

1975

1975: Abilene Christian College Lecture - Full Text

Paul Southern

Gus Nichols

Melvin Wise

J. C. Bailey

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PREFACE

When the apostle Paul originally spoke the words, "I am not ashamed of the gospel . . ." he was writing to Christians who were living out their commitment to Jesus in an extremely hostile, intimidating and almost overpowering society. The pagans of ancient Rome did not understand, nor could they, what it meant to be a Christian. Their secular, pagan minds were boggled by the very idea of one believing such "nonsense." Therefore, for one to become a Christian in that ancient environment was a step that took tremendous courage and faith.

We live in a world that is no less challenging in its own way. The threats to faith are still ever present about us. The gods of secularism and materialism still make it unpopular in most situations to be a deeply devoted child of God. The temptation to keep our commitment secret is still very real in 20th Century America.

Paul's words, "I am not ashamed of the gospel," need to come ringing again and again in every modern Christian's ear, reminding us of the threats, the challenge, the discouragements of the dedicated life.

The messages in this volume should have special meaning because they are delivered by men of unique wisdom and experience. Each man delivering a theme speech is past sixty-five years of age. These men are living examples of Christians in our day who are not ashamed of the gospel.

This volume goes forth with the fervent prayer that the messages it contains may be helpful to everyone who reads it in his own determination to stand gallantly in his own place as one who will never be ashamed of the glorious gospel of the Son of God.

CARL BRECHEEN
Director

MAIN SPEECHES

“I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL”

Paul Southern

Education:

B.A., Abilene Christian College, 1930 (Bible Major)

M.A., Texas Christian University, 1933 (Education)

B.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1946

Th.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1948 (Greek N.T.)

Graduate Studies, University of Chicago, 1940

Dr. Southern has been a gospel minister since 1924. He has served churches in Weatherford, Denison and Abilene, Texas, and has done evangelistic work throughout the United States and abroad. He is a world traveler, having visited some 45 or 50 nations on every continent.

Dr. Southern taught 34 years at Abilene Christian College as professor of Bible and Greek, 19 of those years as Head of the Department of Bible.



He is actively engaged in various aspects of personal, marriage and family counseling. He has served as president of numerous organizations involving mental health work. He holds memberships in the National Council on Family Relations, Texas Council on Family Relations, the National Association of Retired Persons, the National Retired Teachers Association, and serves on the advisory board of the Regional Council on Aging.

The Epistle of Paul to the Romans is the greatest discussion of Christian doctrine ever written. It is also the most systematic of Paul's letters, but it does not contain a systematic theology. The book is a genuine letter and not just a theological treatise.

The theme of Romans is the universal need of righteousness and the way to secure it. Wisdom will not work, since it is stripped of power by man's pride which makes him want to play the part of God. The Law is likewise ineffective, since it only heightens man's awareness of sin, and tricks him into thinking that by works he can merit salvation. In this grand epistle we note how God has revealed the way of righteousness through Christ. The gospel presented produces a spiritual freedom which the legalist does not know. It is a freedom, however, that is inspired, guided, and disciplined by the inspired word working within man in accordance with the most inclusive and severe law of all, the law of love.

The mighty theme of this epistle is stated in chapter one, verses sixteen and seventeen. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith." The reality of this theme was brought out in the experience of Paul, and served as a tremendous influence to inspire later leaders to rebel against arbitrary authoritarianism and narrow ecclesiasticism, all of which tried to imprison the true spirit of the Lord Jesus. It answers forever the practical question, "What must I do to be saved?" It is a superb example of the integration of doctrine with missionary purpose.

The letter to the Romans is unquestionably Paul's greatest doctrinal masterpiece. Here we see him rise majestically from the grovelling level of Corinthian factions and personality problems to the universal scope of redemption. In each generation Romans has served as a reminder to the church of her tremendous responsibility—the proclamation of the gospel of salvation to all mankind. Surely, "I am not ashamed of the gospel" is one of the greatest subjects that ever engaged the powers of burning eloquence or inspired poetic fire. But their meaning of shame differed from ours. This text is best understood in the light of Isaiah 28:16, quoted by Paul in Romans 10:11. "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." The word translated "ashamed" means "confounded," or "disappointed." So Paul is here saying: "I am not disappointed in the gospel; it has never let me down." All who reject Jesus and put their trust in others shall be confounded, disappointed of their hope, and ashamed.

The Person of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the Person of the gospel. Other movements make much of ideas, abstractions, and philosophical reasoning. The gospel exalts a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is obvious to Bible students that the New Testament is the "Jesus Book" of all literature. From beginning to end, its contents are dominated by the personality of Jesus. "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame" (I Peter 2:6). This is the Magna Carta of our faith. Let down all your weight on Him, and He will never let you down.

No one ever becomes excited over the philosopher's discussion of love, or the psychologist's analysis of love. The

greatest forces of life grip us and change us, not in the form of abstractions, but in the form of persons. Someone asked Dr. William James, the Harvard psychologist, to explain spirituality. He hesitated for a moment, and then pointed to a man who, he thought, possessed it. His definition of spirituality was wrapped up in a warm, vibrant personality. It is love embodied, personalized, that makes the heart beat faster.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of all that is great and good. The Eternal Word "became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). God put "all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Paul points to Jesus as the equivalent of the gospel. In the opening sentence of his epistle to the Romans the apostle affirmed that Jesus Christ our Lord "was determined the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

In an age of doubt and infidelity, it is refreshing and reassuring to know that Paul regarded the Incarnate Christ as existing before His Incarnation. In saying that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), the apostle showed that he was not ashamed of the virgin birth of Jesus. He was not ashamed of the lowly way in which Jesus came into the world. The life of poverty which Jesus lived did not make Paul ashamed of the Person of the gospel. Neither was he ashamed of the ignominious death of Christ. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2; cf. Philippians 2:8). His only ground of glorying was the cross of

Christ. The message of Paul was this mystery of God. "But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Paul was not ashamed of the resurrection of Christ, the miracle of miracles, which declared the Saviour to be what he truly was (Romans 1:4). Offsetting the Epicurean philosophy, the apostle made morality turn on the hope of immortality. We cannot afford to be ashamed of the Person of the gospel, when the basis of our hope is in the fact that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Christ must be Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all.

The Power of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the power of the gospel. The world into which the gospel came was interested in power, and had many contacts with it. In any direction that one looked, evidences of power could be seen, heard, and felt. Intellect was worshipped in Greece, which boasted of its philosophical power. Athenian philosophers "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). Prophetic power was the concept of the Jews, since God had intrusted them with the oracles of God (Romans 3:2). Military might was the forte of Rome, which ruled the Mediterranean world. Roman chariots and legions were a familiar sight in the society of the first century.

By the same irony of fate that brought Rome to dust, our own self-glorifying civilization is so near the brink of

collapse that fear is a nightmare. The age of nuclear power is here, and even the experts disagree about what is ahead. We are armed because we were afraid, and now we are afraid because we are armed. Nuclear warheads and the gimmicks of secular science cannot bring to fearful hearts "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). If we are to stand "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," we will have to take up the whole armor of God (Cf. Ephesians 6:10-20).

The almighty power of God accompanies the preaching of the gospel. Nothing but the power of God can save a fallen, sinful soul. The gospel is a mighty agency, set in motion by God Himself and not by man. It is God-kind of power, in contradistinction to all other kinds of power. In other words, the gospel has all of God's omnipotence behind it. It is a real force, not a sham force like so much we see in the secular world. (Cf. I Corinthians 1:18; 2:4; 4:20; I Thessalonians 1:5). "Dunamis" is often used of exerted power, especially divine, superhuman power.

Paul declared that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). It matters not how sinful and sordid one's life is, through obedient faith in Jesus and subjection to His will, a person is brought into the covenant of God and the fellowship of saints. We stood one time at midnight on skidrow in New York City. Without taking a single step, we counted thirty-seven human wrecks, derelicts on the sidewalks of time. The combined nuclear resources of all the nations could not save one of those souls, each of which was made in the image of God. On the other hand, God's gospel was capable of saving every one upon faithful obedience to it (Romans 6:17-18).

The Priority of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the priority of the gospel. It has no equal, tolerates no rival, and admits no substitute. The New Testament leaves no indication that there is a revelation to follow. It was given in its completeness once and for all, and is just as relevant in the twentieth century as it was in the first. "His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). It will furnish the man of God completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

Paul was thoroughly convinced that he had proclaimed the full gospel, and he pronounced condemnation upon any man or angel that preached anything contrary to it (Galatians 1:6-9). Jude exhorted Christians to "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). "Once for all" describes what is of perpetual validity and never requires repetition. Since the truth has been delivered for all time, it is a permanent deposit that will never be superseded, amended or modified by divine authority. Inspired men of the first century affirmed that the New Covenant is of everlasting duration (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Many religionists in the modern world are attempting to amalgamate human philosophy and divine scripture. Their theological gobbledygook makes it difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. It is no wonder that many dedicated Christians are suspicious of intellectual eggheads. Any person who tries to blend the gospel with philosophy, however, has overlooked the priority which the New Testament places upon the gospel. The gospel is not, and never has been, a philosophy. Learn of the philosopher, and

you find restlessness. Learn of the Christ, "and ye shall find rest" (Matthew 11:28-30). Philosophy deals with the love of human wisdom, whereas the gospel is divine revelation. In a brief but definitive manner, Paul spoke to this point when he wrote: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world; hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:21-25). It is impossible for intellectualism to satisfy the ultimate longings of the human heart. Sophisticated learning may look down its nose at the simple gospel of Christ, but in the end the truth of God will prevail. The firm foundation of God stands and will endure (2 Tim. 2:19).

In spite of these inspired affirmations, religious philosophers are always eager to embrace "some new things" (Acts 17:21). It is no wonder that Paul warned against those who would turn away from the truth and turn aside unto fables (2 Timothy 4:1-5). During the last two hundred years, many religious bodies have arisen claiming new revelations. Such events have caused some within the church to question their own faith and wonder if they really have the complete revelation from God in the Bible. With the coming of Situation Ethics and The New Morality, modern America is worshipping at the shrines of sex, science, and silver. In our crass materialism we have largely forgotten God. We have also

forgotten that one soul is worth more than all the world (Matthew 16:26). The value of human life has deteriorated, because we have been grasping for things that money can buy. We are acquiring more material things at the expense of spiritual things. Since many Christians are satisfied with mere church-going and sermon-listening, we have lost to a large extent the true spirit of devotion and evangelism.

In an age of gross rebellion against the established church, itching ears have no difficulty in finding something to tickle them. Fickle flirtation with Christianity abounds today. The immorality and lascivious practices of a pagan world are making inroads upon the church in many places. There are demands for a watered-down and more palatable message. Some hold that the New Testament is outmoded as they look for a new gospel for our space age. The "Gospel of Carnegie" threatens the gospel of Christ, and from some we hear more of Peale than we do of Paul. But when storms come and shadows fall, we find Peale appalling and Paul appealing. Faithful stewards of the word are determined that the church's firm foundation shall not crumble. Since Christ is God's total revelation of Himself to man, there is nothing lacking in Christ for man. "In him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17), "and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

In the first century, gospel preachers changed the world; in the twentieth century, the world is changing gospel preachers. The gospel needs not so much to be defended as it needs to be declared. It needs not so much to be guarded as it needs to be given.

The Purpose of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the purpose of the gospel. Liberal theologians of the twentieth century have emphasized only the social aspects of the gospel. They see the New Testament as a book of life but not of doctrine. Social welfare and community programs have replaced spiritual conversion and church expansion. Proponents of the "Social Gospel" are more interested in better hospitals than they are in better hearts. What they consider the "Christian Ethic" finds the world spiritually lost and leaves it that way. Efforts at evangelism from the New Testament viewpoint are considered "old hat," outmoded, and narrow-minded. A leading representative of this "New Theology" said: "A sermon on conversion when I am in the assembly will cause me to walk out. I want a program that is devoted to the ailments of mankind and the improvement of the social milieu."

In the light of the New Testament, what is the real purpose of the gospel? Paul answered this question in terms of the salvation of man (Romans 1:16-17). In His farewell commission, Jesus said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). Was he interested only in saving the human body from the ravages of disease and disaster? The salvation of which He spoke must have encompassed more than the improvement of human life styles. (Cf. Matthew 6:19-34). Both reason and revelation attest to the fact that "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus said: "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matthew 16:26).

Social welfare comes as a natural consequence when people are truly converted to Christ. Pure religion causes a Christian "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27; cf. 2:14-26). "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10). But Christ demands the heart as well as the head and the hand in order to the salvation of man, "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Realizing that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), we declare that the purpose of the gospel is salvation from sin and unto sanctification (Romans 6:17-18). This purpose was paramount in the preaching on Pentecost, and it has never been changed by divine authority.

The Plan of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the plan of the gospel. In some church circles, sophisticated brethren look down their noses at the idea of a plan. There was a time when brotherhood polemics aired the question, "The Man or the Plan—Which?" In the light of the scriptures, it is not a question of "either-or," but a matter of "both—and." Jesus identified himself with His teachings when He said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). From the Sermon on the Mount to His ascension into heaven, Jesus emphasized the divine imperative of hearing His words and doing them (Cf. Matthew 7:24-29). Whoever, therefore, "goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth not in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

The New Testament reveals that the gospel is universal in application and international in scope. It transcends racial barriers and eliminates all national boundary lines. Since all peoples are sinful before God, the riches of divine grace are made available to all mankind. By the grace of God, Jesus tasted "of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). The whole world is the field (Matthew 13:38), and "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). By means of the gospel, Christ broke down the pales of the Jewish assembly. By the same token. He forbids forever the building of any other partition wall of schemes and terms of Christian fellowship imposed by human authority. In His farewell commission, Jesus commanded the apostles to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15), and the church is still charged with this eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10-12).

Potentially, the gospel makes possible the salvation of all men. (Titus 2:11). Actually, it promises to save only those who submit to it (Titus 2:11-14). Paul declared, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). We become the friends of Jesus only when He becomes our Lord. (Cf. John 14:15; 15:14). "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). Salvation is a personal and conditional matter. Whosoever will, let him come and "take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17; cf. Matthew 16:24). The gospel message to the alien sinner is: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

The People of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the people of the gospel. By means of an obedient faith in Christ and subjection to His will, sinful human beings are "called out of darkness into his marvelous light," and become a people for God's own possession (I Peter 2:9). They are added to the church which Jesus built, and which He purchased with His own blood. (Cf. Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; 20:28). The people of the gospel constitute the church of the gospel, the fairest gem ever strung from the dome of heaven. Christ "loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Since the church is the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2, 9), any belittling of the gospel people is a slap in the face of God. Any person who makes fun of the church and her program "hath trodden under feet the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." (Hebrews 10:29). With some people, criticism of the church has become a perennial pastime. They consider the institutional church a kind of pharisaical fossil which has emerged from the Dark Ages. They speak of "three songs and a prayer" as if such spiritual devotions constituted a plague of some sort.

In some church circles, every time a group gets together for any purpose a carnival atmosphere prevails, and the aroma of coffee fills the air. Now there is nothing wrong with fellowship among the people of God. We are persuaded that some congregations could be improved if the brethren would

put a little more social caffeine in their coffee water. But thou shall not crucify the people of the gospel on a cross of coffee, confusion, and confetti! "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). We have lost some church members because they became too sophisticated to associate with the people of the gospel. It is heartening to know, however, that Jesus identifies Himself with His saints. (Cf. Matthew 18:20; 25:31-46; 28:18-20; Acts 7:56; 27:23). From Him we have the assurance that: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

The Promises of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the promises of the gospel. We have heard a great deal in recent years concerning "Pie in the sky in the sweet by and by." People who believe and proclaim the New Testament message concerning eternal salvation run the risk of incurring derision and laughter. Many religionists hold that the only heaven to be experienced is in the flesh-in this life, here and now. They have espoused the hedonistic philosophy of the rich man who said: "Take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19). This man's apostrophe to his soul is thoroughly Epicurean, for his soul feeds on his goods. It is eternally true, however, that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Christians are heartened by the fact God "hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises, that through these ye may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is

in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4). The promises of the gospel are precious because of what they mean to the souls of men. They are exceeding great because they include the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7); the promise of eternal life (Matthew 25:46); and a share in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Belief in a future life is the appetite of reason and the assurance of revelation. If there were no future life, our souls would not long for it. "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are all men most pitiable" (I Corinthians 15:19). Even in the night of death, Christian hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustling of angelic wings. Christians sing "Heaven holds all to me," because they believe there is a land beyond the river, "Where the surges cease to roll." In expressing this faith Paul was inspired to say: "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). This sacred promise was not to him only, "but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

Gus Nichols

Gus Nichols was born January 12, 1892, in Walker County, Alabama. He was baptized in 1909 and began preaching in 1917 in the county of his birth. He is presently minister for the church in Jasper, Alabama, and has been working with this congregation since 1932. Prior to that time, he served the congregations in Cordova and Millport, Alabama.

Mr. Nichols attended Alabama Christian College and serves as a member of the board of trustees of that college. In addition, he is a member of the board of trustees of Childhaven Children's Home.

Nichols has been a staff writer for the *Gospel Advocate* for over 25 years. He has authored several books, including debates and sermons. He has participated on Bible lectureships and training programs throughout the brotherhood.



Gus Nichols was married to Matilda Frances Brown in 1913. They have eight children, and three of their sons are full-time preachers.

Greetings to all of you, my fellow travelers to eternity. I have always appreciated your invitations and my visits here to speak in lecture programs at Abilene Christian College. As a trustee of

Alabama Christian College, I bring you greetings and good wishes from that school. It is our hope and prayer that all of our colleges in the brotherhood may remain true to the word of God in all phases of their teaching and training of leadership for our homes, our congregations, and in our nation. As a stream never rises higher than its fountain, our leadership in the home, the church, and nation, rarely ever rises above the homes, schools, and congregations which produced them. Only the truth of God's word and pure, primitive Christianity can make somebody out of nobody, and Christ came into this world *to make somebody out of us all.*

The subject assigned unto me for this, the first lecture in this series is, "The Precious Blood of Christ." Our text is found in a statement made by the great apostle Peter. He wrote, "Ye know that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish, and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (I Pet. 1:18-21).

Blood! "The word is used (1) literally, as in Exodus 29:12; Acts 17:26; (2) figuratively, for murder, Hab. 2:12; Mat. 27:24; and for the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, where the idea is the death of Christ on the cross, Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7." (CRUDEN'S COMPLETE CONCORDANCE, (P. 47). There is no difference in being saved by the "blood" of Christ and in being saved by his "death."

The apostle was, no doubt, trying to shock us out of our

spiritual sleep and indifference when he wrote about "The *Precious Blood of Christ*." We are tempted by a worldly environment to overlook the most important things which all of us know about.

Is it not possible that in our great progress of the last two thousand years, we have been surrounded and flooded with so many good things that we are losing sight of the importance and value of the blood of Christ? Is it possible that we have become so worldly minded that we are not able to properly appreciate the death of Christ for our sins? Paul says, "That Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-4). We are told in this context that this is intended of God to be "gospel," or good news unto all people (See Luke 2:6-12).

I once read of a captain of an army who was so provoked by so many of the soldiers committing crime in a nearby city that he gave a decree unto them that the next soldier found guilty of a certain crime in the future would have both of his eyes gouged out. To his great disturbance, the first soldier brought before him, and found guilty of this particular crime was his own son! So, what did he do? What could he have done under the circumstances? He decided to show mercy unto the young man and spare him his sight. However, in order to hold the respect of others composing his army, and to be just as well as merciful, he first gouged out one of his own eyes, and then removed only one of his son's eyes. In this, he was considered to be just, as well as merciful, as a great and wise captain. He not only kept his own self-respect, but preserved the respect and devotion of the whole army. Of course this son never forgot the great act of love and kindness of his dear father.

But this was comparatively nothing in the light of what God has done for us! He gave His Son to suffer and die on the old rugged cross for our sins. God did not give some little something like an "eye" to save us, but "His only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). At the baptism of Jesus, God's voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Again, he said at the transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him.*" (Matt. 17:5).

God's gift of his own Son to come into a wicked world like this to be slandered and persecuted, and finally crucified between two thieves in order to save us from everlasting punishment, as well as from a life of sin here, is incomprehensible proof of the magnitude of His marvelous love for us! Christ was his only begotten Son, begotten of the Virgin Mary, by whom he became a living human being as to his outward man. He was closer to the heart of God than any other being in existence, either in heaven or earth. Because Christ had been with God from all eternity before the virgin birth, they loved each other with infinite love. Still, God gave Him to die for us, that we might go to heaven.

If all the parental love were added to the Christian love of this world, the whole of it would not be comparable to the love which God had for His Son and for a lost and hopeless human race! God's love for us is as much greater than our love for those dearest to our hearts, as He is greater in wisdom and power than mankind. Yet, millions seem not to appreciate such marvelous love as is expressed in the glorious good news of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16; Luke 2:8-10).

Many seem to *forget that God could not* have been a good and just God, had he eliminated the gift of His Son for

us, and saved us in our sins, and without conversion on our part (Acts 3:19). Paul says, "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; to declare, I say, at this time *his righteousness*: that *he might be just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25, 26). The apostle is telling us here that God could not have been *just* in saving a lost world in its sins, and without any change or conversion on man's part. God would not have been "just" in his own infinite wisdom, had he decided to populate heaven with a wicked world of people without their being fit for heaven.

It would not have been fair on God's part to let the wicked (who are rapidly ruining this world by populating it more and more with criminals, hatred, wars, evil, and strife) be associated with the righteous and all little innocent children in heaven. So, the apostle is telling us that God gave His Son so that He Himself might be *righteous* and *just* in saving those who will believe in Him with joyful trust and loving obedience to the gospel.

One of the most wicked things which we can imagine would be for our President, and the rulers of all other nations, to release all prisoners and criminals and let them go free to wreck and ruin our society. No honest citizen would be in favor of such a move on the part of our rulers and leadership.

God not only gave His Son to shed His "Precious Blood" for our sins, "That he might be just" and "righteous" in saving us from hell and eternal damnation, that we might go to heaven, but that his love thus expressed would convert us and make us fit for heaven.

Some who claim to believe in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, fail to manifest any such faith, or any love at all for the gospel of Christ. Many years ago, when a great religious assembly congregated to make their own rules and laws, they were confronted with a motion, backed up by many delegates to the conference, that they remove all songs about the "blood" of Christ from their hymn books. They said, "Blood is a nasty and repulsive thing to have to think about in our worship." This is an example of how false denominational religions are. I once related this wicked move, and a young man approached me after the service with this information: He said, "your reference to removing songs about the blood of Christ from song books, reminded me of my mother's blood." Then he told me how that when he was a child his mother snatched him and his small brother off the railroad tracks, from in front of a fast-moving passenger train, and saved their lives. But she, in so doing, stumbled and fell in front of the train and her body was torn to pieces by the train. Then this brother told me that the most sacred thing he ever saw was his mother's blood on the cross-ties and up that railroad track. He did not think of her blood which was shed for the two of them as being something "filthy," and disgusting to think about. Their lives were saved by it, and all that they were, and ever expected to be in this world was because of that blood which to them was "Precious blood!" (I Pet. 1:18-21)

I'd rather have the blood of Jesus, and all that it means to me, than to own all the worlds which God by Christ created in the beginning (Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-3; Gen. 1:1; John 17:5). Furthermore, I would rather have the salvation and the hope of heaven which I have because of the precious blood of Christ, than to be given a million worlds like this. I love to live in this beautiful and lovely world, but not

without God, nor his beloved Son. If I were offered a world like this for every day that I would live in the sinning business, I would consider it a grand insult.

I love to think and sing about the “precious blood of Christ.” One cannot believe the gospel of Christ and not believe in the efficacy and importance of the death and blood of Christ. Christ “died for our sins, according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3). Furthermore, he was raised from the dead the third day, and this proved him to be what he claimed to be—God’s Son. It also proved that there is life beyond death (I Thess. 4:13-18; John 5:28-29; I Cor. 15:1-58). Had Christ failed to rise from the dead, or had he not died, we could not have been positively certain that he is God’s Son, and that there is life after death, as we can as it is (Acts 1:1-4, 9-11; I Cor. 15:20-26; 2 Pet. 3:9-16).

We should not think it strange that God would give his Son to die for us. Since God created Adam, man has had to live upon suffering and death of some kind. The life had to be crushed out of corn and wheat before we could live upon it as essential bread. The same is true of all other vegetables. In gathering them they are all put to death for us and that we might live upon them. The pork and beef, and all other flesh which we eat, had to die that we might live, even here in this world.

Please remember, we positively cannot go to heaven if we die in the sinning business. Jesus said unto some wicked sinners, who were rejecting him, “I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 8:21). Again, He said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (V. 24).

It would be better never to have lived in this world than to die in sin, and as enemies of Christ! Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). He also said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). This life is not worth living to those who die in sin, and go into everlasting punishment, and everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41, 46; Mk. 9:43-48). Since Jesus came and lived and taught among men, there is no hope for those who reject him. He said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sins" (John 15:22). That is, if he had not come, they would not have been guilty of the awful sin of rejecting him. Again, he said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (v. 24).

"The precious blood of Jesus" was shed in order to draw man away from the sinning business unto a righteous life. In reference to all of these wonderful things, and to the power of the gospel, Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). God draws us, not by some miracle wrought directly upon us, but by the gift of his Son, and this great teaching. He then referred back to the prophets as proof of the drawing power of the gospel, the good news of "The precious blood of Christ." He said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

The death of Christ, and all the gospel truth connected therewith, is powerful enough to draw all men to Christ.

Indeed, he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33). God knew that this wonderful world would draw and influence mankind to live for this life only, if they would permit it to do so. So, God designed that Christ, when lifted up on the cross for us, would become a greater drawing power to influence them to come to Him, if they would believe his gospel, which is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12).

The sun, which is nearly one hundred million miles from our earth, has marvelous magnetic drawing power, and it holds our earth up in space at the right distance from it, so that we can live upon it (Job 26:7). This gravity, or magnetic drawing power, reminds us of the gospel, and how Jesus, lifted up in his death on the cross, draws us unto him through the power of the good news of it all, and not by miraculous power wrought upon sinners to force them to salvation.

God deals with mankind as free moral agents, and not as though they were mere machines, like a typewriter, to be operated as helpless and irresponsible machines. The sinner can wilfully and fully reject Christ and his "precious blood." Jesus said, "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47). *Unbelief* of this amazing and marvelous gospel, the sweetest story ever told, counteracts its amazing and saving power (Rom. 1:16). And this gospel can be rejected, for man is a free moral agent, and not a mere machine, as we have said already. Hence, Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

We must, therefore, receive his “words.” *Unbelief* of his “Words” is like taking a capsule of powerful, healing medicine in a glass capsule. Those who hear and read this very sermon will not be influenced by it to obey the gospel and be saved unless they first of all believe the truth being taught herein (I Pet. 4:17; Rom. 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Jesus’ “words” are, as in the great commission, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:15-16). The believer of his “words” is to be “baptized into His death” so as to be saved by the benefits of that death (Rom. 6:3-4, 5).

His word says those who have heard the gospel and believed it, and asked what to do, are to, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). This is the way to obtain remission, or forgiveness of sins by his blood, for he says it was shed “For the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). It is the blood that washes away our sins (Rev. 1:5; 7:14). This is why the penitent believer must be baptized to reach the blood. Ananias said unto Saul, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16). It is “In” Christ that one becomes a “New creature,” and one is to be “Baptized into Christ” and “Into his death” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26-28; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 14:13). It is in Christ that we have “redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” and we are “Baptized into Jesus Christ” (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Christ “Purchased” the church with “his blood,” and we are baptized “Into the one body”—the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18-24).

Even we Christians obtain forgiveness of sins, and are

kept cleansed from sin, by being faithful and walking in the light, as Christ is in the light (I John 1:7-10; 2:1-2; James 5:19-20; Rev. 2:4-5). In addition to all this, the Christian life is by far the best life to live even in this world. "The way of transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

The great, crying need of our world, therefore, is for religious freedom and pardon. Our world of sinners are lost, and have been, by their sins, sold into spiritual, and sinful slavery. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly PARDON" (Isa. 55:7).

The late Brother G. C. Brewer wrote of two men who were at the close of a war, under the awful sentence to be put to death for their awful crimes committed during the war. Brother Brewer said, however, the President of the U.S.A. finally offered them a pardon. But only one of them accepted the wonderful pardon offered. The other one rejected the offer and was executed, or put to death, as though no mercy had been offered him. It shocked our nation to think a man would be so foolish as to "reject" such a wonderful offer of mercy!

Remember, "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). "They are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Christ took our place and died for us, (Heb. 2:9), and is the "Author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey him*" (Heb. 5:7-9). He even invites and pleads with you to come (Matt. 11:28-30). Don't REJECT AND BE EXECUTED—COME!

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Melvin J. Wise

"But we preach Christ crucified" (I Corinthians 1:23)

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The cross of Jesus Christ stands at the center of the Christian religion.

No other symbol of Christianity can be compared with it. It is the dominating theme in art and architecture. It is the impelling motive in devotion and service in the Master's cause.

Yet the cross is not an image to be worshipped. Claudius of Turin (one of the early European reformers) declared that "We are to bear the cross, not to worship it." We might as well worship every virgin because Jesus was born of a virgin, or worship every manger because Jesus was born in a manger, as to worship the cross. It is not the cross that means so much as the crucified.

To the Corinthians Paul said, "But we preach Christ crucified" (I Corinthians 1:23). To preach "Christ crucified" is to preach that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3). Preaching "Christ crucified," "preaching the cross," and preaching "the gospel," are all expressions that are equivalent to one another.

I. THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS RESULTED IN TWO ATTITUDES (I Corinthians 1:18)

A. The Attitude of the Lost—"to them that perish foolishness."

We notice that it is not preaching that was regarded foolishness, but the content of that which was preached—"the cross." The pure and unadulterated message of the gospel of the cross will always be unacceptable to the proud intellectual. It is only when we adulterate it with philosophical reasoning that it finds acceptance with the intellectually proud, but when we do so we have made the cross "of none effect."

The Modernists resent the Bible doctrine of the Atonement. They denounce it as a "bloody gospel," yet in this they are logical according to their teaching, for they deny the reality of sin. Liberal theologians ignore the *cause* of sin, the *effect* of sin, and the *remedy* for sin. Modernists consider the death of Jesus only as a martyr for His cause, but hell shakes with infernal laughter when it hears the cross of Christ preached to sinners in these words. Satan need not trouble himself at all, for his "angels of light," who thus preach Christ, do his work for him to his complete satisfaction.

To the cultured Greek and to the pious Jew the story of the cross sounded like sheer folly.

1. "*To the Jews a stumbling block.*" (I Corinthians 1:23)

To the Jews it was incredible that one whose life had ended upon a Roman cross could possibly be the Chosen of God. They pointed to their own law which said "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23).

2. "*And unto the Greeks foolishness.*" (I Corinthians 1:23)

The Greeks (Gentiles) represented the speculative, philosophical type of mind that took pride in continually wandering around in the realm of the relative, never arriving at any definite conviction or conclusion. Paul met this kind of philosophy on Mars Hill in Athens, where he delivered his famous discourse recorded in Acts 17:22-31.

Unfortunately this "Greek" spirit of human wisdom has invaded the Lord's church in our day. There are those who are saying that truth is only relative and can never be abso-

lute; that man is a subjective creature, for he subjects himself to his past experiences and former teachings, his prejudices and to every environment to which he is exposed. Hence, man cannot know absolute truth, for all he can know is altered and flavored by his own subjectivity. Therefore, all the knowledge of truth which he possesses is only relative. But Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine . . ." (John 7:17). Jesus further said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

B. The Attitude of the Saved—“but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (I Corinthians 1:18)

This is not an attitude of philosophical argument and explanation, but of personal experience. Christianity is more than an academic question to be determined and explained by the philosophers and scientists. It is a laboratory experience of life, to be established by proof. Jesus declared that proof would come by our own experience of salvation. The apostle John expressed it in these words, "And hereby do we know him, if we keep his commandments" (I John 2:3). Therefore, to those who have experienced this power, the cross of Christ is not a proposition, but a demonstration.

II. THE MEANING OF THE CROSS. Why the cross of Christ? What does it mean?

A. The cross of Christ reveals the fact and certainty of sin.

It helps us to understand the horribleness of sin. You have seen how sin leaves in its pathway broken homes, bleeding hearts, wrecked lives, and doomed souls. Yet we try to

take a light view of sin, and refer to it as “human weakness,” or “misconduct,” but God calls it by its true name—SIN. From many so-called Christian pulpits today sin is never mentioned, or if it is mentioned, it is explained away. People of the twentieth century pride themselves in their culture, refinement, and respectability. They do not want to be told that they are sinners. But the preaching of the cross declares the fact of sin.

But what is sin?

1. *Sin is transgression.* (I John 3:4)

“Transgression” is from the Latin “transgredi”; “trans” meaning “over or across”; “gredi” meaning “to step or to walk.” Hence “transgression” means “to step over” or “to walk across.” God has established a boundary line between good and evil, right and wrong, and whenever we “step over” or “walk across” this line into the forbidden territory of evil, we are guilty of intrusion or trespassing; we are breaking God’s law; we are guilty of sin.

2. *Sin is unrighteousness.* (I John 5:17)

We can perhaps better understand “unrighteousness” by looking at its opposite—“righteousness.” David said, “. . . all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalms 119:172). Therefore, righteousness comes by keeping God’s commandments. Disobedience of God’s commandments is “unrighteousness.” What is the greatest sin one can commit? Surely it must be by breaking the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:38).

3. *Sin is omission—to know and not do God’s will.*
(James 4:17)

Submission to God’s will is required, and a failure to do this is nothing short of rebellion and rebellion is sin. Sin incurs the penalty of death (Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23). No man has the ability to save himself from sin’s penalty or cleanse his own heart from its corruption. Therefore, man’s only hope for salvation from sin is to be found on a lonely, barren, skull-shaped hill, outside the old walled city of Jerusalem, upon which we see three crosses. A thief is on each side of the central cross, and upon this cross is the Man of Sorrows, the Prince of Peace, heaven’s own appointed Messenger to this sin-ridden world. Who brought Him to this place of horror? Who inflicted this hideous torture upon the Man who came to redeem us from sin? You did and I did; it was your sins and mine that nailed Jesus to the cross. God’s prophet of long ago said, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

Paul said, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Here the apostle declares that “all *have* sinned,” not “all *were born in* sin.” We have been “blaming” Adam long enough. There is no ground in the Scriptures for “original” or “inherited” sin. Sin is an act committed by an individual (I John 3:4). God’s word says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son . . .” (Ezekiel 18:20). I don’t care whether Adam ate an apple or a cantaloupe, I feel not the slightest responsibility for his actions. I have done enough myself to cause me sufficient remorse without borrowing obligations from any of my ancestors. We are alienated from

God by our own wicked works (Isaiah 59:1-2; Colossians 1:21).

B. The cross of Christ reveals God's love for lost humanity.

God did not love us because we were worthy of being loved, or because we were loveable and attractive to Him. Paul said, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God Commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). Also, John said, "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). Hence, God loved us when we were sinful and unworthy.

In the beloved Golden Text of the Bible, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Many of you are fathers, and you know how extremely difficult it would be for you to give up your son for any cause. You would not suffer his right hand to be cut off for all the wealth of the world. Yet God spared not His only Begotten Son. He gave Him up to die a shameful death, the death of the cross, to demonstrate His love for us all. No wonder Paul exclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15).

C. The cross of Christ reveals the truth that God's only remedy for sin is the blood of Christ.

Thousands of lambs and oxen had been offered upon

Israel's altars, but none could take away sin. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). John the Baptist made this testimony concerning Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The beloved apostle John said of Jesus, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

Under the gospel of Christ we have one and only one great meritorious ground of justification—that ground is the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. This justification is appropriated by man's faith, which leads to baptism, for Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Paul shows that in the beautiful act of Christian baptism one is "baptized into his [Christ's] death" (Romans 6:3). At this point one reaches the cleansing blood of Christ, for in His death He shed His blood.

Paul insisted that in Christ's death and resurrection He suffered for sin once and for all. "For in that he died, he died unto sin *once*; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Romans 6:10). This is reaffirmed several times by the writer of the Hebrew epistle. ". . . for this he did *once*, when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:27). "So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many . . ." (Hebrews 9:28). "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once* for all" (Hebrews 10:9-10). This plainly repudiates the Roman Catholic doctrine of repeated sacrifice upon the altar of the Mass.

D. The cross of Christ reveals the futility of all human efforts to remove sin, or to minimize it, or to explain it away.

Various remedies for sin have been proposed by the philosophers and reformers. Education, mental health, psycho-analysis, salvation by morality and social regeneration are methods that have been offered and tried in vain. The deluded followers of Mrs. Baker Eddy solve the problem of sin by pronouncing it to us as an "illusion of the mortal mind"—an explanation that doesn't explain.

III. CHRISTIANITY IS DISTINCTIVELY A RELIGION OF ATONEMENT.

The elimination of the doctrine of the vicarious death of Jesus Christ would take the very heartbeat out of Christianity, for truly this is the center and core and circumference of the gospel of salvation. It is important that we understand that this tremendous doctrine is the very basis of our Christian faith, for "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

For many years we have been affirming this great truth, not only in our preaching, but in our Christian hymns as well, such as:

"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

And again:

"I must needs go home by the way of the cross, There's no other way but this."

On the cross Christ took the sinner's place, drank the sinner's cup, felt the sinner's stripes and was bruised for the sinner's iniquities. It is when you preach Christ as the Atonement for sin, the divine Sin-bearer, as the One who was made

sin on our behalf, that you approach the glory and power of the Christian religion. Wherever the gospel is preached with this great doctrine of expiation and atonement left out there the offense of the cross has ceased to modern theology. That is the one doctrine which the world scorns and which the gates of hell fear. It was this great doctrine of Atonement that established the church in the pagan world during the early years of Christianity, and has kept it secure through the storms of the ages. Can the church now afford to forsake its first love and preach to a lost humanity the merits and morality of humanity in lieu of the atoning and saving work of Christ as the world's only redemption from sin? We might have great cathedrals with their stained glass windows, and eloquent preachers, and magnificent singing, and still fail to communicate to lost humanity the only cure for its spiritual malady. One of the most alarming tendencies of the day in so-called Christendom is the tendency to tone down the gospel to suit the prejudice and unbelief of our age.

The question is sometimes asked, "How can God be just and justify the sinner?" The term "justify" means the clearance of the sinner from all guilt; it means that his sin is put away and made as though it had never been committed. How, then, could God be just and true to His holiness, and yet so justify the sinner as to receive him back into His fellowship on the basis of freedom from sin's guilt? The only solution to the problem was for an innocent party to voluntarily give his blood, an act which would necessitate death as a substitution before God for the death that was due the sinner. Where could God find such a substitute? There was no mortal on earth to qualify, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). There was only one possibility—God's own Son was the only Person who had the capacity to become man's sinless offering, to bear in His

own body the sin of the world. There was only One who could be a sin-bearer, for He must be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, guileless and spotless—a Lamb without blemish; so Jesus was ordained in the eternal ages as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). Through His atoning death, in His triumph over sin and Satan, He is truly the Author of eternal life. But if He became our Atonement for sin, He would have to come to earth, take upon Himself the form of a servant, live as a man, be despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows. Then He would have to be smitten of God, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Looking down from the battlements of heaven, He saw the world doomed, damned and bound for hell. He saw you and me struggling beneath our load of sin and bound in iniquity. Thus He left His heavenly habitation, threw off His heavenly garments, took upon Himself the form of human flesh and blood that He might die for our sins.

Unitarians and other Modernists object to this doctrine of the Atonement. They object on the ground that it is not reasonable to punish one person for the sins of another. They say, “How could God, the first Person, take the sins of guilty man, the second person, and lay them on Christ, the innocent third Person?” The truth is that when God, the first Person, took the sins of guilty man, the second person, and laid them on Christ, He laid them on Himself. There really was not a third Person in the transaction, for God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one (I John 5:7). Not one in entity, but one in purpose. Hence, Christ is Deity; He is God Incarnate; He is Immanuel (John 1:1-3, 14). Therefore, Paul affirmed “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . .” (II Corinthians 5:19). So unless Christ is Deity, unless He is

both God and man, both divine and human, the whole gospel of the vicarious suffering of Christ is reduced to foolishness. Had Christ been only a man, only human and no part divine, He could no more have saved others than could have Stephen, Paul, or Lincoln, or any other martyr.

IV. WE DO NOT COME TO THE REAL STRENGTH OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST UNTIL WE COME TO THE HOUR OF THE CROSS.

We now travel with Jesus on the historic "way of sorrow"—the way that led from Gethsemane to Calvary, from Gethsemane's gate to the palace of the High Priest; thence to Pilate's Judgment Hall, and finally to "the place of the skull," where the tragedy of the ages was enacted, and where human cruelty reached its highest.

A. *Gethsemane.* Leaving the Upper Room, following the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus took with Him His eleven apostles, Judas having gone to lay plans for the betrayal. East of Jerusalem the ground slopes downward to the Brook of Kidron; on the opposite side rises the Mount of Olives. This side of the hill of Olivet facing the city there lies the Garden of Gethsemane. Leaving eight of the apostles outside the Garden, Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John into the Garden. Leaving them at a certain spot, He withdrew Himself from them a stone's throw, and there He poured out His heart to the Father these words. "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Returning to Peter, James, and John, Jesus found them sleeping. He rebuked them in these words, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Jesus went back to the same place of

prayer and prayed these words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42). Jesus came again to the apostles and again He found them sleeping. Again He rebuked them in the same words as before. The Savior returned to the same place of prayer and repeated the second prayer (Matthew 26:44). Again He returned to Peter, James and John, and again they were sleeping. To them He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Matthew 26:45).

Leaving the Garden, Jesus and the apostles could look toward Jerusalem, and coming through the Valley of Kidron, there came Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, among whom were the chief priests and elders of the people. "It was a full moon and the black mass was easily visible, moving along the dusty road" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, page 2). In all probability some of the dignified members of the Sanhedrin were along to make doubly sure that none of their plans miscarried.

B. *The Arrest.* By pre-arrangement, a kiss, the sign of friendship, was to be the sign by which Jesus was to be identified to those seeking His arrest. Judas planted upon the blessed cheek of my Lord the kiss of betrayal. Jesus said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48) Peter, bold to defend his Lord, took his sword and "smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus" (John 18:10). Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Then Jesus tenderly touched the ear of Malchus and healed him.

C. *The Trials*. It should be explained here that Jesus had to undergo two trials—the first, Jewish (or ecclesiastical); the second, Roman (civil). The Jews as a nation were a province of the Roman Empire, therefore, subject to Rome's final authority. Rome insisted that infliction of death by crucifixion should be her own prerogative. Hence, in this case the Sanhedrin could pass the sentence of capital punishment by crucifixion, but that necessitated another trial before Pontius Pilate.

The Jewish Trials

1. *Before Annas*. (John 18:13)

Annas, an old man of seventy years, was skilled in political trickery. He had been high priest some twenty years before, but had been deposed under Tiberias. He was still the virtual head of the Jewish theocracy; however, his son-in-law, Caiphas, was the nominal head.

2. *Before Caiphas*. (John 18:24)

This was in the house of Caiphas, where the Sanhedrin was assembled. The charge made against Jesus was, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days" (Matthew 26:61). This the Jews considered to be blasphemy, for to blaspheme the Temple of God was, according to Jewish law, equivalent to blaspheming God Himself. To this charge Jesus gave no reply, but simply "held his peace".

3. *Before the Sanhedrin*, again assembled in the palace of Caiphas.

Caiphas asked Jesus, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am . . ." (Mark 14:61-62) "Then

the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands" (Mark 14:63-65).

The Roman Trials

1. *The initial hearing before Pilate.* (Matthew 27:2, 11-14; Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23-1-5; John 18:28-38)

The first charge the Jews made against Jesus before Pilate was that He was a malefactor (John 18:31-32). They then trumped up the charge that Jesus forbade the payment of taxes to Rome, and that He had proclaimed Himself a king. Pilate was shrewd enough not to be deceived by this sophistry, and he knew that the Jews would never have asked the death sentence for such offences as these, so he took Jesus into the Judgment Hall and questioned Him privately (John 18:33-37). This private interrogation was enough to convince the governor that these charges against Jesus were false. He came out before the accusers of Jesus and said, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4). When the Jews mentioned that Jesus was a Galilean, this moved Pilate to realize that Jesus really belonged under Herod's jurisdiction, and he told them to take Jesus before Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time (Luke 23:6-7).

2. *Jesus before Herod.* (Luke 23:8-11)

"When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him" (Luke 23:8). Herod then asked Jesus

questions, but Jesus "answered him nothing" (Luke 23:9). Herod then sent Jesus back to Pilate again.

3. *Jesus before Pilate again.*

Pilate announced to the Jews that neither he nor Herod had found in Jesus any fault worthy of death. Then Pilate said, "I will therefore chastise him, and release him" (Luke 23:16). Then Pilate remembered that at the Passover feast it was a custom for the governor to release a prisoner. He then brought Jesus and Barabbas, a notable prisoner, before the Jews and asked, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate said unto them, What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified" (Matthew 27:21-22).

When Pilate sought to release Jesus, the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend . . ." (John 19:12). When the Jews persisted that Jesus be crucified, Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

D. *The Scourging.*

Pilate turned the Prisoner over to the executioners for the scourging which always preceded a crucifixion. It was probably his thought that flagellation would satisfy the mob blood-thirsty for vengeance. After the scourging the soldiers took the Victim into the palace quarters and called together the entire company to make sport of Jesus. They took from Him His own clothing and put upon Him the scarlet robe; they placed upon His brow a crown of thorns and in His hand they placed a reed. They mocked Him, crying in scorn, "Hail, thou King of the Jews."

E. *The Via Dolorosa*—“the way of sorrow.”

The Death March then began. Every step was a struggle for Jesus. He bore the burden of the cross; it was an upright beam, perhaps twelve or fourteen feet long; the cross beam was, likely, six or eight feet long. No wonder He struggled beneath the weight of this heavy cross. Yet “the cross he carried was not heavy because of the wood, but because of the world” (William F. McDowell, *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ*, page 79). But Jesus was enfeebled not only by this cruelty, but by the previous days of violent treatment, by the night of sleepless anxiety and suffering, and the mental anguish of the Garden and also of the six trials.

The Roman soldiers, eager to get their assignment over, met a man coming from the country, “Simon, the Cyrenian, whom they compelled to bear the cross after Jesus.” They came to Golgatha—“the place of the skull.” There they crucified Jesus between two thieves.

Upon the cross Jesus spoke those seven beautiful words:

1. Looking upon those who had so ill-treated Him, Jesus looked to the Father and said, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34).

2. To the thief who had said to Jesus, “Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,” to him Jesus said, “*Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*” (Luke 23:43).

3. To Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Lord said, “*Woman, behold thy son*” (John 19:26), alluding to John. Then to John, Jesus said, “*Behold thy mother.*” Here Jesus spoke as the Son of man, remembering in His dying hour, His obligations to His human mother. He dared not to speak her name now, nor reveal His relationship, lest the hostile crowd

insult her, but with His simple statement He commended her to John that he should care for her.

4. In indescribable anguish, Jesus said to the Father, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Matthew 27:46). Had God really forsaken Him? Yes, but not because God was displeased in any sense with His Son. But Jesus was dying for sin. He was a sin-offering. Paul declared that God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). The sin offering under the law was loathsome; it had to be burned outside the camp. In the Hebrew letter we read, "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:11-12). So Jesus tasted the horror of Hades that we might escape it forever. Speaking prophetically at this point, David said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalms 16:10). No wonder there was darkness over the face of the earth for three hours. Was not this a veil reverently let down from heaven?

5. Jesus then said, "*I thirst*" (John 19:28). They then gave Him vinegar, mingled with gall. According to custom the victim was offered a strong aromatic wine, from a feeling of pity to the condemned, in order to stupefy him. Some believe that this was a sort of an anaesthetic to relieve Him of pain. He merely tasted it, but refused to drink it, for He wanted to drink the bitterest dregs of suffering.

6. Then Jesus said, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). Nothing more could be done. Prophecy had pointed to that

day; hence fulfilled or finished. The price for sin had been paid. The law of Moses had ended; it was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14).

7. Finally, Jesus said to the Father, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*" (Luke 23:46). In the Intercessory Prayer Jesus said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). The Father would receive Him back, that He had finished His work on earth, into that intimacy of communion and fellowship which had been theirs from all eternity. His work of redemption was ended—the Father then received Him at His ascension back into heaven.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died;
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

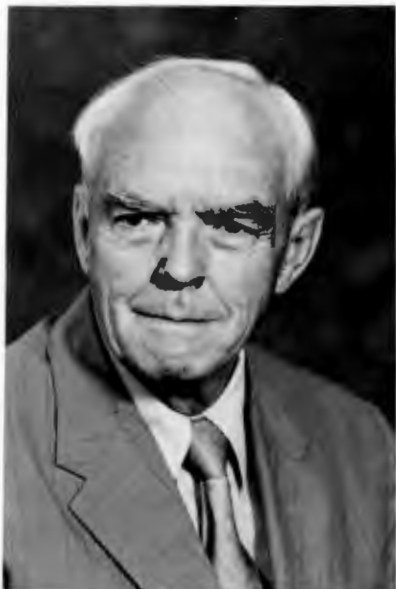
Isaac Watts

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

J. C. Bailey

John Carlos Bailey was born September 13, 1903. He was born on a farm near Meaford, Ontario. He obeyed the gospel in July, 1914. He was baptized by his father, the late T. W. Bailey. He attended the old Carman Bible College in the years 1921-23. From there he went to Montana to preach. He was in Montana until the spring of 1925.

On January 3, 1924, he married Myrtle Deane Buckallew of Elmdale, Montana. To this union seven children were born. The Baileys later adopted three little half-Chinese girls. One son passed to the spirit world on March 6, 1974. There are also 21 grandchildren and one great grandson. He returned to Canada in May, 1925, and since then has labored in every province in Canada, but has worked extensively in Ontario and the Western provinces.



He was editor of the Gospel Herald for a number of years and also worked with Western Christian College for a number of years when the school was at Radville, Saskatchewan.

It was discovered in 1962 that there were special privileges extended to Canadians in going to India as missionaries. He accepted the challenge and on April 25, 1963, he landed on Indian soil. Others have followed. Ways have been found for Americans to spend time in India, and so there are now more members of the church in India than any other place in the world except the U.S.A.

He has made six trips to India. The first two trips were more than three years each in duration.

Introduction

When Jesus said that we were to lift up our eyes and look at fields that were white already unto harvest (John 4:35), he was referring to a harvest of souls and not a harvest of grain.

Before we enter into a discussion of the subject proper, it might be well for us to see the setting. God had given the Old Testament to the Jews (Exodus 34:27, 28; Deuteronomy 5:3). Jesus was born under the law and lived under the law (Galatians 4:4). The men that He chose to make His will known to the world were all Jews and had been raised to believe that the Jews were the covenanted people of God. This was true, but this condition ended at the Cross (II Corinthians 3:14; Colossians 2:14).

The Field is the World

Constantly during the personal ministry of Christ He laid the foundation for the worldwide system that He proposed to establish. Time only permits us to call attention to a few of these. In the parable of the tares, as recorded in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, Jesus said that the field is the world (verse 38). However, in the lesson that we are using as a text Jesus said that these men, and hence us, were to lift up our eyes unto *fields*. Jesus made it very plain in the Great Commission that the whole world was the field: "Go ye therefore, and

make disciples of the nations” (Matthew 28:19). “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). Luke records another conversation of Jesus, after His resurrection, and this is what was said: “and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Within this field (the world) there are fields, (nations) and within these fields there are fields (different ethnic groups, and people talking different languages). India is a field within the field and then there are many fields within the country of India. There are 14 major languages and each language has its own script. Then there are hundreds of different dialects.

In connection with this matter of reaping the world for Christ, Jesus made a very significant statement in John 6:63; He said, “the flesh profiteth nothing.” Under the law the flesh did profit. Under the caste system of Hinduism the flesh does profit. It does make a difference whether you are born a Brahmin or a Harijan (this is the name that Ghandi gave the Untouchables).

While the apostles had the Great Commission they were slow to realize its significance. It took three miracles to convince Peter that he should go down and preach to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-23). Even when he got there he asked them why they had sent for him (Acts 10:29). After Cornelius had told Peter of the visit of the angel, Peter was then ready to do what Jesus had commanded him to do in the Great Commission and he made this very significant statement; “. . . Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him (Acts 10:34, 35). “I think we should add here two statements made by inspira-

tion through the Apostle Paul: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). "Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh; even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more" (II Corinthians 5:16).

I think we have established the fact that the gospel is for all. We cannot say that any one nation of people has more right to the gospel than others.

Now let us turn back to our text again. Jesus said "LIFT UP YOUR EYES." He was not talking about a property that we might buy. He was not talking about educational opportunities. We are to lift up our eyes unto fields. I was raised on a farm. I love good land. I love to travel down the Red River Valley from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Fargo, North Dakota. There are no stones. There is no poor land. It is rich fertile soil. The best time to travel on this road is about the middle of August. There are several million acres that are ripe unto harvest. Jesus said that we are to lift up our eyes unto fields that are white unto harvest.

Every farmer knows that when the grain is ready, harvest must take place THEN. Let us suppose that we have a field of wheat that is ready to harvest but we leave it for four months. Every farmer knows that this can be near disaster. If a farmer does not harvest the fields that are white unto harvest he will soon be off the farm.

Many Fields Ripe Unto Harvest Now

We may not understand why, but at certain times certain fields (nations) are white unto harvest. There are nations

where men are sowing the seed. It may be a generation before there is any great harvest. The Parable of the Sower demonstrates this (Luke 8:4-15).

Why are there fields that are white unto harvest? Jesus says: "I have sent you to reap that whereunto ye have not labored; others have labored and ye have entered into their labor" (John 4:38).

If we think of the Indian as a barbarian we have a wrong conception. When William Carey went to India the Indian people were not looking for Christianity. William Carey was an English Baptist who went to India about the first part of the last century. It took him seven years to make one convert. Young widows were burned with their dead husbands. It was not uncommon for the firstborn, if she were a girl, to be destroyed to appease the gods, for the parents had offended the gods or the firstborn would not have been a girl. India was then certainly anything but a field white unto harvest. Even as late as the middle of the century when the American Baptists sent a missionary into Andhra Pradesh (that is where I have done most of my work) it took him five years to make a single convert. However, William Carey translated the Bible into many of the languages of India. Hundreds of thousands of copies of the Bible, in whole or in part, have been distributed among the people of India. For two hundred years denominational missionaries have told the story of Jesus. True, they did not preach all the truth, but the Indian did learn what was in the Bible and did learn of Christ. It is a field white unto harvest, and it is true, sadly true, because others have labored, we have been able to enter into their labors.

To Evangelize the World Is a Command

I would like to emphasize the fact that Jesus gives a command here, a command that we should obey. (Should we not obey any command that he has given us?) In a past generation there was a segment in the church that taught that we are not under the Great Commission. In practice that segment may still be very much alive, but I do not think that anyone would argue that the Great Commission does not apply to us.)

We do not believe that we have the right to change the elements that are on the Lord's table. We use bread and the fruit of the vine. We do not believe that we have the right to change the action of baptism. We are firmly convinced that those who sprinkle babies instead of immersing adults have violated the law of God.

This being true, and it is true, then how can we change the Great Commission? We are to carry the gospel into all the world. We are to lift up our eyes unto fields that are white unto harvest. There are MILLIONS that would obey the gospel in various parts of the world IF THEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY. Yet, I am told that there are elders who say that they will not work in a field that is more than 500 miles away from where they live. Are they obeying the voice of Christ? I think you know they are not. WHO GAVE THEM THE RIGHT TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION?

Let us look at this carefully again. The field is the world. That is the verdict of the Lord Himself. Jesus said, LIFT UP YOUR EYES. Where? UNTO FIELDS. WHAT FIELDS? The fields that are white unto harvest. Do not say, says Jesus, that there are four months unto harvest. This may be true in many parts of the world, then and now, but there are

FIELDS THAT ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST. We should be ashamed that others have labored and we now enter into harvest, but this does not alter the urgency of the command. There is no denying the fact that there are fields that are ALREADY white unto harvest.

When I was a boy excursion trains ran from Eastern Canada to Western Canada to help reap the harvest of grain. Thousands of men were brought out each year. (That was before the combine became a widely used machine.) They came out to harvest the great crops of the Western Plains, to receive wages. Harvest wages were good compared to other farm wages at that time. So we have been promised by the Lord of harvest, that we shall receive wages. We shall gather fruit unto life eternal (John 4:36). We could not get better wages than that. There is special consideration for those who win many souls for Christ. Prophetically Daniel spoke of this very thing: "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn MANY [Emphasis mine--JCB] to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

The saved will not consist of just Anglo-Saxon people for I read this: "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . ." (Revelation 7:9). It does not look as if the plan of God can be carried out and churches stay within five hundred miles of home base.

God's Providence

We profess that we are striving to restore New Testament Christianity. Yet, we have fallen far short of restoring the

pattern of evangelism of the New Testament Church. God overruled in the book of Acts to see that the message was carried worldwide. The gospel was preached to the orthodox Jew. It was preached to the Grecian Jew. It was preached to the Samaritan. Then God overruled, as we have already noted, to see that the gospel was preached to the God fearing Gentile. Jesus may have been directly referring to these people when he said: “. . . others have labored and ye have entered into their labor” (John 4:38). After the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity they had translated the Bible into the Greek language. Because of this, there were thousands of people in the world, like Cornelius, who while not worshipping according to the rites of Judaism, did worship the true God and had given up idolatry. So this was a field ripe for the early Christians to harvest. You can see what happened in Antioch: “But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they were come to Antioch spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:20, 21).

Lift up your eyes and look at the church now. Instead of a group of Jews it consisted of Jews, Orthodox, and Grecian; it consisted of Samaritans and Bible believing Gentiles. We would have said surely this is enough. Surely, this would do for one generation. Let us lift up our eyes and LOOK.

A great meeting had been held in Antioch. This meeting had continued for one whole year. There had been a great harvest of souls. We would say that surely now they should stop and consolidate their work. There were men left there to consolidate the work, but listen to the word of the Lord: “. . . the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2). Let us

lift up our eyes and see what this is now. What is the new work that was to be done. The gospel is now to be carried into the heathen world. First, to the island of Cyprus they went with the gospel and then into Asia Minor into what is now Turkey. They had great crowds in some of these meetings, for in one meeting nearly the whole city came to hear the gospel preached (Acts 13:44). In every city a storm of persecution beat upon the preachers of the gospel, but they carried on. After this preaching trip was ended they returned to Antioch and made a report to the church (Acts 14:27). A second trip was planned and they visited the churches that had been started on the first trip. They were taught to be faithful to the Lord. The great apostle Paul is not satisfied with the ground he has covered. He now wants to turn south into Asia (Ephesus) but the Holy Spirit forbids it for the time. Paul later spent more time in Ephesus than any other one place except in jail (Acts 16:6). Paul then thought to turn north into Bythinia "and the Spirit of Jesus suffered him not" (Acts 16:7). Paul did not conclude that because he could not go south and he could not go north, that he should return or stay where he was. There was one other direction to go. He went west. Soon Paul and his company found themselves in Troas (Acts 16:8). Paul here had a vision. In this vision he saw a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). The gospel had been preached in Asia. The gospel had been carried to Africa by the eunuch who was baptized by Philip (Acts 8:26:40). Now the gospel is to be carried to Europe. I believe that it is as essential to restore the New Testament pattern of world evangelism as any other part of the divine plan. If not, why not? These men did not go out and start schools. They did not start hospitals. They preached the gospel. They preached the gospel by looking a man in the eye and preaching Christ to him.

Charity we must do, for Jesus so taught (Matthew 25:31-46), but this will not save the souls of men. Only a preached gospel will save men (Romans 1:16). I must practice charity to save my soul. I must preach the gospel to save the souls of my fellow man.

New Testament Churches Were Evangelistic

New Testament churches reached far with the gospel. I read of the church at Rome: "... your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). Their faith could only be proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). Their faith could only be proclaimed by what they SAID. Paul talks to them further about this, later in this book. Let us lift up our eyes and look at this statement from the Book of Romans: "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Romans 10:8-15).

If anything can be proved, then world evangelism is a part and parcel of New Testament Christianity.

Our Own History

Lift up your eyes! Let us look back at the history of the church in the last 150 years. The movement to restore New Testament Christianity was not a generation old when it was split over a plan to do Missionary Work. Brethren thought that if the churches would cooperate through this organization that was called a Missionary Society, then they could evangelize the world more rapidly. This was a tragic mistake. Those brethren who did not take part in this organization did more work at home than those who had the Society. I refer to the matter of starting work in new places. This is very apparent by these figures. The Christian Church at the turn of the century had about one million members. They now have about two million members. After the division there were probably not more than 300,000 members of the churches that rejected the societies. Figures show that there are now more than 2,000,000 members of the churches that rejected the Society. The work overseas was not so prolific.

It is not that the Society brethren accomplished much overseas, but we did less. In the debate between J. B. Briney of the Christian Church and W. W. Otey of the churches of Christ, Briney said that we not only did not believe in the Society but we did not believe in Missionary work. We could have pleaded guilty and saved the cost of the court.

In my early life Daniel Sommer taught that it was not needful to do overseas work. He claimed that the "ye" in the Great Commission applied only to the apostles and so the churches that held to his view did not do any work overseas. Hundreds of churches, especially in the Northern States, were under the control of this man. This is not the only error that he taught, but this is the part that has to do with the subject under discussion.

As the influence of the Sommer faction began to fade, there arose a new enemy on the horizon. The greatest advocate of foreign evangelism in the 1920's and 1930's was a man by the name of Don Carlos Janes. When the controversy arose over premillennialism, Janes was very active on the side of this theory. This gave brethren a good alibi not to support foreign evangelism for it was controlled by premillennialists. Not all work was controlled by these brethren, but enough of it was to give brethren an alibi not to support the work.

Then came World War II. American soldiers who were Christians went into nearly every country on earth. They were impressed with the need of taking the gospel to the people of the world. Plans were begotten in the War Years to carry the gospel to certain nations. Notable among these were Germany, Italy, and Japan. After the war there was a greater effort made than ever before in modern history.

The church had lifted up her eyes and even if only in a limited way, she saw a lost and ruined world.

Would we march on to victory? Not if the devil had his way. As he had hindered us with a society and then he had hindered us with the theory of pre-millennialism, now there arose a new cry. Many of those that were baptized backslid. Had not many of those who had been baptized in America backslid? Do not Canadians backslide? Some workers proved unfitted for the task. Some got homesick and discouraged and came home. So some churches refused to support overseas work. Certain men said that they had got "browned off." Is it not peculiar that they never got "browned off" when it came to dealing with Anglo-Saxons?

A Wonderful Event

Then a wonderful thing happened. A native policeman in Nigeria learned the way of the Lord through a Bible Correspondence Course and reading his New Testament. In a few months he had baptized more than 5000 people. As we lifted up our eyes and looked over the world we found that there were many nations where hundreds of thousands would obey the gospel.

One preacher had said in 1947 that we would not baptize 5000 people overseas in a generation. I think we call 33 years a generation so our generation is not completed yet, but there have been between 350,000 and 500,000 people baptized outside the U.S.A. Yes, some got homesick and came home. Some were inefficient, some elders got "browned off" and refused to support the work, but think of the harvest.

What of the Future

Only by the eye of faith can we lift up our eyes to the future. People were never so willing to obey the gospel as they are NOW. There is no one to take the gospel to them but US. We can make all the excuses we like but the dying millions of the earth can not hear without a preacher and they can not preach unless they are sent.

Have faith in the Gospel. Before World War I the English churches had some work in Nyasaland. This country is now called Malawi. This country is near Zambia. When the war broke out (World War I) these members of the church that were there for some reason were arrested by the authorities. I do not know if they were conscientious objectors or not. Anyway, they left the country under a shadow. The seed had

not been sown in vain. I am told that today there are more members of the church in Malawi than in any nation on earth per capita.

During World War I but before the U.S.A. entered the war, three men were sent to India to preach the gospel. Two of these men embraced the faith of the Seventh Day Adventists and worked for them for years. One of these men was still living a few years ago and was visited by Brother Carl Johnson. This man is retired and lives in the U.S.A. Recently Brother Chas. F. Scott, of Olney, Maryland, was in India and he found churches that did not follow these men into Adventism and have continued to worship God through the years. There is a flourishing work again in that area where these men labored and many of these churches that did follow McHenry into Adventism are now being revived, or restored. The following report in part is taken from the Gospel Advocate of July 18, 1974: "The Western India work began in 1970 (that is the present effort). Today we have 78 congregations, 23 local preachers, and 42 self-supporting congregations. Total number of Christians 42,687 converted in four years time." I am sure that there are other parts of India where the story of Andhra Pradesh and Western India can be repeated. To those who say that Africa can well become the centre of Christianity by the year 2000, I say take a good look at India.

What do We See?

When two people lift up their eyes they often see two different things. In a work growing as fast as the work in India there are places that are neglected after they have been baptized. No matter how hard a person may try to avoid it, these things happen. I know that some people would never go

to a new place unless they were SURE they could be looked after afterwards. Is that the way PAUL did it? I recently read a report about some churches that were found without any help and it was played up as a terrible tragedy. Let us take another look. We went to a village near the Godavery River. There were some 40 people baptized. These people were neglected. No one was there to minister unto them. Some months later we baptized a man that was a government employee. He began to carry the gospel into the villages around him. He came to this village. He told these people about the one church. He told them of the one faith and the one baptism. They told him that they were members of the church, they told him that they had been baptized for the remission of sins but no one had told them what they were to do next. Despite the fact that they had been neglected for 18 months, each one of them was still a member of the church. They meet and worship now in that village.

There was a story told in this province during the thirties. The southern part of this province was dry and the northern part had plenty of rain. Many farmers moved out of the dust bowl into the northern part of the province. One day two of these men crossed the ferry across the Saskatchewan River on their way into the northern part of the province. One man crossed in the morning and he asked the man that ran the ferry if he knew a certain district. The ferryman replied that he knew that district. The man asked him what kind of people lived in that district. He asked the farmer that was moving, what kind of people he had left. He told the ferryman that they were wonderful people and if it had not been for the hope of saving his cattle he would not have moved. The ferryman told him that he would find the same kind of people in the district where he was going. In the afternoon another man crossed on the ferry. It so happened

that he was going to the same district. He asked the ferryman the same question that the first man had asked. The ferryman then asked him what kind of people he had left. He said that they were terrible people. He thought that the drought was a Godsend to get him out of that area. The ferryman told him that he would find the people like that in the area where he was going. (He had said he was going to the same area to which the first man was going.) When the second man had pulled off the ferry the helper on the ferry turned to the man in charge and asked him why he had told the man in the morning what fine people live in that area and then told the man in the afternoon a different story. The ferryman said that they will find the people in that area just like the ones they left. If you are looking for something to criticize then you shall surely find it. This is true no matter what country you are in.

Paul said: “. . . whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things” (Philippians 4:8). Let me give you one glimpse into India. Two of the native workers had been going to three native villages for some time. They wanted me to go with them when they thought these people had been well enough taught to be baptized. They had sent word that I could come as soon as I was ready. I sent word that I could come on a certain day. The arrangement was that this brother would go on the motorcycle and tell the villagers that we would be there the next day to have meetings. These people all did field work, but it was agreed by their Hindu bosses that the first group could leave the fields at 10 a.m. The second group would not come to work after dinner until after the meeting in their village and the third group would come from the fields at 4 p.m. It so happened that when I sent word that I was coming, the brother’s motorcycle was broken down. It

was the month of May. That is the hottest time in India, at least in that area. Under the circumstances I know what I would have done. I would have waited until the Jeep came the next morning and I would have said that the motorcycle was broken down and so we would have to arrange the meetings after we arrived in the village. This would have meant that we would only have had two meetings, as we would have had to wait until the people came from the field after we got there. This man rode a bicycle for 50 miles and the villages were ready when we came. From certain people we never hear stories like that. **THEY NEVER SEE THINGS LIKE THAT.** (It was 106 in the shade that day the man rode the bicycle.)

If I were to go hunting I would not see anything to shoot. I do not want to shoot anything. So we lift up our eyes and too often we see the wrong thing. There is a certain man who a few years ago did translating for two young men who were in India. Certainly translating is a lot harder job than preaching. They were in their 20's. He was nearing 50 and a diabetic. Yet, he was recently dismissed. With such an attitude it would be better if such men never saw a foreign country.

Let us **LIFT UP OUR EYES.** There are millions that will obey the gospel in the world if only we have the wisdom to carry the message to them. They will be weak, frail human beings that will need the grace of God as long as they live even as we. However, by that grace there can be that great host that no man can number to sing the songs of Moses and the Lamb as the ages of eternity roll on.

CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

C. E. McGaughey

C. E. McGaughey was graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1928. There he met and married Pauline McCanlies. They have two sons, Paul of Abilene, Texas, and Don of Redondo Beach, California.

He has done local work in Elk City and Oklahoma City in Oklahoma, Springfield, Mo., Washington, D.C., and Houston. He now lives near the campus of Oklahoma Christian College and gives his full time to gospel meetings, having conducted over five hundred the last thirteen years. His labors have taken him to nearly all the states of the Union, Canada and Great Britain.

He has appeared on the lectureships of most of our colleges and has delivered lectures on preaching in several of them. Biblical Research Press has published a book of his sermons, *Christ the Hope of the World*.



While conducting a meeting at Reading, Pennsylvania, I saw a beautifully illuminated neon sign with these words, "Christ is the Answer." I was deeply impressed with the sign and its wording. It expressed a great truth this generation needs to recognize.

The world has many problems and is seeking

everywhere for a solution. Unfortunately, it is painfully obvious the world is not aware of the answer. It is regrettable that many in the church also fail to understand the solution. To those who have been redeemed by His blood and have been born into the family of God, the answer should be known and experienced in their Christian lives. The fact that this is not true is a severe indictment against us. It causes us to look elsewhere for the solution to our problems and to experience many disappointments and heartaches. Our own personal observations should cause us to see how true the words of our Lord are, "for apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Likewise, the truthfulness of Paul's words should be experienced by every follower of Christ, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phillippians 4:13).

Christ is the answer to the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. To the sincere student of the prophets and their predictions of the One to come, it is clear Jesus Christ fulfilled them one by one. In a university city, a young Jewish girl visited the services of a gospel meeting with some of her friends who were members of the church. She told me she did not believe in Jesus. I explained to her that He was very precious to us and asked her if she would read the book of Matthew. She graciously agreed to my request. She started reading and began to see how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. Her interest in Christ began to grow and daily it became more apparent to her that a mere man could not have fulfilled all those prophecies. Like Saul of Tarsus, she began to see that the one she had rejected was really the Messiah for whom the Jewish people had been waiting for centuries. She was led to believe in Him and expressed her faith in Him by obedience to His gospel.

This Jewish girl, who found faith in Christ, is an example of the way others, both Jew and Gentile, can find a like faith by studying the evidence given in the inspired prophecies concerning the coming of Christ and the manner in which they were fulfilled in the New Testament. Let us observe some of the prophecies that pointed to the coming of Christ.

When God called Abram out of Ur of Chaldees, one of the first clear and distinctive prophecies of the coming of Christ was given. It reads, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all of the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). In the New Testament Paul points out that this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ, saying, "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 3:16).

Later, Jacob predicted that the Messiah would come of the tribe of Judah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). Two hundred years later Balaam prophesied that the Lord would come of the seed of Jacob, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not high: there shall come forth a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of tumult" (Numbers 24:17). When one looks at the genealogy of Jesus he finds He did come through both Jacob and Judah, ". . . the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham . . ." (Luke 3:33, 34).

A most interesting prophecy of Christ's coming is given in Deuteronomy 18:18 & 19, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." In the New Testament, Peter quotes this prophecy and applied it to Christ (Acts 3:22-23).

A prophecy familiar to all students of the Scriptures is that of Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." It is in Matthew 1:21-23 that this was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is interpreted, God with us."

The One to come was pictured as the Man of Sorrows in the Old Testament. It was written, "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed; All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:3-6). When one reads the

account of the life of our Lord as given in the gospel, he can see that truly Jesus was the Man of Sorrows.

Even the birthplace of Christ was described centuries before He was born. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). The fulfillment of this is beautifully pictured in these words: "And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men, in whom he is well pleased" (Luke 2:8-14).

A study of these prophecies, and these are just a few of the most commonly known, is convincing evidence that Jesus Christ is the answer to those statements of the Old Testament foretelling the coming of the Messiah. It is enough to cause men to say with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Christ is the answer to the question, "Who can save me?" Man needs a saviour. Paul said, "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). For four thousand years, the blood of animals had been offered for removing

guilt, but they were only typical of another sacrifice that eventually would be made, "For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered? Because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sin year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-4).

John introduced Jesus by saying, "... Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). By His death on the cross, a sacrifice efficacious enough to permit God to be just in upholding the dignity of His law and to forgive man of his sin, was offered by Christ. A most beautiful explanation of the atonement is given by Paul in these words: "... whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at the present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26). Peter explained it by saying, "who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

In the light of all this, we can understand why Jesus was able to say, "I am the way, and the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Also, it is better understood how the writer of Hebrews could say, "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the

things which he suffered; and having been made perfect; he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Man needed a Saviour and Christ was the answer, as was expressed by the Lord himself, “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

What moves men the most in prompting them to become Christians? Again, Christ is the answer. His death for our sins furnishes the strongest motivation for men to come to God. Paul expressed it well in his preaching, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3-4). His death for our sins makes us realize how awful sin is. Sin made it necessary for Christ to leave heaven and die on a cross. This is graphically expressed in these words of Paul, “Who, existing in the form of God, 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; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

When we understand Christ died for our sins and took our place on the tree, and thus how guilty we are, it should make us want forgiveness and cry out as the people did on Pentecost, “. . . what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) A realization of guilt so great it caused Christ to die makes us want to be forgiven.

The death of Christ for our sins leads us to love Him. “We love, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19). This love

prompts obedience, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15) Therefore, the understanding of the death of Christ is the strongest motivation of all in prompting sinners to trust and obey Him that they may be free from their sins.

Christ is the answer to the question, "To whom shall we go?" for authoritative information telling how to become Christians, and how to worship. Peter's statement, "Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68), is still true in this last age. God "Hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:2). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord . . ." (Hebrews 2:3). From the lips of the Christ the great commission was given telling the apostles to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

He built the church of the New Testament and by the Holy Spirit, caused the apostles to remember His teaching. John quoted him as having said, ". . . he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26). Thus the New Testament furnishes us all the instructions we need to become a Christian, and enjoy all the items of worship enjoined by the Lord. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). It behooves God's people to speak "as it were oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11); and "not to go beyond the things which are written" (I Corinthians 4:6).

Who can help us bear our temptations? Again, Christ is the answer. "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 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 4:14-16). He knows our strengths and will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability, and with every temptation He will provide a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13). Elaborating on this, Paul said, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25). He has not left us alone. He sees and understands. "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Who can help us bear our burdens, trials and crosses? Truly Christ is the answer. One outstanding example of this is found in Paul's help in bearing his thorn in the flesh. Paul's cross is not known, but it brought him to his knees. He asked God three times to remove it. God did not grant the request, but spoke these reassuring words: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." This promise of help from God, which he firmly believed, enabled Paul to write these words to bless all future generations, "Most gladly, therefore, would I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore, I take pleasure in weaknesses, injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Corinthians 12:9-10).

when we reach out for God, and rise above the storms, things look different when we go higher and touch the hand of God.

Who is our hope? Let Paul answer the question. To Timothy he wrote, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and *Christ Jesus our hope*" (I Timothy 1:1). The hope of the return of our Lord is ever before the Christian. To Titus the same apostle wrote, "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13).

Peter elaborates on this precious hope with these inspiring words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:3-5).

So our Lord is our hope that causes us to believe that someday He is coming back for us to take us unto Himself to a place prepared for us where we may ever be with Him and all the saints. To Him we owe all things and may we never lose sight of what is to come. In loving gratitude let us sing with deeper appreciation than ever before:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

Thro’ many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
’Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we first begun.”

John Newton

O, LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO

E. W. McMillan

A native of New Baden, Texas, Dr. McMillan attended Gunter Bible College, Austin College and Baylor University, where he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees. He has done advanced graduate study at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has received the LLD Degree from Abilene Christian College.

He has served at churches in Texas, Tennessee and California. He is the founder and past president of Ibaraki Christian College in Japan and is the chairman of the Ibaraki Christian College Foundation Board. He was also founder and president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas. He presently serves as chairman of Biblical Studies at Columbia Christian College.

He is a noted author, and speaks on numerous lectureships throughout the world.



Dr. McMillan is married to the former Pauline Riddle and has two daughters, Pauline and Elizabeth Randolph.

Understanding Love and understanding God are inseparable. He whom Christian love has mastered understands and experiences God in his life. Likewise, he whom God completely controls understands love and experiences love in his life. The reason is that "God Is Love."¹

God is LOVE is the heart of God's Holy Book—His revelation of Himself and His will for human beings. It demands also that:

Love and Law must harmonize, for God is both;
 Love and human suffering must harmonize;
 Love and discipline must harmonize;
 Justice and mercy must harmonize;
 Heartbreak and happiness of mind must harmonize;
 Spiritual war within one must harmonize with peace
 unspeakable;

The deepest depths of sorrow must harmonize with
 heights of happiness;

Faith and works must harmonize;
 Grace that saves and obedience to get it must harmonize;
 Heaven and hell as eternal destinies must harmonize with
 God.

Since God's total being is Love, every thought, word, motive, and act which comes from Him is the fruit of perfect love.

LOVE'S PRE-DAWN DREAM

Before the dawn of time, God pre-determined, out of

¹ I John 4:1-8

eternity, across all the centuries of time, on into eternity beyond time, that certain things would come to pass. Among God's plans was the creation of the human being with a freedom to choose. He also knew that this freedom would result in choices which would bring sin into man's life. God further pre-determined a way of deliverance for that guilt. Some wise man said:

Infinite knowledge foreknew of man's guilt;
Infinite wisdom pre-determined a way of escape;
Infinite power executed that plan;
Infinite love hallowed and glorified this plan.

In all of this God was accepting the challenge of Satan. Total goodness confronted total evil in mortal battle. God could have ended the battle by compulsion, but God left the human will still free to choose. God wants the creatures made in His image to return willingly the love which He so generously gives.

The books of Ephesians and Colossians develop this entire pre-determined plan of God and explains how it was developed. Its culmination was at a cross, intended by its makers as the acme of shame, but was changed into a crown of glory by *love that would not let go*.

LOVE'S UNFOLDING IN THE MORNING OF TIME

Four thousand years of Old Testament history tell the unfolding and developing of this plan of God. We move with God as if in the inner circles of His mind, revealed in His word. Love walked hand-in-hand with Enoch, who escaped death; love also spread the Deluge of Noah over the earth to enhance the ultimate in God's redemptive plan. Love kept in touch with the rising nations, descendants of Ham and

Japheth, sons of Noah, while working more closely with Shem, the son chosen to be the heir in the lineage to Christ. Though this lineage later received Love's law through Moses, it chose to deal mercifully with others who lived the principles of the law under their own consciences.² Four hundred and thirty years of silence, while Abraham's descendants served as slaves in Egypt, did not cool the ardor of Love; it sent, in due time, Moses to deliver. The ten plagues on Egypt were the loyalty of pure love developed through a covenant which reached from Abraham to Calvary. *Love never quit.* Dry highways across the Red Sea and the Jordan River were but prophetic assurances that love always opens roads for the love in human beings when it reciprocates the Divine love. The finger of God on Mt. Sinai carving His law upon stones became the historic type of the greater One who writes His laws of love in hearts of flesh, giving them new birth and the right to sit with Him in heavenly places in His church on earth. Moses said a prophet would come like unto himself.³ Settled in Canaan, God's people betrayed him seven times under the judges; they violated every principle of God's covenant with them under Saul, Solomon, and the divided kingdom. Prophets preached reform and return to God, but without success; but the *voice of LOVE* through prophets and psalmists foretold of a time when unprecedented things would come. A psalmist cried out in the words of Jesus on the cross;⁴ Isaiah spoke of somebody who was led as a sheep to slaughter;⁵ and added: "He has borne *our* sorrows, carried

² Romans 2:14

³ Deut. 18:13

⁴ Psa. 22:1

⁵ Isa. 53:7

our griefs, and by *HIS* stripes we are healed.”⁶ Love moved the hearts of heathen kings to capture God’s children and refine them. The Jews returned from Babylon to their homeland humbled, refined, then headed toward the noonday of time. Though severely tried at times, *Love had not quit*. It had chastened, punished, and silenced its voice at times; but love had watched, hovered over, and patiently waited until it could succeed in the human will. *Love Did Not Quit*.

LOVE ON EXHIBITION AT HIGH NOON IN TIME

Jesus Christ was unrelenting Love in human flesh. *He was love* on exhibition at high noon in time. From the beginning of His ministry, he walked a straight path to His cross. He never tried or desired to escape it, not even in Gethsemane. That path was marked out for Him before the universe was made. His death was predetermined before matter was made. His cross was the meridian of time. The Christian centuries are the evening of time. The Christian has access to all of the wisdom, power, knowledge, and beauty of God. He is the heir of all the Love of God. As we walk with Jesus Christ, we are with Somebody bigger than any experience He had; He never traded principle for policy; He demanded nothing of others for Himself; He demanded everything of Himself for others. Love in Christ identified him with the need of all people.

1. Christ, therefore, was a great miner of human good. He attached Himself to the sincerity in Nathanael, notwithstanding the latter’s prejudice and made out of him an apostle.⁷ He attached Himself to a woman of low morals

⁶ Isa. 53:3-4

⁷ John 1

at Jacob's well, though she was highly prejudiced against Him, and changed her into an evangel of good news to her community.⁸ Among the most moving scenes in the records of Jesus was one in a Pharisee's home; a sinful woman washed the tired feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair, then kissed his feet.⁹ For her love, he forgave her sins.

2. The night before He died, He warned Peter that he would deny his Lord, then assured him, "I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail."¹⁰ The morning He arose, some women went early to the empty tomb, met an angel, then Mary met Jesus Himself, who said, "Go and tell my disciples, *and Peter*, that I am alive and will meet them in Galilee, as I promised I would."

3. All of this He did though no mention is made that one apostle stood with him in the court of Pontius Pilate, and though only John, of the apostles, attended His crucifixion as far as we know. No apostle is named among those who helped bury Him, but He passed as unimportant all these neglects, because:

Love would not let go.

4. No words can describe the agonies, physical or mental, that Christ endured in His death; but the Biblical emphasis is on what was so divinely great in the story. Religious prejudice crucified Jesus, but many others had died that way; political policy crucified Jesus, but unnumbered thousands before that day had died by that policy. Two other men died on crosses beside the cross of Jesus Christ that morning but nobody knows their names. Their crosses and the cross of Jesus Christ were all intended to be a symbol of shame and disgrace; but

⁸ John 4

⁹ Luke 7

¹⁰ Luke 22:31-34

the sublime *love of heaven* changed the shame of Jesus' cross into a crown of glory, "Towering o'er the wrecks of time." So, we joyfully sing today:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole world of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my love, my all.

And this love-theme moves on through all Revelation.

Our thoughts to this moment have covered the following divisions of material:

Love's Before Dawn Dream
Love's Before Noon of Time Unfolding
Love's High Noon Demonstration

We next move into *LOVE'S EVENING OF LIFE—GOD'S FINISHING TOUCHES*. God's church is not a set of human trash, hypocrites, whitewashed formalistic pretenders. God breathed His nature into them.

Possibly it would be well for those who say most about supposed hypocrites in the church today to remember that Jesus said: People do not even know Him unless they deny THEMSELVES, take up THEIR crosses and FOLLOW Him. Also, our beginning text says that love in the human for other human beings and God must match the Divine love for the human. And if it does not match, who is really the hypocrite?

The careful reader sees in the books of Ephesians and Colossians a household of God, built out of very unpromising materials. God is taking what some call human trash and building Himself a household of no longer trash but of people with

Surpassing mercy and grace;
Surpassing greatness of power;
Surpassing workmanship, because it is God's;
Surpassing fullness, matching the selflessness of Christ;
Surpassing manifold wisdom from God.

Paul's great prayers for Christian maturity are contained in Ephesians and Colossians especially. They plead for the maturity of all believers into the stature of the fullness of Christ. Careful Bible students KNOW how concerned God is for this maturing. This concern guarantees that neither "principalities nor powers nor life, nor death, nor any other thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God." But what about our love in return?

God used the practical minded James to plant Christians' feet on solid earth, hard at work, lest they come up to the judgment with dead faith, as "dead" ducks; He led the author of "Hebrews" to employ nine chapters admonishing wavering Christians to stop pitying themselves and blaming others in their persecutions. In chapter ten, he emphasizes encouraging others to love, good works, and public assemblies. Then he took the feet which James set to hard work and planted them on a race track to "run with patience the race set before them," remembering the record which Jesus set, because "He endured the cross, despised the shame and is set down at God's right hand." His climax is: "We have received a

kingdom that can not be shaken; let us, therefore, hold fast." The inspired, fiery, Jude comes in with a short, shocking message which opens the door into eternal brimstone, where some rebellious angels are locked up, to be joined by the incorrigibles of all time, including unfaithful church members, suffering everlasting punishment.

The final scenes in this march of *unrelenting love* is unfolded in the book of Revelation. The "Apostle of Love"—John—almost one hundred years old, matches his family heritage as a "Son of Thunder" in his inspired hair-raising, blood-curdling chapters. A prisoner on Patmos, he was called up to heaven. What he saw may have been the first moving picture scene ever thrown on a screen. God showed John what heaven looks at all the time on earth, and then told him, "Write what you see and hear and send it to the churches." Michael and his angels were locked in war with the devil and his angels (demons). Under the caption of carnal warfare, there were horses, bloodshed, and immoral women. So fierce was the battle that stars fell from heaven to earth. The issue was salvation for mankind through the blood of the Lamb. When war was over, victory belonged to the saints. The devil and his hosts were cast into the lake of fire. John told us what the saved were. "A great host which no man could number," robed in garments whiter than snow, with crowns on their heads and palms in their hands." They came marching with no uneven steps singing "The song of Moses and the Lamb."

So, beginning before matter was created, God planned a course of action which, in our time, already has crossed

almost six thousand years; and it will go on as long as time lasts. In all of this time, evil forces and good forces have been arrayed in battle for the allegiance and loyalties of the human spirit and will. Infinite Love, supported by infinite knowledge and wisdom, strengthened by infinite power and love, have offered themselves directly and through spirit aids in the forms of angels and the Holy Spirit. They have revealed themselves in the Holy Bible. Opposing these are the forces of evil, who never take vacations, never sleep, and never rest. They seek through appeals to the human weaknesses, false doctrines, misleading prejudicing terms, to win, woo, and achieve. The day is far spent for those who once appealed to all religious groups to unite on the Bible as God's inspired word. "Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent" seems to have joined the casualties of "change" though it is Peter's appeal also. But as for me: The Bible is still the only intelligent communication that we have in understanding God's will. The undeniable help received from spirits already named in this address can be hoped for but only as God's word promises. Within this framework of hope and expectation, we have the blessed privilege to sing:

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.

We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.

Praise God that the closing invitation in the march of love is:

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come;
Let those who will say, Come;
Whosoever will, let him come
And take the water of life freely.”

“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright, shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we just begun.”

THANK GOD for the love that knew me before I was born, laid hands on me when I was a little boy, has guided my feet, warmed my heart, chastised my wavering at times, given me courage, and brightened my hope.

O, the Love that will not let me go!

THE POWER OF SUFFERING LOVE

J. P. Sanders

Education:

B.S. from Texas Christian University
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Dr. Sanders has served churches in Texas, Tennessee and California. He has held lectures in Frankfurt, Germany, Madras, India, and Nigeria. He is co-founder and first editor of the *Twentieth Century Christian* magazine and co-author of *Preaching in the Twentieth Century*. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Education*.

He is currently President of Columbia Christian College, having served as Executive Vice-President of Columbia Christian College, May 1970-1974. He previously served as Dean of Pepperdine University, Dean of David Lipscomb College, and Chairman, Department of Religion Pepperdine.



“But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first com-

mandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matthew 22:34-40).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
"We love, because he first loved us." (I John 4:10 . . . 19).

Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians that they might be quick to apprehend, together with all the saints, the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge (Eph. 3:18). Paul was very much aware that the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of God are beyond the limitations of human understanding. Just as the love of a parent is beyond the comprehension of the five-year old child, so the love of God is beyond the comprehension of the wisest of men. But while the child does not understand the parent's love, he can respond to it in trust and affection. He can feel its effects in his life and find himself strengthened and sustained by it. The mature Christian finds strength and hope in the love of God, although he can never hope to comprehend it in its entirety. We should like, therefore, to come to grips with at least some of the things that are possible for us to know about the love of God and the power that it is capable of manifesting in our lives. In the gospel we are brought face to face with the love of God, and the gift of that love, who is Jesus Christ our Lord. We are also made aware of the fact that certain demands are made upon us. We are assured that God loves us and the demand is made that we in turn should love Him and that we should love our neighbors. One of the facts that

needs to be emphasized most clearly is simply this: that we cannot meet the demand until we have first received the gift. Throughout all of God's dealing with mankind, God has always provided the motivation before making a demand on men.

In the law of Moses men were taught, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." Jesus later said that this is the first and the greatest commandment, and that there is a second like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But God never made this demand of the people of Israel until He had clearly demonstrated His love for them. He led them out of Egyptian slavery; He redeemed them from bondage; He gave them their freedom. Only after He demonstrated His love with such remarkable clarity did He make the demand of them that they were to love God and one another. The apostle John reminds us in the fourth chapter and nineteenth verse of his first epistle that we love because He first loved us. If He had not loved us first, we would not know how to love Him. We would not know how to love one another. We would not know how to love our families. We would not know how to love our brethren, and certainly we would not know how to love our enemies. Because God has loved us first, we learn how to love so that we become capable of loving others.

A number of years ago while I was living in Los Angeles, Mr. Kennedy was shot by Sirhan Sirhan. Some of you may have followed the trial in the newspapers. You will recall the testimony of the psychiatrist that Sirhan Sirhan had not truly known a father's love. Since he had not been loved he did not know how to love; consequently his heart was filled with

hate—a hate that expressed itself in the tragic shooting of Senator Kennedy.

About two and one half years ago we received word of the birth of our fourth grandchild, the first child born to this particular son and his wife. The next week I found it convenient to go down and visit them. They took me in and showed him to me as he was lying asleep in his little crib. I could tell by the way their faces beamed that they loved him very much. They had been looking for his coming for some time, and they had made all the preparations that they knew to make for his arrival. Now that he had arrived and everyone was well, they were very happy and their hearts were filled with love as they looked upon him. But he didn't love them; he was just a tiny little bundle of selfishness who wanted what he wanted when he wanted it. He didn't care how tired Mother was, nor what a hard day Dad had coming up tomorrow. If he wanted something in the middle of the night he set up a howl until he got it. Just a few days ago I visited him again. He is now learning to love them. Having been loved continuously since his arrival on this planet, he is responding in loving them back. As they go on loving him week after week, month after month, and year after year, he will learn to love them; he will also learn how to love God. He will learn how to love his neighbors, and he will ultimately learn how to love his enemies. He is learning how to love by being loved, and this is what John tells us: we love because He first loved us. We have to receive the gift before we can meet the demands.

This brings us to a very important principle that is essential for us to learn if we are to be mature Christians. When people act their worst they need to be loved the most, and when they are acting their worst, it is most difficult for other

people to love them. It is here too that God shows us how. The golden text of the Bible tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The world that God loved was not very lovable. It was a hard, cold, cruel, evil world—a world in rebellion against God. It was a world characterized by all the terrible sins that Paul mentioned in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans, and yet God loved that world. He loved it so much that He gave Jesus to die for it. He didn't love it because it was lovable; He didn't love it because it deserved to be loved; He loved it because it needed to be loved. This is an important difference between human love and divine love; human love loves that which is lovely and lovable, that which is deserving. God's love, mature Christian love, loves the unlovable, the unlovely, the undeserving. God's love is creative: there is a power in it to change the unlovely into the lovable, to change bad men into good men, and to change good men into better men into better men still. God didn't say to the world: If you will straighten yourself out, quit your wrongs, and prove yourselves worthy, then I will love you. He loved first, and as we respond to that love we come to love Him, and all those whom He loves.

Perhaps one of the reasons so many of us find it difficult to love others, and to love our enemies as we should, is that we have not completely opened up our own hearts so that the love of God fills them completely. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans that Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6)—that is, for people who were wicked, for people who were undeserving, for people who were unlovely and, perhaps, almost unlovable. And yet God loved them and God demonstrated His love by sending Christ to die for them.

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

There are many tensions in the world: hatreds exist within communities, sometimes within families, between races and between states. It is therefore absolutely imperative that somebody be willing to love somebody else who doesn't deserve it but who desperately needs it; otherwise there will be no possible way of stopping this reverberating cycle of hate. Yet human nature is of such character that is very loathe to do anything for anyone else that isn't deserved. A preacher was invited one time to go down to the Bowery in New York City and preach to what were known as the bums on Skid Row. He wondered what to talk about, and finally decided to tell the story of the prodigal and his return. When he told of the prodigal's leaving the pigpen and returning home and of the father's running out to meet him, falling on his neck and kissing him, someone in the back of the audience shouted out, “So he put it over on the old man again.” Somehow or other human beings feel that something is being put over on them if they manifest love where it isn't deserved, and since they don't want anything put over on them they simply refuse to love where love is undeserved, even though needed.

Strength and weakness are very often viewed from different points of view by God and men. No doubt both the Jews and Romans felt that it was because of their superior strength that they were able to overcome Jesus' “weakness” and put Him to death. But Paul reminds us in his letter to the Corinthians that the weakness of God is stronger than men, the foolishness of God wiser than men. God can choose the despised things of the world—yea, the things that are not—in order that He might bring to naught the things that are. In

the first century was there ever a power that was greater than the power of Rome? The march of her legions was known and feared around the world. Her citizens felt that Rome was the eternal city. "There will always be a Rome," they said. And during that same era was there anything more despised than the cross? Rome would not permit her citizens to be crucified even though they were convicted of crime; yet God took that cross, the symbol of ignominious shame, and by means of it He brought to naught the power of Rome. Truly, the weakness of God is stronger than men, and God can take things that are despised—yea, things that are nothing in the eyes of the world—and by means of them bring to naught the power and the wisdom of the wise.

The cross reveals the love of God and demonstrates the power of God in changing human personality and making it better. In one of E. Stanley Jones' books, which perhaps a number of you have read, he tells of a man in India who was converted to Christianity. This man was employed by the Indian government and there were periods when it was necessary for him to be gone from home a number of weeks at a time. On one of these trips he became unfaithful to his wife, but he was a man of deeply sensitive conscience, and he suffered deep feelings of guilt. He finally came to the conclusion that the only way he could be rid of this guilt was to confess his wrong to his wife and seek her forgiveness. He told Dr. Jones that when he was trying to explain to her what he had done, and when it finally dawned on her what he was trying to say, that she turned very pale and fell back against the wall. "Then," he said, "I saw for the first time in my life the real meaning of the cross, for I saw in her eyes love crucified by sin." That's what happened at the cross: divine love was crucified by human sin—the sin of the Roman soldiers who drove the nails through His hands and His feet;

the sin of the Roman governor who, knowing He was innocent, nevertheless turned Him over for crucifixion; the sin of the Jewish leaders who, out of envy and pride, clamored for His death; the sin of the populace who, because of their general indifference, allowed it to happen; the sin of all those who had preceded Him; and the sin of all who have been born and who will ever be born as long as the world shall exist. The love of God was crucified by human sin, by your sin and my sin and the sin of all the world.

But there is a creative power in this suffering love that is capable of changing men; this is the power of the gospel. It can rehabilitate human personality and make good men out of bad men, and there is no power in all the world that is comparable to it. In the twelfth chapter of John's gospel we have the story of some Greeks who were seeking Christ. They hesitated to approach Him directly, so they found one of His disciples with a Greek name, Philip, and they told him that they wanted to see Jesus. Philip was hesitant and approached Andrew, and together they took the Greeks to Christ. Jesus responded in what might at first appear a quite unusual manner. He said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth by itself alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Then he added, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." He had reference, of course, to the cross on which He was crucified. There was manifest in that cross the power of suffering love that has reached out around the world to bring not only Greeks but men of every race, kindred, tribe, and tongue into His fold. The arms of that cross reach out to envelop all mankind and those who receive the gift into their hearts, who open up their lives to receive it—receive the power that enables them to meet the demand of loving Him, their neighbors, and even their enemies. There is a certain physical power to be found

in the bayonet and in the atom bomb. There is an economic power that is discovered in the prudent wisdom of enlightened self-interest, but the only power that can change the human heart from the inside and make good men out of bad men, the only power that is capable of rehabilitating human personality and saving it eternally, is the power of suffering love manifest on the cross of Christ.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16). The heart of the gospel is closely related to the cross of Christ. Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthians that he declared unto them the gospel “how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-4). Here God’s love is demonstrated in the willingness of Christ to die on the cross, and the power of God is demonstrated in raising Him from the dead. This same power becomes operative in the life of the sinner when he receives the love of God into his heart, responds in obedience to the gospel, puts his trust in Christ to save him, rather than any ability of his own to achieve his own salvation. Thus accepting Christ, the power of God’s suffering love becomes effective in changing his life from one of selfish concern and the love of sin and its pleasures to a life of dedication unto God in which the glory of God is sought above everything else. To the Jews the story of this cross became a stumbling block, and to the Greeks Paul said it was foolishness. But the “foolishness of God is wiser than men” (ICor. 1:25). We can see the power of suffering love as it is worked in the hearts and lives of millions of people, transforming them from servants of Satan into servants of light.

Are you willing to accept this foolishness into your heart—this foolishness of God that is wiser than men, this weakness of God that is stronger than men? When I was a youngster in high school there came a man to Fort Worth whom I used to hear preach. He was a Canadian by birth and his name was Campbell. He used to end so many of his sermons by saying, “God loves you; love Him back.” And this, after all, is the only proper response to the love of God—to love back. God manifested His love toward us on the cross. Having loved us first, He has made it possible for us to love Him back, and He has made it possible for us to love not only Him, but when His love fills our hearts, we become capable of loving our neighbors, of loving our families, of loving the brotherhood, and of even loving our enemies. And so we urge you to accept the gospel of Christ, which introduces His love into your heart, and to respond in obedience to the gospel.

THE GOSPEL IN EARTHEN VESSELS

R. N. Hogan

R. N. Hogan was born in Tennessee in 1902. He studied with the late G. P. Bowser before beginning his preaching. For a time he worked in a plant in Detroit, but his one desire was to preach. With the help of the Jimmie Lovell's, R. N. Hogan began preaching first in cross-country tent meetings.

In 1937, Hogan visited Los Angeles and held a meeting from which the congregation at 110th and Wilmington was started. The following year, he returned to Los Angeles for another meeting, and from this meeting another congregation was begun. This new congregation invited him to labor with them, and in the fall of 1938 he began working with what is known today as the Figueroa Church of Christ. From a small beginning, this congregation grew to more than 1,000 members and has helped establish other congregations in the area.



Hogan appears regularly on Christian college lecture-ships and travels extensively in the States and abroad to preach the gospel.

Certainly I want to express my sincere gratitude to the planning committee for having selected me to speak on this great Lectureship program. However, I question their wisdom in selecting me,

for I know that there are many who are better qualified than yours truly to speak on so great a program. Now that I have been selected, I shall do my best to speak the truth in love with reverence and godly fear.

The subject for our consideration at this time is, "The Gospel in Earthen Vessels." I now call your attention to II Corinthians 4:1-7:

Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Did you hear him? He said, "We have this treasure in EARTHEN VESSELS." This treasure? What treasure? Certainly, the inspired apostle Paul is referring to the gospel of Christ. He had just said, "But if our GOSPEL be hid, it is hid to THEM THAT ARE LOST," verse 3. Be it remembered that a treasure is something of great worth or value. I know of nothing that is of more value than the gospel of the Son of God. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Here it is clearly stated that the gospel of Christ is God's power to save the believer. Thus we see that the gospel has to do with the salvation of the soul. In the estimation of Jesus, the soul of one person values more than all of the wealth of the entire world (Matt. 16:26). With this in mind, we can easily understand why Paul refers to the Gospel of Christ as a treasure. But he said, "We have **THIS TREASURE** in earthen vessels" (verse 7). True, for Christ, immediately after being raised from the grave, committed the gospel into the hands of His disciples (earthen vessels) telling them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Now inasmuch as this treasure, the gospel of Christ, has been delegated to **EARTHEN VESSELS**, we must conclude that the claim of direct revelations from God is a lot of "Hog-wash." God said that He has not spoken in secret (Isa. 45:19). Again He said, "Come ye near unto me, **HEAR YE THIS**; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning" (Isa. 48:16). Jesus Christ said, "In secret have I said **NOTHING**" (John 18:20).

Please keep in mind that the word and the gospel are used interchangeably. Therefore, to preach the word is to preach the gospel, and to preach the gospel is to preach the word (I Pet. 1:23, 24). Men are saved by obeying the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16; II Thess. 1:7-9; I Cor. 15:1, 2). Remember, Paul said, the gospel is God's power to save the believer. **THE POWER**, not a power. My friends, the gospel of Christ is the **ONLY** power that God exerts in saving the believer. He does not exert a power to save the unbeliever short of obeying His word (Heb. 5:8, 9). God has but one gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). He forbids preaching another gospel and pronounces a curse on all who do (Gal. 1:8, 9). Paul said further, "But there be

some that trouble you, and WOULD PERVERT the gospel of Christ" (verse 7). He did not say they did pervert Christ's gospel, but they WOULD. The thought is, they would if they could, but the gospel of Christ cannot be perverted. Therefore, they just preach another gospel and he said, "Let him be accursed." The word came from God, who gave the word to Christ (Deut. 18:18; John 17:8). Christ gave the word to the apostles while here. He went back to heaven and gave the word to the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15). The Holy Spirit came to the apostles and revealed the word to them and they wrote them that he may READ and understand them (Eph. 3:1-5). God cannot directly tell men what to do without breaking His will, for He said hear His Son (Matt. 7:5; Acts 3:22, 23). He gave His Son all authority both in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), but Christ cannot directly tell men what to do without breaking His will. Remember it has been delegated to EARTHEN VESSELS and Christ and God are heavenly beings. If Christ could have done it, He would have told Saul of Tarsus what to have done while in personal conversation with him on the Damascus road, but He sent him to the earthen vessel, Ananias (Acts 22:6-16). Angels cannot directly tell one what to do to be saved without breaking God's will, for they are heavenly beings and this is the work of earthen vessels.

If angels could tell men directly what to do, why didn't the angel tell Cornelius what to have done instead of delaying his salvation for four days? The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, the earthen vessel, who would tell him words whereby he and his house would be saved (Acts 10:1-5; 11:14). The same is true of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit could tell one what to do directly, why did he send Philip to the man of Ethiopia instead of going to the man himself? The Holy Spirit is a heavenly record bearer and the gospel, God's

power to save the believer, is in the hands of earthen vessels. The disciples of Christ have been commissioned to preach the whole gospel to the whole world and the responsibility rests upon the Church of the Son of God (Eph. 3:10).

**EXEGESIS
OF DIFFICULT
PASSAGES**

WHERE LIBERTY AND LOVE MEET

A Study of Romans 14:1-15:3

Neale Pryor

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Near the close of the greatest of Paul's doctrinal treatise lies a discussion of one of the most practical of problems. Just how much should one give in to the scruples of his brother? How much freedom does one enjoy in Christ? This question came to a head over the problem of

eating meats.

BACKGROUND

“One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he that is weak eats vegetables only” (Romans 14:2). R. L. Whiteside contended that in Romans the meats in controversy were those which Jewish Christians refused to eat.¹ Although many Jews had become Christians, they still clung to their old ways of life, even to following the Levitical food laws. Even Peter exclaimed long after his conversion to Christ, “By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean” (Acts 10:14). It is hard to break with one’s background and culture. It is probable that many Jewish Christians followed the Mosaic legislation on meats until their death.

It is more likely that the meat in Romans 14 is not food forbidden by the law of Moses, but meat which had been offered to idols. In I Corinthians 8-10 it is obvious that a similar controversy existed in Corinth and the meat was that which had been offered to Idols: “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols . . .” (I Corinthians 8:1). The connection between the Romans passage and the I Corinthians passage is more apparent when one realizes that Romans was written from Corinth. Paul saw the problem in Corinth, and also realized that the problem existed in Rome as well.

There was nothing in the law of Moses that forbade eating meat or drinking wine (Romans 14:21). Anders Nygren further observed that Paul was always eager to separate Jewish shackles from the Christian faith and certainly would not have taken such a conciliatory attitude had these meats been those of the Jewish food laws.²

From the context of I Corinthians 8-10 it seems that when animals were sacrificed in the pagan temples, the worshipper ate some of that sacrifice and in that manner had fellowship with the idol itself. The carcass that remained was then taken to the meat market and sold to the public. Those weak in the faith, still fresh from idolatry, felt that it was wrong to eat such meat sold in the markets. Since the meat has been offered to idols, it would be an act of idolatry to eat it. Others, stronger in the faith, maintained that an idol was nothing. Therefore presenting the meat to an idol was a meaningless act. There was nothing wrong with eating this meat. Such was the position Paul took in I Corinthians 8:4, 7.

Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and there is no God but one . . . However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

This controversy had led to bitter feelings and divisive attitudes in the church at Rome. Each party was condemning the other. In this situation Paul seized the opportunity to teach a marvelous lesson on Christian liberty and love. He answers the problem with two main points: (1) Each Christian is individually responsible to God, and not to his brother. (2) Yet the law of brotherly love compels the strong to yield to the weak.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY—Romans 14:1-12

In Romans 14:1-2 Paul emphasized one main point, that the Christian is responsible directly to God. His faith is a personal matter between him and his God. Basically the matter of eating meats is a matter of one's own faith.

Paul recognized that every Christian is not alike. Some will eat meats, others will not; some will regard every day alike, others will not. In verses 2-6 Paul points out that there can be diversity within the framework of unity. It is an unhealthy neurosis in the church that demands that all think and act alike. Among the disciples of Jesus, what diversity existed! There was Simon the Zealot, who opposed Roman taxes; and there was Matthew the Publican, who collected them. There were the elite, such as Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus; there were also the publican Zaccheus and the demon possessed Mary Magdalene.

At least three factors make it impossible for everyone in the fellowship of faith to be alike. Basically men are different; children with the same home background turn out radically different. "Men are not alike, nor should they be so."³ Second, Christians come from such different backgrounds. There were the Jews steeped in the laws and traditions of their faith. There were the pagans, who knew little or nothing of Moses. Third, there are different levels of maturity within the same body. There are the strong in faith who have weathered the storms of life. There are the babes in Christ who still must feed upon the milk of the word. Any church, whether it be in Rome or Corinth, or whether it be in the first or the twentieth century, must find harmony in the midst of diversity. Unity does not depend on sameness, but on everyone accepting Jesus as his Lord.

Note that here the weaker brother is the one who is the more scrupulous. Extreme conservatism is not always a sign of a mature faith. Often the weak brother is more narrow because he is too insecure in the faith to allow any variation or difference of opinion. He has to have everything either black or white. All matters, even opinions, have to be legislated.

In Romans 14:1 Paul enjoins the strong to receive the weak man, but not in order to badger him with arguments and debate. The weak in faith must be allowed time in which to mature. He also should be given the right environment in which he can grow—an environment of patience, tolerance, and love. The strong is not to ridicule his brother's beliefs. "No man remains unwounded when that which he thinks precious is laughed at."⁴

The basic principle Paul set forth is that each man's faith is a personal matter between him and God. Eating meats or not eating meats is a personal matter. Just so is the observance of days or the refusal to observe days. Paul expressed fear over the Galatians because they were observing days and seasons (Galatians 4:10-11). He also said that no one should bind the observance of days in the Mosaic law upon the Colossians (Colossians 2:16). Although Paul deplored such practice as a matter of faith, he admitted such as a matter of opinion. Perhaps the same application could be made to the observance of Christmas. If one wants to think of the birth of Christ on December 25, and even sing about it, there is no harm. Yet it is sin to bind this observance on others, or even to teach that all must regard this day as the day of Christ's birth. Would it be permissible to preach on the Resurrection on Easter Sunday? Or is this the only Sunday in the year when such a sermon would be out of place?

Romans 14:7 has often been misapplied: "For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself." The important lesson of one's responsibility to his brother is often drawn from this passage. Although it is a scriptural principle, this is not what Paul is saying here. In Romans 14:7 Paul is making the point that everyone lives and dies for the Lord. Each Christian is the Lord's servant, and he is answerable to

Him. Note verse 12: "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

The principle of Christian liberty is founded on the relationship each has to his God. In the final outcome, man is answerable only to God. While it is true that brethren should be concerned about one another and that elders watch over the souls of those under their charge as they that shall give account (Hebrews 13:17), no fellow Christian is the final judge of any other. Since each is answerable to God, one's brother should not, indeed he cannot, play God and sit in judgment upon his fellow servant.

James carried this principle one step further.

Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it (James 4:11).

Brethren are helpers of one another, not judges. Within this framework it is possible to love, work with, and even appreciate another without making him conform to one's own standards.

Faith is a personal thing. Each man's relation to God is unique. The words of the song "I Did It My Way" could apply in the Christian faith. In accordance with the Word of God and in obedience to its principles, there is liberty for each to serve his God in his own way. One cannot believe for another, nor can he force him to pray, or commune, or sing, or behave just as he does. When Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John, the Lord taught him a great lesson on minding his own business: "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:22). On matters of

opinion it would be well for each to mind his own business. If a brother wants to observe a day above another, or if he wants to eat meat or leave it alone, that is between him and the Lord. "To his own master he stands or falls..." (Romans 14:4).

BROTHERLY LOVE—Romans 14:13-15:3

In Romans 13:8-10 Paul had stressed the all importance of Christian love. Love is a debt that can never be paid (vs. 8). It is the summation of the entire law (vs. 8-10). Now he gave his audience an opportunity to put this theory into practice. The attitude of the strong brother to the weak should show forth the real meaning of *agape*: to put the other's good before one's own. Although Christian liberty would give the strong brother the right to eat meats, the higher law of *agape* might demand that he forego his right because of another's need.

Note that the yielding was placed on the strong instead of the weak. That is how it should be. The weak cannot support the strong; the strong must help the weak. "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). It has to be this way because the weak could not yield to the strong without offending his conscience. If he thought eating meats was wrong and he did it to please the strong, he would have sinned in defiling his conscience (Romans 14:14, 23).

God's children should be looking for opportunities to express love to others. Here was a grand opportunity for this. The love for the weak brother is expressed not only in the respect shown for him, but even in the willingness of the strong to forego that to which he otherwise had a perfect right!

One's relationship with his God must be right before he can have the right relationship with his brethren. Only when he realizes his (and his brother's) personal responsibility is to God, can he be in any position to help his fellow servant. Only when he has basked in the warmth of God's love can he radiate that love to others and accept others with their imperfections as God had accepted him. "Wherefore accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7).

If Christ died for this brother, should not the strong be willing to give up some favorite food for him?⁵

Again and again, in every sphere of life, the Christian is confronted with the fact that he must examine things, not only as they affect himself, but also as they affect other people.⁶

Notice the stress on accepting the brother. "Accept the one who is weak" (14:1). "Let each of us please his neighbor" (15:2). "Wherefore accept one another" (15:7). This acceptance is much more than tolerance. The original word carries with it the idea of "take to one's self," "admit fully into one's company."

Here one learns the real meaning of Christian liberty. Christian freedom is not the permission to do what one likes, but to do what Christ likes. Real freedom is found in bringing one's will in subjection to his Lord. "Without Christ a man is a slave to his habits, his pleasures, his indulgences."⁷

Unhappy man! It is better to be the slave of scruples than of self. In order to allow yourself another dish—you would slight an anxious friend's conscience, and so far as your conduct is concerned, push him to a violation of it.⁸

Paul's main thrust in the latter part of Romans 14 is that one might curtail his freedom in the interest of love for his brother. "For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love" (14:15). The example of Christ is given in Romans 15:3: "For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell upon me.'" In I Corinthians 8:13 Paul's devotion to this principle can be seen when he says, "Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble."

DRAWING THE LINE

With this understanding of what Paul was really saying in Romans 14, one is now able to make the practical applications. Although the problem of eating meats is not a vital issue in churches of today, there are matters of opinion which can and do become divisive. Among these are playing cards, attending movies, allowing kitchens in church buildings, etc. Each congregation has its own unique situation to which this principle is applied, whether it fits or not.

But the most difficult question in this whole study is just how far to go with a weak (or cantankerous?) brother. Should the church cater to the whims of every member? Should the brethren cease from everything that may be offensive to some one? If so, would there be anything left to do? To borrow from Shakespeare's, "Ah there's the rub!" Must the strong always concede to the wishes of the weak? If so, the church can be no stronger than its weakest member. It can do only that which the weakest and most poorly informed member understands and approves. Is this the way God's army is supposed to march?

If the scrupulous ones go so far as to say to the more liberal, "You cannot be Christian if you do not do as we do," then the limits of concession have been reached, and we are to do as Paul did when he flatly refused to yield one hair's-breadth to the Judaizers.⁹

The reference to Paul suggests an interesting study. There are examples of Paul's desire to be conciliatory to the weaker brethren, to become "all things to all men" (I Corinthians 9:22). He had Timothy circumcised in order to cut down prejudice (Acts 16:3). It is true that this was to conciliate prospects for conversion and not weak brethren. Yet in Acts 21:20-26 Paul offered to pay the expenses of the sacrifices of four men who had a Jewish vow. These were brethren, no doubt. Although he realized his freedom from the law of Moses, he was willing to go this far in order to please others with a weaker faith. But on the other hand Paul flatly opposed those Judaizers who taught Gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1-2). Is Paul's attitude and action here parallel to Romans 14? Admittedly, these are not occasions of dealing with weaker brethren in every instance, but it does show that there is a point where conciliation stops and conviction starts.

We are to be flexible as long as possible, and let weak brethren's scruples restrain our action. But if they insist on things indifferent as essential, a yet higher duty than that of regard to their weak consciences comes in, and faithfulness to Christ limits concession to His servants.¹⁰

Time would forbid (as though lack of wisdom didn't) to list every occasion that may arise in local churches and to legislate whether the strong should give in to the weak or should disregard the objections of the weak in the interest of the progress of the church as a whole. Some guidelines may be helpful. First, the strong is to refrain lest the weak be

emboldened to follow his example and thus sin against his conscience (I Corinthians 8:10). One might ask if the overly scrupulous in his church are in danger of committing this act by the examples of others. Second, this weak brother in Romans 14 is one who is new in the faith with problems that require patience and growth. Is this the same as some cantankerous brother who objects to practices of the strong today?

One must consider the good of the whole church. Must the church be reduced to a vegetable because some brother or sister will object to every program that may be proposed? Is there not a time when the Lord's kingdom must come first, even over the objections of others? What was Paul saying in Romans 16:17: "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them"? Although there was the weak brother at Rome to whom the others must yield, there was the contentious brother who was to be avoided.

Finally, this is the reason why God placed elders in the church. He knew that His Word could not legislate on every minute point of judgment. Therefore He delegated this authority to the pastors. They will need to decide how harmony will be achieved in dealing with the weak brother and take the lead in yielding to his scruples. They also are the ones who must see to it that God's church not suffer because of contentions of those who would hinder its progress.

CONCLUSION

In Romans 14 Paul was showing that one's freedom in Christ is limited by his love and concern for his brother. Out of love for his brother, one should be glad to forego some

liberty. The strong in faith are to welcome and accept the weak, they are to encourage them, and they are to see that all possible stumbling blocks to their Christian growth are removed.

Paul was not saying that the welfare of the church should be sacrificed for the scruples of a minority. While the individual is important, no one is worth impeding the progress of the entire congregation. In Romans 14 Paul is dealing with personal matters that affect one's liberty in Christ, not scruples that would block the growth of the Lord's body.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ R. L. Whiteside, *A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome* (Denton, Texas: Inys Whiteside, 1955), pp. 266-67.
- ² Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* tr. by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), pp. 442-43.
- ³ Nietzsche, as quoted by Nygren, p. 443.
- ⁴ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), p. 196.
- ⁵ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 391.
- ⁶ Barclay, p. 212.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.
- ⁸ Handley C. G. Moule, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), p. 389.
- ⁹ Alexander McClaren, *Exposition of Holy Scripture, Romans, Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1944), p. 325.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*

TONGUES OF I CORINTHIANS 14

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The Assignment or the Statement of the Problem

The assignment for this paper is to deal with the "problem of whether the tongues of I Corinthians 14 were merely

ecstatic jabber with no language or meaning; whether they were 'heavenly languages,' i.e. communicable languages but not understandable by human beings, or whether they were an ordinary human language understandable by some human beings but unknown to the assembly at Corinth."

Survey of Significant Positions

The above is a formidable task, as becomes very obvious when one surveys the literature on the subject and observes the wide differences in the interpretations by the scholars. One writer observes,

The finest scholars in the world are divided over whether this is an audible or inaudible muttering and whether it involved the use of some known foreign language—which was not known to the person speaking or the people to whom he was speaking. It is not possible to know for certain whether these tongues were always actual languages or not.¹

Philip Schaff states, "The term tongue has been differently explained."² Then he proceeds to list seven different interpretations, particularly of the Pentecost experience.

1. The rationalistic interpretation denies the miracle and attributes it to a mistake of the narrator.
2. Others explain it as a mistake of the hearers who in the state of extraordinary excitement and profound sympathy imagined that they heard their own language from the disciples.
3. The glossolalia was speaking in archaic, poetic glosses, with an admixture of foreign words.

4. The mystical explanation regards the gift of tongues in some way as a counterpart of the confusion of tongues, either as a temporary restoration of the original language of Paradise, or as a prophetic anticipation of the language of heaven in which all languages are united.
5. The Pentecostal glossolalia was a permanent endowment of the apostles with a miraculous knowledge of all those foreign languages in which they were to preach the gospel.
6. It was a temporary speaking in foreign languages confined to the day of the Pentecost and passing away with the flame-like tongues.
7. The Pentecostal glossolalia was essentially the same as the Corinthian glossolalia, namely, an act of worship, and not of teaching.³

Excluding the higher critical theories there are two basic positions in the present day controversy among Bible believers. One position holds that, "The New Testament *glossa* gift is to be understood as being the ability to speak in foreign languages. It is to be so regarded in Corinth as well as Jerusalem."⁴ The other position contends that tongue speaking, especially of I Corinthians 14, is to be regarded as a language of worship for thanksgiving, praise, and prayer.⁵ Some regard this as unintelligible utterances, but others consider it as communicable languages of angels and heaven. One even claimed that the language spoken in a miraculous tongue was Latin.⁶

The Translations

The difficulty of the problem and the various views are reflected in the translations. They may be divided into three categories: (1) those which translate *glossa* in a neutral manner, (2) those that translate it as a foreign language, and (3) those that translate it as an ecstatic, unintelligible language. The American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, Phillips, and the New American Standard Version translate the Greek word as "tongue," thus taking a neutral position and leaving the decision to the reader as to which is the best approach. The New International Version translates as "tongue," but in the margin places "another language." The Living Bible Paraphrased boldly reads "speak in tongues, that is, to speak in languages you haven't learned." The King James Version reads "unknown tongue" with unknown in italics. The New English Bible renders as "language of ecstasy." The Today's English Version translates as "strange sounds."

The commentaries, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and lexicons are as hopelessly divided on the interpretation of the phenomenon. Scholars of the stature of James MacKnight,⁷ J. W. McGarvey,⁸ David Lipscomb,⁹ and others understand the Corinthian experience, like the Pentecostal experience, to be the speaking of foreign languages by the power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, perhaps, a larger number of scholars, including the commentators in the *International Critical Commentary*, *The Pulpit Commentary*, *The Expositor's Greek Testament* and others, hold that the tongues at Corinth were ecstatic utterances and not human languages.

Author's Position in Proposition Form

In the light of the above, it would seem presumptive for anyone to take a dogmatic position either way. However, in humility, recognizing the complexity of the study, let this author state his position in the form of a proposition and then present evidence to support it. Proposition: The act of speaking in tongues at Corinth was the act of speaking in foreign languages of our earth which the speakers had not studied but were empowered to speak by the spiritual gift given through the Holy Spirit. Further, they were foreign languages unknown to the regular assembly at Corinth.

Evidence and Arguments to Support the Proposition

First. A standard rule of hermeneutics is that obscure passages are explained by clear passages on the same subject. It is clear from Acts 2:1-13 that the Greek word *glossa* is used to mean foreign language or dialect. This Greek word *glossa* is used in the Greek New Testament fifty times.¹⁰ Many times it refers to the organ of speech or in metonymy of speech for the person who possesses the tongue (i.e. Mark 7: 33; Acts 2:26). Other times it is clearly used to refer to foreign languages (i.e. Rev. 5:9; 7:9; etc.). *Glossa* is used twenty-six times to refer to the miraculous gift of tongues. Three of these are concerning the events on Pentecost in Acts 2. It is clear in this context that *glossa* is equivalent to *dialektos* or tongue means the same as dialect or language. Verse 4 says the apostles "spoke with other tongues (*glossa*)." Verse 6 states "every man heard them speaking in his own language (*dialektos*)." Verse 8 quotes the people, "How hear we, every man in our own language (*dialektos*) wherein we were born." Then verse 11 quotes the people, "We hear them speaking in our tongues (*glossa*) the mighty

works of God.” Therefore, there can be no doubt that in this passage the miraculous tongues were the foreign languages of the foreign people listed as being present on Pentecost.

Second. At the conversion of Cornelius, the Gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues (Acts 10:45, 46). Peter observed that they received the “like gift” as the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 11:17). The term “like gift” encompasses the baptism of the Holy Spirit but certainly includes the manifestation of speaking in tongues. If Luke means to imply that tongues in Acts 10 are different from those of Acts 2, it behooves him to state it plainly. The natural thing would be to assume that the same author means the same thing by the same word in the context of miraculous activity. Since Luke gives no other explanation, it is logical to assume that tongues in Acts 10:46 were foreign languages. The same is true of Acts 19:6. Not only is that true of the book of Acts, but since the Holy Spirit is the author of both Acts and I Corinthians, it is logical and reasonable that if he meant something different by tongues in I Corinthians 14, he would have made it clear. One authority affirms,

It is believed that there is a preponderance of evidence leading us to look on the phenomena of Pentecost as representative. It must have been from them that the word “tongue” derived its new and special meaning. The companion of Paul and Paul himself were likely to use the same word in the same sense. In the absence of a distinct notice to the contrary, it is probable that the gift would manifest itself in the same form at Corinth as at Jerusalem. The “divers kinds of tongues” (I Cor. xii, 28), the “tongues of men” (xiii, 1), point to differences of some kind, and it is at least easier to conceive of these as differences of language than as belonging to utterances all equally wild and inarticulate.¹¹

Third. When the phrase "foreign language" is translated in all the twenty-six places where *glossa* is used of miraculous speaking, the translation makes perfect sense. Since we know in Acts 2 that *glossa* is foreign languages and the same translation throughout I Corinthians 14 makes perfect sense, why should one seek further for a hidden meaning. In the light of the clear meaning of *glossa* as foreign language there is no reason to reject this and look further for an exotic meaning.

Fourth. There is no evidence of ecstatic or strange and uncontrollable behavior on the part of those who spoke in tongues at Corinth or any place. Some scholars let their imagination run away with them when making an exposition of the text. Barclay says, "a man became worked up to an ecstasy and a frenzy" and he describes tongue speaking as an "uncontrollable torrent of sounds."¹² Paul directly contradicts Barclay and states "let him keep silence" and "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (I Cor. 14:28, 32). These statements indicate that those with miraculous gifts did have control over themselves. If the Holy Spirit wanted to describe the behavior of the Corinthians as ecstatic he had the word to do it. The Greek word *ekstasis* is used seven times in the New Testament, but not even one time in all the Corinthian epistles. It is the height of audacity for translators to use a word the Holy Spirit could have used if he wanted to but choose not to use.

Fifth. Paul in I Corinthians 14 is dealing with an abusive use of tongues. Therefore, it is not possible to consider the practice followed at Corinth as normal and approved in the church as a whole. It is even possible that some at Corinth were trying to counterfeit the real gift of tongues, that is, trying to pretend they had it when they really did not.¹³

Sixth. In I Corinthians 14:21, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11. It is clear from both contexts that foreign human languages are under consideration. One purpose for Paul quoting Isaiah is to indicate that tongue speaking by Christians was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. Therefore, the Christians were speaking foreign languages.

Seventh. In I Corinthians 14:18, Paul says, "I speak with tongues more than you all." This statement definitely signifies an unspecified number of different but specific systems of communication. Thus, tongues were not just noises and inarticulate sounds but specific communicable languages. It fits the context best here to say that Paul spoke with more foreign languages than anyone else.

Eighth. I Corinthians 14:22 affirms that tongues are not a sign for believers but for unbelievers. Verse 23 indicates that the unbeliever would consider the tongue speaker in the assembly as one mad or raving. How are these statements to be harmonized? If tongues are a sign for the unbeliever, why would they not be as effective a sign in the assembly as any other place? The obvious conclusion to this writer is that the tongue speaker was not speaking the language of the unbeliever under consideration. The Corinthian tongue speaker was just showing off his gift by speaking languages of far away places. He was not trying to exhort the unbeliever in his own language. If tongues were just inarticulate sounds, they would have been just as much a sign to the unbeliever at one place and time as another. Tongues were a sign to those at Pentecost because they heard them speaking in their own native language. This was the case at Corinth also.

Objections to the Proposition

Normal procedure would call for an examination of objections to the proposition. However, due to limitations of time and space this is not possible. Many of these will no doubt be raised during the discussion session.

The Main Message of I Corinthians 12-14

In much of the discussion about tongues the main message of Paul is passed over. Here are at least three main points Paul is stressing.

1. Christians must place the love and concern for the church; the body of Christ, far above their personal selfishness, pride, and vain glory in their spiritual gifts, especially the spectacular one of tongues.
2. Tongues are not to be used in the assembly unless they are used for edification and teaching. They can only be used if there is an interpretation.
3. Tongues and all nine spiritual gifts were transient, temporary. They would pass away when the complete or mature was come. They were a part of the immaturity. For people to be striving for these gifts today indicates they are still striving for the immature things.

Final Observations

It is indeed tragic and sad for division and strife to exist today in the church over a gift, that even when it clearly existed, Paul relegated to an insignificant role in the function and worship of the church. Five understandable words are more to be desired than ten thousand words spoken in an

untranslated tongue. If any are going to seek a gift today why don't they seek the gift of prophecy.

Lastly, in this writer's opinion the discussion about the nature of tongues in I Corinthians 14 is largely academic because this gift passed away with the maturing of the church. Therefore, the gift of tongues, whatever its nature, is not available or needed by Christians today. Vine sums this up in good language.

There is no evidence of the continuance of this gift after Apostolic times nor indeed in the later times of the Apostles themselves; this provides confirmation of the fulfillment in this way of I Cor. 13:8, that this gift would close in the churches, just as would "prophecies" and "knowledge" in the sense of knowledge received by immediate supernatural power (cp. 14:6). The completion of the Holy Scriptures has provided the churches with all that is necessary for individual and collective guidance, instruction, and edification.¹⁴

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ John McRay, "Spiritual Gifts in First Century Worship" *Integrity* Jan., 1972, p. 107.
- ² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1960) Vol. I, pp. 235-241.
- ³ *Loc. cit.*
- ⁴ Jimmy Jividen, *Glossolalia from God or Man?* (Fort Worth: Star Bible Publications, 1971) p. 195.
- ⁵ John Short, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians in The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953) Vol. 10, pp. 197, 198. See also Schaff, *op. cit.* p. 235.
- ⁶ Pat Boone, *A New Song* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1970) pp. 109-129.
- ⁷ James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprint 1949) pp. 191-196.
- ⁸ J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendelton, *The Standard Bible Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1916) pp. 133-144.
- ⁹ David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd, *The Gospel Advocate Commentary on First Corinthians* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., reprint 1968) pp. 204-219
- ¹⁰ W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Fourth edition, reprinted 1970) pp. 172, 173.
Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 22nd American Edition, Revised by Wm. B. Stevenson) p. 994.
- ¹¹ John M'Clintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper Brothers, Publisher, 1894) Vol. 10 p. 483.
- ¹² William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, Second edition, 1956) pp. 141, 142
- ¹³ Jimmy Jividen, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
- ¹⁴ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966) p. 143.

**WOMEN, HEADDRESS, LONG HAIR, ETC.—
I CORINTHIANS 11: 2ff.**

Neil R. Lightfoot

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In 1951 he was married to Ollie Robinson of Ravia, Oklahoma. They have three daughters, Donna Lynn, Lu Anne, and Michelle.

It is with pleasure that I speak on this passage today. I come with the hope that God will enable me to cast a small bit of light on a passage acknowledged by all as exceptionally difficult.

Paul's Views on Women

It is regrettable that this passage, along with I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11-12, are the only passages taken by some as representative of Paul's views on women. With this narrow perspective it is concluded that Paul taught that women were inferior to men and through his writings has to the present suppressed the rights of women. Indeed, by today's "liberated women," according to *Newsweek*,¹

Newsweek, Nov. 2, 1970, p. 81.

Paul "rates a high place on the list of all-time male chauvinists."

To the contrary, the writings of Paul have done more for women than the writings of all feminists combined. The world that Paul knew fenced in its women. The Jewish woman had very few rights of her own. Her marriage was agreed upon by a trade between her father and her future husband. She was first and foremost a sexual being; she was to bear children for the husband's family. She was his possession; even what she earned belonged to him. The husband, on his own will, could dissolve the marriage; the wife could not. The girl in the home could be taught the Scriptures, but she was not permitted to receive instruction in the oral law. The woman's sphere was in the home and that was her realm of glory. In fact, because she was mother in the home, this above all else gave her rights with her husband. She was to be honored, as taught in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:12); she was to be greatly respected, as taught in Proverbs (20:20; 23:22; 30:17; 31:10ff); but from the early periods of Jewish history on down, women unquestionably were considered inferior to men.²

In Greek society the status of woman varied in time and place, but mostly it was under that of the man. The woman was generally uneducated, except in domestic matters; she took no part in political life and was the property of the

² See Joseph W. Gaspar, *Social Ideas in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 62ff; E. A. Leonard, "St. Paul on the Status of Women," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12 (1950), p. 311ff.; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, p. 359ff; *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, articles on "Woman," "Husband and wife," "Marriage," etc.; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 24ff.

man, whether wife, mistress, or slave. Roman women enjoyed more freedom, especially in the latter days of the republic onward; and by the beginning of the Christian era, woman's place in many respects was equal to that of the man.

Against this background of inequality Paul, following the example of Jesus, proclaimed the good news to women as well as men: to Lydia and the other women at Philippi (Acts 16:13), to the leading women of Macedonia at Thessalonica (Acts 17:4) and at Berea (Acts 17:12). In his letters he sends greetings to both men and women (Rom. 16; Philemon 1:2). Twice he greets the two-part team of Priscilla and Aquila, with Priscilla's name mentioned first (Rom. 16:3-4; 2 Tim. 4:19). In Romans 16 Paul greets eighteen men and eleven women by name. He refers to others: Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5); Euodia and Syntyche at Philippi who "labored side by side" with him in the gospel (Phil. 4:2-3); and Chloe of Corinth (I Cor. 1:11). It was from Chloe's household, either freedmen or slaves, that Paul had learned much about troubles in the Corinthian church. It is to be remembered, therefore, that when Paul writes about women wearing veils at Corinth, he writes not at all in terms of a wholesale denunciation of women.

Reasons For Difficulties

Several factors contribute to making I Corinthians 11 especially difficult to understand. A first difficulty is that we do not know the customs of the times and of the ancient world as well as we would like. It used to be confidently asserted that practically everywhere among the ancients women wore veils in public. Commentary after commentary repeats this statement. But this is now a matter of genuine

disagreement among specialists on this point and especially with reference to the headdress of Greek women. There are indications that the Greek woman was not always under the obligation to wear the veil in public. At times women in festival processions are described in detail, and no mention is made of veils. Empresses and goddesses are portrayed without veils.

Plutarch, on the other hand, writing at the close of the first century A. D., presents a different picture. He says that, among the Spartans, girls went to public places unveiled; but married women appeared veiled.³ He also unequivocally states that it was the usual thing for women to go out in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered.⁴ Yet in the same connection he says that formerly women were not allowed to cover the head at all.⁵ Plutarch also says in the same passage that it was customary for men to cut their hair and women to allow their hair to grow.

Plutarch's statements on women being veiled are supported by what is recognized as the universal practice in the East. At Tarsus, a woman, when she went out, was heavily veiled.⁶ At Jerusalem, when a woman left her house, she was covered with two head-veils; and if she went out unveiled, her husband had the right and even duty of putting her away because she had acted indiscreetly.⁷ And farther

³ *Sayings of Spartans*, Charillus, 2.

⁴ *The Roman Questions*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ See Sir William Ramsay (*The Cities of St. Paul*, pp. 201-205) who draws upon the works of Dio Chrysostom (early 2nd c.).

⁷ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 359-360.

east, among the Assyrians, the rule was more strict: women were veiled and harlots always were to be unveiled on threat of death.⁸

A second difficulty is that we do not know enough about the specific problems in the Corinthian church. The Christians there had written to Paul and had asked him certain questions (I Cor. 7:1). His answers to these questions begin in chapter 7; and the clues to Paul's answers are given in the words "now concerning" (7:1, 8:1; 12:1). Following these clues we are able to piece together something of these questions; but still all we have are Paul's answers which can be understood only obliquely by us. We may compare it to a telephone conversation where only one part of the conversation is being heard. The Corinthians had written Paul about a number of matters. We do not have their letter; that is, to use the illustration, we cannot hear their end of the conversation. We can only hear Paul, and that often concerning things we are not familiar with. This should help explain why the passage on veils is for us so difficult.

What Paul Says

I Corinthians 11:2 begins a new section that deals with public worship. The last part of the chapter undoubtedly concerns public worship, and there is a close connection between "I commend you" in verse 2 and "I do not commend you" in verse 17. Further, verses 4-5 speak of

⁸ On the varying customs of ancient veiling, see *Theological Dictionary on the New Testament*, III, 562. Hereafter cited as T.D.N.T.

praying and prophesying, activities that normally took place in the assembly. If it is possible to hear one end of a conversation and still to some extent be able to determine what is said on the other end, then perhaps it is possible to reconstruct something of the situation that existed at Corinth. Men and women at Corinth were endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4ff). These gifts included the gift of prophecy, the gift that enabled one to give teachings inspired by the Spirit. Women, too, could, prophesy. Should they exercise their prophetic gift in the presence of men? If so, should they try to give a divine message underneath a veil? Or should they use their freedom in Christ, remove their veils, and prophesy freely among those who constitute the one family of God? It was questions like these that the Corinthians had posed to Paul, or matters like this that had been communicated to Paul by Chloe's household. These were important considerations for the Corinthians and for Paul since the ancient world looked upon styles of dress as indications of national customs or moral habits. Whatever the custom was, ancient people were scrupulous in not deviating from it.

Paul tells the Corinthians plainly that their women are to be veiled in public gatherings. This means that the customs Plutarch spoke of at the end of the first century must have been in vogue at Corinth. He could scarcely have reasoned so forcefully unless in their society it was out of order for a woman to cut her hair or pray bareheaded. Paul's arguments can be re-shaped according to a fourfold pattern.

1. The theological argument. The argument is "theological" because it is God-centered. Paul's statement here begins with Christ, works downward to man and woman, and then ascends upward to God. Paul's term here is "head":

Christ is the head of man, man is the head of woman, etc. "Head" means either "origin" or "superiority"; the latter term fits better because the Scriptures do not teach elsewhere that God is the origin of Christ. Christ is, however, represented as being subordinate to God, a subordination that he assumed in becoming man. Woman similarly, or perhaps wife (if Paul is speaking only of the husband-wife relationship), has a subordinate function to man. The point is that Christ is over man, man is over woman, and God is over all. Since covering the head is a sign of subordination, then, Paul reasons that it would be disgraceful if the man is veiled and disgraceful also if the woman is unveiled. If the woman is to appear unveiled, she might as well have her hair cut or shaved off—which at Corinth was a symbol of immodesty. Paul continues his theological argument in verses 7-9. Woman's position as subordinate is part of the created order. Man is the image of God and mirrors His glory; and, like God, exercises dominion. But woman reflects the glory of man since she was taken from his side and was made for him. The latter expression means that woman was to be his helper, not that she was to be his slave or selfish possession.

2. The angelical argument. The woman ought to be veiled "because of the angels" (vs. 10). This is an additional argument given in the conclusion of the theological argument. We will return to this statement later.

3. The sociological argument. This argument can be termed "sociological" because it pertains to their society. In verses 13-15 Paul appeals to their own judgment as to what was decent and proper at Corinth. He says, "You judge for yourselves" (cf. 10:15). "Do *you* think it appropriate that a woman should pray uncovered? Is it not according to nature that a man should wear short hair and a woman wear long

hair? If a woman should wear long hair, that in itself is an indication that she ought to be covered in the assembly."

4. The ecclesiastical argument. This is Paul's final argument, an appeal to the practice of the churches. "If anyone is contentious, we have no such custom . . ." (vs. 16). This cannot mean, "If anyone strives over this or causes trouble, then dismiss the whole subject." Paul would not give prolonged reasoning for the veiling of women and then drop the subject with one statement. Nor is it likely that he means—"If anyone wants to dispute about it still, remember that it is neither our practice nor the practice of the churches to dispute." His intention is not so much to censure the contentious spirit as to supply an additional answer for any possible objection. "If any further objection is raised about women wearing veils," he says, "I would add that it is neither the apostolic practice nor the practice of the churches in general to do otherwise."

Questions Raised

In the remaining time I want to consider some of the main questions that Paul's teachings raise. In treating these I will have to be brief; but perhaps questions from the audience will allow further consideration of these problems.

1. Is Paul here speaking of a veil at all? Several views are held. One is that long hair is the covering: woman's hair is given to her for (*anti*, instead of) a covering. The Greek word *anti* generally denotes substitution; so the woman is to have long hair as a covering and nothing more. But this does not fit in with verses 5-6. If the covering is merely long hair, there would be no need to argue that being uncovered is the same

as being shaved. This would make Paul's argument amount to only a truism.

Another view is that the covering refers to a particular hairstyle. A woman is said to be covered if her hair is pinned up on her head, or a woman is said to be uncovered if her hair is undone and permitted to hang loosely. This view emphasizes that the Greek expression in verse 4 literally means "having down from the head." However, this overlooks the force of the same construction found in Plutarch which clearly means "having the head covered" with a garment.⁹ That is why lexicons and translations agree in rendering the passage in terms of a veil on the head.

2. What is the meaning of verse 10—"authority on her head because of the angels"? The statement is extremely difficult. Probably Paul is using "authority" as a metonymy of the sign for the thing signified: the veil signifies the authority to which woman is submissive.¹⁰ Then, why "because of the angels"? Probably because the angels, who uphold the divine order of creation, are represented as being present in the worship assemblies (cf. Ps. 138:1). For this there are parallels in the Qumran literature.¹¹

3. Is Paul's teaching here in contradiction to his instruc-

⁹ Plutarch, *Sayings of Romans*, 13.

¹⁰ Cf. T.D.N.T., II, 574.

¹¹ See J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of I Cor. XI. 10," *New Testament Studies* 4 (1957), 48-58; H. J. Cadbury, "A Qumran Parallel to Paul," *Harvard Theological Review* 51 (1958), 1-2.

¹² See J. W. Roberts, *Letters to Timothy*, p. 19, on I Tim. 2 referring to the assembly.

tions in I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12? No; for in these passages he speaks of the silence of women in the assemblies¹² and in this passage of the subordination of women in assembly. But does not I Corinthians 11 speak of a woman's praying and prophesying? Yes; but in particular of pneumatic endowments. And even when the woman prays or prophesies under the guidance of the Spirit, she is to do so with veil on.

4. How does Paul's teaching on the wearing of veils apply today? In my opinion it does not. For Corinthian women to be in the assembly unveiled was shocking and disgraceful in their society, so immodest that they might as well cut off their hair like harlots. Today in our society it is not shocking or immoral either for a woman to be without a covering or for her to have her hair cut. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" is a custom that has changed; and so here Paul speaks of a custom that is unmeaningful to our society.

5. Does Paul's teaching on long and short hair apply today? Of course, the question always comes up as to how long is long and how short is short. The matter is relative. It should be kept in mind that even Paul placed this in the sociological realm. His whole argument at this point concerns what *they* judged appropriate and fitting. "Does not nature itself teach you?"—by which Paul means natural feelings, not natural laws. This is in keeping with his "judge-in-yourselves" type of argument. Although we today may have strong preferences about length of hair, and so forth, it would be incorrect to use Paul's sociological argument (related to that

¹² See J. W. Roberts, *Letters to Timothy*, p. 19, on 1 Tim. 2 referring to the assembly.

society) and bind it as a moral obligation on people today.

The situation at Corinth, and Paul's teachings with reference to it, presents a number of imponderables. It is difficult to advance along a road with few signposts. But certain things are clear. Christianity did not come to unsex woman. It came to raise and dignify her as woman. In Christ, it is true, there is neither male nor female. The full statement of the passage is: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Paul recognized outward differences between Jew and Greek. Paul distinguished between Philemon the master and Onesimus the slave. Paul here wants the Corinthians to observe differences between men and women. His argument is not only sociological; it is theological, turning again and again on the created order. The created order, contrary to custom, is valid in all times and places. Outwardly, therefore, there are differences between men and women, and these differences must always be observed. In Christ, spiritually speaking, however, all are one. It is the religion of Christ that brings people together.



