the task of calling a people out of the world? It seems to me there is a lot of emphasis in the New Testament on our being citizens of heaven but strangers and pilgrims here, on our wrestling being with spiritual wickedness and not primarily with politicians, on our warfare not being carnal, on the quality of being not brawlers or strikers, or even boycotters.

Admittedly this answer reflects my views. I am aware that the application of principles is not always an easy task. I respect the man who may sincerely reach a different conclusion from the same word of God. Nor do I believe that the Christian ought to bury his head and be totally indifferent; I try to stay relatively well informed on many of the issues before us. This is needed for intelligent praying. More-

over, my concerns with respect to conditions of the day may not be so very different from some who are active in politics. I too am alarmed. But I do not personally believe our hope lies in politics or politicians, or in any political power Christians can achieve in the world system. "The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the watercourses; He turneth it whithersoever he will."

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Mankind Took a Wrong Turn"

They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one. Romans 3:12

In verse twelve of Romans three, quoted above from the American Standard Version, Paul continues his piling up of indictments against all mankind by quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. The entire verse is found also in Psalms 14:3 and the last half in Isaiah 53:1. The first half gives a statement of direction with its result in character and then a negative statement of the results in life takes up the rest of the verse.

"They are all turned aside" pictures all mankind headed in the right direction by God and then every single one of them turning off the right path and going his own way instead of God's way. There has never been a single exception to that from any man except the Lord Jesus Christ, Who always did the Father's will. Just try to picture the billions of human beings that have existed walking on a path and then all of them leaving the path and going another way. That is the kind of picture the opening statement gives us.

The resulting change of character is then stated—"they are together become unprofitable." The word translated "unprofitable" is an interesting one, meaning "to make useless, render unserviceable." It was used of rotten fruit as viewed by a cook. Mankind became as useless to God as rotton fruit is in cooking. The Hebrew word used in Psalm 14:3 means "to go bad, become sour like milk." You can choose which of the two words (Greek or Hebrew) gives the worst picture, but please note that the Holy Spirit, Who chose both words, was telling us that there is nothing in human nature

now that men have sinned, nothing of use to God. The efforts at self-improvement that men make are as useless as an apple trying to change back from being rotten to being a sound, edible piece of fruit. Please remember that the next time Satan tempts you to think that you can earn your way to Heaven, that you can please God by simply trying hard.

The second part of verse 12 then reinforces what has been said by pointing out that not one human being by nature "practices goodness". Paul is here speaking of "moral goodness, integrity, benignity, kindness." You might want to argue with that as you look at your own life with the colored glasses of human nature and without the perfect moral goodness of God, but you would be foolish to argue with the One Who has perfect knowledge of both you and goodness. He is the perfect Judge, the One Who will sit in judgment of everything about you and whose judgment will be perfect. Your mouth will not be opened to try to present any argument in that day, for He will show you how perfect His judgment is. You see, it is His Law that sets before you what He requires, and unless you find the Perfect One, Jesus Christ, to keep the perfect way you may do some things that *you* would call good, but your life is not one of "practicing good", as it ought to be. Well does William R. Newell sum this up: "Corruption rather than holiness, selfishness rather than goodness, cruelty rather than kindness, is the way of apostate mankind everywhere. Thus declares the Judge who looks upon men as they are" ("Romans Verse by Verse", page 82).

Every true Biblical doctrine is an abomination to human nature, but if there is one doctrine that human nature hates more than others it is probably this one that says that there is nothing good about fallen human nature. But do you remember that one day when a man came to Jesus and called Him Good Master that Jesus reminded him that that was the equivalent of calling Him God, telling him that "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Remember that Jesus also said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Truly Jesus is pointing out to us that there is a tremendous difference between human goodness and divine goodness. Go back again to our key text of Romans (1:16, 17) and be reminded that only in the gospel do we have revealed for us the righteousness of God and only when we have that perfect righteousness can we be saved. Don't hold back from the Lord's invitation because of some imagined goodness; come to Him and receive His goodness, His righteousness so that you may stand before God. The sinner can not stand in His presence and you are a sinner by nature and by practice. Let Him cleanse away your sin and give you the perfect standing before God. Accept His gift of eternal salvation and you will never be sorry.

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



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

IN SEPTEMBER THE NUMBER OF MEMBER nations in the United Nations grew to 154.

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST LEADERS recently republished its "Provisional Regulations on the Protection of State Secrets." State secrets, it stipulates include all state affairs that have not been announced. Even weather forecasts are included as state secrets unless the government decides to disclose them. When a trade official was asked what percentage of the country's exports flowed through a certain point, he replied, "I don't think the information has appeared in the newspapers." Everyone understands that information is classified unless it has been published in the papers.

A NEW PILOT WORKFARE PROJECT in seven counties around the country require that recipients of food stamps accept proffered jobs in order to receive the stamps for more than 30 days. The test was applied to 4,500 persons in San Diego County, CA; Sussex County, NJ; Muskingum County, OH; Berkeley County, SC; Clay County, SD; and, Rusk County, WI. The result was that two thirds dropped out of the Food Stamp program either by finding a job or not registering for stamps. Representative Findley (Rep. IL) asserts: "The first-year figures suggest that if workfare were applied nationwide, hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients would be encouraged to find and take regular jobs with a potential saving of millions of dollars to taxpayers."

This one government program costs the people more this year than the entire budget for 1939.

6,000 CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONS have united in a nationwide program to "clean up TV." The means is a boycott of the products which pay the bill to keep offensive programs on television. Many other churches or individual members of other churches have joined in this campaign by signing a notice that they would not purchase the products which keep the companies alive who sponsor these programs. The companies who were targeted are General Foods and American Home Products. Another company, Warner-Lambert seems to be negotiating its position about the kind of programs it will sponsor, so the campaign to clean up TV did not include them at this time. The program is under the leadership of the Joelton, TN, Church of Christ. If you have not had an opportunity to be a part of it, and wish to do so, write them for the forms to sign. This is a meaningful way to speak out for decency.

WILLY BRANDT CHAIRED AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION which called for major increases in aid and loans to poor countries and a major shift in power within international institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund to give greater voice to poor nations. This report follows some rather shocking demands of the "Group of 77" so-called "Developing Nations." This is a group of nations which now number 119 who are demanding that the richer nations set up a global fund of \$300 billion for the poorer nations by the year 2000. Never mind that these "poor nations" possess much raw material which is greatly desired by the "rich nations" in order to produce real wealth for all.

It takes work to mine and produce, but who will tell the "Group of 77" to try a little honest labor for a change.

A GROUP OF PARENTS IN SIOUX FALLS, S. D. brought suit against the city schools saying that Christmas programs were an unconstitutional entanglement between church and state and asking the court to prohibit the schools from having them. You will be happy to know that the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the decision of the local courts that allow some religious music, art, and literature to be used in programs marking holidays such as Christmas and Hannukkah. The Appeals Court said that Christmas Carols "have achieved a cultural significance that justifies their being sung in the public schools of Sioux Falls." Pray, folks. Remember the "cloud about the size of a man's hand"?

"I'M NOT FRIGHTENED BY WHAT LIES AHEAD," President-Elect Ronald Reagan. "Together we're going to put America back to work again . . . and we'll survive the problems that we face right now." So the former governor of California is looking forward to the challenges before him. One thing the American electorate should have known is that there was a vast difference between the Republican and Democrat platforms. The Republican platform reflected the philosophy of government that Mr. Reagan represented in most all of his public utterances, not only during the campaign, but for years past as well. Considering the platform of 1980, the people were offered a more clear-cut difference between the two parties than they have in many years. But, as satisfying as the election of Mr. Reagan must be to those who have been longing for a change to a sane philosophy of government, the results across the country in the electing of so many solid, "America-first"-type statesmen makes us feel like there is yet a future for America and the world. Again, pray, folks. It does remind me of the "cloud, the size of a man's hand."

CONGRESSMAN PHILIP CRANE OF Illinois says: "If a free society is to be preserved, and not lost or abandoned, it is essential that we rediscover the political philosophy that motivated the Founding Fathers—the philosophy that for its first two hundred years made the United States the most free country in the history of the world. We stand in serious danger of forgetting that philosophy and losing that freedom. What the future holds is up to us."

I appreciate the Congressman's thought in the above quotation. We must remember that the basis for the political philosophy of the Founding Fathers is a vital faith in the God of the Bible. If we lose that faith, we have lost that philosophy. "Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, lest we forget—lest we forget."

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE CAN DECIDE ON HOW much influence the Moral Majority had on the November elections. I doubt if the establishment media will make even a slightly honest attempt to bring together all the facts that could lead to an intelligent assessment of it. My feeling is that they did have a very significant part in the outcome of this election. I think that is the reason for the constant criticism of Mr. Falwell and others who were speaking out on the vital, moral issues previous to the election. Vice-President-elect George Bush says that conservative religious groups such as the Moral Majority will be represented in the Reagan Administration but will not have an undue influence on the new President. He further says, "A lot of the views of the so-called Moral Majority are not extreme views—strength of family, belief that this is one nation under God . . . there's been an effort in dealing with this subject to portray people who advocate these as some kind of extreme, whereas on the other end of the spectrum, you see ministers for years, groups like the National Council of Churches, off on the more liberal side of the spectrum and nobody got all excited about that."



"For Such A Time As This . . ."

Antoine Valdetero

"The characteristic falsehood of our day consists of humanizing God, deifying man, minimizing sin." This is a statement by Bro. R. H. Boll in his book on Revelation, page 127. If that was true 33 years ago, it is more so today.

We live in a world that does not see sin for what it really is—a rebellion by man against God. Have you ever stopped to consider how Satan has euphonized sin? Drunkenness is condemned throughout the Bible. Today, however, the drunkard is referred to as one being sick. The drunkard is no longer displeasing God but has a disease. All the cure-all clinics in the world cannot wash away the first sin of drunkenness from the drunkard's soul. Our society has been brainwashed into calling drinking "social" as though that removed its sting and ugliness. Isaiah spoke of those who call "evil good and good evil." We are living in such a day. The whiskey bottle is a familiar sight in supermarkets across our land and we have become accustomed to it.

The Bible condemns immorality, but our society refers to sex outside of marriage as "an expression of free love." Slogans such as "if it feels good, do it" are having a brainwashing effect on many in the church as well as out of it. Nowhere does our society tell us as the Apostle Paul does that fornication is a sin against one's own body.

In our society people steal and the sin is almost condoned because the thief is a product of the wrong environment. Behind it all is Satan deceiving on every hand.

Perhaps the greatest blight on our nation's record is the upsurge in abortions. A propaganda campaign making the murder of unborn children the right of every woman "to control her own body" is another of the devil's lies. That control of the body should begin with an attitude about purity. The cause leading to abortions is uncontrolled sex. The point has been made that we live in a day in which sin is minimized.

These are not the only sins that are being winked at today. Sins of anger, malice, gossip and envy are just as destructive. As Christians we are told to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man."

Preaching against sin is not real popular. Isaiah was told to "lift up thy voice like a trumpet and declare unto my people their sins." Preaching against sin is not pleasant. There are many subjects that I

would much rather preach on, but a preacher has a responsibility to warn people of the impending danger and brainwashing of our day.

Many readers of this article would affirm their belief that Jesus may come at anytime. Can anyone envision Jesus coming back for His church and going into a dance hall to find some of his saints? Can anyone envision Jesus breaking up a beer party to take His people home? **Liquor and the modern dance** have done as much, if not more, to break down godliness than anything in the world today. Isn't it sad that many members of the church find nothing wrong with dancing? No man would permit another the liberty with his wife that is afforded on the dance floor.

Jesus is coming back! The call to "come ye out and be ye separate" is as valid today as when Paul wrote it. "For such a time as this" God's people should be holy, separate from the world, and living like they are expecting the coming of the Lord Jesus. **The breakdown that we see today in the lives of many church members is an indication that they do not really believe Jesus may come at any time and it shows in their lives.** It's time that we preachers preach against sin—and call it just that, sin! It's time for God's people to "rend their hearts and not their garments" and get ready for Jesus to come. Let's not be doing anything that we would be ashamed to be doing when Jesus comes. The poet Pope has well said:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen.
But seen to oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

O, beloved, let us not let sin become common and accepted.

REPRINTS:

"Petrified Saints"

R. H. BOLL

Too many Christians, especially those of middle age and past, have settled down for what they are for the rest of their lives. They think they are doing tolerably well, or very well, as the case may be, and they look forward to nothing more. There is a kind of fatalism in this, and consequent lack of hope and inspiration, a kind of self-content and lazy comfort that is unwilling to be shaken out of its rut. Now and then the Lord gets hold of such a mummy as this and shakes it back to life, and that in no gentle way. That is kindness and special grace on God's part. But do not wait for that. Quit that hopelessness and that self-complacency now. Plow up your fallow ground. Look forward to something. It is not at all recorded that you must always be what you are; and it is only Satan that always whispers, "no use." We must get a better knowledge, a truer outlook, a brighter spirit, a cleaner heart, higher love, a more sincere life. Do not shun the difficulty of the attempt and of the disturbance of lazy, automatic habits. A spiritual fossil is of no account. Neither is there life without strife—none worth mentioning. Get thee up hence. Make a sincere beginning right now, and God will take notice of it and fall in to help you.

Some Second Thoughts on the Timing of the Rapture

Dr. David R. Reagan



During the past few months I have analysed eleven arguments regarding the validity of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture concept, seven in behalf of it and four opposed to it. My conclusions were as follows:

- 1) The timing of the Rapture is a mystery that is not clearly revealed in scripture.
- 2) The scriptures *infer* that the Rapture will occur *before* the Tribulation begins.
- 3) Although the Rapture could occur after the beginning of the Tribulation, the scriptures infer that it could not occur any later than the mid-point in the Tribulation, when the Anti-Christ reveals himself.

NEW ARGUMENTS

As is often the case in discussing a Biblical question of this nature, the most obvious arguments are sometimes overlooked. Since completing the series on the timing of the Rapture the Holy Spirit has brought to my mind three such obvious arguments which have convinced me more than ever that the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation begins.

The first argument is based upon Jesus' description of the Rapture in John 14:1-3:

Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (RSV)

Jesus makes it rather clear in this passage that when He comes for His church, He will take the church back to Heaven with Him. This is a definite indication that the Rapture will be an event separate and apart from the Second Coming of Christ to this earth. The passage also makes it clear why the church will meet Jesus in the sky. The Historic Pre-Millennial view, which holds that the Rapture and the Second Coming will be one combined event at the end of the Tribulation, has never been able to offer any logical explanation of why the church should be snatched off the earth if it is going

to return immediately to the earth. This “yo-yo” effect has just never made any sense. But this passage in John 14 makes sense of the Rapture by its indication that those who are raptured will proceed to Heaven with Christ.

THE MILLENNIAL POPULATION

An even better argument in behalf of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is the one that relates to those people who will populate the earth in the flesh during the Millennial reign of Jesus. The argument goes like this:

- 1) The Bible teaches that only saved people will populate the Millennium in the flesh.
- 2) If the Rapture does not occur until the Second Coming of Christ, then there would be no one to populate the earth in the flesh during the Millennium, because all saved people, living and dead, will be raptured and glorified at the return of Christ.

This is a devastating argument against the Historic Pre-Millennial concept that the Rapture will be delayed until the end of the Tribulation. It rests, of course, upon the assumption that only saved people will be allowed to enter the Millennium in the flesh, and so that assumption must be proved convincingly. It can be:

- 1) Jesus teaches in His parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30) that at His return the “weeds” (unbelievers) will be gathered to be burned, whereas the “wheat” (believers) will be gathered into the barn.
- 2) In His second advent discourse recorded in Luke 17:22-37, Jesus tells His disciples that there will be a gathering of people at His return whose bodies will be fed to the vultures.. Again, He is speaking of a worldwide gathering of unbelievers who will be consigned to death.
- 3) In the great judgment scene portrayed in Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus is seen judging the Gentiles upon His return to this earth. All those who have demonstrated their unbelief by their refusal to help Jews and Christians during the Tribulation are sentenced to eternal punishment.

These passages make it very clear that unbelievers will not be allowed to enter the Millennium in the flesh. Thus, if the Rapture is delayed until the end of the Tribulation, there will be no one to populate the Millennium in the flesh, for Believers will be given glorified bodies at the time of the Rapture.

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture concept eliminates this problem. It provides two groups of people who will populate the Millennium in the flesh: 1) Gentile Believers who are converted during the Tribulation and who live to the end of the Tribulation period; and 2) The remnant of the Jews who “look upon Him whom they have pierced” and believe.

THE RAPTURE IN REVELATION

The best and most obvious argument in behalf of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is one that is often used against the concept! It is the argument that the Pre-Trib Rapture is nowhere pictured in the Book of Revelation.

Those who believe in the Pre-Trib Rapture have usually responded to this attack on their position by trying to prove that the translation of John from earth to heaven, recorded in Revelation 4:1, is a type of the Pre-Trib Rapture. But as I have pointed out in an earlier article in this series, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that John is a prophetic type of the church. It just requires too much reading between the lines.

Instead of trying to present such obviously strained arguments, those of us who believe in the Pre-Trib Rapture should simply admit that the Rapture is nowhere portrayed in the Book of Revelation—and then we should point out that this is one of the best arguments in behalf of a Pre-Trib Rapture! Why? Because the Book of Revelation focuses on a detailed description of the Tribulation period, and although it does not reveal the Rapture of the church, it reveals that the church will return in glory with Jesus at the end of the Tribulation.

—This latter revelation is contained in chapter 19 where we are told in verse 14 that “the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure” follow Jesus on white horses when He returns to the earth. Lest anyone think that this is a description of angels, please note verses 7 & 8 in the same chapter where those “clothed in fine linen, bright and pure” are identified as the Bride of Christ. And, of course, the Bride of Christ is the church (II Cor. 11:2 and Eph. 5:25).

The point is this: 1) The Book of Revelation describes the Tribulation period in detail; 2) This description does not include the Rapture of the church, but does include the return of the church in glory with Christ at the end of the Tribulation; 3) Therefore, the clear inference is that the Rapture occurs *before* the Tribulation events described in Revelation. To put it another way, the reason the Book of Revelation does not mention the Rapture of the church is because that event has already taken place before the Tribulation narrative in the Book of Revelation begins.

POST-TRIB BOOKS

Let me conclude by directing your attention to two Post-Tribulation Rapture books which are currently receiving a lot of attention. Both are published by Omega Press in Medford, Oregon (P.O. Box 4130), and both are being promoted extensively in large display ads contained in all the leading Christian magazines published nationally. The books are *The Incredible Cover-Up* by Dave MacPherson and *Christians Will Go Through the Tribulation* by Jim McKeever. Both books have caused a considerable stir among Evangelicals.

McPherson's book is a total waste of time. It is a sensationalist piece of writing that was done several years ago by a journalist. It has been published under two previous titles as *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin* and *The Late Great Pre-Trib Rapture*. It claims that John Darby, the leader of the Plymouth Brethren in England during the 1830's, got the idea of the Pre-Trib Rapture from the hysterical, trance-like ramblings of a Scottish woman named Margaret Macdonald. Supposedly, this disreputable origin of the Pre-Trib Rapture concept has been "hushed-up" by those who advocate the concept.

McPherson never proves his thesis. The only thing he proves is that various people have advocated the thesis. When he presents a transcript of Mrs. McDonald's remarks (contained in the appendix of the book), he in fact disproves his own thesis, for the transcript does not reveal anything that even hints of a Pre-Trib Rapture! But the really crucial point is that even if it could be proved that the concept originated with Mrs. Macdonald, that would prove nothing about the concept's validity. The point Christians should be concerned with is not the origin of the doctrine but whether or not it coincides with what the scriptures teach. McPherson has nothing to say about this.

McKeever's book is more valuable, even though it is disappointing. It is disappointing because he devotes only 56 of his 351 pages to proving that the church will go through the Tribulation. His arguments are superficial and unconvincing, and he himself must have sensed this, because he finally refers the readers to two other books which he claims prove his point.

But the book is worth purchasing for what he has to say in the rest of it regarding physical and spiritual preparedness for times of tribulation. He gives valuable tips on how to prepare for nuclear war, earthquakes, famine, economic collapse, and religious persecution. Even though I believe the church will not go through the Tribulation period described in Revelation, I believe the Bible teaches things are going to get progressively worse and that we are likely to suffer economic hardship, religious persecution, and perhaps even nuclear war before the period of Tribulation begins.



STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

These Studies started back in February; and we have studied the Prayer experiences of Old and New Testament people. Those accounts

might cause some to wish that they could have lived back in those "good ole days".

But, wait a minute! Is not our Prayer-answering God "the same, yesterday, today, and forever"? (see Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8) There are more Prayer-promises in the New Testament than in the Old; and more admonitions regarding prayer after Calvary than before. Most all New Testament writers wrote forcefully on Prayer. Promises abound in the writings of Paul, who was guided by the Holy Spirit. Peter, James and John were guided to write abundant assurances for us, who live in this day and hour!

Sir Walter Raleigh, the great English Sea Captain who travelled and fought for Queen Elizabeth the First, one day stood before the Queen, making a request. The Queen spoke to Raleigh, saying, "Raleigh why is it that you're always asking me for something?" The Captain answered, "Your Majesty, I'll quit asking, when Your Majesty quits giving."

Now, Our Great Giver NEVER quits giving—so long as we humble ourselves before Him, repenting and confessing our sins, and praising Him for His lovingkindness—and making our requests for the "desires of our hearts". (see Psalm 37:4) And, remember, James 4:2 ("Ye have not, because ye ask not"). What a challenge to Pray!

Occasionally a few fellow-Believers confide to us certain answers they've received from their prayers. Why are there not more of such testimonies? Are we afraid to speak out, giving praise to our God, for His abundant loving-kindnesses?

Consider the prayer-life of David, the Psalmist. Unashamedly, David witnessed, saying, "This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him". (Psa. 34:6) No wonder he was referred to as "a man after God's own heart". (Acts 13:22) He did "all of his Lord's will," and a part of God's will, was to pray and give thanks, and praise his God.

I'll tell you what let's do: Let's start sharing with one another what the Lord has done and is doing for us, in answer to our prayers! I'll "start the ball to rolling," and please join in! Send me some of your experiences and I'll relate mine. (Here's a starter—)

Some years ago we were returning from Fall Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee where we had assisted Bro. Crowder in a youth Camp. We left Camp earlier than did the Gallatin Church Bus, which brought many of the young people. We had to travel a number of miles along Interstate 40. We had to stop our car to check for smoke coming from our motor. A bunch of my keys were brushed off the car seat as I opened the car door. I was not aware of this. Later, as we stopped in Gallatin, I discovered that my keys were gone. I told Bro. Crowder about it. Later, when the bus got there, and we had gone home to Winchester, Brother Crowder told Bro. David Schreiner about my loss. David had left the camp, driving the Church bus with a load of the Gallatin Church children. A mechanic rode with David, the two of them alone in the bus for the bus had developed motor trouble, necessitating a call to Gallatin for cars to come take the children back to Gallatin, leaving David with a mechanic who also was brought from

Gallatin. The two men drove very slowly along the apron of I-40 for fear that a rod would be thrown in the motor of the bus. One of them spotted some keys on the side of the highway. No identification was with the keys, so they hailed a Tenn. State Patrol car, and gave them to them. A call to the Highway Department in Tennessee led to a search. They located which county seat the Patrolman had turned the lost keys into. I got my Keys! (For I had asked the Lord to do the Impossible!) I had travelled a number of miles along I-40, and had dropped my keys "no-telling-where" during a more than 100 miles of driving. I really had thought that I probably left them or lost them before leaving the camp. (I just knew that they were gone.) And, did I say God did the Impossible? Yes, but not Impossible to HIM! ("Is there any thing too difficult for me?" said the Lord in Jer. 32:27.) I had prayed—God answered!

I can, and will relate many more of such experiences of my prayer-life—but not yet: rather, I will leave space for some of yours! Don't "let me down," for I have no monopoly, and I firmly believe that it will encourage many others to go boldly to the Throne of Grace where they too will find grace that will enrich their faith in our Prayer-answering God! (Heb. 4:16)

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HIGH CALLING

By P. Jim Elliot

Now let us go back, not a decade nor a mere century, nor even a millennium, but into eternity—back into the reaches beyond creation, before the earth was hung on nothing or stars were flung into an empty universe; before rankling pride threw Lucifer from his high station, ere time had begun to be.

There in the council chambers of a Triune God were born immutable purposes. Amid divine intents of good and glory, of sin and judgment, of matters angelic and matters demonic, crept in a thing unthought: a cross, grim and raw as martyrs know it. A cross and death—death, before God had breathed life into the nostrils of man. Death, devised and accepted as the means whereby those eternal counsels should come to fruition.

The high calling which was to be given the Son, with all its glorious involvements, was not free from the principle of crucifixion. Christ is as a "Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." And today—aons later—as Christians who have postulated in all our thinking a God who planned such redemption, we dare not look ahead nor plan at all except we first reckon with the cross. We do not exalt the cross for its own sake; the cross ever remains the emblem of mockery and shame.

The cross is not constructed of yellow gold or shining ivory, but of rough splintery wood. We do not exalt it, but we must not, we dare not exclude it. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus is a call primarily to the cross: the place of sin-removal. No man nor all of men together can better their eternal welfare without taking their place before the Man by whose death on the cross peace with God became a reality. What a race of fools we have shown ourselves when we have excluded from our thinking the element that God has placed central in His designs. No cross, no peace. An uncrucified Christ is a worthless Christ.

The work of Jesus Christ in redeeming fallen mankind has been completed. But all mankind has not yet heard—nor shall it hear until those of us who know His life proclaim by bold witness the hated message of His death and resurrection. Our knowledge increases our responsibility, and God has chosen us to this high calling: spreading the message of divine reconciliation to a rebellious world.

This very hour that cross is in effect among us . . . in your city, on Skid Row. See that grimy sot, to whom that Christian is talking. Tonight when you crawl between clean sheets he will roll onto a bare, lice-infested mattress in that flop house just around the corner. That Christian knows this and the cross has come into his life so that such things disturb him. He knows that flop houses and gutter-wallowing and the merciless shackles of base habits are the results of a root which the cross was erected to destroy.

He has found that the only release from those foul fetters which chain men to Skid Row and relentlessly drag them into the maw of unglutted hell is in the cross—the cross where Christ carried the weight of judgment for such sin. And caring nothing for his reputation, he has taken up that cross. All else is despised except the Man who cared nothing for the shame of a cross because of glory that was set beyond.

Oh Prince of Glory, Who dost bring thy sons to glory through thy cross: Let me not shrink from suffering, reproach, or loss.

And so in the simplest, most understandable terms the Christian is telling that bum what all this means. He speaks of a Savior who knew sacrifice and love. He tells of a cross, a tomb, a future throne of judgment. But somehow the man does not understand. Satan has tensed his grip on that sorry life and has brought such blindness that the mind fails to grasp even the simplest truths. Only a miraculous entrance of light by the Spirit of Power into that mind will restrain him from judgment. And only by much travailing prayer can that light enter. Travail, there's the word; suffering, cross-bearing!

Has the story gripped you—gripped you so that you too know the impact of a cross? So that the cross has come to mean more to you than simply a story in history, and has become the principle of your life?

(Continued on page 345)

HAVE THE JEWS CEASED TO EXIST?

By Dr. David Reagan

This question may seem ridiculous, but I assure you, it is not. Increasingly, I am running across people within Christendom at large who argue that the Jews have ceased to exist, and therefore God could not have any purpose left for them.

At a large meeting of Church of Christ ministers in Dallas about a year ago, one of the ministers argued vehemently that the Jews have been mongrelized as a race by inter-marriage with Gentiles and that the Jews have ceased to exist as an identifiable segment of humanity. While listening to this man, I kept sitting there thinking how stunned the Arab world would be to hear the news that there are no Jews in Palestine! A few months ago I received a letter from another man in the Dallas area who challenged me to debate him on the existence of the Jews. I felt like I should send him a page from the Dallas telephone directory with the Jewish names underlined! Several weeks ago I started receiving a prophetic newsletter from a group in Ohio who take the position that *all* end time prophecies (the return of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment, and the "end of the world") were fulfilled in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem. They too deny the continuing existence of the Jewish people.

ISRAEL'S PERMANENCY

This position about the non-existence of the Jews is incredible in the light of what the Bible teaches about the permanency of the Jews. The most definite teaching regarding this matter is contained in Jeremiah 31:35-37. In this passage God says that Israel is as permanent as the "fixed order of the moon and stars." "When this fixed order departs," says the Lord, "then shall the descendants of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever." And then, to emphasize His point, God repeats His promise by saying that Israel will be "cast off" only when the heavens above have been measured and the foundations of the earth explored. In other words, Israel will never be cut off.

I just don't know how God could make His intention any plainer. The language is clear, precise, and graphic. The promise is unconditional. God does not lie, nor does He exagurate.

In Isaiah 49:15 God says that His commitment to Israel is as permanent as that of a woman to her nursing baby. He asks, "Can a woman forget her suckling child?" He answers His own question by stating that although it might be possible for her to forget (though not probable), it is not possible for Him to forget the Jewish people. And then He adds a startlingly symbolic statement to again emphasize the strength of His commitment: "Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands." (Isa. 49:16) In other words, God has the children of Israel tattooed on His hand, and thus He can never forget them.

In Jeremiah 30, God states that He will preserve the Jewish nation until the return of Christ. Speaking of "Jacob's trouble" (the Tribulation period), He says that some of the Jews will be saved out of it (verse 7). Then He adds: "I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end." (verse 11) This promise is repeated in Jeremiah 46:28.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The permanency of Israel as a nation is also emphasized in God's promises to Abraham. In Genesis 12:1-3 God promises to make a great nation of the descendants of Abraham, and He promises to bless that nation and to curse those who curse that nation. This explains the survival of the Jew in history despite almost 2,000 years of dispersion and persecution. It also explains the disappearance into the dust bin of history of such nations as the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Edomites, and many similar groups who persecuted the Jews at one time or another.

It should be emphasized that the Abrahamic covenant is unilateral, unconditional, and everlasting. It was ratified by God only (Gen. 15:7-21). No conditions were specified for its fulfillment. And it is declared repeatedly to be "everlasting." (Gen. 17:1-8) In short, the Abrahamic Covenant is still in effect (Gal. 3:15-18 and Heb. 6:13-18). As Paul puts it in Romans 9:4—"my brethren, my kinsman by race—They are Israelites, and to them belong... the covenants... and the promises."

THE REGATHERING

The permanency of Israel is also taught in the regathering promises which God has made to the Jews. In Isaiah 11:10-12 the prophet says that the time will come when God will regather the Jews a second time from the "four corners of the earth." There is no way this prophecy can be made to apply to the return from Babylonian captivity. That regathering involved only about 50,000 Jews from two tribes who returned from one city. Isaiah 11 speaks of a *second* regathering that will assemble all the: "outcasts of Israel" and the "dispersed of Judah" from all over the world. How can God fulfill this promise unless the Jewish people are preserved through their dispersion?

In Amos 9:14 & 15, God gives an unconditional promise that He will someday "restore the fortunes" of the Jews. Their cities will be rebuilt, their vineyards replanted, and they themselves will be "planted" in their land and "shall never be plucked up again out of the land." This is an unfulfilled, unconditional promise that cannot be fulfilled unless the Jewish people are preserved.

In Zechariah 10:6 God again promises through His prophet that a day will come when He will regather Israel and Judah (that is, all the Jewish people). "I will bring them back because I have compassion on them," He says, "and they shall be as though I had not rejected them." This promise was given *after* the return from

Babylonian captivity, and thus it clearly refers to a future, promised regathering of all Jews that has not yet been fulfilled and which cannot be fulfilled unless the Jews are preserved.

THE REMNANT

The permanency of the Jewish people is also taught in the prophecies of Zechariah and Paul regarding the preservation of a Jewish remnant. Zechariah says that one-third of the Jews will survive the Tribulation and will turn to God in faith (Zech. 13:8 & 9 and 12:10). Likewise, Paul prophesies that God will save a remnant of the Jews *after* the full number of the Gentiles have come into the church (Rom. 11:1-6, 25 & 26).

To summarize, the Bible clearly teaches that God will preserve the Jews in their dispersion, regather them for tribulation, and save a remnant at the return of Christ in glory. God calls the Jews "the apple of His eye." (Zech. 2:8) His rejection of them is as unthinkable as is the rejection by Christ of His bride, the church.

(Next month Dr. Reagan will continue this series on the Jew in Prophecy by considering the Question, "Have the Jews Been Cut Off From the Promises of God?")

Wooden Leg Religion

I once read an interesting quip that started me thinking about the reality and usefulness of personal religion.

Too many people have a religion that is just like a wooden leg. There is neither warmth nor life in it. And although it helps them hobble along through life, it never becomes a part of them. They have to strap it on every morning.

This uncomfortably describes the lifeless, insincere effect portrayed by some people suffering from a personally deficient mal-religion. Jesus used another symbol to teach the same principles when He likened worthless religion to savorless salt.

"Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and be trodden under foot of men." Matt. 5:13.

An excellent place for me to begin restoring a warmth to the Lord's living religion is with me. It might be disappointing and surprising to know just how influentially dead I am. May God help each of us to rededicate our purposes to Christ and the religion He powerfully directs.

—Selected

AT BILL AND BETTY'S

SHARING CHRISTMAS

I was feeling rather pleased with myself because I had finished my Christmas shopping much earlier than usual. It's really much the best plan to get it done in good time while tempers are still un-

frayed and there is a good choice of gifts. I was standing by the escalator in the Co-op and had just decided that such virtue really deserved a cup of tea when I bumped into Sylvia from down the road.

"My feet are killing me," she said, "I can't think why we let ourselves in for this rat race every year."

I picked up a flimsy paper bag that Sylvia had dropped and it promptly split, raining Christmas cards and labels all over the shop floor.

"Brother!" Sylvia said, "I knew it would do that sooner or later."

"You need a cup of tea," I said. "Come on, I was just going to treat myself."

"I don't know why you don't buy your cards from the Church Bookstall," I said a few minutes later as I poured her out a strong cup of tea in the Store Cafe. "You can choose them at peace and leisure and they're half the price of the secular cards in the shops."

"But you can't send religious cards to everyone," Sylvia protested.

"I used to think that, but I don't any more," I said. "After all, it is our Lord's birthday that we're meant to be celebrating, isn't it?"

"I'm fed up with Christmas," Sylvia said suddenly.

"I think it's very much overrated. You spend too much and eat too much, and what have you got at the end of it?"

"Perhaps if we spent a little less and ate a little less, we'd have a little more at the end of it," I pointed out gently.

"Are you going to be on your own for Christmas again?" I went on.

"Yes," Sylvia said. "Just the three of us."

"Then why don't you invite someone to spend Christmas with you?" I said, "someone who would have a pretty lonely Christmas otherwise."

"Oh I don't know," Sylvia said, "you never know how it will work out—inviting someone outside the family, I mean."

"Inviting someone outside to come inside is the heart of the Christmas message," I reminded her. "There are those foreign students the preacher was telling us about or one of the old people from our own church if you want someone more familiar. You'd find Christmas has much more meaning if you're trying to give someone else happiness, you know."

"Perhaps you're right," Sylvia said. "I'll talk it over with Hugh anyway."

"And Sylvia," I said, "we're planning to play Santa Claus to the Masters family. You know—the chap at Bill's work with the big family. We thought we'd fill a sack and drop it on their doorstep on Christmas Eve. Like to help?"

"Sounds fun," Sylvia said, draining her cup. "Do you know, I'm beginning to look forward to Christmas after all!"
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Remember Those Who Are Mistreated

Alex V. Wilson

Scripture says, "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Heb. 13:3). Yet how often do we think and intercede for those in Communist or Muslim lands? Try to imagine the following incident:

An evangelist who supports himself as a businessman "was able to hold a baptismal meeting for more than a dozen new believers even though he knew that a government agent was present. He took the group of new converts 'swimming' one afternoon during a camping trip. The camp cook invited the agent to the cook's tent for an extra snack while the group swam. As the agent enjoyed his snack, a group of new believers followed the Lord in baptism!"

We need to keep informed about our brothers and sisters around the world. If you don't subscribe to MISSIONARY MESSENGER magazine, published by Victor Broaddus, you are missing out on a lot. It mainly tells of current blessings, needs, opportunities and problems around the world. But it also contains past articles by brethren Boll, Janes and others.

Maybe like me you sometimes feel swamped with magazines! But other Christians—especially those who are retired or bed-ridden—have lots of time on their hands. Why not subscribe for them to WORD AND WORK, MISSIONARY MESSENGER, and OPEN DOORS. The latter is a bimonthly that tells mainly of the church in Communist lands. Such reading will motivate people to give themselves to intercession—one of our greatest needs. (Addresses: Missionary Messenger, 199 North Hanover Ave., Lexington, Ky. 40502. Open Doors, P.O. Box 2020, Orange, CA. 92669.)

RESPONSIBILITY

We may not be able to save men from the consequences of their sins, but we at least can save ourselves from the charge of neglect. What we do with the message we have is our responsibility, but what they who hear us do with the message is not our responsibility. We are commissioned to warn men that there is a precipice ahead; if, after that, they go over it, that is not our responsibility. It is our responsibility to give the "bread of life" to starving men, but if at last they should die of starvation, that is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is not the conversion of the world, but its evangelization!—Copied

HIGH CALLING, continued

O solemn hour! O hour alone,
In solitary might;
When God the Father's only Son,
As man, for sinners to atone,
Expires—amazing sight!
The Lord of glory crucified!
The Lord of life has bled and died!

O mysteries of mysteries!
Of life and death the tree,
Center of two eternities,
Which look, with rapt, adoring eyes,
Onward and back to Thee—
O cross of Christ, where all His pain
And death is our eternal gain.

O how our inmost hearts do move,
While gazing on that cross!
The death of the Incarnate Love!
What shame, what grief, what joy we prove,
That He should die for us!
Our hearts were broken by that cry—
“*Eli, lama sabachthani?*”

But Skid Row is only one street, and your city is only one city, and the United States is only one country—what of the rest? Those hundreds of languages which as yet have not a single syllable of the cross-story . . . those millions outside the scope of established Christendom? What shall we say about thousands of populated miles which have no Christians to tell about the cross—no printed Gospels, no churches, no tracts, no wayside missions. Surely Skid Row is enlightened compared to them. How deaf must the ears of those who have never once heard the name “Jesus,” never once been told the story of the cross. Yes, it is a deafness so still we rightly call it *death*.

It's evening here in Skid Row. But it's late afternoon in Tibet, and a missionary with his guide stand before a job yet to be done behind the ranges. Back there, thousands of feet high along the crags of the Himalayas, are perched the lamisaries, centers of Satanic domination which hold whole tribes in clutches of unabated superstition and fear unknown to the Western world. Inside those monasteries in little cell blocks live holy men who have been walled into the very masonry of the building.

There they sit this very evening, turning prayer wheels. The one who walks by can hear rattlings come from small apertures in those stone tombs—the only source of light those men ever see. For they have committed themselves to lives of prayer.

Once each day a bowl of gruel is pushed onto the ledge of that slot, and the holy man's dirty hand reaches out, and he gulps it down. Once a day, for many days, for many months, for many years, he clutches at the bowl that blocks the sole ray of light from his filthy den. He does nothing else but turn that prayer wheel, till the muscles of his hand are so contorted that they have no use but to grasp the little handle of the wheel. But one day the gruel remains untouched; the sound of the rattling has ceased. The bowl is removed, and a stone is sealed into place, and the end of that holy man's life is marked. And hundreds have gone this way, never having heard the story of the cross. How many more will go before the cross drives us from our beds of soft, 20th century conventionalism? God only knows. Only He can stop this great waste of souls, despairing and being destroyed, without any witness from us who have known the truth for so long.

That missionary who stands there before the ranges, crushed with loneliness, hears a strange echo in memory's chamber—the sound of complacent Christians in America, steadfast in their pews, singing "Send the Light."

Lhassa, the capital of that country, is one of three such capitals in the world who have as yet no Christian witness whatsoever, and this fellow intends to take there the story of the cross. But he presses on alone with the mocking memory of missionary hymns sung zestfully by people who do not mean what they say.

In Central Asia are seven countries—Tibet, Nepal, Russian and Chinese Turkestan, Afganistan, Bhutan, and Mongolia. Their population is estimated at about 35 million. These doors are shut to the gospel, barred with a three-fold bolt: inaccessability, language difficulties and political opposition. Tell me, have you ever prayed that God would open these doors? Has it ever been any concern to you that the oppression of a wretched political priestcraft has kept these people of Central Asia in a bondage of demonism of which the Western world has no conception? Have you ever laid hold on God for those few missionaries who are assailing the stony bastions of that sealed land—cried to Him for their advance with the story you possess at so little cost? God send the cross among us to instill a zeal that shall consume, give us concern, send us into dark places, steel us to ourselves—*crucify* us!

PERSPECTIVE

When we shall come Home and enter into the possession of our Brother's fair kingdom, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings: then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from prison to glory; and that our little inch of time-suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome home to heaven.

—Samuel Rutherford

It's getting late—and in Africa this very night in a low mud hut in the depths of the black Ituri forest kneels another one of these cross-men. He has trekked tirelessly for a week in the heart of that jungle, and now instead of his body receiving the rest it deserves, he cannot sleep, but pours out his soul in an agony of prayer. Why? Just beyond that mud hut, in the glare of a fire, the frenzy of demon power drives fear-ridden Africans to excesses of wild contortion. The hours drag on through moon rising, and the shrill cries of the worshippers surge and ebb with the weird cadence of the dancing. The still forest soaks up the sound.—And what thoughts swell within the breast of that weary cross-man there upon his knees? Why is he so concerned?

I'll tell you why. He has caught a vision of a Man who carried that cross alone, and hears Him say, "I died for your release and the release of all these. But they know not the story, and how shall they hear except one such as you should tell them? I bore a cross to finish the task of reconciling the world to my Father. You must bear one to tell that word of reconciliation to the world. If any would come after me let him say 'No!' to himself, and take hold of the cross day by day, and follow close in my track."

David Livingstone poured out his soul one night, praying like that, and was found late the next morning by Africans, dead upon his knees. Are we not cowardly and false to neglect the awful reality of carrying a rugged cross? How we pad it and make it easy by our non-committal attitude. But we must face it if this generation is ever to answer the terrific challenge of a world dominated by an awful usurper.

Brothers, what shall it be for us tomorrow? A cross or a pillow? Death or an easy chair? Humility and loss for His sake, or the gain and praise of a God-despising world? Now hear the Master as He judges:

Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,

Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed round,

I swooned:

Hast thou no wound?

No wound? no scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me;

But thine are whole: can he have followed far

Who has no wound nor scar?

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in my body.”

And this is the principle, even of our daily food. We take life from dead elements. So alone can the world hear the message of life, by death working in us. In our witness for Jesus Christ life can be manifested only as death makes its sting known.

Death? Death to what? Death to these old desires of pleasure and ease. Death to the rebel-will within. Death to the man of old who seeks his own selfish ends. Death to the flesh which will do anything, will serve, will sing, pass out tracts and shout—anything, that is, but die.

From subtle love of softening things,
From easy choices, weakenings,
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified,
From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Quickly now we move out of Congo, north across the grasslands and over the parched, sprawling Sahara. Into the stronghold of Islam we come, where a false prophet receives the homage of 350 million Moslems—homage which rightfully belongs to Jesus Christ alone. Every town of any size has its mosque and daily calls to prayer. North Africa, land of the vanquished church. Land where 600 flourishing Christian churches once hailed Christ as Divine Son and Savior, where countless mosques and minarets now jut into the empty heavens. North Africa, handle of Islam's scimitar whose end rests beneath the shadow of Gibraltar; the jewel of whose hilt is Mecca in Arabia, and whose broad blade lies unchallenged across the Middle East, sweeping even to western China.

Here is a couple who have answered the high calling of the cross and find themselves at war with that broad scimitar, that blade which is not sheathed. They know the organized aggressiveness of that Mohammedan challenge. But Christians are largely ignorant of its attacks, not realizing that today there are more Mohammedan missionaries in Christianized countries than there are Christian missionaries in lands under the shadow of Islam. Arabia—comparable in size to the United States east of the Mississippi—has less than 40 missionaries among her 10 million. And there is not a single mission station on her Red Sea coast. Put a mission station in Maine, one in Boston, one in New York, one at Tampa and another in Key West and you have the evangelical situation in Arabia transposed to our continent. Could those five outposts evangelize Eastern United States? The black stone of Islam is unchipped and will remain so until God raises up from among us men who believe the power of the cross is stronger than that stone.

“Islam was cradled in the desert and has borne the imprint of its environment ever since—stern, ruthless, majestic, awful, in-

evitable, Islam spreads more rapidly than Christianity, though Christianity penetrates much more deeply." But Islam is advancing, while Christianity today seems only to entrench. With all their pride in a lofty monotheism, the Prophet's people have failed to improve even to a small degree the moral and social rot which characterizes their religion. Yet this rot in no way assuages their aggressive zeal.

The Liberian government reports the persistent penetration of Mohammedan Negroes into the interior of that land. Missionaries today tell us of infiltration of Mecca's emissaries into South Africa. It is not yet decided which shall set the cultural standards for Africa: Islam or the Cross.

And what are the effects of their efforts? What conditions prevail under the black tents of Kedar? Those mud walls—what sort of people rest behind their shelter tonight? What is the moral life of this seventh of the whole human race?

"Islam," says Adolph Wuttka, "violently interrupts the progress of cultural history and is to be regarded as an attempt of heathenism to maintain itself erect against Christianity under an outward monotheistic form." Islam is as a towering mountain range, whose summits are gilded with the light and truth of God's existence and unity, but whose foothills run down into the putrid swamps of degradation and shame. The woman behind those walls, unseen by any male eyes but those of her polygamous master, loses even the semblance of womanhood. She is his slave—worse, he thinks of her as he thinks of his cow, to be used as he pleases and sold if occasion should demand. Only a woman of the cross can reach behind those walls with the story of love, and that with great difficulty.

The Christian couple whom we saw a moment ago are overlooking a city of Algiers. He ponders Arabic which he will not perfect in a lifetime; she meditates the dealings of God among the veiled multitudes fitfully asleep in Islamic darkness. And she prays furtive, helpless little prayers that God will somehow bring light into those bleak, insensate lives behind the walls. A surge of pain sweeps over her as she thinks of buried generations who have died in darkness. And perhaps she meditates on the poet's words:

The strings of camels come in single file,
 Bearing their burdens o'er the desert sand;
Swiftly the boats go plying on the Nile,
 The needs of men are met on every hand.
But still I wait
 For the messenger of God who cometh late.
I see the cloud of dust rise in the plain,
 The measured tread of troops falls on the ear;
The soldier comes the Empire to maintain,
 Bringing the pomp of war, the reign of fear.

But still I wait
The messenger of Peace, he cometh late.
They set me looking o'er the desert dread,
Where broodeth darkness as the deepest night.
From many a mosque there comes the call to prayer;
I hear no voice that calls on Christ for light.
But still I wait
The messenger of Christ who cometh late.

Only from God can come the resolute purpose to do among this people what His command insists be done. And who are better prepared than we? The Church must wake to its duty toward Islam. Those who go against her will find her armor decayed, her weapons antiquated, and her children, though proud and reticent, still unhappy. May God plant among us the mustard seed of faith—faith of the hammer-and-tongs sort, reckless, defiant, uncalculating faith that nothing can deter; faith that shall make us grabbers of the impossible. We must meet Pan-Islamism with Pan-Evangelism. It is a fight for life. We must conquer them or they will conquer us. There are unknown possibilities in those great continents. Who knows what the forces of Central Asia may yet be, stored up for the future?

We must go down to the desert; we must go into Arabia; we must go into the Sudan; we must go into Central Asia; and we must Christianize these people or they will march over their deserts, and they will sweep like a fire that shall devour our Christianity.

Yours is more than a high calling, my brother in this battle for the cross. Yours is a holy command to stoop low and lift high those elements which have become trite and meaningless in our 20th century vocabulary. Faith that shakes mountains, hope that is indomitable in the face of the heaviest odds, and love, undismayed at the blackest outlook, remembering the cross.

And it is our high calling, yours and mine, to spread the news—news that engenders life among those who live in the tombs. Take heed, Christian, there are some who keep to themselves more than is good, and it only makes for poverty one day. Under the compulsion of the love of Christ we must hold forth the Word of Life to all nations, all tribes, all peoples. This is our high calling—have we been taken up with lesser pursuits? Have we too been blinded by Satan and the satisfaction of our own selves—blinded to the vital truth that they must hear or their blood shall be upon our hands?

God, set us free from obeying a lower calling!

Father, the dust of words would smother me . . .

Give us to know a calling that involves the cross.

Rebuke our softness,

Make us strong sons, for Jesus' sake.

(Jim Elliot was one of five men who died on the bank of the Curaray River in Ecuador in 1956. Originally prepared for an FMF program when Jim was a student at Wheaton College, Ill., this article reveals the passion for lost men which made him willing to lay down his life for the Auca Indians.)

NEWS AND NOTES

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

We enjoy the "Word and Work" so much that we'd like to have a copy every month. We hope and pray that you continue to "declare the whole counsel of God." And may it be to His eternal glory.

—Dorothy & Fred Stiltner

We appreciate the Word & Work very much and are always glad to receive it.

—W. L. Brown

Editor's note — The following article was written by Forrest M. McCann, associate Professor of English at Abilene Christian University, extolling the latest edition of the well-known hymnal, "Great Songs of the Church," available through the W & W.

GREAT SONGS OF THE CHURCH HIGH STANDARDS SET FOR HYMNAL

What Alexander Campbell's hymnals did for Christian hymnody in the 19th century, *Great Songs of the Church* has done and is doing in the 20th. Between 1828 and 1882 the Campbell hymnals and their successors set high standards for poetic content and extolled musical excellence. *Great Songs of the Church*, now in its 54th edition, has since 1921 been built upon the same principles of excellence and scripturality. The Compiler wrote in the original Preface:

The book has been built on this unusual principle: no song was eligible unless it was indispensable, or at least of compelling excellence. . . . A conscientious effort has been made to render a lasting service to the Church of God, rather than to build a book which, no matter how popular for a season, would soon wear out and call for another.

Since 1958 Abilene Christian University has owned and published the shaped-note edition of *Great Songs of the Church*. The University believes the Churches of Christ in America are entitled to have the very best in Christian hymnody available to them. *Great Songs of the Church* offers no less. When the Number Two book first appeared in 1937, the compiler, E. L. Jorgenson, was elected to The Eugene Field Society for his literary accomplishment in the hymnal and was listed in *Who's Who in America*. No other hymnal among us has ever been so honored. Our collection contains the 32 hymns acclaimed as the world's greatest and is today fabricated for the University by Rand McNally and Company of Chicago, Ill.

In order to keep abreast of the very best in church music, a *Supplement* of seventy songs was added to *Great Songs* in 1975. These songs were carefully chosen by a committee of hymnologists at ACU after four years of research. During this time preachers, singers,

students, and interested individuals were contacted. From all suggestions received the committee selected the cream, the indispensables. *Great Songs of the Church with Supplement* thus represents the best, the most dignified, the scriptural in modern church music.

The principles of selection for the *Supplement to Great Songs* include:

1. Scripturalness and excellence in poetry and music have been the primary criteria for any inclusion.

2. Only those hymns and songs which have endured have been included, not those which would wear out quickly or require constant revision.

3. No unscriptural material has been tolerated. The hymnal is a manual for worship and no mere appeal to emotional rhythms or inferior poetry could suffice.

4. The differing needs and musical and poetic attainments of the churches have been seriously considered. To this end selected hymns include both ancient and modern, gospel songs, and folk songs with a view to giving all ages suitable material for the service of praise.

5. Finally, in accordance with the foregoing principles, as many numbers as possible by poets and musicians from the Restoration Movement were selected. These songs are comparable to the attainments of any religious group.

Great Songs of the Church with Supplement represents an accomplishment to which the Churches of Christ may point with pride. The hymnal has no equal. It has endured longer than any hymnal ever published in the Restoration Movement, including those of Alexander Campbell. This endurance is because of its high purpose—not for mere financial gain but to render a real and lasting service to the Churches of Christ.

—From *ACU TODAY*, May, June 1979

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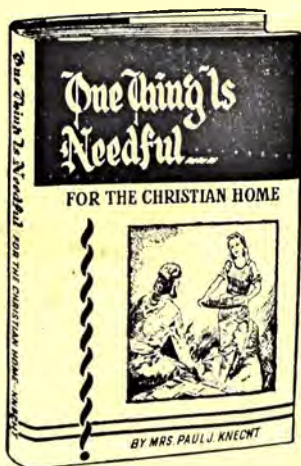
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