

Pulling Down Strongholds: the Battle for Little Rock

WUPLLOOK

June 1998



A BITE AT
MY HEART

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It's one thing to taste the past, but wait till you taste the future!

It was 1968. My dad was making his first visit “home” to Scotland after a 23-year absence. As a family we were able to join him on his journey down Memory Lane. A few things had changed. We stood on a knoll at a place called the Green Knowe, and looked down on what had been the enchanted meadows of my father’s childhood. Obviously he would have to rely on happy memories, because the present reality was a sprawling parking lot, a garbage-choked stream, and a tenement building.

But some things seemed to have survived the years. The sheep-dotted hills. The seaside at Largs; even the same family renting boats to young boys wanting to try their hand at fishing in the Firth of Clyde.

And there was Shawlands Academy in Glasgow, where Dad spent his boyhood school days. We could tell it meant a great deal to him to be back there. We weren’t privy to all that swept through his mind as we stood before the somber gray buildings. But he did let us in on one happy memory of those far-off days. We got to taste the past. Well, sort of.

The Ice Cream Slider. That delectable way of transporting ice cream down the gullet between two thin wafers (2x4 inches) and upgraded to a Double Nugget when married to marshmallow and dipped

in chocolate. The slider is a common treat in Scotland, we were informed, as my father led us around the corner from the school. Let’s see...yes...it’s still there!

We felt the mounting excitement as we made our way along Pollokshaws Road toward a little, nondescript news agent. “This shop’s sliders had the best ice cream. It was on my way home from school.” For two pennies little boys could cover a day of endless facts, tests, and flint-strict teachers with a cool, refreshing, slider.

We all had to have one, of course. And soon we were standing outside again in the sunshine, each with a slider—the slider of all sliders—in our hands. Dad was still in the shop paying for this piece of history (and no doubt

remiscing about the good ol’ days with the clerk).

We couldn’t wait. The ice cream was starting to melt. I took a lick. Wha-a-at was that?!

I had always questioned if you could trust the taste buds of a nation that relished hot bone marrow on bread, blood pudding, the lining of a cow’s intestinal tract—who had exalted the sheep’s stomach to a national monument. Now I was having it confirmed. The slider was awful! We were all finding it out at the same moment, just as my smiling dad was stepping out expectantly, wondering how we were enjoying this taste of his childhood.

If this was a taste of his childhood, he had had a rough time! He wanted to know what we thought. How was it? What could we say? It was hard enough to turn our warped lips into a smile.

Fortunately, he couldn’t wait for an answer, and tasted his own. It was not a pretty sight. He looked at the treat as if it had slapped him. Defrauded him. Stolen from him. The things were gritty and sour. Something had gone wrong.

Later we had some sliders that had not spoiled, and they were delicious. But it wasn’t the same. The moment had been lost; nostalgia had been forced into reality. Welcome to the real world. Things can go sour over time.

Taste is obviously more than information travelling from our receptor cells along our glossopharyngeal nerve to our brain. There are taste buds of the soul, too. Memory. Imagination. Esthetics. Conscience. With these we taste experience.

Some tastes in life are acquired. “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103). He and His Word will never turn sour on you. And if it’s good now, what will heaven taste like?

It’s good to remember the sweetness of our spiritual youth, the happy times in the first blush of our Christian life. You may not be able to go back, but you can go on with the sweet memories of God’s unfailing goodness. [👉](#)



by J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

UPLOOK

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Storm the ramparts!

“IT IS TIME for Thee, Lord, to work” (Ps. 119:126).

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for IT IS TIME to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hos. 10:12).

The Little Rock Outreach Week has arrived! After months of planning and praying, with scores of serious Christians having sacrificed to be there, or having unselfishly given so others could go, (or pulled up roots and moved there!) the time has come to see what the Lord is going to do among us.

As with anything attempted for the Lord, there have been both discouragements and encouragements. As Paul wrote: “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, *and there are many adversaries*” (1 Cor. 16:9). But it seems the Lord has so ordered events that human effort has been neutralized at every step, and rebuffs have humbled us at every turn. If anything is done this week and in the ensuing months, God will obviously get all the glory!

Yet while the Lord has used such circumstances to bring us to the end of ourselves, He has also provided clear evidence that He is in it and clear encouragement too.

For example, you will be encouraged to hear that the high school principal in the neighborhood where John and Bobbie Heller have moved, has been most helpful. The week of the campaign (June 7-13) is the week following the closing of the school year in Little Rock. The teachers all must report to work, however, the week of our meetings, so the air conditioner must be kept run-

ning, etc. The principal is allowing us to use the cafeteria facilities for preparing our lunches and snacks for the children’s outreach, as well as the lunch room for a 3:00 PM kid’s club each day. There is no charge for this. This is a clear provision of the Lord.

And now **from you** we desire your fervent prayers, not only for the week of meetings, but for the weeks and months ahead, that a bright testimony will be established, will flourish, and will reproduce, with other assemblies being started in Arkansas and elsewhere.

Please pray for:

- *Those families and individuals that are moving to Little Rock to be the beachhead in this effort. Pray that they might be sustained, encouraged, used by the Lord, and supported by ongoing intercession. Pray for their neighbors, some of whom have already made contact. Pray for Heller’s next-door neighbors, Brad and Cindy, who need the Lord.*
- *three other couples who are exercised about moving to LR. Pray for guidance, and for the knitting together of the hearts of those who come to help in the new work.*
- *the residents of Little Rock (pop. 175,795 in city limits; 513,000 in the greater LR metro area) who need the Lord.*
- *that an open door—obvious opportunities—might be given to those who are joining in the outreach. We need boldness, wisdom, and grace to represent the Lord.*

GOOD NEWS Little Rock

We are expecting about 100 believers from Ontario, Quebec, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, Ohio, California, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and Oklahoma. There is also one joining us from Northern Ireland.

• *believers in the area who might be looking for a New Testament assembly; and for a warm reception to the 10,000 pamphlets to be distributed, called “Is it Possible to Meet as a New Testament Church Today?”* Two couples from Arkansas have expressed interest in the possibility being involved in an assembly.


• *those in authority, especially in the Little Rock area:*

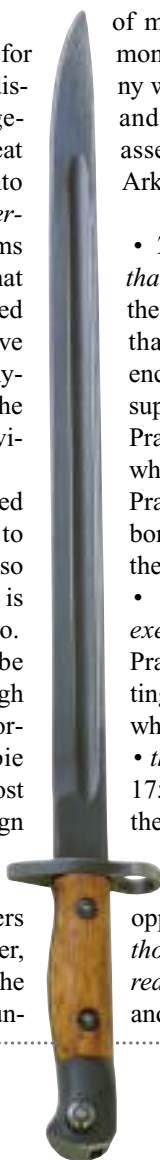
—President Clinton, who calls Little Rock home;

—the governor, the Honorable Mike Huckabee, a Christian. (A Governor’s Economic Summit is being held in Little Rock the same week as our meetings);

—the mayor, the Honorable Jim Daily, also a believer;

—Police Chief Luie Caudell;

—the high school principal who is allowing us use of her school. Due to the smaller number coming, we do not have enough to use the meeting room in the hotel. Therefore the gospel meetings will be held, Lord willing, in the high school. Little is much when God is in it. 



FELLOWSHIP FAMILY CAMP

This camp provides an opportunity for families to share with other believers in a time of daily Bible teaching, fellowship, and recreation in the spectacular Rocky Mountains. The location is Covenant Heights Conference Center, seven miles south of Estes Park on Highway #7, just east of beautiful Long's Peak.

There are private rooms for families. There is also a campground for those who prefer to use a tent or camper. The dates are: Aug. 2, 3:00 PM to August 6, 3:00 PM. Make reservations early. For more info.:

Donald Norbie
2605 14th Ave. Court
Greeley, CO 80631
dlnorbie@juno.com

DISCIPLESHIP WEEK

Morning Star Bible Camp (BC) plans, Lord willing, to host its second annual Titus School—a week of classes for training and equipping God's people in a number of areas. Peter Daley (MT) will be the speaker. Singles and families are welcome.

Early registration is highly advisable. If there aren't sufficient numbers by July 1, the classes will be cancelled. For fee information, call:

Sharon Stutters, Registrar
(250) 768-4651
For all other information, contact:
Craig Funston
(604) 588-3733
hearthbrook@CharacterLink.net

YOUNG ADULT'S CAMP

This expanded College and Career weekend is scheduled for Morning Star Bible Camp (BC) to run from Friday evening, August 28 to Sunday evening, August 30.

The goal of this camp is to help develop tomorrow's leaders, elders, and missionaries. George Taibert (BC) is once again the invited speak-

er. He plans to deliver seven messages from Romans 6-8. The camp is intended for serious Christians, although there will be plenty of time for fellowship and fun. Contact:

Craig Funston
(604) 588-3733
hearthbrook@CharacterLink.net

UPWARD BOUND

Upward Bound is a two-week program that will be held from Sunday, Aug. 23 to Friday, Sep. 4, at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, ON) for Bible study and fellowship.

Lord willing, Boyd Nicholson, Sr. (ON) will be speaking on the topic of *Basic Doctrines for Christian Living*, with an emphasis on prayer. Frank Burgess (MO) will be doing an overview of Dispensations. Roy Houghton (ON) will also speak.

If your schedule permits, plan to stay the second week, and take a canoe trip into the interior of Algonquin Park—a journey you'll never forget. We will continue some in-depth Bible studies as we work our way through the park.

Minimum age is 18. \$200 (CDN) is the cost for one week—\$350 for both. This covers meals and accommodation.

For info. or to register, call Saju Mathew at (519) 886-5187 or Sandy McEachern at (519) 638-2928.

CALL FOR HELP

DIME (pronounced "dee-may") is a Spanish word which mean "tell me," the cry of millions who have not yet heard the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Two of the helpers at DIME Publishers have recently had to return to Argentina because their work permits expired and a third helper is moving on to a different ministry. As a result, they are experiencing extreme difficulties getting their

work out on time.

At the present time they are in need a person to work in the managerial or administrative capacity, perhaps a retired missionary or someone contemplating a change in the Lord's work. The person would require bi-lingual (Spanish/English) skills.

LOOKING FOR FELLOWSHIP

A small number of families would like to see a new fellowship started in the Orange Park area in Florida. If interested, please contact:

Andy Hamilton
(904) 269-0042
achfl2@juno.com

TAKING AMES

A group of young people has been meeting for prayer and fellowship in Ames, IA every Monday. Anyone interested in this (especially students from Iowa State University) should contact:

Bill and Carol Moore
127 East O'Neil Dr.
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 232-1167

STAFF NEEDED IN NC

Pittsboro Christian Village has staff positions available in two areas.

They are looking for an assistant administrator to work with the management team of the Village under the direction of the Administrator. This person would have to be born again with an assembly background and have the ability to manage people in one or more of the following areas: health care, food service, maintenance or business operations.

They are also looking for an Activities Director to organize and lead in social settings and resident activities while meeting North Carolina state requirements for documentation of resident activities.

Contact Dave Dewhurst at (919) 542-3151 fax (919) 542-5919 or e-mail at wddew@juno.com/

DIRECTORY OF ASSEMBLY EVANGELISTS IN INDIA

On behalf of Gospel Missions of India, Inc., a directory of Brethren Assembly Evangelists has been published. This is a comprehensive list of approximately 1143 people working in both the north and south of India.

One of the objectives of GMI is to continuously support these full-time evangelists, helping to meet their physical and ministry needs. Some of them work in the most difficult circumstances and the prayer and support of North American brothers and sisters mean a lot to them.

A free copy of the directory may be obtained by writing:

Gospel Missions of India
P. O. Box 1043
Warren, MI 43090-1043

HOME FOR RENT

A ranch-style home at Greenwood Hills Conference Grounds (Fayetteville, PA) is available for rent either on a seasonal or year-long basis. The house has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a lovely mountain view. This property would be ideal for retirees or missionaries on furlough. For information:

Carl Balsam
phone: (847) 869-4561
fax: (773) 279-7960
ceb@northpark.edu

RETREAT DIRECTOR

Looking, looking, looking for a retreat director for the mother-daughter retreat to be held at Camp Iroquina on October 2, 3, and 4, 1998. Speaker, music, crafts, and activities have all been taken care of, but one is needed to take charge. Any volunteers? Please call Tom Freeman at (609) 585-1835 or Bob Bateman at (908) 757-6038.

COMMENDATIONS

Ross and Lucille Ragland

The Christians that meet at the Southeast Gospel Chapel in Springfield, MO are happy to commend to your care and fellowship Ross and Lucille Ragland.

Since their move to Springfield in 1973, the Raglands have been a blessing and help to the assembly there. Ross ministers the Word of God not only at their own assembly but in surrounding areas, at Bible camps and at children's meetings.

During the past few years, Ross has had more invitations than he could commit to, being in full-time employment. For the past year, the saints have prayed that the Lord would grant direction, help and peace to the Raglands as to His will for them. They now are all in agreement about his decision to leave regular employment as he gives himself to the work of the ministry.

Dan and Nikki Rogers

The Christians at Asbury Road Bible Chapel in Dubuque, IA, prayerfully commend Dan and Nikki Rogers to the work of the Lord in Ecuador. Dan and Nikki have been in the assembly in Dubuque for a number of years, and give evidence of their life in Christ and heart exercise in the service of Christ. They have participated in various ministries in the assembly including Sunday School, youth groups, Awana, ladies' ministries and men's Bible studies.

The Rogers' are commended to the grace of God, trusting that He will continue to bless them and make their service for Christ fruitful.

Chris and Barbara Schroeder

Chris and Barbara Schroeder were commended to the Lord's work by Lakeside Bible Chapel, Sterling Heights, MI, in October 1991. As of April 30, 1998, this commendation will be transferred to Calvary Bible

Chapel, Chesterfield, MI.

The Schroeders are commended to the work of evangelism, discipleship, and preaching in North America and abroad as the Lord leads.

NEW ADDRESS

• Stewards Foundation is relocating their offices to Dallas, TX. Please make a note of their new address and phone number:

Stewards Foundation
14275 Midway Rd. Ste. 285
Dallas, TX 75244
Phone: (972) 726-6550
Fax: (972) 726-6589

• Ray and Carol Dolinski
56 Mount Pleasant Rd.
Tottenham, London N17 6TN
England
181-801-0805
raydolinski@compuserve.com

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Uplook Ministries is pleased to welcome Mr. Roy Hill as a member of the Board of Directors.

Mr. Hill, from Bath, England, serves as chairman of the committee of *Precious Seed Publications*, heads a printing ministry called *Christian Year Publications* (publisher of the UK assemblies address book), and travels widely as a well-respected Bible conference speaker. He is an executive in the book printing industry in the UK.

The board, management, and staff of *Uplook Ministries* wish to express their appreciation for Mr. Hill's involvement in this ministry and for the highly qualified leadership he provides. We trust more of our UK friends will make acquaintance with *Uplook* as a result. ☺



Roy Hill

Someone Special

A Masterpiece

The Victor and the vanquished

*Like Samson in this, by His death our Lord brought down the enemy's stronghold.
It shall not rise again.*

J. R. MACDUFF

If ever there was a case which we might have thought would have repelled Infinite Goodness and Infinite Purity, it is that described in Luke 8. No leper-house more loathsome or polluted than this! Joined to his filthy idols—the trail of the serpent in every chamber of imagery—Christ might well have said, “Let him alone!”

But who can limit the Holy One of Israel? He would leave behind in that wild region, even if He never visited it again, one enduring memorial of His grace and power. He would tell people in every age that if Satan is mighty, there is a mightier still; that over this Legion dominion “all power” is committed to the “Stronger than the strong man.” He has only to utter the word, and the demons surrender their prey, crouching submissive at His feet!

Moreover, declaring a still further exhibition of the Saviour's power in the sequel of the narrative, observe the demons would not and dared not enter into the herd of swine until they had received His permissive word, “Go.” Blessed assurance! Satan's power is bounded! Satan's Lord says as then, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed!”

Both from the case of this Gadarene demoniac and the one in the synagogue of Capernaum, we learn that, great as was the sway of Satan over the bodies and souls of men, it was not such as to prevent them taking themselves to Jesus, and seeing His mercy. We may take comfort in the assurance that no power of Satan can deter us fleeing to the “Power of God.” If our faith and hope is built on that Rock,

“the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”

Further, we have the assurance that there is a period of triumph at hand—a time coming when Satan's kingdom shall be destroyed, when Jesus shall put him and all other enemies “under His feet.”

That Satanic Empire got its greatest and final blow on the cross of Calvary. “Now,” said Jesus, when that cross was projecting its shadow on His path, “Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out!” And it was so. As He bowed His head and cried, “It is finished,” he dragged the pillars of the Usurper's Empire to the dust. And if “we see not yet all things put under Him,” we know on infallible authority that victory does await the Prince of life. The chain is already forged which is to bind the destroyer. Ever since the day when his serried legions were routed at Calvary, the loyal subjects of his Divine Conqueror have been following up the triumph of their Lord, gathering spoils and trophies from the nations so long enthralled. The Great Captain of Salvation “from henceforth [is] expecting, until His enemies be made His footstool.”

You who are feeling at times downcast by reason of “the depths of Satan,” mourning over his power alike in your own hearts, in the church of God, and in the world; remember his doom is sealed! Jesus can say of each one of His people as of Gad of old, “A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.” We can anticipate with confidence the predicted period when the tyranny of six thousand years shall end—Satan and all his discomfited legions be strewn, like the hosts of Egypt, on the shores of Time—and, in the words of God to His people, “The enemies ye have seen today, ye shall see no more forever.” [📖](#)

Practical matters of worship

Surely there are things we can learn about the holy art.

It is evident there is a renewed interest in worship. At many conferences and assemblies you will hear a series of messages on the subject, usually at the specific request of elders or others. This renewed interest is nothing but a positive, spiritually healthy sign.

The Breaking of Bread is the primary public expression of the church's worship. It is at that meeting believers exercise their royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). I cannot think of a greater privilege for the believer than to sit with other believers engaging in the worship of the Lord.

But while most acknowledge the importance of worship, there remains a question, "How can I be a worshipper? What can I do to come prepared to worship (whether audibly or inaudibly) when the assembly meets for the breaking of bread?" While learning to be a worshipper cannot be reduced to mechanical steps, here are a few practical things I can do to help me be a worshipper.

1. *Learn to identify, in specific terms, things the Bible says about the Lord.* The best book on worship is the Bible. When we come to worship, God is not asking us to be poetically creative in designing expressions of thought. He has already given us worship material in the Bible. As you read, take time to notice statements that magnify the Lord Himself. Notice the many pictures of the Lord which God gave to Israel, for example.

For some help on thinking this way, let me recommend (with admitted bias) *Worship and Remembrance—52 Meditations on the Sinner's Friend*, by Daniel Smith, available from Gospel Folio Press. Every home interested in worship should own this book. (Note to assembly elders: consider purchasing one for every family in your assembly.)

2. *Learn to distinguish between the blessings we receive and the character of the One who blesses us.* When we first get saved, we cannot help but be overwhelmed with the many benefits that come to us. Forgiveness of sins, fellowship of the believers, the care and comfort of God—on and on it goes. But as we think about our blessings, it should lead us to think about the kind of God who should bless us in this way. What kind of God loves sinners enough to send His own Son to die


for them? Why should the Lord suffer and die in this way? In other words, I do not think in terms of "me" and "my," but Him. Stay focused on Him, and you will be a worshipper.

3. *Be familiar with hymns of worship.* Not every hymn in the hymnbook is a hymn of worship. They are not intended to be. Some hymns encourage us in prayer, Christian service, or a closer walk with the Lord. Others are gospel hymns and personal testimony. Identify the worship hymns when it comes to the Breaking of Bread. Hymns that speak of Christ and His death, resurrection, ascension, and glory are good to know. Look through, in fact sing through, the hymnbook during the week.

4. *Listen to experienced worshippers around you.* None of us is a perfect worshipper. And we do not want to simply imitate one another. Nevertheless, we can learn from godly men around us who have learned something about worship. Listen to their way of thinking about the Lord. Notice the way they handle the Scriptures. Note the harmony of their worship. Listen and learn.

5. *Remember that inaudible worship is worship, too.* All believers, men and women, are called to be worshippers. The sisters are vital in our worship. It is not just what is heard by us that is important, but what is heard by God. The spiritual atmosphere of a Remembrance meeting is often charged with the godly worship of the inaudible worshippers. The women's worship, inaudible to us, is essential.

6. *Be a worshipper seven days a week.* While the Breaking of Bread is the most obvious public expression of the church's worship, it does not mean we cannot be worshippers every day of the week. There is at least one thing wonderful about God we could notice each day. As we accumulate these thoughts, our worship on the Lord's Day will be full.

Let's encourage worship in the young, the old, the middle-aged. There are no perfect worshippers. And we don't need worship critics. But we can determine to learn to be the kind of worshippers God is looking for, for "the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (Jn. 4:23). 

by BRIAN GUNNING

Report from L. A.

Special Spanish gospel outreach with Mexican evangelist in California

RICHARD YARRALL

The recent meetings with Jaime de la Vega from Guadalajara, Mexico, are just part of the on-going work of reaching out with the gospel among the needy Latino population of metro Los Angeles.

While in Los Angeles, Jaime was able to preach in the Highland Park and Westminster Latino assemblies, as well as preach several times by radio.

The prayers of the Lord's people were answered with several professing faith in Christ, others being helped spiritually, some new people starting to attend the assemblies and many homes being opened to us across greater Los Angeles.


Some of the best times were experienced sharing the gospel in homes where some heard the gospel for the first time. For example, in one home in Pasadena some 50 people—young and old—were crowded into a living room and kitchen to hear the Word.

In another case, a woman from Guadalajara living in LA called after a radio message, and then organized a home meeting. It was a surprise to arrive at her home and find over 20 members of her extended family, all at different stages in their understanding of the gospel, waiting to



hear a message from the Word of God.

In general, the Lord has been blessing the Latino assemblies. At both Highland Park and Westminster numbers are up, new people are participating, and new home studies are in progress. But the laborers are few. We need to multiply ourselves by the training of men and women for the work of ministry.

Pray that the Lord would raise up more workers for the potential harvest in metro Los Angeles and elsewhere among Latinos. 

NTM PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

New Tribes Missions offers the following report about the recent media blitz in Colombia regarding the three NT Missionaries that are being held hostage there:

“Patti Tenenoff, Nancy Mankins, and Tania Rich spent a hectic, draining two-and-a-half days in Bogota, starting with a “media mugging” upon arrival at the airport and ending with a final TV interview at the airport while they were waiting to board their departing flight. Terry Anderson and Terry Waite returned on different flights. Their high profile presence made a major difference in the media coverage...The whole effort of Washington-New York-Bogota was all that we hoped it would be. Our message got out to those who needed to hear it. Now it is in God's hands. If He'd be pleased to use this effort to bring about the release of Rick, Dave and Mark, we'd be very pleased as well...

The Crisis Team continues to be engaged in following up leads, mainly in countries other than Colombia right now. Two members of the Crisis Team met with the new U. S. Ambassador, Curtis Kamman, and he assured us of his support. A more recent visit to the U. S. Embassy has added nothing new to the case. As for the Colombian government, we have no knowledge of anything being done concerning our case in a long time. Now that presidential elections are approaching, there is a total preoccupation with politics.

PKs BACK TO WORK

On March 31, Promise Keepers laid off its entire staff of 345 employees due to lack of funds and predicted that it would be August before they could resume the payroll. But thanks to the best month of contributions in the ministry's 8-year histo-

WHAT'S GOING ON?

ry—more than \$4 million—employees are now back to work.

Last year, nearly 640,000 attended 18 stadium events, compared to 1.1 million at 22 events in 1996. —*World*

NEPAL CONVERSIONS

A group has been distributing gospel literature with a correspondence address on it in Nepal. One man was quite interested in knowing more about this “god” Jesus and decided to go to the post office to mail his request for the course. The post office was a five-hour walk away! When he reached the post office, he found it was closed. Since he had already walked five hours, he chose to spend the night in the village and wait for the post office to open. While he waited, he met a man who also had come to request the correspondence course.

The next morning, they accomplished their task and started home. As they walked, they met some men with what looked like the same materials they had just mailed. These men were also on their way to the post office to mail in for the course. They talked about what they knew about Jesus, and they decided that they would meet together to worship Jesus since they all felt He was the true God. The men totaled 15...and they agreed to meet weekly. And so these men with no one to help them, and no understanding of what a church is, started their own fellowship. “Ye shall...find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13). —*Pulse*

THE BOOK-MENDERS

We recently received the following information regarding book and Bible repair (we have not personally used this service). “*The Bookmenders* receives Bibles from all over the country in various states of disrepair...Each Bible is carefully inspected and disassembled. A special mending tissue and transparent glue is used to repair torn pages. Loose sections are refastened into place with linen twine and flexible glue. When needed, new covers are cut from an attractive, bonded, long-wearing leather made especially for Bibles. All leather covers, when restorable, are cleaned with saddle soap, treated with a special leather dressing which was developed by the British Royal Museum. Each cover is then carefully re-dyed to eliminate scuff marks.” The cost to repair a hand (medium-size) Bible is \$34.95 plus S&H. For more information, call Tom Bellino at (800) 538-0821 or check out

www.bookmenders.com

WORLD CUP EVANGELISM

The World Cup soccer tournament in France in June is providing opportunities to share the gospel with unsaved people. Special literature and videos have been made available in a number of different languages to be used by Christians as a witnessing tool. Sports Outreach America is one group that will be distributing a video that profiles about seven members of the Brazilian National Team, who share their testimony. —*MNN*

REMEMBER THE PRISONERS AS IF CHAINED WITH THEM

Ayub Masih is a Pakistani Christian that has been sentenced to death for blaspheming against Mohammed. *Voice of the Martyrs* says that contradicts Pakistan’s constitution which calls for freedom for Christians. In 1947, Christians voted with Muslims to establish Pakistan as a nation. (The white stripe on the Pakistani flag indicates Christianity.) Yet despite the constitution, the persecution continues—five or six times a year in Pakistan. *Voice of the Martyrs* is currently assisting a young 17-year-old girl, Salima, who has been to trial twice and has had people beat her and even bite her. —*MNN*

A WORD OF EXPLANATION

In the February/March issue of *Uplook*, we printed a report in the *What’s Going On?* column entitled “Family Troubles.” A few of our readers responded and pointed out to us that our statement was careless and inaccurate. We would like to apologize for this and for all of the confusion that we may have created.

Grace Community Church did withdraw affiliation with the ministry. Their opinion is that undue stress is placed on non-biblical matters while biblical issues such as the doctrine of depravity and the child’s need for regeneration do not receive sufficient emphasis or explanation.

A number of health professionals from various disciplines do support GFI. No investigation or documentation into the alleged failure-to-thrive cases in infants was ever made.

Matthew 27:46 is not quoted directly in the material dealing with what to do when an infant cries. *Preparation for Parenting* states, “God is not sitting on the edge of His throne, waiting to jump at our every cry in order to demonstrate His love. He already demonstrated His love by sending His Son to Calvary. His non-intervention in the suffering of His Son is the ultimate example that speaks against the fraudulent notion that love always requires immediate intervention. Non-action does not equate to a lack of love. It wasn’t true at Calvary nor is it true in parenting.”



DONALD ROSS

Attend to God's things in God's way, and He will attend to yours.

As a youth, Donald was “as proud as a peacock, and as empty as a drum,” and yet he “said” prayers night and morning, for fear that God would smite him if he didn’t. Then one day while Ross was walking alone among the mountain heather, returning home after visiting a dying brother, he saw the light of the gospel in John 18:8: “If ye seek Me, let these go their way.”

Ross was born in Rosshire, Scotland in 1823. Twice each day his God-fearing parents gathered the family to read Scripture and pray for God’s blessing. Ross was the fruit of their prayers. For the first five years following his conversion, Ross was a member of the Church of Scotland. He left during what was later known as “The Disruption of 1843,” when Thomas Chalmers split from the mainstream Presbyterians to start the Free Church of Scotland.

In 1847, Donald married Margaret Leslie. He moved his new family to Edinburgh a few years later. There Donald and Margaret heard Mr. Tasker ministering God’s Word. After work, he engaged in evangelistic work. It was during this time that Tasker urged Ross to superintend a mission to coal miners in Lanarkshire. “This,” say his biographers, “he positively refused to do—not from unwillingness to serve the Lord with all his might—but because he did not wish to be dependent on preaching for his support.” But Ross changed his mind a while later, when his employer terminated his position. He did not know how to preach. Tasker said, “You preach into your own heart, and you will be surprised how many other hearts your preaching will fit.” And so it was that Ross, from 1858 to 1860 preached the gospel to the miners.

In 1859, Thomas Rosie began a gospel outreach called the “North East Coast Mission” to reach the 57 Scottish fishing villages between Thurso in the north down to Ferryden in the south. From these villages, the fishermen sailed and rowed boats that were little improved from

previous centuries. Their livelihood was always tough, and occasionally dangerous. The men who would preach Christ among these fishermen, said Rosie, needed to be no-nonsense people.

Rosie asked Ross to be his secretary and superintendent of The North East Coast Mission. The Mission had no money and little manpower. So Ross started from the ground up, making the city of Aberdeen his headquarters.

In his first annual report for the Mission, Ross wrote, “At Bervie, Gourdon, Downes, Cove, St. Comb’s, Inverallochy, Cairnbulg and Broadsea, the blessing has descended. Waters have broken out in the wilderness and streams in the desert.” Ross soon had a band of twenty aggressive evangelists helping him in the work. Those interested in joining the Mission had to pass an interview with Ross. He asked all candidates the same opening question: “When and where were you born again?” If the candidate could not give an immediate, certain answer, the interview ended. Ross had high standards for his preachers. “Were they godly? Had their preaching ‘teeth’? Had they the power of God with it?” If a man’s preaching lacked “the revival fire” it was “neither good for man nor beast.” Of weak preaching, Ross would remark, “It wouldn’t kill a mosquito,” and of weak preachers, “He has not the smell of God.” He talked about “feeling a preacher’s pulse” by his prayers, and enjoyed hearing a message that “shaved close.”

John Ritchie, one of Ross’ biographers, sums up Ross’ view on preaching and preachers: “It is necessary to emphasize the need of godly care in encouraging or authenticating as preachers all who may wish to leave their employment to go out as evangelists or missionaries at home or abroad, lest those uncalled and unsent, be helped into a path that they have neither gift nor grace to fill. The Scriptural principle in all such public service is, ‘Let these first be proved’ (1 Tim. 3:10), which can be best done in the sphere in which they live by those who



by JOHN A. BJORLIE

see their lives and have their testimony and service before them from day to day. Being ‘well spoken of’ (Acts 16:1-2) by those who know them best, and with the fellowship of the assembly in which they are (Acts 13:1-4), they may then be heartily commended to the Lord, and go forth followed by the prayers of His people. Very different is the not uncommon practice of restive, often unspiritual young men, who have no great love for honest labour ‘becoming evangelists,’ and setting forth in their self-chosen path, only to do mischief, until they break down and dishonour the Name of the Lord.”

Ross’ letters to younger workers were sometimes harsh. But if he saw the right attitude, he became a father to them. John Campbell, James Dewar, John Gill, Donald Munro, and John Smith all had Ross as their mentor. Ross said, “All were not equal in gifts and graces, but there were in the *Mission* the choicest spirits and most devoted men we ever met—godly, self-denying, and successful.”

From 1859 until 1870, a great reaping of souls occurred, especially in the villages along the Moray Firth and the Aberdeenshire coast. The work in Ferryden, Cairnbulg and Inverallochy was remarkable. In 1869 at Footdee “the power of God was so manifest, that for many weeks no fishing boats went to sea. Meetings were continued day and night.” “Men, women, and children were seen at all times of the day dropping on their knees—on the snow-covered ground, crying for mercy.” Six hundred professed to be saved at Footdee. The evangelists did not know of any holdouts in the town.

Alexander Marshall said, “Duncan Matheson and Donald Ross gathered numerous sheaves of golden grain for the Lord of the harvest. Duncan Matheson and Donald Ross were men of kindred spirits, and were splendid Gospel pioneers. Matheson spoke of his friend as ‘that Caledonian warrior.’” Matheson (1824-1869) was Ross’ mentor, and closest friend.

Matheson called him “the walking Shorter Catechism” and would say, “I have given you the stories; he will give you the doctrine. His name is Donald Ross.”

Ross always spoke of him as “dear Duncan Matheson.” They were both Presbyterians, and Matheson sympathized with Ross’ grief over the clergymen. But until his death in 1869, he advised Ross to endure the Free Church denomination. Ross said, “As a rule, we could get the people of the coast to hear us, but this aroused the jealousy of the clergy, to a fearful extent in

some cases. Then their complaints poured into headquarters of the sayings and doings of the missionaries in their parishes and districts.” As long as drunkards were reformed and church membership increased, Ross’ society was a true “auxiliary of the church.”

But Ross was not content to only warn the disreputable. He wrote, “Gradually it became our settled conviction that the clergy were the greatest hindrances in the country to the people’s salvation. This staggered us, and we often asked ourselves—‘Can this be they that Christ ordered?’ Another thing was made plain to us then, that is, that nearly all the church members in the Established Church were absolutely unconverted, and that only a sprinkling of the Free Church people were born again.

We were convinced that something was radically wrong with the churches. For ourselves we were beginning to think over the question whether it was our duty to have no more fellowship with that which was simply an agency for the devil to deceive souls. This gradually ripened into positive conviction and led to the first steps on the way to a complete separation.”

As Ross searched his Bible, he decided to end his service in the North East Coast Mission. In 1870, he started the Northern Evangelistic Association. Some evangelists joined him, but soon afterwards that society dissolved, and Ross ceased being connected with any society or denomination. This was a frightening step for a husband and

father. He knew it might bring privation and loneliness. But the thing he feared more than the frown of his peers was the frown of God. Was he a clean vessel? He felt sure that if he walked with God, “there would be porridge in the bowl.” These situations helped him see that God does not measure out His grace in ounces and small measures. “No, no,” Ross said, “God is a great God, and must act like Himself in all the greatness of His character.”

During the summer of 1870, Ross studied baptism. “What about baptism?” he asked himself. “If you saw it in the Word of God, would you be willing to obey?” Ross had been a proponent of infant sprinkling. All his thirteen children were “christened.” But now his Bible reading did not back up his opinion. And so it was that, not long afterwards, Ross was baptized in the River Dee at five o’clock on a Saturday morning, at the Public Baths in Crooked Lane, Aberdeen. His obedience influenced many others, and the baths were used to baptize large numbers of believers for many Lord’s Days following. That summer many of Ross’ religious prejudices were overturned.

I NEED THE HOLY GHOST FOR MY WORK...IF YOU CANNOT PREACH IN THE HOLY GHOST, YOU SHOULD PUT A PADLOCK ON YOUR LIPS, AND KEEP THE KEY IN YOUR POCKET.

At this time, a Mr. McIntosh, a licensed minister in the Free Church, was commissioned to warn the people about this heretical movement. A booklet, *The New Prophets*, was published and widely circulated. The newspapers echoed the misrepresentations in the booklet, and the villages around Aberdeenshire received such slanderous reports that the evangelists needed next to no advertising for their meetings. Ross and his co-workers and converts were gradually "squeezed out."

In 1871, he started a monthly paper, the *Northern Evangelist and Intelligencer*, afterwards called the *Northern Witness*. After 1888, it became *The Witness*, and had a worldwide circulation of 30,000 monthly. In August of 1871, he was invited to the shipbuilding town of Jarrow to "sound an alarm."

There he met James McGregor, an upstanding churchgoer who had for five years been "troubled about his soul." Ross listened at length while McGregor discussed his many merits. Then interrupted, "James, if that is all you have, you may consider yourself on the road to hell." James was the first one to be saved that fall.

By November of 1871, "the table of the Lord was spread in the simplicity of early times." James Campbell joined the meeting at that time. "It was a beautiful sight to us indeed. We had never heard of such a meeting until we saw it with our own eyes." Several New Testament styled gatherings sprang up. Ross had his mandate: Preach the gospel, baptize, and see the saints gathered into assemblies. Ross did not realize the reaction these new steps would bring. Under pressure, Ross moved his family to Edinburgh, where "the work was carried on amidst much to discourage."

In 1876, he visited the United States. He often said the Lord never got anything out of him except by squeezing. God squeezed him into repentance, squeezed him into going into the Lord's work among the coal miners, squeezed him out of the Free Church, and now squeezed him out of Scotland into America. Upon his arrival, Ross evangelized in Boston, New York and in country districts in Canada. In 1879, he moved his family to Chicago. There he and three other men began to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread in a tent, also used for evangelistic purposes. That assembly grew so that several others in the Chicago area hived off from it.

Caleb Jason Baker worked with Ross in planning the first Chicago area Bible conference with Ross. Baker cautioned Ross about the expense of the conference, but Ross was undaunted. Baker described Ross' reaction: "'Oh,' he said, 'do it for God, man; do it for God.' 'Do you mean,' I said, 'that you would not charge anything?' 'That is just what I mean,' he replied. 'But,' I said, 'This would cost about \$200 for the four days.' His reply was,

'I never knew anything undertaken for God in God's way, but He would look after the expense. Invite everyone to come; let there be the regular collection at the breaking of bread, and let each give as the Lord may lead.' This was somewhat startling to me, and I said I would have to pray and think more about it before I could decide. I did pray, and it seemed to me that it would be honoring to God, and a great blessing to the poor of the flock...the expenses were \$199, but the collection was \$204. Since then, all, or nearly all, of the numerous conferences on this western continent have been run on this plan, and always with the most satisfactory results."

While in Chicago, Ross started a tract depot in his own house, keeping a stock of tracts, Bibles, and books for Christians. For some twenty years he issued the monthly magazine, *Our Record*, and for a number of years edited a gospel paper.

In 1887, he visited California with James Goodfellow to labor in San Francisco and Oakland in tent meetings and home visitation. By the end of that summer, fifteen were baptized and an assembly of thirty begun. That October they held their first Annual Bible Conference. Donald Munro often spoke at that conference, and during one visit had a direct hand in leading to Christ a teenager named Henry Allan Ironside.

In 1894, Ross made Kansas City his base. From there his gospel campaigns ranged in all directions. He wrote, edited periodicals, and preached there until 1901 when he returned to Chicago, to be with his son C. W. Ross.

Alexander Marshall described Ross "as essentially a gospel preacher. He was more than a preacher and an exhorter. He was a laborer, and he toiled for the perishing; at fairs and races, in tents and halls, in barns and chapels, in music halls and theaters, in cottages and in the open air, he sounded out the wondrous story." Ross was fearless. He led by example. With his co-workers, Campbell, Gill, Marshall, Munro, and Smith, they saw about 400 assemblies established in the US and Canada.

Ross moved to Savannah, GA, shortly before he was promoted to higher service on February, 13, 1903. Near the end, he said: "I will be eighty on the 11th February, and if I had other eighty before me I would spend them in this gospel of God's grace. There is no other work of such importance in the whole world. All other investments amount to nothing compared with this."

MATERIALS FOR THIS ARTICLE TAKEN FROM

Hy. Pickering, *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, Loizeaux
C. W. Ross editor, *Donald Ross*, Gospel Tract Publ.
J. Ritchie editor, *Donald Munro*, GTP
J. Ritchie editor, *James Campbell*, GTP

DO YOU HAVE A SWEET TOOTH?

And none of it's fattening!

*Not a sound invades the stillness,
Not a form invades the scene,
Save the voice of my Belovéd,
And the Person of my King.*

*And within those heavenly places,
Calmly hushed in sweet repose,
There I drink, with joy absorbing,
All the love Thou wouldst disclose.*

*Wrapt in deep adoring silence,
Jesus, Lord, I dare not move,
Lest I lose the smallest saying
Meant to catch the ear of love.*

*Rest, then, O my soul, contented:
Thou hast reached thy happy place
In the bosom of thy Saviour,
Gazing up in His dear face.*

**My meditation of Him shall be
sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.**
Psalm 104:34



**How sweet are Thy words
unto my taste! yea, sweeter
than honey to my mouth!**
Psalm 119:103

*In the secret of His presence
I am kept from strife of tongues;
His pavilion is around me,
And within are ceaseless songs!
Stormy winds, His words fulfilling,
Beat without, but cannot harm,
For the Master's voice is stilling
Storm and tempest to a calm.*

*In the secret of His presence
Is a sweet, unbroken rest;
Pleasures, joys, in glorious fullness,
Making earth like Eden blest;
So my peace grows deep and deeper,
Widening as it nears the sea
For my Saviour is my keeper,
Keeping mine and keeping me!*

—Henry Burton

Charles Spurgeon told of a friend who was invited by a farmer acquaintance to come and collect a bushel of apples. The friend demurred. When pressed as to his refusal, the man confessed he had been riding by the orchard recently and had climbed the fence to take a few apples, knowing the farmer wouldn't mind. They were, he said, the sourest apples he had ever tasted.

The farmer roared with laughter. He had gone many miles, he said, to find such sour apples. He put two rows along the fence to keep thieves out. "Go in deeper," he said, "where the sweet ones are."

You'll have to go in deeper to find sweetness. The Lord has put some hard sayings and rules around His orchard too, to keep the hypocrites out.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

2 Corinthians 2:14-15

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. Prov. 16:24

*If any word of mine may make a life the brighter,
If any song of mine may make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak the word, and take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale to set the echoes ringing.
If any little love of mine may make a life the sweeter,
If any little care of mine may make another life completer,
If any word of mine may ease the burden of another,
God give me love and care and strength
to help my toiling brother.*

Romance, a rent lion & a riddle

The honey is sweet, Samson, but don't touch that carcass!

W. ROSS RAINEY

The history of Samson is one of sin and sadness, folly and failure. Yet, in spite of this, we do well to remember his noble qualities. He was a man of faith (Heb. 11:32). He delivered Israel from the Philistines and ruled as a judge in Israel for 20 years. Furthermore, he was a man of tremendous courage and of believing prayer (Jud. 16:28). Finally, he was a Nazarite forever, pledged to touch no wine, no razor was to touch his head, and he was not to touch any dead body.

“The unfolding of his downfall is no doubt recorded to warn us against the beginnings of disobedience and sin. It seems to say, ‘See how the mighty are fallen!’ Sin is merciless. Samson is like a man setting fire to his own house; the fire stays not until only a blackened ruin remains” (George Goodman).

James Smith has commented: “The fuller the cup the easier is it to spill the contents. The higher the spiritual privilege the more need for lowliness of walk before God. The stronger we are the greater the temptation to trust in our strength. The more frequently the Spirit of God moves us the more powerfully will the world and the flesh oppose us. The life of Samson alternates with light and shade. A Nazarite who seemed to be partially unconscious of the sacredness of his life, a fatal flaw in his character as a servant in the work of God.”

A ROMANCE (14:1-4, 7, 10, 11) THE DISOBEDIENCE OF SAMSON

Under the law Samson was forbidden to marry a Philistine woman. In fact, of seven pagan nations it is written: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them” (Deut. 7:3). Samson indeed went “down to Timnath” (Jud. 14:1) and wilfully sinned against the Lord and his godly parents.

If we really don't want to take good advice we should not seek it, especially of God, though it is to Samson's credit that he told his parents of his love affair and sought their help. Would that more sons and daughters did the same today! Nevertheless, Samson rebelled at the remon-



strances of his parents, insisting, “Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well” (Jud. 14:3). Many a young man has defiantly pursued a similar course because of “a pretty face,” all to his soul's undoing and the raising up of an ungodly seed. True, evil can be overruled by good (Jud. 14:4, the “he” probably refers to God), but

this is no reason to flagrantly set aside and disobey God's Word. Sooner or later the believer will suffer the consequences of his willful disobedience. It is evident that Samson did not like the advice of his parents because he was not walking with them (Jud. 14:6, 9). No one likes to have his will crossed.

Actually, God could only “begin to deliver Israel” (Jud. 13:5) by Samson because Samson never completely fulfilled his Nazarite vow. Other passions commenced to crowd upon Samson's life which took him away from God and away from his Nazarite vow. His love for a Philistine woman soon involved him in Philistine companionship (Jud. 14:10-11). Here was a Nazarite feasting and reveling with the enemies of God's people. This incident serves as an interesting sidelight into some of the heathen customs of the day—seven days of feasting with high pitched merriment and competitive games. Samson's affiliation soon led to trouble. The world will not tolerate a believer for long, and such will soon be evident if he is a real believer.

A RENT LION (14:5-6, 8-9) THE DEFILEMENT OF SAMSON

Already out of the Lord's will by going to Timnath to take a Philistine wife, Samson was led still further out of God's will as a result of his encounter with a roaring young lion. His great feat of rending a young lion as he would a kid (Jud. 14:6) was only made possible because “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.” However, this occasion of victory became a snare to Samson (as victories can often become). Returning to

take his Philistine bride, he turned aside to see the dead lion. He took note of a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass, and by eating the honey he broke his Nazarite vow, becoming defiled by his contact with a dead body. That Samson was of a thoughtful disposition is reflected by the fact that he took some of the honey to his parents.

What should we learn from Samson's mistakes? Simply this, Satan attacks through open conflict as well as subtle camouflage; from before as well as behind. The latter is always the most dangerous. Samson handled the open combat well, but the subtle camouflage of Satan in the person of a Philistine beauty was the first fly in the ointment and the beginning of his downfall.

Only One has conquered the onslaught of the Devil and broken his Power—namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only in Him do we have power and victory (1 Cor. 15:57).

Both of Samson's 'honeys' resulted in his being hurt!

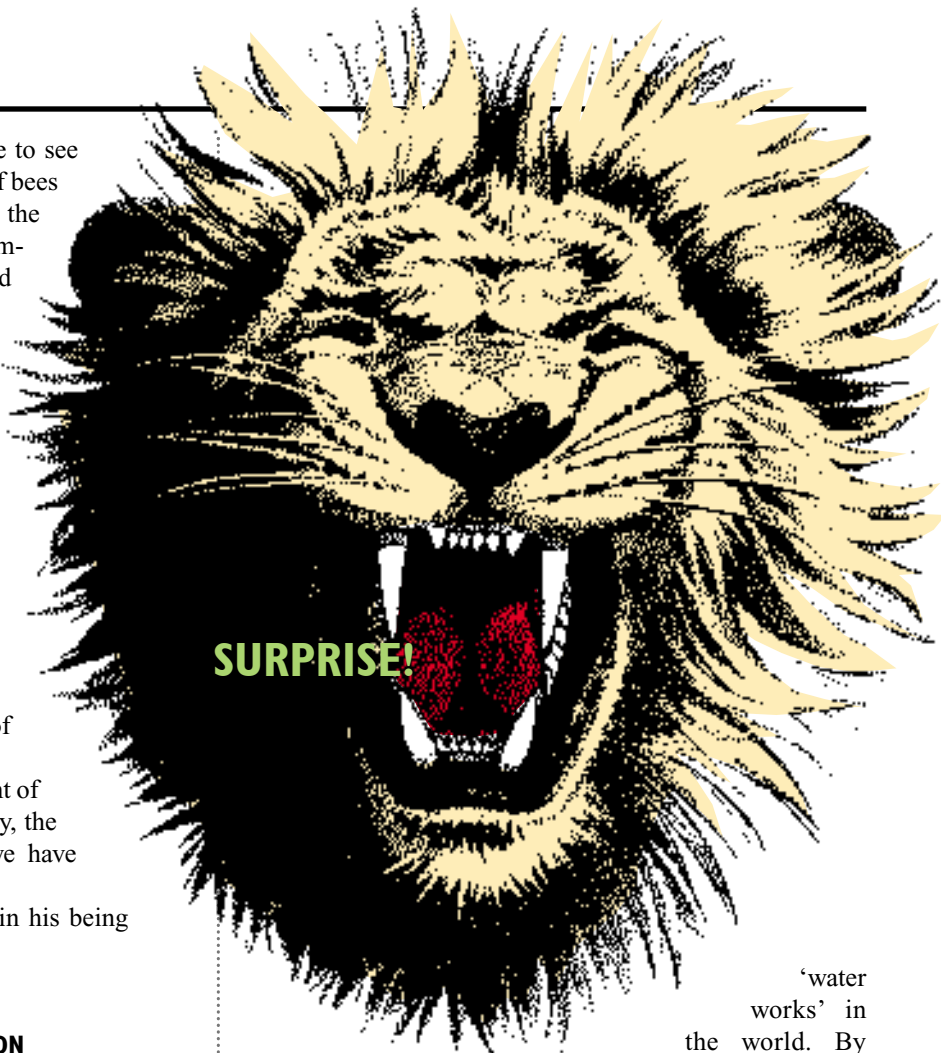
**A RIDDLE (14:12-20)
THE DECEIVING OF SAMSON**

Riddles are an ancient institution. The Queen of Sheba pronounced "hard questions" to the wise King Solomon to test his wisdom (1 Ki. 10:1). The same word occurs again in Proverbs 1:6 where it is translated "dark sayings." The Greek equivalent, "enigma," is translated "darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). The Lord Jesus Christ is the only answer to the secrets of life, and apart from Him life is indeed a riddle.

Samson put forth a riddle that completely stumped the men of the city. What is sweeter than honey? The psalmist found the answer (Psalm 119:103). What is stronger than a lion? The Apostle Paul knew the answer (Phil. 4:13). Oh, that we knew more of the sweetness of God's Word and of His power resting on our lives!

Samson's riddle has often been spiritualized. The eater suggests the roaring lion, Satan, the believer's archenemy (1 Pet. 5:8). By Christ's triumph over him in death, our victorious Captain and Redeemer has gained for us the sweetness (honey) of salvation and life. From the eater has come forth meat (see Rom. 5:20).


Samson soon learned the folly of having married a heathen wife. A woman's tears are the most powerful



'water works' in the world. By her feigned love and excessive weeping (he had to be a strong man to stick things out almost seven full days), coupled with the threats of the men of the city, she gained the answer to Samson's riddle. Immediately she betrayed his secret, soon left him, and ultimately was burned because of her folly (Jud. 15:6).

In order to carry out the condition pertaining to the solving of his riddle, Samson had to go and violently take the required spoil. It was only when the deceived and disillusioned Samson broke with the Philistines that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him," enabling him to accomplish his violent conquest.

Samson let himself be guided by what "pleased" him, but this must not be our motive of action. Christ has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). He "pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3), having said of God the Father, "I do always those things that please Him" (Jn. 8:29).

Although Samson did not take his parents' advice, he nevertheless manifested his love and respect for them, for midst his rage he returned "to his father's house" (Jud. 14:19). How often this proves true (see Lk. 15:12-24) 

Christ-centered ministry

It isn't popular. But is it practical?

JAMES MARTIN

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

We live in a day when Christ-centered ministry is viewed as boring or impractical. (Actually, we suspect that many people who say the latter mean the former but don't wish to say so.)

Like the children of Israel before us, we long for the tastes of Egypt. And so, today, many Christians expect that the speakers they hear or the magazines they read will provide them with the entertainment, psychology, and self-esteem they crave, with just enough of the Bible thrown in to ease the religious conscience. Serious Bible teaching and preaching of any kind, but particularly that about Christ, is unpopular. In fact, the time HAS come when "they will not endure sound doctrine."

Some of us may have been distracted from seeking Christ-centered ministry and instead have pursued the more popular trends of the day. Or perhaps some of us who have opportunity to speak or write have become discouraged by the constant opposition that Christ-centered ministry sometimes faces and have sought to offer a more palatable diet. In either case, it is hoped that the following thoughts might turn our hearts and minds away from the folly of the crowd and upward to the bright and morning Star.

What are some of the reasons that show us Christ-centered ministry is important?

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY IS BIBLICAL

We read that "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Whether in public or in private, whether to the saved or to the lost, Christ was the sole subject of the ministry of the New Testament church. They had one glorious topic that was enough to satisfy both sinner and

saint, and they refused to be distracted from it.

A LACK OF GOOD DOCTRINE ABOUT CHRIST WILL LEAD TO BAD DOCTRINE ABOUT CHRIST

It is sometimes assumed that as long as nothing bad is taught, we're safe. But 2 Timothy 4:2-4 warns us of a slippery slope to doctrinal destruction that starts with, not bad doctrine, but simply a desire not to hear sound, serious doctrine. Once sound doctrine is avoided, we are on a path through entertaining ministry to false doctrine. It's not enough to refrain from teaching bad doctrine about Christ. If we ignore sound, complete doctrine about Him for long enough, we will end up with bad doctrine. Refrain, for example, from teaching the truth that it is impossible for Christ to sin and you can be sure that the enemy will take the opportunity to teach that He could have sinned.

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY CONVICTS US OF SIN

Being brought face to face with the Light exposes our sin. It is no coincidence that the Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would testify of Him (Jn. 15:26) but then goes on to say that the Holy Spirit would "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn. 16:8). When Peter was confronted with Christ, he was brought to his knees, crying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk. 5:8). In order to show the lost their need of the Saviour or to expose sin in our own lives, we need Christ-centered ministry.

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY IS THE ONLY TRUE PRACTICAL MINISTRY

As we consider the sin in our own lives, we probably realize that the vast majority of it is wilful sin. When we are tempted to lie, do we ever think to ourselves, "I don't know if I should lie or not. If only I'd had some practical ministry about whether or not lying is bad." Generally we know full well what we should or shouldn't do, but we lack the power to obey. What we need, then, is not so much teaching about what is a sin and what isn't, but ministry that will change us internally. Once again, the

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY

answer is Christ. Second Corinthians 3:18 teaches us that as we “with open face” behold “as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” we are “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” As we see Christ, we become more like Him. In fact this is the ultimate hope of every Christian: “we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2). Ministry divorced from Christ may tell us what to do, but Christ-centered ministry is the only truly practical ministry because it is the only ministry that changes us to be like Him.

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY ADDRESSES THE REAL ISSUES OF LIFE AND ETERNITY

There are lots of Christians for whom the real struggle in life isn't interest rates or even the occasional temptation to lose their temper. These are Christians who are struggling to cope with overwhelming discouragement or grief. They need encouragement that isn't superficial—and only Christ can give it. If the issue is sustenance on the way home, He is the One who can “speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Isa. 50:4). If the issue is joy, He is the One Who can make our joy complete (Jn. 15:11). If the issue is peace, He offers us His peace, not as the world gives (Jn. 14:27). If we desire true satisfaction, what better place to find it than in the One who satisfies the infinite heart of God (Isa. 42:1)? All of the real issues of life and eternity are met in Christ.

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY PROMOTES LOVE FOR CHRIST AND THEREFORE CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Every aspect of the person and work of Christ is lovely. As we learn about Him, we can't help but love Him

In addition to the full-length portraits of Christ in the NT, here are some of the more obvious places to look:


1. The Messianic prophecies such as the Servant Songs of Isaiah, the Branch passages in Isa., Jer., Ezek., and Zech. There are hundreds of them!
2. The Messianic psalms are prophetic, of course, but they are often in the first person, helping us to see the inward passions of the Lord. Among others, see Psalm 2, 16, 22, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 89, 102, and 118.
3. There are types and shadows such as the Rock, the Lamb, the serpent on the pole, Jonah in the fish, the furniture of the tabernacle, and the Melchisedek priesthood.
4. Christophanies, pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus. Often He appears as “the Angel of the Lord.”

more. And love for Him will spur us on in our service for Him. If we love Him, we won't be able to help telling others about Him; if we love Him, we will long to read His letters to us; if we love Him, we will be eager to speak with Him in prayer; if we love Him, we will be happy to spend time with those whom He loves.

CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY PROMOTES WORSHIP

Like His followers before us, when we see Him we can't help but fall at His feet in worship (Mt. 28:9, 17). In the end, Christ-centered ministry is important not for what we receive from it, as splendid as that might be, but for what *He* receives from it. Every time He is presented to us, we are given a little taste of eternity, and we have the opportunity to worship Him and bring joy to the heart of the One who died for us that we might live with Him.

Christ-centered ministry ought to be the standard in every life, in every family, and in every assembly. We ought to ensure that Christ is the focal point of the literature we read and the ministry we seek. May we be encouraged to always give and receive ministry that exalts and centers on no less a topic than our glorious Lord.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” He said, “I will draw all men unto Me” (Jn. 12:32). 



LOOKING
FOR THE
KING?

The Book and a tract

The Bible helped him find the Lord. A tract helped him find an assembly.

MIKE BOWLES

By the grace and mercy of God, I became a Christian just before my twentieth birthday. Until then, most of the teaching about God and Jesus Christ that I had heard was from the Catholic churches I had attended near my home in Stamford, Connecticut. One very noteworthy event that occurred during the days when I went to Sunday School was that I received a New Testament as a gift from my teacher. This occurred one Sunday during my last year of Sunday School, when I was about age 13. My recollection is that everybody in the class received one, and that the teacher gave these gifts on his own initiative. The New Testaments were the Revised Standard Version. He told us to keep them in a place where we could see them, not hidden. He also said to open them once in a while and read on the page where you opened it.

In my later teen years, while in Atlanta for college, I attended a Catholic church often on Sundays. In the latter half of my sophomore year, I discontinued going to that church, and was not going to any church for many weeks or months. At that time I was planning to do some things that I now know are clearly wrong according to the Bible. I was also using inappropriate speech consistently and with lack of control when I was at the dormitory. When I looked into the mirror, I noticed that my eyes had a more evil appearance than before.

There were two people living in the dormitory room across from mine in the same suite; although they had usually acted like friends throughout the year, I heard them saying the word "Satan" occasionally in a loud voice, and I thought they were referring to me. This was usually accompanied by increased anger in me. I began to wonder some about the presence of evil spirit beings, but wondering was as far as it went at that time.

One clear night, I was walking on campus to my dor-

mitory room. I thought about how God was not letting certain things happen that I had wrongly intended to do. In a moment of anger, the thought to speak against God came to my mind, even the exact words. I immediately looked up toward the stars to speak and found I was not able to say what I had intended to say against God, and no words at all came out. I was surprised at this, and knew what I had intended to say was wrong. My mind focused on the New Testament that had been given to me years earlier. I knew I should read it when I returned to Connecticut for the summer break.

Soon after I returned to Connecticut in June 1987, I was ready to sit down and read from the New Testament. Other than the fact that I knew I should read it, I also had a desire to learn wisdom and teaching on morality. I went to my room, where the New Testament was in a drawer. I closed and locked the door. At this time, I had no knowledge at

all of concepts such as being "born again" or "saved." I decided to start reading from the beginning, Matthew 1:1. It is significant that Jesus Christ is mentioned in the first verse. Even while reading the genealogy, the tears began to flow from my eyes.

I continued slowly reading, verse after verse after verse. The tears kept coming. I noticed that a struggle was going on in my presence. I knew I should keep reading, but there was discomfort inside of me. It seemed that this was not God indicating to me to stop reading, because that would be contradictory. As I kept reading, I realized clearly that there were evil spirits in the world, but that the Scriptures had power from God. Almost all of what I read was a revelation for me; I had never read many consecutive verses before that day. I read several chapters in one sitting. I read about the Lord Jesus Christ forgiving the sins of someone; and saw Him as the One who could forgive my sins. I trusted in Him as my Saviour as I cried at my desk in Connecticut.

I know this probably happened while I was reading Matthew 9. I praise the Lord for saving me! One of the



first thoughts that came to my mind immediately after He saved me was simply the phrase “eternally grateful.” It is a phrase I had probably never heard, read, spoken, or thought before that day. On that day I knew that if I were to die, I would go to heaven. I also clearly discerned that God had given me a gift within; He had given me His Holy Spirit. The first thing I remember doing when I got up out of the chair was to look in the mirror. When I did, I noticed my eyes did not appear so evil as they had before I sat down to read. I also wanted to give thanks to God, which I did as I kneeled beside the bed.

In that summer of 1987, I continued reading the New Testament with great interest. I read all of it and the Psalms before returning to college for the fall quarter. Yet even becoming a Christian, it was not obvious to me that I should look for any particular type of church, so I continued going to Catholic churches from time to time.

In 1991, I moved to New Jersey where I worked my first job after finishing college. Around December 1992, I received an envelope in the mail containing two tracts. The envelope was not addressed to me by name, but to the resident or occupant of my apartment. One of these tracts invited me to attend meetings with an assembly of Christians who did not take a denominational name to themselves. The tract included their schedule of meetings, and provided their address in Long Branch.

The tract stated that they believed what the Bible teaches, and gave some specific doctrines believed and taught. I was pleased with what I read. About the time I

received the invitation, I was learning some Christian teaching from two sources that helped me to have confidence that I should begin meeting with Christians who relied only on the Word of God. One of these sources was a Christian who spoke at a Sunday gathering associated with a business-related conference. The other source was a radio station in New Jersey. At this point I had not been going to the local Catholic church for many months; I had found that I was more comfortable not going to that church, although I did not understand the reason.

On a Sunday in early 1993, I decided to go to the evening gospel meeting to which I had been invited, through the tract sent to me. I was glad to meet the Christians there, and was pleased with the teaching. There were not many people there, and nobody was close to my age, but I did not view these things as problems. As I continued to gather with them, my confidence only grew that they were devoted to God and His Word. After having been saved for about five-and-a-half years, I had finally found some Christians I knew I should continue to meet with. They knew that I came there because I had received the tract. I’m so glad they sent it!

Later in 1993, I applied for a job in Georgia and received an offer. Before moving, I obtained the addresses for two assemblies in the Macon area from one of the Christian brothers I had met in New Jersey. I am glad to be gathering with the Christians at Three Oaks Bible Chapel in Macon, Georgia.



The Lamp

*A lamp once hung in an ancient town
At the corner of a street
Where the wind was keen and the way was dark
And the rain would often beat;
And all night long its light would shine
To guide the travellers' feet.*

*The lamp was plain, and rough, and old
As it weathered the storm alone;
And it wasn't a thing of beauty
That a man would care to own;
But no one thought what the lantern was—
'Twas the light that within it shone.*

*That lamp is the frame of a human heart
Who seeks, though it's worn and tried,
To shine for God, and to show the Road
To souls who have gone aside!
You are the lantern—a thing of naught;
But Christ is the light inside.* —AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The “saviours”

Here’s a sampling of a book being issued this spring by Gospel Folio Press. It is a companion volume to “The Names on the Gates of Pearl.” Have a taste.

CHARLES H. WALLER

“According to Thy manifold mercies Thou gavest the saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies”
(Neh. 9:27).

We are sometimes inclined to ask, “Of what use is the book of Judges? What lessons is it intended to teach? To what period does it answer in the history of the salvation of man?”

The safest way to approach such questions is to go to the history itself, and inquire what the position of the Israelites was at this time. The judges all stand between Joshua and Samuel who is the forerunner of David the king. Joshua first established Israel in the land of promise. David was the true beginning of their kingdom after Saul was put away. Through him God gave them rest from all their enemies round about. Between Joshua and David, the history of Israel is the history of many a severe struggle; there were backslidings, and punishments, and deliverances. A hundred and eleven years in the time of the Judges may almost be blotted out of the record of Israel’s progress as the chosen race—years of oppression, and suffering, and servitude, under some one or other of the heathen nations that still remained in or near the land of Canaan.

During all this time, however, a certain progress was made towards the purpose that God had in view. Six or seven of the oppressors of Israel were so effectively put down that they were never able to make headway against the Israelites anymore. At the end of the book of Judges, deliverance has begun for Israel, even from the most inveterate enemy of all, the enemy whom God had left to be a thorn in His people’s side. It was said of Samson, the last of the saviours in the book of Judges, “He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Thus the period of the judges covers almost the whole interval between the foundation of the congregation of Israel in Canaan and the kingdom that was to come. It corresponds to the age of Church history, the time between Christ’s first and second coming. At His first coming He was like Joshua: “The Shepherd and stone of

Israel.” He gathered a flock together, and He laid the foundation on which His Church is rising higher and higher every day. At His second coming, He will set up His kingdom, and give us rest from every enemy that disturbs us now.

Meanwhile, we have the varied and eventful course of Church history, and a very mingled history it is. We are partly oppressed and partly victors. Our own sins and negligence and ignorance bring upon us many failures and calamities and defeats. We are often delivered into the hand of our enemies, as a chastisement for our faults; and then, when we “cry unto the Lord” in our trouble, He delivers us out of our distress. He sends us a Saviour. But as it was with Israel, so has it often been with the Church of Christ. “It came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers...they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way” (Jud. 2:19).

And so we go on, and yet, thanks be to God, progress is made, and His work continues; enemies are defeated and brought under, one by one, so that they do not rise again to oppress His Church and people as completely as they did before. The book of Judges tells us why believers are so sorely troubled with besetting sins (Jud. 2:20 to 3:4). Some troublesome enemies were left in the land because of Israel’s neglect. Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of some of their towns; neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites here; nor did Asher drive out those that were there; and the Amorites would dwell in the inheritance of the tribe of Dan. Israel would not fight in the first instance, therefore God left their enemies that they might feel the result. It is often much the same with a Christian’s besetting sin. He left it alone until it became too strong; God left it upon him as a chastisement for his neglect.

God also left some nations to prove Israel; and others to teach them how to war. And so our enemies are left, in order that by our struggles and conflicts we may give evidence whether the mind of Christ is in us or not. Our vigorous conflict with these enemies, or our passive submission to them, will prove our condition in the sight of God. Our battles with them will hone our skills in prayer and the use of the Spirit’s sword.

The Church of God has had many individual deliver-

THE "SAVIOURS"

ENEMIES	BONDAGE	JUDGES	PEACE
Mesopotamia	8 years	Othniel	40 years
Moabites, etc.	18 years	Ehud	80 years
Canaanites	20 years	Deborah & Barak	40 years
Midianites	7 years	Gideon	40 years
Israelites	3 years	Abimelech	45 years*
Amonites	18 years	Jephthah	31 years
Philistines	40 years	Samson	20 years
TOTALS	114 years		296 years

*under Tola and Jair

ers whom the Lord raised up as he did the judges; but it is not of man to find them or to bring them forth. The Israelites could not make their judges; the Lord raised them up. He gave them "saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies" (Neh. 9:27).

This name of *saviour* is of course the same which we apply continually to our Lord Jesus Christ; and the application of this title to the judges makes all of them in some point or other to be likenesses of Him. They were, in their ways of delivering Israel, so many lesser fore-runners of the Great Deliverer, Jesus Christ; and this is perfectly natural. In Jesus Christ is the well of salvation. Every other deliverer of God's people, before and after, stole some plan of deliverance from Him. No noble act was ever done by man for the deliverance of his fellow-creatures that has not a complete and glorious counterpart in the work of the Lord Jesus.

But in thus regarding the judges, we must look not so much at the personal character of the men as at the nature of their work. It is not always as individuals that they are like our Saviour, but as men raised up for a certain work. The question how far they were personally holy and Christ-like is another matter.

The first Judge, Othniel, is of the tribe of Judah. Was not the great Saviour to be of the same tribe? Where in all Israel could we find a better family to head the list? Little is said of Othniel. He was the younger brother of Caleb, who followed the God of Israel with all his heart. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel and went out to war, and his hand prevailed."

But the most striking details in the work of the judges are those which especially indicate a suffering Saviour; weak in those things that are accounted the glory and strength of man, but strong in the power of God.

The second of the judges is a left-handed man of Benjamin, the least of all the tribes. There is something strange about the left-handedness. Benjamin, who was born at the cost of his mother's life, was named by her, *Benoni*, "Son of my sorrow, as her soul was in departing,

for she died." It seemed to the ear of Jacob a name suggestive of the greatest sorrow of his life. He therefore changed the name to *Benjamin*, "Son of the right hand." Yet the best warriors of the tribe of Benjamin were left-handed until David was on the throne.

The first great Benjamite leader of whom we read was a left-handed man; and this very left-handedness was the means by which he was able to save. Ehud "made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length." Yes, "a sharp two-edged sword" was his weapon, "and he did gird it under his raiment, upon his right thigh." Thus he came into the presence of Israel's enemy, armed with his left-handed weapon, in a place where no one would think of looking for it, and, saying to the King of Moab, "I have a message from God unto thee," he delivered the sword into his body and was gone. A strange deliverance, and yet it was a pointed message from God. This was Ehud's part in the salvation of Israel; the rest was easy when his left-handed weapon had done its work. Is there no allusion here to Him who vanquished the tempter with the sharp two-edged sword, which is the word of the Father?

Of the next Judge, Shamgar, little is recorded; but what there is is very suggestive. "He slew of the Philistines 600 men with an ox goad." This time it was to be seen that "the Lord sayeth not with sword or spear, but the battle is His still." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they "are mighty through God." So Shamgar is passed over with this brief record, "He also delivered Israel." He also was a saviour, though little more than his name is written in the Book of Life.

After Shamgar we find still stronger indications that God's thoughts are not like those of man. The woman, and not the man, is first throughout the next deliverance. It is Deborah and Barak, not Barak and Deborah. The man says, "If thou (Deborah) wilt go with me." "I will go with thee," she answers; and the oppressor is slain by another woman, Jael, in a tent, with a hammer and a nail.

Then we find an intimation that this shall not be the last time that such a thing would come to pass. "So let all

thine enemies perish, O Lord" (Jud. 5:31). What is all this but a hint given beforehand how the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head? Yes, it was with the nail and the workman's hammer that our salvation

was actually wrought. The nail that pierced the feet of the Saviour pierced the serpent's head.

When we come to Jephthah and Samson, how clearly do we see it foreshadowed that the Saviour of Israel must

JOSHUA

- ① FINAL PREPARATIONS
On the Plains of Moab (ch. 1-2)
- ② THE CENTRAL CAMPAIGN
At Gilgal, Jericho, and Ai (ch. 3 to 8:29)
- ③ TIME OUT AT SHECHEM
The Covenant Renewed (ch. 8:30-35)
- ④ THE GIBEON CAMPAIGN
Defeating the Five Southern Kings (ch. 9-10)
- ⑤ THE WATERS OF MEROM CAMPAIGN
Defeating the Northern Confederacy (ch. 11)
- ⑥ THE LAND ALLOTTED
Possessing their Possession (ch. 12-22)
- ⑦ JOSHUA'S LAST CHARGE
The Covenant Repeated (ch. 23-24)

JUDGES

- ① Othniel, Caleb's nephew and son-in-law, defeats the Anakim and takes Hebron (1:9-15); defeats Chushan of Mesopotamia (3:7-11)
- ② Ehud, a left-handed Benjamite, slays Eglon the Moabite king at Jericho (3:12-30)
- ③ Shamgar kills 600 Philistines with an ox goad and so delivers Israel (3:31)
- ④ Deborah and Barak defeat the forces of Jabin under Sisera at Mount Tabor (4:1-5:31)
- ⑤ Gideon (Jerub-baal) defeats the Midianites at the Hill of Moreh with 300 men (6:1-8:35)
- ⑥ Abimelech, Gideon's son, an oppressor instead of a deliverer, is crowned king at Shechem (9:1-57)
- ⑦ Tola judges Israel 23 years from the Mountains of Ephraim (10:1-2)
- ⑧ Jair, with his 30 sons, judges for 22 years from Gilead (10:3-5)
- ⑨ Jephthah defeats the Amorites at Mizpah and is included in Hebrews 11 (11:1-12:7)
- ⑩ After Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, Samson wars against the Philistines until he dies, restored by a gracious God, at Gaza (13:1-16:31)

RUTH

- from Moab to Bethlehem
- from idols to Jehovah
- from hopelessness to redemption
- from widowhood to the Messianic line

die? Jephthah's family was absolutely extinguished by the victory that he won. He vowed a vow if the Lord would deliver the Ammonites to him. And when the victory was over, "his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter;" and she was the price of his victory, so that his name in Israel was extinguished. "He was cut off out of the land of the living;" he had not a representative in Israel left. The question "Who shall declare his generation?" might literally have been asked with regard to him.

But the likeness is even stronger when it comes to Samson, the last of the judges, who stands out from among the others in a remarkable way. His mother is a Nazarite when he is born, and he is a Nazarite to God from his birth. That is, he lives in the purest ceremonial holiness. Regarding outward and legal purity he is perfect; in that his strength lies. As long as he is a Nazarite² he is unconquerable. He only of all the judges of whom we have any history, does everything single-handed and alone. He never calls the armies of Israel together; he asks for no assistance; sometimes he is even hindered. What he does, he does himself, in his own unconquerable strength. "I looked, and there was none to help; I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own

arm brought salvation to me; and my fury, it upheld me" (Isa. 63:5).

The life of Samson ends in a scene which needs no interpreter. Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines. So he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein; so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." Whose doing was it to wind up the history of the saviours of Israel in such words as these? Is it not the true sum of salvation? The death of the Saviour of Israel was the ruin of the enemies of Israel, too. Nowhere was Satan confounded, so thoroughly overthrown, as he was by the cross of our Saviour Christ.

We may see in the work of the judges various illustrations of the method by which God saves His people. We may see many shadows of the work of the one Saviour, and how much it cost the Deliverer of Israel to do His work. We may see how the weapons of man are rejected, and the things which man despises are often the very instruments whereby the Lord will save. It is here as it is always, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:27, 29).

From *The Path to the City of Gold*, the Companion Volume to *The Names on the Gates of Pearl*

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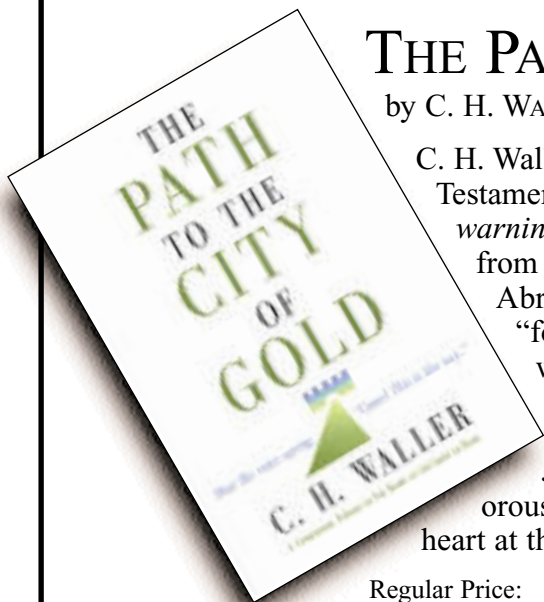
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THE HIDDEN YEARS OF CHRIST

“Sanctified imagination” has real dangers

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Lk. 2:52, NASB).

What we think of Christ is the most important thing that can be said about us. So said a preacher I once heard, and I believe that what he said is the absolute truth. Nothing can possibly matter more than knowing the Lord, and knowing Him as He is, not as we would like Him to be, nor as we may imagine Him to be. The Word of God takes great pains to give us particular information about our Lord’s characteristics, just so that we will not indulge in vague and irreverent speculation about His nature. In spite of this specificity, there are some aspects of the Lord’s nature, His humanity or His deity which are not fully explicated in Scripture. When we come upon such things, we must not speculate. There is an element of mystery in Christ—a point at which human minds must humbly admit their own incapacity, and be in awe before a greatness which even eternity can never exhaustively reveal.

You would think that this would be self-evident to Christians everywhere. Yet there are those who seem to believe that every mystery should be revealed by the penetration of human logic. Not fearing to go beyond the words of Scripture, they make confident assertions about things concerning which God Himself has said nothing to us. They speculate about the nature of the Lord’s humanity, or about the extent of His deity, or about the

order in the Godhead, or about other such sacred things. In many cases, these people mean well; they hope to open new and beautiful truths to our appreciation, or to show the sufficiency of Christ for every experience, or some such thing. But we should remember Uzzah, who put his hand to the ark, thinking to steady it, and was struck down by God for his irreverence. Being well-meaning does not mean that we can touch anything with impunity. If God cared so much for the ark, which was only a picture of His Son, what shall we say God thinks when we casually put a hand on the honor and reputation of the Son Himself? Let’s be careful!

Much unruly speculation has been generated by the verse in Luke 2:52. Little is said in Scripture about the childhood years of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the mind reels at the thought that God Incarnate could ever have been a child. What could it mean? What could He have been like? What could He have done? There is abundant fodder for guess-making in this. How could He in Whom all things consist increase in anything? Human minds race to form the picture of what these years could hide.

False gospels and atheistic teachers have supplied abundant pictures of this period. They would have him behaving as a spiritual upstart, or making clay birds for His own amusement. Such portraits are reckless and blasphemous. We must not dwell on such things. Alas, it is not just false teachers who have fallen to speculating about the Lord’s



by STEPHEN L. ANDERSON

hidden years.


Recently I read an article by a beloved and faithful brother, in which he guessed that the Lord experienced the frustrations of the carpenter shop. How the One who created the tree could be frustrated by a piece of its wood I do not know; nor do I know how He who knew all the secrets of men's hearts could have difficulty knowing how to make a simple article of furniture. But to this brother it was a great source of comfort to think that the Lord struggled with these things as we all do. Comforting or not, it was irreverent guesswork.

In fact, we find very little written in Scripture concerning the hidden years of Christ. I say little because it is not true to say that there is nothing. The Lord Himself made a very important statement about those years, one by which we should find all unruly speculation governed. It is found in Luke 2:49. This verse fits into the incident in the Temple, in which the Lord's earthly parents had lost Him and then found Him after a search of three days. In gently rebuking their fear and confusion, the Lord said, Did you not know that I had to be (lit.) in the things of My Father?

Let us think for a moment about what this rebuke implies. Perhaps an analogy will help. Suppose I borrow a sum of money from my brother, and that I agree to repay it a week later. Suppose that then he discovers that he has a sizable debt which is coming due on the same day upon which I agreed to repay him. Knowing that there is only one day in which to retrieve his money and

cancel his own debt, he becomes increasingly fretful as the week progresses. When I arrive at his house on the repayment date, I find him agitated and upset with me. Imagine that in my defense I offer the following: Did you not know that I would repay you?

What would have to be true, in order for me to successfully offer such a defense? Suppose I had many times before borrowed money and failed to repay him on time; would such a defense work for me then? What if had returned the money only fifty percent of the time? Would he not justly say to me, I thought that this would be one of the times when you were late. What if I had only failed him once or twice? Could my general pattern of consistency remove from his mind the memory of the few times I had proved unreliable? No, the only way in which my rebuke could carry perfect weight is if at all times, in all situations I had been faithful in respect to my obligations.

For this reason, on the testimony of our Lord Himself, I maintain that in all that He did during the hidden years of His childhood our Lord was doing the work of His Father in Heaven and being about His business. I do not know all that that means. I know only that whether in the carpenter's shop or in the marketplace, whether at home or traveling on the road, whether in glorious Jerusalem, in the busy streets of Nazareth or in the obscurity of Bethlehem, the Lord Jesus was at all times doing the will of His Father. Beyond that, let us be too reverent to speculate. Let us just marvel at Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. 

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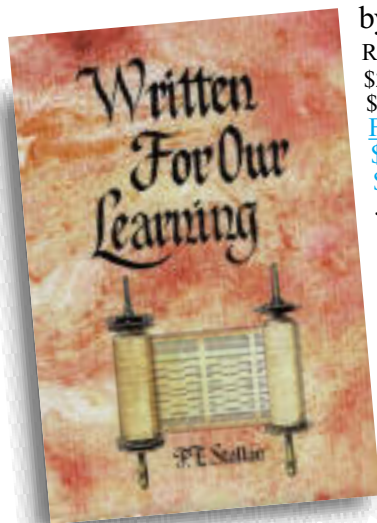
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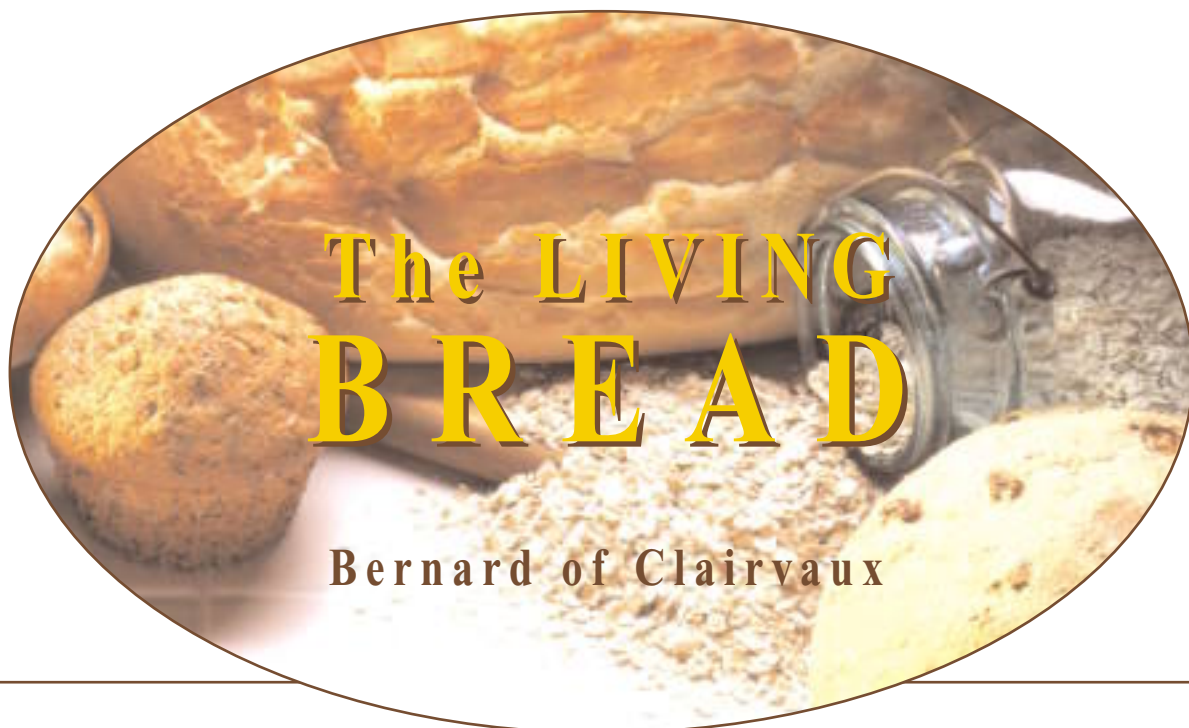
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*Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.*

*We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead,
And thirst, our souls from Thee to fill.*

*Thy truth unchanged has always stood;
Thou savest those who on Thee call;
To them that seek Thee, Thou art good,
To them that find Thee, All in all.*

*Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, for Thy care can hold us fast.*

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX (1091-1153), was born at Fountains, near Dijon, France. Weak of frame and unfit for military service, he was given an education with religious service in view. He died in his sixty-third year, after forty years spent in a cloistered life; he was the author of numerous poems, many of them occupied with God and the love relationship between the Lord and His people. Obviously over against that was his apparent devotion to a religious system which usurps the place of Christ as the only Saviour and Head of His Church. Even so, a day is coming, the darkest in human history (after Calvary, of course), when the Lord will address believers in Babylon itself, "Come out of her, My people."