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## 1958: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

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**“GOD”**

*Being the*

**Abilene Christian College Annual  
Bible Lectures**

**1958**

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## PREFACE

The lectures contained in this book are those which were given at the fortieth annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian College during the fifty-second year of the College's operation.

These lectures on the main theme, "God," should be among the finest things in print on this very important subject. The other speeches and discussions are also informative and inspiring for the subjects that they cover.

The primary purpose of the annual Bible Lectureship is to further the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the years it has been a source of inspiration for those who are consecrated to the Cause, and in recent years we have attempted to include as much informative and practical help, as well as inspiration, as almost anyone could receive in the five days of the program. The Lectureship is purposed to serve the students of the College, as well as its friends and visitors, with information, inspiration, and a challenge for getting greater things done in the Kingdom.

It is the desire of the College through the medium of the Lecture program to be of as much service as possible to the Cause of the Master in enlarging the vision of those who take the lead in the Lord's work throughout the brotherhood. The Lectureship office publishes *Vision*, a leaflet which serves to acquaint our friends with Lectureship activities and to enlarge the vision of church leaders by the suggestion of new ideas. (The paper is sent free of charge to those who request it.)

The speech of Brother Alonzo Welch is not included in the book due to unusual pressure of his work, but it will be printed in the columns of the Firm Foundation.

Our prayers and best wishes are for all who labor in the Kingdom in whatever capacity, to the end that the work may prosper and grow.

J. D. Thomas  
Lectureship Director



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## **Section I**

### **Main Speeches**



## GOD IS

---

By George H. Stephenson

God is. In these words we find a declaration of faith, an assurance of hope, and an explanation for our existence. In Hebrews 11:6 we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Bible does not present a list of arguments for the existence of God. His reality and eternity are accepted as facts. Evidences of the existence of God are found in the Bible, but not arguments to try to prove Him. The man who declares there is no God is characterized as a "fool." (Psalm 14:1) The idea of Scripture as a revelation implies a God who gave the revelation. The Bible tells of the experiences men and nations have had with God. Furthermore, its central character, Jesus, is presented to us as the Son of God.

The majority of us have always believed in the existence of God. We have lived among a people who have believed in Him. We have seen the need for faith in our own lives and in the lives of others. We feel the need for someone stronger and wiser than man to satisfy the spiritual yearnings of our hearts. It seems to be a universal longing upon the part of man in all ages to seek for some higher power.

To say that we believe in God does not mean that we completely understand God. If we could understand all about God, then we ourselves would become gods. Rowland Hill once tried to convey the greatness of God's love. He said, "I am unable to reach this lofty theme. Yet I do not think



the smallest fish in the ocean complains of the ocean's vastness. So it is with me. With my puny powers I can plunge with delight into a subject the immensity of which I shall never be able to comprehend."

We cannot demonstrate God in the same manner we can demonstrate a proposition in geometry, but this does not mean that there is no God. Neither do we observe God through any of the five senses, that is, through seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling. But this does not prove there is no God. Which one of us has ever seen our brain, yet we speak familiarly of this organ and do not doubt its existence. Someone said, "There is no God, because no microscope and no telescope has revealed Him." But there are many things we never see with either a microscope or a telescope. Can you find courage, loyalty, honor, or mother love by looking through a telescope or microscope? One might examine the physical brain of an Edison or an Einstein, but one would not see the marvelous thoughts these great men had. One might examine the brain of a great musician and fail to find the music which came from the heart.

We believe that there is a God from the evidence we have. When one says, "George Washington was the first president of the United States," he means that "I believe George Washington was the first president of the United States." He never saw Washington and he never saw anyone who ever saw Washington, but he believes the historical evidence that we have concerning Washington. Elton Trueblood well said, "If, then, we say we shall believe only what we know directly at first hand we reduce our belief in a fantastic manner. All history would be thereby eliminated, and we should be confined to the *specious present*. A life so ordered would be intellectually poverty-stricken, if, indeed, it were possible at all. Intellectual self-sufficiency, like economic self-sufficiency,



is only possible at a level of existence too low to be attractive." (Philosophy of Religion, page 67)

We are justified in reaching a certain conclusion if we have sufficient evidence to point in that direction. We say that no two finger prints are alike. But how could one *prove* this to be true? In order to prove beyond question that this is so, it would be necessary to examine all of the finger prints of all of the people of the world. Obviously, this would be impossible for anyone to do. However, when we realize that men have never found two finger prints alike, we think the evidence justifies our believing no two finger prints are alike. Likewise, we may not demonstrate God like a mathematical equation, but we believe the evidence is such that we are justified in believing that God is.

#### *What the Atheist Must Believe*

Before we investigate some of the reasons for our faith in God, let us first examine what we must accept if we accept the verdict of the Atheist. If there is no God, then all of the world and everything in it is just an accident. This means that nowhere in the universe is there anything corresponding to the mind or spirit which exists in man. If everything in the universe is governed by blind and unconscious force, then we no longer wonder about the problem of human suffering. The wonder is that there is not more suffering and that everything goes on as well as it does. Dr. R. G. Lee, one of the best known Baptist preachers of our day, has listed some of the things an Atheist must believe. He says that an Atheist must believe that "providence is an idle dream, prayer is a useless exercise, heaven is a vain hope, life is without inspiration, death is without anticipation, sorrow is without balm, conscience is without authority, and sin is without accountability." The alternative to the Atheistic conception of man

and the world is the recognition of a Divine Being who gives meaning and purpose both to ourselves and to the world about us. I much prefer to believe as Paul that "in him we live, move, and have our being," than to believe with the Atheist that life and the world have no ultimate purpose or meaning.

### *The Ontological Argument*

One of the classical arguments for the existence of God is known as the Ontological Argument. Anselm, adviser of William the Conqueror, and Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093-1109, is said to be the father of this argument. It was enlarged upon later by the French philosopher, Descartes. The word *ontology* is derived from two Greek words, *ontos* and *logos*, which mean "the reason or ground of being." The argument is that since man has the thought of God, there must be a God.

Man is the only being capable of thinking of God. The rocks, the stars, and the seas bear testimony to God's handiwork, but they do not think of God. The animals of the forest, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea do not think of God. But man does think of God. In a sense, even the man who says, "There is no God," bears testimony to the existence of God. Where did he get his idea of a God to deny? Whence came the thought of God? Is it just an invention of men? If so, when did man first originate the idea? How did this idea become so universal? Some might say the idea of God came from tyrants or priests who sought to exploit others. But how did their idea of God originate? In spite of many efforts to destroy our belief in God, and in spite of much about us which might seem to question God's existence, yet the idea of God still prevails in the thoughts of men. How do I know I exist? Descartes said, "I think,

therefore, I am." Man thinks of God; therefore God must exist.

### *The Cosmological Argument*

Another one of the classical arguments for God's existence is known as the cosmological argument. The word *cosmological* comes from two Greek words, *kosmos* meaning *world*, and *logos*, meaning a *reason for*. Hence, this argument suggests a reason or cause for existence of the world. In this argument, we show that the final cause of all things is the one self-existent Being who is God.

We know that in the world about us every *effect* we see is the result of a *cause*. If one tree dies while another tree lives, we know there were different causal factors in the two situations. The dead tree had a disease, or it may have been struck by lightning. But in tracing the cause of the tree's death, we have a whole series of causes. If it died of disease, what caused the disease? Then what caused this to happen to this tree? We can continue tracing causes back and back, but we cannot trace an infinite chain of causes. If there is no higher cause, or ultimate cause, then why do we believe there were any secondary causes? But we recognize there are secondary causes, but rising out of all this series of causes, we must come back to a first cause, itself uncaused and self-existent. To say the first cause exists is to say that God is.

George H. Joyce, a Jesuit scholar and philosopher, has a splendid discussion of the philosophical arguments for God's existence in his book, *Principles of Natural Theology*, published by Longmans, London. Of course, this does not mean we endorse all he says any more than we endorse 100% all that anyone might say. But he does show profound thinking and presents some good arguments. In his discussion of the



cosmological argument, he discusses "contingent being" and "necessary being." By "contingent being," he means that which does not necessarily have to exist in contrast to a necessary being, which is incapable of not existing. Joyce argues from the existence of contingent beings the necessity of a necessary being. He says, "Experience shows us that contingent beings exist. We see things come into existence and pass out of it. Animals and plants have their period of life and then die. Inanimate substances enter into composition, forming a new substance with properties different from those of its constituents: and after a while the compound is again resolved into its original elements. Now the existence of contingent beings involves the existence of necessary being, and is inexplicable without it. Therefore a necessary being exists: and this necessary being can be none other than a personal God." (*Principles of Natural Theology*, page 79.)

Looking about us, it is but natural for all of us to point to some great Cause for all of the effects we see in the world about us. A great biologist was once asked as he walked by a flower bed, "Do you believe that yonder flower bed came there by chance?" He immediately replied, "No more than I believe the latest book on botany came into existence by chance."

Looking at the sky on a clear night, while the stars are shining as a myriad of diamonds in the sky, we are made to exclaim with David of old, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1) Does one believe the Russian satellites got in the sky just by accident? No more than I believe that the stars above us are there just by accident.

Would one believe that a globe which is supposed to represent this world could just happen to exist? Certainly not, and neither should one believe that the earth itself just hap-

pened to exist. Back behind every design there must be a designer. To account for life, there must have been life. Something cannot come from nothing. But something is. Therefore, something always has been. The one eternal something is God, the creator of the heavens and the earth.

### *The Teleological Argument*

The teleological argument is closely associated with the cosmological. The word *teleological* is derived from the Greek words "telos" and "logos," meaning "end or purpose" and "the reason for." The presence of order in the universe points to God as the source of that order. The adaptation of means to accomplish certain ends suggests intelligent cause. In all of nature we see the adaptation of means to an end; therefore nature is the work of an intelligent cause. This can be none other than God. This, briefly, is the teleological argument.

All around us we can see illustrations of order and system in the world. Perhaps the best known of all the illustrations of the argument of design and purpose is the classical argument concerning the watch as given by Paley in his *Natural Theology*. When one examines a watch, he knows that its frame and all of its parts are put together for a purpose. The parts are adjusted so that they produce motion and the motion is so regulated as to point to the hour of the day. The watch must have had an intelligent maker and designer. But the universe is regulated with order and precision more perfect than any watch. The planets all move upon their orbits in orderly fashion. The earth rotates upon its axis every twenty-four hours. At the same time it is moving around the sun at the amazing rate of 72,600 miles per hour. Everything in the universe stays on perfect time. Because of the exact precision of the working of the universe, scientists

are able to look into the future and tell exactly when we may expect an eclipse of the sun or of the moon.

The earth is adapted for life. The rotation of the earth on its axis and its changing position in relation to the sun provides us with the changing of seasons. If one side of the earth were continually exposed to the sun as the moon is to the earth, we would find our temperate regions covered with perpetual ice. We are the right distance from the sun for human life to continue. We are the right distance from the moon for the ebbing and flowing of the tides. We are fortunate that we are not so near that tides are not so large that they would sweep all over the earth!

We can see design and purpose in the lower forms of life. We marvel at the wonderful instincts of the insects, birds, fish, and animals. The salmon of the northwestern coast of the United States furnish an interesting study. At maturity, salmon swim from the salt water of the sea to the fresh water of the Columbia River and its tributaries. The salmon always return to the waters where they were born to bear their young and then die. They have been taken from the streams in which they were swimming and placed in different streams, but they always manage to make their way back to the original stream from whence they have come. How do they know the right way to go? The birds know where to fly without studying geography and the bees know how to build their hives without studying architecture. The first birds and the first bees had to know, or how could they have survived? Surely they were created and did not just happen to exist.

It is interesting to study the habits of wasps. Among "solitary wasps," the mother wasp must build a safe nest in which to lay her eggs and then she must stock the nest with fresh or living food for her unborn young. The young wasp



will not eat food which is not alive. The mother wasp finds a fly or caterpillar, as the case may be, depending on the particular species of wasp, and stings her prey so that it remains alive but paralyzed. When the young larva hatches, it feeds upon the insect which has been provided by its mother. But how did the mother wasp know the exact place to sting the caterpillar to leave it paralyzed, yet still alive? Evidently the first wasp did it the right way or the wasps would not have survived. This suggests again intelligent creation.

We notice further that the wing of a bird shows design and purpose in its making. In order for the bird to be able to fly, it not only needed the formation of members which should serve as wings, but it needed those members to be able to be greatly extended without adding materially to their weight. The body of the bird had to be provided with covering which would help to keep it at an even temperature, without impeding its flight. Instead of hair or fur which covers other animals, the bird was provided with feathers which are very light and yet provide protection against cold weather. Furthermore, the feathers on the wing are arranged with just the right proportion that they give to the wings the extension which they require. Moreover, the bird is provided with a special gland which secretes an oily substance which covers the wings and serves as a water repellent. If this were not so, the flight of the bird would be possible only under very restricted conditions. How can one fail to see design and purpose in the wing of a bird?

Many of the modernists of our day believe that the teleological arguments are not valid, because they feel that the conclusions of Darwin in regard to natural selection disprove design and purpose in the origin of all things. While they do not hold to all of Darwin's theories, yet they accept the idea that nature's works have been produced solely through the

operation of natural causes which do not lead to any ultimate First Cause or intelligent Creator. According to the theory, all organs have survived or have evolved because a use has been found for them in each successive stage in the evolutionary development of the particular animal under consideration. If this theory, which embraces a "survival of the fittest," be true, then it would be necessary for each successive stage in the development of an organ to confer on its possessor some advantage or else it would not survive. But if wings were gradually evolved, the earlier apparatus which were eventually to become wings, would have been hindrances rather than helps. They would not have survived, according to Natural Selection, and wings would never have evolved. Wings had to be perfect for flying for the first birds who ever flew. They are another one of the many evidences we see of purpose and design in nature.

We see other evidences of purpose and design in the human body. When we think of man's body, we say with the psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) The functioning of the two hundred bones, five hundred muscles, and two thousand ligaments binding them together, present a wonderful example of harmonious planning and design. The nervous system, the glandular system, and the function of all the human organs for the good of the body present a picture of intelligent design.

Books have been written on the amazing organ of sight, the eye. The eye is so adapted that it can perceive objects at various distances, from just a few inches to miles away. Looking over a landscape, this amazing optical instrument can bring into our vision multitudes of objects within the space of half an inch in diameter. We see all of the objects in "Three D and technicolor." We get some idea as to their shape, size and position. Then we may read a book and get



ideas from the words we see which have been given to us by others. To keep the eye moist and clean, which is necessary for it to function properly, a special fluid is constantly supplied, the superfluous moisture passing through a hole in the bone of the nose where it is evaporated. This valuable instrument is in duplicate, the two eyes being so arranged that while each eye can see separately, they can see together in perfect harmony. The eye is formed before birth and before it is used, being of no use until a later time. This is an indication of its design for a certain purpose. We realize further that as amazing as the eye is, it is useless without the brain behind the eye. It would be just as interesting to study the intricate details of our organ of hearing. All of the organs of our body point to a purpose or reason for being, and thus point to the existence of an intelligent Creator.

### *The Moral Argument*

It is wonderful to think of man's physical make up, yet it is more wonderful to think of his conscience and sense of moral values. If evolution instead of Creation be true, whence came man's conscience? A sense of moral values is seen in all of us, even the most determined Atheist or materialist. The Atheist wants others to know he has a sense of moral values. Furthermore, he wants others to respect his rights and to have a sense of moral right in their treatment of him, in order that he will not be abused. Trueblood says, "When we condemn our own actions we maintain that there was something which we *ought* to have done and which we did not do. This, by common speech, we put in a class by itself. To say 'I ought to do this' is not the same as to say 'it is to my advantage' or 'it is prudent' or 'it is customary' or 'it is commanded by the state' or 'I desire it.' In fact, we habitually decide between what we think we ought to do and all

these others. Frequently there is a clash between them. It may be customary for condemned men to run away if they can, but Socrates stays because he senses a difference between what is moral and what is customary. The martyr distinguishes between what the crowd commands and what seems to him to be right.

“So pervasive and far-reaching is this experience of moral endeavor or moral failure, as the case may be, that it becomes the deepest source of satisfaction and interest in literature. The most moving scene which the world has to show is the scene of genuine moral struggle. Thousands of pieces of great literature, with their uncounted millions of readers, bear witness to this fact.” (*Philosophy of Religion*, page 110.) How can we account for the moral structure which is in all of us if man is here without a purpose and exists only as an accident of nature? C. S. Lewis, a former Atheist but now a believer in God, points out that if the moral law in us is just an instinct, then this instinct should cause us to be able to point to one impulse inside us which is always “good,” which is always in agreement with the rule of right behaviour. But, of course, this we cannot do, which shows this moral sense is not just an instinct. C. S. Lewis has some excellent thoughts in regard to the moral arguments for the existence of God in his book, *Mere Christianity*. Our conclusion in regard to the origin of the moral sense in man is that it is a part of Him which came from an all-wise God.

### *The Aesthetic Argument*

Man has a sense of moral values, and he also has a sense of the aesthetic or the beautiful. The beautiful is not just something which we seek, but it is something which claims us. The sense of beauty is not just something in the sense organ alone. Dogs may hear better than man, but they do not en-

joy the concerts of trained musicians nor thrill to the singing of a great chorus. Birds have wonderful eyes, but they are not the world's great art critics. All around us we see the beauty of the world. Alfred North Whitehead said, "The teleology of the universe is directed to the production of beauty." We see beauty in the sky above us and in the earth below us. Beauty is seen in the smallest flower as well as in the giant trees of the Redwood forests. Who is not impressed with the grandeur of a sunset over Grand Canyon? There is a beauty in the icy regions of the poles and even in the sandy expanse of the deserts. Some of the things which may not appear to be beautiful may be here, if for no other purpose, to contrast that which is beautiful from that which is not. We cannot conceive of beauty coming into existence by chance, and we cannot conceive of that which is in man which can appreciate the beautiful coming into existence by chance. It is true that we may have differences of opinion in regard to what is beautiful, but this does not disprove that man has an aesthetic sense. We cannot explain the origin of this sense on the basis of materialism.

### *The Historical Argument*

Throughout the ages, men have believed in God and many great men have claimed spiritual experiences with God. The prevalence of a belief in God among most of the people of the earth indicates that God must exist. Cicero once said, "There is no nation so barbarous, no race so savage, as not to be firmly persuaded of the being of a God." C. S. Lewis said, "Only one fact in human experience is more universal and stubborn than the fact of pain, namely, the fact of the sense of God; and therefore we must explain not only pain, but primarily man's faith in God." Belief in God prevails among the most civilized people of the earth, but it is to be found also among the most primitive people on the earth



today. Speaking of the Pygmies of North Central Africa, Joyce says, "As regards material civilization they are as backward as any race which exists. Bishop Le Roy was in personal contact with this strange people alike on the eastern and western sides of the continent. They make no attempt to cultivate the soil, but live on what they can pick up in the forest. They have no permanent settlements. They construct for themselves only the most temporary habitations. It surely is a very remarkable fact that this most primitive race have a clear knowledge of a supreme being, unique, the maker of all things, the lord of life and death, the guardian of morality, who rewards and punishes in the life to come." (*Principles of Natural Theology*, page 187).

Among the uncivilized aborigines of Australia, there is a conception of God, recognized as Ruler of all things. If, as the evolutionists teach, God is a creation of fancy and of very gradual growth, it would be expected that among nations low in civilization, no belief in one God could be found. Huxley boldly stated such to be true. But Huxley and the evolutionists are wrong.

The further back we go in the history of man, we find a purer faith. Rather than finding more gods as we go back into the history of a race, we find fewer gods and an approach to belief in one God. Sir William Ramsay was knighted because of his archeological research in Asia Minor. He tells us that when he had finished his schooling and when he began his work that he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of the evolutionary theory of human history, but that he was compelled to change his ideas. His discoveries pointed to the fact that there was a time when humanity knew God and that idol worship developed as history moved forward. The idol worship of primitive people was a degeneracy, and not a stage in upward evolution. His conclusions

verified the teaching of Paul when he said, "When they knew God they glorified him not as God . . . and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:21 ff.)

Many men throughout the ages have claimed they have had experiences with God. The experiences of Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, John, Paul and countless numbers of Christians have caused them to have faith in God. The writers of the Bible claimed to write the word of the Lord. Jesus Christ Himself claimed to be God's Son. No one can seriously say that these great ones, including Jesus, were fraudulent in their claims. If God is not real, then these great men were the victims of self delusion. If this is true, then the unbeliever is forced to a very difficult position. He is bound to hold that, except for man's capacity to believe falsehood, much that is recognized to be best in civilization would not have existed. We may grant that many who have claimed spiritual experiences were deceived without destroying the force of the argument from the experiences men have had. For if only *one* person anywhere has truly met God and continues to meet Him, then God is.

Those of us who pray to God and read His word feel a sense of the presence of God in our own lives. We rejoice in the faith we have and in the hope this faith gives to our souls. May our faith grow stronger day by day and may it enable us to gain the "victory which overcomes the world." (I John 5:4)

"God lives, I say, God lives today."

"O soul, how hast thou known?"

"'Tis hummed by every bursting bush

'Tis whispered by the leaves,

'Tis painted in the roseate flush

The sunset sky receives."

"God loves, I say, God loves for aye."

"O soul, how durst thou hope?"

" 'Tis thrilled through every Mother's kiss,

Through homes that love can share,

Through hands that work love's ministries,

Through hearts that dream and dare."

"God rules, I say, God rules alway."

"O soul, how canst thou tell?"

" 'Tis written clear in human lives,

On history's printed page,

The false succumbs, the true survives,

And spreads from age to age."

—Author unknown.

## THE GODHEAD

---

BATSELL BARRETT BAXTER  
Head of the Bible Department  
David Lipscomb College  
Nashville, Tennessee

It is with a feeling of deep reverence that we approach the subject of the Godhead, another in this great series of studies concerning God. Entrance on the study of a theme of such magnitude as this stimulates several emotional reactions within. First of all, there is a warm, satisfying feeling that comes from the realization that we are dealing with nothing trivial or unimportant. Surely we are at the very center of our religion. Then, there is the feeling of insufficiency in the tackling of so huge an undertaking as a description of the Godhead. It would appear that no man would be capable of fully comprehending the scope of so vast a subject. Finally, there is a feeling of challenge to make what it is possible for man to know about the Godhead clear and plain so that others who have not previously had the opportunity of studying the subject may be enriched by an increased understanding of the three-fold nature of God. Mindful of our own limitations, but challenged by the greatness of the task, we gladly embark upon the presentation of these materials concerning the Godhead.

### *Definitions*

While beginning with definitions may be prosaic and unimaginative, it is still the best way to begin a study of this kind. Obviously, the important first word requiring definition is the word "Godhead" itself. Actually, the word "God-



head" is just another form of the word "Godhood." In past ages the words stood side by side and were used interchangeably. Benjamin B. Warfield, in an article on "The Godhead" in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, says, "The word 'Godhead' is a simple doublet of the less frequently occurring 'Godhood.' . . . The fundamental meaning of 'Godhead' is, nevertheless, no less than that of 'Godhood,' the state, dignity, condition, quality, of God. As manhood is that which makes a man a man, and childhood that which makes a child a child, so Godhead is that which makes God God." The same writer goes on to say, "'Godhead' is thus the Saxon equivalent of the Latin 'Divinity,' or, as it is now becoming more usual to say, 'Deity.'"<sup>1</sup>

The word "Trinity" is also often used in the discussion of this theme. Perhaps it would be well to give at least something of the definition of this word before we proceed. The word "Trinity" comes from Latin and appears to have been first used by Tertullian in the third century A.D. The very similar word "Triad" appears to have been first used by Theophilus, a Christian apologist, who was a contemporary of Tertullian. Neither of these words is a Biblical term, therefore, but both have been used through the centuries to refer to a Biblical idea—that in the unity of the Godhead there are three co-eternal and co-equal persons. The whole idea of the doctrine of the Trinity is a revealed doctrine, for men would never arrive at it by a study of the universe about them, or by mere reason. The doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in the scriptures, not in formulated definitions, but in many fragmentary allusions, which we shall show shortly. When we have said that there is but one God, that the Fa-

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<sup>1</sup> Warfield, Benjamin B., "The Godhead," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, General Editor, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1949, Vol. II, p. 1268.



ther, Son, and Spirit is each God, and that the Father, Son, and Spirit is each a distinct person, we have stated the doctrine of the Trinity fully and completely.

There are still several other words that have been used less widely to refer to the concept of the Godhead. These terms include "the Divine Family," "the Sacred Three," "Divinity," and "Deity." For our purposes, however, the definitions given above appear to be adequate so we move on to a discussion of the subject itself. Our first major concern is to learn what the Holy Scriptures, in both Old and New Testaments, teach on the subject of the Godhead.

### *Objection of Liberal Theology*

As we begin this quest we are aware that in many liberal theological schools it is constantly believed and taught that the idea of the Godhead, or Trinity, is not taught in the Bible. The idea is attributed to the post-Biblical period. It is claimed that this concept must be read back into the original text, if it is to be found there. The highly respected Millar Burrows, in his *An Outline of Biblical Theology*, has this to say, "What may be called the classical doctrine of the Trinity arose after the apostolic age as an answer to the theological problem of reconciling the Deity of Christ with monotheism. . . . The Old Testament provided no preparation for this doctrine except the idea of the Spirit. The New Testament has all the elements of the doctrine but no statement of it, because the problems that led to its formulation were not yet felt."<sup>2</sup>

Despite such objection, we confidently believe that the scriptures do teach the doctrine of the Trinity. The word Godhead occurs three times in the King James Version of

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<sup>2</sup> Burrows, Millar, *An Outline of Biblical Theology*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1946, p. 80.

the Bible, as follows: Acts 17:29—"Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man." Romans 1:20—"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Col. 2:9—"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily." The Revised Version of the Bible uses the word Godhead in the passages in Acts and Colossians, but substitutes the word Divinity in the passage in Romans. Three different Greek words are used in these three passages—"Theion," (Acts 17:29); "Theiotes," (Rom. 1:20), and "Theotes," (Col. 2:9). The meaning is "that which is Divine."

#### *In the Old Testament*

The above references suggest a beginning in our finding of the doctrine of the Godhead in the scriptures, but only a beginning. Let us look next at the Old Testament to see if we can find it there. W. Fulton says, "The Old Testament could hardly be expected to furnish the doctrine of the Trinity, if belief in the Trinity is grounded upon faith in the incarnation of God in Christ and upon the experience of spiritual redemption and renewal through Christ."<sup>3</sup> While it is true that none of those who have depended exclusively for their religious beliefs on the Old Testament have ever believed in the doctrine of the Trinity, it is likewise true that there are many passages in the Old Testament which imply the doctrine of the Godhead, even though they may not spell it out in express, detailed terms. There are many Old Testament passages which cannot adequately be explained, except by the

<sup>3</sup> Fulton, W., "The Trinity," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922, Vol. XII, p. 458.

idea of the Godhead. On this matter, Warfield comments, "This is not an illegitimate reading of the New Testament ideas back into the text of the Old Testament; it is only reading the text of the Old Testament under the illumination of the New Testament revelation. The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before."<sup>4</sup>

Passages in which the Old Testament suggests the idea of the Godhead include those which contain *the plural form of the divine name*, like Genesis 1, which uses "Elohim." Still other passages employ *plural pronouns* with reference to God. For example, Genesis 1:26—"Let us make man in our image." Other passages which do this same thing are Genesis 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8.

#### *In the New Testament*

When we turn to the New Testament we find many passages which contribute their support of the doctrine of the Godhead. The nearest approach to a formal announcement of the doctrine is in Matthew 28:19—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This came to be referred to as the "Baptismal Deity Formula" and shows that the early Christians clearly understood the three named beings to stand together in a divine relationship. Another clear and decisive passage is that found in II Cor. 13:14—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." This, again, unmistakably shows the belief in the Trinity. Still other passages speak of the three

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<sup>4</sup> Warfield, Benjamin B., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 3015.



Divine Persons in close proximity, though not quite as obviously as the two passages just mentioned. Examples are: Romans 15 :30—"Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." Luke 1 :35—"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee," said the angel to Mary, "and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is to be born shall be called the Son of God." Matthew 3 :16-17 describes Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, the voice of God speaking from heaven, and the Son being baptized in the Jordan. I Pet. 1 :2—"According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience in sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Jude 20-21—"Praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." All of these passages speak of the three divine persons in relationship to each other. Even more distinctly do we find the idea in Ephesians 4 :4-6—"One Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father."

In addition to these passages which clearly and distinctly allude to the doctrine of the Trinity, there is much additional support in the New Testament in the whole host of passages which proclaim the deity of Christ and the divine personality of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is shown in passages like the following: John 14 :7, 1, 10—"If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also;" . . . "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; . . . "I am in the Father, and the Father in me"; . . . "The Father abiding in me doeth the works." John 14 :26—"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." It

would be difficult to speak more distinctly of the three who are yet one. The Father, Son and Spirit are constantly distinguished from one another—the Son makes request of the Father, and the Father in response to this request gives the Advocate, who is sent in the Son's name. Yet the oneness of these three is so kept in sight that the coming of this "another Advocate" is spoken of without embarrassment as the coming of the Son Himself. These passages and many others in the gospel according to John presuppose the doctrine of the Trinity.

Surely, from these passages in both Old and New Testaments, it is obvious that while there is no full-scale explanation of the doctrine of the Godhead, it is implied and presupposed constantly. It is extremely difficult to understand how an open minded person could read the Bible without coming to understand that there are three divine personalities who make up Divinity. Perhaps at this point it is appropriate for us to pause and give something of a fuller, more comprehensive statement of the total picture which one gains in the scriptures concerning the Godhead and the three distinct personalities who make it up.

### *The Three*

First of all, there is the Creator, Jehovah, the Almighty, Lord God, and Father. He always stands first among the Triune Divinity. The Bible pictures Him as supreme in wisdom, power, love, mercy, and justice. He is the great planner, designer and creator of the universe. He is the supreme authority and sovereign ruler of the universe. He is our Father and we are His children. In Him we live and move and have our being. He is a Spirit and is to be worshiped. He is always referred to in the masculine gender and with a personal pronoun.

The second member of the Godhead is the Lord Jesus Christ. In His relation to man He is called "Son of Man"; in His relation to God He is called "Son of God." He is the only member of the Godhead that has been clothed with flesh and lived physically here on earth. He "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7). He is the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

The third member of the Godhead is the Holy Spirit. He has the same nature and essence as God and Christ. Like them, He is referred to by a personal pronoun and always in the masculine gender. The Holy Spirit is always mentioned third when spoken of in the Bible in connection with the other two members of the Godhead. He is spoken of in the New Testament as the means by which man would be guided and instructed. He is our Comforter.

These three eternally-existent, co-existent beings make up the Godhead. While there is very much that we do not know about each one, which we would like to know, we can be very certain that they exist and that they all are a part of Divinity. They are united and exist as one in the sense that they are distinct and different from all created things, in the sense that they are eternal, and in the sense that they have unanimity of will and purpose. In the fullest sense this is true Monotheism.

### *The Trinitarian Controversy*

Having noticed the teaching of the scriptures on our subject, it may now be of some value and interest to come this side of the Bible and observe the doctrine of the Godhead, or Trinity, in the early centuries of the history of the church. By the end of the third century Monarchianism had become



a serious threat to what many believed was orthodox Christianity. While Monarchianism had many facets, and many shades of belief, there are two strains which have a special bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity. Paul of Samosata, a representative of Antiochian thinking, held that Jesus was merely a man. The view was that the relationship between God and Christ was a unity only of will, and that Jesus was merely a good man united to God. This view held that there was one God and that Jesus and all others were not God. The other strain was known as Modalistic or Sabellianistic Monarchianism. This view held that the divisions among the Godhead were merely "temporal manifestations of the one supreme being." At one time it would be God the Creator; at another God the Redeemer; and at still another God the Holy Spirit. In other words, there was no eternal or permanent diversity in the Godhead—merely different manifestations of the one God at different times and under different circumstances.

Obviously, neither of these views could be held within the confines of orthodox Christianity. The view expressed by Paul of Samosata would make Christ simply a great teacher and leader, but would take away all idea of His being Saviour and Redeemer. Such a view would destroy the very heart of Christianity. No more satisfactory was the second view, for it would make so many things said in the scriptures meaningless. If Christ on earth were merely a temporal manifestation of the one God, why then did he speak of His Father in heaven and pray to Him? Did all of God leave heaven and come to earth? Was all of God killed on the cross? Did God cease to be the Supreme Being when He became the Son?

These ideas so strange to the New Testament led to the calling of the first great religious council—the Council of

Nicea in 325. The council eventually adopted a creed which used the word "Homousias," which means "out of one substance," in defining the relationship between God and Christ. Thus, Christ was declared to be of Divinity, rather than of other stuff. A little later the traditional idea of the Trinity received further support from the famous three Cappadocians—the two Gregorys and Basil. Gregory of Nyssa wrote "On Not Three Gods" which declared that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit were united in that they possessed the quality of Divinity, or "God-ness," but that they were also separate and distinct personalities. He illustrated by Peter, Paul, and John who were distinct personalities yet shared a common "man-ness."

The lawyer Tertullian, with his facility in choosing words and phrases which exactly delineate, said it rather well, "God is one substance in three persons." In other words, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit share the possession of Divinity or "God-ness." Yet, they are three separate functioning beings.

Augustine gave a strong emphasis to the unity of the Godhead speaking of the diversity within the Trinity as only their mutual relationships. He used a number of analogies to make the relationship of the Trinity clear. Among them was: He who loves; that which is loved; and love. Much later John Calvin gave still further emphasis to this traditional doctrine of the Godhead. Through the centuries many others have written and spoken on this theme and this position has come to be more or less universally accepted as orthodox.

### *Conclusion*

In this study we have been talking and thinking along intellectual, conceptual lines. As we come to the close of our



study, however, I should like to remind us that for all practical purposes, it is far more important for us to have a right attitude toward and a right faith in the Godhead than it is for us to be sure that we understand all of the fine points of the doctrine of the Godhead. It is more important for us to be sure that our belief in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit is real than it is for us to be overly concerned with theoretical explanations of the differences in functions among the three. It is far more important that we be reverent and obedient to the Godhead than it is for us to be scholars about the Godhead. I would not want us to leave such a study as this without recognizing that our first responsibility as humble servants of God is to render honor and glory to the three divine beings that make up Divinity. To that end we offer this presentation and such other service as we are able to render during our lifetime, for it is our deep conviction that man's greatest purpose on earth is to honor and glorify God.

## GOD IS LOVE

I John 4:8

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H. A. Dixon  
*Definitions of God*

To the Samaritan woman Jesus declared that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). In this statement Christ affirms that God is a person. He is spirit,—that is, a real being but wholly immaterial. He is spirit,—that is, there is nothing tangible about Him. He cannot be touched, nor can He be seen by mortal eyes. He is spirit and yet He is real. He is a personal God.

In I John 1:5 the apostle says that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." This inspired writer affirms that God is an intellectual being. He is not a light but He *is* light. Light is His very nature. This is divine essence on its intellectual side. Light is not a mere attribute of God, but it is God Himself. James declares that "He is the *Father of lights*" (James 1:17). Paul states that He *dwells in light* (I Tim. 5:16), but John says that He *is light*.

In our text John makes the third profound statement regarding the nature of God when he says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8). Like light, love is not a mere attribute of God. It is His nature. As the expression "God is light" sums up the intellectual nature of God, so "God is love" sums up His moral nature. One who has no idea of God's attributes of beauty, power or justice has a limited knowledge of God even though he may have knowledge of many facts regarding Him. In the same

manner one who has no concept of love cannot know God. Love is of God for He is love. God, then, is spirit, a personal being; He is light, an intellectual being; and He is love, a moral being.

### *Occasion of the Text*

John wrote his first epistle to Christians in part to correct certain false concepts regarding their attitudes one toward another. One of the major burdens of the book is that of emphasizing the importance of brotherly love. In chapter four, verses 7 and 8, he says, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Love for one another is so distinctly Christian that only where it is present is there evidence that one is a child of God. "Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." In its absence one has no claim to sonship. As a child shares the nature of his earthly father the spiritual child of God partakes of the nature of his spiritual father. That father is love and anyone who claims to be His must partake of that love. It must be a part of him just as it is a part of God.

### *God's Love Known Through Manifestations*

The mind of man has never been able to grasp God fully. His eyes cannot see God. His hands cannot touch God. His mind cannot explore God. God has accommodated Himself in revealing to man His nature and His attributes. Even so none of these can be fully described by the pen or words of mortal man. Impressed with this fact a certain poet penned these lines:

“Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
Were every blade of grass a quill,  
Were the world of parchment made,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
    To write the love  
    Of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry:  
    Nor would the scroll  
    Contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.”

Finite man cannot comprehend the infinite mind and character of Jehovah God. Man, then, must depend upon His manifestations in order to learn the reality and nature of God. Appropriately we can say with Paul that “the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made” (Rom. 1:20). This statement has particular reference to God’s deity and power, but it is also true in regard to His love. We cannot see His love but we can learn of it through His acts of divine compassion, pity, and mercy toward man.

God manifested His love toward man in all the acts of creation. His prophet said that God made the world to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). This is correctly interpreted to mean that God made the world primarily as a habitation for *man* who was the object of His love. God visited man whom He had made but a little lower than the angels (cf. Ps. 8:4 ff.; Heb. 2:6-7).

In this habitation God, in love, not only provided all forms of life necessary to man’s existence, but made for him a help suited and complimentary to his needs. He bound man to this help mate in the closest bonds known among mortals,—that is, the love of man for his wife. This relation provided for man a home with loved ones, and it formed the basis for



promoting and preserving true love through the ages. Man knows no expression of love sweeter than that which fills the home of the true child of God.

God manifested His love in the creation of the material universe. He placed man in ideal circumstances in the Garden of Eden. Even after man sinned and his consequent expulsion from that garden, God demonstrated His love. Though the earth was cursed and man was compelled to seek his sustenance through labor and toil, God provided him fruitful seasons and guaranteed for him seed time and harvest time until time shall be no more.

Man alone in this world of problems has never been able to find his way. The solutions of problems are not within himself. Again the love of God has been manifested in granting instruction to man. God revealed Himself through various messengers. He gave light to dispel the darkness and counsel to guide man. That counsel and instruction makes up the "Book of books." The Bible is a true manifestation of the fact that God is love.

The greatest manifestation of God's love is the fact that He has given a remedy for the sins of man. Men describe John 3:16 as the golden text of the Bible. It is fitting description, because that passage is an epitome of the extent of God's love. He so loved the world that He gave His Son to die in our stead. John says "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us" (I John 3:16). The cross of Calvary is the manifestation of the four dimensional love of God toward mankind. It shows the length, breadth, height and depth of His concern for their souls.

The fellowship and joy of those who compose God's family upon the earth is another demonstration of God's love. This fellowship is the privilege of all who compose the

*church of God.* In it His people participate in all of His benedictions. He loved the church and gave His Son to make it possible. That Son loved the church and gave Himself that He might sanctify and cleanse it and make it a suitable dwelling place for God's spirit.

As a final token of God's love we call attention to the hope of life beyond the grave. This was inspired in man by the promises of a loving Father and it is the preeminent force to cause man to live righteously. The belief that life is a mere stepping stone to eternity, the hope penetrating the veil into the paradise of eternal glory stimulates in man the strongest of drives to live a God-like life. This hope enables him to bear the afflictions of body or mind and to endure through life's trying problems. This hope is but another manifestation of the fact that God in love provided all blessings that pertain to life and godliness.

#### *Man's Response to the Love of God*

God has manifested His love toward man in order to gain a love response from man. John says "We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). We also observe that to love Him we must love those whom He loves; hence it is gross misunderstanding to think that we can love God by holding malice and ill will toward God's people. In the language of the Apostle Paul each Christian must demonstrate his love for God's people by "counting other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). That love must be translated into service. Faith working through love is the only effective faith in the sight of God. Jesus said "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Love therefore cannot be separated from service and love for the people of God likewise must be shown in service. We must love the souls of men and seek the salvation of those souls. To seek their

salvation necessarily we should seek to serve them as well. We can interest few souls in spiritual food if we close our ears and eyes to them should they stand in need of physical food. Jesus went about doing good and those who love as He loved must follow His example.

The character and quality of God's love is set forth by Paul in the familiar thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians. God's servant declares that "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13: 4-7). This passage is not only a demonstration of the character of love but since God is love it is a description of God. The passage is quite readable when we substitute God for the word "love." We read it again "God suffereth long, and is kind; God envieth not; God vaunteth not himself, is not puffed up, doth not behave himself unseemly, seeketh not his own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Since the child of God must possess the character and nature of God it becomes obvious that he should be able to substitute his own name in this passage of scripture. Shall we read it again? "A Christian suffereth long, and is kind; a Christian envieth not; a Christian vaunteth not himself, is not puffed up, doth not behave himself unseemly, seeketh not his own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Finally let each of us substitute himself and read once more. "I suffer long, and



am kind; I envy not; I vaunt not myself, am not puffed up, do not behave myself unseemly, seek not my own, am not provoked, take not account of evil; rejoice not in unrighteousness, but rejoice with the truth; bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things." No one feels fully worthy to make such a claim in his own behalf; yet this is the real test of discipleship. Do we *really know God*? Are we able to say that we possess the very nature of God? As we answer let us recall how He has said that "He that loveth not knoweth not God" and again, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another" (John 13:35).

As we thoughtfully ponder the import of Paul's description of love we are mindful of man's selfish nature. We remember his proneness to think that he is self-sufficient. We remember how prone he is to justify himself while setting others at naught. We recall how he can see the mote in his brother's eye, but cannot discern the beam in his own. Could it be that we have failed to emphasize in our teaching that without love no virtue commends itself to God. When special miraculous powers were granted to men of God the absence of love made their works invalid before Him. After those gifts had served God's purpose and had been taken away, when there remained only faith, hope and love we recall that "the greatest of these is love." It is that quality which gives meaning and value to one's faith and hope. By that quality we know whether we are of God. By it we know that we are His children. By it we know whether or not we may be like Him when we come into His presence in the land beyond.



## GOD—THE CREATOR

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The subject of the first sentence of the first book of the Bible is God, and it is in the role of creator that He is mentioned here. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Bible clearly sets forth the doctrine, and so far as I know it is the only book in all the world that does, that everything in the universe, both visible and invisible, is the result of the free, creative activity of God. Many passages of Scripture might be called upon to show this. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:1-3). "For in him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things have been created through Him and unto Him" (Colossians 1:16). "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

This doctrine of creation stands in contrast to all pagan cosmogonies and to certain philosophical and scientific hypotheses which regard the universe as eternal. Let us notice the contrast between this Biblical doctrine of creation and some of the non-Biblical cosmogonies. Liberal critics have a tendency to place the Bible narrative in about the same category as certain pagan cosmogonists. In fact, some of the critics hold that a great deal of the material in the Biblical

narrative was derived from these other sources. I believe that a careful study of all of these will indicate that there is a vast difference in character between the narrative that is given to us in the Bible and all other cosmogonists. This difference in character is very strong evidence of the divine origin of the narrative as we have it in Genesis. One of the best known non-Biblical accounts of creation is the Babylonian or Chaldean Genesis. Many critics regard this as the original from which the Biblical account was taken.<sup>1</sup> Several tablets containing this account of creation were unearthed by George Smith in Nineveh in 1873 and are in a fairly good state of preservation. Actually, this story begins with an account of the origin of the gods. It also contains an account of a conflict between the gods for supremacy in which Marduk proved himself to be the stronger. He triumphed over Tiamat, the mother of the gods, and cleaved her into two great halves. The upper of these halves became the heavens and the lower became the earth. Then man was created by Marduk out of material which he compounded from his own blood. Other cosmogonies may be found among the Phoenicians, the Parses, the Greeks, the Persians and others. Some of these were written after the time of Moses, and in some instances may reflect some acquaintance with the Biblical record. But any "striking resemblance" between these narratives and the Biblical narrative is due to the critic's desires to read into these stories similarities that do not really exist. Not one of these can compare in character and in propriety with the story that we have in the Biblical record. Certainly one sees in the Biblical narrative evidence of its divine character from the very fact of its total difference from all of these others.

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<sup>1</sup> *The International Critical Commentary*, p. ix, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1910, by John Skinner, D.D.

Basic to any point of view, Christian or non-Christian, lie certain presuppositions or assumptions. Any naturalistic hypothesis assumes the eternal existence of matter and force. From the naturalistic point of view, the origin of these cannot be explained, they simply have to be taken for granted. Some of these points of view claim to hold strictly to the laws of phenomenon and reject any concern for ultimate causes. Within these systems there is no spiritual principle at all. The only unity that can be discovered is that of the law among the elements.

One of the chief points to be gained from the study of this first chapter of Genesis is that all things have their absolute derivation from God. In fact, all the way through the Scriptures one finds the uniform teaching that the universe had its origin not from the fashioning of something already in existence but directly from the creative activity of the almighty God. We cannot explain the existence of anything by a chain of cause and effect endlessly regressing into the past. That which *is* could not have emerged from nothing. *From nothing, nothing comes* is as thoroughly established truth as we know. There must have been something, not caused by something else and which is not subject to the cycle of cause and effect. The very existence of the universe with its purposeful design points to the existence of One who purposed, designed, and created all that exists. "He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood forth" (Psalms 33:9). These basic facts, clearly presented on the pages of Scripture, are not only essential to the satisfaction of our theoretical interest, but are also of great practical importance. For if there is anything, either in the world, or out of it, that exists independently of God, then we have no security for believing that God will be successful in the accomplishment of all of His purposes. We have confidence that God's purposes



will not fail, that His Will will be worked out, that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek after Him, because we believe that there is nothing that lies outside His control. Since everything depends upon God, we believe that ultimately all things will be worked out for the fulfillment of His purposes. David said, "The Lord made heaven and earth" (Psalms 121:2). Paul said, "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36). The apostle John said, "For thou didst create all things and because of thy will they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Surely these passages of Scripture provide us confidence in the truthfulness of these great assertions, the confidence that we need that the government of the universe is in the hands of our heavenly Father, and that in the end He will be triumphant over everything that opposes Him.

### *The Meaning of Creation*

So far as knowledge goes, either ancient or modern, scientific or philosophical, there is no way to account for the absolute beginning of anything except by genuine creation or miracle. Scientists know a great deal about matter today that they did not know a few years ago, but we still do not know how it originated unless we accept the statement here in the book of Genesis. We know that matter can be changed; that some elements are continually giving off radiation at a very rapid rate and that this radiation may be lost into outer space. But we know nothing of any method by which we can bring these radiations together again to form new matter. Sir James Jeans said, "The universe is like a clock which is running down, a clock which, so far as science knows, no one ever winds up, which cannot wind itself up, and so must stop in time. It is at present a partially wound up clock, which must, at some time in the past, have been



wound up in some manner unknown to us.”<sup>2</sup> Science knows nothing about any process of creation that is now going on. Creation is something that belongs to the past. Again we quote from Sir James Jeans, “Everything points with overwhelming force to a definite event, or series of events, of creation at some time or times, not infinitely remote. The universe cannot have originated by chance out of its present ingredients, and neither can it have been always the same as now.”<sup>3</sup> Belief in God as the Creator of the universe is thoroughly consistent with all the known facts in either the realm of science or philosophy; there is no other explanation of the origin of things that is consistent with the facts of human experience and of reason. Certainly the existence of the creation implies a Creator possessing both the power and the intelligence to design and to bring into existence the universe as we know it.

### *The Order of Creation*

After the universe had been created and following a period in which everything existed in a state of chaos, God began the work of fitting it into such a world as could be the home of man. How long the world existed in the state of chaos we cannot know. The Bible does not say and there is no uniformity among the hypotheses of science. The divine writer describes the process of fitting the world into a place habitable by man in six days by eight divine fiat. 1. The creation of light and the separation of the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:3-5). 2. The separation of the waters with a firmament in between (6-8). 3. The gathering of waters into the sea and the appearance of dry land (9-10). 4. The creation of vegetable life (11-13), including grass, herbs and fruit bearing trees. 5. The formation of the sun,

<sup>2</sup> *Eos; or the Wider Aspects of Cosmogony*, page 52, London.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 55.

the moon and the stars (14-19). 6. The creation of the sea animals and the birds (20-23). 7. The creation of land animals (24-25). 8. The creation of man, (26-31). Having finished the work of creation, God rested from all the works which He had made on the seventh day.

Throughout this entire story of creation, we are made aware of the manner in which God carried on His creative work. Everything was brought about through God's omnipotent word. The universe is not the result of some mysterious emanation from some divine being as many of the ancients held. It was not produced by natural processes, nor was it self caused; it was called into existence by an all-wise, omnipotent Creator. The order of the creative process shows the development from the material, non-living to the living, sentient creatures and finally to man, the climax of the creative process.

Sometimes we are asked if this order of creation is the same as that set forth by science. There are many different scientific theories that have been set forth and they are not in perfect agreement with one another. There is, of course, a certain similarity among them and there are also certain parallels between the Bible story and some of the scientific accounts. I do not believe that we should be in any hurry to "prove" that the Bible is true by showing that it is in harmony with certain scientific theories. Science is young and its theories are undergoing continuous change. They are modified from year to year as new discoveries are made. The person who makes too much effort to show that the Bible is in harmony with some scientific theory is likely to be embarrassed when the scientists themselves discard the theory a few years hence. I believe that nature is the work of God and that the Bible is the Word of God, and that between the two there can be no disharmony. Sometimes men incorrectly

read the Bible and sometimes scientists set forth theories that are incorrect interpretations of nature. Between these two, of course, there is likely to be a great conflict. There are many, many reasons why we believe that the Bible is the Word of God. I believe that when the facts of nature are discovered and properly understood that they will be in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. In the meantime, I am going to put my confidence in the integrity and the truthfulness of the Word of God. I believe that the scientists, as a result of their own investigations of nature, will reach conclusions ultimately that are in harmony with the teaching of the Bible. Science is young and has a great deal yet to learn.

The tentativeness of scientific conclusions is recognized by scientists themselves as seen in the following quotation from a paper on "The Relation of the Natural Sciences to General Education," by Richard E. Scammon, Dean of Medical Sciences and Professor of Anatomy, University of Minnesota. He said, "In biological science there is rarely such a thing as a true critical experiment or an invariable law. Aside from the specific discoveries in these sciences, I think that the great advance in the past generation lies in the recognition of the fact that the results obtained from their study are at best probabilities. People have ceased to speak of natural laws with the conviction which was characteristic of the turn of the century. We recognize that our findings are only more or less true."<sup>4</sup> In the field of the physical sciences, the scientists felt that classical mechanics had presented a complete explanation of the world at the end of the nineteenth century. But a startling break took place when the new theories of Planck, Rutherford and Einstein appeared in the first part of the twentieth century. The tentative character of scientific

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<sup>4</sup> Pages 64-65, *General Education Its Nature, Scope and Essential Elements*, edited by William S. Gray, the University of Chicago Press, 1934.



theories is clearly apparent in the words with which Sir James Jeans concluded his book, *The Mysterious Universe*. He said, "So that our main contention can hardly be that the science of today has a pronouncement to make, perhaps it ought rather to be that science should leave off making pronouncements: the river of knowledge has too often turned back on itself."<sup>5</sup>

We are just now beginning to understand the nature of the atom, the basic building block of the universe. There is absolutely no reason to assume that modern day theories in science represent the absolute and the ultimate, hence there is no reason for us to be disturbed at the existence of some variations between the teaching of the Bible and the teaching of science. A better understanding of nature will lead us to a better understanding of the Creator and the more nearly perfect or correct our understanding of nature, the more clearly will it be seen to be in harmony with the teaching of God as revealed in the Bible.

### *The Creation of Life*

The Bible writer tells us that on the third creative day life came into existence by the Word of God. There is no way for us to account for the beginning of life except as a special creative act of God. The alternative to this is to believe in spontaneous generation. Many of the ancient philosophers believed that life came into existence spontaneously from damp earth. Even Aristotle, one of the most brilliant minds of the ancient world or of all time, held this to be true. Belief in spontaneous generation was quite generally held until modern times. It was the work of Lewis Pasteur who died as recently as 1895 that succeeded in convincing the world

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<sup>5</sup> Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, page 160, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930.



that life comes only from life. He said, "There is no circumstance known today which justifies us in affirming that microscopic organisms have come into the world without germs, without parents like themselves. Those who make this assertion have been the playthings of illusions or ill-made experiments invalidated by errors which they have not been able to appreciate or to avoid." Notwithstanding the fact that this truth has been thoroughly established, the scientist who is seeking a naturalistic interpretation of the world and of man must assume that back yonder somewhere in the past spontaneous generation occurred. He begins with the assumption that matter has always been. Then he has to assume that at some time, in some way, living forms arose from lifeless materials. H. H. Newman in his book, *Outlines in General Zoology*, says that even though conditions as we know them on the earth today would preclude the possibility of the origin of living matter from lifeless materials that, nevertheless, it is necessary for us to assume that at some time conditions were so favorable that living forms arose from lifeless material.<sup>6</sup> This, of course, is a violent assumption and involves a greater strain on one's credulity than anything a Christian is called upon to believe. It is absolutely contrary to all the known facts of life, for no scientist, anywhere at any time, has ever witnessed the emergence of the living from the non-living, either in the laboratory or the natural world around it. That life came by the creative handiwork of God as we are told here in the first chapter of Genesis is the most plausible explanation that is known to man.

In these same verses, where Moses tells us of God bringing life into existence, he also tells us that all living things were to bring forth after their kind. "And God said, Let the

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<sup>6</sup> H. H. Newman, *Outlines of General Zoology*, page 37, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1925.

earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:11-12). In the light of what we have said above of the possibility of life springing only from the creative handiwork of God, we might ask the question, What form or forms of life were originally created? Are we to suppose that from some one-celled plant or animal all the living forms we know today have evolved? If some such germ of life should come into existence on the earth by mere chance, or even by creation, and if it were then left to itself, it is impossible for us to imagine its survival. How long could it possibly continue to live? Scientific observations have shown us quite conclusively "that all organisms are dependent upon other organisms for their very lives." The world of living things is a balanced world and a world in which interdependence between plant and animal exists. Just as bees cannot exist without flowers to provide them nectar and as flowers cannot exist without insects to pollinate them, so throughout the whole world of nature we have discovered a very intricate interdependence between creatures. In the words of George McCready Price, "All the various parts of the organic world are absolutely dependent upon one another for their mere existence, and it is utterly unthinkable that one or two of the lower forms of life could exist for any length of time alone in the world as the evolution theory would have us believe."<sup>7</sup> The explanation supplied us in the book of Genesis, viz., that God created many different living forms is the most reasonable conclusion to hold.

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<sup>7</sup> *How Did the World Begin*, page 42, Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1942.

According to the Biblical record, each living form was to bring forth after its *kind*. This was said of both plant and animal creation. Price called our attention to the fact that certain microscopic organisms have persisted true to type throughout millions of generations.<sup>8</sup> Since it is true that they have remained true to type throughout so many generations, we have no real basis for assuming that such changes have taken place as are assumed by the evolutionary hypothesis in the development of all life from single one-celled forms of life. He also calls our attention to experiments that have been made using the drosophila or fruitfly. These insects can be made to produce twenty-five generations a year. Over a period of twenty years of experimentation, over 600 generations of flies have been studied. This would correspond to 20,000 years of the human species. The total result of all these studies shows that, despite certain mutations which make their appearances from time to time, they have not produced anything that is really new. The persistency of the species or *kinds* as the term is used in the book of Genesis is one of the strongest arguments against the theory of organic evolution. I believe that the doctrine of creation and the propagation of species true to type as taught in the book of Genesis is the doctrine that has the facts of the universe on its side. I believe that there is abundant evidence to support and to establish this truth, and if I may be allowed to make a guess concerning the future, I believe that some day this doctrine of creation will be generally held by the scientific world. After all, it is less than 100 years ago that Darwin brought forth his epic making book, *The Origin of Species*, in 1859. This is a relatively short period of time. During this period of time many discoveries have been made, but there are many scientists who believe that the greatest discov-

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, page 47.



eries are yet to be made, and when they are, the truth of the Bible will shine forth clearer than ever.

### *The Creation of Man*

The creation of man is the final and the highest stage in the creative process. The world was not created for itself nor as an end in itself. It was to serve some higher purpose than merely being the abiding place of the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. There is nothing about vegetable life nor is there any capacity in the beasts of the earth, either to understand or to appreciate what God had done in creating the universe and fitting it as a habitable place. None of these creatures was able either to comprehend or to adore and worship the One who had designed and created it all. It is interesting that man's creation was preceded by divine counsel. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26-27). Man's creation is the result of very special deliberation on the part of God, and man himself became a special expression of God's nature.

The phrase "let us make man" is particularly interesting in that it is plural indicating a plurality of persons in the Godhead. With this, of course, agree such statements as found in the New Testament. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that has been made" (John 1:1-3). See also



Paul's statement to the Colossians where he refers to Christ "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible" (Colossians 1:15-16). The opening words of the epistle to the Hebrews are significant here too. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

In the second chapter of Genesis we have the description of man's creation. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man is a dual being possessing both body and spirit. He exists at the very apex of the pyramid of creation, the last and the most distinguished of all that God had made. He alone is the creature into whom God breathed the breath of life so that he became a living soul. He alone bears the Creator's image. He alone was given dominion and a place of supremacy over all the rest of creation. God looked at all the other works that he had made and pronounced them "good," but it was only when man appeared upon the scene that they were declared "very good."

The question that naturally comes to our minds in this connection is this, What is the meaning of the expression, *the image of God*? It is obvious from the context of the passage that man possesses pre-eminence over all the animal creation. Between man and the very highest order of the beasts there is a great and impassable gulf that is fixed. From the reading of the account in the second chapter of Genesis, it is obvious that no beast was fitted to be a companion to man.

The word "soul" may include both the lower and the higher life while the term "spirit" is restricted to the higher life. Since God is not represented in the Scriptures as being body nor limited geographically as a physical body is limited, it is in man's soul or spirit that he is created in the image of God.

Man possesses self-conscious reason, a characteristic which distinguishes man from all the animals and which indicates his pre-eminence above the entire animal creation. We are aware of the fact that man possesses reason since science would not be possible without this attribute of character. The ability to generalize, that is, to start with certain basic observations or data and to proceed from these until one arrives at a scientific hypothesis or theory which may be referred to as a scientific law, is essential to the development of all science. The very fact that man is able to understand the world around him is an indication of his kinship to the Creator of the world. For example, man not only observes eclipses but he predicts when they are going to occur. The fact that man can express the movement of the heavenly bodies in terms of mathematical equations and thus predict to the split second the moment that an eclipse will occur is an indication that man's mind is capable of coming to grips with the fundamental laws by which God governs the universe. God has made us like Himself in this respect. The universe has been cast in the form of God's thought, and man being made in the image of God is capable of using his mind in a way that enables him to understand and comprehend what God has done. But human reason is only an infinitesimal spark of the infinite reason of God. As the scientist carries on his studies and makes his observations and comes to his conclusions, he is but tracking the mind of God and thinking God's thoughts after Him. Our little minds give us an indication, although faintly, of what God's great mind must be like.

God possesses other attributes than that of intelligence or reason. He possesses also feeling, freedom, and a moral consciousness that distinguishes between good and evil. In these respects, too, man bears the divine image. Man possesses the powers of moral wisdom; he calls some things good and some things bad. As he grows in spiritual experience, he becomes more and more capable of making keener distinctions between things that differ. He is capable of setting before himself noble goals, and he praises himself when he achieves them. He is also conscious of his failures when he does not achieve them, and he assigns blame-worthiness to himself for his lack of achievement.

One cannot well imagine a moral capacity and a sense of moral responsibility without freedom. Without the power of choice enabling one to elect one course rather than another, there would be little or no advantage to the capacity enabling man to distinguish right from wrong. To know the good and to not be able to follow it would be disastrous indeed. All the way through the Bible man's moral free agency is recognized. He is held guilty when he chooses to follow the course that is wrong and he is held praise-worthy when he follows the course that is right. Freedom implies will. It is in the ability to make decisions and to exercise the power of will that man indicates his constitution as a person. It is the will that chooses to act for or against a proposed course. It is the will that decides to follow God or to follow evil. Through the right choice and the proper exercise of will, man ascends towards divine perfection. Through wrong choice and the wrong exercise of will, man descends almost to the brute. The capacity to feel a moral obligation and the will to act certainly constitute a part of the divine image indelibly stamped upon man.

Since God created man with certain qualities of His own



nature, He then gave him a task commensurate with his abilities. God told him to subdue the earth and to have dominion over every living creature upon the earth. God created the world to be man's home, but a home in which man finds a worthy task, an occupation to employ his mind and his hands. In order to subdue and to exercise dominion over the earth, it is necessary that man understand it. Is not this the function of science to help man understand the world in which he lives? One cannot harness the forces of the universe and make them subject to his will without first understanding the world of which he is a part. The world is vast and intricate and the process of understanding it is long and tedious. But God has so made us that our minds are capable of grappling with the forces of the universe around us, understanding them, harnessing them that they might become our servants. It is only by understanding the laws of creation that man becomes capable of using them in order that he might send ships through the seas and airplanes through the heavens. It is only by understanding, at least something about the truth of the material world in which we live, that we are able to send our messages by means of radio and television, that we are able to build bridges across streams and send skyscrapers into the skies. It is only by understanding the nature of our human bodies and the principles of health and hygiene that we are enabled to live healthful, useful and happy lives. Perhaps the latest indication of man's dominion over the physical forces of the universe is the appearance of the earth satellite known as "Sputnik" that is at this time circling our globe. Through the long, slow and tedious processes of scientific research, man has come to understand at least something about the physical universe God has created, and through the understanding of this truth, he has achieved some dominion over the earth.



These reflections on man's achievements remind us of the Psalmist's statement. "For thou has made him but little lower than God and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Jehovah our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Psalms 8). We have not dwelt upon the distinctive characteristics of man for the purpose of glorifying man, but for the purpose of glorifying God. Man is made in God's image. The more thoroughly we comprehend and understand the nature of the image, the better concept we will have of the reality from which the image derives its likeness. All the desirable characteristics of man are found in perfection in the nature of God. What is dimly seen in man as a shadow finds its reality in God's own character. The glory of the world around us, the glory of man himself causes us to become more conscious of the infinite glory of our Creator and our Heavenly Father. As David said so long ago, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE, OMNISCIENCE,  
AND OMNIPOTENCE

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Raymond C. Kelcy

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job 11:7-9).

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28).

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8).

Becoming acquainted with God is an activity that will occupy our minds throughout eternity. Certainly we cannot hope to exhaust the subject here. God is incomprehensible to finite man. It is not that He has tried to withhold Himself from man. On the contrary He longs to be known and has made every effort to reveal Himself. Failure to comprehend God is not due to any unwillingness on His part to reveal Himself but to our limitations. Because God has condescended to reveal Himself to man He is knowable in a measure and to know God is eternal life (John 17:3). It should be our constant aim to get better acquainted with God, though it is impossible to understand thoroughly His perfections.

It is said that Rowland Hill was once trying to convey to his audience something of God's love. Suddenly he stopped, and raising his eyes heavenward he exclaimed: "I am unable

to reach this lofty theme! Yet I do not think the smallest fish in the ocean ever complains of the ocean's vastness. So it is with me. With my puny powers I can plunge with delight into a subject the immensity of which I shall never be able to comprehend." It was a similar feeling that caused Paul to break forth in one of his wonderful doxologies: "Oh God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

We are studying at this time the infinity of God. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). The term "infinite" conveys the idea of the absence of all limitations. There is nothing beyond God's compass. He is immeasurable. No limits to His greatness can even be imagined.

Some of God's attributes as love, mercy, and justice find at least a near analogy in human beings, but there are other attributes of God which we sometimes designate as His metaphysical attributes to which there is nothing analogous in the human mind and our descriptive terms are very inadequate to set them forth. We must use such language as we have and such illustrations as we can find, at the same time remembering their insufficiency.

### *Omnipresence*

Let us notice first the attribute which we designate as omnipresence. The word does not occur in the scriptures but throughout the Bible the fact that God is everywhere is taught and presupposed. No idea of revelation is more difficult for man to grasp than this . . . the omnipresence of Jehovah. He is not limited by time-space concepts.

There are two units of existence . . . God and the universe. . . . God and all that is not God. Omnipresence im-

plies that God, one unit, penetrates and fills the other unit, the universe, in all its parts. God is everywhere. Not that there is a part of Him in every place but His entirety in every place. Paul declared in his Mars' Hill sermon that God "is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). He is just as near to a man on the other side of the earth this very moment as He is to us. If we pray to God in this place and ask Him to perform a work in our behalf He is here to perform it. But if a man in China is praying to God at the same time for Him to perform a certain work there, it is not necessary for God to move from here to there to answer that prayer. He is already there. God never needs to move to be at any places where He wishes to work. He inhabits His creation. There is no place you could be in all the universe where you would be any nearer to God than you are right here at this very moment. If you could ascend into space and be on some distant planet whose distance can be measured only in terms of hundreds of thousands of light years, you would be no nearer to the presence of Jehovah than we are now.

But isn't it true that Jehovah is in the heavens? Yes, but not there only. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:24). In the words of Solomon: "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (I Kings 8:27). Jesus also taught that God is a spirit and therefore not to be confined to any one place (John 4:24). Many have thought of God as a being far removed with his residence up in the sky but God is everywhere and can be approached everywhere. It has been said that God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.

Two words have come into use in comparatively recent



times to set forth the relation between God and the universe . . . Immanence and Transcendence. They are not new words but they have lately found a new usefulness. Remembering the fact that there are two units of existence, God and the universe, God and all that is not God, Transcendence means that God exceeds the other unit, that He is more than the world and that He is above it. However, though He transcends the world, still He inhabits it and pervades it, drawing near to it in His love and continuing to work in it. This is the meaning of Eminence. God does not act upon His universe from a distance.

Of course, God is not present in the same sense in every creature, nor is He present everywhere in the same manner. Two persons may be near each other physically but far apart in sympathy, and they may be far apart geographically but close together in love and sympathy. Coming near to God does not require a pilgrimage, but penitence, humility, and obedience. To approach Him means to become like Him, and, conversely, to depart from Him means to become more unlike Him.

Immanence also includes the fact of God's indwelling time as well as space. Isaiah refers to God as "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity" (57:15). And the Psalmist speaks of Him as the one existed "before the mountains were brought forth" and before the earth and the world were formed, and then adds, "even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). This sets forth God's infinity as related to time. He inhabits eternity! He dwells in what we know as the past, the present, and the future.

#### *Omniscience*

A companion fact to omnipresence is omniscience, God's perfect knowledge. Omnipresence implies omniscience and

we might even call omniscience a part of omnipresence. God is present to all and absent from nothing. He is present, therefore, with all His power of knowing. The perfect mind cannot be present without knowing that to which it is present. So, God cannot be omnipresent without knowing all. In the 139th Psalm the writer celebrates both attributes, omnipresence and omniscience, with a reverent gladness and the practical identity of the two is taken for granted. The idea of the Psalmist is that God knows all because He is everywhere. He is everywhere in His universe and in eternity. If one cannot escape from God's knowledge it is because he cannot escape from His presence. One of the two units of existence, God, has perfect knowledge of the other unit, the universe, and, in addition, God perfectly knows Himself.

All human knowledge is imperfect. We do not understand anything completely, not even the least and most familiar thing, because we do not understand completely the whole to which each thing belongs. Therefore our experience gives us little aid in understanding the omniscience of Jehovah. It is unlike all knowledge that is possible to us. All our knowledge is ignorance and folly in comparison. All of the knowledge combined of all men who have ever lived would not add up to omniscience. Omniscience means the simultaneous knowledge of all things past, present, and future. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

How comprehensive is the knowledge of God. Peter said, "Lord, thou knowest all things" (John 21:17). "God calleth those things that be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven" (Job 28:24). "He bringeth out the host by number and calleth them all by names" (Isaiah 40:26). He knows the universe in its totality.

He knows all things pertaining to man. He not only knows all things that have happened but His knowledge even extends to what would have happened had some other course been pursued. Jesus said Tyre and Sidon would have repented if they had had the light possessed by His generation (Matthew 11:21). God knows what is in man. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men" (Psalm 33:13). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "He declareth unto man what is his thought" (Amos 4:13). When the apostles prayed to God on a certain occasion they addressed Him as the one "which knowest the hearts of all men" (Acts 1:24). Jesus assured us that even the hairs of our head are numbered and that God is aware of the sparrow's fall (Matthew 10:29-30). He also assured us of the fact that "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:8).

The knowledge of God includes all things and has no bounds.

### *Omnipotence*

When Abraham was ninety-nine, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God." This name suggests the might and power of Jehovah. And after God had promised Abraham an heir and after Sarah had laughed at the promise, God asked Abraham the question: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). Those who are acquainted with God as He is presented on the pages of the Bible and as He is seen in Jesus Christ must answer this question negatively. The power of God is the most obvious of His attributes. "With God all things are possible," de-

clared Jesus (Matthew 19:26). When the angel appeared to Mary and informed her that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Lord, he added, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Miracles have attested to the mighty power of Jehovah. He was able to restrain fire from hurting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He was able to part the waters of the Red Sea, to make an axe head float, to calm an angry tempest, to change water into delicious wine. The creation of matter from nothing bespeaks an infinite power. God's handiwork is seen in the starry vault above and the heavens declare His glory. His power is seen in nature, in history, and in redemption. One of the greatest exhibitions of divine power was that "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:20).

Omnipotence is closely related to God's omnipresence and omniscience. That He is everywhere enables Him to know all things and to act everywhere. God is able, adequate, sufficient. He is the master of the universe, the Almighty, holding His universe in control and competent to do all that needs to be done. His power extends far above anything that He has ever done. It operates in all things that His own nature and character call for and in all that His universe demands.

Omnipotence does not imply that God can do everything that might be mentioned. It does not imply that He can do that which involves an absurdity or things which involve some sort of a contradiction. It has been the delight of skeptics to propose things which they are sure Jehovah cannot do. We gladly agree that there are some things God cannot do. Does not the Bible itself say that it is impossible for God to lie? (Hebrews 6:18). There are some things



God cannot do because He is God and this is one of them. He cannot lie because He is truth in Himself. And we might go farther and say that God cannot die because He is life in Himself. He cannot do an unwise act because He is wisdom in Himself. The only limitations of God rise from the perfection of His nature. He is able to realize perfectly whatever He wills, but it is unthinkable that He should will anything inconsistent with His own nature and character. Neither can He do things that are self-contradictory. Can He delete history, making a past event to have not occurred? Can He make a rock so big that He cannot lift it? Can He make undone that which has been done? No. These are self-contradictory. God cannot create a being whose nature is sinful . . . this would contradict the essential nature of deity. He cannot force us to serve Him or to love one another. That would contradict the nature He gave us and would violate His purpose for us.

### *God Described in Human Language*

There are passages in the Bible which may seem to some to be at variance with what has been said in this lesson. If God is everywhere, how is it that the scriptures can speak of Him as coming and going, much as they would a human being? We are told that He walked in the garden, that He descended at the building of the tower of Babel, that He appeared to various individuals, and that He dwelt in Zion between the cherubim. We can explain these by the fact that while God is not local, still manifestations of Him have been local, and also by the fact that God's relation to space is sometimes spoken of very figuratively. To say that God comes from afar to reward or to punish man is to use human terminology in describing actions of deity. Scholars designate such figurative expressions as "Anthropomorphisms,"

that is, God revealing Himself to human beings in human terms.

The same thing can be said of those passages which speak of God having bodily parts and performing certain actions. He is said to have a face, eyes, nostrils, arms and feet. He is said to smell a sweet savor, to laugh, to repent, to be jealous of other gods. We do not understand these literally. Any characteristic or attribute of God must be described in terms man can understand and we are to view such expressions as accommodative language. However, these metaphorical terms do imply that in the divine conduct there is something analogous to the human attributes and actions upon which these expressions are founded. If we conclude that the writers who used these expressions took them literally, we must also say that they believed God had wings and feathers and that He was a tree with spreading branches, for they also used these descriptive terms in speaking of God.

#### *Practical Significance*

The infinity of Jehovah is a source of much comfort and satisfaction to the child of God. Since God is everywhere He is in me and near me. The incident is related that once Anthony Collins, a noted skeptic of his day, met a plain countryman who was on his way to a place of worship. "Why are you going to church?" Collins asked. "To worship God," was the reply. "And is this God you worship a great or a little God?" asked Collins whimsically. "He is so great, Sir, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and so little that He can dwell in my heart," was the unexpected answer. Collins later said that this simple answer had more effect upon his mind than all the scholarly volumes that had been written against Him. God is within me! He is near to help in every place and from every foe and trouble. "The

Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing" (Philippians 4: 5-6). We are always under our Father's eye and we may enjoy real and vital communion with Him everywhere.

If we are living close to God his great knowledge is a source of comfort. Since he knows all, he knows me and my needs. He knows my burdens, my trials, and my problems. He knows my laughter and my tears, my sorrows and my joys, my grief and my happiness. He knows the yearnings of my heart and the inexpressible groanings of my soul. He knows all that I need even before I ask.

Then, since God is omnipotent, He is able to meet my needs. He can do all things and is willing to exercise His great power in my behalf. He can answer prayer and has assured us that He will do so. Our God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Ephesians 3:20).

But the infinity of God, though a source of comfort to some, is also a source of fear and terror to others. That God is everywhere, that He knows all things, and that He has all power are great truths upon which the ungodly man does not like to dwell. All through the ages men have been trying to escape from God, and every attempt to do so is just as foolish as was that of Adam and Eve who hid themselves in the garden, or of Jonah who tried to flee from the presence of Jehovah. Many today would not admit that they are trying to escape from God, but we are constrained to think that their efforts tend in that direction.

We cannot escape from God by doubting or denying His existence. Research is supreme to the skeptic and he will not believe what he cannot prove by mathematical demonstration. He says, "I do not know whether there is a God or not." Others, bent upon personal pleasure, pursue the phi-

losophy of eating, drinking, and making merry. They ask, "Since we have but one life to live, why not?" Some who follow this course are low and degenerate; others are law-abiding citizens. Both classes are ungodly . . . without God. The majority of those about us are neither atheistic nor religious. They are average people of the community who never read their Bibles, pray only in time of great trouble, and go to church once in a great while. They believe in the Lord's Day as a day for personal pleasure and recreation. While the atheist says there is no God these multiplied legions are *living* as if there were none. But in spite of man's efforts to get away from God and to ignore Him, GOD IS STILL THERE!

One man told of this experience in one of the wars. He was standing one evening not far from the tall spire of a church building. The firing had died down. But suddenly a lone shell came screaming through the twilight and the top half of the tower was blown apart with a deafening roar. Almost simultaneously a covey of birds which had been nesting there rose slowly above the smoke and the flying bits of stone, hovered in the air a moment, and then settled quietly back. He said it seemed like the greatness of God to him . . . lifting over the ruin and the pain, only to brood down after men had done their worst, and nest again silently close to earth.

As usual, the world is in chaos. Our problems, many of which the wisest of earth confess they cannot answer, are accumulating year by year. Yet above all the dust of our little battles and quarrels, THERE IS GOD.

The psalmist once thought of escaping from his trials. "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the



windy storm and tempest" (Psalm 55:6-8). But of course if David had been given wings and had flown into the wilderness, he would have still had problems and there would still be God. This same David, in another psalm, the 139th, while his mind moved among the glories of Jehovah, sang of His infinite greatness in a way that has reverberated across the centuries and which touches our hearts tonight:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting, and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto

me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. . . . Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be found any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24).

## THE GOODNESS AND THE SEVERITY OF GOD

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J. Leonard Jackson, Minister

In the eleventh chapter of the Roman letter, verse 22, Paul in his profound letter to the Roman church said, "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off." The word "behold" is found more than two hundred fifty times in the Bible. It means "to see, to observe fully." The goodness of God which Paul wanted the Romans to see was His engrafting the Gentiles into the Abrahamic stock. This was done by God because of the Gentile's belief. But the severity of God was manifested in the cutting off the Jews as natural branches because of their unbelief. In these two acts of God we have what the apostle calls "the goodness and severity of God." Then we may assume that our Maker is a God of goodness and also a God of severity. This is the declaration of our text: "toward those (Jews) that fell, severity; but toward thee (Gentiles grafted in), goodness." To the righteous, God is a God of goodness, but to the unrighteous He is a God of severity. We shall in this paper give emphasis to these two aspects of God's nature, His goodness and His severity, both of which permeate the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible is replete with manifestations of both the goodness and severity of God. It has often been said that God has written of Himself to humanity in two great books, the book of nature and the book of revelation. In both books we are able to see both the goodness and severity of God.

Life is an antithesis, fraught with many contrasts. It presents to us its bright side and also its dark side; these, like the opposing forces of a drama, are struggling in their antagonism toward a turning point and a climax. In life we meet sunshine and shadow, joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty, happiness and misery, health and disease, living and dying. This antithesis may be seen in the Bible as it relates to the nature of God. In the Bible we find God's love and His hatred, His mercy and His wrath, His blessing and His curse. We would rather behold the bright side of revelation and of life and overlook the dark side. It is more pleasant to think of sunshine, joy, happiness and life, than to think of shadow, sorrow, misery and death. It is more pleasant to behold God's goodness, mercy and love, than His hatred, His wrath and His severity. But in life we are brought to both Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, the mount of the blessing and the mount of the curse, and God wants us to see both. Our love for the pleasant should never blind us to the reality of the unpleasant. Therefore our text calls us to behold the antithesis, the goodness and severity of God.

That we may climax what we have to say with the pleasant side of God's nature, we shall follow a divine precedent with respect to our text and make "the last first and the first last." Behold the severity of God! We see the severity of God in His hatred of evil and in His wrath on the sons of disobedience. The very nature of God demands that He be severe with rebellious sinners. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hinder the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). All types of unrighteousness are hindrances to the truth and are therefore the objects of God's wrath. To the Colossians Paul wrote, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, pas-



sion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God on the sons of disobedience" (Col. 3:5). To the church in Thessalonica the same apostle said, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the power of his might" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Despite these warnings of God, however, some contend that eternal punishment is contrary to and incompatible with the mercy and goodness of God. Modernism makes the mistake here of beholding the goodness of God, while at the same time blinding itself to the severity of God. Our text admonishes us to behold both the goodness and severity of God.

The Bible informs us that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. Then to go to hell one must make a devil of himself or an angel of the devil. Sin does this for one. It makes a human being a devil or an angel of the devil. A weeping wife and mother came to my study one day with two small children who were also crying. A drunken father and husband had allowed intoxicating drink to dethrone his reason and to destroy his character. He had become so abusive toward his family, the wife said to me, "our home is a veritable hell. I have stood it as long as I can. I am leaving my husband and am going to work and I want you to help me get my two children a home in the orphanage at Spring Hill." The mother was right in her description of her home. It was a hell, but why? What made her home this way? The answer is sin. Sin creates hells for people here and hereafter. Wherever you find sin you will sooner or later find a hell. A hell is the creation of sin. A noted warrior said once,

after seeing the havoc of war in our Southland, "War is hell." How right the General was! War is hell to those on the battlefronts, and hell to those at home. War is hell because it is diabolical, Satanic, and sinful. War creates the hell that it is because it is sin. In his depiction of what he saw on Patmos on the day of precious memories—the terrible consummation of the hereafter—the aged John reveals the class that is to be in hell. "But for the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Yes, there is to be an eternal hell, which the sin of sinners is creating for them hereafter. God cannot be blamed for the doom of sinners. He has warned sinners to flee from the wrath which is to come on the world of unrighteous men. The Psalmist said in the first Psalm, "The wicked are not so (as the righteous), but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish." Behold the severity of God toward sin and sinners—those who walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of scoffers.

But we turn our attention now to the brighter side in beholding the goodness of God. We see God's goodness when we look up at the starry heavens that declare His glory. We see His goodness when we look down to the earth and see He has crowned the earth with His blessings and our paths drop fatness. We see His goodness when we look into our souls, and we say with the Psalmist, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Psalm 67:16). Then we see the goodness of God when we

look around us to a land of surplus and a land of plenty, to a land as yet uninvaded by hostile foes. David asks us to enumerate our blessings and to forget not all God's benefits. "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy desire with good things. . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities. . . . Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him." The pathos of our frailties causes our God to pity us and to be merciful to us in the midst of our weaknesses.

New Testament writers also keep before us the manifestations of God's goodness and call upon us to behold the same. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). All the good that comes to us in life is from God, and all the evil comes from Satan. "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Paul, in his address on Mars' Hill said in his great sermon on God, "He giveth to all life and breath and all things . . . and in him we live and move and have our being." Jesus saw God's goodness in the birds and lilies. "Behold the birds of the heaven, they sow not, neither do they gather into barns, but your Father feedeth them. Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not and neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Peter said, "His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). "And according to his mercy he begat us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, which fadeth not

away (1 Peter 1:3-4). In contemplation of this truth Paul said, "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

The goodness of God is seen furthermore in His consolations. In the hour of grief we are able to find Him who is able to "turn the shadow of death into the morning light."

"When other helpers fail and comforts flee;  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

"The Lord is our refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). "For in the day of trouble he will keep me secretly in his pavilion, and in the covert of his tabernacle will he hide me" (Psalm 27:5). "Are the consolations of God too small for thee?" (Job 15:11). "No," Eliphaz, "they are always abundant in every sorrow of life."

And finally, God's goodness is seen in His superlative gift of our Redeemer. In Him God gave us the light of the world, the Shepherd of His sheep, the Savior of the world. And through Christ God has given us the promise of "a land beyond the river where the surges cease to roll." "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his Holy Name." Because of the goodness of God our lives should be a living doxology of His grace. "What shall I render unto Jehovah for all his benefits unto me?" (Psalm 116:12).

"O Thou Fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
"O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness like a fetter  
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee."



## THE HOLINESS OF GOD

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By Jack Bates

The subject, "The Holiness of God," is as significant as ancient truth and as modern as the clock on yonder wall. Our knowledge of the Holy Creator must be based upon His revelation of Himself, for no man could evolve this doctrine. Our understanding of this unique characteristic of Jehovah, combining the traits of mercy, love, and righteousness in unchanging perfection, staggers our pride and reduces us to humble supplicants. We tremble before the sublime purity, the stern justice, the unbending righteousness of Jehovah God. We are conscious of the great gulf separating divinity from humanity. Then, our hearts fill with ceaseless gratitude because the Eternal One has manifested the seeking love and tender mercy which are also aspects of His holiness.

Throughout this lectureship we shall be engaged in a search for God. Our minds and hearts will be challenged by the magnificent postulate—"GOD IS!" The Bible asserts this truth positively and plainly. It is the beginning and the ending of sacred, inspired Scripture,—that God was Yesterday; God is Today, and God will be Tomorrow. To know God truly, not only as Creator but as Father, is to gain wisdom and understanding. To lean upon God in prayer and trust is to find resources and strength transcending human understanding. To follow Him in loving surrender is to become part of His eternal purpose.

Modern man needs God. He needs to find the Sun of Righteousness more than he needs to fly to the moon. An atheist was once defined as "one who had no invisible means

of support." When faith is not a part of life, a vacuum is created. Into this void flow the fears and frustrations, the irrational phobias, and the terrible insecurities that fill the lives of so many people today.

One of the most penetrating minds of our day has summed up modern man's adventure away from God. Walter Lippmann is actually an unfriendly witness. Writing in *A Preface To Morals*, he described the orthodox liberal who believed that man had a beautiful soul enslaved by his belief in God. Somehow he felt that when he was released from the awe and worship of God he would be free from guilt. Somehow he felt that once he escaped from the demands and discipline of God, both perfect freedom and automatic progress would result.

Then Mr. Lippmann described the woman freed from her husband, her home and her children—free with the expensive help of the psychoanalyst to endure a lonely but free life. He described the freedom from morals which has led to world-weariness and cynicism.

Two notable exponents of this freedom have left their testimony. Nietzsche, who fathered the spirit of fatalism, is the first expert in man's emancipation from God. Here are his words: "Where is my home? For it do I ask and seek, and have sought, but have not found it. O eternal everywhere, O eternal nowhere, O eternal in vain."

Man's adventure away from God leads to profound hopelessness and deep-tinctured pessimism. Listen to these words of Bertrand Russell:

. . . we see, surrounding the narrow raft illumined by the flickering light of human comradeship, the dark ocean on whose rolling waves we toss for a brief hour; from the great night without, a chill blast breaks in upon our refuge; all the loneliness of humanity amid hostile forces is concentrated upon the

individual soul, which must struggle alone, with what of courage it can command, against the whole weight of a universe that cares nothing for its hopes and fears.

In *Only Yesterday*, Frederick Lewis Allen described the generation that grew up after World War I. "What most distinguished them," he said, "was not their rebellion against religion but their disillusionment with their own rebellion." He added, "The certainty had departed from life. Science took their God away from them, reduced Him to a principle of order in the universe, or a figment of the mind conjured up to meet a psychological need. It also reduced man to a creature with ideas of right and wrong for which there was no transcendental authority."

God was robbed of His holiness. He was dethroned and defamed. He was described as 'absolute energy,' 'idealized reality,' or, in the words of one New England liberal as a 'sort of oblong blur.' Dr. Alfred North Whitehead, one of the better known philosophers of this country, once defined God as follows: "God is not concrete, but He is the ground for concrete actuality." It would seem that God is available to logicians only!

The banner of freedom became tattered and torn. Winds of tempests swept through the earth. False philosophies arose—bloody dictators had their day—and millions of white crosses are mute testimony to man's failure.

With the rejection of God and the loss of personal faith, five things have happened in modern life:

1. *futility and meaninglessness.* Without faith in God, life has no framework. There is no great adventure or purpose.

2. *personal insignificance.* If the universe is a vast, cold

machine, and all things are measurable in terms of quantity only, what can we do that is worth doing?

3. *the yearning for security.* We try all kinds of material security because we are insecure spiritually.

4. *awareness of the power of evil.* Who would have dreamed in this era of education and scientific advancement that Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev *et al.* could have enslaved millions of people? When God is left out, man gives himself to bestialism and cruelties beyond description.

5. *the need for an absolute in life and conduct.* Experimentation in morals brings disaster. Man needs principles of right and wrong that do not change. His own life needs to be buttressed and sustained by the knowledge of truth that is constant and unchanging.

Against this awful backdrop of futility, of insignificance, of the terrible yearning for security, of the helplessness against the power of evil, and of our need for absolutes in life—there stands the *Holiness of God!*

Out in the desert there lived an Indian tribe. More powerful tribes warred against it, pillaging, invading and molesting their peaceful life. In desperation they climbed the rocky sides of a great mesa which reared itself steeply above the plain. Here they found water and fertile soil. Bathed in sunshine, they grew their grain in peace. They were above their enemies.

So it is with the holiness of God. We are challenged to rise above sin and self by the plain disclosure of what God is like, who He is, and what He wants of human beings.

What is God like? How has He described Himself? Is He vindictive, capricious, moody? Is He clothed with the lusts of men? Is it possible to know how to please Him? Does He govern the world by principles that lead us out of



ourselves because they are above mortality, space, and time?  
Is He unstable and cruel?

Micah asked this question centuries ago:

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (Micah 6:6-7).

Moses wanted to know. Exodus reveals the sublime courage of this Hebrew prince of Egypt who believed that his God was greater than Pharaoh. But out in the wilderness Israel danced around a golden calf. Their idolatry, God's wrath, the unknown factors of sin and human weakness, caused Moses to make an unusual request. "Show me thy ways, that I may know thee," he asked. "Show me thy glory," he pleaded.

We can understand this longing. Robert Browning was once asked what sentiment in his poetry best expressed his conviction. He gave the simple answer, "I am very sure of God."

God told Moses to prepare two new tables of stone and to climb to the top of the holy mountain again. There Jehovah descended in a cloud and passed before him. This is what He said:

"And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation" (Exodus 34: 6-7).

In essence, Jehovah declared His identity to be HOLY LOVE. This holy love was manifested in His mercy and graciousness, in His loving-kindness and truth. He is steadfast and dependable in His dealings with mankind. It is time now to answer the inquiry voiced by the prophet Micah. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

Throughout the Bible God has revealed His holiness.

To Israel He declared, "I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:1, 2).

Aaron wore upon his garments a constant reminder of this exalted relationship with God. Upon a plate of pure gold fastened to his mitre or turban and worn on his forehead were engraven the words, "Holy To Jehovah" (Exodus 28:36-38).

It is said that when Gamaliel Bradford began to write his book on Robert E. Lee, he approached his subject in a spirit of hostility. He had little sympathy with the South, and so at first he decided that the title of his book would be *Lee The Rebel*. As he studied the material and came to know his man better, he concluded that 'rebel' was not the word he wanted. He changed the title to *Lee The Southerner*. As he lived with the great general, studying his memoirs and becoming acquainted with his characteristics, he saw that even this was too provincial and limited. He finally called his book, *Lee The American*.

*The Holiness of God*

This concept of holiness grew as men learned more of the nature of God. They found that His love was for all men. Reverence and respect deepened as they discovered His power and purpose.

It may be suggested that the term 'Holiness' refers to the moral excellence of God. Hannah, exulting in the birth of Samuel, glorified Jehovah saying, "There is none holy as the Lord" (I Samuel 2:2). No other being is absolutely pure and free from all limitations in his moral perfection.

The children of Israel looked back at the waters of the Red Sea as it covered the wreckage of the proudest army of that ancient time. In their song of deliverance they paid homage to the character of God: "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like thee, *glorious in holiness?*" (Exodus 15:11).

Isaiah, in a later time, trembled before the holiness of God. In the troubled year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord upon His throne.

Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts (Isaiah 6:1-6).

Charles Hodge, writing in his first volume of *Systematic Theology*, states that the seraphim give expression to the feelings of all unfallen rational creatures in view of the in-

finite purity of God. They are the representatives of the whole universe as they cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." It is because of His holiness that God is a consuming fire.

John described these celestial creatures in Revelation 4:8 honoring God ceaselessly, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." The heart of this great apostle in exile on rocky Patmos, thrilled to the song of Moses and the Lamb, the swelling chorus of those who had emerged victorious from the beast and his image.

"Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Revelation 15:3, 4).

It may be at this juncture that some serious observations about worship are in order. David enjoined that Jehovah be worshiped "in the beauty of holiness" (I Chronicles 16:29). Many of our worship assemblies are not characterized by the preparation of heart, the framework of reference in which our attitudes and thinking are attuned to the sacred privilege of seeking God in the public assembly. Some are gum-chewers, clock-watchers, interested critics, or peaceful spectators. Some of us could stay awake on the Lord's Day if we retired earlier on Saturday evening. Apart from these questionable attitudes on the part of worshipers, two extremes may be noted in terms of worship procedures. At one pole are the noise and confusion, the back-slapping familiarity, of the disorganized service. At the other extreme is the mechanical, perfunctory performance of people who seek formality and who are very much in a hurry!



William Newton Clarke, writing in his *Outline of Christian Theology*, declares a self-evident truth. He states that "Holiness is the glorious fulness of God's moral excellence, held as the principle of his own action and the standard for his creatures."

Several principles need to be noted at this point in our thinking.

First, *holiness in God is an inward character of perfect goodness*. The Lord God possesses all moral excellence without defect. So Paul declared that the goodness of God prompted men to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Second, *God always holds the quality of holiness as the principle of His own action, and is always consistent with it*. Holiness includes, therefore, both the perfection of God and the fact that He is always true to Himself. In the Bible when God reveals Himself to His creatures as holy, He wishes them to know these two great facts: that He is inwardly perfect, and outwardly consistent with His perfection.

James describes God as "the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17). If there were incongruity, inconstancy, or lack of steadfastness in Jehovah's dealings with mankind, we would be helpless indeed. Malachi assures us that Jehovah changes not (Malachi 3:6). Balaam declared to Balak and the princes of Moab, "God is not a man, that he should lie." He then asked a rhetorical question, "Hath he said, and will he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). God's holiness is guarantee that He will be consistent with His own character and purpose.

Third, there is a principle in the doctrine of the holiness of God that directly concerns mankind. *The goodness which*

*is the quality of His own conduct is also His standard for our conduct.* God's aim is to produce beings who are capable of goodness and then to make them good. For this He created the universe, and for this He conducts it. A holy God can have no lower aim than this, and with infinite patience He has been pursuing this high goal ever since He brought the universe into existence.

Since holiness dictates God's end in the universe it follows that holiness is His standard. He cannot have one standard for Himself and require another for His creatures. Therefore, He requires men to be holy and endeavors to make them so. He says, "Ye shall be holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:1, 2). Peter, quoting this great passage, states, "but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16).

It follows as a sure conclusion that *if sin exists, holiness in God must forever oppose it.* Sin is the opposite of moral goodness for which God created the universe. Sin destroys and defeats His holy desire and purpose. Nothing could be more positive than the opposition of God as a holy being to moral evil in the life and conduct of His creatures.

It is because of the doctrine of the holiness of God that Paul writes:

"Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 6:17-7:1).

Peter describes the high estate of God's people:

"But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9).

It is said that the English writer, J. H. Shorthouse, as a young man had difficulty accepting Christian truth because he did not feel any need of forgiveness. His minister suggested that he do a strange thing. He gave him two sheets of paper, one plain white and the other with a black edge around it. Then he suggested that he write on the white paper everything he had ever done that was absolutely good with no touch of evil, and on the black-edged sheet everything in his life that had been sinful and wicked.

In a few days, Shorthouse returned with the black-edged sheet filled on both sides. He said, "I could have filled a dozen more like it. On the white sheet I wrote just one thing—my love for my mother. Then I rubbed it out because too often it had been marred by selfishness."

"Then what did you do?" asked his friend.

"Then I got down on my knees and said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

Since holiness demands a stern and rigorous opposition to sin, we may understand God's Justice or Righteousness, which is a form of His holiness.

Clarke has a striking paragraph along this line of thought:

When a man freely commits himself to moral evil, and joins his will in opposition to God, that man has set himself against the purpose for which God conducts His universe. God cannot overlook him, or make it possible for him to prosper in his evil way. He has placed himself where he must either turn back and forsake his sin, or take the inevitable consequence of resisting the purpose which God is fulfilling. . . . But righteousness in God

does more than insure the certainty of punishment. God's justice or righteousness is the certainty that He will be guided in His action toward all beings by the rightness that enters into His perfect character.

God's holiness, therefore, is the basis of moral significance in His universe. The holiness which is God's own standard gladdens and inspires the good, dooms evil to defeat, and is the hope of all who struggle upward.

A woman took a friend with her when she went to the photographer to have her picture made. The beauty parlor had done its best for her. As the photographer was adjusting the lights, she said, "Now be sure to do me justice." Her friend remarked with a twinkle in her eye, "Honey, what you need is not justice but mercy."

I am thankful that there is another indispensable element in the holiness of God. God's purity and justice separate Him from us but His love communicates His character to the sinner. Through love, God imparts Himself and all good to other beings. By His mercy and grace, through the supreme sacrifice of Christ, we can become partakers of His holiness.

How wonderful it is that love and mercy are intrinsic parts of God's character, too! How great would be the gulf otherwise between man's sin and God's righteousness!

God would not be holy if He were not love. If God were not love, He would be either selfish or indifferent. The glorious fulness of goodness which constitutes His holiness would then be no more. Holiness is central in God but love is central in holiness. If love is the impulse to give all good, love in the highest degree can exist only in one who has all good to give.

Our Father offers eternal fellowship, justification from sin,



the righteousness of Christ for our guilt. In love and extended mercy through grace He seeks us for our highest good. We are invited to become partakers of His holiness—of His divine nature.

This has been made possible through Christ Jesus.

“For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7: 26, 27).

There is a fine, old story about Harry Lauder, the great Scottish comedian, who lost two of his sons in battle. After the war was over Lauder’s physicians recommended a long rest. He went to Australia where he made new friends. Late one afternoon as dusk was falling, he was out walking with a boy who had become his close companion. They passed several homes where service banners hung in the windows.

“What are those?” asked the boy. Mr. Lauder replied that each star meant that a son had gone from that home to the war. “And why are some of the stars gold?” further inquired the boy.

“That means the son did not come back. He was killed in the war,” the man answered.

They walked on in silence. The sky grew darker. A star twinkled. The boy pointed to it and asked another question, “Did God send a son to the war too?” “Yes,” Mr. Lauder thoughtfully replied, “God sent His only Son to the greatest war ever fought, the war against sin, and it cost His life.”

In the Gospel of Christ, holiness is the ideal and the sub-

stance of Christian character. The moral excellence of God has been demonstrated in the Word made flesh. Power and resources are made available for humanity, integrating and bringing wholeness into life.

“Holiness is the eternal beauty of God, which is to be imparted as the crown of life to men. All the voices of revelation unite in this key-note, ‘The Lord your God is holy.’”

## GOD'S GRACE

Elbridge Linn

(Lecture for Abilene Christian College Lectureship,  
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I am humbly indebted to the Lectureship Committee for this privilege and to God for the physical strength. Lest someone misunderstand and wonder if the Lectureship Committee has made a mistake in having me on the program two years in succession, I hasten to explain that I was ill with some virus last year, and while in Abilene, was unable to speak.

From year to year the growth of Abilene Christian College numerically, scholastically, in preparation of splendid young people for complete living, and as a spiritual force for Christ in the lives of thousands never ceases to give me cause for rejoicing. It was in the Fall of 1931 that I matriculated as a student at Abilene Christian College. After two previous years in a Junior College in California where the Bible was frequently criticized, even ridiculed, it was spiritual meat and drink to my hungering soul, for I was a Christian, to attend classes where godly men and women believed the Bible, loved and served the Christ, and taught young people to do likewise. Never in those years, or since then, have I heard of anyone connected with Abilene Christian College saying, or even remotely suggesting by spoken or printed word, that the school can supplant the church, dictate to it, or accomplish the work God has given His church. Instead, may God's word have free course in our lives both in school and out, throughout all of life, that we all may serve our

Maker steadfastly in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, as faithful members of the ongoing church of Christ.

The subjects which have been outlined and assigned for these lectures are basic to our lives as Christians. The truth that *God Is* must be accepted by man before there can be philosophical or practical meaning to the Scriptural declaration that *God Is Love*. Even though God is infinite in *Holiness*, His *Grace* makes it possible for Him to forgive man's sins, to be worshiped and communed with, in spite of human unworthiness. I am thankful for the privilege of considering with you the marvelous *grace of God*.

A definition of the word "grace" as given by Webster's New International Dictionary: "The divine unmerited favor toward man; the mercy of God, as distinguished from His justice; also, any benefits His mercy imparts; divine love or pardon." Man in his rebellion was driven from the garden of Eden. Yet, God was gracious to him in the promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). When the sins of mankind grieved the heart of God and He determined the destruction of man and the beasts and creeping things, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Through the grace of God Noah and seven other faithful souls were saved from the flood. Divine favor blessed the patriarchs. Israel was delivered from Egypt through the grace of the Lord.

When Moses presented himself before God on Mt. Sinai with two tables of stone that God might write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which Moses had broken (Exodus 34:1; 32:19), "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord," saying, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity



and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6, 7). The expression, "and that will by no means clear the guilty" is very significant and will be considered before the lesson is finished.

Under the law the form of the blessing which Aaron and his sons were to pronounce upon the children of Israel was: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Numbers 6:22-26).

The sweet singer of Israel besought God: "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid" (Psa. 86:15, 16). And many have felt the yearning of David for God's mercy, as burdened with a deep sense of guilt, his tortured soul cried out: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. . . . Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. . . . Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness" (Psalm 51:1-3, 9, 10, 14, 15). The fervent pleas of sinful David sought and found the mercy of the Lord.

One of the Old Testament prophets, Jonah by name, was commanded by the Lord to cry out against the great wicked-

ness of the city of Nineveh. He made the mistake of so many who think they can escape God, and sought to sail away to Tarshish. He was man enough to admit to the sailors aboard ship that he was the cause of the storm, recommended that he be thrown overboard. God had the whale ready, and after three days and three nights in the great fish, Jonah was vomited out upon the dry land. Someone has facetiously remarked that since a whale couldn't stand the non-missionary prophet what must God have thought of him! But at last the message of repentance to Nineveh was preached: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" But the people of Nineveh repented, "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10). Amazing as it may seem to us, who should rejoice with the angels in heaven when a sinner turns from the error of his way, Jonah was not happy, but instead was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord and said, "I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." These words from a disgruntled, prejudiced Jewish prophet form a tribute to Jehovah. O God, we thank Thee that Thou art merciful, for our hope rests upon Thy mercy and kindness!

Another of the minor prophets called Israel to repentance with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:13).

The foregoing are passages to which I have referred to

show that the Old Testament frequently emphasizes the truth that God is gracious and merciful. But the New Testament throbs with the heart beats of divine love. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-5, 14).

God is love and grace is that Love in action. Grace is always unmerited. To be sure, it is man's demerit which makes grace possible and necessary. If there were no human sin, there would need to be no divine forgiveness. And the working of sin does not hinder or limit divine grace. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," declared Paul. And again, "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Some one has said, "Grace works not by what it finds, but by what it brings." Behold what grace God extends to man in removing his sin and guilt and in conforming redeemed man into the likeness of His Own Son and placing him at last in a state of eternal glory.

It was by the grace of God that Christ suffered death for all men. "But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Sins are forgiven according to the riches of God's grace. Paul taught the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spir-



itual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:4-7). Sinners are justified by divine favor: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:24, 25). Consider what a marvelous blessing grace in a faithful Christian's life may accomplish: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21).

The several passages quoted from the Old Testament have been given to refute the false theory sometimes referred to as the "evolution of God." The idea that God is gracious and loving now that He has given Christ but that He was not in Old Testament days, is false. May students of God's word be reminded that the infinite grace of God in sending His Son as the gift of His love was not an afterthought of God, but that He foreordained the death of His Son before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 13:8). However, it cannot be said too emphatically that the events of the Old Testament, that the Law of Moses with its spirit and demands had to precede the sacrificial life and death of Christ in order that man might be ready to receive Him. The statement of Paul to the effect that the law "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" has great signifi-



cance but just one truth should be noted here. God did not give the Old Testament law, hoping that it would meet man's needs, but when it failed through human weakness, decided to cover up His mistake by sending His Son. The very idea is preposterous! And yet that is the idea that many people who should know better have expressed to me. No, God was not experimenting when He gave Israel the Old Covenant. He knew exactly what He was doing and men today need to know God's plan when He gave the Law through Moses that they might understand and appreciate Christ and the New Covenant.

When I received the assignment to speak on this topic the letter from Brother J. D. Thomas also enclosed a mimeographed copy of the rationale of the topics planned by the Lectureship Committee. I am glad that this exposition of the subjects and principles involved suggested that God's grace in Christ is a scheme of redemption, a way of salvation, different from the law of Moses, opposed to its spirit and letter, and that God's grace excludes human merit. Man does not deserve salvation as a reward for accomplishment. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4, 5). Human merit would place God in debt to man. But this is contrary to God's word, and the idea is degrading to God's character. "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (Romans 4:2). James 2 does not contradict Paul. He shows that faith must express itself in overt acts of obedience. This is still faith and not meritorious works. God gives no man a right to boast about his works. Man's works do not merit blessings from God. In fact, the person who thinks he is good enough to earn salvation from God is mis-

informed or un-informed and miserably conceited and deceived by his self-righteousness. One is reminded of the Pharisee of old who in the guise of thanking God actually congratulated Him for having such a fine servant. However, the publican had nothing good to say about himself, and could only sob, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 9-14). Christ said the publican was justified in God's sight. He also warned His disciples against trusting in their own righteousness (and that would be upon the basis of human works): "When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

Some very fine people are quite surprised when told that men today under Christ are not under the Old Testament. Some people think one can be under the grace of God in Christ and under the law at the same time. To see if this is possible, shall we read in Romans 7:1-4: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Here Paul declared believers in Christ are "dead to the law." In verse 6, the statement is made: "But now we are delivered from the law." To what "law" are we *dead* and from what "law" are we now *delivered*? Mark verse 7: "I

had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' But the law which said: 'Thou shalt not covet' was the ten-commandment law! Yes, the law of Moses, the law of God, the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments were one and the same. And Paul affirmed we are not under these, because 'ye are not under the law, but under grace' (Romans 6:14).

It has been suggested that the words "gospel" and "grace" are not synonyms. However, the gospel is the "good news" of the grace of God. Paul risked death to faithfully discharge his ministry which he received of the Lord, "to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). The "grace of God" hath appeared (Col. 2:11); it brings salvation. The gospel of Christ brings salvation: "By which also ye are saved . . ." (I Corinthians 15:2). Paul was caused to marvel that the Galatian Christians so quickly deserted him that called them into the grace of Christ for another gospel (Galatians 1:6). Here the "grace of Christ" and the "gospel of Christ" apply to the same thing. Again, we are pointed away from the Old Testament and to Christ. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

If men today are living religiously under the Old Covenant, then God has not kept His promises. I speak reverently. Those who claim that we are now living under the Ten Commandments, the Old Testament, the law, make God unfaithful to His promise. The claim makes God a liar, unfaithful to His promises, reduces the Bible to a mass of contradictions—a mere scrap of paper! Now think carefully. God made a promise to Abraham four hundred and thirty years *before* the law of Moses was given (Galatians 3:17). The promise was that in the seed of Abraham the nations should be blessed, and undeniably meant that in Christ, the



seed of Abraham, men should be saved. Now let us read Romans 4:13, 14: "For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect." Paul has written to all men—Jew or Gentile—that all men might know that God's promise to Abraham is made worthless, and faith itself is made void, if men today are under the Law of Moses. May I emphasize it: if men today since the Day of Pentecost following Christ's resurrection are under the Old Testament, God has not kept His promises! But hear God: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed which is Christ" (Galatians 3:15, 16). Do not slight the unmistakable significance of these words. We know that an honest man will keep his promises insofar as it is humanly possible. But God is *unlimited* in power, all things are possible with Him, except He CANNOT LIE! When He promised Abraham, saying, "And to thy seed," he referred to Christ. Nothing that later happened could make void, or of none effect, this promise of God to Abraham. Therefore, we read on: "Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand of God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (Galatians 3:17). Thus, this promise which God made to Abraham was given four hundred and thirty years *before* the Old Covenant (the Ten Commandment law) was given by God. Some four centuries before the law of Moses was given, God spoke glorious things to the faithful patriarch.



“Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:6-14).

How can these Scriptures be misunderstood? *Only willfully!* Those who would be justified by the Old Testament are under a curse, for such salvation would be on the basis of works—of human merit—and not on the basis of grace through faith in Christ. God’s word plainly states: “Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident” (Galatians 3:11). Such has not been evident to some people. Such people, though sincere, are mistaken. They are just as Paul was, living and worshiping in Judaism, before he became a Christian by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Men must make a choice; they can’t have both. It is either the Old Testament with works of human merit (and a curse) or the New Testament with salvation by grace through faith. One must choose between law and grace, between Moses and Christ. Works and faith do not mix, nor law and grace, nor

animal blood and the blood of Christ, nor the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Friends, I warn you not to try to mix Christ and Moses. Moses spoke to the *Jews* by the inspiration of God, but Christ speaks to *all* men. He has *all* authority (Matthew 28:18). Moses was *but* a servant in God's house, while Christ is the Son *over* God's house (Hebrews 3:5, 6).

"Why was the law of Moses abolished?" This question is quite general today. Men reason, "Well, if God took the law away, why did He give it in the first place?" The Holy Spirit anticipated these questions. In Galatians 3:19 we read: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator." Now we understand. The law of Moses was "added" by God to His teaching prior to that time, due to men's sinfulness, but it never did supersede the covenant which He made with Abraham centuries before. We have already learned from Scripture that with the death of Christ on the cross the law ended (Colossians 2:14).

Why did God "add" the law? The answer is in Galatians 3:23-25: "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor." There it is in plain English! The law of Moses, the Old Covenant, was a "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ, but now that Christ is come, men are no longer under a schoolmaster! That is precisely the same as saying: "men are no longer under the law." This was written 1900 years ago, mainly to those Christians whom judaizing teachers desired back *under* the law.

What did the "schoolmaster" teach? First, that men are sinners (note Galatians 3:19). Then, that he can't save himself. It never ceases to amaze me that Bible teachers frequently will read Romans 4:4 and say that Abraham was not justified by the works of *the law*, when Abraham was justified four hundred years before the law was ever given. How could he have been justified by the law; he wasn't even under it. The truth of the matter is that a lot of people want some credit for their salvation. They desire somehow to put God in debt to them. How convincing are the words in Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfill the law's demand;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow  
All for sin could not atone,  
Thou must save and thou alone.  
Nothing in my hands I bring;  
Simply to thy cross I cling;  
Naked come to thee for dress;  
Helpless look to thee for grace;  
Vile, I to the fountain fly,  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

I was talking to a Bible class teacher one day, emphasizing the marvelous grace of God, and said: "There isn't anything I can do to pay for my salvation." He replied: "No, the nearest we can get to it is to keep all of the commandments of God." My lesson on the mercy of God had been wasted, I guess. Oh, friend, I don't know anybody that's going to come "close" to paying God for his salvation. But out of gratitude for His lovingkindness may I never cease to do

His will that others may come to share His infinite grace and that I may be transformed from day to day into a life that is increasingly Christlike.

Then, the schoolmaster taught the inability of the law to save. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, but through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20), and Paul explained: "I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). The law exposed the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It was a mirror in which men saw sins. However, we all know that looking into a mirror will not wash away dirt, even though it is revealed. Just so, the law revealed the sin, but did not remove it. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16). The apostle explained why men were not saved by the law by declaring: "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh . . ." (Romans 8:3). It was not the fault of God's law that men were not saved by it. The law was holy and righteousness, but man was weak and unable to keep it. That is the meaning of the scripture "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." This is a lesson taught by the law, that men might be brought to trust in God's grace and not in their works of righteousness. Paul adds "For if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law" (Galatians 3:21), however, through Christ every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which men could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39). We understand, then, that the law as schoolmaster taught that man is a sinner, that he can't save himself, nor be saved by the law.



Finally, the tutor taught by prophecy, by promise and by type of the Saviour of mankind. God be thanked for the gift of His Son!

A brief summary of God's teaching concerning the law sharply contrasts it with the grace of God in Christ. Men are not saved by the law; it was weak through the flesh (Romans 8:3); the law was not of faith (Galatians 3:12); the promise of salvation in Christ was not through the law (Romans 4:13); the law worketh wrath (Romans 4:15); the law instigated human nature to evil (Romans 7:7-10); no man is justified by the law (Galatians 3:11); the law has a curse (3:13); but Christ became the curse for us; the law made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7:19); the law had a shadow of good things to come in this gospel age (Hebrews 10:1); and the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Galatians 3:24).

Just as soon as it has been definitely taught that the Law of Moses is not binding upon Christians, someone who has come under Judaistic influence even though he may erroneously call himself a Christian, cries: "Well, then, a person can do just anything he wants to do since he is not under any law of conduct!" Nothing could be further from the truth. Has such a person never heard of the New Testament? The teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount *magnified* the law. The law prohibited killing, but Christ warned men against hatred. (Read Matthew 5:21, 22.) The law of Moses forbade adultery, but Christ taught that lust in a man's heart may be adultery in God's sight. Said Jesus: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27, 28). Thus Moses prohibited the act, but Christ even forbade the

thought! Likewise, people who charge the New Testament with presenting no teaching on human conduct should read Romans 12th chapter, or the book of First Corinthians, or God's warning in Galatians 5:16-21 against the "works of the flesh." The very idea that Grace does not teach on moral conduct is preposterous.

One may be certain there were critics of Paul among the orthodox Jews then, and have been since for his alleged antinomian tendencies of the gospel he preached. The word "antinomian" comes from "anti" meaning against and "nomos" law. Anyone holding the idea that faith, or God's grace, frees the Christian from the obligations of the moral law is ignorant of plain, emphatic Scriptures! The Judaizer might try to make a case against Paul like this: "You preach grace and unmerited forgiveness. If Christ is our sin-bearer—our substitute—bearing the penalty of our sins so we may go free, are you not condoning sin, encouraging moral laxity, and sweeping away the very foundations of ethical behaviour?" Paul was keenly aware that some had slanderously reported such lies on him, and had affirmed that he had said: "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Romans 3:8). The apostle not only denied the false report, but also announced their condemnation (damnation) from God as being just. Again, when the great apostle to the Gentiles had announced: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," lest his opponents say: "Well, let's just keep on sinning," he quickly asked: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" His negation vibrates like the thunder, "GOD FORBID. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Then follows the powerful teaching on holy living as given in the 6th chapter of Romans. We Christians owe so much to our Lord that we ought to live for Him in holiness and consecration out of a deep sense

of gratitude. Yes, and we owe so much to each other. I, myself, owe so much to so many. But to Brother R. C. Bell I owe gratitude for guidance into insights in this great letter of Paul to the Romans. I remember the outline Brother Bell gave us when we studied Romans. The word "Sanctification" applied to chapters 6 and 7. There are three reasons why the Christian should not live in sin:

1. He is dead to it (6:2).
2. He is under grace and not under law (6:14).
3. It is too costly (6:23).

Hear Paul's inspired recommendations to aid the Christian—God's child under grace—to live a holy life in Christ.

There are many reasons given for holiness in the life of one under grace in Christ, but the first I give is so powerful, that if it stood alone, it would be sufficient to tear to shreds every antinomian charge brought against the Gospel. This element in the teaching of God's word is union with Christ, union in His death and resurrection. "For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). Men commit a grave error when they try to get away from the plain teaching that baptism is a burial (immersion) as they favor some substitute, or even complete omission of obedience to God's will. However, it cannot be said too emphatically that baptism is more than a physical act. It is submission to Christ. Yes, when one is baptized into Christ he shares in the benefits of His death for sin, but he also identifies himself with Christ's attitude toward sin. That is the reason the man of faith can be raised to walk in newness of life! One's response to the grace of God in the cross of Christ is to die to that which caused the death of Christ, namely, SIN! This is exactly the emphasis of Galatians 6:

14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The one who lives in vital union with Christ finds it essential, if he is to continue that relationship, to bring all associations of life into obedience to His will. To people who thus live, God admonishes: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3). You call Jesus *Saviour*, but in the same breath, you must call Him *Lord*. This kind of faith begets a love in response to God's grace which causes a Christian to prefer to walk the narrow, rough, lonely path of duty to Christ, rather than be swept along with the crowd on the broad way of sin.

God's grace supplies the strength for holy living. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). It would take much help to misunderstand this teaching. If, because we are under grace and not under law, sin is not to have full sway in our lives, the inevitable conclusion is that *grace* helps overcome sin. Just as the physical body is strengthened by food, so also prayer, worship, and complete surrender to Christ strengthens the Christian's spirit. The soul receives help from the inexhaustible supplies of grace in Christ. That is why Paul could say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Or, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:4).

The Christian should never forget that the Spirit of God dwells in him (Romans 8:11), that His presence in the body of the believer is stressed by Paul as an incentive to holiness



of life (I Corinthians 6:15-20), that "by the Spirit" we "put to death the deeds of the body" (Romans 8:13), and Paul's prayer for the Ephesians included the request to God that these Christians might be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" (Ephesians 3:16).

Further, the child of God is admonished to pray to God with the assurance that Christ, his great high priest, can be touched with the feeling of his infirmities. "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16). Here is help from on high! *Grace to help* in time of *need* is promised, and Christ, though he *never* yielded to evil, was "without sin," can be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses. This isn't saying *anything*, if it doesn't say that Christ will strengthen ("help") us in time of temptation ("need")!

Above all this is the divine assurance of mercy. How gracious is God's promise: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). The inspired exhortation is: "SIN NOT," but "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

All this does not mean the end of the Christian's striving against evil. God's word definitely states that Christians "have sin" and "have sinned." It concedes the possibility that the child of God may give way to sin under its great pressure. Yet, saints may be "restored" to holy living; they may return to their "first love" and like the prodigal of old they may return to the Father's house. Let no Christian regard church membership as an automatic guarantee of salvation. Instead, one under God's grace strives every day he lives to make himself more of what God expects him to be

by virtue of his relationship to Christ. Consequently Paul urged: "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). It is a present obligation of the child of God to "reckon" himself dead to sin, to "yield" himself to righteousness, and not to sinfulness, and to be a "servant of God" (Romans 6:11, 13, 22). The church member whose religion is of convenience and not of conviction, who is shameful in life and worldly in heart is like the many of whom Paul wrote to the Philippians, saying, "they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (4:18, 19). Paul was deeply sorrowful—even weeping—as he told of these ungodly church members whose wicked lives indicated they were untouched by the grace of God!

Since one of the lectures deals with God and human suffering, I merely refer to the statement of Paul that God's grace was "sufficient" in helping him bear his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). To be sure, God's grace will be with us in times of physical distress, which has not been brought on us by sin.

Our gratitude to God for His grace to us in granting us to be members of the *unshakable* kingdom of Christ is to be expressed in our offering service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28). The passage here may indicate worship as well as work done for Christ. The word of God's grace certainly sets forth New Testament worship. In a certain city I preached a series of sermons dealing with worship under Christ, and the attitude of a Christian in worship and service. One person remarked after a sermon in which a sharp contrast was drawn between the actions of a person under law and another under grace: "I guess I'm that legalist you talked about in your sermon, but

somehow I get comfort out of obeying that command to observe the communion on Sunday morning! The Bible doesn't say you have to go to church Sunday night, or Wednesday evening." I pray the lady learned before it was too late the difference between her attitude and that which a Christian should have. No; the New Testament authorizes observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). However, the word of God does not specify worship on Sunday morning to the exclusion of a meeting on Sunday evening. In fact, the Christians in Troas were there all day and all night as the context indicates. Yes, Paul's preaching was a *special* occasion, but not the Lord's Supper. That was observed every first day of the week. Faithful Christians find Sunday evening an excellent opportunity to worship God, study His word, preach the gospel, grow in grace and knowledge and to help others and be helped in Christian living. The early Christians met daily, but no man has the prerogative to so legislate. We have the privilege under grace to meet as often as we deem it wise for the purpose of worship, edification and service.

It is amazing how many members of the church serve the Lord in the spirit of lawkeepers. For years, I preached in Denver. During summer months many vacationers found their way to the mile-high city. It was always a privilege to have brethren worship with the church where I preached. Sometimes they were there for Bible study! (Think of it.) Others came in just before worship, and occasionally some had difficulty, perhaps, in finding the meeting-place and were just a little late. I'm not saying that "some" people didn't have good reasons for being late. However, after the worship in song, after the prayer, after the sermon, and *just in time* to eat the Lord's Supper, some people dragged in to the service. Not a few failed to "make it" by 11:45 a.m. After

one service a brother, who was a late-comer, remarked to me how glad he was to get there "in time for the 'sacrament' " ! He represents that too-numerous group of church members who go through the motions of eating the Lord's Supper, even if there is no other spiritual exercise, and feel relieved of any responsibility to 'serve the Lord' till next Sunday. They are satisfied just so they get to worship in time for the Lord's Supper. They feel that they have 'done their duty.' Yes, they have paid the premium on their eternal-fire insurance policy! Some people must think there are sacramental powers in the bread and the fruit of the vine to bless the receiver, regardless of his attitude when he partakes. Let us help those who need concerning the application of New Testament teaching as the doctrine of the grace of Christ and not of the law of Moses.

God's grace supports Christians in Evangelism and Benevolent work. These efforts to preach the Gospel and help the needy depend upon the contributions of money Christians make, though not entirely, yet in a large measure. Because Christians are not bound to give a tithe of their income by New Testament "law," some persons give in God's service just as little as they can 'get by' with and still make a token gesture of fulfilling the words in I Corinthians 16:2: "as he may prosper." What kind of response is this to the love of God Who has made available to us the unsearchable riches of Christ? You may be certain that some church members do not want to get anywhere near that tithe-law. Examples under Patriarchy of Abraham and Jacob give a pattern of tithe-giving. The law demanded the tithe. The Gospel of God's grace makes no such demand. In view of our blessings under Christ, why do we often give so little? Someone has suggested that since the Patriarchs gave a tenth, and the law required *more* than a tenth, 'to give *less* under grace is a



disgrace'! The day of judgment will reveal that many Christians, even churches, are sadly negligent in benevolence. (Read Mt. 25 :31-46.) And who doesn't *know* that Christians are too often sadly unconcerned about preaching the gospel to the world and woefully lacking in the zeal necessary to accomplish this task in our generation? Paul urged brethren in Asia and in Europe to support the effort to minister to the poor saints in Jerusalem. He supported his plea for liberal giving by this divine assurance: "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor: his righteousness abideth forever. And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything, unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:8-11). There is God's promise to use what we give and increase our ability to give in the accomplishment of His purposes. After commending the Philippians for their support of the gospel, through supporting Paul the preacher, this divine assurance which will challenge the faith of many brethren: "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:10-19). Hear it, brethren! Why don't we preach the gospel to the world? Is it because we are stingy, or afraid to trust God to keep His promises? I do not know any informed person who is not ashamed of the half-hearted effort churches of Christ are making to preach the Gospel of God's grace to the whole world. Is it because we don't value God's grace ourselves? What do you think? What does God KNOW?

Because someone may be present whose heart has been

won to Christ by the moving truth of God's grace to man, I plead that you will turn to Christ because your faith leads you to do that. Turn from sin and self to Christ in true repentance because you now see that sin crucified Christ—man's sin, all men, and you included. When you have confessed with your mouth Jesus as Lord, may your faith lead you to make Him your Lord, too, by obeying His will in baptism. You will be united with Him in the likeness of His death for your sins. By faith in Him you will be raised to walk in newness of life. Glorious life in Christ is made possible by God's infinite grace. When you can remain no longer in this world God's grace has reserved in heaven for you an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, eternal in duration, inconceivable, save only to God, in beauty and splendor.

## GOD'S WORD

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Melvin J. Wise

## Introduction:

Is the Bible really God's Word? Your answer is an un-equivocal "yes," but how would you proceed to prove it? If you were asked where the Bible came from, who wrote it, when and where, could you intelligently and convincingly answer these questions?

There are literally thousands of people who love the Bible; it is their daily companion and friend. They have been brought up from their early childhood to believe that the Bible is an infallible book, word for word inspired, and that everything between its covers is to be taken as unalterably true. By it they have been quickened into a new life; it inspires them to deeds of love and sacrifice; they come to it for comfort when they are sad, for guidance when they are perplexed, and for instruction in daily living. Thousands of them would suffer any loss rather than to part with the Bible. In the early centuries of the Christian era many were cast into prison rather than give up the Scriptures. Numbers of them suffered martyrdom rather than to dishonor the Word of God. Among the masses of people today there are multitudes who have the same loyal love for this inspired Book, and if the occasion demanded it, they would endure death rather than denounce their faith in the Bible. And yet many of them could not answer these questions regarding the divine origin of the Bible. When called upon to give a reason for their implicit faith in the Word of God, they simply say, "We have been brought up to believe the Bible; our fathers

and mothers before us believed it; and, therefore, we believe it and have never entertained any doubt concerning it." But we should have more than a traditional faith in the Bible. Such a ground of faith is not only unreasoning and unstable, but it is insufficient for the trials to which our faith is so often subjected.

It is to help such people that I bring to you this lesson. We want them to know that our Bible is God's Word, and that it is inspired, inerrant and infallible.

There is one thing of which we are all sure—the Bible is here; we have it. True or false, good or bad, inspired or un-inspired, from God or from men, it is here. Our fathers had it before us; their fathers had it, too. Where did they get it?

Let us notice several facts concerning God's Word:

### *I. God's Word Is Inspired.*

A. *Because it seems to be.*

1. This is seen in its origination.

Most all books of men are the product of one man or a few men. Not so with the Bible, for it was written by about forty men, who were under the effusion of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is human, yet divine. These books have passed through the minds of men; they were written in the language of men; they were penned by the hands of men; and they bear the style and the characteristics of the men who wrote them. When God gave His revelation to men He did not ignore the human personality and style of the author, but rather made use of them. Not only did it come to us through men, but it tells us about men—great men, yet fallible and erring men. Abraham lied; David lusted; Peter cursed. How much more human can men be? The Bible is truly a human book.



Yet the Bible is also divine. There are other great books in the world, but none can compare with this one, because it is more than the product of men, it is divine. There are thoughts here which the human mind never could have created. The Bible is divine because it is the Voice of God, and it is human because it is written in the language of men.

2. This is seen also in its preservation.

The preservation of God's Word is no less amazing than its origination. It has passed through many periods of persecution, yet it has withstood every attack of those who would exterminate it. The Emperor Diocletian determined that he would destroy the Bible; he decreed death for any person who would be found with a copy of the Bible in his possession. After two years Diocletian proudly boasted, "I have completely exterminated the Christian writings from the face of the earth." Later when Constantine embraced the Christian faith, he desired that copies of the Bible be made for all of the churches of his vast empire. He offered a reward for anyone who could find and deliver a copy of the Scriptures. Within twenty-five hours fifty copies of God's Word were offered to the emperor, yet Diocletian had claimed that he had destroyed the Bible. Carlyle rightly said, "No lie can live forever," but the precious Bible is still with us, and across its pages falls no shadow of decline or decay. Truly did Jesus say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible has passed through a number of translations, yet in God's providence we still have His pure word. God has not only preserved the text, but He has also preserved the purity of it.

3. This is seen also in its circulation.

The circulation of the Scriptures is truly phenomenal.

It has gone into many languages. After more than 1900 years the Scriptures exist, at least in part, in 1,109 languages, of which 210 have entire Bibles and 270 more the New Testament, according to a recent report from the American Bible Society.

It has gone into many copies. During 1956, the American Bible Society distributed at home and abroad 1,007,560 Bibles, 1,681,115 New Testaments and 12,481,383 Gospels.

B. *Because it claims to be inspired.*

Let us hear what the Bible says about itself. In a court of law the testimony of the witnesses is considered truth until it is proven to be false. Surely the Bible should be given the same opportunity to be heard and should receive a patient and unprejudiced hearing. In dealing with this we examine the claims of both Testaments.

1. *The Old Testament.*

a. *The Pentateuch.*

Throughout this portion of the Scriptures we find such expressions as:

"The Lord God *called* unto Adam, and *said* unto him . . ."  
(Genesis 3:9)

"And God *said* unto Noah . . ." (Genesis 6:13)

"Now the Lord had *said* unto Abram . . ." (Genesis 12:1)

"And God *said* unto Jacob . . ." (Genesis 35:1)

"And the Lord *spoke* unto Moses, saying." (Exodus 13:1)

"And God *spoke* all these words saying." (Exodus 20:1)

Words like these appear more than 600 times in the Pen-

tateuch. Therefore, this part of the Old Testament writings claims to be the Word of God.

b. The Historical Books.

In this section of the Bible we note such statements as:

"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord *spake* unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying." (Joshua 1:1)

"And the Lord *said* unto Joshua . . ." (Joshua 8:1)

"And the *word of the Lord* was precious in those days . . ." (I Samuel 3:1)

"The Spirit of the Lord *spake* by me, and *his word* was in my tongue." (II Samuel 23:2)

"And the Lord appeared to Solomon. . . . And the Lord *said* unto him." (I Kings 9:2-3)

"And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord *saieth* unto me, that will I speak." (I Kings 22:14)

Statements like these occur over 400 times between the books of Joshua and Esther, which set forth the claim that these divine books contain God's Word.

c. The Poetical Books.

In this part of the Scriptures we find such expressions as:

"And the Lord *said* unto Satan . . ." (Job 1:7; 2:3)

"And the Lord *answered* Job out of the whirlwind, and *said*." (Job 38:1)

Many similar expressions can be found throughout the Poetical books, which establish the claim that these inspired books contain the Word of God.

d. The Prophetic Books.

Note some of the expressions found in these books:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for *the Lord hath spoken . . .*" (Isaiah 1:2) . . .

"And he laid it upon my mouth and *said . . .*" (Isaiah 6:7)

"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, *saying.*" (Jeremiah 1:4)

"But the Lord *said* unto me . . ." Jeremiah 1:7)

"The *word of the Lord* came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest . . ." (Ezekiel 1:3)

"The *word of the Lord* that came unto Hosea . . ." (Hosea 1:1)

"Thus *saith the Lord . . .*" (Amos 2:1)

"Hear this word that *the Lord hath spoken* against you . . ." (Amos 3:1)

"Now the *word of the Lord* came unto Jonah . . ." (Jonah 1:1)

Such expressions as these appear in the books from Isaiah through Malachi over 300 times. Truly this is irrefutable evidence that the Bible contains the Word of God.

## 2. *The New Testament.*

It logically follows that if the Old Testament is the Word of God, the New Testament is also; but let us examine the evidence.

### a. The Four Gospels.

To the disciples Jesus said, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:24) Here Jesus lays claim to the fact that all that He said while on earth, recorded by the gospel writers, were the words of His Father.



b. Acts of the Apostles.

On Pentecost day the apostle Peter affirmed that the happenings of that day were but the fulfillment of that predicted by the prophets of old. (Read Acts 2:16, 25, 33-35.)

c. The Epistles.

To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (I Corinthians 2:12-13) To the same brethren Paul again wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (I Corinthians 14:37) To the Thessalonians Paul wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God . . ." (I Thessalonians 2:13) In these, as well as in similar other passages in the Epistles, we have indisputable evidence that the inspired writers of these letters wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit."

d. Revelation.

In the closing chapter of this closing book of the New Testament John affirms it to be the inspired word of God, by showing the course of heaven that rests upon him who would add to or take from this message from heaven. (Read Revelation 22:18-19.)

C. *Because it proves to be inspired.*

1. This is seen in the fulfillment of its many prophecies.

The Bible writers were inspired as seen in the fact that they left on record many remarkable prophecies, which have been accurately and minutely fulfilled, even though the prophecies were written many years before their fulfillment.

Take for example the prophecy concerning Noah. (Genesis 9:25-27)

“Cursed be Canaan.” (Verse 25) A curse has always rested upon the nations descending from Ham, the father of Canaan.

“A servant of servants shall he be.” (Verse 25) This has been verified in all ages and countries. It was signally fulfilled when the Canaanites were made slaves to the Jewish people.

“Blessed be the God of Shem.” (Verse 26) The descendants of Shem were providentially cared for by Jehovah; to them God committed the oracles of God; to them He sent the Messiah; to them He gave the gospel and the kingdom first.

“God shall enlarge Japheth.” (Verse 27) Japheth had a more numerous offspring. He had seven sons, while Ham had four and Shem had five.

Consider also the prophecy concerning Babylon. (Read Isaiah 13:14-22.)

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee’s excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” (Verse 19) Babylon was destroyed just as were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

“It shall never be inhabited . . .” (Verse 20)

This part of the prophecy did not receive its fulfillment until many centuries had gone by. From the time of Cyrus

to that of Alexander the Great, Babylon was one of the chief cities of the Persian Empire. Founded in 2234 B.C., Babylon was one of the principal cities of the ancient world. The walls which surrounded it were fifteen miles square, 350 feet high, and eighty-seven feet thick. It had hanging gardens and exquisite palaces. It was built in the fertile valley of the Euphrates and was the capital of the great Babylonian Empire. Hence, these prophecies were written when Babylon was at the height of her glory. But twenty-five centuries have passed and the city now lies in ruins. The valley is not fertile for the nitrous soil there produces nothing but the coarsest and unpalatable vegetation. Consequently, the shepherds do not feed their flocks there. (Verse 20)

The Bible writers left on record a long line of prophecies concerning the Messiah and His kingdom, which find their exact fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. The birth of Jesus was foretold by the prophets. They predicted that He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14); that He would be a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:3); that He would be of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), and of the house of David (Isaiah 11:1); that He would be born in Bethlehem of Judah (Micah 5:2).

The betrayal of Jesus was foretold (Zechariah 11:12-13); also the burial of Jesus (Isaiah 53:8); also the resurrection of Jesus (Hosea 6:2); and also the ascension of Jesus (Psalms 68:18).

2. That the Bible proves itself to be inspired is seen in its marvelous unity.

The wonderful unity of the Bible implies oneness of authorship. We speak of the Bible as a book and in a real sense it is; but it is a collection of sixty-six books, written on one grand theme—man's relation to God. The Bible is a

great library that was in the process of making for over 1500 years. These books were written in separate countries, hundreds of miles apart. They were written by at least forty different human authors. They were written by men upon almost every level of political and social life, from the king on his throne down to the herdmen, the shepherd, the fisherman and the tax-gatherer. This Book contains law, history, hymns, prayers, biographies, sermons and letters. Yet all the writers unite in presenting one grand theme. This unity is so remarkable that an accidental authorship is out of the question. How are we to account for this unity? There is only one rational way of accounting for it—that back of the forty or more human authors, there was divine guidance—there was the One all-guiding, all-controlling, all-superintending mind of God, for truly the “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (II Peter 1:21)

Suppose that our federal government proposes to build in our capital city of Washington, D. C., a temple that should represent the stone production of every state in the union. Some of the stones were of the Fredericksburg Red from Texas; some of the Georgia Gray from Georgia; some of the Salisbury Pink from North Carolina; some of the Mahogany from the Dakotas; some of the Wausa Red from Wisconsin; some of the Barre Blue from Vermont; some of the Rainbow and Agate from Minnesota; some of the California Black, Blue and Gray from California; some of the Maine Pink from Maine; some of the Quincy Granite from Massachusetts; some of the Westerly Pink from Pennsylvania; some of the Deer Island from Rhode Island; some of the Salida Pink from Colorado; some of the Missouri Red from Missouri; and some of the Sienna or Century Pink from Oklahoma. Each stone is of a different size and shape;



some small, some large, some medium, some cubic, some spherical, some square and some rectangular. Not a chisel or saw is to take one cutting from a single stone. Now all the stones are received by the builders in Washington. As they begin and continue the construction they find that every stone fits into place and there is a perfect matching of all stones. There is not one stone too many, nor one stone too few. When the work is completed there is not one stone left over and not the slightest niche of a stone missing. How could you account for this? There is only one simple and sensible way of accounting for it—that back of the work there was the master mind of the architect, who planned the entire structure.

This is precisely what we find in the temple of eternal truth which we call the Bible—back of the human hands which penned the Bible there was the Master Mind of God.

3. That the Bible proves itself to be inspired is seen in the immeasurable superiority of its teachings to those of any other book or all other books.

It seems to be the fashion of the day with the skeptics of our time to compare the teachings of the Bible with those of the world's great philosophers and sages of the past like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Antoninus, Seneca, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius and Mohammed. But anyone who puts the Bible in the same category with the writings of these men must be ignorant of the teachings of the Bible, or else ignorant of the teachings of these men, or ignorant of both.

The teachings of these philosophers contain truth, sometimes precious truth, but it is truth mixed with error; whereas the Bible contains nothing but truth. "Did not Antoninus teach the excellencies of moderation?" one may ask. He did, but do not forget that he also taught that it was right to put

men and women to death for no other reason than that they were Christians.

"Did not Seneca teach the excellencies of poverty?" inquires one. He did, but do not forget that at the same time he himself was one of the most notorious spendthrifts in Rome.

"Did not Confucius teach the duty of children to parents in a way that is worthy of our attention?" we are asked. He did, but do not forget that he also taught that it was right to tell lies under certain conditions.

Another radical difference in the Bible and these philosophical books is that the Bible contains all the truth, while these other books contain only fragments of truth. There is not a single moral or spiritual truth that cannot be found either in a clear-cut statement, or in substance, between the covers of the Bible. If all the other books in the world were destroyed, and the Bible left, we would not lose one single known truth on moral and spiritual subjects. Does not this signify unmistakably that God is the author of this Book?

Another point of radical difference between the Bible and all other books is that the Bible contains more truth than all other books put together. You can go to the uninspired literature of all ages among all nations—the literature of ancient Greece, Rome, Persia, China and India, and also to all modern literature and cull out all the good and set aside all that is worthless, and put the results of your efforts together into one book, and even then you will not have a book that will take the place of this Book, for truly it is the Book of Books.

## *II. God's Word Is Authoritative.*

To whom shall we go for authority in religion? This has long been a prominent question in the religious world. To it

many answers have been given. The answer of the Roman Catholic Church is that the church is authoritative, and to it we must look as a supreme and final court of appeal. Others rely upon their conscience as a guide in religious and moral matters, yet Solomon said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12) Jeremiah also said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23) Many religious people take for their standard of authority that to which their parents adhered. Others have subscribed to articles of faith drawn up by the councils of men.

Jesus said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18) This settles the matter of authority in Christianity. Jesus has *all* authority. That leaves none today for Moses, David or the Old Testament prophets, for "God . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1-2); that leaves no authority for Joseph Smith, or Mrs. E. G. White or Mrs. Baker Eddy; that leaves none for the church or for the councils and synods of men. Jesus has *all* authority and to Him we should go. Therefore, when we want the truth on any question in Christianity we must go to Jesus our King and find out His will in the matter. We must hear His voice and let that be final in all matters of the Christian religion. But how does Christ our King make known His will? How does He speak to us today? Only through His ambassadors—the inspired apostles. (Read II Corinthians 5:20.) To them Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ." (John 16:12-13) In our Lord's Intercessory prayer, He said to the



Father, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me . . ." (John 17:8) Hence, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11)

Why do we receive the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice? First, because it was given to us for this very purpose. The fact that it was given to us from God makes it our duty to believe it and obey it, even if nothing were said of this duty in the Book itself. We stand approved or condemned as we hear or do, or hear and do not the sayings of Jesus. (Matthew 7:21, 24-27; 10:40; Luke 10:16) Second, this divine rule is infallible. David declares it to be "perfect." (Psalms 19:7) Whatever proceeds from God is perfect because God is perfect. Being perfect, it is, therefore, a crime to add to it or take from it. Third, because this divine rule is complete, so complete that through it "the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (II Timothy 3:17)

All Protestants are pretty well agreed that the Bible is the only infallible rule, but many hold that it is incomplete, for they feel at liberty to frame rules of faith and practice based on their own fallible judgment. This matter was settled for us once and for all by Jesus in something that He said to the Jews that involved this same principle. Their wise men had concluded that in addition to the law which God had given them, some other rules were important, the rules of their own traditions. One by one they adopted such rules until they accumulated a large body of them which they called "the traditions of the elders." These they enforced on the consciences of the people, and Jesus Himself was adjudged by them a sinner when He neglected to observe them. Jesus pointed out that in their zeal to keep these traditions, they had not only neglected, but had made void the commandments of God by their traditions. (See Matthew 15:6-8.)



By the same principle we today in the Lord's church should exclude every precept of men, and thus limit our faith, teaching, worship and work to that which God has appointed. We have an infallible and perfect rule that cannot mislead us, and certainly common sense would impel us to conclude that we have no use for a fallible and imperfect rule. Why should a merchant have two yardsticks, one of a standard length and one a little shorter or longer? What honest man keeps two pairs of scales, one which he knows to be correct, and one which may weigh heavier or lighter? Why, then, should men who wish to please God endeavor to make a fallible rule in addition to the infallible one which God has given?

### *III. God's Word Is Powerful.*

#### *A. In its influence upon world civilization.*

The Bible is a very small book, yet there are but few libraries in our nation which could contain the volumes that have been written about it. It has been the greatest inspiration to the poets, painters, authors and composers. Unquestionably it has been the dominating influence upon world civilization.

1. Take in the art of painting. The works of the great master painters all show the influence which the Bible has exerted in this field. Take Da Vinci's "Last Supper," Raphael's "Sistine Madonna," and "The Transfiguration," and Michelangelo's "Moses"; they all owe their origin to the Bible.

2. Take in the field of dramatics. Many of the great plays of today owe their origin and inspiration to the Bible. The great "Passion Play" at Oberammergau; also "Green Pastures," which is an interpretation of the Bible account of

creation; also "The King of Kings," and also "The Ten Commandments," were all inspired by the Bible.

3. Take in the field of music. The great world composers such as Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Mozart and Beethoven; they all received most of their inspiration from the Bible.

B. *In its cultural power.*

The record of a nation's advancement and cultural growth is largely determined by that people's acceptance of the Scriptures and their fidelity to the teachings of the Scriptures. What makes the difference between the culture of India and of England? There was a time when the British Isles were populated by barbaric and savage races. When the wisdom of Greece and the arts of Rome made the Mediterranean world a center of culture, the British Isles were populated by tribesmen more savage than the American Indians ever were. What happened to change these wild tribes into rulers? The answer is written in their history. Missionaries with the Christian gospel came to the British Isles. The tribesmen accepted the Bible and thus the long and cultural history of the British Empire began.

Why is there such a difference between the United States and our sister nations of South America? Because in the countries of Latin America the Bible is a closed book. It is suppressed by Catholic pressure. Catholicism always thrives on the ignorance of the people. It endeavors to keep its people steeped in the darkness of Catholic tradition, superstition and prejudice. I am confident that if the day ever comes when America ceases to be a country with an open Bible, then the sun of her national glory and greatness will be forever set.

C. *In its transforming power.*

Its power to transform and convert the individual is but a confirmation of its cultural power. Just as the mason must build the wall brick by brick, so nations are made up of individual citizens. The culture of any country will be but the sum total of its individual citizens. It cannot be denied that there is a power in the Bible to transform, ennoble and beautify human lives, a power to lift men up to God, which no other book possesses. It is a fundamental principle of science that no stream can rise higher than its source; hence, a book that has a power to lift men up to God that no other books possess must have come down from God. We have all seen the gospel transform the lives of moral wrecks into stalwart Christians. Do you know of any other power that can accomplish this?

D. *In its comforting power.*

Here the Word of God is unparalleled. There never has been and never will be any other source that can bring the comfort to sorrowing hearts as God's Word can. A minister of the gospel has many ministries to perform. I find them all delightful except one; I find no joy whatsoever in conducting a funeral. Death is an enemy of mankind, and all the poetry and philosophy of men cannot change that grim and gloomy fact. But to the Christian death is a defeated enemy, conquered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Read I Corinthians 15:20-22; 55-57.) But to the rest of the world death is horrible beyond words. I have had sorrowing fathers, mothers and children come to me to conduct the funeral of some loved one and say, "Please say something that will bring to us some consolation." But where can I find such words? Not from the great poets or philosophers. Not a line outside the Bible can bring real comfort to sorrowing hearts.

While we do not like funerals, yet we do not dread them nor seek to evade the duty of conducting them. Why? Because we have a Book—a Book that can bring comfort to heal all our wounds of sorrow. But take away from us God's Word and we would never want to face another funeral.

#### *IV. God's Word Is Indestructible.*

It is an indisputable fact that what man can produce man can destroy. Why, then, if the Bible is a mere product of mortal man, have nineteen centuries of assault upon the Bible been unable to destroy it? Down through the centuries enemy after enemy has come forth to war against God's Word. But this Holy Book has survived despite the frequent and continued attempts to destroy it. Again and again the most powerful governments in the world sought to eradicate it from the earth. Men have died on the gallows for reading it, and they have been burned at the stake for possessing it. If the Bible had been man's book it would have gone down in defeat and would have been forgotten centuries ago.

The Christian believes the Bible to be God's Holy Word which cannot therefore, be destroyed, even though "the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." (I Peter 1:24-25) We may assume, therefore, that the Bible can withstand any test applied to it. In a measure I am glad every time a new attack is made upon the Bible. Perhaps that statement may sound somewhat strange and even shocking to come from a minister of God's Word. Of course, I tremble for certain weak-hearted and weak-headed men and women who are willing to swallow anything and everything that people may say about the Bible; but for God's Holy Word I have no fear, for David said, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Psalms 119:89) But a Book that has success-



fully withstood nineteen centuries of assault by the devil's heaviest artillery, is not going down before the air-guns of modern Biblical criticism. This demonstrated indestructibility of the Bible is positive proof of its divine origin.

### *Conclusion*

It is not without purpose that God has so wonderfully inspired, revealed, recorded and preserved His Word. Unquestionably it was written for the purpose that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through his name." (John 20: 31)

Therefore, may we have humble hearts to hear this Word, obey its commands, and by its power bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. I commend you unto the Word of His grace. Study it daily; study it prayerfully and obediently. Walk in the light of its precepts and be saved at last by its power.

Indeed the Bible is a wonderful Book, but wonderful as it is, its power is limited to your attitude toward it. Have you accepted the Person who is the theme of this Book as your Lord and Saviour? If not do so now without delay. Come to Him in simple faith; in honest and earnest repentance; to confess His adorable name and to be baptized into Him, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins.

## GOD AND HUMAN SUFFERING

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By Frank Pack

This subject tonight confronts us as believers in the God of the Bible with one of our most difficult problems, the problem of human suffering. How can God whom the Bible reveals to be infinitely good and loving as well as all-powerful permit so much suffering among His creatures in the world? Does God really care? Why does He allow the horrors of war? Why should the innocent so often suffer so much? Why should disease cause such frightful pain? Why should babies be born deformed or bereft of mental ability? These and many kindred questions are often asked, not only by those outside the church, but by Christians themselves. So acute at times does this problem become in some minds that there have been those whose faith in God has been wrecked on the rocks of human suffering. While we may not be able to find a fully adequate solution to all the aspects of this grave problem, perhaps we can shed some light upon it in this lecture that will lessen the difficulties men feel, and help all of us to understand suffering itself in a more profound way.

For the purposes of our study tonight we shall understand suffering to include not only physical pain, but all the disappointments, mental frustrations, bereavements, and troubles of the human heart, whether these come with devastating suddenness or slowly overwhelm our spirits.

Let us point out at the very start that being a Christian does not make the problem easier, but more difficult to solve. There is no problem of explaining suffering and tragedy for

the man who does not believe in God. If the universe has no meaning, but is simply a dead machine, it would be unreasonable to suppose that it has any concern for human beings at all. Such a world could not "care" whether men suffered or not, because it would not possess the capacity to "care." In a world without meaning there is no need to seek for any reason why tragedy occurs. The very fact, therefore, that one believes in a personal God, who is redemptive, self-giving love, possessed with infinite concern for man, increases the acuteness of the problem. However, the atheist does not escape all problems because he denies the existence of God. While he may not have to account for the suffering among men, nor the evil in the world, it now becomes for him an even greater problem to explain the unselfishness, the goodness, and heroism of those who live and die for others, as well as the nobility of those who die for their conviction of right. These are the persons the world regards as its greatest heroes in history and the supreme examples of the finest in man. If all the noble and heroic in man is merely the result of the accidental grouping of atoms, there is no explanation that can be given, nor is there any reason to the universe at all. Thus, all of man's reasoning about meaning in the world becomes simple nonsense. While the unbeliever gets rid of one problem, he has a far harder one cut out for him.

#### *Some Wrong "Solutions"*

What have been some of the wrong "solutions" proposed for the problem of suffering? One that has been held by certain absolute idealists in philosophy, and more recently popularized by Mary Baker Eddy is that all suffering is illusion. According to this view, it becomes simply the product of our twisted minds, and cannot exist outside the mind itself. Since all experience of evil is subjective, it can exist only

in the mind of the observer, and is not a part of objective reality at all. Thus erroneous thinking and suffering are one and the same thing. As soon as a person corrects the error in his thinking concerning pain, all his suffering disappears. But it is absurd to say that all the tragedies in the world are merely imaginary. If this is so, we have a world filled with minds that are always imagining such monstrous troubles that this becomes an evil all its own to explain. Why should the mind imagine such evils, if none really exist at all? To one who has lost his eyesight in an accident, it is absurd to say, "Just forget it, your blindness isn't real at all; it all is in your mind." To a mother and father who have lost their child, what is more absurd than to say, "Just forget it. You just imagine that your child is gone. Your trouble is just an illusion and your child is not dead." Any one who believes the Bible knows that suffering is as real as the thorns that pierced the brow and the nails that tore the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. We might as well say that the disciples were all deluded into the error of thinking that Jesus suffered and died on the cross, and that the gospel itself is the result of evil imaginations as to espouse this false notion regarding pain, for they are both parts of the same idea.

The next proposal arises out of such an acute sense of the problem that it tries to find its explanation in the concept of a finite God. The idea is that God, though good, and a noble champion of righteousness, is not completely adequate to do His will, but is limited by the evil forces against which He is fighting in the universe. It is not creature fault, but creator disability that confronts us. This view holds that the eternal will of God faces given conditions which His will did not create, and these present obstacles to the carrying out of that will. God is doing all He can to oppose evil and make the world as good as possible, but He is limited. He needs our



help because the outcome of this struggle may be in doubt. Every soul who is fighting on the side of God is adding strength to God in the struggle and contributing to possible victory for the right. It can be readily seen, however, that this view does not account for evil in the world, but only strives to explain the struggle in terms of a God not fully adequate to carry out His will because of external forces that oppose Him. While a number of modern philosophers led by E. S. Brightman of Boston University have espoused this view, it has never made a wide appeal to men as a solution to the problem. The concept of a finite God flies in the face of the Bible's teaching that God is all-powerful, and fully able to accomplish His own purposes in the world, for "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26b).

A third wrong "solution" to the problem of human suffering is the idea that all suffering is due to one's own sin. The strong element of truth in it is that sin does bring suffering. Much of the pain in the world today is the result of the wickedness and folly of selfish men, bent on evil purposes down through the ages. When we do wrong and suffer for it, we should have little trouble in understanding why we suffer. However, this does not explain everything. It does not explain the suffering of the innocent. It is not true to say that all suffering is due to sin as if a man's troubles were his punishments for some great fault of character or life. That was the mistake Job's companions made in accusing him of some hidden evil large enough to account for his many miseries. They saw him, sitting in the ashes, his body loathsome with disease, racked with pain, his wife turned against him, his family dead, and his property gone. Calamity had come suddenly, overwhelmingly upon his household. "Job, you certainly must have committed some grave sin, or you would not suffer so much," is their plea. "Repent and confess it,

and perhaps God may turn His face toward you once more." The body of the book is the protest of Job against these accusations, as he defends his righteousness, and refuses to accept this false view of his own suffering. Out of such a struggle a deeper wisdom regarding his problems is found. Our Lord Jesus pointed out in the New Testament that those whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices were not more wicked than all others in the land. Listen to Him say, "Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-5). In language that could not be plainer, our Lord rejects the idea that all sufferings come because of the wickedness of those who suffer. On another occasion, as our Lord and His disciples faced the man born blind, they asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-3). It was neither the sin of the parents nor of the man born blind that accounted for his blindness. It should be further evident that the suffering of Christ Himself should be sufficient to refute the idea that all sufferings come as punishment for one's sins, for the Scriptures plainly teach that He "did no sin" (I Pet. 2:22). Yet He suffered, the innocent for the guilty that He might redeem us. While there is some truth in this proposal, it is not adequate to explain the problem, nor does the Bible accept it as the solution. This should settle the matter for all Christians.

Now that we have noticed some wrong "solutions" may I

say that no one can claim to have arrived at a complete solution to this problem of human suffering. Certainly there are many things about it that go beyond our powers of understanding. Nor is it possible for us to say all that might be said on such a theme in this one lecture. However, perhaps some thought may be suggested that will help to shed some light on the sufferings we have and we see in others.

"If God were good, He would wish to make men happy, and if He were almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But His creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either the power or the goodness or both." This restates our problem.

#### *God's Omnipotence and Goodness*

A new evaluation of the meaning of God's omnipotence and His great love for man may clear up some of the misconceptions that lurk in our minds. What does the Bible mean in saying, "With God all things are possible"? Does it mean that God can tie a knot that He cannot untie? Can God create a square circle? One can immediately see that in these questions men are playing with words, putting them in juxtaposition to one another without meaning. Just because you put words together after this fashion does not mean that they say anything. Two mutually exclusive things cannot be done by God at the same time, or this world would be an absurdity. Omnipotence does not mean that God can do any foolish thing that someone might dream up. Instead, it must be understood in relation to the other attributes of His nature, in complete harmony with them. God is all-powerful to accomplish that which is in accordance with His will and nature. Yet even the Bible says that there are some things God cannot do, because He is God. God cannot lie (Heb. 6: 18), He cannot tempt with evil nor be tempted (Jas. 1:13), and He cannot look upon nor countenance evil (Hab. 1:13),



for to do these things would violate His very nature. The omnipotent God in making man created him with the power of choice, freely to exercise his will in making decisions in his life. In so doing God imposed a limitation upon His own will, for He allowed for the exercise of man's freedom of will. God's omnipotence is not endangered in any way by the fact that He has voluntarily limited Himself in creating men with free-wills, to be exercised in this world. This limitation that God imposes upon Himself does not involve some external force, but is derived from His very nature. If one should ask why God created men with free-will, knowing that this involved the possibility of men making wrong choices with consequent suffering, the answer can only be that God was willing in His infinite wisdom and love to take the risk involved that He might treat us as persons, and make us free to serve Him willingly, or to reject Him. This risk He took to make us morally and spiritually like Himself. God works with men through appealing to the minds and wills of human beings, using persuasion rather than compulsion. Therefore, many of the evils in the world have come about through the stubborn wills of those who have rejected and refused God's way. But if there is any meaning to freedom of will, then even God Himself cannot enter my life and force me against my will to follow Him, simply because He may desire it. The decision rests with me. No concept of God's omnipotence that destroys man's freedom of choice and his moral responsibility for his acts and decisions is in accord with the teachings of God's word.

In speaking of God as love, oftentimes men have the idea in our day that God must be thought of as some kind of a cosmic Santa Claus or grandfather, whose major concern is to see that His creatures have just what they want, and enjoy themselves thoroughly on earth. What a distorted concept



of love this is! When experiences in life arise that shatter this "pipe-dream" many people are ready to say, "I cannot believe in a God who will not give me what I asked for, or what I think is best for me and mine." On more careful study, the Christian is aware of the fact that the figures and analogies used in the Bible to describe God's love for His people never set forth our Father as an indulgent grandfather-type of God. Whether it is the potter working carefully and painstakingly over the clay vessel, or the builder skillfully shaping and placing the stones in erecting a beautiful temple that will be his crowning masterpiece of building, or the shepherd who devotedly cares for and protects his flock from all danger, or that father who disciplines and corrects every son in whom he delights—God is always pictured in Scripture as bestowing loving care upon us. Yet that love causes us pain, because His holy eye finds in us so much that offends and repels His purity through its evil. He has to work with us to make of us more lovable persons, more like His pure and holy nature. While He may be pleased with our triumphs over weakness, He is unsatisfied with us as long as He finds there anything that is not as good as it should be. He disciplines, trains, and prepares us that we might be fitted at the end of this life for spending eternity with Him. No concept of God's love is adequate that does not have place for His discipline. This care that He bestows upon us emphasizes how greatly He does love us, and how deeply concerned He is that we should be like His dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### *The Nature of the Universe*

Another truth that may help us in understanding the place of suffering in God's plan lies in the very nature of the universe itself. One of the most marked characteristics of the natural world is its uniformity. Science in all its forms is

built upon the concept of the regularity of the natural world. The tendency of matter to behave in the same way can be stated in terms of natural "laws." The working of these "laws" or principles of uniformity in nature enables men to live, to subdue the earth and to use its forces for their own welfare. But this very uniformity of the world of matter enables men of evil will to use matter for bad purposes, as well as providing opportunity for good men to use it for good purposes. The steel that can be the framework for buildings of education, culture, and worship, can also be used for the armor with which men can fight, even when the cause they advance is an unjust one. The knowledge and use of natural laws can enable atheistic Communism to put up its Sputniks and advance its claims to domination of the world by its evil philosophy. Thus, the working out of natural laws may not always be equally beneficial to all people at all times. For example, fire is a wonderful boon to man when properly used. It warms his dwellings, it cooks his food, its energy produces power with which his machines are propelled and his factories and utilities operate. But the fire that warms and comforts the body of man at a certain distance, on closer contact will do tragic harm to that body. If through carelessness, or some accident my body is brought into direct contact with the fire, I shall suffer severe burns, possibly severe enough to take my life, regardless of how devout a Christian I may be. The very fact that fire behaves in a regular fashion enables man to use it either for good or harm. The fire that consumes the wood to cook my food can also burn down the wooden house where I may be living, and even destroy nearby homes unless it is brought under control by the use of other natural forces.

Suppose that every time the possibility of a person's being burned dangerously or losing his cherished property by fire

arose, God should step in and set aside the operation of the laws governing the behavior of fire. Suppose that every time someone felt that fire did not suit his own purposes, God should intervene and natural laws be suspended, what a chaos would be created. One could never know whether in any particular instance the natural world would behave as it usually did, because of this constant interference with its working. Multiply this by all the natural forces of the universe and one can immediately see that all possibility for the exercise of free-will and moral responsibility would be taken away because wrong actions would be impossible.

Life must be played according to the rules, and the natural laws represent a part of the rules of the game. If every time a football player ran too close to the limits of the playing field in carrying the ball, he could by wishing have the boundary to swerve outward and allow him to continue his progress, there could be no real game of football played. If when the team were near the goal line, by wishing it the goal line would be moved several yards closer so that the touchdown would present no obstacles, for the moment the team might be happy, but that sort of a world would make a football game impossible. The whole game depends on the constancy of the lines and the regularity of the world in which it is played. God does not interfere with the natural working of His world to please every whim of man. In this faithfulness of the universe God has given us one of our greatest blessings. Yet we must not conceive of the framework of natural law as being so rigid that it makes God a complete prisoner in His world. "Nature is not flinty, but faithful."

Closely allied to this point is the fact that God does not promise immunity from suffering to His people as some sort of special reward for faithfulness. So often the question has been asked, "Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous



so often have things hard?" With this problem the writer of the 73rd Psalm wrestled in the long ago. Coming to the New Testament, one does not find God promising to His people that He will protect them from the common ills of man with some sort of a "divine hedge." Just because I am a Christian it does not mean that God will protect me from cancer or some other ravaging disease. Just because I am a Christian it does not mean that God promises to protect my family circle from the invasion by death to claim some loved one. Just because I am a Christian it does not mean that I will be protected from all accidents on the highway. If God did promise such special favor to His children, the laws of the world would be interrupted in their operation every time a child of God got into a tight spot. Thus, instead of serving God because of love out of a willing heart, men would serve Him only as a kind of cosmic insurance policy against calamity, suffering and death. Religion would become nothing but a selfish bargain, and all opportunity to offer service to God out of a pure heart from unselfish motives would be gone.

#### *Our Life with Others*

"None of us liveth to himself and none dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). In this statement is to be found another insight into the problem of suffering. Much of the innocent suffering occurs because of the fact that men live together in groups, and what they do in such group relationships affects the lives of others. Along a major, crowded highway a drunken driver weaves his way at high speed, his senses benumbed by alcohol. Many others are traveling that road—law-abiding citizens able to make full use of their senses because they are sober. They are driving on their side of the road and observing all the rules of the highway. But the drunken driver swerves onto the wrong side of the road in



the path of a car loaded with a family, and leaves behind him the dead and the dying. These are innocent victims of his criminal recklessness. The very fact that men live so close together in such large numbers increases the power of one man's wrong-doing to cause suffering. But you may say to me, "Why should I have to be involved with all these people in their mistakes, blunderings, and wrong-doings? Why must I suffer for their wrongs? Why can't I be left alone, completely isolated from them?" Suppose you could stand so isolated that none of the world's ills could affect you in any way. You must remember that by the same token you would forfeit all the blessings and privileges that others contribute to you. Some of our richest experiences come from associations with others. Even for the necessities of life we are dependent on others. Without these interrelationships between men and men, how much poorer our lives would be. We simply cannot accept the blessings and privileges of such corporate life and at the same time reject all the risks involved in living together.

#### *The Remedial Character of Suffering*

Another insight into the meaning of suffering lies in the fact that much of the pain we suffer is remedial in character. While sin does not explain all our suffering, much of it comes about because of man's wickedness. An important aspect of this wickedness is man's self-deception in thinking that he is good, and in need of nothing, not knowing that he is poor, wretched, naked and blind spiritually. Yet in the sight of a holy God who cannot tolerate iniquity, his evil self-will becomes swollen with pride, and like a rebellious child it must be "broken" before it will come in submission to God to be made fit for His purposes. It is a part of the deceitfulness of sin that so long as things are going well with us there is little disposition to give up error and sin. Only when we are hurt,

feel deeply troubled, and insufficient in ourselves, do we find ourselves shaken out of our complacency and made to face our real spiritual condition. In this sense adversity serves the purpose of awakening men who have thoughtlessly gone along in sin to see their lost condition and their need of God. Many of you have known of persons who waited until times of trouble before their faces were turned toward God and they came to do His will in humble submission. Intellectually they knew better long before they acted on the gospel. No one would claim that suffering is good in itself, but what is good in any period of suffering is submission to God's will and our willingness to acknowledge how wrong our ways have been and how much we need His redeeming grace.

#### *Its Effect on Character*

Suffering has power to beautify and ennoble the character and spirit of the sufferer. "For the moment all discipline seems painful, rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:11 RSV). Through our troubles we are led to discover new sources of power and strength in God. Perhaps life has always been rosy and things have been so easy for us. Stuffed with an overweening sense of our own importance, we have gone in our own wilful way, only to learn through some tragic experience how desperately weak we are when faced with real obstacles. And out of such an experience there comes a greater power and a greater strength to live life meaningfully. If there were no experiences like troubles, griefs, afflictions, and suffering, we would not be challenged to courage, patient endurance, self-denial, and compassion, for these qualities of character grow best in an environment where there is a strong mixture of suffering. If you ask, "Why?" I am not able to answer further, than to say that this is the way God made it, and He knoweth best.

*The Example of Christ*

Suffering was necessary for redemption from sin, for there could be no forgiveness without the cross. What a tremendous example of calm, courageous love lying in humiliation and shame before the seeming triumph of wrong! "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5: 19a). God could not say to you and to me, "I forgive," without the sufferings of His dear Son, the Son who is God Incarnate. What a profound victory that Son wrought in His resurrection over coming death and the powers of evil, and guaranteeing the ultimate triumph of the redeemed. When we realize that He who was nailed to the cross is the one who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," then we know that no heart-ache nor suffering of the human spirit is beyond His knowledge or understanding. "For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly" (I Pet. 2:20-23 RSV). No man can walk in His steps and expect to escape suffering. If God and His Son could suffer so much in redeeming me from my sins, and transmute the cross from an object of shame to a thing of glory and victory, they can help me to turn my crosses of sorrow and adversity into crowns of glory and beauty.

*Heaven a Part of the Answer*

One final word must be said in this mediation. Without it the whole story on human suffering would be quite incomplete. Heaven is that word. "For our light affliction which



is but for the moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 5:17). Earth cannot tell the whole story of human suffering. Beyond this life with its toils and tears, its struggles and disappointments, its imprisonments and persecutions there is a realm of pure delight, where every tear shall be wiped from our eyes, where every sorrow shall be turned into joy. That is the home beyond the river that has no bridge. The burden of the cross Jesus bore that I might have that home. The sufferings and privations of the apostles and martyrs were borne to preserve for us the good news of eternal life. As I homeward make my way, with eyes set toward the city whose builder and maker is God, I find my burden grows lighter, and I realize that "the best is yet to be."

The cry of man's anguish went up to God,  
 Lord, take away pain!  
 The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,  
 The close coiling chain  
 That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs  
 On the wings that would soar,—  
 Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made  
 That it love Thee the more.  
 Then answered the Lord to the cry of the world,  
 "Shall I take away pain?  
 And with it the power of the soul to endure  
 Made strong by the strain?  
 Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart  
 And sacrifice high?  
 Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame  
 White brows to the sky?  
 Shall I take away love that redeems with a price  
 And smiles through the loss,—  
 Can ye spare from the lives that would climb unto Mine  
 The Christ on His Cross?"



## THE GODS OF MODERNISM

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W. B. Barton

*Modernism* in the broadest sense includes both groups and individuals who tend in their religious thinking to deny the supernaturalism of our religion and, with respect to the subject before us, demand a radical reinterpretation of the biblical doctrine of God. It has had its representatives among Protestants, Catholics, and the Jews. In this study our attention will be centered around some of the more prominent manifestations of this liberalistic tendency. A thorough historical investigation of the roots of Modernism is a desideratum which the limitation of time will not here permit. In fact, the question as to how to go about this kind of study presents a problem. Should one simply notice the different conceptions of God among the various liberalistic and skeptical thinkers, or, perhaps confine his interest to those "idols" of mind and heart which hinder their coming to know the God of the Bible. The solution would seem to be a combination of both approaches. Those "idols" limit and determine their conception of God. In fact, the modernist's apotheosis of strictly human values, or the scientific method, as the case may be, is to a great degree synonymous with his conception of God.

For present convenience a division will be made of the various strata of modernistic thought into (1) Classical Modernism, (2) Scientism, and (3) Neo-modernism. This is an arbitrary classification, of course; but we shall allow the development of each theme to be its own justification. Finally, a brief comparison will be drawn between these differ-

ing notions of deity and the Biblical doctrine of the Godhead.

### I. *Current Liberalistic Conceptions of God*

A. *Classical Modernism.* The headwaters of Classical Modernism are the "rationalistic" thinkers of the Eighteenth Century, culminating in the "critical philosophy" of Immanuel Kant of Königsberg. This caustic river gained momentum as it passed through the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Georg Hegel to influence the theologians of early Nineteenth Century Germany. In revolting against the impersonal and otiose god of the Deists, Schleiermacher in his work, *The Christian Faith* (1821), comes close to identifying God with the causal order of nature itself. Where, for instance, the Deist had thought of God as a kind of Super-Watchmaker, who when finished making the world, went on about His own business, Schleiermacher goes to the other extreme, very close to Pantheism, by seemingly identifying God and the ideal processes of Nature. This tendency to identify God and natural causation has been called "immanentism." He cannot, therefore, refer to God as a Person, or admit the biblical doctrine of the Godhead, which teaches the distinction of three divine Personalities. Writing about the doctrine of the Godhead, he suggests:

We have only to do with the God-consciousness given in our self-consciousness along with our consciousness of the world: hence we have no formula for the being of God in Himself as distinct from the being of God in the world. . . . (Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, New York: Scribner, 1948, p. 50.)

Now, since man apparently is the highest form of nature, it follows that God is identifiable in some way with man's action.

When the radical biblical criticism of the early Nineteenth Century began to undermine the faith of certain religious thinkers in the authority of the Bible as an inspired revelation, many turned to Schleiermacher's interpretation of the Gospel, where a feeling of absolute dependence upon this impersonal principle was substituted for faith in the living God. Although other schools of thought, such as that of Hegel and Ritschl, contributed to the rise of Twentieth Century Modernism, it was Schleiermacher's conception of God that became characteristic of the whole movement. American Biblical scholarship during the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century was already becoming aware of German critical thought. More and more students and teachers went to Germany to study. They not only brought back the historico-critical methods of Griesbach and Eichhorn, but also the radical theories of Baur and Strauss. It was not, however, until Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis became popular that liberalistic thinking really began to conquer.

Henry Nelson Wieman, professor in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago (1927-47) and one of the most influential American religious writers of this century, taught his students that "Whatever else God is, he is not a personality." ("Theocentric Religion," *Contemporary American Theology*, ed. Vergilius Ferm, New York: Roundtable Press, 1932, I, 351.) According to Wieman God is an impersonal social force, which he equates with that interworking of groups and individuals that has as its goal "the greatest possible mutuality of good." (*The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, New York: Macmillan, 1929, p. 14.) Wieman reflects the German modernistic spirit. He studied at Heidelberg (1910-11). But by this time such liberalistic ideas could as well be learned in the U.S.A. as in Germany.

E. S. Ames sets forth a similar notion of God. He denies

that God is a Being in any sense, "but rather an order of nature which includes men and all the processes of aspiring social life." (*Religion*, New York: Holt, 1929, p. 177.) Elsewhere he tells us that his idea of God is no different from his idea of Uncle Sam. (*Contemporary Religious Thought*, ed. T. S. Kepler, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1941, pp. 180-184.) Ames was professor at the University of Chicago for thirty-five years (1900-35) and minister of the University Church of the Disciples of Christ for forty years (1900-40).

Another, and perhaps the leader of the so-called *Chicago School*, Shailer Matthews, writes concerning the biblical doctrine of a personal God, that "it was in reality an anthropomorphic conception of those personality-producing activities of the universe with which humanity is organically related." (*Is God Emeritus?*, New York: Macmillan & Co., 1940, p. 34.) Such a God as this could never really be the object of our personal devotion. How can one love such an impersonal force? Consider also how capricious such a God would be, who could be identifiable, at once, with Russian Atheistic Communism and Western Free Enterprise. This kind of "immanentism" is characteristic of much of classical modernism.

1. *Humanism*. Although the writers we have noticed so far are each guilty of "immanentism," that is, identifying God too closely, either with nature or the ideal processes of man's social order, they still would be inclined to keep God first in their vocabulary. But the attitude of the Humanist is adequately suggested in this statement by Charles Francis Potter, a leader of this movement:

Modernists still maintain that God is king and make due obeisance on state occasions, but he is shorn of his power and is only a symbol. The real power is the Prime Minister, Man.



(*Humanism: A New Religion*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930, p. 44.)

Humanism ostensibly claims to be a new religion.

You have to make over and broaden your definition of religion to get Humanism in at all, especially if you come from a Christian background. (*Ibid.*, p. 3.)

One must give up what has been known as religion in the past. Humanism is the worship of man—the unabashed deification of mankind. The biblical doctrine of God, we are told, must be abandoned as inconsistent with the advance of modern knowledge.

I would like to recount an unusual experience during my first year in Harvard Divinity School. One hour at the Divinity School I attended a class in Systematic Theology under Professor Auer, who spent the semester undermining the faith of his students in God's existence; then I walked across the College Yard to Emerson Hall, which is the School of Philosophy, and listened to John Wild intelligently defend the proofs of God's existence. I am glad to report that since Auer's retirement, John Wild has been appointed to the Divinity School Faculty. Professor Auer taught for twenty-five years at the Divinity School, twelve of which he was full professor of theology. He was probably the only full-time Humanist professor of theology in the United States, but the respect he commanded has given impetus to the dissemination of humanism.

In 1950 Professor Auer debated Julian Hartt of Yale over the question of God's existence. Professor Hartt points out how the Humanist attempts to play both ends against the middle.

The humanist affirms the worth of human life in very strong terms. He is out for the perfection of human possibilities. . . .

But the humanist also affirms the unbroken solidarity of man with nature. . . . Man's sense of having superior value or worth would seem to be a mere conceit. . . . Why should a man feel any greater obligation for other men than he does for other organisms, say the mollusks. (*Humanism vs. Theism*, Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1951, p. 96.)

The ethical life of man is meaningless without God as the ground of moral sanctions. When man has his finest hours it rather seems to be in spite of his relation to nature. Furthermore, the one person whom the Humanist sets up as most exemplary, Jesus of Nazareth, never taught man to worship any save God alone (Matthew 4:10). Nothing is more out of harmony with the facts than the attempt to make over Jesus into a Humanist. Humanism is the debacle of Classical Modernism!

2. *The Finite God.* One form of modernistic theism is the belief that God is finite, struggling along with man to make a better world. E. S. Brightman, who advocated a temporalistic God at Boston University for thirty-four years (1919-1953) is one of the best known defenders of this view. He taught that God is perfect in everything but His Will.

God's finiteness thus does not mean that he began or will end; nor does it mean he is limited by anything external to himself. Strictly we should speak of a God whose will is finite rather than a finite God; for even the finite God is absolute in the sense of being the ultimate source of all creation. (*A Philosophy of Religion*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940, p. 337.)

But if there is any limitation found in God, He is no longer perfect, since in this one respect, at least, He would still be lacking in a perfection.

John Stuart Mill was the first to give articulation to this theory in order to overcome what he thought were insuffer-

able difficulties in the problem of evil. This is becoming, more and more, a popular attitude on the part of some. Peter A. Bertocci, the student and successor of Brightman, is carrying on the tradition at Boston University. He uses nearly two full chapters of his work, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951, pp. 389-440), justifying this position. The necessity these men feel to limit God's Will, in view of the presence of physical and moral evil in the world, seems to be one consequence of accepting the skeptical position of modernism with reference to the biblical view of man. To one who accepts the God of the Bible, the responsibility for evil is laid at the door of mankind, not God, nor nature. Man is responsible for the evil that has happened to him. Moral evil is at the base of physical evil. (Another representative of this position: William P. Montague, *The Way of Things*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1940; *Belief Unbound*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938.) A God perfect in every respect, but in Will, is no more perfect than a man who, though sound in every way, but weak in will, would be considered a healthy specimen of what a man ought to be.

B. *Scientism*. Science has become for many the modern Delphic oracle. Science rightly claims our admiration for the remarkably beneficial and sometimes terrifying accomplishments which are constantly being added to her repertoire, but we are not obliged to measure all of life by her methods. Some of the most important aspects of our lives are not measurable or filterable, but nevertheless quite valid.

Scientism is the characteristic attitude of (1) *Logical Positivism*, (2) *Naturalism*, (3) *Materialism*, whether the *academic materialism* of the schools, or the *Dialectical Materialism* of Marxism, and (4) *Psychologism*. These divi-



sions are rather arbitrary, but it will be satisfactory for our purposes.

(1) *Logical Positivism*. The outstanding representatives of this new way of dealing with philosophical and religious problems is related both to the English school of Neo-realists, like Bertrand Russell, and the Vienna Circle of philosophers which left Austria when Hitler came to power. Several of the latter found their way into American universities. We will turn our attention to Bertrand Russell, since he has been the most vocal opponent of the idea of God. As early as 1925 he had declared, "God and immortality, the central dogmas of the Christian religion, find no support in science." He adds further, "for my part I cannot see any ground for either. I do not pretend to be able to prove that there is no God. I equally cannot prove that Satan is a fiction. The Christian God may exist; so may the Gods of Olympus, or of ancient Egypt, or of Babylon. But no one of these hypotheses is more probable than any other. They lie outside the region of even probable knowledge, and therefore there is no reason to consider any of them." (*What I Believe*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925, pp. 13, 14.) In his diatribe on religion he eliminates everything from the realm of knowledge which cannot fit into the categories of *physico-mathematical* science.

Whatever knowledge is attainable, must be attained by scientific methods; and what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know. (*Religion and Science*, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 243.)

But this leaves out some of the most important aspects of life. Russell is forced to admit this.

Science does not include art, or friendship, or various other valuable elements in life. . . . Science can tell us much about



the means of realizing our desires, but it cannot say that one desire is preferable to another. (*Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.)

When man recognizes the existence of almighty God, he apparently has no trouble finding a place for these "valuable elements in life." The trouble has arisen when certain ones have attempted to reduce human life entirely to the categories of science. When something, that forms a real part of human experience, will not fit into the framework of scientific method, it is relegated to the realm of the unknowable. Such a procedure, however, is patently suspect, unscientific and beneath the dignity of intelligent men.

(2) *Naturalism*. The method of Naturalism is much the same as that of the Logical Positivists, but here it is rather the methods of the *natural* sciences. John Dewey represented this position.

There is but one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection. (*A Common Faith*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, p. 32.)

That such a method has its place in the empirical sciences, no one would doubt, but it is not adequate as an instrument to deal with man as a whole. But the Naturalist turns this "faith in the continued disclosing of truth through directed cooperative human endeavor," into something which he tells us, "is more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation." (*Ibid.*, p. 26.)

It is the elevation of the method of the *natural* sciences into a religion, yes, rather a *god*, that constitutes the distinctive characteristic of Naturalism. (W. B. Barton, Jr., "A Defense of the Direct Realist's Interpretation of Intentional Consciousness," unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, pp. 226-237.) According

to Dewey man should reject traditional religion, which has hindered the progress of mankind: in fact,

Men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life, because they have waited upon some power external to themselves and to nature to do the work they are responsible for doing. (*Ibid.*, p. 46.)

What is needed, according to Dewey, is for man to use his imagination in solving his problems and in moving toward ideals.

The new vision does not arise out of nothing, but emerges through seeing, in terms of possibilities, that is, of imagination, old things in new relations serving a new end which the new end aids in creating. (*Ibid.*, p. 49.)

Thus, man does not need God, according to Dewey, in order to live fully. Dewey's "God," in fact, is as he says quite explicitly, "this *active* relation between ideal and actual." (*Ibid.*, p. 51.) Religion, in this sense, has to do with such things as "accommodation," "adaptation," and "adjustment" (*Ibid.*, p. 15) and progress over difficulties and "forces beyond human control," by setting certain ideals before us. There is certainly no need of God's grace in the world that Dewey describes. His "god" apparently has his ups and downs according to whether man is intent on working toward ideals.

But if traditional belief in God has not solved man's earthly difficulties, neither have the methods of science. Does it satisfy our fear and disappointment in our fellows for enslaving millions and ruthlessly destroying all who interfere, to know that man's techniques of observation and recording are growing more accurate every day? To ask this, is to answer it.

There is still another question which Naturalism cannot adequately answer. How can the values and ideals which

Dewey, for instance, sees are necessary for the amelioration of society have a place in his completely naturalistic philosophy? The underlying assumption of Naturalism as Y. H. Krikorian points out, is "that nature is the whole of reality." (Y. H. Krikorian, ed. *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1944, p. 244.) But do the methods of science tell us anything about the "whole of reality"? It would seem that the special sciences are not qualified to say anything about the *totality* of things.

In commenting on this aspect of Naturalism, Oliver Martin notices that,

. . . actually, nature as being the whole of reality is simply posited. No evidence is given for the proposition. Such a procedure may be contrasted with that of, say, the classical realism of the Hebraic-Christian tradition. Though the Christian may believe that God rather than nature is the basic reality, he has never been willing merely to affirm his thesis. In the history of thought there are volumes attesting to the fact that he has at least tried to give evidence, however unsuccessful his critic may have thought his attempts. ("An Examination of Contemporary Naturalism and Materialism," *The Return to Reason*, ed. John Wild, Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953, p. 71.)

Although there are fifteen contributors to Krikorian's volume, no attempt is made to prove that Naturalism is the "whole of reality."

3. *Materialism* in all its various forms is guilty of the same reductionism as Naturalism, except with greater consistency it denies any reality to God, since it subordinates both man and nature to inorganic matter.

The Marxist is not the only materialist who flouts the God of the Bible. R. W. Sellars, one of the leading philosophers of our time and a materialist, suggests that "Paul's God was an oriental Monarch. To the modern, He is a cad." (*The*

*Next Step in Religion*, New York: Macmillan, 1918, p. 182.)

According to the Marxist *Dialectical Materialist*, the idea of God arises when a society divides into classes. The ruling class is the basis of the abstract idea of the relationship between ruler and the ruled. The ruled are impressed with the "power and prerogatives of the ruler." From this the abstract idea of God is supposed to arise, when this relationship is considered to express a general truth about the universe, that it needs a ruler. This, we are learnedly told, is the origin of religion and the idea of God; while the existing social order is interpreted as decreed by God and nature as the creation of God. (Maurice Cornforth, *Dialectical Materialism*, London: Lawrence & Wishert, 1954, Vol. III, p. 89.)

V. I. Lenin, the patron saint of Russian Communism, wrote: "He [the party member] must combat religion—this is the A.B.C. of *all* materialism, and consequently of Marxism." (*Religion*, New York: International Publishers, 1933, p. 14.) Marxism, however, can offer *no concrete proof* of its hypothesis for the evolution of the idea of God. But history and logic both offer devastating proofs against the atheistic thesis of Marxism. First of all, modern anthropological studies have undermined the evolutionary hypothesis, especially with regard to the idea of God. W. Schmidt has been able to prove that the further back one studies the peoples of the world the nearer one gets to a period of monotheism, when one God, the High God, was the object of worship. (*The Origin and Growth of Religion*, New York: Dial, 1931, tr. by H. J. Rose.)

The evolutionary hypothesis teaches that the idea of one God, Creator over all, came about by a slow development from a very primitive, animistic stage when man first began



to explain the mysteries of nature by attributing human qualities to its various facets, such as wind and rain, to the stage of polytheism, then finally, by a natural process of elimination, to monotheism. But it was noticed that the High God, among the so-called primitives, although considered the Creator of men and the other gods, was no longer a vital part of their religion. At one time He was the most important, perhaps the only God worshiped; now service to Him was very meager, if at all. This is the opposite from what the evolutionary view would lead us to conclude. Instead of the latest addition, the High God was the first God worshiped. Anthropology renders the Marxist thesis both unscientific and unhistorical.

Dialectical Materialism is also unphilosophical since it violates the first principle of logic. The principle of non-contradiction states that *it is impossible for a thing to both be and not be at the same time and in the same way*. Man is said to be the creature of deterministic materialistic laws of development over which he apparently has no control, one aspect of which is the development of the idea of God and religion. Yet he is exhorted to take up arms against this process, as though he were a free moral agent. Lenin says the Communist "must combat religion." He is not referring here to an inescapable law, but a moral obligation on the part of each good party member. Man cannot be a wholly determined being yet morally responsible for his politics.

But, if man, in his total being, is merely material, then it should be possible to filter out with a test tube "communism" from a dead Marxist and "capitalism" from a dead American. But this is absurd. Why? Because man is not wholly material, but is also a spiritual being capable of appreciating and even dying for immaterial principles, such as truth, goodness, democracy and religion.

4. *Psychologism.* The application of psychology to religion has its proper domain but when it assumes the place of religion itself, this may rightly be called "psychologism." Psychoanalysis especially seems to claim absolute knowledge of man and the promise of perfect happiness. This new science began in the field of medicine, but it threatens now as Karl Jaspers, one of the founders of psychoanalysis, warns, to invade "every department of human life and is now preparing to bring the whole of medicine into subjection to itself." (*Reason and Anti-Reason in Our Time*, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952, tr. by Stanley Godman, p. 20.) It has become a "faith" and Freud is its god. It has beyond any doubt contributed much to our knowledge of man, mainly through the discoveries of Freud. But there has been the tendency to overrate its place of importance. There are many psychotherapists who want to help man and who use psychoanalytic methods but they do so without becoming their slaves. But for some it has taken the place of faith in God. As a faith, "Psychoanalysis," so says Jaspers, "is made possible by basic scientific errors." (1) It confuses understanding the meaning of something with an explanation of its cause. (2) The therapeutical effects of it are still open to question. (3) Whereas, only a very small percentage of human beings ever suffer from the neurosis. As Jaspers suggests: "Must people repress, forget, leave unsettled, suffer and endure the worst without transforming it into physical symptoms." (*Ibid.*, p. 23.)

According to Freud, however, everyone who takes religion seriously is following an "illusion." Everything about our belief in God is interpreted in the light of the son-father relationship. God is simply the exalted father, and the inherent longing for the father is the ground of our idea of God. (Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, Garden

City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1957, p. 40.) But this conclusion is no more valid than for one to assert that an infant's helpless need for protection—"protection through love"—creates the actual father who begets it. The father-longing presupposes a father. But the father of a family does not supply the basic longing. Yet it ought to follow from Freud, that, unless one becomes alienated from his father, all needs are relieved. What for Freud makes faith in God illusory, is really the most basic proof of God's existence. Nature has provided every longing with its legitimate fulfillment; strange the whole thing becomes illusory only at the level of religion. The very fact of the need for God is a good reason for believing in Him. As Augustine put it: "Our hearts are restless, till they find their rest in Thee." (*The Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book I.)

C. *Neo-Modernism*. In revolt against the "immanentism" of classical modernism, a new kind of liberalistic movement is in the process of sweeping the western religious world. This characteristically goes to the opposite extreme of over-emphasizing the *transcendence* of God. Soren Kierkegaard had written at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century about the "absolute difference" between God and man (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. by David Swenson and Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 369), but it was not until after the unsteady foundation of liberalistic optimism was demolished in the first world war with its physical and moral devastation, that men began to doubt that God could be so intimately identifiable with the processes of the world, especially human activities and ends. Among the religious thinkers of Europe, it was Karl Barth, a Swiss theologian, who first challenged the overweening optimism of the preceding age with his *Commentary on Romans*. (Tr. by Edwyn Hoskyns, London;

New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.) But along with his reemphasis of sin and the need for God's saving grace which the older thinkers had complacently relegated to the theological scrap-heap, he, and those influenced by him, have *depersonalized* God so as to limit Him to a kind of *dumb impersonal force*, who, compared to the God of the Bible, is much less than God indeed.

God is so utterly different from man and far removed, that He cannot apparently communicate doctrine or propositions, but remains a speechless God. He *acts* in man's favor, we are told, but He does not speak to man or through man. Peter's statement concerning how "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (II Peter 1:21, R.S.V. All quotes, unless otherwise specified, are from the R.S.V.), becomes, under the radical reinterpretation demanded by Neo-orthodoxy, a manifestation of Peter's so-called limited World-view. Christ is the *Word of God*, but this is the only way *Word of God* can legitimately be used. It can neither refer to a canon, that is, scripture, nor to an utterance of an inspired man. God can reveal Himself, but He cannot reveal His Will, because He is so utterly different from man. (Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Reason*, tr. by Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946, p. 8.)

Paul Tillich, who immigrated in protest from Hitler's Germany in 1935, has become the leading propagator of this new theology, first at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and now at Harvard. The biblical doctrine of the *Godhead* (*Trinity*, as it is called in theological parlance) is said to be merely a symbolic expression of a truth expressed also in other religions. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are merely symbolic ways of referring to the various aspects of God. (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, Vol. I, pp. 218-235.) The



doctrine of the Godhead, "describes," Tillich asserts, "in dialectical terms the inner movement of the divine life as an eternal separation from itself and return to itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 56.) Anyone acquainted with early church history recognizes the similarity between this and the doctrine of the Modalistic Monarchians, who taught that the Son was merely a different mode of the Father's existence. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are merely *three moments* in the divine life. (Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, tr. by James Luther Adams, London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1955, p. 70. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 250.)

That *divine person* called the Father in the Bible, Tillich *depersonalizes* as "chaos," "the abyss" and "burning fire." (*Ibid.*, p. 251.) The personality of the Son is denied. The divine *logos*, or the Son, is the ordering principle that gives *form and meaning* to "the abyss" and "chaos." The Holy Spirit is merely the third principle which is the combination of the other two in a creative way. So Tillich's concept of God is a *depersonalized force* made up of *three principles*, one of power, the second of meaning, and the third a creative combination of the first two. (*Systematic Theology*, p. 251.) Such a position challenges our powers of attention to follow, but one thing is certain, Tillich's God is not the Living, Loving, Saving God of the Bible. It is no wonder that Cornelius Van Til calls his appraisal of the theology of Neo-orthodoxy, *The New Modernism*. (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1946.)

Tillich asserts further that *God does not exist*. When we attempt to apply any human categories, such as personality, will, love, and even *existence*, to God we commit a grave error. (*Systematic Theology*, pp. 110, 143f.) He prefers to call God, "being-itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 146.) It is difficult to see how one can be "ultimately concerned" about such an im-

personal and abstract conception of God, yet Tillich tells us God is what is of "ultimate concern." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 211.)

If God is not a *person* then how can He love us? If He cannot love us, how can He demand love in us? How can I love a God incapable of love Himself? Yet John the Apostle tells us, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I John 4:10, King James Version). If the divine *logos* is not a *person*, how could He love us and give Himself for us? (Galatians 2:20.)

## II. *The Biblical Doctrine of God.*

In contradistinction to the "immanentism" of the older form of Modernism, the Bible asserts the transcendence of God over His creation.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

The deification of man, which is the core of Humanism, is set forth in the Bible as the origin of the first sin.

But the serpent said to the woman, you will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4, 5).

But this attempted apotheosis resulted in the loss of Eden and made us heir to death and life's woes.

For one to deny the existence of God is the admission of a foolish heart (Psalms 14:1).

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge (Psalms 19:1, 2).

But the Psalmist indicts the skeptic for not opening his heart to the clear indications of the Creator in His creation.

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Psalms 19:3, 4).

Only the "fool" can fail to be impressed with God's existence.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. *So they are without excuse* (Romans 1:19, 20).

From the vast expanse of the heavens with its countless galaxies to the atom and its infinitesimal particles, all move within the framework of one creation, governed by laws which are operative everywhere. The universe demands for its ground and governor such a God as that of which the Bible speaks. No one can enjoy one moment of appreciation for the beauties of nature or the higher values of life, such as friendship, without witnessing to God's existence.

It is no cause for despair, that religious values cannot be measured by the methods of science. The spiritual has different dimensions from the material. "But will God dwell indeed with man on the earth?" asks Solomon with reference to the temple he had built, "Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built?" (II Chronicles 6:18).

Though God be *transcendent*, He is not so far away as the neo-modernists would put Him. Paul quoted the Stoic philosopher with approval: "We are his offspring." "Yet he is not far from each one of us," declares Paul, "for in him we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28). God is a spirit who loves us and whom we can love. He has communicated His Will to us in the Bible.

## MISSION CHALLENGES NOT YET MET

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Otis Gatewood

According to Rand McNally World Atlas there are now 135 nations in the world, counting such small nations as Latvia, Monaco, Haiti, Estonia and Lithuania.

According to the best count I have been able to make, there are now congregations of churches of Christ, as we know them, meeting in these 52 nations: Algiers, Bermuda, Malaya, Mexico, Philippines, Hawaii, Norway, So. Africa, France, Japan, So. Rhodesia, China, N. Rhodesia, Nigeria, Australia, U. S. A., Canada, Germany, Italy, Nyasaland, Denmark, Tanganyika, Cuba, Scotland, England, Ireland, Okinawa, Sweden, Israel, Austria, New Zealand, Alaska, Libya, Baffin Islands, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Sicily, Brazil, Thailand, Canal Zone, French Morocco, Greece, Iran, Korea, Labrador, Puerto Rico, Turkey, Newfoundland, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.

This is a great improvement for ten years ago there were congregations in only about twenty nations. This means that within the last ten years we have established churches in 32 new nations. There are still 83 nations of the earth where churches of Christ have not been established, but if we continue the rate of increase of the last ten years, churches will be established in every nation of the world within the next thirty years. Many of us who are now living will very likely live to see that day. When this is done we can then say that we have fulfilled that part of the great commission of our Lord which says: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

This may sound as if we are fantastically close to evan-



gelizing the entire world, but we must remember that there are 2,820,000,000 people in the world, which means there are 50 people for each square mile of land surface of this world, and yet there are only about 1,700,000 members of the church. So there are still 2,819,300,000 souls outside of the fold of Christ. This may seem like an impossible number for the present membership of the church to reach, but if each member of the body of Christ during his lifetime were to preach the gospel to only two thousand who never heard the gospel before, we could say as did the apostle Paul before our life closes: ". . . the gospel . . . was preached to every creature which is under heaven."

My topic for this lectureship is: "*Mission Challenges Not Yet Met.*" And I know with the words that I have just spoken in mind you may expect me to immediately begin calling upon us to answer the challenge of preaching the gospel in lands other than the United States. However, that is a serious mistake mission speakers make. We often leave the impression that we think the other nations of the world present the only challenges that have not yet been met. We overlook the fact that the United States is one of the ripest mission fields of the entire world. It is true that the Lord told us to teach all nations, but Christ also said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields that are ripe to harvest." The ripe fields, therefore, should be the places where we concentrate our greatest efforts.

There are 119,039 cities, towns, and villages in the U. S. A. but there are only 17,000 congregations of the Lord's church. This means there are still 102,039 cities, towns, and villages where the church of our Lord has not yet been established. Thus there are six times as many places in the U. S. where there are no churches of Christ as there are where there are congregations. So if you have the concep-

tion that a preacher must cross the ocean in order to get into the mission field, you are mistaken. We have a present membership of about 1,700,000, but statistics show that within the next fifteen years more than 25,000,000 who are not now religious will become identified with some church. If we answer the challenge here in America that has not yet been met, we will see to it that many of these 25,000,000 will have an opportunity to become members of the body of Christ.

I mention this first among the challenges that have not yet been met because many who are not successful in converting others in America think that if they could only cross the ocean they would succeed. This is not true. If you cannot convert people whose customs you know and whose language you speak, you will not be successful in another language. Your difficulties will only be intensified. In another land you will be regarded as a foreigner, people will question your motives, misjudge your actions, attack your character, and laugh at your efforts to speak their language. There you are thousands of miles away from those who love you, pray for you, and are interested in your physical as well as your spiritual welfare. Here in America you are always within a few driving or flying hours from your relatives or loved ones in case of sickness, trouble, or death. Your brethren can come to help you or you can visit them for counsel or encouragement as the need arises.

Here in America if you can't get a church to support you so that you can give full time to the work of the church, you can get a job in a town where the church has not been established and support yourself. Let me appeal to you to answer the challenge of the 119,039 cities, towns, and villages where the church is not known. Move away from the Abilenes, Lubbocks, Nashvilles, etc., and scatter into this wonderful

land and harvest the 25,000,000 souls that are ripe and ready to accept the Lord. Sell others on the same idea and take them with you into some new field. Move with a group into a new field.

About 15 years ago a caravan of Christians passed through Salt Lake City, led by a successful physician from Wichita, Kansas. They were on their way to Eugene, Oregon. Then there was no church in Eugene. Today the church of Christ is the most highly respected church in that city. Dr. Rhodes and those Christians with him established a hospital in Eugene and used it as the basis around which to build the church.

Five years ago Jay Church of Wichita, Kansas, did not return to his home town when he finished David Lipscomb College. He and some of his friends went to a city in the northeast and they have succeeded in establishing a self-supporting congregation.

Follow the example of these brethren. Scatter, brethren, scatter! You will be greatly blessed and you can be a wonderful blessing to the Lord. Teacher, doctor, lawyer, retired person, young man and young woman finishing college—scatter!! Why stay here in large congregations in the south where you are never called upon to work for the Lord? Leave your loved ones, your brethren, and the strong churches! Answer the challenges in America that have not been met! Scatter, brethren, scatter!! Preach the gospel to the millions in America who have not heard. Go to the north, the northeast, the northwest, or wherever the church has not been established. Live in some new field and build the church around you.

If you cannot go to some new field, answer the challenges that have not been met in places where the church is strong.

Open your home to cottage Bible classes, invite your neighbors who are not members of the church, teach the class yourself, get the printed series of lessons and the beautiful colored slides that are available to help you—use them in your own home to show and teach your neighbors and you will find a new joy in living the Christian life.

Let me say just here that I have found more dissatisfied and unhappy members of the church here in America in places where the church is strong than any place in the world I have yet visited. Here our best friends are members of the church. We give them wedding and baby showers and they feel obligated to return the favors. We give to one another and try to keep up with the Joneses while we are very little concerned and give no time to teaching the next door neighbor who is not a Christian. Preaching that members of the body of Christ should teach their neighbors is not sufficient. The leaders of the church should assign tasks to different members of the body of Christ who are inactive. Call them together, talk over the work that needs to be done, give them specific jobs in saving the lost and then the church will grow and unhappy, critical, dissatisfied members of the church will be happy and useful. Let us answer the challenges that have not been met in the large congregations.

### *Challenges Abroad*

However, even though America presents some of the greatest challenges, we must not make the mistake of believing that it is the only field ripe to harvest. Today in almost all parts of the Western world the American is held in as high esteem as Romans were held in the days of Christ. And even in Russia the people show such great respect for Americans that they will not even leave a church building until the American present leaves.



This attitude on the part of most of the peoples of the earth presents one of the greatest challenges to the gospel preacher in our generation. Even before he begins to speak, the people of other countries want to hear what he has to say. Many people of the different nations consider it a great honor to have an American as a friend. He is therefore welcomed into homes wherever he goes. The people of the world want to know what he believes and thinks. They are even more receptive when he speaks their native language. American preachers are therefore often able to accomplish more than native preachers. I have seen American preachers preach to several thousand people night after night in tent meetings. We should arise within our generation and meet this great challenge that is presented to the American preacher.

Let me say just here that it is much more challenging to preach to people who have never heard than it is to people who have heard the story time and time again. We preachers like to hold meetings. First, because we can preach our old sermons, because we can preach to large audiences, and third, because we are usually paid quite well for only one week of preaching. But have you observed in the last few years that very few people are responding to the invitation. We are preaching mostly to members of the church who have heard our sermons on first principles time and again. Those who come know our sermons so well that they could almost preach the sermons by memory themselves. And often it is very hard to get the members of the church to come because they know they will hear the sermons that they have heard so often before. And if they do come they compare us with other preachers they have heard preach the same sermons and they think boringly: "He can't preach that as good as Brother So and So did." Brethren, is it right to go to such

people time and again only because we are fed big fat chicken dinners and paid handsome salaries while at the same time there are millions of other people in the world who would not compare you with other preachers but would welcome hearing the conversions in the book of Acts for the first time? I can tell you from personal experience that it is really refreshing to preach the book of Acts to people who have never heard it before.

And that brings me to this question: Is America after all so very much more fruitful than any other land? We would think so by the way we preachers stay here at home and preach. Ninety-nine per cent of preachers of the church of Christ are preaching here in America to less than 6% of the world's population! Is this right?

Let us examine for a little while to see why we do this. Is it only because it is easier to preach in our own language and to people whose customs we understand? After all is another language so hard to learn? I know that if you stay here in America and try to learn a new language it is very difficult because you speak English all the time. But if you quit speaking English and speak the language that you are trying to learn you will be able to speak the other language in a very short time. The army has learned that if they teach young men a language for eight hours per day, just as they do other work, that a young man can learn to speak another language within six weeks. Why can't we do the same thing? And why not learn another language? One philosopher said: "He who learns a new language gains a new soul." Think of all the books you could read and the things you could do and understand if you knew another language or two. Why be so narrow and confine yourself to the knowledge you can gain in this world from only one language? Don't let the language barrier keep you from preaching the

gospel to others. It is not as great a barrier as we think. After all if you cannot speak the language fluently, you can write your sermons and have them translated and then you can learn to read them without too great a difficulty. I know many preachers who are very successful in this respect. And you can also preach through interpreters. Many American preachers are preaching to this day very successfully through interpreters. Then too there are many people in the different nations of the world who read and speak English. We can teach many people in our own native tongue. So why let the language barrier keep us at home? This is only a lazy excuse.

Is it because we love the salaries we get here in America too much? Yes, it is very nice to have \$100.00 or \$150.00 per week with a house furnished and utilities paid and then sometimes with car expenses and insurance and taxes paid on top of that. We know that we would not be paid that much if we went abroad. Are we not willing to take less? Our Lord gave up heaven for us. Can't we give up a fat salary for Him? And if we do evangelistic work the salary is even better. An evangelist can hold three and sometimes four meetings per month if he schedules them right. And what does he receive? From \$200.00 to \$400.00 per meeting, and this means that he averages from \$600.00 to \$1,200.00 or maybe \$1,600.00 per month. Don't deny that this is true. I have held meetings regularly myself and I know the salaries that are paid. We preachers therefore are often milking the churches to death financially while we preach mostly to members of the church who have heard our messages time and again. How, brethren, can we face God in the day of judgment and do things like this while at the same time we allow the other millions of the earth to go before God in the day of judgment without having heard the gospel even once?

We teach the members of the church that they should sacrifice in giving. Aren't we preachers willing to sacrifice and take less salary if need be in order to preach the gospel to peoples of another nation?

I know also that you are ready to make the excuse that peoples of other nations are not willing to come to hear you preach. Are you saying that from experience, or is that only an excuse? Are you willing to preach only when you can get a large audience? The pioneer preachers in Texas and Tennessee preached often in school buildings to small audiences, and if they hadn't done so you could not preach to full church buildings today. Why not be a pioneer and preach to smaller audiences so that future preachers in all the nations of the earth can preach to large audiences? But after all how many people do you preach to who are not members of the church every Sunday? Most missionaries in foreign fields are preaching each Sunday to more non-members than many preachers here in Texas who are preaching for large congregations, and they are baptizing almost as many if not more per year.

Do we love the American way of life so well that we are not willing to go abroad? I think that is the real difficulty. But it is just as close to heaven from Italy or Africa as it is from America. And what if you died in another land and have to be buried there? Many a soldier lies buried on foreign soil today. Are we preachers better than they? Are we willing to sacrifice less? But is it such a great sacrifice to give up some of the luxuries of America? Is it necessary to drive an American car with radio and heater? Can't we ride a bicycle or walk for the Lord? And what if we can't get to the best hospital in the land when we are sick? Didn't our Lord suffer for us? What if we cannot go to the drive-in theater, read the daily newspaper, or see our favorite tele-



vision program? What if we cannot send our children to the best schools? They learn many other things in the mission field that are far more valuable. What if we don't have the best neighbors to visit us when we are sick? The wild flowers that a poor widow or an orphan might bring you are far more valuable in the sight of God. Living in another land is not all sacrifice. There are many blessings connected with it. Thousands of tourists spend millions of dollars every year to see other lands. The missionary lives among those sights daily and near the main tourist attractions of the entire world. In many lands you can find hospitals as good as the best in America, there are more doctors and nurses there than here, and their system of education for children is in some respects superior to our own. Public transportation is far superior to that in America. Communication by telephone is also superior. In Europe now you can dial a number in any major city without calling the long distance operator. You can find food, medical supplies, and clothing in abundant supplies. So the conception is false that life in a foreign land is all sacrifice. Many of us stand in great danger of going to hell because we are so in love with America and the American way of life that we are not willing to go anywhere else to preach the gospel of Christ. Why love America more than we love the Lord? There are good people in other lands just as well as in America.

### *The Middle East*

One of the great challenges of our generation is preaching the gospel in the Middle East. In the middle east the cold war is being fought and there the ideologies of the west will either stand or fall. The Communists are determined to win, and already they have succeeded in getting firm holds in Syria and Egypt. However, most of the people of that part of the world are looking to the West and hoping that we will

not forsake them. Recently Brother C. M. Rhodes of Tripoli, Lybia, our only preacher in the Arabian world, made a survey of the Arabian countries and he found wonderful opportunities in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, and even in Egypt. The denominations are carrying on successful works in all of those countries. The people who have formerly killed those who left the Mohammedan faith are now welcoming American missionaries. The Arabs are the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael and they are far more receptive to the gospel than Abraham's descendants through Isaac. Many Arabs already believe in Christ and many more will accept Him if they only have an opportunity to do so. Let us go to the Middle East, brethren, and there meet the challenge of Communism where battle lines are being drawn!

#### *Behind the Iron Curtain*

Fourteen of the 83 nations that our Lord told us to go to with the gospel of Christ lie behind the Iron Curtain. It would be easy enough for us to mark them off our list as hopeless. It is true that we would have to face dangers in going into those nations, but didn't the apostle Paul go into places where he was in danger of losing his life? Are we better than he?

Did you know that more than half of the world's population lies in those lands dominated by Communism? Are we willing to surrender those souls to the forces of infidelity? Who is making plans to go there? The Catholics are training more than a thousand missionaries to go behind the Iron Curtain. Some have already gone. We can also go if they can, if we want to do so badly enough.

Not too long ago some missionaries from Wheaton College dedicated themselves to the task of going to one of the

least civilized tribes in Africa where the story of Christ had never been told. After dropping presents by plane for several weeks a group decided to land. After several days they were all brutally killed. The message of this killing reached America and the story was printed in the leading newspapers of our land and even in *Readers Digest* under the title "Through Gates of Glory." Now more than a thousand missionaries throughout the world have volunteered to go back into that dangerous place to try to tell those people about the Lord. Why can't we who are members of the church of Christ do things like that? Why can't we preachers take the leadership in taking such risks behind the iron curtain? Why do we allow the denominations to show more zeal for the Lord in this respect than do we? Are we cowards, or do we just not love the Lord? Why don't you, brother, dedicate your life to taking the church of the Lord to one of the 14 nations behind the iron curtain within the next few years? Here is a challenge that is not being met. Finland which is just outside of the Iron Curtain is ripe, as I see it, in a way that is similar to the Scandinavian countries. I believe we shall be seeing some of the greatest development in any mission field in the Scandinavian countries where our brethren are now working in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Who will volunteer to be the first preacher in Finland?

#### *Africa and South America*

A few years ago an African native in Nigeria wrote to one of the ladies we had converted in Germany. She sent him a correspondence course that had been published by the Lawrence Avenue church in Nashville. He wrote the Lawrence Avenue church and asked them to send a preacher to Nigeria. They did so and now there are over 300 churches of the Lord in Nigeria, native preachers are being trained, and

some of the congregations have built their own houses of worship. There are many other natives of Africa who would be just as willing to accept Christ as these if we were to go. Congregations have already been established in 11 African nations, but there are 20 other nations in Africa where there are no churches.

Most of us look upon Africa as a land that is impossible for the white man, but many of the nations that have no churches have climates that are as pleasant as the Untied States. Why don't we go, brethren, to such pioneering lands and establish the church there while the countries are new and let the church grow with the nation? Africa is the last frontier of the world, and what is done now will determine the future of that country. It is one of the richest continents of the world in natural resources. If the church is established there, that country will do much to support the spread of the gospel. And the wonderful part about preaching in the larger cities of Africa is that you do not have to learn a new language. You can preach to the Europeans who speak English.

Now let us look to South America. There are 11 nations in South America with a total population of approximately 100,000,000. But there is only one gospel preacher in that entire continent. South America is one of the most progressive continents of the world outside of North America, yet for some reason we have come to the conclusion that it is a backward nation. And we have also concluded that the people there are not receptive to the gospel of Christ. But the Baptists have 800 missionaries in Brazil alone, and they are meeting with brilliant success. Did you ever think about it, but it is a truth that wherever the Baptists succeed the church of Christ is successful. Aren't there ten gospel preachers who will dedicate themselves to preaching the gos-



pel in the ten nations in South America where the church has not yet been established?

### *Servicemen Congregations*

There are at least 65 congregations in the world that have been established by servicemen. They are the pioneers who have spread the church in many parts of the world where gospel preachers have not dared to go. Many of them are working alone in new and difficult places with no help or encouragement from churches here in America.

Here is an opportunity that we are failing to meet. Many preachers cannot with a clear conscience serve as chaplains in the Armed Forces. But if we had gospel preachers where these servicemen are meeting we could reach the young men in the Armed Forces who need to be guided correctly. The Catholics are giving most of the guidance, and we are neglecting this great and challenging field. We should send gospel preachers to every place in the world where there is a military base. Sooner or later our sons will go to those bases and we should provide for churches of the Lord and gospel preachers ahead of time. Here you do not need to learn a new language.

Many of the servicemen have succeeded in establishing churches among the native peoples in the lands where they are stationed. We should send gospel preachers where all the servicemen congregations are now, and this will be a means through which we can get the church started in the lands where they are stationed. We are now sleeping to this great challenge, and it is one of the greatest challenges that has not yet been met. I know of two such congregations where the servicemen have an apartment for a preacher with all utilities paid and have a hall in which to meet, but they cannot get a gospel preacher to come. What is wrong with us, brethren, when we allow such opportunities to pass!

*How Can We Answer the Challenges?*

I know that with all these great challenges before our eyes we are likely to get discouraged and say that the task is too great. But they are not too great. About ten years ago when the war was over we had only about thirty missionaries on mission fields. Now there are more than one hundred. We thought then that the task was too great to get support for so many men. But we all began to preach on mission work, and now the need has been supplied.

I mentioned when I started that there are only 83 nations where the church has not been established. I mentioned that we might be able to get churches established in those nations within the next thirty years. But why must we wait so long? Why don't we go now? I am as definitely sure as I stand here that there are 83 churches in our brotherhood who are ready and willing to support that many qualified men if we can find the preachers who will go. I know that we preachers are inclined to hide behind the excuse that no one will send us. But this is not true. The churches of the Lord will send us anywhere in the world we are willing and ready to go. I have been traveling and speaking on mission work among the churches as long as anyone and I know that what I have just said is true. I know now of churches who would like to send preachers to the mission fields but they cannot find qualified men who will go. The fault that the 83 nations have not been evangelized lies at the feet of us preachers. If we will dedicate our lives to a specific nation and get ready to go, the church will send us. Why don't we go, brother preachers?

Or have you been thinking about quitting preaching to start selling insurance so you can have a better income and won't have to move so much or put up with some of the things that a preacher has to put up with? Have you been

thinking about lying on ivory beds of ease here in this wonderful land in America and let the rest of the world that needs the gospel of Christ be lost? Yes, it's wonderful to settle down in a nice home here in America. No one knows that any better than those of us who have spent some of the best years of our lives on the mission field. But, brethren, how can we face God in the judgment if we do so?

Only 83 preachers will not be missed in America. The 83 churches who support them to go to the nations where the church has not been established will not suffer as a result of the support they give. They will be blessed.

Brother preacher, if you are tired of being mistreated by some congregation, leave America and go build the kind of church that will treat you right in another land. Are you tired of moving? Then go to another land where you can spend your life in a new field getting the church established. Can other preachers outpreach you and get the better pulpits of the land? Then go where there is no competition. Go to the land where you are the only preacher. Are you tired of preaching only to members of the church who have heard the gospel all their lives and are often bored with your sermons? Then go to those who have never heard!

Yes, brethren, let us arise to the challenges that have not been met within our generation, and go into every nation of the earth with the pure and unadulterated gospel of Christ!!

## RESTORING GOD TO EDUCATION

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By M. Norvel Young\*

In these critical days when Americans are comparing their educational system with that of Communist Russia, it is extremely pertinent to talk about restoring God to our educational processes. Now that we have entered the age of man-made satellites, we should be more aware of the importance of the right kind of education.

There is little doubt that the trend in American education has been away from emphasis upon the study of the Bible or religion. We believe that God has blessed this nation because of the direct and indirect influences of the Bible upon its people. Education in America was born under the leadership of men and women who believed the Bible and sought to follow its precepts. The first colleges, and a majority of the later ones until the twentieth century, had their beginning in the zeal of parents to train young people for a life of service to God. There are in existence in the United States today nineteen colleges and universities which were founded before 1789. They include such schools as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Washington and Lee. Only five of the nineteen are now related actively to any religious group, three are supported by state taxes, and eleven are independent. During the first half century after the adoption of the Constitution of the United States about forty permanent colleges were begun and of these three-fourths were established by preachers or by people of definite religious convictions who wanted to educate youth to the glory of God.

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As late as the year 1900 there were five times as many church-related colleges as tax-supported colleges with twice as many students. Today this ratio has changed until, in the state of California, 80% of all college students are in tax-supported institutions and only 20% are in private colleges or institutions related to some religious group. The majority of this 20% are in Catholic institutions. The trend is obvious. With the exception of the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and perhaps one or two other groups, the trend in higher education in America is the same as the trend has been for many years in the grades and secondary schools toward education by the state.

We all know why the state cannot teach the Bible or religion. We realize that there are so many different denominations and such wide diversities of faith that it has been impossible to get an agreement on what a public institution could or should teach. In the state of California it has been ruled unconstitutional for the Bible to be read in the public schools. Some boards of education have not agreed with this interpretation by the attorney general of the state but it still stands and is adhered to by most of the school systems. This is true in a number of other states. Think of it! A nation that has been so blessed by God, spending billions of dollars for educational systems and turning over its young people to that system in which it is illegal to read the Bible. Have we not mistaken freedom of religion to mean freedom from religion?

At the very time we are turning more and more of our young people over to the state for their training in a deadly competitive struggle with tyrannical communism, we are also preparing to send a greater proportion of our young people to college than ever before. Beginning this fall, a tidal wave of students will apply for admission to the colleges and uni-

versities of the land. Within ten years there will be twice as many young people in college if conditions are similar to those that exist today. Not only are there more young people graduating from high school, but a higher percentage of those young people want to go on to college. Never before in history has higher education influenced so many people as it now does in America. In 1910 only one out of 25 Americans ever got to college. Today, one out of six attend college and it is predicted that within another ten years, one out of two or three may go to college. This fact underscores the importance of Christian education.

We have been talking about the need of restoring God in the education process of our nation, but let us get down to brass tasks and talk about the importance of Christian education for the boys and girls who are growing up in our own homes and who are occupying the chairs in our Bible school classrooms on Sunday morning and the pews in the assembly of the church. There is no extensive study available as to what is happening to these boys and girls as they go on to college under secular auspices. There have been some estimates made by elders who have watched these young people for a quarter of a century. While working with the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, for thirteen years, we observed a stream of young people coming to town every fall and entering one of the better public educational institutions. Quite a number of them were well enough trained that they identified themselves with the church a week or two after they arrived in town. We were always glad to welcome them into our fellowship and the elders at Broadway went to unusual lengths to provide for their spiritual growth as a congregation. A Bible chair was erected on a permanent location adjacent to the college campus at the cost of more than \$100,000 and a full time teacher was provided

who was allowed to teach those students who chose to take Bible as an elective. They were given credit by the state college. Daily devotions were conducted in addition to the welcome at the thirteen congregations in the city in their regular services, and yet it is the considerate opinion of some of the elders and ministers in that city that by the end of four years, only one college student out of two was still faithful to the church. If this is happening where an active program is being carried on to help these young people, what can we expect in the scores of instances where the church has no Bible chair and is not giving much attention to the young people in the public institutions of higher education?

What happens to these young people? Why do they lose their zeal? Why do they drop out of attendance at prayer meeting, Bible study, Sunday evening, and then around the Lord's table on Sunday morning? From interviewing hundreds of them and talking with others who have sought to find the answer, I am convinced that they suffer two fundamental blows . . . one to the flesh and one to the mind. First, they are tempted by the worldly atmosphere to conform to its standards. They often join fraternities or sororities where drinking and dancing and gambling is the norm and, although they may resist for a time, they sooner or later begin to act like those with whom they are intimately associated. Society resents any assertion of difference and our young people today, not only on the college level but on the high school and junior high school level, are submitted to a terrific pressure to adjust or to conform to the worldly life around them. It is not simply a matter of doing or not doing one particular thing, but it is a matter of conforming to a worldly attitude, a spirit of seeking pleasure rather than seeking Christ.

The next blow is one aimed at the mind. About the time



that the young person is struggling with his conscience as he participates in activities which he has been taught at home, in the Bible class, and from the pulpit are wrong, he comes in contact with a learned professor who challenges his basic concepts of life. He hears, for example, that God did not create the world, that it just happened. He studies at the feet of the man who is a specialist in a particular field and whom he is taught to respect, both by his parents who send him to the institution and by society which supports the institution. This teacher tells him that man is not really any different from the animal, that he is not a living soul, that he has no responsibility to God. In another class he may hear that there is no God at all. Strangely enough this intellectual doubt, coming on top of his conscientious struggle with moral problems, compounds the difficulty of his predicament. The very fact that he is already violating some of the principles that he has accepted makes it easier for him to find refuge in doubting the source of those principles. In other words, he can get rid of his bad conscience by just changing his values and so he frequently does. I know some of you have been through this process and you have come through with your faith strengthened and your will to live a faithful Christian life. You may be inclined to think that everyone should be as strong as you, but for everyone who comes through this ordeal, I firmly believe that there is at least one who fails. Fifty per cent is too high a mortality rate for the product of our Christian homes and our Bible classes. We cannot afford to be content with this kind of ratio. No general would want to send his soldiers into battle if he knew that fifty per cent of them would lie dead on the battle field at the end of the day. Christian parents are aware of the dangers of automobile accidents, but how many of them are aware of the danger to their children's spiritual welfare in our secular institutions of higher learning today?



Elders are concerned with the flock over which they have been given oversight by the chief shepherd. How many of them are aware of the number of young people who leave the pew to go to college and never return to worship Jesus Christ as king of kings and lord of lords? Preachers have the experience of counseling with many of these young people who have lost their faith and their zeal and with the parents of those who have gone into the far country of forgetfulness of God and yet I wonder how many of them are really aware of how general and widespread is the loss of our young people today. It should be obvious to all that there is something wrong with our educative process when we have a higher percentage of crime and delinquency in an era of more formal education, more millions spent in training, more formally trained teachers than ever before. *I believe the fundamental reason for this failure is the fact that we have left God out of the center of education.*

Arnold Toynbee, a distinguished English historian, points out that we have substituted the worship of nation or flag or science or even education itself for the worship of God. Secularism is the dominant philosophy in education today and secularism is the organization of life as if God did not exist. Education that ignores God cannot be the kind of education that fits young people for successful living in this world or the world to come. If we really believe there is a God, if we really believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, if we really believe that the Bible is the word of God, then we must set ourselves to the task of restoring God in the education of our boys and girls.

After all, we cannot expect people who do not share our faith in Christ or in the Bible to teach that faith to our young people. We cannot expect a government that must serve the interest of believers and unbelievers with impartiality to be

able to put God at the center of its educative processes. This means that the Christian home must undertake more responsibility in training boys and girls. It means that the church must assume a heavier weight and rely less upon the public and state. Christians need to rethink their responsibilities to their children in the light of the eternal values which they have accepted by faith in Christ. We have taken too much for granted and assumed that with the few minutes of instruction each week by the church from pulpit and classroom and very little instruction at the home, we can give Christian training to our youth.

Our children are our most valuable possession. "What shall we be profited if we gain the whole world and lose our children?" to paraphrase Jesus' statement about our souls. Too many of us have been lulled into thinking that there is *nothing* that can be done about the tremendous number of young people who are lost to the church each year. I am convinced that this is just another maneuver of our enemy, Satan. He wants us to think that there is nothing that can be done, and he wants us to do nothing. Of course, there is nothing that will reverse the trend which does not require great effort and expense and sacrifice, but have you ever known of a job worth doing that did not require sacrifice and effort? Somehow things seem to drift downhill by themselves, but anything worthwhile needs pushing. Good things have to be pushed up hill. Let us notice what can be done to restore God to the education of our children and as much as is possible to the education of our neighbor's children.

First, we as parents can do a better job of instilling the principles of New Testament Christianity into the hearts and lives of our children. We can take more time in our homes for Bible study. More and more Christian homes are taking time for the family to get together at least once a day for a

fifteen minute period of daily worship. It is a pity that too many people think that worship is something that is limited to a church building as a sacred place. No wonder there is a tendency among us to make a meeting house a sanctuary where only worship can be engaged in. When we become Christians, we live and work in the church every day. We should do all we do to the glory of God. Of course, at times we assemble with other Christians in a local congregation for the purpose of worshipping. Sometimes we assemble for the purpose of working together. Sometimes for the purpose of visiting and talking and learning to love one another more. We are also Christians in our home. We need to impress upon our children the fact that God is just as near us in our home as He is in the church building. One good way to do this is to inaugurate the practice of family worship. It has been a thrill to me in the last four years to work with my wife in editing the daily guide for family worship, **POWER FOR TODAY**.

It is not only true that the family that prays together stays together, but it is also true that such a family is helping restore God to the education of their children. The child who never hears his name mentioned in prayer by his father or mother is *underprivileged* to that extent. Let us restore God and the Bible to the center of our training program in the home. Appropriate verses should be memorized; hymns should be learned so that they will be part of the atmosphere of the home in contrast with some of the sensual and vulgar music that often sets the tone even in Christian homes. The Christian should train children not only by precept but by example and by clean and holy living; by courtesy and hospitality to strangers as well as to brethren. The Christian home should give children an interest in the wide frontiers of the Kingdom as good religious periodicals come into the



home because the parents want their children to read this kind of literature in contrast to so much pornographic literature or papers and magazines which are designed to stimulate the worldly and the sensual rather than the spiritual in our children's lives. Fathers must take a lead in this nurture and admonition of children (Ephesians 6). Making a living is important but making a life is of *more* importance. Children need the opportunity of working with their parents, talking with them, playing with them, sharing their troubles and their joys. *This is real Christian education.* It is said that the child learns more before he is six years of age than he ever learns after that age. The home has so much to do with the future of the child's life. It is the first place where we can begin to restore God to the education of our children.

The second place we can do a better job of training our boys and girls is in the systematic activities of the local church. More attention needs to be given to better teaching with better materials by better teachers from the greatest character-producing book, the Holy Bible. Most churches spend less than 10% of their budget and time on their Bible classes on Sunday morning or Sunday night or at the mid-week service, and yet between 75 and 85 percent of those who obey the Gospel come through the Bible classes. Too long we have neglected the field of systematic Bible instruction, not only on Sunday morning but in vacation Bible school, Bible camps and in released time during the week. In a number of states children can be released for one hour a week if the church provides an adequate program of instruction in religion. Yet, I know in many instances that this hour is not being used simply because the elders and members do not see the importance of going to the trouble of preparing to use it.

The church can do a better job in training young people



in pulpit preaching. More attention needs to be given to the proper indoctrination of young people. We take too much for granted. They do not know the basic facts of the Gospel simply because they are born into Christian homes. It only takes one generation for the church in any community to die out. The Gospel must be preached to each generation. It must be preached with love, with vigor, with boldness, and without compromise. Training involves more than just telling.

Also, we need to put our young people to work serving the Lord in various ways, distributing literature, inviting their friends to worship, helping with the Bible classes or vacation Bible schools, singing for shut-ins or singing in wedding or funeral choruses, taking part in the worship, helping to clean the building, mow the lawn, et al. Of course, all of this takes time and it is much easier to pay somebody to do it, but the exercise is worth more to the young people than we can imagine.

Another effective way to restore God to the education of our young people is through Christian schools and colleges. To many people Christian education means this type of Christian training alone but the term should include the work that the home and church are doing, as well as the work that a private Christian school can do. I thank God that we live in a land where our Constitution gives us the right to train our children in harmony with the faith that we find revealed in the Holy Bible. This is not true in countries that are dominated by Communism nor in some countries that are dominated by Catholicism. We should thank God for the liberty that we have in this great Nation and we should take advantage of it.

At this point it might be appropriate to define what we mean by a Christian school and Christian education. A

Christian school, whether it be a grade school, high school, college, or graduate school, is a school in which the core of the curriculum is the Bible as the revelation of God in word, and Jesus Christ the Son of God as the revelation of God in life. Here is a definition by Vance Carruth of Bellflower, California, that appeals to me:

“Christian education at the very least should be the process of training and developing knowledge, skill of mind, and the life and character of the student whether in matters sacred or secular in an environment and in a manner that is truly Christ-centered and in harmony with His will. A Christian college is an institution of higher learning where this kind of Christian education takes place.”

This kind of Christian education should not be inferior in any way to the education that takes place in public institutions but rather it should be superior because it deals with the true values and goals of life. It is in contrast to the secular education as described by the British educator, M. V. C. Jeffrys in his book, *CHRISTIAN OR PAGAN*:

“The texture of our education is in the main secular. Its aims and presuppositions are secular. It can say nothing of the purpose of human life except that it is what one thinks it is. Consequently the orthodox descriptions of the alleged themes of education in terms of citizenship, social adjustment, individuality, self-development and the like are really descriptions of means and not properly speaking of the ends at all.”

As Kenneth Brown expresses it in the book *Toward a Christian Philosophy of Higher Education*, “Secularism can have no goals except as they grow out of popular thought and change with the changes of popular thought. For secularism is essentially the mirror of changing contemporary

life." For Christian parents to be satisfied with this kind of education is a discouraging commentary on the quality of our Christianity in the home. Again, let me quote Mr. Jeffrys in commenting on the difference between the Christian and Secular education:

"The illumination of the educational process by the Christian sense of divine purpose means rather that education is understood and experienced at its full depth. The most melancholy feature of our contemporary education, especially our higher education, is its shallowness. It contains a surface layer of knowledge and skill in their relation to occupational need and social amenity, and it leaves unplumbed the depth of the meaning and purpose of human life. It is cast in the dimensions of preparation for the citizen's journey through some fifty years of wage earning or a professional career, not in the dimensions of the journey of the immortal soul through eternity."

Dr. D. Elton Trueblood in the book, *Toward a Higher Philosophy of Education*, had this to say about the value of the Christian college in our society:

"Our civilization needs centers of creative renewal. These must spring up in the common life of the people who voluntarily establish contrived means of lifting the level of civilization. This is why we emphasize the Christian college. In order to have the power to make the necessary changes in our civilization we must have a drive as great as a religious commitment. It cannot come in any lesser way. We all know that this is the way most of our colleges began and it is not likely that we can continue our civilization if it is disassociated from these powerful roots. This is true in regard to our whole conception of civil liberty. Some citizens do not know that our civil liberties have come chiefly from the Biblical view of man, but it is encouraging that the President of this



great nation understands this very well and has said so repeatedly."

These quotations should give us some of the thinking of educators who see the fruition of education that ignores God. Education is but a tool which is either good or bad depending on the purposes of the men who use it. It can be used to propagandize and subvert, to "brain wash," or to develop men into the likeness of Christ. Christian education is that education that is used to help people obtain the goals and life set by Christ. We are in this world to glorify God. We are not here by accident. In a Christian college it is the purpose of the faculty to teach every subject in such a way as to relate the facts in that area to the eternal purpose of God in Christ. If God really is God, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then how can we have complete education if we rule out the most important *persons* in the universe?

To be more specific the Christian school has these four distinct advantages for our children:

1. The Bible is taught as the Word of God to every student by men who believe it. If we really believe that the Bible is of divine origin and that God's Holy Spirit works through this instrument to the changing of our lives, then we cannot teach the Bible to young people in the formative years of their lives without expecting good results. Of course, some seed will fall on shallow ground, some on rocky ground, but some will fall on the good soil that will bring forth thirty, sixty, and one hundred fold. This teaching alone is sufficient cause for the support of Christian schools but it is not the only advantage.

2. The teaching of every subject, whether it be chemistry, biology, history, education, art or music within the frame of reference of the Christian point of view. This does not



mean that there is not the sincere search for truth in science or beauty in art, but it does mean that these things are not taught as an *end* in themselves. The world is seen through the eye of faith as the evidence of God's creative power. Everything beautiful in music, or art, or literature causes the Christian teacher to point to God as the author of all that is good and true and beautiful.

3. The advantage of daily chapel in which the student experiences daily worship with his family expanded to include the entire college or school community. Faculty and students bow their heads and bend their knees in humility before the God who made them and sing praises to Him in Jesus' name. This experience is invaluable in the cultivation of the soul. After all, *the soul of education is the education of the soul.*

4. The advantage of Christian association and guidance. "Evil companions corrupt good morals" the Bible teaches. Good companions are conducive to good morals. Of course, they do not guarantee good results, but given a boy or girl who wants to do right and given the kind of environment which should characterize a Christian school, you have a wonderful opportunity for the development of real character. I know there are some critics of Christian colleges who think there is danger that we will be overly protective of students and that they will not learn what the real world is like. In these days of television, radio, automobiles, etc., I do not think there is much danger of young people failing to come to grips with the trials and temptations of this world. The danger lies in their being *overcome* by the pressures of our secular, materialistic and sensual age before they are old enough to successfully overcome their enemy. In days gone by there may have been some instances in which some schools were too isolated and created a hot-house type

of environment, but I doubt if there is very much validity to such criticism today. On the contrary, I think that school administrators and their faculty and boards must be alert to see that the environment of the world does not creep into the Christian college and destroy this very important function. Christian students should be able to learn to lead and to take active part in social and athletic as well as cultural events without having to compromise their convictions. There should be a strong enough Christian influence on the campus to set the tone or the climate, and so that those students who are not in harmony with the ideals of the school or are not acquainted with them will be influenced dynamically and positively by the climate.

5. Another advantage of a Christian school is that of bringing young people together during the years that they are normally looking for a mate. The experience of colleges like Abilene Christian College shows that of the marriages that come about as a result of association with other Christian students on campus, the divorce rate is less than one-half of one percent. Compare this with the rate of some thirty percent in our nation as a whole. This is a by-product of a Christian college but it is an important one for parents to consider, especially when they are weighing the cost of a Christian school.

We might as well face this matter of cost now. Christian schools are not cheap. We must support the public institutions with our taxes, whether we patronize them or not. Is it worthwhile to support private Christian schools and colleges and then to pay the tuition for our students and to provide scholarship and student aid to other students? I firmly believe that the answer is *yes*. A hundred times over. When we are dealing with the immortal souls of our children we are dealing with something that cannot be calculated in dol-

lars and cents. Certainly no one of you would think of choosing a church or a religion to live by on the basis of the cheapest one. You would not want to move to a country where the church was supported by taxation so you would not have to give to support the work of the church each Sunday. In the same way I believe you should not think of refusing your children the advantages of a Christian education if you are able to pay for it or if they are able to work and make it possible.

Dean J. P. Sanders at Pepperdine was telling me about an experience which President Athens Clay Pullias had with a father who was considering sending his daughter to Lipscomb College. The father said that he thought it would cost several hundred dollars more per year to send his daughter to a Christian college, therefore he preferred to send her to a cheaper tax-supported institution nearby. President Pullias responded by saying, "I do not doubt that you can save this money. You should put it in the bank to give to your daughter when she graduates after four years, but when you give her this money I want you to explain to her that you have saved it at the expense of her studying the Bible each year under a capable and devout Christian. I want you to explain to her that she has not had the opportunity to study science, history, English literature, or any of the other subjects under Christian teachers. I want you to explain that she has not had the opportunity of worshiping in chapel with other young Christians each day during this four year period, and that she has missed the opportunity of making friends that will stay with her for life, and perhaps finding a good Christian boy who will be her life-long companion. Be sure you explain this when you give her the check." This Christian father decided that it was worth the money it cost to send his daughter to a Christian college.



If we light the candle of Christian education we must pay for the tallow and the string. Not only must we be willing to pay the extra tuition but we must realize that when we do that we only pay slightly more than half of what it really costs. Someone else has to make possible the buildings and the endowment and the extra operating expense. Christian schools are not cheap, but they are worth what they cost. That is why men like Tolbert Fanning gave their lives to Christian education. That is why men like David Lipscomb left their fortune to Christian education. That is why men like James A. Harding, T. B. Larrimore, A. B. Barrett, L. P. Bennett, Batsell Baxter, J. N. Armstrong, George Pepperdine, and A. M. Burton gave their time, their talent, and their money to invest in the Christian training of boys and girls.

When we look around us we see religious people like Seventh Day Adventists, the Southern Baptists, and the Lutherans spending a hundred dollars for every one dollar that those of us who are pleading for New Testament Christianity are spending in Christian schools. The Southern Baptists now have more young people in their schools planning to preach than all the other Protestant religious groups put together. Can you see what this means in terms of 25 to 50 years or a hundred years? Do we really believe in God? Do we really believe in Christ? Do we really believe that our children are immortal? Do we really believe that the Bible is alive and that it will change the hearts of those who reverently study it and obey it? If we do, then I believe we will give more than we have ever given to support Christian education. Every dollar we give to such a cause is an investment in Christian youth.

In talking about costs, we have been largely appealing to students and parents to pay the extra costs of tuition and fees



in a private Christian college. But, I would like to say a word to each Christian about helping to supply the needs of these institutions whether you have any children to send or not. Even though Christian schools must charge tuition, it is impossible for them to exist without additional gifts. A study has been made of one of our oldest Christian colleges, Lipscomb, and it was found that if the College had every dollar in tuition and fees that had been paid to this school since its beginning in 1891, the College would not be able to pay for the campus buildings and equipment.

A Christian school is a service institution. It is not designed to make a profit, but it is designed to render an invaluable service to young people and through them to the Christian home and through the Christian home to the church as well as to the community and the nation. To say that a school is not *tax* supported is simply another way of saying that it is *gift* supported. In the past fifty years the fruits of Christian schools is such as to convince Christians that they are worthy of support. Nearly every congregation has benefited from the training that has been given some of its members by Christian schools. Many of these schools lived only a short time and died, but they were not failures because the imprint that they made on the young people who were under their instruction lives on.

What are the sources of revenue for Christian schools apart from tuition and fees? The obvious answer is that the schools that are dedicated to the principle of teaching the Bible as the word of God must look to Christians who believe the Bible for their support. They can get some support from the business man in the community which they serve, and rightly so for such a school is an economic asset to any community. Corporations realize that they have a stake in keeping alive our private non-tax supported institutions.

There is a dangerous trend today toward putting all of our education under government control. It is still true, however, that *unless Christians are willing to pick up the bill, the kind of schools that they want cannot be long maintained.* Has any religious group ever grown and prospered who turned the training of its leaders over to the state or to teachers who were not in harmony with its ideals and principles? It is imperative that more Christians awake to the tremendous need of training more elders, more preachers, more Bible teachers, more homemakers who will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Every Christian school among us today needs support and this is not a bad thing. It is one of the surest ways of keeping schools in harmony with the will of the Lord. If we fail to support them when they are doing a good job and are remaining true to their high and holy aims is to court disaster. It will result in one of the following consequences:

1. It may result in their turning to outside sources of revenue and thus eventually being lost to the Cause of New Testament Christianity.
2. It may result in their lowering their standards and doing inferior work and thus attracting fewer and fewer capable students and gradually dying out.

Have you considered your stake in the health and development of the Christian schools among us? This relates not only to your children but also to your neighbor's children and to the entire restoration movement. May God grant that we will not be so busy working to make a success in this life that we will forget the *one* thing that is most important, and that is to please God. Let us prayerfully consider as a people our responsibilities to our young people. Let us plan as trustees of the property that we have been given by God

to give a liberal portion to the support of Christian education. When we prepare our wills, and every Christian should have a will, let us be sure to make it a *Christian* will and to remember that the work of Christ needs to go on even after we have gone on to the life beyond the grave.

God has given us the time, the talent, and the money to provide for our children a thorough Christian education. When we begin to value their training as much as we value our automobiles, our pleasure trips, our luxuries in the creature-comforts of our prosperous age, we will adequately provide for their training. Let us pray that we may soon open our eyes to these real spiritual values and act accordingly!





## **Section II**

### **Special Speeches**



## THE CHURCH IN SCANDINAVIA

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Heber Taylor

Leif Ericson, Norwegian explorer, discovered America in Viking days, at the end of the 10th century. American Christians have not been as quick to discover Norway, or any part of Scandinavia.

Our discovery, for all practical purposes, took place in the spring of 1957 when preachers and their families began arriving in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. One of the questions that these brethren have had to answer is, Why didn't you come sooner?

Let us ask ourselves that question now: Why didn't we go sooner?

*An introduction to Scandinavia.* Norway, Denmark, and Sweden lie high atop Europe. In fact it is said that some Norwegians live closer to the North Pole than any other civilized people. Norway and Sweden are lands of the mid-night sun. Their northern parts have about six weeks in the summer when the sun doesn't go down. They have a lengthy period in the winter when the sun doesn't come up.

About the dark winters in north Norway, a friend who had lived there told us: "Almost everyone in town would climb a mountain to see the sun go down for the last time in the winter. Weeks later, we would climb the same mountain and see it come up for the first time in the new year."

Because of the northern location and much untillable soil, the Scandinavian countries are not heavily populated. Sweden has 7 million, Denmark 5, and Norway 3½.

These are, in my opinion, some of the world's finest people. They are industrious, clean, honest, and hospitable to a surprising degree. They tend to live more slowly and graciously than we do—there is little frantic rushing around over there. Most Scandinavians work hard for a living, but they reserve time for home, family, and recreation.

Each of the Scandinavian countries is picturesque. Denmark has green, rolling farm land that furnishes milk and bacon for neighbor countries. Norway has rugged mountain beauty but little tillable land, and Norwegians are thought of as fishermen and sailors. Sweden has some of the mountain scenery of Norway and some of the good farm land of Denmark, and the Swedes go in for farming, forestry, and mining, and have more manufacturing than the Norwegians and Danes.

*The church in Denmark.* The first preachers into Denmark last spring were Fred Davis and Hollis Prine. They were followed a month later by Cline Paden, Earl Danley, Clinton Davis, and Marcella Johnson, who went as a Bible teacher. Dan Clark and family went over in the summer.

This group stayed together in Copenhagen for a while. They rented a meeting place in the center of the city and soon reported crowds of 40 and 50 at their services. One young man was baptized before summer.

In the summer, the Fred Davises and Hollis Prines moved to Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark, to begin a congregation there. The Lord has blessed the church in both cities. In October, seven were baptized in Copenhagen and three in Aarhus.

Now the Danish work is ready to spread to a third city—Odense, the home of Hans Christian Anderson. Brother



Clark and Dow Evans, who was to go over early in 1958, have been planning to work there.

A letter from Brother Paden in November told of the boost to the efforts in Copenhagen given by Carl Spain's visit. Attendance at the meeting Brother Spain held in September went into the 60's. Interest was great, and Brother Paden says that four of the October baptisms had a direct connection with the meeting.

His letter contained a plea for American preachers to give some time to evangelistic work in Scandinavia. "Carl Spain's meeting pointed up the importance that American preachers *could* be to this work. He was well received, and the contacts we have been able to maintain . . . reveal that they will always remember him for the time he was here."

What are the main problems in Denmark? Learning the Danish language has not been easy, but more of a hindrance are lack of interest in religion and a lax attitude toward divorce and remarriage. Also, protestantism has confused many and people there resent another group coming and adding to the confusion. At least, they are resentful at first, but when they are taught they change the question, Why did you come? to, Why didn't you come sooner?

With more financial support from home for advertising, correspondence courses, tracts, and hall rent, the work will move faster. With more prayers and just a little more going and sending, Denmark will prove to be as fruitful a field as any in Europe.

*The church in Sweden.* Preachers who went to Sweden last spring were Dan Billingsly, Mitchell Greer, and Payne Hattox. They settled in Stockholm, rented a meeting place in a centrally-located community building, and went to work.

I visited the church in Stockholm in July, about two

months after the first service was held, and found the brethren making good progress. They were having about 20 persons present on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and about 30 on Sunday evening. The Sunday evening service that I attended brought a number of visitors, several of whom participated with great interest in a question period at the end of the service.

By October 4, the church in Stockholm had four additions. Unfortunately, the first convert, a sailor, has fallen away. When he left Stockholm on a ship last fall, the church felt that he was lost, because he had not been very faithful before leaving. The others are proving faithful, interested, and helpful in winning others. They are the type we believe Scandinavia will become known for—persons who are genuinely converted.

The Swedes are not a church-going people. Less than five percent attend services regularly, although 95 percent hold membership in the Lutheran church, the state church in each Scandinavian country. However, polls show that the Swedes prefer religious radio programs to any other types, and the Stockholm preachers find many who are ready to study the Bible at home; but the average Swede is reluctant to attend services, and that reluctance is a problem.

Another problem is finding a really good meeting place. The present place, though well located and inexpensive, is not ideal. The church does not know how long it can use the building; one evening it was unavailable, and at times the members have had to move from one room to another. The church cannot erect a permanent sign, and the present sign is in competition with those of two sects using the same building.

The Swedish language is a problem, but the two Swedish

men who have interpreted at the services are good prospects for conversion. The American preachers were planning to do some of their public speaking in Swedish by January. Much personal work in Stockholm, and the other large cities in Scandinavia, can be done in English.

Lack of funds for advertising and printing is a serious problem in Stockholm. At present, the church can afford to place only one advertisement a week. This ad is placed in *Dagens Nyheter*, a Stockholm daily with a circulation of 220,000. Several new contacts result from it each week, and letters of inquiry had come in from about 20 Swedish cities by November. I know from a study of Scandinavian papers that religious advertisements are read very closely in Scandinavia. I believe that we on this side of the ocean should make it possible for the brethren in Stockholm and the rest of Scandinavia to advertise more than they are able to do now. Our money would be wisely spent.

The church in Stockholm is distributing tracts in large numbers. The brethren have written some of these themselves with the needs of the Swedish people in mind. They have had others translated.

There are many Swedish cities where congregations should be started now, including Gothenburg, the great port on the west coast, and a number of cities on the Stockholm-Oslo highway. The preachers in Stockholm would like to hold meetings in some of these cities next summer. Men are needed to move in after these meetings. Who will go or send?

*The church in Norway.* The preachers who went into Norway last spring were Carrel Anderson, E. P. Lake, and Claud Parrish. My family and I went to help because we had lived in Oslo for a while and had many contacts there.

Oslo is a city of 450,000 and is, by far, the largest city in Norway. Like the other Scandinavian capitals, it dominates its country by virtue of being the national, political, cultural, and population center. It was, we felt, the best place to start a congregation.

Although housing in Oslo is extremely scarce, we were settled in a very short time. The only meeting place that we could find was available just for the summer. It was conveniently located close to the king's palace in downtown Oslo. It was inexpensive and had a seating capacity of almost 100. The largest number to attend a service there was 44. The present place, found after many days of searching, is rather expensive and inconvenient. Some Norwegians who have started out to attend a meeting of the church for the first time have wound up in a Jehovah's Witness meeting that takes place at the same time in the same building.

We found freedom of religion to exist in almost an absolute sense in Norway. Only Jesuit Catholics cannot teach freely. Others have only to register with the Minister of Justice as a dissenting (non-State) church and give a simple statement of their basic beliefs to obtain recognition.

There was considerable interest in the church from the first in Oslo. We contacted friends that we had made three years earlier and told them about the new congregation. Unfortunately, most of them were set in their religious ways, and their interest did not mean that they were good prospects for immediate membership in the Lord's church.

One of them, Mrs. Dagmar Gjerlow, attended the first service last spring and has missed very few services since then. She was baptized for the remission of sins a number of years ago after spending many years in the Lutheran church. When she decided that the Lutheran church was not the New



Testament church, she had her name removed from its roll and became what she considers just a Christian. She has been most kind and helpful to the members of the church in Oslo. She has helped with the language, and she has been very hospitable. She has led us to many fine contacts. Yet, she is not one of us: she feels that we do not fully represent the Lord's church. Perhaps the most serious difference is over healing. She believes that one of the ladies in her close and large circle of religious friends was healed miraculously, instantaneously during fasting and prayer shared with the others.

After a four-day meeting with the church in Oslo, Carl Spain came away thinking that if Mrs. Gjerlow is won the church will grow quickly. She has a number of friends who can be won through her.

Much interest has been stirred up in Oslo through advertising, which is cheaper there than in the other Scandinavian capitals. In response to the first ad, a small notice of the first service held in our hall, came a man we soon began to call "Brother Nilsen." Johannes Nilsen, an intelligent, well-educated businessman, had been baptized for the remission of sins while on a trip to America. Though not baptized by a member of the church, he held to the spirit and the teaching of the New Testament so closely that we soon realized that here was a man who walked in the Way. Unlike Mrs. Gjerlow, he had no doubts that we represented the true church.

Brother Nilsen has proved a blessing in many ways. He is interpreting until the preachers in Oslo are ready to shift to Norwegian in their sermons. He brings others to services, and he works actively to lead others to Christ.

If all Norwegian members are like Brother Nilsen, the

problem of getting Norwegians to be faithful in attending services will not materialize. He did not take a vacation last summer, saying, "I have found something that means more to me than a vacation. I do not want to be away from it."

Brother Spain's meeting meant much to the Oslo congregation. Attendance reached its peak, and real interest was shown by many who came to services for the first time. Clinton Davis came from Copenhagen to lead the singing—the church in Oslo does not have a trained song leader. So well did Brother Spain and Brother Davis do their jobs that the Norwegians are still talking about those services held in the middle of August.

An Oslo paper has been a great help to the church by carrying sympathetic news stories about the church and its work. It is *Morgenbladet*, a conservative daily, one of 10 daily papers in Oslo. One of the stories, based upon an interview with Brother Spain, was displayed prominently on the front page. The writer of these articles, the religious editor of *Morgenbladet*, has been translating some tracts for the church, and we are hoping that he will obey the gospel.

The Norwegians are a reading people, and we are excited about the possibilities of advertising, correspondence courses, and tracts in Norway. These are bringing responses from various places. A recent letter from the workers in Oslo said that we need help—financial help to spend on printed matter and, more important, Christians to come and work in the towns where the church should be established now.

Connie Adams and W. B. Kickliter went into Bergen in September and have established a congregation in that west coast city, the second largest in Norway. They held a meeting as soon as they got settled in the city and made a number of promising contacts then. Brother Kickliter was expecting

to return home soon because of financial difficulty. Both he and Brother Adams feel that the church will have good growth in Bergen.

Magnar Knutson arrived in Oslo in October. He is a Canadian of Norwegian descent. Besides knowing a great deal about the language and Norwegian customs, he is experienced in working in new places.

Cities that Christians should go into now in Norway include Moss and Drammen, south of Oslo, and Stavanger on the southwestern coast. Prospects are already known to be good in those cities. Who will go or send?

There were no baptisms in Norway up to the time that this report was prepared, but we believe that conversions will soon be forthcoming. We feel that Norway, like Denmark and Sweden, is one of the most promising fields in Europe. Other members of the church who have been in Europe in the last few years, like Brother Spain, Don H. Morris, and Norvel Young, have said the same thing.

*The summing up.* I would like to submit in brief summary these reasons for our being enthusiastic over Scandinavia as a mission field:

1. Freedom of religion exists there.
2. As a new field, the need is great there.
3. Because of great interest in America and Americans, doors are now open to American preachers in Scandinavia.
4. The Scandinavians have time to read religious literature and time to talk over religious matters with teachers of the Bible.
5. The State churches do not meet the religious needs of many Scandinavians, and the church should move to fill those

needs. Other groups, such as Pentecostals, are moving into Scandinavia to take advantage of this situation.

6. There is little, if any, prejudice against the church in Scandinavia.

7. The converts will be, we believe, very stable. In Copenhagen, where several have been converted, Cline Paden says, "When we get 50 like these, we (Americans) will be in the way."

8. Our missionaries live and work in a good environment: schools, medical care, morals and manners, on the whole, are quite good. It is not home, but it is the next best. Remember, too, that the Lord did not intend for us to stay at home, for He charged us to "Go into all the world . . ."

9. It is not necessary to know the language of a Scandinavian country before going there. There is plenty of work to be done in English, especially personal work, as the missionary learns the language.

10. We have neglected Scandinavia for a long time and for no reason—even the supposedly severe climate is mild enough. Now let's make up for our negligence. The field is white unto harvest. Let's reap it for the Lord.



## THE CHURCH IN GERMANY

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Don Finto

Just seven years ago I sat where you are now sitting listening to reports from the foreign fields. I had come from Memphis, Tennessee, where I had been working with the Union Avenue Church for less than a year. I was completely happy in the work I was doing there and anticipated serving in Memphis for many years. As I sat there hearing of far away places with no church of the New Testament, a number of questions began to force their way into my thinking. All of them were motivated by an analysis of myself: "What reason have you for expecting others to go when you are unwilling?" I began offering myself various reasons why I should not go. These are some of them: There was a real challenge awaiting me in Memphis in my work with the young people; my grandparents who had reared me were nearing 80; my three sisters and I always had been a closely knit family unit; I knew not one word of German; I knew no congregation that would support me, and I had had very little practical experience. As I prayed that the Lord might help me to be honest with myself, I became more and more aware that I was not exempt from the commandment to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." I admitted that there were many other people who would be willing to assume the responsibilities that I was carrying, and that I need not think that my services were indispensable. As for family, these ties were no closer than the devotion in many Christian families, and though I was not yet married, I had every reason to believe that my future companion would share my interest and plans for the Lord's work. I

assumed that I could learn to speak German with reasonable success. As for a congregation to support me, I half hoped that I would not be able to find one, but knew that God could provide me with the necessary funds if it were His will. I even began to recognize a number of things to my advantage. I was young. I had good health. I had been reared in a Christian home. I had been privileged to graduate from a Christian college where I had sat for four years under the guidance of devout Christian men. There were a number of unpleasant features evident. There would be no experienced elders, deacons, or older preachers with whom we could discuss church problems and current issues. Europe would not offer all the comforts of modern American life. There would be no preacher's home . . . no favorable social standing. We would not have the fellowship of large groups of Christians who would enthusiastically welcome suggestions and compliment our efforts. All of these privations had to be realized. There were, however, some things that encouraged us to go. We knew it would be a rich and rewarding experience. We knew that some one must go if we were to help lead the world to peace. Our work would help us to become more grateful. Our faith would be strengthened. We would learn more than ever before to take God at His word, to rely on Him in prayer and use Him in time of discouragement.

Soon after our decision to go to Germany, we received word that the Lamesa, Texas, church was willing to assume our full support. We later learned how blessed we were to have this congregation sponsoring our work. It has supported us, not only with a monthly check, but with its constant prayers and encouragement. It has watched carefully the progress of the work in Hamburg and has helped financially in the efforts undertaken. Its members have appreci-

ated the time we have spent away from home and have been willing to bring us home at the end of each 2½ year period for needed diversion and spiritual fellowship. Our feeling of the nearness of this group has lightened our responsibility and made our residence abroad as pleasant as possible.

Upon arriving in Germany in 1953, we were glad to find groups of American Christians with whom we could work while learning to speak the German language. As terrible as the last war was, it has done much to further world evangelism. American Christians have been placed all over the world, and have been largely responsible for much of the evangelistic work that has been done. Practically every congregation in South Germany, as well as in other parts of Europe, was encouraged by American servicemen who began worshipping regularly. In many cases these men promoted work in new cities faster than the limited supply of preachers could go to help them. They often have interested their home congregations in foreign countries. They have given generously to begin work in new cities.

The church in Wurzburg, Germany, can serve as an example to many who find themselves isolated in a city with no church. This group of servicemen was enthusiastic enough to rent a meeting place and an apartment for a preacher; then, through constant work and prayers secure the promise of an American preacher to come to work with them while learning to preach among the German-speaking people. Through such groups almost every major city in South Germany has at least one small congregation numbering anywhere from eight to more than one hundred members.

While South Germany has numbers of new congregations two facts are disturbing:

First, there are fewer American preachers now than there



have been since the beginning days. This would not be so disturbing if there were enough German preachers to fill the need. All of the initial workers have left the field with relatively few replacements. At the present time only five American preachers are spending full-time in the German work. With some of the German preachers spending time in the States in the Christian schools, at least ten places in South Germany are in need of American evangelists. In some of these places there are German evangelists who are working alone trying to assume the responsibilities of elder, deacon, Bible School superintendent, secretary and welfare worker. The burden of every major decision rests upon this one man, and he spends many hours meditating on what should be done. He has problems that no American preacher ever has had and about which no good book has been written. He must re-examine every issue that has faced the Lord's church and prepare himself to meet any false teacher.

The other disturbing feature is that while South Germany has been included in these concentrated efforts and many churches have been established there, North Germany is relatively unknown and untouched by New Testament Christianity. Did you know that of the eleven cities in West Germany including Berlin, with populations upward of a half million people, only five have a nucleus of Christians? Cologne, Essen, Dusseldorf, Dortmund, Hannover and Bremen with combined populations of nearly four million people have no churches of Christ of which we know. Are you aware that there are about twenty other northern and central German cities with populations beginning at 100,000 reaching to 450,000 who never have heard of an undenominational church of the Lord? Had you heard that the small congregations meeting in Hamburg and Berlin are the only churches outside of the American Zone in Germany? And



did you know that this American Zone includes only about one-third of Western Germany?

It was this need and the plea of a German Christian who had been converted in Frankfurt that drew workers to Hamburg in 1953. This new work in Germany's largest unified city with almost two million population offered definite disadvantages. We would be isolated over 300 miles from the nearest group of Christians. We would not have the added encouragement of fellow Americans, upon whom we could call for financial and moral assistance. There were other conditions, however, that have offset these disadvantages. We have become more appreciative of German customs and have made warm friendships among German-speaking people. Besides becoming more intimate with the Christians with whom we work, it has been an added advantage in learning the language. Having no English Bible classes has helped to convince some that we are not another American sect, and we have not had to split efforts with an English-speaking congregation. There were other things we found to be different. Whereas Bavaria and the Rheinland are predominantly Catholic, North Germany is primarily Lutheran with hundreds of other free churches and denominations making bids for recognition. This is probably the explanation why the lectures of Dr. Fausto Salvoni, converted Italian Catholic priest, drew crowds of 500 to 600 to a rented university auditorium in Hamburg in May of 1956. While this fertile field of free thinking creates a challenge to the church, at the same time it has established an open door for the Buddhist and Moslem missionaries who have entered Germany. North Germany presents a challenge today as stimulating as all Germany did twelve years ago.

We are grateful for the congregations that have been established and the hundreds of Christians converted, but we

should not think that our goal has been reached. Look around you, read reports of mission fields, hear evangelists from other places where the church is weak, open your eyes to the opportunities we have of converting people to Christ, and you will learn that there are required things that our efforts should be doing. Read about living conditions in other countries where many families are glad to have one room to house the whole family, and you will learn that a lot of things we call necessary are secondary. You'll ask yourself the question: What did I do to merit being born an American? And you will realize more than ever before that this thing of being an American is not as much a privilege as it is a responsibility, a responsibility to use every talent the Lord has given us. With our standard of living at an all-time high, it should make us more aware of the responsibility that we have of helping people whose economy is three or four times less than ours. There is plenty to be done financially, and we have been entrusted with the money to do it. Shall we use it selfishly or shall we invest in the purpose for which it has been given us? There are no other Christians in the world who have potentialities equal to ours. No others are capable of supporting hundreds of workers all over the world. If we fail, thousands of people will remain unaware of true New Testament Christianity.

You might like to ask why it is necessary to continue supporting the present German congregations. How long will it be before they are self-supporting? Is it not true that the German standard of living is higher than ever before? Yes, it is true that German people are earning more now than they did in pre-war days. Even so, the average weekly income is only about 95 marks a week, compared with 80 marks weekly in 1953. To the American, this is still less than \$25 weekly in buying power, but with this, the economy

minded German is able to fulfill dreams he never before has been able to realize. The German Christians understand that the American churches cannot be expected to support them indefinitely. Therefore, the alert leaders of the German churches are as concerned with the problem as you are. Practically every church is taking some steps toward independence. Brethren at the West End church in Frankfurt, supported by the Broadway church in Lubbock, have planned to begin supporting their local evangelist at the rate of 100 marks (\$25) monthly, increasing it to 200 marks monthly next year, so that within ten years, they will be supporting their own preacher. By that time, they also should have elders and deacons appointed. At Bornheim, in Frankfurt, where elders and deacons already have been appointed, the church has done much on its own initiative to become self-supporting. It finances all of the regular work, is paying on a note on the building, and pays most of the expenses except for the salary of the local evangelist. Brethren in the downtown Munich church have paid thousands of marks toward the completion of their building, which was begun with American funds. This building recently was deeded to the German church when its American evangelist, Jack Nadeau, returned to the States. As for Hamburg where the church is less than five years old, contributions last year averaged almost two marks (50c) per Sunday per person. When about one-third of the members live on pensions of less than \$30 a month, you can understand that this is commendable. Nevertheless, with earning power no more than this, you will see why it is impossible for a congregation of 60 to 70 members to pay \$30,000 for a meeting place or even \$3,000 for the right to lease a suitable location. This is the reason why a church such as Hamburg, that has been meeting all the while in two rented rooms, will have to continue to call on American churches for help in securing a suitable meeting hall.

Financial assistance, however, is not the only need. Indeed we must be cautious that we do not miss-spend money which the Lord has entrusted to us. Even more than finances there is a dire need for men who are willing to sacrifice five or more years of living in our wonderful homeland and close to family and friends in order to take the gospel of Christ to "all the world" "to every creature." Surely there are more preachers who are willing and able to help in evangelizing other countries. And they do not have to worry about support. If those who are capable and able to do the most good will decide to go, there will be enough Christians who will stand back of them with their financial and spiritual support.

Now I am not intending to say that every preacher ought to go to a foreign field, but I do believe that every preacher should without prejudice ask himself the question, "Where can I best serve?" Each of us should be willing to go anywhere He needs us. And I am convinced that the Lord needs many of us in Germany.

May He help us to make our decisions unselfishly so that you and I may do everything we can toward evangelizing the world.

"I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me."



## THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA

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R. J. Smith, Jr.

I am deeply thankful for the privilege of being your speaker on this occasion for the purpose of telling you something about efforts being made to preach the gospel of Christ in other nations of our world. One nation uppermost in the minds of many today is that great country either to our east or west that wraps itself half-way around the globe known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or more commonly known to most of us perhaps, as Russia.

After more than a year of negotiations with the Soviet government I was given a ten day visa in July of last year for a visit into this mysterious country, and a few months following Bro. Otis Gatewood was also privileged to spend a few days in Russia. Then this past summer I was permitted to visit again in the Soviet Union, being accompanied on this journey by brethren Carl Spain, Nyal Royse, and L. E. Cranford. We spent about one month visiting congregations, religious leaders, and government officials in both Poland and Russia.

The purpose of my first visit into Poland and Russia was threefold. (1) We in Germany had received numerous reports through Polish refugees that there were groups in Poland and Russia similar to the churches of Christ. I went to see if contact could be made with such groups. (2) I wanted to meet with the responsible officials in the Soviet Union for the purpose of obtaining permission for evangelists of the church to live and preach in their country. (3) I had always heard there was religious freedom in Russia but

did not believe it and wanted to see whether or not this was true.

From this first visit and the succeeding ones, we have learned that the church of Christ had its origin in Poland when a Polish convert from America, Konstantin Jaroshevich, returned to Poland and began preaching. As a result of this man's work and that of his co-laborers numerous congregations were established and thousands of believers were baptized. We have learned that this work spread into the Soviet Union (primarily the Ukraine) where at one time there were some 84 congregations in existence. The total membership of these congregations is unknown but believed to have been very large.

Russia is a country with a long and varied religious history. However, the predominant Protestant groups in Russia were not introduced until as late as the Nineteenth Century. The first of these was the Evangelical Christian faith which was introduced in northern Russia about 1850 when British Ambassador Radstock was assigned to Russia in Petersburg, now Leningrad. Radstock was a very religious man with abounding zeal for his faith. His evangelistic work was primarily among high ranking government officials. As a result of his work such notables as Colonel of the Russian Army Pachkov, who served in the Czar's palace, was converted. Later Count Moodes Korff, Princess Livian, Professor of Petersburg Nikolai, and the renowned Westinghouse engineer Prokhanov were also converted. Prokhanov was perhaps the most outstanding leader of the Evangelical movement. He edited for a number of years a monthly paper called *Christian*, and later came to America and raised funds with which he published Bibles and song books in the Russian language. Being a gifted musician and poet he personally wrote over 1200 songs.

In the late Nineteenth Century disciples of Onkel (founder of Baptist doctrine in Germany) were to be found in the many German colonies established in the Ukraine and along the Volga. From these centers of activity the Baptist doctrine spread throughout southern Russia. As a result of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist movements in Russia, evangelists of the churches of Christ from Poland upon coming to Russia to teach found the populace already well acquainted with the teachings of the Scriptures. This evidently had some effect upon the rapid growth of the church in such a short time. Brother Sacewicz, who is with us today, spent a number of years preaching in Russia and was alone responsible for the baptizing of over 4,000 people in that country.

#### *The Church in Russia*

The Revolution of 1905 brought complete religious freedom to Russia and this existed until 1929 when Stalin published his first five-year plan forbidding religious freedom. Not until 1941 when Russia became absorbed in World War II was there a slackening of restrictions against religious activities. These events and others to follow have caused the condition of the churches of Christ in the Soviet Union to differ somewhat from those now existing in Poland. The event which was to have the greatest effect on all so-called Protestant groups was the formation in 1944 of a religious alliance by the Soviet government. It was the desire of the government to get all Protestant groups into one organization and under one head. It was forbidden for a church to exist outside of the alliance. Churches either had to conform with the new law or disband. The alliance established its headquarters in Moscow and from there began to legislate all practices and policies of member churches. When the alliance was established the 84 congregations of the church earlier referred to as existing in Russia were incorporated



into the alliance without choice. To our present knowledge organized churches of Christ in Soviet Russia have completely lost their identity and are known today, as are all Protestant groups, as members of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Union, a union composed of Evangelical Christian, Baptist, Methodist, Churches of Christ, Pentecostal, and Seventh Day Adventist. I have had the opportunity on numerous occasions to be the guest of the officers of the alliance and from my associations with these men I am unable to identify them completely with any belief with which we in America are familiar. As leaders of the union they have had to become extremely liberal in order to please each faith represented. It is my prayer that we may soon have the privilege of living and preaching in the Soviet Union and by the grace of God restore His church in that country.

While in Moscow last year, I talked with a Mr. Polanski, who was in charge of all religious affairs in the Soviet Union, for the purpose of obtaining permission for evangelists of the church to work on a permanent basis in Russia. Although Mr. Polanski was no doubt an atheist, he was very receptive and favorable toward such plans. He, as well as all other officials with whom I have spoken, stated there was no reason why such permission could not be granted. He said he was not the final one to give the permission but when the proposal came before him for approval he would give it his support. Upon returning to America last year, I received a letter from the Soviet government asking that I appear before the Soviet Ambassador to the United States in Washington, D. C., for the purpose of discussing the details of our proposal to live and preach in the Soviet Union. Last March Brother Guss Farmer of Dallas and I were the guests of Soviet Ambassador Georgi Zaroubin in Washington. Mr. Zaroubin stated also there was no reason why this permis-



sion would not be granted. He instructed us to make application to him in the form of an official letter including a description of the church and the names of those Americans who desired to work in the Soviet Union. Bro. Farmer and I composed this letter including in it the names of eight American evangelists whose desire it is to take the gospel of Christ to the Soviet people. We have recently been notified by the Soviet embassy in Washington that our applications had been approved by the embassy and were forwarded to their superiors in Moscow for final approval. Officials in Moscow have assured us of their approval, so all we can do now is hope and pray. At no time have we ever been discouraged by the Soviet government from making applications for visas, but greatly encouraged. It is my understanding we are the first religious group to receive such attention by the Soviet government since World War II. Why they have been so receptive I do not know, but I like to think the organization of the church is appealing to them. The Soviet officials understand that should congregations ever be established in Russia they would be self-governing and independent of any American church authority.

I was told that Bibles had been out of print in Russia for almost 30 years, but this year the government has authorized the printing of 10,000 copies. This number will hardly meet the demand. Upon presenting an acquaintance I had made in Moscow with a Russian Bible he broke into tears and said it was the finest gift he had ever received. For some months now we have been sending Bibles and tracts in the Polish and Russian languages, to these people believing they will help them in serving God more perfectly. On our journey into the Soviet Union this past summer we took with us some 300 Bibles and hundreds of tracts in the Russian language and distributed them wherever we went. We need your financial assistance to continue this program that if pos-

sible we might flood the Soviet Union with Bibles and good Biblical literature.

Last summer as our group was about to depart to Russia, the young lady who had acted as one of our interpreters was standing at the door of our plane and with tears streaming down her cheeks bade us farewell. Although an atheist she said in parting, "Your visit to the Soviet Union has been a blessing. I will never forget all that I have seen and heard. If there really is a God as you believe, will you please pray to Him for me that somehow, someday, I might someday have the privilege to live and believe as do you." These are the heart rending words of one Russian soul for whom I fear I must give an answer in the judgment. But I fear even more that there are over 200,000,000 souls in the Soviet Union for whom we may all give an answer in the day of God's judgment. I believe the Lord has opened a small crack in the door of opportunity for us, but I believe He has left to us the responsibility of forcing that door wide open. I believe that if we truly love the people in Russia and if we truly believe that we are the fulfillers of the Great Commission, we will sacrifice all that we have and are that the gospel of Christ and love of God we enjoy today may be shared with those in that foreign land. I ask today above all for your prayers, and I plead for your financial assistance that the preaching of the gospel in Russia might well be a dream come true. I am convinced that if this challenge is not accepted today by the church of the Lord that God will close this door of opportunity and we shall give answer to Him in His judgment for our failure to answer His call.

May God bless and help you in fulfilling His Will, is my prayer.

(Editor's note: Those wishing to assist financially in this work may send their contributions to the Urbandale church of Christ, 7200 Military Parkway, Dallas 27, Texas, clearly marked "Polish-Russian Fund.")

## THE CHURCH IN POLAND

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Carl Spain

The first congregation of people identified by name as the "Church of Christ" was established in Poland in the year 1921, in the village of Semeiztysze, about sixty miles from Warsaw, as a result of the preaching of Dr. K. Jarosiewicz, a Polish convert from America. In 1953, according to recent reports, there were thirty-three congregations, with a total membership of about twelve hundred members.

Since about the year 1939 Poland has been a land of great suffering and martyrdom. Under the Nazi invaders there was a terrible destruction of property and people. Millions died in concentration camps. During the years from 1939 to 1943 it is reported that about seven hundred thousand people perished in Warsaw alone, a city that was eighty-five per cent destroyed.

When the Russians "liberated" them from the Germans, the people found themselves existing miserably under the Christless tyranny of the Communist. It was in the year 1951 that religion was dealt another discouraging blow by persecution. Two elders of the church of Christ in Warsaw, Brethren Jerzy Sacewicz and Bolestaw Winnik, were imprisoned for two and a half years, incarcerated in a cell six by six feet. Another elder, Brother Jerzy Bajenski, was released after six months in prison. Upon his release he and other leaders in the church of Christ were compelled by the Communist government to join an alliance called the United Church of Evangelical Christians. All property was confiscated and designated for use by the United Church. Other



religious groups that were forced into this alliance were the Free Christian, Free Lutheran (Affirmative), Evangelical Christians, and Pentecostal. This alliance was formed without the knowledge or consent of Brethren Sacewicz and Winnik, who were still in jail at the time and were not consulted. When they came from their prison cells in the bombed out ruins of Warsaw, they, too, became identified with the United Church, serving on its Presidium as representatives of the churches of Christ.

Just at this point let us consider the doctrinal identity of these churches of Christ who were forced into the Protestant alliance. In their worship they are very spiritual, sober and sincere. Old-fashioned organs are used to accompany their singing. It had not occurred to them that this was not scriptural. They often sing without it, and do not argue that it is absolutely essential. They observe the Lord's Supper once each month.

As to church organization, they believed in the local autonomy of each congregation, under the oversight of scripturally qualified and appointed elders, with the New Testament as their guide. Unfortunately, they have suffered from poor leadership, and many congregations were weak from lack of well-informed and capable elders and evangelists. This, together with the persecutions and wars, kept them from growing numerically, and also hindered the full restoration of the Lord's church in that land. Thus impoverished, they entered the post-war years not as independent churches, but as a part of an alliance that was calculated to destroy what was uniquely theirs as a religious group.

As to the law of pardon and terms of membership, these churches believe and practice baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. In their determination to avoid the sacra-



mental concepts of Catholicism (which is strong in Poland), they have insisted that baptism will not cleanse or wash away the sins of an unconverted person. But, this resulted in a definition of conversion that did not include baptism. They insist that a man has to prove that he is a penitent believer before they will baptize him. In other words he must be "a converted man." *If he is truly converted, then he may be baptized for the remission of sins.* So, while teaching the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, they defined conversion and the new birth in such a way as to exclude it. Many of them are now engaged in a careful study of the Bible on this question, and are re-examining their own thinking along this line. A number of them have discovered the unscriptural fault in their teaching.

Over the United Church of Evangelical Christians, there is a ruling Presidium, composed of six representatives from each of the five participating groups, making a total of thirty men. This Presidium has increased in power through the years and admittedly legislates in matters of faith and morals, even in the discipline of preachers who serve the congregations. On our recent visit in Warsaw we had several formal and informal sessions with the Presidium or with members of it, and reasoned with them in an effort to determine the nature of their organization and to help them to recognize it as a dangerous religious hierarchy. We also had a friendly and profitable conference with the Polish Minister of Religious Cults. The results were gratifying and encouraging.

In the complexity of such a situation there have been recent developments that are thrilling to all who are seeking to return to the original Christian faith and practice of the New Testament church. The following is a brief account of history in the making, current events which we pray will prove

to be some of the most exciting pages in the history of the Lord's true church.

Two former preachers of Methodism in Poland have made the first move to establish an independent church of Christ in Poland. Behind this movement, and helping to explain its origin, is a close friendship between these two preachers and two elders, Sacewicz and Winnik. Along with this friendship there were tensions of a doctrinal and ethical nature between these preachers and the Methodist church. As a result, Jozef Naumiuk, one of the most outstanding religious leaders in Poland, and his capable brother-in-law, Henryk Cizek, have left Methodism. By their own testimony, and that of the two elders, Brethren Winnik and Sacewicz, these men have been baptized by immersion for the remission of their sins. They have been urging the elders of the churches of Christ to withdraw from the United Church and to help them in the establishment of independent churches.

In addition to these efforts among the Christians in Poland, there have been recent efforts on the part of Christians from the United States.

In July of 1956, Brother R. J. Smith, Jr., serving the Urbandale Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, obtained permission from Polish and Russian authorities to enter for the purpose of determining the accuracy of numerous reports which our brethren in Germany had received through Polish refugees concerning groups behind the "iron curtain" that were so close in identity to the New Testament church. Brother Smith was the first known evangelist of the church to visit these people since the outbreak of World War II. He made important and effective contacts with church leaders in Poland, though handicapped at times because of polit-

ical uprisings which resulted in his being confined to his hotel in Warsaw.

In August of 1956 Brother Otis Gatewood of Frankfurt, Germany, also visited in Poland and Russia and made a lasting impression on those with whom he visited. One of his most important contacts was Henryk Ciszek, one of the men figuring so significantly in recent developments in restoration efforts.

In August of 1957, four evangelists from America traveled together into Poland and Russia. They were R. J. Smith, Jr.; L. E. Cranford, of Nashville, Tennessee; Nyal Royse, of Norwalk, California; and Carl Spain, of Abilene, Texas. These men followed up on the work already begun by Brethren Smith and Gatewood on their previous trips.

On Friday, August 23, they had a meeting with the Elders of the Warsaw Church of Christ, and discussed with them matters pertaining to church organization. The following morning they met with these same men in the home of Elder Bajenski, at Pulaskaw 114 where the church meets and where the families of the three elders live. Present at this meeting was Henryk Ciszek. This meeting was given to discussions pertaining to the United Church and a clarification of the relation of the churches of Christ to this organization. The subject of baptism was also discussed at great length. In the afternoon a meeting was held at the home of Henryk Ciszek, with Mr. and Mrs. Naumiuk and Elders Winnik and Sacewicz. The meeting was given to further discussion of problems pertaining to the full restoration of the New Testament church, and further clarification of their convictions and purposes.

The next day, Sunday, August 25th, the entire group of men traveled about sixty miles for services at Semeiatysze.



Those making the trip were elders of the church of Christ, the two preachers, and two leaders of the Free Christian church, Stanislaw Krakiewicz (President of the Presidium) and Gustav Stephan, and the American evangelists.

With Naumiuk and Giszek as interpreters, the four evangelists were given the opportunity of preaching. The sermons on this occasion emphasized the worship of the New Testament church, especially the question of music and the Lord's Supper. After a three-hour service (which included a marriage ceremony), the group enjoyed a Polish meal at the home of the bride's parents, then returned to Warsaw for evening services at the Jerusalem Avenue meeting place. The sermon that evening exalted Christ as the one hope of man, and the need for respectful obedience to His will.

That evening, after services, the group approached the elders of the church of Christ concerning the fact that the Lord's Supper had not been observed at any of the services that day, and requesting that it be provided for them in the hotel. They quickly and gladly responded, and went to great effort to secure the necessary things. None of them had cars, and had to travel by taxi and street car to secure the necessary elements. At about 10:30 p.m. they came to our hotel and joined us in the communion of the body and the blood of the Lord. They were deeply impressed and confessed their negligence in this matter.

On Monday evening we had services at Pulawska 114, at which time all four American evangelists were invited to preach. And again the emphasis was on the various aspects of the restoration of the original Christian faith of the New Testament church. Special emphasis was given to the history of the falling away which led to the Roman Papacy. Following the services a wonderfully inspiring fellowship



was enjoyed in the home of the Sacewicz family, with a delicious meal, singing and Christian conversation.

The following day we left for Moscow. It was a tearful departure. The young ladies brought each of us a bouquet of flowers. Everyone was visibly touched, some expressing it in tears, as we said farewell.

Since our return to the United States in September of 1957 there have been important developments in the restoration movement in Poland. On September 23, 1957, a letter from Jozef Naumiuk and Henryk Ciszek was received by our brethren stating that they had organized an independent church of Christ in Warsaw, free from all entangling alliances. This church began meeting on September 15 at Mokotowska 12m.10. They stated that they wanted to follow the pattern of the church of Christ in America, realizing that we had fought and won many battles in the last century. Feeling unsure of themselves, they asked that we help them in every way possible.

We immediately inquired as to the attitude of the other churches of Christ (affiliated with the United Church), and of the reactions of the elders in Warsaw. At the same time we wrote to these elders and asked them to give their own reaction to the efforts of Naumiuk and Ciszek.

Two letters on hand reveal the picture as completely as we are able to present it at the time of this writing. A letter dated October 7, 1957, arrived from Naumiuk and Ciszek. Another one dated October 8, 1957, arrived from Jerry Sacewicz, an elder in the church of Christ who is at present on the Presidium of the United Church. Excerpts from these letters are herewith submitted:

*From Brethren Naumiuk and Ciszek:* "With a great deal of joy we welcomed your gracious letter of September 23rd

which reached us a few days ago. It was good to hear from you and we want to express our heartiest thanks for writing us so promptly and assuring us of your interest in our efforts in the restoration of the Lord's church in Poland. We feel most grateful for your prayers and want to let you and your friends know that we also are praying here for the expansion of the church of Christ in your great country."

Then they mention that on Sunday, September 29, they preached at Pulawska 114 and were invited to take an active part in the service by brethren Sacewicz and Winnik. They go on to say:

"Some of the elders of the church of Christ now belonging to the United Church of Evangelical Christians were present and also preached. As we were told by Brother Sacewicz their presence at this service was tied with the problem of restoration of the churches of Christ in Poland. However, we do not know what sort of plans were made and what practical steps were undertaken during their presence in Warsaw to restore the churches. However, they did rejoice in learning that we organized an independent church of Christ in this city."

The letter also mentions another service conducted at Mokotowska 12m.10 on October 6th:

"We observed the Lord's Supper at the morning worship just like we do each Sunday. At the evening service Brethren Sacewicz and Winnik took active part at which we witnessed a blessing of the Holy Spirit when one member broke out into tears thanking God in an open prayer for a first time. There was great joy among the present."

It is well to explain here that these people believe in the indwelling of the Spirit as we do. They do not believe in "miraculous" demonstrations. But, it appeared to us that with them the indwelling of the Spirit is a reality, not just a theory. In this respect they may prove a help to us as we endeavor to help them. The letter continues:

"Last week we accepted two grown up persons into the fellowship by baptizing them by immersion for the remission of sins. We are extremely thankful to God for this evidence of His infinite love and care. Of course we are working towards the baptizing of all our group. However some of them have been baptized already."

They also stated that they are not using the mechanical instrument of music in their worship, and asked for additional instructions on the question of the music of the church. They also asked for printed materials dealing with the practical aspects of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

The letter contains a request for a statement to be used to explain the identity of the Church of Christ to the Polish authorities in order to secure permission to exist as an independent church. In requesting this statement for official use they added, "we are very careful in accepting any creed." (The letter from Brother Sacewicz will speak also on this point). But, let us continue with excerpts from the text of the letter from Naumiuk and Ciszek:

"Next Sunday, October 13, one of us will be away from Warsaw and will be preaching on this day at a Catholic village where we have a brother, a gardener who spent some years in America, who is in close contact with us and who invited us to come to his house to preach in it. He promised to gather as many Catholics as possible for this service."

The statement that immediately follows is most unusual, coming from a church less than a month old:

"We shall let you know in our future letter about the result of this first missionary work. Besides carrying on with our work in the city we shall do all we can to work in all near by towns and villages."

Let it be said here that these men are receiving no financial help from America at the present time. They are work-

ing at other jobs to take care of their physical needs. They have already received a warning that they will be severely attacked from the side of the alliance of the United Church. To this they replied, "If God is with us who can be against us?"

The letter closes with a request for written copies of certain sermons preached in Warsaw to be translated and distributed among the members of the churches of Christ, and with "sincere best wishes and warmest greetings from your brethren in Christ."

The next day, a letter arrived from Brother Sacewicz:

"Let the grace and peace of our beloved Lord be with you and all the faithful . . .

"From the bottom of my heart and soul I thank my God for you brethren. . . . that the banner of the New Testament church of Christ was raised highly by you in our country thanks to your strong sermons in which you gave the irrefutable fundamental structure of the church of Christ of which the Lord Christ is the head. . .

"Yes, indeed, an independent church of Christ was organized on September 15, 1957, at Mokotowska 12m.10 in Warsaw under the leadership of my good and faithful friends and brethren Jozef Naumiuk and Henryk Ciszek. . . It is not a big church in number but it is spiritually rich and it is worthy of all help you can give. In other places similar churches are being organized.

"In order to notify the authorities of the existence of the independent churches of Christ we are working on a proper Constitution based on the Bible given by you during your preaching at our chapel at Pulawska 114."

The closing words of the letter serve as a fitting close to the history of events to this point. But we rise to meet each new day in the hope of additional news from the front



lines of the Lord's kingdom behind the "iron curtain"; Brother Sacewicz concludes with:

"It is my prayer that all churches of Christ in our country would become free of man's wisdom and lean only on the irrefutable foundations of God's Word. I am working in this direction and ask you to pray for us and help us."

There are many brethren of good reputation as evangelists who are planning trips to Europe in the next year. Each one is being urged to arrange for a tourist visa into Poland to spend a few days with these brethren to encourage them. There is also at present a movement under way in an effort to secure the necessary financial funds to make it possible for these brethren to come to America for a visit among the churches of this country and to visit lectureship programs conducted by the various Christian colleges.

Because so many individuals and so many churches have had a part in making it possible for brethren in Poland to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, it is best not to attempt to give recognition of such in these pages. But we need not doubt that the Lord has kept a record which will have important value in the judgment of that Great Day.

## THE CHURCH IN ITALY

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By Carl Mitchell

A few years ago, American armed forces went into various foreign lands bent upon a mission of destruction. Terrible leaders had arisen in some parts of the world who were determined to take away man's freedom and bring other nations into slavery. Among the American military personnel engaged in this conflict in the interest of liberty, were some who were even more concerned with the spiritual slavery in which they found the citizens of countries where they were stationed. When they returned into their respective congregations in America, they began to talk about the conditions they had seen, and as a result, the missionary program began a great upward trend. Many of our boys who had been overseas began training in preparation to return into the same nations in which they had served, this time taking with them the Gospel of Christ.

This is the history of the beginning of the work of our Lord in Italy. Brother Harold Paden served there with ski troops during the war. As he observed the darkness of Roman Catholicism, he determined to return some day with the light of God's love. When he was discharged he began preparing to return to Italy, at the same time attempting to attract as many others as possible to go with him. Through God's blessing, Harold's dream eventually became a reality. In January of 1949, six ministers together with their families, and one elder, docked at Naples Italy, and shortly thereafter initiated the work of the church in that country.

You have no doubt heard often of the trials, joys, and sorrows experienced as the work unfolded; how the Catholic authorities assured the people that the church of Christ would soon be driven from their shores, and attempted in every conceivable way to keep people from obeying the truth. You have heard of the persecutions, the closing of buildings, the arresting of preachers, and the expelling of missionaries from Italy. Yet, in the face of all this, the work has grown and we are thankful to God that today we are in better condition than ever before for the advancement of Christ's cause in Italy. According to most recent reports, there are some 37 places where Christians meet in that country. The faithful membership is something over 1000 souls. About 23 native evangelists are presently dedicating full time to teaching and preaching among their own people. Some 16 or 17 ex-priests and monks have been baptized into Christ, some of whom number among our native evangelists.

We are happy for the advancement that has been made, but those of us who have labored in Italy, feel that we are just arriving at a great door of opportunity, and that tremendous things can be done for the kingdom of Christ in the future among the Italian people if we do not falter in our faith. It is therefore our desire to impress upon the church in America the opportunities that exist for the work in that great country, with the prayer that you will respond to this call.

#### *New Freedom*

It is a pleasure to announce that we now have complete freedom with which to work in Italy. Until recently, we were victims of a contradiction that existed in Italian law. The Lateran Pact between Mussolini and the Vatican, made in 1929, became the basis for certain Italian laws that

avored the Roman Church and made religious liberty nonexistent. However, after the second world war, the Italians passed by popular vote a new Constitution that provided in Articles 8, 17, 18, and 19 for freedom of all religious groups. The Constitution further provided for the setting up of a Supreme Court which would proceed to the taking away of any former laws that were at variance with it. The Catholic Church could not keep the "Allied sponsored" Constitution from coming into existence, but they did very handily block the formation of the Supreme Court, thus completely neutralizing the power of the Constitution. Consequently, even though we had complete freedom to work in Italy according to the Constitution, the existent Italian laws, which were themselves unconstitutional, were used against us to close down and thwart our efforts. When we would be forced to go into the courts of Italy to fight for our freedom to worship, without exception the courts would rescind and declare illegal the police action against us. Unfortunately, this same process had to be undertaken every time we were involved in difficulty, for there was no court empowered to take away the old Lateran Pact laws, and to establish as law the norms of the Constitution. This is the reason that we were constantly involved with the law in Italy; not because our work was illegal, or that we were agitating difficulty, but because of the contradiction that existed in Italian law. Finally in the summer of 1956, the other political parties of Italy became so strong that they were able to force the establishment of the Supreme Court. As a result, and we feel largely due to the great amount of attention our work had attracted to the forementioned contradiction in law, the first decision of the new Supreme Court was the taking away of the old laws that had curtailed and governed religious meetings, and the establish-



ing as law for all of Italy the norms of the Constitution which provided for freedom of religion.

Perhaps it would be well to add, however, that the Catholic Church has not given up on her attempt to get us out of Italy. Shortly after the action of the Supreme Court, we were notified that we were no longer a mission and therefore missionaries from America would not in the future be allowed to enter Italy in the interest of the work of the churches of Christ. Dr. Gatta, head of the General Direction of Cults of the Italian Ministry of Interior brought out that we came to Italy several years ago as a missionary group to establish the church. He pointed out that we were now a well established church, with a good supply of native preachers, and that we could no longer be considered as a missionary group. For this reason he informed us that new missionaries would not be allowed to enter the country, replacements could not be sent for those presently in Italy, and when any of the present workers left, they would not be allowed to return. In this way, they hoped to rid themselves of the American workers so that we could not capitalize on the new freedom which was ours. Once they were rid of the Americans, then they could do with their own people as they pleased. As a result, several of us went to Washington and met with Senators and Congressmen of various states, asking that they use their influence with the Italian Government to provide for Americans the same right to go into Italy in the interest of religious work as that given to Catholic personnel desiring to come into our country for the same purpose. Our meetings culminated in a meeting with the Undersecretary of State at which several Congressmen and Senators spoke in our behalf. The Undersecretary agreed to bring what pressure he could to bear upon the Italian Government. We were pleased with the success of

our trip, for we were soon notified that the Italian Authorities had reconsidered, and the visas which had been formerly denied would be forthcoming.

Today, we have the possibility of getting workers into Italy, there is freedom to carry on our work, and all that is lacking is the necessary personnel in order that we might capitalize upon this great opportunity.

### *The Benefits of Persecution*

Satan has never learned that the more the church is persecuted, the more it will thrive and grow. When he wars from within, he can weaken and destroy the work of the Lord's body, but from without, his attacks only aid in the strengthening and growth of God's cause. The pen of the Apostle Paul pays tribute to this truth in Phil. 1:12-14. "But I would ye should understand brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." The forces of evil had arrested Paul, thinking to still his voice, but instead, he found new opportunities to preach, and many others, seeing his suffering, had taken courage and were themselves preaching. The arresting of one preacher caused many new preachers to be born. The same things have happened in Italy. The more the Catholic Church asked people to ignore us, the more they seemed to desire information from us. The more our preachers were arrested and our buildings closed, the more people heard of us and the more requests poured in from those desiring to be taught. Today, largely because of persecution, we are known throughout Italy, and can be sure of good audiences almost

any place we go with the Gospel. We hope that there will be no more difficulties (we are not too optimistic about that however) and that we will be allowed to benefit from the publicity given through past persecution as we use to the fullest the new liberty that is ours.

### *The Value of Experience*

Although one does not usually dwell in presentations such as this upon the disappointments and heartaches suffered in working in a foreign land, there are many bitter lessons that one must learn by experience. In Italy, due to the inexperience of workers, and a lack of knowledge concerning the people and customs, some severe mistakes in judgment and procedure have been made. However, with the passing of time, we have been able to learn from the experience of the past. We have a fuller understanding of the Italian people and their ways, which in turn has enabled us to work more wisely with more pleasant results. This information can be passed on to new workers, who will be able to benefit from the experience of those who have gone before.

### *Good Native Preachers*

Among the native evangelists in Italy, are some outstanding workers. All of our Italian ministers are maturing spiritually, and growing in knowledge and wisdom with the passing of the years. The storm of persecution and the enticements of this world have been too much for some men in whom we trusted, but we are thankful to God for those who have weathered the storm, and who every day give new evidence that they belong unto the Lord, and are working honestly and courageously for His glory and the saving of men's souls. As our understanding of each other has grown, we have been able to work more closely together and more effectively with our native workers. Our hopes

for the future stability and auto-existence of the work is to a great extent based upon the development of capable consecrated men of God in Italy who can carry on the banner of God's love. For the present, it would be ideal to have an American preacher with each native in order that together we might speed the day when Italy can in turn carry the Gospel to others.

### *Aspects of Permanency*

The Catholic leaders have continually told their people that it would be useless to entrust their faith to us, as we were just a fly-by-night organization which would soon abandon them. As the years have passed and Catholic efforts have failed to dislodge us, the people are coming to believe more and more that we are in Italy to stay. The rapid growth of the work, the development of native preachers, the acquiring of meeting houses, the printing of books and papers, have all assisted in convincing the people that the effort of the church of Christ is a serious one. The result is that Italians are giving increasing credence to the teaching of the Lord as presented by His church. We should also add, that members of the church in Italy are proving to others about them, that the step into the church is an upward step. They are forcing the Catholic world to respect them for their seriousness, their knowledge of God's word, and their obvious zeal in the leading of souls to the purity of God's fountain.

### *Challenge of Catholicism*

Again and again you have heard it expressed that the greatest threat to our liberty in America is that of Roman Catholicism. This is not an exaggeration. By simply looking into past Catholic history, into our own experience in Italy, or even into any Catholic controlled country in the



world today, one cannot help being impressed by the obvious hatred that Romanism holds for true liberty. It is very possible that some day Catholicism will grow in America to the point that religious liberty will no longer exist. But, we have in our possession that which can overcome the power of Roman Catholicism. As Garibaldi said, "the Bible is the cannon that will destroy the Vatican." It has been proved in Italy that all the forces of Romanism cannot withstand the advance of the cause of Christ. The Italian work has proved that Catholic people and even priests can be converted, and that many of them are just waiting for someone to teach them. It would seem that the most effective step toward overcoming the power of Catholicism in our own country is by establishing a strong church in the very shadow of the Vatican in Italy.

#### *Workers and Supporting Congregations Needed*

The time is ripe for a great conquest of souls for the cause of the Lord in Italy. There, the fields are indeed white unto harvest, but as is the case throughout the world, the laborers are few. Souls in Italy are waiting for the message of salvation. At least 20 new workers are needed to supplement the overworked four who are presently on the field, in order that we might begin to reap the advantages that first persecution, and now liberty have brought to our door. Time may be running out. Italy's economic dependence on our nation is the reason that we have gained entry into that country. But who knows how long they will continue to be dependent economically upon us; or for that matter, how much longer our Government will be willing to continue to aid them? Even at this time, there is a great deal of agitation within our nation against expenditures in foreign aid, and we may be sure that if and when aid is cut off to Italy, we will

be immediately expelled from her shores. We pray that many faithful ministers and congregations will feel that they have "come to the kingdom for such a time as this." As we conclude this message, may within our ears ring the cry of lost souls distressed, pleading that we come over and help them wherever they may be throughout the world. God will hold us responsible if we fail to answer, for He has said, "I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezek. 3:17-18).

## I BEHELD HIS GLORY

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By Jim Bill McInter

In some random reading from a musty old volume one day, I chanced to find these lines, "In every river of life there are cataracts." I like that statement. The thought was not new, but it at least was a new way of wording the old worn-out clichés like "Every rose must have its thorns," "In every life some rain must fall," and other such philosophical axioms to demonstrate that each person within the course of his allotted time is subject to victories and to defeats.

But that expression, "In every river of life there are cataracts," was an expressive thing. Perhaps you can recall your own experiences, the stream of life placidly and simply flows along. There are no waves, no strong undertows, but meandering through the peaceful valley of living, the stream of life gently flows. However, one day you look ahead, looming in the vast distance you see some cliffs. It looks from your vantage point the river may narrow, and, sure enough as you reach that point the river of life begins to be hemmed in by tremendous cliffs on either side. A bend in the river is found in those cliffs, and as you round that bend apprehensively expecting the worst, your every fear is fulfilled. Suddenly you are in the white water; boulders, abnormal currents, swerving, swaying, bucking against the opposition that is there, you find yourself doing everything possible to ride those rapids. Your river of life has led you to the experience of staying afloat in the cataracts.

All of us recall our testings, and we are reasonably sure,

in the love of God, there are still those yet to come. We remember the times that we were tenderly tied to the apron strings of our mothers—we'd like even now the consolation that that security brought as a present experience. However, death or infirmity has removed those apron strings and instead of now being sheltered and protected there, you in turn have become the protector. But although they assume their rightful place in society, they never outgrow that yearning for placing dependence in another.

The burden of my speech is to say to you, your citadel of strength may be found in Jesus. Your burden may rest there, and He, at the precise moment of your life can be your consolation if you but trust Him.

We base our story on one major event in the life of Christ. As you see Him inspired by reassuring, noting the perfect sense of timing the Master possesses, it is earnestly hoped that you will be thrilled with the sense of His appreciation of need, and know that the same Lord of yesterday is the Christ of today, who, in every perplexity, can give you what you need.

Shall we begin with John 6:66 where, as a result of the accusation laid against the people that they had come simply for the loaves and fishes and not for the spiritual food that they might receive, this statement is made, "From that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Crowds were now deserting the Lord, the height of His popularity had been reached. Enemies were pressing on every side. At every discourse He must satisfy the audience with the answer to the trick questions, the loaded questions, the evilly inspired questions. More and more time is now being given to the intimate circles of disciples. Longer trips with them are now being initiated. Appearing in increasing



regularity in the teachings of the Christ Himself is the sure shadow of the cross which will one day give way in the substance of the crucifixion.

Some eight days after the marvelous confession by Peter of the divinity of Christ (or six days, as Matthew and Mark record it—Luke counting the extremity of the week and Mark and Matthew counting the six days that transpired between these two events), Jesus took the inner three, Peter, James and John, and went into a mountain to pray.

It is not explained why, in the event that was to follow, only Peter, James and John were privileged to view it, however, in this and any other experiences that befell the Christ, as you try to reason why He performed the acts that He did, you are impressed with the Messianic wisdom that was used. Here were three mighty leaders. The fire that they could receive from this mountain top experience would be able to, in a contagious way, imbue the hearts of many others with a flame for righteousness never to die in that or succeeding generations. Jesus, many times, took a chosen few, brought them to a boiling point of adoration, then released them to touch later the hearts of others. My question to you is, could you have been one of those leaders? If in this 20th Century, the Lord had made His appearance, could you have been "James," would your name have been "Peter," and would you have been the "John" that beheld many experiences?

The place they went was the mountain of prayer. The Bible does not locate by geographical name this mountain. Ancient authorities said it was Tabor, later scholars are led to feel that it was Hermon. Evidences that are offered seem to favor the latter decision. Tabor was a low mountain, far away from Caesarea Philippi and in addition to that, a walled city sat atop its crest.

Hermon, a tremendous mountain, many times snow-be-decked, listening in the distance like a jewel embroidered into God's footstool, comes closely to fitting the description necessary to the story. It also was in close proximity to the previous experiences of the disciples.

But although we could never know the exact location of this mountain, we can find one in our times. Do you have your mountain of prayer? Is there somewhere away from the jingling of the phone, the demand of the front door, the press of a heavily concentrated society that you can withdraw and pray to God? Prayerlessness and powerlessness are twins of impotency, and I fear by the cunning of the Devil are growing with the nurture of indifference among the peoples of God. Every man must find his mountain of prayer and if he is to mature in the spiritual development expected of him he must have frequent and ready access to this place. It may be a literal mountain, it may be your automobile, it may be your study, the closet in your home, the utility room in the basement. It must be somewhere, and to be the power for the Lord that you would be, I bid you find it.

The Book then makes a tremendous statement, "And as he prayed—" Prayer is a powerful thing, it changed even Jesus Himself. No other such event as this is anywhere recorded in the life of the Lord. As He prayed something tremendous happened to Him, "The fashion of his countenance was altered," Matthew, chapter 17, alone describes the appearance of His face. Sparse are the references anywhere in all the Scriptures that tell you the face of the Lord. But in this instance, it says His "face did shine as the sun." Brilliant flashes of light categorize the physical appearance of our Lord.

Although Matthew only describes His face, each writer tells of the alteration of His clothing. As the glory which

was once the Lord's is again recaptured by Him, Matthew said, "his raiment was white as the light"; Mark calls it "exceeding white as snow, as no fuller on earth can white them"; and Luke tells us that His raiment "was white and glistening." Flashing light! Glistening appearance! Celestial glory! Anticipatory of the future appearance of Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the illustrious Lamb, the joy of Heaven of whom was said, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23), was transfigured before their very eyes. Divine splendor irradiated both in body and clothes and the holy symphony which began to be played on the night Christ was born of the virgin now reaches an eloquent crescendo and soars into a rhapsody of breath-taking beauty. Christ was transformed; a change of form or appearance, not the change of substance, for divine He had always been, and divinity shall ever mark His way.

With the Lord and the inner three in that magnificent hour there were two heavenly companions, Moses, dead for some 1400 years, Elijah, gone for some 900, the perfect representation of law and prophets. But as we so often do in our finest hour and choicest opportunity, we grow weary and attempt to sleep—so did the apostles at that time. The King James expression, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake" perhaps appears to you a little clumsy. They were terribly drowsy and the action that is described literally comes from a Greek expression which means "having kept awake" or as the Revised Version says, "When they were fully awake," or better still, as the Revised Standard Version records, "heavy with sleep but kept awake," "they saw his glory and the two men that stood with him."



Not only did they see great things, but they heard a tremendous conversation. Literally with Moses and Elijah, Jesus talked of His exodus. Humanity is being weighed in the balance. Christ might have gone home and done no injustice to man from the mountain of prayer. Had He made His exit from the earth at this event, the message declared today by every preacher would be, "Once we came close to having a way of salvation, but God saw through His Son the extreme wickedness of man and decided not to complete that which He began." But, thanks be to the grace of God, no man has to declare a message like that. But sermon joins song and shouts triumphantly, "The Way of the Cross Leads Home." The decisions and the counsels of heaven previously reached and now all the more emphasized here, was discussed by these men as the tremendous work of Christ was yet to be fulfilled.

Now, do you see at the moment of sagging spirits, when the disciples were watching the desertion of Christ by the crowds, when their future looked dark and dim—at that precise moment appears the transfiguration of our Lord, not only to prove, but to inspire those disciples to greater zeal. The sense of timing possessed by Jesus in knowing precisely when and how to make His appearances, is one of the comforts that every Christian possesses. And as one has said of Peter, "Ever ready, though not ever wise," Peter spoke saying, "Master, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." A question or two, please. Moses, dead for 1400 years and Elijah, gone for 900, yet Peter knew them by name! How could he? Was he told, being introduced, did he absorb it from the conversation, or is the appearance after death so apparent of the individuality of a man that Peter knew by sight? Although I do not know how Peter



understood the identity of the group to which he spoke, I can never forget what he was trying to do. He sets a standard for every preacher. Constantly men who tell the story of Christ's gospel are the recipients of blessings from their brethren, kindnesses over and over extended. Would to God we could learn from Peter, that although you cannot repay in kind, there should be enough gratitude in your heart to at least acknowledge the gift and try to do something in a measure of reciprocity. Peter was so compelled that in some means that is righteous and honorable he must say, "Thank you" for the marvelousness of the scene that he witnesses. Would it not be wonderful if men today manifested the same gratitude and generosity! Could it be that that's a part of the reason the divine rebuke of Peter's action was so gentle, for it says of him, he spoke "not knowing what he said."

For while he thus spake, a cloud came—and I wonder if it was the shekinah? Milton speaks of those "dark with excess of light." Brilliance of light can as easily blind you as can darkness and so brilliant was the appearance of this cloud that they could not penetrate fully that which transpired. Yet there came a voice from the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." Christ can never be relegated to the level of man. He does not stand on a par with the law and the prophets, but alone and preeminent above every one, as the one voice in this age, Christ speaks. As to the worthiness of Him, listen to these messages: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand

of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3). "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4). "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Peter 1:16-19).

Jesus only! In the shadow  
Of the clouds so chill and dim,  
We are clinging, loving, trusting  
He with us and we with Him.  
All unseen, yet ever nigh,  
Jesus only all our cry.

Jesus only! In the glory  
When the shadows all have flown,  
Seeing Him in all His beauty,  
Satisfied with Him alone.  
Then, among the ransomed throng,  
Jesus only all our song.

Although my imagination may have some difficulty recapturing the fullness of the scene of that which transpired,

I have no difficulty whatever in duplicating in my own experiences the following action: "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." It is a fearful thing to know that you stand in the holy presence of God. The contrast of infinite and finite, spirit and flesh, holiness and sin, could never more pungently appear. And like them, we fall afraid, feeling "be merciful to me, a sinner." But we need not always grovel in the dust, for there comes one to us, His name is Jesus, will you note His pleas? "And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid."

Do you want similarly to behold His glory? Then will you remember "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In simple obedience to His will, will you allow Jesus to touch you, lift you, and lead you to the land where, "there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5).

## THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

Wendell Broom

The many opportunities in Nigeria today, and all that shall be said about them, are merely one chapter in the larger volume entitled "WORLD EVANGELISM." The day of *World Evangelism* must come. Jesus set the worldwide theme for the church 1900 years ago, and any program of evangelism and mission work short of "worldwide" must fall short of the theme of Jesus and disappoint the will of God. The leaders of the world governments have come to a "One World Consciousness": in the fields of politics, science, travel and military tactics, theories and principles of operation have been revised to consider the entire world as one community. The church must either change its localized policies of evangelism to face its worldwide responsibility, or carry the shame of falling behind even the wisdom of the world.

The Nigerian chapter in this "World Evangelism" book is merely one. Some chapters have already been started, entitled "The Work in Italy," "—in Germany," "—in the Philippines," "—in Japan," "—in Denmark" and many others. All these chapters are in process of preparation; already there will be souls in heaven from the work done, but the strong independent native churches are not yet accomplished. The achievement of the last fifteen years in growing mission programs among the churches of Christ is certainly gratifying and encouraging, until we pause to consider that over 10,000 churches of Christ in America have so far sent less than 100 men outside the continental United States. If it is



true that faith without works is dead, then we must stand under the condemnation: of the 10,000 churches, more than 9,900 of them do *not* believe that God expects them to preach the Gospel to foreign nations. The time has come when we must not be content to look at maps of the United States when we plan mission work. We must begin buying world globes as a basis of our missionary planning.

Now, I must bore you with some details and statistics, which like budgets and taxes, are universally disliked, but necessary. Nigeria is equal in size to the state of Oklahoma, with Texas added. The population is over thirty million, all of whom have black skin. Nigeria is a sovereign state, within the commonwealth of British nations. Public education is growing rapidly, but only about 15% of eligible children are currently enrolled, with the remaining 85% of the population remaining illiterate. The living standard is very low with wages for unskilled labor running at about 25 to 40 cents per day. The life expectancy is low, probably around 45 years. Religion is about 50% denominational Christianity and 50% pagan superstition (idolatry, ju-ju, etc.). Often this 50-50 division does not run in large population blocks, but within one man's own convictions, he believes about half in a form of Christianity and about half in paganism.

The history of the church in Nigeria is thrilling—and strengthens our faith in the power of the Word to generate life. Shortly after World War II, a Nigerian ex-police constable, C. A. O. Essien, learned the truth through a correspondence course from an American congregation. He immediately began teaching others and spreading the doctrine he believed. Within two years, he and his co-workers had established about 20 congregations. In answer to their pleas for American workers to assist them, Boyd Reese and Eldred Echols came in 1950 and spent a short time teaching and

training them. In 1952, Howard Horton and Jimmie Johnson arrived to spend two years working among them. In the five following years, other workers came and went. Presently the work stands in this condition: in a radius of fifty miles, there are over 250 congregations of the Lord's church. Monthly we see reports of baptisms numbering anywhere from 100 to 400 souls, some by the American evangelists and some by Nigerians. New congregations are reported beginning—about one each week. Half of the time of the American workers is devoted to the training of young Nigerian men in the Word, equipping them to go out among their own people and to teach and preach the truth. To date, 100 such young men have completed two years of full time study in Bible (totaling 1600 hours of class time, not counting outside lesson preparation). Over a hundred more young men are now enrolled in this training program.

One of the fringe benefits of working in West Africa for Christ is the privilege of witnessing the **SPONTANEOUS EXPANSION OF THE GOSPEL** and church of Christ. This spontaneous growing force within the church can be illustrated by analogy. If you were faced with the responsibility of feeding the 200,000,000 people of Africa, you would ask, "How is it possible?" With that task before you which would you choose: three shiploads of canned rabbit meat, or one rabbit family? If you were impatient and short sighted, you might choose the three shiploads of canned rabbit meat, because that is immediate and will relieve the need today. But when that supply is gone, you'll need to call for three more shiploads to be imported, and then three more and three more—the supply will have to continue to come in from outside.

On the other hand, if you're patient and have confidence in the generative power of a mother and father rabbit, you

would choose one little rabbit family. Within a given time, growing from those two, there would be unlimited quantities of food for the people. Now this will take a little more time, but once established, there will be no need of importation and outside supply, because the generating force is in the country, and is spontaneously growing of itself.

So much for the analogy. In Nigeria, several denominational missions have chosen the quickest way. They have imported equipment, institutions, European workers, European funds—all alien factors to the Nigerian people, and they have made a good showing—hospitals, schools, clinics,—but all supported from outside the country and attached to the people. Should the political picture change and these foreign workers and factors be excluded, it is very doubtful that this work could survive. It would be seen to be sterile and barren—as incapable of reproducing itself as canned rabbit's meat. This is what happened in China—the generations of mission work there were external and alien in nature, not partaking of the elements of the native population. Out of this grew resentments and shallowness which made a natural invitation for the communistic infiltration which was a "People's movement." The result is that most of the heroic labors of those workers have been lost, like the wood, hay, and stubble of I Cor. 3:11-15.

In Nigeria, the workers envision instead, a Nigerian work among Nigerian churches, manned by Nigerians, governed by Nigerian elders, supported by Nigerian brethren, spreading by its own regenerative power, receiving its spiritual strength from God directly, without the necessity of American missionaries to mediate God's grace to the people. We are working toward having a group of Nigerian *children of God*, not nephews of God.

Jesus built the church to be this way—with its generative



power inherent in the Body through the Word. This is the teaching of the parable of the Seed, the Living Water, etc. When the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad by persecution, one apostle didn't need to go with each little group who went out. They were individually children of God, begotten by the Divine Seed, and having life in them. Wherever they went that life germinated and left another growing organism of faith. The Holy Spirit was working in them and through them—the individual Christians. No foreign or alien power from Jerusalem was necessary to keep it alive—in fact all the outside powers were working mightily to kill and destroy that faith. But that faith in Christ and all that it brought to the believer was more precious than life itself and rather than surrender the faith, they would die the martyr's death. When such a faith as that burns in human breasts, it cannot be kept down—it has a spontaneous growing power.

Look again at Paul as he went out to spread that faith. When he left Ephesus, or Corinth, the church was in the people and of the people. Even if no other worker ever came from Jerusalem or Antioch, that faith would live on. Each church had its own leadership, exhortation, teaching, discipline—all these were now springing up from the native citizens, fed by faith in Christ and guided by the instruction they had received. Paul was still interested in them, vitally so; he wrote them letters, he sent people to see about them, he prayed about them and was deeply concerned over them. But they weren't dependent upon him, for Paul had taught them to give, to sacrifice, to deny themselves, to work, to pray, to study, to govern their own congregations—the seed of life and the ability to reproduce themselves spiritually was all contained in the local Body.

This same living power—the SPONTANEOUS EX-



PANSION of the church—will operate today in world evangelism (as well as home evangelism) if we will only allow it. Too often we hinder that mighty power by getting in its way. This sometimes happens by our too-weakened views of the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, by our impractical views of the church as a faltering body which must be helped along with human crutches and aids. This spontaneous expansion in foreign mission work is often hindered by the feeling on the part of the missionary that for the sake of the doctrinal, moral and organizational purity of the new churches, the missionary must keep things "under his control." Sometimes American missionaries have upset the native economy with the bringing in of their American riches—maybe it doesn't seem rich to you, but in the eyes of the rest of the world American standards are definitely RICH. Another hindrance to this quality of spontaneous expansion is a shocking tendency of American people to think that "help" to foreign brethren can only be given in terms of money or material things. Probably the greatest obstacle we can put in the way of the growing truth is to deprive these young Christians of their need to sacrifice, to serve, to work—yes, even to suffer for their faith. Discipleship grows on just such food as these things—self-denial, prayerful service, desperate trusting in God when every human source and knowledge has been exhausted—out of such materials is mature faith built. But when the benevolent missionary steps in, well equipped with American knowledge, wisdom, experience, and a natural place of leadership among the poor young native Christians, he supplies all the initiative, and the native Christians let him. The result is they are robbed of their rightful struggles in developing those things for themselves. The zeal, the enthusiasm, the vigilance, the driving power then must come from the missionary, and the kingdom can-

not grow beyond his limits of physical endurance. In this way, God's faithful co-worker is actually tying back the kingdom by limiting it to his own personality, strength and energy. How much better (even though a bit slower) if he would step back, allow the native Christians to learn by doing, develop their abilities, exercise their faith, stimulate their zeal, and thus develop unlimited capabilities for the expansion of the church. God needs men who will be willing to step aside and let the power of God zoom on past them—far faster than they could keep up with.

Beware of extreme-ism here. Let no one think that this will eliminate the foreign missionary—or free the home churches from the responsibility of sending men out. The place of the overseas preacher is the same as a father training his son. The father could drive the nail or saw the wood faster and better if the son would just step back out of the way. But this will leave the son untrained. The son can't do it completely alone. The father needs to show, guide, suggest, and above all preserve the initiative and the interest of the child while he learns. This skillful mixture of learning and independence was kept by Paul in the churches he planted, and must be kept by modern foreign missionaries today.

Examples of this spontaneous expansion can be frequently seen in Nigeria. The very origin of the Nigerian work was just this—having grown to over twenty churches before any Americans were there. We have seen it continue to spread—into the Cameroons by a few plantation workers, into the Yoruba nation through a photographer's apprentice, into Ghana through personal correspondence. If we watch for such growth and assist it cautiously and carefully, we can see World Evangelism in our generation. It is very easy, however, to smother and choke this spontaneous quality, like an overbearing mother can ruin her son's first boy scout hike

with overshoes and nose drops. We are striving to keep it growing in and of itself, without imposing foreign accessories and customs which will cause it to bog down—simple native faith lumbering under the weight of foreign institutions, like David in Saul's armor.

WORLD EVANGELISM in our generation is possible, —more possible than in New Testament times. We have better technical equipment—planes, radio, TV, printing presses. The remaining factor is dedication in the hearts of God's people. The Government won't do it, nor will the Odd Fellows, the Boy Scouts, the Christian Colleges, the Masonic Lodge—none of them. If the world is to believe in Christ, the CHURCH must do it. With the thousands now believing, dedicated to the sacrificial sending of the Word; with missionaries understanding the spontaneous growth and spread of the Word under native initiative; with the help of God invoked by unceasing prayers of the saints—the conversion of the world in our generation is perfectly possible. God speed that day.

## THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

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Dow Merritt

Africa is a very large piece of land that has given shores to two seas and two oceans. In the north are the Mediterranean and Red seas; on the east lies the Indian Ocean, and on the west coast the Atlantic Ocean is found. From the northern-most bit of Africa to its southern tip is a distance of more than 5,000 miles, and it is more than 4,000 miles wide. The coasts rise quickly in South Africa. The coastal mountains drain the clouds so that the high plateau is quite dry for a great part of the year, depending on the direction of the winds. Dense populations are found along the great rivers, but because of the poor soil and the lack of rain, much of the interior is sparsely peopled.

The cities are either sea-ports or mining centers. Johannesburg has gold, Kimberley has diamonds; Pretoria, the capital of the Union of South Africa, has both gold and diamonds. Port Elizabeth is the wool market and the center of the motor-car industry; Cape Town distributes fruit, wine and fish. Durban is a shipping center and the whaling port, some manufacturing is done; rubber and crude oil are processed.

There are four times as many black people in the Union of South Africa as there are Europeans, and so it happens that the white people become the superintendents of ten teeming million black laborers. The foremanship of this crew falls to the man of mixed race, called in South Africa, the "colored people." The colored man lives at half the white man's scale of living. The native black man receives a



quarter of the colored man's wage, but is housed and fed by his employer or else he is given a cash living allowance and left to shift for himself. In many cases he builds a shack for himself out of old sacks and pieces of timber, lengths of old iron roofing and paper packing cases, in out-of-the-way places such as an abandoned mine dumps or along drainage lakes. Some money-loving farmers will allow such houses to be built on their waste land for a monthly tax.

Labor is divided into three incompatible classes, the first two of which must be further divided into Afrikaners, English, Malay and Indian. The native black remains pure.

The black man remains pure. Pure and dissatisfied. Pure and in transition. He knows what he wants to leave, and he is ready to follow anyone politically, religiously or morally who will take him away from where he is at present.

But South African native reserves cannot supply all of the labor that is needed to carry on the industries of the country and so they recruit men from the northern countries and from the Portuguese colonies. These people work for periods of six months and then have to be returned to their home countries where they may make new contracts and go back to work after a time.

Some twenty-two years ago I tried with my little might to get the vision before the church of the opportunity presented in the cities of South Africa for the propagation of the gospel, and, whether what I had to say had anything to do with it, about ten years ago work was begun in Johannesburg, and other works have now sprung up as separate efforts in nearly all of the large cities of the country. But, brethren, as far as the opportunity with the native people is concerned we have missed our chance. The door is closed.

Almost all of the missionaries working with black people in

South Africa are foreigners. Quite a great number of these have no sympathy with the government native policy and have made their opinions public. Some went so far as to publish books against the government-in-office, and to try to re-open closed cases against natives, etc., and some were out and out communists, purported. Then since we are Americans, and our government's policy of integration is exactly opposite to the South African government's policy of apartheid, we are doubly unwelcome as teachers of native Africans. We, a "denomination" almost unknown to the government of South Africa, are not being given permits to enter the country to preach to the Native. But how can we blame the South African, who sees his way of life slipping away from him, if he practices self-preservation?

Yet we may still preach to the European people. There is no reason why a citizen of the Union of South Africa cannot preach the gospel to anyone in the country. So our brethren in South Africa need to be encouraged and helped to develop local leadership and in that way reach the native blackman in the whole of southern Africa. Let us not delay in this matter. Let us make a *concerted* effort, and let the *results* do the springing up.

Let me explain what I mean by reminding you of the life and work of Brother John Sherriff. He was a stone mason who taught his own workmen to read the Bible, and filled them so full of the love of God that when they returned to their home from the city they went preaching the gospel and established churches in their villages. Brother Sherriff did not go to Africa to preach the gospel though he was a Christian, he went to make his fortune. As a magic fortune did not come his way he settled down to his trade in the town of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. In the course of his work he made many great monuments. He has monuments in North-

ern Rhodesia too. For one he brought a great stone all the way from the Matopo Hills and set it up, unscratched, in the memorial court for the Great War dead, at Bulawayo. He operated two quarries as well as his shop in town. To carry on all of this work he employed from sixty to a hundred native men from all parts of central Africa. As is the custom he had to provide food and shelter for these people.

One night as Brother Sherriff went on his rounds of inspection, through a crack in the door of one of the houses where he kept native men he saw a light and went in the house to see what was going on. He found that a Native had melted ends of candles to mould a useful one for himself and was using this to try to read a few leaves of a New Testament that he had found. This was an inspiration to Brother Sherriff. He determined then and there to teach his boys to read the Bible. Through his efforts he converted his partner, and the two of them, up to the death of his friend, taught the boys, and built at their own expense a house, for holding services and for carrying on their class work in the native quarters.

The first one of these boys to go home and report back to Brother Sherriff what he was doing was from Nyassaland. Because he was the first, and because, too, he had a vision of what was taking place, John Sherriff called this man "The Mustard Seed." But there were others; one went to Mushonaland where Nhowe is located, one went to Senkobo, where Sinda is; one went to Mukunie, where for many years we have had the only *organized* congregation of natives that I have heard of in Central Africa.

Out of Brother Sherriff's efforts also came the work that is carried on by the New Zealand Church of Christ in Southern Rhodesia, and the English Church of Christ's work in

Nyassaland. Brother Hollis and Brother Hill rode bicycles all the way from Bulawayo to Zomba to open a work for the Lord.

The cause of Christ is a great cause, and whatever is done for it will go on going on. And Brother Sherriff's work is going on.

There is the pattern. Let us concentrate our work. Instead of each man doing ten men's work away out by himself, why not train and put to work ten local men for every one of us; and if some of them come from distant lands, well, so much the better.

I think that most experienced missionaries are agreed that any work carried on by native workers must be supported by local money if that work is to be of lasting good. I want to refer to the work now being done in Southern Rhodesia by Foy Short, Henry Ewing and others as an example of what can be done. Ten years it has been since that work started.

The European church at Bulawayo split over the music question after a year or more was spent in trying to keep it together. Foy went with those who could not longer fellowship the instrumental group, and for several years this small group met in homes, determined not to go to their American brethren for money. Now they have financed their own building, and have financed the *enlarging* of it too. They have established 25 self-supported African churches. The "Home" church of more than 100 white members are also partly supporting a white missionary at Namwianga Mission.

I have been with the work in Northern Rhodesia since 1926. I have seen workers come and go. Very few left the field because they wanted to; I think more have died on the field than have gone away. I believe a missionary should go



for life. It is a true principle. Professional men make their work their life's work or they fail!

After a few years on the field a person begins to be able to know and understand the people he is working with and they have begun to understand and appreciate him. Let the new worker *look* first, and if he is willing to pay the price he will be a useful servant of the Master. If the missionary is not willing to sacrifice he cannot do very effective work.

Some have gone to the mission field who were misfits; some have been downright bad. I have had brethren ask, "How can we know who is fit to go?" Well, I think you can know who ought *not* to go. The prospect's history should be reviewed. Old hunters say that you cannot tell who will stand when attacked by a lion or an elephant. A man might be a wonderful sportsman but when the testing time comes, run away. And so with the missionary. The field must be his proving ground.

On the Rhodesian field the new man cannot be a *specialist*, doing just the things that he can do, or that he best likes to do. He must be willing to do what comes to hand with what he has at hand.

We have carried on our work with poor tools for years. At Kabanga at this moment 240 boys and girls are being taught in three rooms that are 15x20 feet and have chapel in two sessions in a room only twice as big. The boarding boys have lived in houses that have dirt floors, grass roofs, and with no ceilings, doors or windows. They have had to share among three 80 square feet of floor space. We've managed to keep more or less in the grace of the inspectors, but it is pure grace.

And yet, from Kabanga have originated the greater part of the native men who have become the leaders in our work.

We have known all along that we could do a much more lasting work were we able to teach the girls as well as the boys. Up until the past few years we have not been able to get many girls; now they come, and they want to board. But there are no facilities for boarding girls at Kabanga. It is the Christian girls that become the wives of Christian men and raise and train the Christian family; such families are the preachers who will take the gospel to Africa.

At Kabanga we care for the sick, mend plows, write letters, visit and gossip with the people all with the idea of gaining contacts, and the confidence of the people. We also preach and teach. Sometimes it is discouraging to the point of tears. But when we stand away from the work and look at what has happened over the years, we see that the progress is almost beyond belief. There are two sessions of the Sunday morning meeting. Young men go out on Lord's Day to preach. Young mothers dress themselves and their children and go to church. There are 25 meeting places within a few miles of Kabanga. The whole community, Christians and others, have moved forward in health and prosperity.

Now with the new Kareba Dam flooding 10,000 square miles of farm lands, some of these people are to be relocated near Kabanga. The government wants us to add 2 years to our school curriculum. We have great opportunities in this. If we cannot do this soon the Roman Catholics can. I wonder what you think?

Would it be the right thing to spend some of the Lord's money for school buildings and living quarters for boarders; for a decent water supply, and for roads? Should we make an effort to get two young couples on a field that has had no young recruits from the USA for, can you believe it, 8 years?

In the Southern Province we have at this time 44 native

men teachers, two women teachers and 5 women helpers. All of these are thoroughly Christian. We have many native preachers, four of which are partly supported locally. There are something like 3,000 Christians. More than 2,300 young people, nine hundred of them girls, are in school where they get daily Bible training.

Will you help us?





## **Section III**

### **Panel Discussions**



## AUTHORITY OF THE ELDER

### HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOUND DOCTRINE

By Thomas O. Davis  
Liberty, Texas

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20:28. No obligation, given to the elders, is more important than to watch over the flock of God. When a man accepts this sacred trust by becoming an elder, he accepts with it the responsibility to shoulder the most sacred obligation known to man; namely, **TO GUARD AND PROPERLY DIRECT THE TEACHING OF GOD’S HOLY WORD.**

Elders have the solemn charge to keep God’s word and His service pure from all innovations of men. It becomes their duty to feed the flock with the pure milk of the word of God, so the church may grow spiritually. As it is impossible to live physically without material food, so in like manner spiritual food is needed for spiritual growth and progress. And as contaminated food can cause the physical death of a man, so can man’s spiritual life become endangered, if he is allowed to partake of perverted spiritual food, namely, false doctrine. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1: 6, 7.

Paul's charge to Timothy was **PREACH THE WORD**. The Jerusalem Church continued in the "Apostles' doctrine." Again we have Paul's admonition to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:16.

Since the elders have the oversight of the flock, it becomes their duty to know at all times that which is being taught in every phase of the teaching program of the church. Those who teach, as well as those who attend to other duties, delegated to them by the elders, need to know their duty toward the elders. They should submit to the authority of the elders. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Hebrews 13:17.

Paul warned the elders, at Ephesus, that false teachers would arise and they were admonished to watch. False teachers have plagued the church in every generation. The present generation is no exception. False teachers should not be permitted to remain in the fellowship of the church. The solemn charge is "Teach no other doctrine." 1 Timothy 1:3. The apostle John says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11. Paul says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them (turn away from them—American Revised Version). For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Romans 16:17, 18.



The elders of the church must be alert to detect hobby riders, sowers of discord and all other false teachers. If an elder is true to his charge to watch over the flock, he must keep such false teachers out of the pulpit and see that their false doctrine, or their hobbies are not taught to the church, in any way.

It is altogether possible, that a false teacher, or a hobby rider, may be evasive enough, and not let the elders know his true position in regard to certain matters. If that is true, and the preacher is employed and then lets false teaching become part of his sermons, or if his conduct should be unbecoming to a gospel preacher, it then becomes the obligation of the elders to immediately counsel with each other. Furthermore, it becomes their duty to investigate the case, and quietly gather all the facts. Should their finding support the evidence of what they have heard personally, it then becomes their duty to restore the guilty brother. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Galatians 6:1. The elders should certainly reach a unanimous agreement, before a conference is held with the preacher.

A meeting, that is called between the elders and preacher that they may counsel together, should certainly be approached with much prayer, because souls are at stake. More often than not, a brother can be persuaded to repent. However, if the brother will not repent, there is no other alternative than to withdraw fellowship. "A factious man, after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Titus 3:10.

All these things should be done with a right spirit and in

love. "Let all that ye do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14. The motive should be two-fold; first, to correct and save the preacher; and then to save those who were influenced by his false teaching, or by his ungodly life. When this action has been taken, the elders have fulfilled their obligation, in this matter, to the congregation over which they have the oversight.

Do the elders have an obligation to the brotherhood in this instance? There is a relationship that exists between all Christians everywhere, of having a mutual interest in each other's welfare. Peter admonished us to "Love the brotherhood." 1 Peter 2:17. Also our Lord taught a rule to live by in respect to our brother wherever he may live. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12. If a preacher is discharged for teaching a false doctrine or for misconduct, in any way, love for the brotherhood and for the cause of Christ would obligate the elders to use whatever means necessary to inform their brothers in Christ.

There have been instances, when elders would give a preacher a recommendation, just to get him away from their own community. This should never be done, because in effect, that would be bidding him God's speed and thereby become a partaker in his evil deeds.

We have scriptural examples of Christians, who were marked, their names given, the sin committed named, and the warning given to beware of them. Note the following:

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made ship-

wreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." 1 Timothy 1:18-20.

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus: Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." 2 Timothy 2:16-18.

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." 2 Timothy 4:10.

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." 2 Timothy 4: 14, 15.

Additional scriptural references are: 3 John 9, 10; and 2 Timothy 1:15.

## TENURE OF SERVICE

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F. B. Shepherd

The overall theme today is: "The Authority of the Elder." The particular phase assigned to me is the "tenure of service" of an elder. This of course means, when, if at all, an elder may be deposed, or requested to surrender his stewardship. At the very outset I shall substitute "Bishop" or "Pastor" for that of "Elder," because in my thinking both of these titles are so much more expressive of the office and work; the stewardship, assigned by the Holy Spirit to those men we usually designate "Elders." I fear that in our day too many congregations of our Lord are unscripturally organized. A church ignores the law of its Lord when it installs one as a bishop who does not possess the Holy Spirit ordained qualifications. It becomes openly defiant of its Lord should it seek to close the tenure of service of one who possesses the New Testament required attributes.

Christianity is very definitely a personal, individual matter. Each child of God "To his own Lord he standeth or falleth." In the case of "Bishops," "Pastors," these are individuals the congregation has selected to perform certain functions necessary to the proper growth, development, spiritual health, and permanence of the local body. If the procedure of appointing such persons was carried out in keeping with the commands of the Holy Spirit, each man was selected and ordained because he possessed—at least in a relative degree of excellence—certain Christlike characteristics. Are we to suppose that almost, or altogether, each of these



men, originally such exemplary characters, have simultaneously become purveyors of "false doctrine," or at least in accord with the proclamation of such?

However, let that be as it may, there still remains the fact that the New Testament does not provide for any wholesale administration of discipline. In all cases of false teaching or immoral conduct only the individual can be tried, convicted, and disciplined; or exonerated, be he bishop or any one of the members. Only as an individual does he become an object of "reproof, rebuke, exhortation, with all long-suffering and teaching." If one or more of the bishops can be convicted scripturally of standing for false doctrine, or is a party to the teaching of false doctrine, each individual must be dealt with according to the New Testament prescriptions with reference to false teachers. Whether a bishop or not he would be no different from the man of First Corinthians 5: 1-5; Second Corinthians 2:5-11.

In the matter of the relationship of the brethren to the bishops, the Holy Spirit wrote several things that have to do with the attitude the saints in general are to manifest toward these overseers. The congregation as a whole is commanded to respect, love, honour, help, encourage, and obey the pastors. According to Hebrews 13: 17, the Holy Spirit commanded the saints to be subject to the men "that rule over you." In First Timothy 5: 1, the exhortation is: "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father." In verse seventeen it is "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." In verses nineteen and twenty: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses." "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear."

First Timothy 5: 19 most assuredly involves an examina-

tion of the accusation against an elder; and, if it is false the accused one must be exonerated. If the charge is true such a guilty one is to be rebuked publicly. Surely no honest person would conclude anything other than that each elder, whether one or forty, should have a separate trial. Then in the light of the evidence and the New Testament teaching, either be exonerated or rebuked: "In the sight of all." Then there are such passages as Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." I take it these scriptures are intended to apply to all children of God; bishops as well as others. Still this does not command withdrawal proceedings, nor even deposition from the office immediately and summarily. Certainly, where guilt is established a refusal to repent and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance would eventually render it impossible, after considerable reproof, rebuke, and exhortation, for the congregation any longer to recognize a guilty bishop as scripturally qualified to remain and be acknowledged an overseer.

What a blessed thing it would be if we children of God could learn to view sin as the Christ did. We should consider sin as something that must be grappled with and defeated. There is no reason for allowing oneself to become terrifically startled, or terribly shocked into some drastic act it may be difficult to correct later. Sin must be met as something which hurts the spirit, and can result in damning the soul eternally. It is something that, so far as possible, must be corrected with real love for the sinner. The New Testament tells us the "Wages of sin is death." But it considers every palliating contingency, and extenuating circumstance, and deals with the transgressor in a large, noble, kindly way, always manifested in the attitude of the Christ, and taught

in the New Testament. The Christian communion is a "Brotherhood." Personal friendship, and brotherly love are always as imperative upon the part of all as church fellowship at times of worship. Sympathy, toleration, forgiveness, understanding, and restoration are just as imperative as withdrawal of fellowship and excommunication. All such must be exercised with meekness, gentleness and long-suffering, yet with firmness, justice and mercy. Unfortunately many of us oscillate between the two extremes of rigorous severity that refuses the grace of repentance to the sinner, and burns the bridges behind him; thus cutting off his return forever; and the undue, unjustified, and dangerous laxity and weak sentimentality that cannot tell vice from virtue; calls wrong right; and refuses to see and acknowledge evil in anyone.

Shall we not remember that the erring child of God, regardless of whether he be a Bishop, Pastor, Evangelist, or "just one of the brethren" is not an "Alien sinner." He is a child of God, a brother in Christ, a son or daughter of the household of God. He has been adopted by God into this family because he has "Obeyed the Gospel." These Bishops or Pastors: have not apostatized. They may have "Erred from the truth," manifestly. Still there must be a remembrance of a relationship sustained to God, Christ, and fellow children of God. The primary business and burden of every member of the church is "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"; "convert a sinner from the error of his way"; so "save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins." Shall we not remember that Ephesians 4:3 and James 5:19, 20 are addressed to children of God with reference to their attitude toward other such persons. Yes, beloved, I am persuaded if "The elders are standing for false doctrine against the entire

membership" each one of those elders should become the object of the deepest concern of "the entire membership," and every effort consistent with New Testament teaching should be made by the "entire membership" to "restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted." Wholesale action against a "Group" is not likely to get the job done that God wants done in the way that God wants it done. A poet wrote:—

“Once, in my childhood days long gone and dead,  
I watched a supper table being spread  
By busy hands; and eagerly I said—  
Wishing to please—‘Please, may I bring the bread?’  
Gently, reproving, a kind voice said,  
‘Are your hands clean?’—  
Abashed, I hung my head.”

An infinitely greater poet said: “With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured unto you . . . Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” Matthew 7: 4,5. “He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.”



## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEACON

### THE AREA OF HIS WORK

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Hulen L. Jackson

Churches of Christ are endeavoring to restore the church of the New Testament. In doing this we must have the government or organization for the congregations characteristic of the churches in New Testament days. This government calls for elders and deacons in the churches. Virtually all churches of Christ today do have elders and deacons. We have given much study of late to the qualifications, responsibilities, and the work of elders. But, very little thought and time have we given, I fear, to the responsibilities and work of the deacons in the churches. It could be said, perhaps, that right here is the weakest point in our efforts toward a restoration of New Testament Christianity. Can we say that in many churches deacons are not functioning as deacons should in a New Testament church?

It is sad but true that many deacons today in many congregations do not realize or understand what they are expected to do as deacons. In some few cases deacons are "running the church," but in most cases deacons as such are doing but little. It is a common experience for a preacher to be asked wherever he goes, "What are deacons supposed to do?" Surely God didn't intend for the office of deacon to be merely a place of honor. The office of deacon is a place of honor but not an honorary position. If deacons are not supposed to make decisions for which the normal and average member of the church would not be qualified and if the deacons are not given responsibilities not assigned to

just any other member of the congregation, then why should God require qualifications before being appointed to the office? Study carefully 1 Timothy 3: 8-13. The church in Philippi had deacons along with the bishops or elders of that congregation. (Phil. 1: 2) It is generally agreed that the Jerusalem church had deacons and that Acts 6 gives a record of their selection. These seven men were given definite responsibilities in the work of that congregation. To be selected they had to possess certain qualifications. Notice Acts 6: 3.

The word deacon in the New Testament means a servant or minister. In a broad sense every member of the church is a deacon or servant of the church. But, in a special sense these men selected by the church and thus so honored by them assume certain and regular duties of service to the congregations. They are hence deacons of the church. That same word occurs many times in the New Testament such as in Matt. 23: 11; Eph. 6: 21; and Romans 16:1 meaning servant or minister. Any member asked by the elders to attend to a special task in the church's work would in this broad sense be a deacon. However, in the functioning of any congregation there are many and varied tasks that must be cared for by someone. God ordains that the church have deacons as permanent servants to look after these needs. Eusebius (270-340 A.D.) in his Ecclesiastical History, Book 2, chapter 1, refers to "the office of deacon."

Sometimes it is taught that the elders have the spiritual oversight of the congregation and the deacons have the material oversight of it. A moment's serious meditation will show that this could not be scripturally true. I have known of cases where the deacons contended for this position and caused serious troubles in the church thereby. If the deacons have complete say as to money matters then the

deacons can "run the church affairs." The elders could make a decision and the deacons could veto it by not "voting the money" to finance the project. The deacons could "fire" and likely have in some instances "fired" a preacher whom the elders wanted to retain by merely cutting off his pay since they have oversight of the money. If this position were so, the deacons would be deciding how much we should spend on benevolent work, on mission work, on local expenses, etc., and thus would be deciding virtually all policies of the local church. The New Testament does not teach this. The Bible does not say that the deacons are overseers of the church. Elders are that. Remember, the deacon is the servant of the church. Elders oversee and deacons serve in a well organized and scripturally functioning church of Christ. Any other attitude is sinful and wrong and will cause trouble eventually in the Lord's church.

Much friction arises between elders and deacons because deacons do not know what is expected of them; because deacons are assuming too much authority; and because elders do not want the deacons to have any authority at all. This is truly a shame indeed. Such ought not to be. My limited experiences as a preacher have taught me that a major portion of such troubles arise when the elders do not make it clear to the deacons what is expected of them. Deacons are selected but never given any definite work to do in the congregation. They are anxious to go to work and many times will overstep their authority as deacons just because they do not know for sure what the elders expect of them. Do not blame the deacons for this situation. The elders really are to blame for it. Tell the deacons what their jobs are. Discuss their work with them. Counsel with them about it. Elders should be elders and deacons should be deacons. When elders function as deacons they are wrong and when



deacons function as elders they are wrong. Sincerity forces us to admit that in some churches today deacons are functioning right along with the elders as overseers of the local church or else they are not functioning at all. Either situation is unscriptural and should be corrected.

David Lipscomb in his comments on 1 Timothy 3:13 (Gospel Advocate Series, page 151) expresses the thought that a man serving as a deacon grows into the qualifications and fitness for the work of an elder. Maybe Paul is saying this in that verse. The line between the material and the spiritual cannot always be drawn. It is very fine. The deacon in serving the church in a material manner naturally develops himself spiritually. How could a man be developed and trained to become some day an elder of the church better than serving that church for some time as a deacon? In any busy church the elders will have far more to do than they can accomplish. Why should they not request the deacons to assist them in these spiritual matters also? They will and they do in many places. Just because the work of deacons is primarily of a material nature does not mean they could not serve the church in a spiritual sense too. There might be the danger at this point of the deacon gradually assuming a place of oversight and thus be usurping the work of the elders and this should be constantly guarded against. For example, elders as pastors of the flock "watch for our souls." In a church of virtually any size the elders can not personally do all of this work needed. They can and do ask the deacons and others to assist them in visiting, checking upon, and talking with the members concerning their souls and spiritual welfare. As a deacon I would not be usurping the authority of the elders when I visited some indifferent church member and talked with him about his duties. All Christians should be interested in such



work. Elders should take the lead and supervise this work but deacons often do in a fine manner assist them. Why not? If and when deacons are kept busy in the Lord's work the selection of new elders from time to time for the congregation will become an easier task. Where is a better place to find prospective elders than among a group of deacons busy in the Kingdom?

Here at Trinity Heights in Dallas where I have preached for several years we have eliminated the friction almost completely between elders and deacons by following this plan. Two years ago in a meeting of the elders and deacons they made a list of the jobs they felt that deacons should look after in our local work. This work was classified under twelve headings with a deacon as chairman of each committee of deacons. When the deacons meet now the various committees of deacons report on their phases of their work. When a job comes up, that job is assigned to the deacons handling that task. The elders understand and the deacons understand. Two elders meet for a while monthly with the deacons in their meeting and merely make suggestions or pass on to them matters discussed and decided in the elders' meetings. The elders are in this manner outlining the work of the deacons. I don't mean to hold this church up as an ideal congregation but the plan has worked and worked well here. Would you be interested in the list of committees or the classification of the work of deacons among us?

1. Benevolence.
2. Buildings (upkeep).
3. Handling of offerings (counting of the money and the banking details).
4. Communion supplies and the service itself.
5. Baptismal services (assisting the candidates and arranging for the supplies, etc.).
6. Ushering.
7. Tracts kept in racks, visitors' cards, and information cards, etc., kept on hand.
8. Furnishings of the buildings.
9. Advertising.
10. Parking.
- 11.

Details in connection with funerals, and 12. Bible school details (assisting the elder overseeing the Bible school).

Other committees could be appointed or the work subdivided where there are more deacons. One committee could handle just the air-conditioning which is quite a responsibility in a large building. One other committee could look after the aids in visual education such as projectors, screens, films, etc. Most churches have some system of zoning. Why could not deacons handle such details for the elders? The possibilities are nearly unlimited. May the deacons remember always that Jesus said to be great in the kingdom I must become the servant (deacon) of all. God bless our deacons.

## HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ELDERSHIP

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Paul McClung

In order for us to understand the relation that the deacons sustain to the elders, it will be necessary for me to say something about the authority and work of each.

*What are the duties of elders?* 1. The elders are to *tend the flock and exercise the oversight*. In 1 Pet. 5:2 we find these words, "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight" (A.S.V.) The word which is translated "tend" in this passage is sometimes translated "shepherd." 2. The elders are to *feed the church and oversee all of its affairs*. Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." 3. Elders are to *rule over the church and watch in behalf of the souls of the members*. Heb. 13:17 reads, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." Then Paul, in 1 Tim. 5:17, says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." These passages make it clear that the elders have authority over all of the affairs of the local congregation.

The word deacon means a waiter, helper, attendant, servant, or minister. While I am no Greek scholar, I am told that the same Greek word which is translated deacon in 1 Tim. 3:10,13 is translated "serve" in Acts 6:2. This

being true, the deacons are public servants of the church. The seven men mentioned in Acts 6:1-6 were selected to serve tables or look after the Grecian widows who were being neglected. These seven men became the public servants of the church in Jerusalem. They were selected to do a certain work so as to relieve the apostles from these details and allow them to give themselves over entirely to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

*What is the relationship of the deacons to the elders?* They sustain somewhat the same relationship to the elders that the preacher sustains to them. All of the activities of the deacons are under the oversight and jurisdiction of the elders just as all of the activities of the preacher are under their oversight and jurisdiction. We often say that our preachers are a teaching and not a ruling class. And this is true. In the same way it can be said that our deacons are a helping and serving class and not a ruling class. Preachers are to "preach the word," 2 Tim. 4:2. Timothy was told to "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry," 2 Tim. 4:5. But in all of this preachers are under the oversight of the elders. In the same way the deacons are to look after the needy (serve tables) or anything else that the elders may ask them to do. But whatever they do it must be done under the oversight of the elders. While the Bible speaks often of the elders exercising the oversight of the church and overseeing its work and ruling over the church, no such statements are ever made in regard to the deacons. The deacons are under as much obligation to obey the elders as the preacher or any other member of the church.

The relationship of the deacons to the elders is very much like that of the relationship of the principal of a school to the superintendent. It is generally understood that the prin-



principal of a school is to look after certain matters, but yet his work is under the general oversight of the superintendent. It would be foolish for the principal of a school to launch out on a program of activity without first consulting and securing the endorsement of the superintendent. While it is generally understood that the deacons are to look after the benevolent work of the church, its offerings (counting the money and banking it), the buildings, keeping them up, etc., the communion supplies, and ushering, etc., it would be foolish for the deacons to launch out on any program in regard to these things without first advising with and consulting the elders. Just as the superintendent of the school has the right to ask the principal to change his policies in regard to any matter, even so the elders have the right to ask the deacons to make any changes they may see fit for them to make in anything they are doing.

*Often I am asked, "what authority does a deacon have?"* Perhaps it will help to answer this question by asking, What authority does a preacher have in directing the affairs of the church? The only authority that a preacher has is that which may be delegated to him by the elders of the church. Brethren, I believe that the same is true in regard to the deacons. They have no authority other than that which may be delegated to them by the elders. The idea that the deacons have complete and full oversight of the material affairs of the church is error. I have heard of cases where the deacons claimed that they had complete charge of all money matters. I heard of one case where the deacons wanted to get rid of the preacher but the elders wanted him to stay. While the elders asked the preacher to stay, the deacons forced him to leave for they refused to pay him. Such incidents as this will not occur where and when people have a correct understanding of the teaching of the

New Testament on this subject. The elders have as much right to tell the deacons what to do with the money of the church as they do to tell them what to do in any other matter. It is a tragedy when the preacher of a congregation rebels against the authority of the elders of the congregation. It is no less of a tragedy when the deacons rebel against their authority.

It is necessary in any well-regulated family, church, or school that there be a head or deciding voice. In the school the teacher is the ruler, in a family the father is, and in a local church the elders are the rulers. Of course, we all understand that they are to rule only as Christ the head of the church directs.

In view of what has already been said, I think that you can readily see that the elders and deacons are two distinct groups. When the elders and deacons sit down together in a business meeting, they do not have an equal voice in deciding the matters confronting the church. I have been preaching 22 years and have sat in many business meetings and I can speak from experience and say that in many of these meetings the deacons were given an equal voice in deciding the matters discussed. I verily believe that this practice is fraught with danger. In many cases there are more deacons than elders. If the deacons are given an equal voice with the elders then the deacons could easily "rule the church" by their majority.

Now do not misunderstand me: the elders are not to be "lords over God's heritage." If elders are wise they will not make decisions in regard to many matters without first consulting the deacons, the preacher, and even the congregation as a whole. But we must all recognize the fact that it is their right and their duty to make the final decisions in all matters

in regard to the church. The elders and deacons need to meet together often, but there are times when the elders will need to meet alone. There are also times when the deacons will need to meet alone. I believe that the deacons can assist the elders in any matter in which they are asked to assist them. Thus, the deacons may be spoken of as the assistants of the elders. In studying this subject, I noticed that Webster, in his dictionary, speaks of a deacon as one "who serves as an assistant to a minister or priest, his duties varying in different communions."

So far as governing the church is concerned, I believe that the deacons sustain somewhat the same relationship to the elders that the wife sustains to her husband. The wife has her place to fill and her work to do and so does the husband. They should love each other dearly and should consult and counsel with each other continually, with the husband having the final say and voice in all matters. The woman was created as a helpmeet for man, Gen. 2:18. The helper is never to exercise authority over the one being helped. For this reason, Paul, in 1 Tim. 2:12 says, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Deacons should always remember that they are ministers, servants, or helpers, and should never at any time usurp authority over the elders who are to rule the church.

May we all learn what our places are in the kingdom of God and fill them well. Real love for God and for one another will solve all of our problems.

## THE WORK OF THE LOCAL PREACHER

## HIS SPHERE OF SERVICE

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Cleon Lyles

A thing may be adequately described by many titles, but each one will suggest something that the others do not. For example; Jesus likened the kingdom to many things, a mustard seed, goodly pearl, sower that went out to sow, etc. Jesus was called a light, a Lamb, a Lion, son of man, son of David, son of God. Elders are referred to as bishops, presbyters, overseers and pastors. We are not surprised, therefore, when we find a preacher referred to as an evangelist and a minister. When we take the meaning of all the words that are used to describe an elder we understand what his position is in the church of Jesus Christ. This is also true of the minister. The terms used to describe him suggest a field of service both in teaching and in personal service.

There would never be any question concerning the work of a local preacher if his work were defined in every point in the scriptures. But we do not find a well defined law that says there are some things he must do, and some that he must not do. To a great extent this is true of every servant of the church. We are told what to do, but how to do it is not always made clear. We can see the wisdom of this when we realize that circumstances are always changing. The law does not change, but circumstances will always be changing. So, to learn what is the sphere of service of the local minister it will be necessary to find the answer from where he stands.

In the first place he is employed by the church. Of course, this is done through the elders of the church; unless the



church does not have elders. But when elders employ a minister they are doing it for the church. Hence, he becomes a servant of the church that employs him. He stands related to the congregation that employed him in a way in which he is related to no other congregation. The congregation that employs him has prior claim on his services. If the congregation furnishes his living it is only reasonable that his time belongs to that congregation.

We all recognize the fact that a preacher's first duty is preaching. I do not believe anything should be allowed to stand in the way of gospel preaching, but the question that often goes unanswered is, what should he do other than pulpit preaching?

Since a preacher is employed by a congregation, to work with that congregation, I can see no reason why he would be prohibited from doing whatever that congregation has employed him to do.

Should the preacher be one who visits in the homes of others? Every Christian should be engaged in a program of visitation. Since the preacher has as much time, and often more, than other members of the church I certainly believe it would be profitable to his ministry for him to engage in a work of visitation. Sometimes you hear one say, "I was not employed to be a door bell pusher." I am not so sure of that. Could a member of the church make a statement like that? Did the church employing him make it clear that he was not to engage in personal work? In all probability no such agreement was reached. I am sure the church expected him to do a certain amount of visitation, and will be disappointed if he fails. It would be rather difficult to encourage others to do what one is unwilling to do himself.

Should a preacher be a promoter? Now, there is a word

that has often been used in an ugly sense. I heard a man tell a local preacher once, "You are a promoter." He meant to be critical. Really, there is nothing wrong with that word. It means, "to forward; to advance; to contribute to growth, enlargement or excellence." It would seem to me that it would be the duty of a local preacher to promote the church that supports him. This preacher who was being criticized, had encouraged the brethren where he labored to erect a new building. He had "promoted" a building, or promoted the church to erect the building. Anyone would know the church needed it. No one questioned this fact. When you try to decide who may or may not promote a building program you have a job on your hands. I don't see how one could limit this task to any one person in the church. If the minister is capable of doing it, and the elders so desire, there is no law that he would violate in so doing. As a rule he is in a better position to do this than anyone else.

Should the preacher be an organizer? Of course we know that he is not permitted to change the Lord's organization. But, may he get an organization to working? May he, for example, organize a group for doing personal work, to the building up of the Bible school? I have known a few congregations with elders who had the time and ability to do this kind of work, but they have been few. Usually, if it is not done by the preacher, it is not done at all. Is he violating the law of Christ when he operates in this way? I can see no law that he violates. Neither can I see where he is going beyond what he should do. After all, this question must be settled on the basis of his relationship to the congregation he is serving. It is certain that this kind of service will help in the growth and development of the church. He is in a better position to do this work than most anyone in the congregation. Usually he knows more about doing it than most mem-

bers of the church he serves. If it receives the approval of the elders he violates no law in doing this much needed work.

The preacher is a public relations man. It is impossible for him not to be. Regardless of how much he may deny it; he can't avoid it. The community in which he preaches is either attracted to the services of the church, or driven away, by what they think of its minister. Hence, whether he wants to or not, he finds himself serving in the important work of public relations. There can be nothing wrong with this. He is a member of the community where he lives. He owes something to that community. His children attend school there. The authorities of the city watch over his family, and work for him, as well as all other families in the community. His neighbors are as real as the neighbors of his fellow-man; so, as a citizen, he cannot escape his obligations of citizenship. Being a minister, however, he is naturally expected to be a little more useful than the average citizen. This affords many opportunities to speak a good word for Christ and His church. The preacher who insists on living in his own shell, and having nothing to do with the community in which he lives, will not be of great service to the church. This attitude will be carried over into too many other things to allow him to be of much value. Yes, he is engaged in a work of public relations.

One of the most important works a local preacher can do is to promote unity between the elders and the congregation he serves. He is usually in a position to either make, or ruin a group of elders. He can either cause a congregation to love and respect them, or to despise them. I certainly would not want to contribute to the development of the wrong attitude toward those who are watching over the Lord's people. The preacher is in a position to have more influence over people than most elders. He can use this influence to advan-

tage or disadvantage. When a local preacher is fully aware of the seriousness of his position, as it is related to both elders and congregation, you usually find a work of harmony and prosperity.

Most local preachers are constantly called upon to serve as counselors. They are always meeting life at its extreme. They live among the diseased and dying; those who are happy and those who are sad. They are forever being called upon to settle difficulties between people. Is it wrong for them to do this work? No, it is right for them to do it. In the capacity of a counselor they can bring much happiness into the lives of many who would be unwilling to share their troubles with anyone else. A preacher who can be trusted with the troubles of others, and who will do his best to help those who are in distress, is a valuable asset to any community.

We have tried to cover a big subject in a few words, which is an impossible task. It is my prayer that these thoughts may help us in thinking clearly about the important work of the local preacher.



## HIS RELATION TO THE ELDSHIP

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By C. T. Brown

I once read that "a subject is half argued when it has been clearly stated." Perhaps then, we should develop first, in just what ways we are concerned with the relation of the work of the local preacher to the eldership.

An analysis of the possibilities should lead us to the obvious conclusion that we are concerned with the work of the local preacher in relation to the elder's authority, duties and responsibilities. To understand the work of the local preacher in relation to the eldership, therefore, we should have a clear concept of two things. First, the assignment given to the elders in God's word which make up their duties, responsibilities and authority; and second, the duties of the local preacher and how they are related thereto.

Let's look first at the elder's authority. It should be recognized that it is rather difficult to separate authority and responsibility, but for the purpose of this discussion let us consider authority separately, and duties and responsibilities together. An eldership in any congregation, properly directed by God's word, is the sole authority in that particular local congregation. God's word speaks of elders being shepherds of the flock, see Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2. The elders then are the earthly shepherds, Christ is the chief shepherd, see I Peter 5:4. In the local congregation, the elders then stand next to Christ in authority. He is the head of the church and each local eldership has been given respon-

sibility by Him for the local congregation. The church is in no sense a democracy. Elders are to rule over the church; however, they are not to rule simply as dignitaries, that is, being "lords over God's heritage," I Peter 5:3. If we compare their ruling function with a civil government, it would be in order to describe their function as executive in nature. God and Christ have acted in the legislative capacity and have given us a perfect law, James 1:25. The elders, then, are responsible for executing, for implementing the performance of, for enforcing God's law in the church. This capacity is comparable with that of the president of the United States, so far as the executive function is concerned. It should be thoroughly understood that their authority is limited to the one congregation which has selected them to serve as elders, so much for authority.

What then are the elder's duties and responsibilities? We stated previously that it was difficult to separate authority and responsibility. The elders have the authority to rule. This is certainly one of their duties and responsibilities. It is expected that an elder should rule well, see I Timothy 5:17. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Roman church said, in Romans 12:8, "He that ruleth, with diligence." The elders being instructed to rule, the church is instructed to obey, Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls."

A second responsibility of elders is to be a shepherd to the flock. This is very clearly set forth in the Apostle Paul's statement to the Ephesian elders as recorded in Acts 20:28-31. In this passage, Paul very positively sets out the responsibilities of the elders to protect the church from false teachers, both from without and from within. This same idea of watching is set forth by the writer of the Hebrew letter in

Hebrews 13:17 when he said, "and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

A third responsibility is to teach. In setting forth the qualifications for elders in I Timothy 3:2, Paul required that they should be "apt to teach," also in Titus 1:9-11, he speaks about, "vain talkers and deceivers," stating in regard to the elder "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," and in further reference to these individuals, "whose mouths must be stopped."

A fourth great responsibility is to oversee. J. W. McGarvey in his book entitled, "The Eldership," defines the term *oversee* in the following words, "To superintend the affairs of the church, to direct the activities of the members, to see that everything is done that should be done, and that it is done by the right person, at the right time, and in the right way." Dr. John Paul Gibson in his book, "The Church at Work," has this to say in defining the word *overseer*. "This word itself indicates that they do not do the work themselves but they see that someone does it correctly." For one to properly perform as an overseer it is essential that he direct the work of others. It would not be proper for the elders of the congregation to do all of the work in the church even if this were physically possible. The larger our congregations become, the greater need we have for elders to develop the characteristic of overseers.

In a small congregation it might be entirely possible for a well trained and developed group of elders to handle the primary phases of the teaching program themselves; however, in general, it is thought best by most elders and most congregations that a full time worker in the capacity of the

local minister be employed to assist the elders in the vital teaching function.

In a congregation with this general form of preacher-elder arrangement, just what is the work of the preacher and how is it related to the responsibilities and duties of the elders? It should be obvious to all that the preacher is not to be expected to do the work of the elders. Certainly he is not a ruler, not a shepherd, not an overseer. A truth which should be self evident to all is the fact that we cannot hire someone to do the work which God has given us to do. You might just as well expect to hire someone to obey the gospel for you as to expect him to perform your Christian responsibilities.

Elders sometimes are spoiled into becoming inactive, letting the preacher take charge of the church and do the elder's work. There is a fine line of distinction here which I would like to draw. Perhaps I can give an illustration from my own profession. An engineer who is given responsibility for a project can certainly employ other engineers, or even non-technical people, to work under his supervision and assist him in the actual performance of the task to be done; however, he cannot and would not be considered qualified as a Professional Engineer for very long unless he kept to himself responsible charge of the work. Responsible charge of the work belongs to the elders regardless of how many part time voluntary assistants or full time paid assistants they may have. Sometimes the elders do nothing to the extent that the preacher may in sheer desperation assume their responsibilities in an attempt to get the work under way. However, in my opinion, he should rather bring all his energy to bear upon the elders, encouraging and admonishing them to assume their rightful responsibilities. Only in this way can



both preacher and elders satisfactorily meet the requirements which the Father has laid down.

The preacher's primary work, then, is to preach and teach. As the Apostle Paul so clearly stated in Romans 10:14-15, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except that they be sent?" This preaching work is to be under the oversight and direction of the elders of the congregation. While it is certainly true that the local preacher, at least to some extent, will be preaching to those who are aliens, that is, those who are not members of the Lord's body; nevertheless, in general, his responsibility will be that of following out the second part of the great commission in which Jesus states, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is a successful preacher and eldership indeed who can with their teaching and training program inspire each individual member to carry the story of Christ to his friends and neighbors. This multiplies their individual effort many fold.

The work mentioned above is a delegated responsibility and the preacher should work in close cooperation with the elders in the development and performance of this assignment. In most preacher-elder relationships the preacher has a certain amount of time off each year for holding meetings. This is true in our congregation, where our minister is paid on an annual basis with the expectation that he will not be restricted, in the places where he can hold meetings, by the amount of support which they can afford to pay. While the preacher in such meetings would be working under the elders of the congregation where the meeting was held, it would still seem in order that he should report the results of such

meetings to the elders of his home congregation. They are partners together for the Lord and both should be interested in the accomplishment of the same high standard of results.

In addition to assisting the elders in the teaching program, the local minister can serve in many other capacities. Looking at his job in one way, he is a specialist trained to do a specific job, employed by the elders to perform that job, and in this capacity is delegated certain definite responsibilities. In such an assignment he will make contact with many people. Some will need to counsel with him regarding personal problems, some will be dissatisfied and unhappy, others will need encouragement of one kind or another, some may be sick, some may need financial assistance, some may be in need of visiting and admonishing by the elders. The preacher has an excellent opportunity to come in contact with all of these various needs in the congregation and he, therefore, can in his capacity be of great assistance to the elders in performing their assigned functions.

One real service is to keep the elders advised of developments in the congregation which the minister learns of through his contacts. Since very few congregations have full time elders, the preacher can assist them materially in making the best use of the time which they do have available. We might compare this part of the preacher's work with what the military would call a staff assignment. In other words, by the minister's preliminary work, the elder's effort can be directed to the spots and to the problems which need attention.

No group of elders should ever reach the point where they are not willing to accept advice and admonition. The preacher can do a great work in this field, particularly if he brings to his job experience and judgment of a mature nature

in the Master's vineyard. The elders may often need to be encouraged and inspired to greater activity.

I said the preacher was a specialist. Such he is, both by educational qualifications and by experience. He should bring to his task a wealth of knowledge. When this knowledge is directed, in full cooperation with the elders, to the accomplishment of their joint tasks, then both the elders and the preacher should have a rich, successful and rewarding labor.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

## BIBLICAL TEACHING

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Thomas B. Warren

*Some Introductory Thoughts*

“Church discipline” is a matter which is especially deserving of our study today. Two extremes are encountered in this matter: (1) mis-use (abuse), and (2) non-use (abandonment). For some, church discipline has been simply an outlet for personal animosity. For others, church discipline is something to be avoided at all costs. Neither of these extremes is acceptable to God.

*I. What Is “Church Discipline”?*

It is necessary that one think first in general terms, then in specific terms. Or, one might think of church discipline on the one hand as directive, positive, and preventive and on the other hand as rectifying, corrective, chastizing, and punishing.

Broadly speaking, church discipline includes all of the processes or means by which a church *trains* and *educates* its members to “walk in the light” (I John 1:7). Of the Scriptures, Paul said, “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16, 17). The marginal note on the word “instruction” (Greek, *paideian*) is “discipline.” Of this word Thayer says, “Whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence, a. instruction which aims at the increase of virtue: II Tim. 3:16.” (*Lexi-*



con, p. 473.) In this sense, discipline is directive and preventive. By means of admonition and exhortation, using the word of God, the church is to seek to save its members from straying and becoming disorderly. Read Hebrews 3:12, 13; Acts 11:23; I Thess. 2:11, 12; 5:11; II Tim. 4:1-5; Heb. 10:24, 25; I Cor. 4:14. These passages make it clear that God expects the members of the church to exhort, admonish, rebuke, and comfort one another with the Word of God.

Specifically, and negatively, church discipline involves the *exclusion of the disorderly* from the fellowship of the disciples. Matthew 18:17 tells us that we are to regard the wrongdoer who refuses to listen to admonition as a member no longer worthy of fellowship. Compare II Thess. 3:6; 14; I Cor. 5:13; I Tim 1:20.

## II. *What Is the Design of Church Discipline?*

Fundamentally, the design of church discipline is the salvation of souls—the reclamation of souls, not *repudiation* of them. We, as children of God, are to follow in the steps of Christ (I Peter 2:21). His mission into the world was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

Specifically, the design of “church discipline” is three-fold:

1. *To save the soul of the erring one.* Note these passages. (1) “. . . have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed” (II Thess. 3:14). The word “ashamed” here is from the Greek word *entrepo*, which means, as Vine points out: “To turn in, that is, to turn in upon oneself so as to produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct.” (2) “. . . whom I delivered unto Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (I Tim. 1:20). By being excluded from the fellowship of the saints, they were to be taught (“disci-

plined") not to blaspheme. (3) ". . . deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved. . . ." (I Cor. 5:5).

2. *To save the souls of those in the world.* Note these passages: (1) ". . . that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Those in the world "read" the "sermons" which are "preached" by the lives of Christians. God is glorified by pure and consecrated lives, and men are brought to salvation. (2) "And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Because the church was purged of these liars, the fear of God came into the hearts of men. (3) ". . . they may without the word be won by the deportment of their wives, when they behold your chaste deportment coupled with fear" (I Peter 3:1, 2; ABUV). Godly churches tend to lead men toward Christ; impure, neglectful churches tend to cause men to blaspheme the name of God and lose their souls. Where "sin is in the camp," the Gospel will not be as powerful in the lives of men.

3. *To save the souls of the members of the church.* God holds the members of a church responsible for the toleration of sinful members. (Read I Cor. 5.) If they refuse to "purge" themselves of those who walk disorderly, God will look upon the entire group as sinful (Rev. 2:20).

By way of summary of this point, it may be said that the fundamental design of church discipline is the salvation of whatever souls may be involved in a particular situation by the upholding of the honor and authority of Christ (Acts 2:36; Matthew 28:18) through the preservation of the purity of the church (I Peter 2:11, 12), the mission of which is to "hold forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:16).

### III. *What Is the Importance of "Church Discipline"?*

Churches which fail in this point will fail in their mission of saving souls by "holding forth the word of life." (Cf.: Phil. 2:16; Romans 1:16.) Sincere souls in the world will give little heed to a message preached by those who "play the harlot" with the world and tolerate sin within their own membership. At the same time, it must be remembered that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6, 7). The church itself will be affected by the sinful members which it tolerates. Its hatred of sin will be dimmed. Its determination to "walk in the light" will be weakened. Failure to purge out sin leads to a toleration of sin. Toleration of sin leads to a love of sin. Love of sin leads to a practice of sin. This Christ will not tolerate. (Cf.: Rev. 2:5, 16, 21-23; 3:5.)

### IV. *What Sort of Offenses Does "Church Discipline" Involve?*

Broadly speaking, church discipline involves those who walk "disorderly" (I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6). The word "disorderly" is from the Greek word "ataktos" (from a, negative, tasso, to put in order, arrange). The word signifies not keeping order. It was especially a military term, denoting not keeping rank, being insubordinate, out of step. It thus signifies those who are insubordinate to Christ as King.

Specifically, there are certain matters which involve discipline when the guilty will not repent: (1) those who go "onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ" (II John 9-11); (2) "those guilty of "fornication" (I Cor. 5:9); (3) the covetous (I Cor. 5:11); (4) idolaters (I Cor. 5:11); (5) revilers (I Cor. 5:11); (6) extortioners (I Cor. 5:11); (7) those who will not work (II Thess. 3:6-15).

The first paragraph in this section emphasizes the fact that matters do not have to be specifically named in order to be a matter of church discipline.

*V. What Are the Various "Phases" of Church Discipline?*

1. *Ascertaining the guilt or innocence of the accused.* No righteous action can be taken until an accurate decision is made at this point. It is a terrible thing to bear false witness.

2. *Praying for the wrongdoer.* I John 5:16. We should also pray for ourselves that we act in harmony with the will of God in the matter. See Prov. 3:3-5; Psm. 37:5.

3. *Going to the accused in a spirit of meekness or gentleness.* See I Cor. 4:21 and Galatians 6:1. This attitude involves being concerned for the welfare of the wrongdoer.

4. *Seeking to "convert" the wrongdoer from the error of his ways.* See James 5:19, 20. To "convert" an erring brother means to "turn him about, turn him towards," to lead him to forsake evil and espouse good. This is a parallel idea to "restore" in Gal. 6:1. To recognize that a child of God needs to be "restored" is to recognize him to be a "dislocated" member of the spiritual body of Christ. As such, he should be "admonished" (I Thess. 5:14).

5. *If the wrongdoer repents he should be forgiven by all concerned.* God will forgive him; all of God's children should likewise forgive him. This would be an occasion of great rejoicing. Compare Luke 15.

6. *If he refuses to repent, he must be excluded from the fellowship of the church.* Note the following expressions used in connection with this idea: (1) ". . . let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matthew 18:17).



(2) “. . . withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly” (II Thess. 3:6). (3) “. . . have no company with him, . . .” (II Thess. 3:14). (4) “. . . I have delivered unto Satan, . . .” (I Tim. 1:20). “Put away the wicked man from among yourselves” (I Cor. 5:13). To neglect this is to be disloyal to Christ.

**APPEAL:**

Let us: (1) honor and uphold Christ’s law of inclusion (Acts 2:38); (2) honor and uphold Christ’s law of exclusion (I Cor. 5:13). Upon faithful adherence to both of these points does the accomplishing of the mission of the church depend.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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The meaning of discipline, according to Webster, is "Treatment suited to a disciple, education, training, subjection to rule, the habit of obedience." Church discipline is two-fold: (1) Instructive, and (2) corrective. Instructive discipline is preventive in nature. If the churches today received more instruction concerning Christian conduct and attitudes the problem of corrective discipline would be greatly diminished. In discipline, as in all other matters connected with church activities, the elders should take the lead. It is their business to feed the church (Acts 20:28), to help the weak (vs. 35), and to watch for the souls of those under their charge (Heb. 13:17). Every member of the church has the right to look to the elders to exercise discipline. Though there may not be men who have been duly elected as overseers in your congregation, it is a fact that there are those who take the lead. Every body of men looks to certain ones to lead and direct their affairs; hence, every congregation can, and must, have discipline and it is the responsibility of the leaders to exercise it.

There are several methods of discipline taught in the Bible. First, there is self-discipline. Each member of the church should discipline himself. Paul says: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (I Cor. 9:27). Again he said, "Crucify the flesh with the passions thereof" (Gal. 5:24). He closes the twelfth chapter of Romans by saying "overcome evil with good." To get

the best out of ourselves in God's service we must exercise self-discipline.

Another way to discipline is that of admonition. Christians live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How great then is the responsibility of teaching and admonishing one another. Paul gave the example when he said, "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house." He closed his speech by saying: "In all things I gave you an example, that so in laboring ye ought to help the weak" (vs. 35).

In the third place instructive discipline involves training in service. Knowledge alone is not sufficient. Development comes through the practice of knowledge. We should not only teach the young member that it is his duty to do a thing, but we should teach him how to do it. The elders should seek to develop as many as they can to take the lead in worship services and in the teaching program of the congregation. The busy member seldom needs corrective discipline.

Reproving and rebuking is a part of the Bible teaching on discipline. The reproof however should be done solely with the design of leading the one reproofed to avoid the transgression or the neglect of duty in the future, and never in a spirit of self-righteousness or "holier-than-thou" bearing. Paul's statement in Gal. 6:1 should be our attitude in this matter. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

There are times when a public reproof is timely and necessary. This is true when a member sins publicly and is persistent in his indulgence. "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (I Tim. 5:10).

Paul said, "Reprove them sharply" (Tit. 1:13). There is something about reproofing a person in the presence of others that has a telling effect on the witnesses. In the home when corrective discipline is administered to one child the others immediately become little angels. The case of severe discipline in the Jerusalem church is a classic example. After Ananias and Sapphira were smitten dead because of their transgression the record states in Acts 5:11 that "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

#### *Our Attitude Toward Elders*

What should be the attitude of the church toward those who exercise discipline? First, "We should esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:13). We do not despise our parents for correcting and disciplining us, but rather we love them for it knowing that it was for our good. The same attitude should prevail in the church. Then our attitude should be that of submission. The writer of Hebrews says "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls. . . ." In this verse we are taught not only to submit to them, but to obey them.

Again, Paul said count them worthy of honor (I Tim. 5:17). "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

Finally, we should imitate their faith. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7).

A recognition of these duties of the church and the attitudes they exhibit will maintain God's order. To reject them



results in anarchy and a state of spiritual bolshevism in the church.

### *Corrective Discipline*

Corrective discipline is chastising or penalizing in its nature. We turn our attention now to a brief study of corrective discipline. Our thoughts thus far have been centered on instructive discipline which, if properly exercised, will largely eliminate corrective discipline. We know something of the importance of corrective discipline from the many passages which deal with it.

The Lord wants a pure church (Eph. 5:25-27). To harbor sin, disorder, rebellion, wickedness in the church brings the frowns and displeasure of the Lord on those guilty of doing so. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (I Cor. 5:6). Corrective discipline therefore has a two-fold purpose: (1) To save the church and (2) To save the guilty party. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5).

#### *Upon Whom Is Corrective Discipline to Be Exercised?*

(1) Those who walk disorderly. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). One who persists in sin, rebels against the teaching of God. In I Cor. 5:11, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

(2) A busybody, trouble maker, one who will not tend

to his own business (I Thess. 3:11-15). Paul in this passage among other things said, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

(3) Those who cause division. This class of people in the church must be disciplined in order to maintain and preserve unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

### *The Scriptural Course to Pursue*

The Lord has been careful to outline the proper course to pursue in taking action against members of the church. A close study of Matt. 18:15-17 will reveal the Christian's responsibilities toward those upon whom corrective discipline must be exercised. It is possible that by going to him and telling him of his fault he may be gained. If he will not hear and remains obstinate then the Bible teaches us to take other steps in trying to win him. (a) Pray for him (I Jno. 5:16). (b) Try to convert him (Jas. 5:19-20). (c) Restore him if possible (Gal. 6:1). (d) Admonish him (I Thess. 5:14).

### *Final Action*

When all efforts at teaching and training, rebuking and exhorting fail to keep one in line of duty or bring the erring to repentance, the next move required by the Lord is plainly laid down in the Holy Scripture. In this matter, as in all other matters, we have no choice but to do what the Lord commanded. "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves . . ." (I Cor. 5). "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such an one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned" (Tit. 3:10-11).

*Proper Spirit*

The final object of all disciplinary measures is to develop the member into the greatest usefulness and bring about his final salvation. All measures adopted should be carried out in a spirit best calculated to accomplish the desired end. Let it be fully realized that to sever a member from the body is a serious matter, and to proceed so as to win and not repel should be the aim of any one who is earnestly seeking the salvation of the erring. Different cases require different treatment, and a thoughtful man who is acquainted with human nature and the Bible will, with prayerful consideration, be able to determine the proper course.

*Make It Effective*

Many times a withdrawal of fellowship means but little. The guilty party is not made to feel the force of it. Our attitude changes but little and our relationship with him remains unchanged also. Such a course makes the man feel that the church has gone through a meaningless form. Though we should "exhort him as a brother," yet in our social relations with him the Lord tells us that we should "turn away" from him, not to keep company with him, even to the point of refusing to sit down at the table and eat with him. The fact that he has been withdrawn from denies him the right to the Lord's table till he has righted his wrongs.

If your attitude before and after withdrawal is the same toward the one withdrawn from wherein does he find the force of his discipline and what can be the impression made on the world by your course?

