

UPLOOK

OCTOBER 1991

Keep on Growing
Caught in the Middle
Harvest in Autumn Time





EDITORIAL

Harvest in Autumn Time

J. B. Nicholson, Jr.

In 2010, the first of the "baby boom" generation (those born between 1946 and 1961) will become senior citizens. The Western world braces itself for the coming old-age crisis. According to Joyce T. Berry, U. S. Commissioner on Aging, "Within the next 40 years, the number of older persons in the U. S. will more than double. By the year 2030, the population of the entire country will look like Florida's, with 28% of Americans over the age of 60 . . . and the number of people 85 and over will almost triple to eight million."

In fact, by the year 2015, it is estimated that the world population of the elderly will approach one billion — the size of China today! How will society cope? Health costs continue to spiral out of control. Western governments are awash in deficits. The pyramid will continue to invert as more and more retirees expect to be supported by less and less workers. No wonder men's hearts fail them for fear as they peer into the dark and foreboding unknown.

Meanwhile, research continues to look for the scientific fountain of youth. It is an ageless dream. Bernard Baruch wryly observed: "To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am." But pretending will never do. Scientists know that and are diligently seeking an answer to the problem. Yet "impressive medical advances of the past century have failed to provide the ultimate scientific objective, and a cure for aging remains elusive," writes *Maclean's* magazine.

"Despite the miracles of modern medicine," says Sharon Begley in *Newsweek*, "the ceiling on human life span for most people still hovers around the biblical threescore years and ten. Life expectancy has 'increased' over the years not because more people are living longer, but because fewer people are dying young."

Even if scientific wonders could find some way to keep the flower of life from fading as quickly, it is far simpler to add years to a man's life than adding life to a man's years. Very often, advancing years can bring unwanted physical and mental changes; loss of spouse or family members; reduction of income and significant activity; and often the loss of house, privacy, possessions, and

community. So what is a person to do?

The autumn of life should be harvest time for the believer. What good is it to become bitter and frustrated by the aging process? This will do nothing but turn sour what could be life's sweetest fruit. These days should be, "The last of life, for which the first was made" as Browning wrote.

There are others who would like to pretend that they have managed to elude the grasp of encroaching time. They talk like they are 40, act like they are 30, and dress like they are 20. The danger is that they will fritter away their most valuable days and miss the harvest entirely. Attempting to be younger than their years, they cannot fool time, and end up settling merely for immaturity.

Far better those who look life bravely in the eye and say with an unnamed Quaker of 82 years: "I'm going to live till I die . . . and then I'm going to live forever." This living on, this running right to the finish line, is the spirit of Paul's words: "Though the outward man perisheth, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." How invigorating it is to meet saints well advanced in years whose spirits are still fresh, whose vision is keen, and whose affections are tender — bearing fruit in old age (Psalm 92:14).

And why not? John Wesley preached until his homecall at 88. Titian painted his greatest masterpiece at 85. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote some of his most brilliant judicial decisions at 90. Some of Edison's most productive years were between 70 and 80. And Gladstone was Prime Minister of Britain at 82.

When John Quincy Adams was 80, a friend asked him how he was doing. "John Quincy Adams himself is very well, thank you," he replied, "but the house he lives in is sadly dilapidated. The building trembles with every wind, and I think that John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it before long. But he himself is very well."

Autumn time is harvest time. So what if you're 102. Through the power of prayer, the ministry of encouragement, and the grace of an ageless God, this could be one of the most wonderful and productive years of your life!

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Rethinking the Head Covering

David Dunlap

The role of the woman in the local church is no longer a neutral issue. Many are questioning the traditional views held by the Christian Church. Others, influenced by modern trends within society, are espousing radical changes in church order. One much discussed issue is the head covering teaching for the woman. Sincere Christians who are grappling with the current issues are beginning to ask serious questions. Many are searching the Bible for satisfying answers. It has long been believed that the head covering issue was a minor detail unworthy of serious consideration. Today this trend is being reversed. Major journal articles, detailed books, and pamphlets discussing this issue have been published. Though hotly debated among Church leaders and seminary professors, some evangelical scholars are taking a fresh new look at 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and are coming to some surprising conclusions. This may arouse others to re-examine this issue.

Many scholars are beginning to argue convincingly that the head covering should be practiced in the church today. Dr. Bruce Waltke, professor of the Old Testament at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, is representative of those who argue for the importance of clearer teaching on this subject. He writes, "If the Church would include 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in their readings at the Lord's Supper, they would be guarded against some extreme positions and theological errors. Unfortunately this has not been the case, and as a result many believers within the church are abandoning Paul's clear teaching on the subject."¹ Mary Kasian, the author of *Women, Creation and the Fall*, adds her voice to those who call for clarity when she writes, "Since the seventies, a myriad of books and articles have been published on the biblical role of women. Yet much confusion remains. I have found the bulk of writings on the biblical role of the women irresponsible in their handling of the Bible."²

Able and well-known theologians are joining their voices, urging for a more biblical position concerning the headship symbol in the church.

Churches who practice head covering have long been stigmatized as sterile and lifeless. Leading evangelicals have exploded the belief that the head covering practice is a hindrance to numerical church growth. There are many churches in North America practicing the use of the head covering which are experiencing marked numerical growth. One such is the Calvary Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Calvary Baptist Church has over five hundred active believers in fellowship and is noted to be one of the leaders in evangelism in the Edmonton area. The leadership of this church has definite convictions concerning the headship symbol. The minister, Gordon David Thomas, states, "Woman and man are dependent on each other, and all are dependent on God. They are equal in spiritual privileges. However, men and women are to respect and adhere to the created hierarchical order. The head covering is a symbol of this order."³ The widespread belief that the head covering is a hindrance to spiritual growth does not seem to be borne out in the experience of numerous churches in North America.

The clear exposition on the head covering passage has been clouded by misinterpretations of the Corinthian culture. It has often been asserted that the head covering for women should be discarded for it was merely a social custom limited to that specific time. This view has been thoroughly re-examined and leading scholars suggest that this view contains serious flaws. R. C. Sproul, well-known author and professor at the Reformed Seminary, in Jackson, Mississippi, writes, "Some very subtle means of relativizing the text occur when we read into the text cultural considerations that ought not be there. For example, with the hair covering issue in Corinth, numerous commentators on the epistle point out that the local sign of the prostitute in Corinth was an uncovered head. Therefore, the argument runs, the reason why Paul wanted women to cover their heads was to avoid a scandalous appearance of Christian women. What is wrong with this kind of speculation? We are not only putting words into Paul's



CURRENT CONCERNS

mouth, but ignoring words that are there. Paul provides a rationale which is based on an appeal to creation, not the custom of Corinthian harlots. We must be careful not to let our zeal for knowledge of the culture obscure what is actually said. To subordinate Paul's stated reason to our speculatively conceived reason is to slander the apostle and turn exegesis into eisegesis."⁴ In much the same vein, Dr. H. Wayne House, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and chairman of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, further explains, "Paul bases his view of the relationships between a man and a woman in 1 Corinthians 11 upon theological considerations from the creation narratives. He is appealing, not to social custom, but to creation. Paul did not base his teaching on mere opinion or rabbinic bias. He clearly founded his teaching on the creation order."⁵ Leaders in the church are now abandoning the once accepted idea that 1 Corinthians 11 was limited to their culture. Today many are arguing for a recovery of this New Testament truth.

The criticism that the head covering was irrelevant to modern day society was once widely accepted. Today this charge has been ably refuted. Sound biblical and cultural arguments have been brought forth in its defense. Many leaders have taken this issue one step further. A growing number are now challenging the church to reintroduce the use of the head covering symbol once again in the local church. They urge us to consider that there are eternal and enduring issues at risk. The glory of God and the display of God's divine order are two crucial issues that are in jeopardy. Bruce Waltke sets forth the situation, "A woman in an assembly of believers should cover her head as a symbol of her submission to the absolute will of God who ordered His universe according to His own good pleasure. The symbol must be present or the reality and its truth may be lost. Thus the fact with which God chose to reveal Himself to the world is one that the world desperately needs to see, namely, a man who displays the image and glory of God through Christ, and a woman who, though equal to man, submits to him. It would be well for Christian women to wear head coverings at church meetings as a symbol of an abiding theological truth."⁶ An assembly of believers is a setting in which God's glory is to



be paramount. When a woman in obedience veils her hair, she glorifies God. Charles Ryrie, the author of the notes in *The Ryrie Study Bible* and former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, explains concerning a woman's role in worship, "A woman must have her head covered at worship, since that is the proper way for her to recognize the divine order of creation."⁷ It is now evident

that this issue is no longer a secondary issue or a mere cosmetic detail, but one that lies at the heart of New Testament teaching. Many are calling the Church to re-examination.

The clarion call has gone forth from leading seminary professors, lecturers, and Church leaders. This once-forgotten teaching has received an injection of new life. The challenge to re-examine the teaching of 1 Corinthians 11 is timely and fitting. God's divine order and His glory in the Church are at issue. Mary Kassian explains regarding the weighty purpose of the head covering, "The discarding of this symbol went far beyond mere cosmetic adjustment. It was an affront to the order God had instituted at creation."⁸ Many in heartfelt obedience are submitting to God's Word. This example is challenging others to reconsider this once-neglected principle. It is significant that those who are calling for re-examination are from varied denominational backgrounds. These church affiliations did not emphasize the woman's unique role in the church. These convictions from evangelical leaders who are taking a stand were borne out of an earnest study of the Scriptures under the leading of the Holy Spirit. In our day of indecision and vacillation, may their example spur the Church of God toward genuine convictions in the truths of His Word.

¹ Bruce K. Waltke, *1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation*, Bibliotheca Sacra 135 (1978), p. 46

² Mary A. Kassian, *Women, Creation and the Fall* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), p. 1

³ David Gordon Thomas, *A Sign of Respect in Church Worship*, Sermon, March 13, 1983, Calvary Baptist Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

⁴ R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), p. 110

⁵ H. Wayne House, *The Role of Women in Ministry Today* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), p. 121

⁶ Waltke, *1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation*, p. 57

⁷ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Role of the Woman in the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 74

⁸ Kassian, *Women, Creation and the Fall*, p. 94

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Front Lines

TRANSLATION WORK IN SPAIN

Brother William MacDonald's *Believer's Bible Commentary* is to be translated into Spanish and printed this fall. It would be good for the saints to uphold brother Santiago Escuvain who is doing the translating.

LITERATURE WORK IN QUEBEC

Jean-Paul Berney writes:

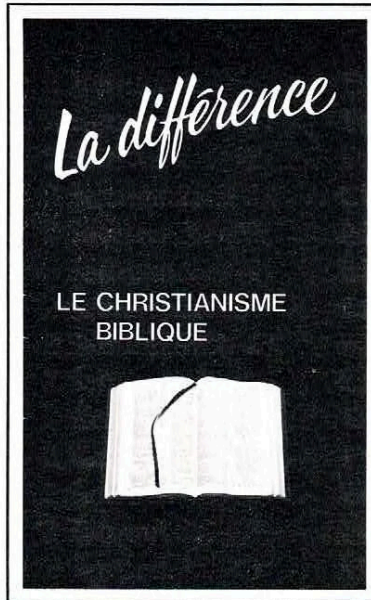
We moved our Christian bookstore at the end of June to larger premises in the same shopping center, in metropolitan Quebec City. We are grateful we have been able to obtain 50% more space at a reasonable price.

A Christian bookstore in Quebec is not a lucrative business but a rewarding ministry. In addition to supplying good books to believers from various backgrounds, almost every day we have opportunities to present the Gospel to people who would not go to a Gospel meeting.

A young businessman, who realized he was not ready to meet God when we had an earthquake about two years ago, visited the store almost every week for a year to ask questions and get literature. He and his wife are now saved and in the assembly fellowship. A student stopped and asked if we sell crosses to wear on the neck. After a short conversation, he accepted a New Testament and tracts. He came to the Gospel meetings and was saved shortly after. He was baptized and is now faithful to all meetings. He brought to the assembly another teenager who was saved recently and will be baptized in the near future. All these people are from Catholic backgrounds.

In May, we published a booklet

in French showing the main differences between the Roman Catholic teaching and biblical Christianity.



Although many Quebecers are no longer practicing their religion, this publication seems to be meeting a real need. Over two thousand copies have been distributed within a short time. Another booklet, A Sketch of Church History, is at the printers and several manuscripts are in preparation.

Praise the Lord for these encouragements and please pray for continued blessing on the literature ministry in Quebec.

EMMAUS ROAD IN EASTERN EUROPE

Brother Charles Fizer was in Europe recently to gather information for the establishment of the Emmaus work in Eastern Europe. Hungary and Romania are the two most open possibilities now. Five courses are translated into Hungarian, but there is need for an office to be estab-

lished. They would also like an office in Brasov, Romania, and future courses will be translated there, D.V.

The Lord also enabled brother Charles to make arrangements for the printing of six Emmaus courses in the Russian language with the first distribution of courses from Kiev.

These are opportunities unknown in the history of the Correspondence School. When so much that is false is sweeping into the moral vacuum in Eastern Europe, pray for the spread of the Light.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS

The work in Nazareth gives cause to praise the Lord. Although most people have already forgotten God's protective care during the Gulf War, there are some who show an interest in spiritual things. This is especially true of the Soviet immigrants. At the Book Center, brother George Khalil reports that the Russian Bible is their bestseller. He writes:

It has also been amazing to see how the Lord has provided us with books in Russian from all over the world without us even asking. The new immigrants are more open to Christianity than local Israelis . . . They tell their friends of the selection that we have and so more come in the next day! In Nazareth Illit (Upper Nazareth) there are over 9500 new Russian immigrants — one of the highest rates in the country.

They are hoping to extend the shop as the Lord provides.

There is also encouragement on two fronts in the correspondence course ministry. The Ara-

FRONT LINES

bic courses are now printed in Egypt where an open door has developed. About two-thirds of the print run are left for distribution there.

As well, they are now being offered to schools to use in their religious education curriculum. Please pray that the Arab School Education Inspector will give his approval for their use.

The Book Center's address is:
P. O. Box 240
Nazareth 16121, Israel

UNBREAKABLE CHINA

In spite of the oppression of believers in mainland China, the Church is bowed but unbroken by the persecution.

Recently, brother John Short, with fellow laborers Silas Soman and Jack Fung Sun-Wah, visited three provinces. They found the poverty quite distressing. Brother Short writes:

Sichuan, with its capital Chengdu, has an enormous labor problem with millions of unemployed. In Yunnan, Guizhou and Kunming, which borders Burma and Tibet, despite the poverty, deprivation and gross mismanagement, we found shining lights, trophies of the gospel of God's grace. There is a real interest and hunger amid the minority peoples in these areas to hear the Gospel. We ourselves were greatly encouraged to see the response to the printed page and hear how much the believers enjoyed receiving our literature in their isolation.

One dear brother in Christ, with his wife ill in hospital, insisted we go to his home for breakfast to share the bounty of the Lord with him! We had an outstanding time in the Scriptures and fellowship together as others also were invited to join us.

We always feel a great sense of relief to safely deliver the considerable amounts of practical help com-

mitted to us for these poor believers in China. The tears of gratitude from these dear souls as they realize that God has found exercised hearts to care for them, is a priceless joy to retain in our hearts.

We encourage and support young evangelists in China and one such young brother, married with a fine spiritual wife and young son, has been working energetically in the Gospel and has begun three different preaching points in three large towns in southern China.

A little over two months ago, during the recent crackdown on Christians, he was intercepted one evening by the Public Security Bureau. The P.S.B. strikes terror to the Chinese heart for under their system one can be held for two months for questionings incommunicado. I was delighted to hear of his release and immediately travelled through Cninh to visit him last week. For obvious reasons I must withhold his name from print.

What a story of horror and persecution for Christ's sake, yet his overcoming faith in the Lord is a joy

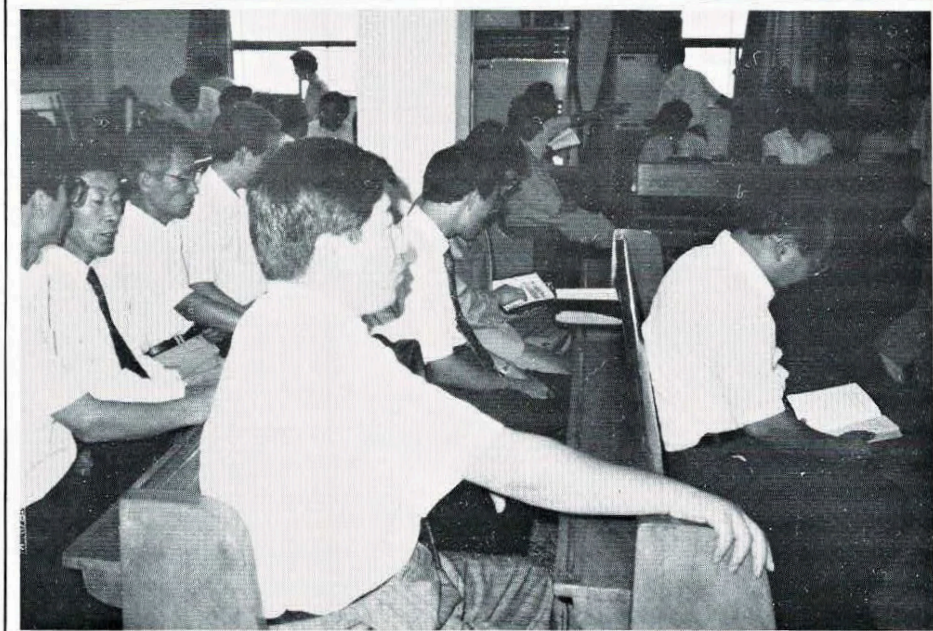
to witness. After two months of torture with electric shocks, forced labor, and cruel living conditions, he was released with the authorities unable to sustain a legal charge against him.

Pray for the many believers in China who are experiencing renewed suppression as the Communist Government strikes back at all religions, believing they pose a threat as they view recent happenings in Eastern Europe.

HOPE IN KOREA

Brother Mun Hope has recently returned from a visit to Korea and Japan. He had the opportunity to minister the Word among some of the approximately 130 New Testament assemblies in Korea. Several confessed the Lord Jesus and there were expressions of appreciation for the encouragement through the Word. It was also possible to preach the Gospel to two thousand people at the Seoul High School.

Pray for the Korean assem-



Korean Workers' and Elders' Conference

FRONT LINES

blies. These are critical days in the Far East. The country is still in a state of war against the communist North. You are familiar with the unrest there. Many of the believers are exercised about the Gospel outreach at Expo 1993 to be held there.

NEWS FROM NORTHERN ONTARIO

The new chapel building in South Porcupine, ON has come a long way through the spring and summer weeks. The labor has been by volunteers and each evening after their daily employment, several men work a few hours in various parts of the structure. Other groups and individuals have come and helped as well and all have brought much encouragement.

The building has been of interest to people in the community and we have had many positive comments. We are confident that the Lord will bless His Word as it is proclaimed from this new building in His will. In

the meantime we are seeing His blessing. Two young men were baptized last Lord's Day, and a young woman in August.

As to other workers in the north, Gary and Gloria McBride moved from Kirkland Lake to Timmins and the children are getting settled in their schools. Phil and Marilyn Barnes have moved from Chapleau to New Liskeard.

The assembly in Matheson has also started its building project. At time of writing, they have ordered roof trusses. They hope to have the building closed in so they can work in it through the winter months. The Christians in Cochrane are adding to the front of their chapel, so it is a busy time of building in the north. The Christians at Grace Bible Chapel in Timmins are also feeling the need to enlarge.

THE NORTH GOES SOUTH

For two weeks this past summer, sixteen believers from the assemblies in Sault Ste. Marie,

ON (between the ages of 14 and 58), traveled to Jamaica to help there in the work of the Lord. They made preparations beforehand by praying together, memorizing good gospel verses and learning some evangelistic songs for open-air work. They familiarized themselves with the island and its customs.

One week before leaving, a "boot camp" was held at the nearby assembly camp, Aush Bik Koong. Everything from cooking and other life skills to sharing of testimonies and Bible story telling was practiced.

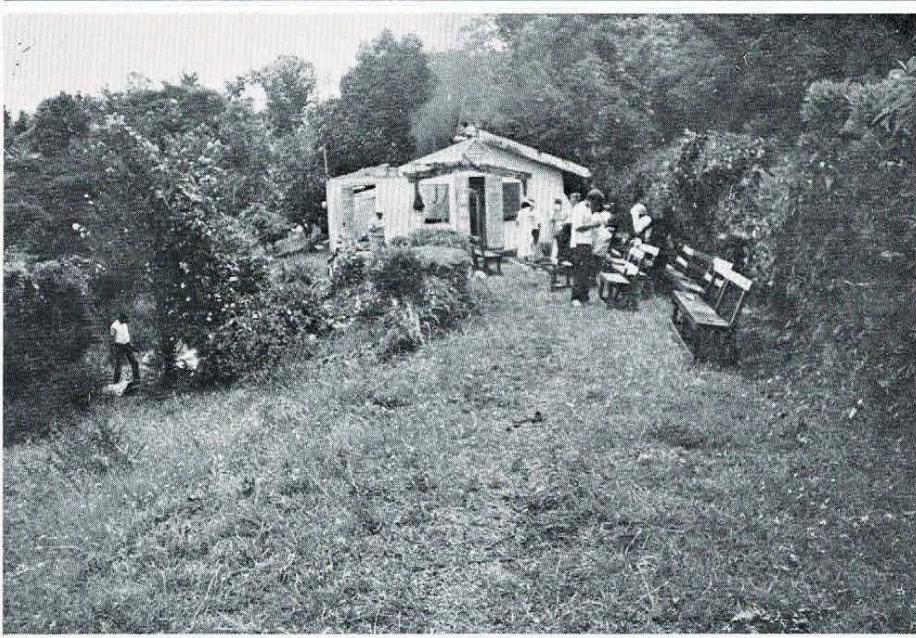
The nine adults and seven teens were billeted in the homes of the Christians. The first week included Gospel meetings in schools, orphanages, hospitals, the market, and on street corners. Several thousand tracts were distributed to the crowds.

The second week was spent in the mountains at Platfield to help rebuild an assembly building that was so deteriorated, it could no longer be used. Some of the team had Bible school for the area children; the rest helped rebuild the building. A few nights, they were able to gather a crowd under the one street light in the village for a Gospel meeting.

The response was most encouraging. The group praised the Lord for His answers to their prayers.

A one-hour video presentation of the time in Jamaica is available. It may be an encouragement to the young people in your own area for a similar summer project. Write:

Joe Reese
199 4th Line E.
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6A 5K8
Phone (705) 946-0289



Chapel in Platfield

WHAT'S GOING ON?

News from Around the Globe

NEWS, NOT VIEWS

The purpose of this feature is to gather news from a myriad of sources and provide up-to-date information for the prayerful consideration of the Lord's people. It is not intended to give editorial comment on that news. One letter to this office expressed concern that we appeared to condone the book by G. Hawthorne mentioned in the September issue. We felt that our subtitle was a dead give away: "The Incarnation: God 'Manifest' or 'Encapsulated'?" But for the record, we believe the "increasing Messianic awareness" notion is thoroughly unscriptural and highly dishonoring to the Person of Christ. In seeking to emphasize His full humanity, the theory robs Him of His full deity. Little brains like ours (albeit professorial brains) would be better served by accepting it as the "great mystery" it is called, and bowing in humble adoration.

UPHEAVAL IN ZAIRE

Of course, the situation is changing daily in this Central African country, but the latest reports do not sound good. Missionaries in outlying areas are being evacuated. In Lusaka, the capital, mobs have leveled one twelve-hundred-student school for diplomatic and missionary children. Many Missionary Aviation Fellowship planes were destroyed and their camp-ground looted right down to the plumbing. Other MAF planes are standing by at Nyankunde to remove the missionaries there if necessary. Some Zairian elders believe the situation will get

worse before it gets better and that missionaries should wait to hear of stable government before making any plans to return.

Zaire has been one of the most fruitful missionary efforts in this century with hundreds of indigenous assemblies established. Currently there are almost thirty North American assembly missionaries serving there.

A VALIANT WARRIOR AT REST



The Richards family

Brother Steve Richards, who for many years "warred a good warfare" among Moslem Turks, stepped ashore Heaven on the evening of October 1. Please pray for his wife and family (his daughter recently bore a son named Steven). Remember to intercede for the ongoing labors among the Moslems worldwide, and pray for the staff at Mayo Clinic where Steve was latterly treated. He was able to give the Gospel to every doctor in the department where he was hospitalized. The warrior goes home; the battle goes on.

MOZAMBIQUE

According to Trans-World Radio, "Many small house groups" have been formed

among the Lomwe people there as a result of the Gospel by radio. Many of these groups have gathered to listen to the broadcasts and continue to meet to discuss what they have heard.

MIXED MULTITUDE

"All the world's religious movements and spiritual entrepreneurs seem to be rushing to fill the Soviet vacuum," Peter Steinfelds reports in the *New York Times*: "New Age gurus, Hare Krishnas, Anglican evangelists, Latter Day Saints, followers of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, Campus Crusaders (*sic*) for Christ are among the more familiar religious forces with footholds in Soviet cities.

In addition to the array of true and false religion, the West is bringing in a flood of other wares — everything from Bibles to pornography. Recently Time-Warner sponsored a free rock concert where more than half a million jammed a Moscow airfield for the event. But newspapers compared the concert more to a battle. According to reports, seventy-six people needed medical assistance when brawls broke out between drunken youths and security forces. Forty-six people suffered fractured skulls from flying bottles.

Having only recently tasted freedom, it will not be easy for the Russian people to tell the difference between liberty and license.

CHANGES IN ZAMBIA

While conditions have been anything but easy for workers in Zambia, there has been an open

WHAT'S GOING ON?

door for the Gospel. Now President Kenneth Kaunda has cleared the way for the country's first multi-party elections in almost two decades. The balloting is scheduled for the end of October. The outcome of the elections could affect religious liberties in the country.

STILL IN THE DARK

"I am an atheist," said Mikhail Gorbachev during a recent ABC TV "National Town Hall Meeting." Boris Yeltsin stated, "I've been in church quite often because during the service there's a kind of feeling of internal cleansing . . . I'm also superstitious, by the way."

ANDREW STENHOUSE GOES HOME

Andrew Stenhouse, who was commended to the work of the Lord from Nova Scotia in 1925, went to be with the Lord on September 19. He would have celebrated his 92nd birthday on September 30. Brother Stenhouse firmly believed in keeping busy for the Lord. In his years of

and many assemblies started. In North America he was appreciated for his writing ministry. His book, *The Sin of Sectarianism*, published by Christian Missions Press, has been widely circulated. He leaves one son; pray for him and other relatives who will miss him in this world but not in the world to come.

BORDER CROSSING

According to *Pulse*, the Evangelical Missions Information Service reports that "a crack-down by Colombian authorities on cocaine trafficking has forced part of the illegal drug trade east to Venezuela. "Evidence of the shift comes from this summer's drug-related corruption scandals among the political elite."

Missionary work in Colombia has been disrupted for years by the illegal drug business, making it extremely dangerous, if not impossible to work in the interior. Now the problem is being exported across the border into Venezuela. Colombia has about thirty New Testament assemblies, Venezuela more than one hundred.

TO R, OR NOT TO R

When the government of Singapore decided to allow R-rated films into its movie theaters, they were surprised by the response. "The backlash was more than what I expected," a government member told *Asiaweek*. "I thought that doing this would meet a popular demand. But it came out quite differently. It seems the population as a whole is still . . . quite conservative."

THE LONG SLIDE

The African continent's economy (excluding South Africa) continues to deteriorate. Living standards are dropping .7 per-

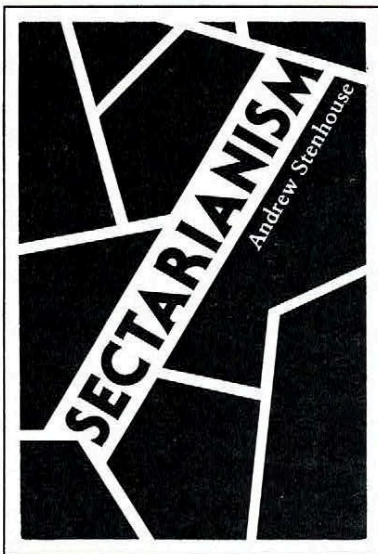
cent each year. Government spending on health and education also fell. From 1980 to 1985, the number of African preschoolers with acute protein deficiency roughly doubled, to about 20 percent. The AIDS scourge has reached epidemic proportions in many African countries. There seems to be little help in sight. Missionaries in these lands must not only cope with the spiritual conflict, but with collapsing economies, deteriorating road systems, unavailable supplies and unstable governments. The next time we feel like complaining, we would do well to turn it into intercession for our missionaries who are facing such gargantuan challenges.

COMPUTERS & THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Since the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 at Qumran, Israel, a small group of scholars have had control of what has been called the greatest archeological find ever. Increasing pressure upon these 10-15 men has not forced them to publish much of these ancient texts. The two-thousand-year-old documents have remained largely a secret.

That is until two researchers at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, OH performed what is being hailed as "an end run around the scholarly blockade." Using a desktop computer and an available concordance of the words in one of the scrolls, their computer program reconstructed part of the original text.

"We've broken the monopoly," said Hershel Shanks, president of the Biblical Archaeology Society. He also admitted the first volume contained no historical or theological "bombshells." — *The New York Times*



service in the Argentine and Chile he saw many souls saved

Twice Purchased

Robert Brown

I began life as a "throw away" child in an orphanage one cold, winter night, the 12th of February, 1944. It was in the stockyard town of South St. Paul, Minnesota. My "given" name was Leonard Allen Boe (aka. Leonard Allen Stenstrom). There are only unanswered questions to fill in the missing pieces of my life or background, my parents or family. In the spring, a young couple from Minneapolis (Roy and Alice Brown) came, sought me out, chose me, purchased me for the price of \$55.50, changed my name to Robert Reed Brown, made me their child, and took me home to live with them! I was a "chosen child" they told me . . . and I am very thankful for them and for that! But, down inside I was still an unwanted child, thrown away by his mother. No matter what you said, how you acted, or what you did, I was still an unwanted child with a lot of questions going unanswered. Who were my real parents? Who were my brothers and sisters? Who was I? Why didn't my mother want me? How could she give me up? Where did I fit in? Where did I belong? From the very earliest age I knew something was missing but I just didn't know what it was.

My foster parents raised me in a nominal Christian home. They had me baptized. We went to church every Sunday. I sang in the choir, was an altar boy, played the trumpet for special services, was confirmed, joined the church, and took communion. I was a religious boy, but something was still missing, and I was still searching.

I started smoking at age seven and drinking at thirteen. I began racing cars and motorcycles, fighting, and chasing all the wrong kinds of girls, only to find that none of these things could fill the emptiness that I felt inside.

I attended the University of Minnesota and studied philosophy and psychology, but found no answers there — only more questions, and more people who were themselves looking for answers.

In October 1964, I was married and went on active duty with the U.S. Navy. For the first time in my life I had a family that was my own. JoAnne, my highschool sweetheart, and I had three beautiful girls. I was a success in my work, and traveled the world. I was realizing a lifelong dream, but

the emptiness was still with me. Year by year, my attempts to fill that emptiness by continually grasping for things that the world offered, was taking a toll on my life in every area that was important to me.

By January 1975, I had lost my wife and family, my home and friends, and was living in the Bachelor Chiefs Barracks at a naval station in Pennsylvania. There was a strange fellowship of empty equals within that barracks! There seemed no end to the alcohol, partying, and girls that drifted in and out of the rooms at all hours, day and night. The only two "quite respectable" rooms were those of the local NIS agent, and the one across the hall from mine (which turned out to be a place where abortions were performed). This was a real collection of disillusioned, lost souls if ever there was one, and it all served to accentuate the realization of my own emptiness.

Then God brought an old shipmate, Charlie Glass, back into my life. We used to drink and party together, but since then Charlie and his wife Rae Ann had gotten saved. One day Charlie asked me if I knew for sure that when I died, I would go to heaven. I replied that I didn't think that anyone could know that. He shared 1 John 5:13 with me, and gave me the tract, *Am I Going to Heaven?* I failed the test in that tract and set out to prove Charlie wrong from the Bible. I failed again. Over a period of time, Charlie and others shared with me how the emptiness I felt was my separation from God on account of my sin. They spoke of how God had sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty that I owed for that sin by dying in my place on the cross of Calvary. Through these and many other patient, loving Christians at a local assembly, I saw that what they had told me was true.

On November 30, 1975, in the attic of a farmhouse in northern Pennsylvania, on a Chapel men's deer hunting trip, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. That night I found that a throwaway child worth only \$55.50 in this world was worth the very best that God had to offer — His Son Jesus! He had loved me, chosen me, changed my name, purchased me, and took me out of my life of sin, and one day plans to take me

GRACE AT WORK

home to be with Him forever in heaven. Twice loved, twice chosen, twice purchased, twice adopted, and now a child of God. An heir and joint heir with Christ — a child of the King!

Since accepting Christ as my Lord and Saviour, the Lord has given me back my wonderful wife JoAnne and family, reestablished my home, taught me about Himself and His plan for my life. He has built me up spiritually, and allowed me to serve Him. My continuing burden is to see others find the real inner peace and joy that I have found. And that only comes from having a per-

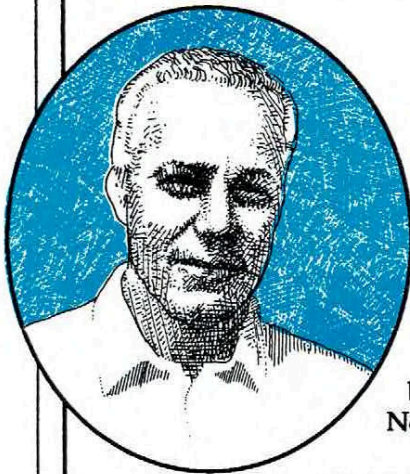
sonal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 40 says: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock [Jesus], and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God . . ." All of this He has done for me, and I pray that as the psalm finishes: ". . . many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord!"

U

A Closer Look . . .

The Deep South



The Deep South is an area approximately 350 miles north to south and 650 miles east to west comprised of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle. The area has an accumulated population of approximately 14,500,000. Much of the area is steeped in Roman Catholicism. Large regions are spiritually dark, and Satanic opposition is stout. There has been good work done here by a few brethren in past years, but considerably less than in other regions of North America.

To our knowledge, there are now approximately twenty-four New Testament gatherings in the Deep South, including three fledgling works initiated in last few years. These are located in Gretna, Laplace, and Mandeville, LA. There are still a number of major centers such as Pensacola, FL; Mobile, AL; and Baton Rouge, LA, without an assembly witness as far as we know. There are very few full-time evangelists and Bible teachers throughout the region and the brethren there ask that the saints might pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to help.

Brother Bob Brown lives with his wife JoAnne in Slidell, LA, across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans, and not far from the Mississippi state line. It was while in the military in the region that the Lord exercised their hearts about serving Him there.

Much of Bob's time is spent working with the assembly in Slidell — visitation, evangelism to the young at the Chapel Day Care ministry; to the elderly at a nearby nursing home, and through friendships in their own neighborhood; and teaching the young believers there. However, 25,000 miles are traveled each year encouraging and instructing believers across the four-state area.

The great need is for the prayers of the Lord's people, for:

- 1) Strength, boldness, and wisdom for the laborers already working there;
- 2) Other exercised workers to catch a vision for the area;
- 3) An ingathering of souls as a result of the severe economic conditions, causing many to question the idols they have lived for, and to seek after the true God;
- 4) Encouragement, growth, and establishing of the new assemblies recently gathered together.

In concluding this report, let me quote from a recent letter from the Browns: "Much has been accomplished; far more remains to be done! The evil one is very much alive in the Deep South. We see his opposition every day. Yet God is able and is faithful in response to his people's prayers. Please continue! '(We) thank (our) God . . . for your fellowship in the Gospel . . .' (Phil. 1:3, 5)."

Caught in the Middle

The middle-aged might complain with some justice that the Church makes no special provision for them. The lambs of the flock are well shepherd; the problems of youth we are never allowed to forget. Old age receives the consideration it deserves; but those who have reached middle life are largely left to their own resources, as if sufficient in themselves.

The fact is that no stage of life needs more spiritual care than this intermediate one. Many people who, in childhood and youth, show much promise; in middle-age lose interest and become weary in well doing. Not a few give up worshipping God, both in public and private.

Why this spiritual decline? It may be that the world, like a python, slowly strangles the spirit, leaving us disillusioned and cynical, and the child who with Solomon asked for wisdom rather than riches or long life, finds himself going after other gods in his maturity because divine wisdom and

piety give no immediate assurance of success.

Or it may be weariness that clogs the soul, the weariness of seeing the yearly cycle repeat itself so often that the very course of nature becomes vanity. When a ship puts out from harbor and our native cliffs begin to recede, there is a pleasant excitement among the passengers aboard; and that pleasurable feeling is renewed when we first catch sight of the distant shore to which we sail. In mid-ocean, however, the romance of voyaging is apt to disappear. Sea and sky, with no alluring islands between, beget monotony and even misgivings. It was in mid-ocean that Columbus faced a mutiny, and out of the boredom of middle life may come a revolt against our early vows to God.

God's means of grace are a precious solace at this critical stage, and spiritual discipline a powerful antidote to the danger of the doldrums in the mid-journey of life: "... and at noon, pray and cry aloud, and God will hear your cry."

Stock-Taking

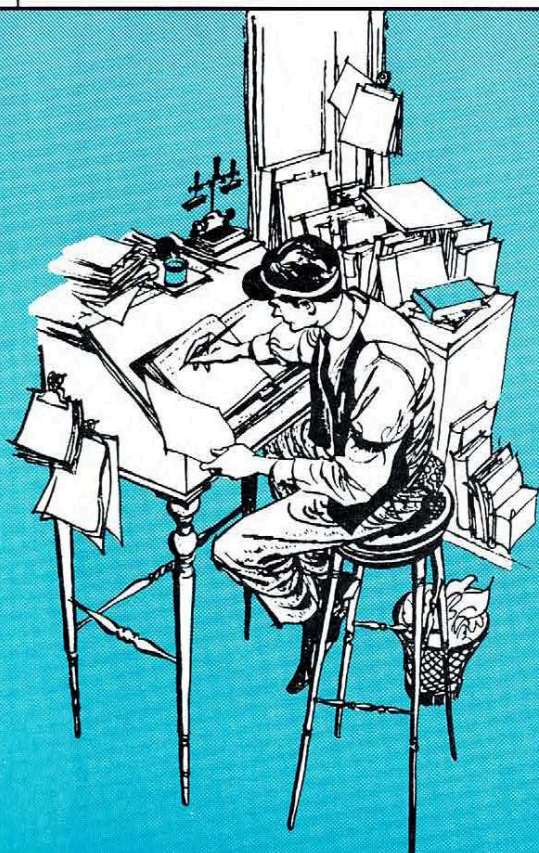
*I pause, amid the clamor of the swiftly moving days
And write the ledger of my life, neath Thine all-seeing gaze,
I list in either column the profit and the loss,
The victories that were golden, the failures that were dross.*

*I look upon the credits with glowing heart and eye,
The faith and courage added as day by day went by;
The lessons Thou hast taught me as I journeyed on my way,
The patience Thou hast brought me through many a weary day,
The measure of Thy love which Thou to me hast shown,
The wonder of Thy presence made manifest and known.*

*And then I scan the debits through swiftly falling tears,
The hours of fretful worry, beset by faithless fears.
The times when I have failed to show Thy love in word and deed,
To be a channel Thou couldst use to meet another's need;
The blotted entries, smudged and spoiled by sin and bitterness,
And marvel at Thy changeless love, and my unworthiness.*

*And for the stock on hand, two entries there I place,
My ever-present need — Thy never-failing grace.*

*Great Keeper of the Records, when Thou takest stock of me
What dost Thou see?* — Joan Suisted (adapted)



Mighty in Spirit!

Walter Scott

We have a growing reverence for the aged. It ever was and is a characteristic of Jewish religious life to honor the aged. It is a touching and beautiful sight to view one in the sunset of life, waiting at the brink of the river for the parting of the waves. The heart yet brave; the love of early days as passionate if more matured; the purpose of the soul unchanged, and the calm, unshaken confidence — the growth of many years — reflected on the patient, if worn and suffering countenance. How chastened! How mellowed! How useful the ripening of experience!

One danger to which the Lord's aged people are peculiarly subject is to rest on their oars, and seek to pass the evening of their days assuming that their work is done. That was not the spirit of brave old Caleb, who, when eighty-five years old, said, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me" — forty years previously — "as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in" (Josh. 14:11). Caleb was not tired of the conflict. He drew his spiritual strength from God Himself.

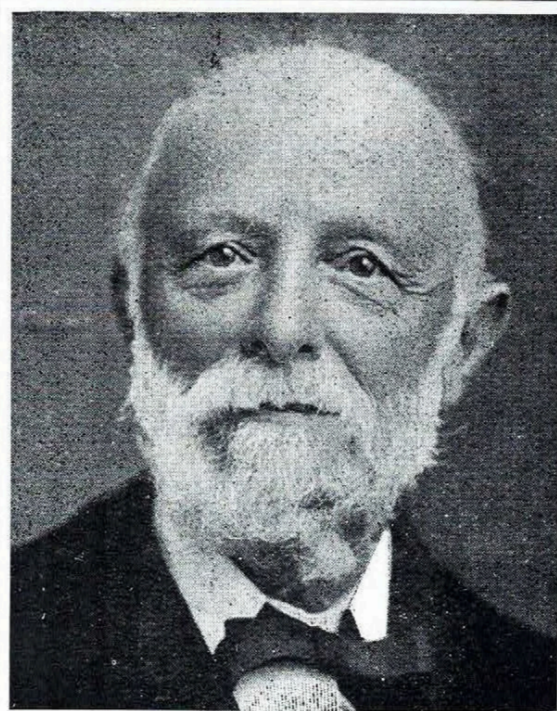
The physical vigor of youth may give way, but there is a power outside the domain of nature: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). O beloved, aged pilgrims, our rest is on the other side of the river; our home is on high. Throw off the indolence which with age and infirmity creeps over the soul, and nerve yourself to battle on, to serve till He come. A few more struggles, and then eternal rest! Your active ministry in pulpit or platform is over, perhaps. But has your service ceased? There yet remains the more spiritual work of intercession with God for the Church and the world. Work in your prayer closet — work which brings you face to face with God Himself. The sanctuary is your sphere of service and that is better than the public work of younger days. Then, too, there is the exquisite beauty of Christ reproduced in your aged days — His love, His grace, His tenderness, His voice, His touch, His gentle-

ness, His holiness. O God, bless Thine aged pilgrim people. Say not, "My long life's work is done."

One of the most eloquent of Scottish preachers whose burning words once fell on our ears, the late Dr. Guthrie, thus wrote: "They say that I am growing old because my hair is silver, and there are crow's feet on my forehead, and my step is not as firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The knees are weak; but the knees are not me. The brow is wrinkled; but the brow is not me. This is the house I live in. But I am young — younger than I was ever before."

For ourselves, and for all our beloved aged pilgrims, we long and pray for spiritual vigor. Where, of course, there is a collapse of physical powers, one can only wait in patience the joyful summons, "Come Home!" Press on with increasing desire. The manna is needed equally for your closing hours as for the springtide of earlier days. Feed on Christ, ye fathers and mothers in Israel!

— *This article was written by the venerable Walter Scott (shown below) at the age of 95!*



Keep On Growing

H. P. Barker

There are no Methuselahs among men today. Even those who live the longest are junior to Jacob, who at the age of a hundred and thirty declared that his years had been few (Gen. 47:9).

There are many, however, who in the language of the Bible, are "well stricken in years." We can say with Eliphaz, "With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men" (Job 15:10). When these are found among the people of God, men and women who have for many a long year walked in His ways, they are worthy of all honor.

MONUMENTS OF MERCY

We value our aged brethren and sisters. How it encourages us to see them, monuments of divine mercy, kept by the power of God through all the ups and downs of life. We thank Him for the cheer which comes to us through them.

The days of restless youth with their golden dreams have faded into the remote past. Gone, too, is middle life with its stress and conflict. Old age is come, and has brought its peculiar trials and special exercises. In view of these, we desire to address a few words of cheer and loving exhortation to those who are nearing the end of their pilgrim journey. This we would do as did the apostle, treating them as fathers, and the elder women as mothers (1 Tim. 5:1).

FRUIT-BEARING IN OLD AGE

Should not the Christian's declining years be the brightest and best of all? We who know the grace and power of Christ do not share the surprise of the master of ceremonies at the wedding at Cana when the good wine is kept to the last. He is able to make the evening of our days golden with the shining of His love.

Much depends on

whether we keep close to the Lord and find the home of our souls in His company. To those who abide in His love, and in this sense are "planted in the house of the Lord," a cheering promise is given: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age" (Psalm 92:14).

THE SERVICE OF GOD

In the days of long ago, there was an age limit for the servants of God. The ministry of the Levites ended at fifty (Num. 4:47). Not so in Christianity. Service may continue till our Master calls us home, if only the soul is kept "flourishing."

Let none, therefore, think themselves useless, mere burdens to others. Barzillai feared that he was this, and as he had reached his eightieth birthday, it was perhaps only natural that he should. "Wherefore then, should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?" he asked (2 Sam. 19:35). But in point of fact he was far from being a burden. Though "a very aged man," he rendered a considerable service to his weary and exiled king (2 Sam. 17:27-29). Age is no bar to service.

"It is now thirty years," writes one, "since I left the shores of England, and I am now far on in my seventy-ninth year, so I cannot expect to continue this service much longer." But our aged brother evidently meant to continue as long as he was left on earth. He had no intention of seeking a place on the retired list. Why should he? He had not reached the age of Barzillai yet.

INFIRM AND POOR

Barzillai was a "great man," and was yet able to move about. What of those who are not only aged but poor? What of those crippled by in-



KEEP ON GROWING

firmity? Can they be otherwise than a burden?

They can indeed. In the city of Aberdeen, Scotland, lives one such, Mrs. K., blind and bedridden. But how she can cheer those who visit her! Never a complaint does one hear from her lips, but thanksgiving and praise. Her very face reflects the gladness that fills her heart. Often a depressed visitor has come away uplifted and refreshed from her bedside. All unconsciously the dear, blind, bed-ridden saint has served her Master well.

Perhaps Anna, with her full sheaf of years was another like that. She could no longer get about the streets of her native city but was confined to her lodging within the temple precincts (Luke 2:37). Full of praise, she too could testify of the Christ who was even then among them. Of Him she spake "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Happy service, in spite of her widowhood and the weight of her years. "She was of a great age . . . about fourscore and four years."

GOD'S TENDERNESS

God has special regard for His aged saints and shows peculiar tenderness towards them. He was thinking of them in their weakness when He said, "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" (Isa 46:4). As a loving mother carries her tired child, so does our God graciously carry us over the rough places of life. Nor does He ever set us down. Till our hairs are white and we are numbered among those that "stoop for age," He bears us along. Like the shepherd in the parable, He carries us all the way till He brings us home (Luke 15:3-6).

A SAD OLD AGE

If God's aged pilgrims "continually resort" to Him as their "strong habitation" (Ps. 71:3), they will be maintained in spiritual freshness and joy. But old age in itself is no guarantee of this.

We have a mournful instance of what I mean in the story of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26). He was one of the greatest and best of Judah's kings. He sought the God of his fathers and walked in His ways. The Lord helped him abundantly and it looked as if Uzziah's reign would end in a blaze of glory.

But at sixty-eight he fell. Finding himself strong, "his heart was lifted up," and he thought that he could do without the priest.

A fearful mistake indeed, and attended with terrible consequences. But let us take heed lest we

fall into the same snare. A long life spent in the fear of God may close under the shadow of a great shame if we imagine that it enables us to dispense for a moment with the services of our great High Priest.

He it is who lives to save us to the uttermost, through every trial. Through Him we "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). We cannot do without Him. Like Mephibosheth, we are helpless in ourselves to the very end of life's journey, though continually receiving grace from on high, and kept by the bounty of our Saviour-God. If we forget this, disastrous will be the result.

LIVING IN THE PAST

One notices sometimes a tendency on the part of our aged brethren

and sisters to unduly magnify the past at the expense of the present. The memory naturally lingers amid the scenes of long ago, when everything seemed bright and fresh.

Perhaps things *were* brighter then. There may have been more widespread interest in the things of God. People assembled in greater numbers to hear the Gospel. Since then, the zeal of many seems to have waxed cold.

But the things that warmed our hearts in those never-to-be-forgotten days remain. The grace



KEEP ON GROWING

of God never fails. The unchanging love of Christ is still ours to enjoy. We have the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost with us. Prayer is a privilege that belongs to us as much as to our fathers, and "the comfort of the Scriptures" is as great as ever it was. Change and decay we may see around us, but He who has saved us remains the same.

FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST

Zacharias and his wife were both "well stricken in years." They had lived blamelessly before the Lord, walking in His fear. But there was nothing very remarkable about them.

Elisabeth's life, from the standpoint of a Jewish woman, had been a failure.

Zacharias, though a man of prayer, could hardly be called a man of great faith.

In their old age, a wonderful thing happened. They were both filled with the Holy Ghost.

First, Elisabeth was filled (Luke 1:41). Immediately her lips were

opened, and in an outburst of joy she spoke of the great One about to be born as "my Lord." It was some weeks after this that Zacharias was filled. The result with him was a song of praise that celebrated the expected advent of Christ into the world.

This is how it always is. Those who are filled with the Holy Ghost do not speak of themselves, their own experience, or their work. Their eyes are upon Christ, their hearts are strongly drawn out in affection to Him, and their lips utter His goodness. They testify of their Saviour, not of themselves.

How charming it

is to meet with a dear aged saint who is filled with the Holy Ghost! Even if his or her life has been of an ordinary kind, what we might call a low-level life, it is not too late to seek this wonderful filling; not too late to give heed to the word, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

A WARNING

It may be that among the elderly readers of these pages there is one still unsaved. If it is a terrible thing for those who are young and strong to be without Christ. How much more so for those whose sun has almost set!

"If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many" (Eccl. 11:8). The longest life is but a passing shadow compared with the days that are to come, days that have no end. And if they be days of darkness, of what avail will have been the rejoicings with which all the years of the present life have been filled?

To trust in the Saviour, to build our confidence upon the firm foundation of the work that He finished, to rest in His faithful word concerning "all that believe," is to insure peace for the present and glory for the future. To take any other way than this is to consign oneself to those days of darkness that will be the endless portion of all who have refused the proffered salvation.

ALONE, YET NOT ALONE

One word in conclusion. Does the aged Christian feel lonely? Are the loved ones of earlier years all gone? While you watch and wait for your Saviour to come, do you feel "as a sparrow alone upon the housetop"? (Ps. 102:7).

Take comfort then from the case of "Paul the Aged," as he calls himself. The friends of former days had left him. In the hour of his need, no man stood with him, but all forsook him (2 Tim. 4:16). "Notwithstanding," he triumphantly exclaims, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Happy man: alone, yet not alone.

Thus it will ever be. To the very end, God's aged pilgrims will prove the truth of His promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). With this promise laid to heart, we may pray the prayer of Psalm 39:13, "O spare me, that I may brighten up before I go hence" (RV, mar.).

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Growing Superchurches

Donald L. Norbie

Jn years past, most Protestant churches in the U.S.A. were fairly small, numbering one hundred to three hundred or less in their congregations, according to *Time* (August 5, 1991). But now a new phenomenon is taking place in the proliferation of superchurches or megachurches. There are now forty-three Protestant congregations which number five thousand or more at Sunday services. In a society which idolizes size — “big is better” — and loves its supermarkets and mammoth shopping malls, the superchurch is a logical development.

Most of these superchurches are evangelical; they do preach the Gospel, although in some cases it is weak on repentance, genuine conversion and godly living. They are fundamental, basically orthodox in their doctrines. Many are charismatic or Pentecostal, with a stress on tongues and miracles.

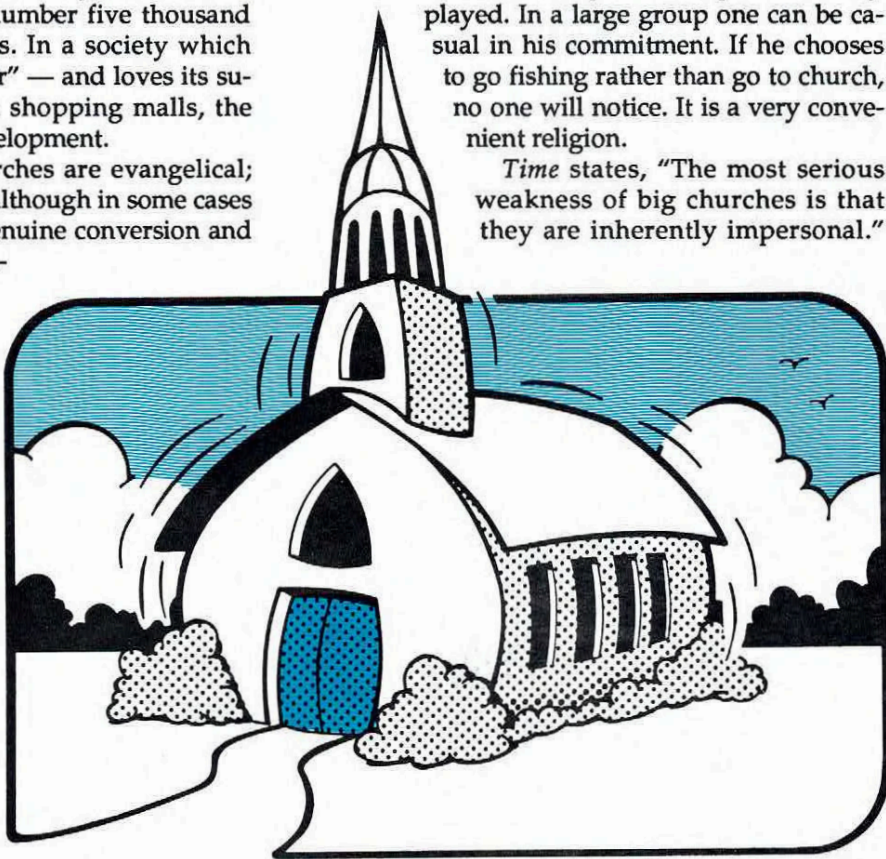
Because of their size they can offer a variety of programs, an elaborate Sunday School, special interest groups (divorced, singles, alcoholics, fifty plus, etc.) and a music program conducted by professionals. Giant incomes characterize these churches. Their facilities can be luxurious with all of the amenities. The Second Baptist Church of Houston has a movie theater, weight rooms, saunas, a television production center and beautiful indoor and outdoor gardens. For superchurches money seems to be no problem and their pastors are paid like the executives of large businesses, which they are.

Here are some of the top superchurches: First Baptist Church, Hammond, IN (20,000); Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL (13,000); Calvary Chapel, Santa Ana, CA (12,000) and Second Baptist Church, Houston TX (12,500).

So what is the appeal? Most Americans value

that which is big and successful. It is a feather in one's cap to say he belongs to the First Superchurch. Does not God want His children to be successful? And many of these churches do stress material prosperity as very acceptable and desirable. The “sanctuary” is a delight to the eyes and the music is upbeat and professionally played. In a large group one can be casual in his commitment. If he chooses to go fishing rather than go to church, no one will notice. It is a very convenient religion.

Time states, “The most serious weakness of big churches is that they are inherently impersonal.”



Yet this is what some desire; they fear a more intimate relationship with its commitment and responsibility. For those who desire more intimacy, superchurches often have cell groups which meet during the week in homes for Bible study and prayer.

How should we evaluate this movement? We can rejoice in the Gospel being preached, regardless of motives (Phil. 1:18), without feeling we must follow the same methods. But one may seriously ask, “Will the New Testament pattern for



the churches function in a superchurch setting?" What is the character of a New Testament assembly?

One figure that is used in Scripture of the local church is that of a flock of sheep (1 Peter 5:2). The flock of that day was fairly small. The shepherd lived with the sheep, led them to pasture and drink, and called them by their names (John 10:27). David, an experienced shepherd, described his relationship with God in these terms beautifully (Ps. 23). This is to be the relationship of the elders to the local church.

Leaders of superchurches are called "pastors" and are expected to shepherd the flock of God. John MacArthur stated confidently on radio, "I am the pastor of ten thousand people." But can one know the names of ten thousand people, visit them, counsel them and do all that is involved in shepherding? One can preach to thousands, even millions, with the right use of media, but that is not the biblical concept of shepherding.

Another figure used is that of a family, a household of God (1 Tim. 3:15). The relationship is the sharing of a common life (1 John 5:1). Older men and women are to be treated like fathers and mothers, the younger as brothers and sisters (1 Tim. 5:1-2). A church too big for people to know one another cannot function as a family.

Still another figure that Paul enjoys is that of the human body. The various parts of the body share the most intimate of relationships; the same life blood flows through the whole. The many members are different, vitally needed and complementary (1 Cor. 12). All the parts should be appreciated and all encouraged to function. There should be no envy or competition. Paul uses this metaphor to bring beautiful, practical teaching to the Christians at Corinth. But this requires knowledge of one another and much interaction. This is hardly true of a superchurch.

While it is true that for a brief time the Christians met in the temple (Acts 2:46) for instruction by the apostles, soon persecution scattered them and assembly meetings were usually held in homes. This limited the size of groups. Although no numbers are given for the size of assemblies, most were probably less than one hundred people. The New Testament is not as number conscious as many churches are today. Scripture is more concerned with the holiness, spirituality and vitality of a church than with the number attending. None of the churches of Revelation 2 and 3

are condemned for their small numbers.

A superchurch is too large to function as a scriptural assembly of Christians. The home cell groups are an attempt to meet this need but they disclaim being a church and do not fulfill all its functions. Often their size is so small that they lack a balance of gift and the teaching is basically done by the "pastor" of the superchurch.

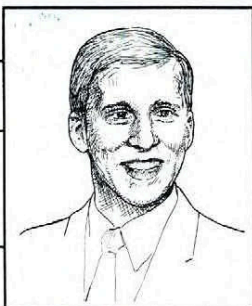
In a gathering of thousands, the priesthood of believers cannot function with opportunity for various brothers to lead the whole church in worship. "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). It is a blessed privilege to have the Lord's Supper as an open meeting with opportunity for various brothers to lead God's people in worship and praise. While all believers are priests, Scripture designates the males to lead in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34).

Much spiritual gift is undeveloped in a huge church. The preaching and teaching is done by professionals; the clergy system is firmly in control. The Holy Spirit is squelched by the system and is unable to speak through various brothers in a fresh, vigorous way. Paul wrote, "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them" (Rom. 12:6). Too often the Holy Spirit is put in a straitjacket by the systems of men.

For these reasons churches seeking to follow the Scripture have tended to hive off and start other gatherings rather than to keep enlarging the building. Often such an assembly that is growing in numbers will begin to think of starting another fellowship when their numbers reach one hundred to two hundred people. In this way, younger men can be encouraged to use their gifts and to become leaders among God's people. Conferences in an area can provide the blessing of fellowship and encouragement between assemblies.

As an assembly, be thankful for the truths you know and practice. Be concerned to develop your gift and to be active in your fellowship. Be zealous in witnessing and in seeing others saved. Pray for growth spiritually and numerically. As you grow in strength, be in prayer to see other assemblies start in your area. There is a great, needy world out there and we have the message of life and hope. May God give us vision.

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HEROES

Michael Sattler

John Bjorlie

The leaves of autumn teach us, that when our time to exit comes, we should do it aflame for God.

During the time of the Reformation there were thousands of martyrdoms. Amidst this throng of worthies few displayed their colors as brilliantly as did Michael Sattler (1490–1527). He stands out as an unforgettable witness in the hour of death.

In May of 1527 a sentence was given at the imperial city of Rottenburg on the Neckar River:

Michael Sattler is to be committed to the executioner, who is to take him to the city square and there cut out his tongue. Then he is to tie him to a wagon and with a red-hot pair of blacksmith tongs twice tear shreds of flesh from his body, doing so five times more on the way to the fire and then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic.

Who was this man, and what had he done?

Michael Sattler was born near Freiburg, Germany around 1490. As a young man he entered a Benedictine monastery and became a monk. He gained some knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages and was an avid student of Paul's epistles. His reading created grave doubts about his connection with the monastery. Michael began to detest the vice and hypocrisy of his fellow monks.

Severing ties with the monastery, Michael married a Bequine, whom Anshelm described as "a talented, clever little woman." For a time the Sattlers embraced Lutheran doctrines, and in 1525 they fled to Switzerland from Austria, because of King Ferdinand's policy of heresy extermination. Once in more tolerant Switzerland the Sattlers met Wilhelm Reublin, a converted priest, who was rumored to be an "Anabaptist." It is said that Reublin "expounded the Holy Scriptures in so Christian and excellent a way that nothing like it had ever been heard, so that he gained great numbers."

Sattler joined forces in preaching with Muntprat of Constance and Konrad Winkler of Wasserburg, who were holding clandestine meetings in the forests. Soon he became the most prominent of the three. The meetings were discovered, and Sattler was expelled from the canton. After his expulsion from Zurich, November 18, 1525, he returned to his native village only to be forced to leave again.

After a time in Strassburg he began to work north of Rottenburg, making Horb his center of activities. At Horb and its environs his efforts were obviously blessed by God.

While a Bible conference at Schleithem was in progress, the Anabaptists were found out by the

Scene of Anabaptists receiving King Ferdinand's "third baptism."



HEROES

powers that be from Rottenburg. Upon returning to Horb, Sattler and his wife, Wilhelm Reublin's wife, Matthias Hiller, Veit Veringer of Rottenburg, and a number of other men and women were arrested. The government officials gloated over their prize. They had found in Sattler's possession the Schleithem Confession and records of Anabaptist activities. Due to the presence of many Anabaptists and sympathizers in the city, the prisoners were moved to Binsdorf.

From the tower of Binsdorf, Sattler wrote a letter of consolation to his beloved congregation at Horb. Typical of Anabaptist prison epistles, it abounds in Scripture references and is completely devoid of bitterness. "Beloved companions in the Lord; the grace and mercy of God, our Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the power of their Spirit, be with you, brethren and sisters, beloved of God.

"If you have love for your neighbor, you will not be envious in punishing or excommunicating, will not seek your own, will think no evil, will not be ambitious, and finally will not be puffed up; but will be merciful, just mild in all things, submissive and compassionate towards the weak and infirm."

This faithful shepherd's primary concern, even in the face of torture and death, was the welfare of the sheep. Sattler attempted in the final paragraphs of the letter to prepare his followers for the

inevitable.

"And let no man take away from you the foundation which is laid by the letter of the holy Scriptures, and sealed with the blood of Christ and many witnesses of Jesus. . . . The brethren have doubtless informed you, that some of us are in prison; and the brethren being apprehended at Horb, we were afterwards brought to Binsdorf. At this time numerous accusations were preferred against us by our adversaries; at one time they threatened us with the gallows; at another with fire and sword. In this extremity, I surrendered myself, entirely to the Lord's will, and prepared myself, together with all my brethren and my wife, to die for His testimony's sake . . . hence I deemed it necessary to animate you with this exhortation, to follow us in the contest of God, that you may console yourselves with it, and not faint under the chastening of the Lord

"In short, beloved brethren and sisters, this letter shall be a valedictory to you all who love God in truth, and follow Him

"Beware of false brethren; for the Lord will probably call me to Him, so take warning. I wait for my God; pray without ceasing for all that are in bonds; God be with you all. Amen."

He was in the hands of Austrian authorities, who had the jurisdiction of Rottenburg. Ferdinand, the Catholic king of Austria, had declared "the third baptism" (drowning) to be the best an-

Who Were the Anabaptists?

Among the many names the brethren of reformation times received was the one "Anabaptist" which means "baptized again." Almost everyone within a region, whether Catholic or Protestant, had been baptized as an infant. So when adults were converted and baptized it was called a second baptism, hence the title. This was not a name the brethren chose, for they did not believe that the ritual of infant sprinkling was baptism.

Another reason they received titles such as "Anabaptist" was their accusers wanted to convey the impression that they had founded a new sect. This the brethren denied. Many of these congregations of saints had existed from earliest times. But amidst the changes brought on by the renaissance and reformation, believers seized the opportunity to publicly state their convictions. So around 1524, in Germany, many of these gatherings declared their independence as congregations of believers. To show their determination to carry out the teachings of scripture many received believer's baptism. It was then that the name "Second Baptizers" or "Anabaptists" occurred.

HEROES

tidote to Anabaptism. Because of Sattler's importance, Ferdinand wanted him drowned immediately. Authorities headed by Count Joachim, however, wanted to give the case an appearance of justice.

On May 15, the court convened with twenty-four judges. The chairman of this body was the Landeshauptmann, Count Joachim of Zollern. The attorney for the defense was the Mayor of Rottenburg, Jakob Halbmayer, hardly a sympathetic advocate. Sattler felt that Halbmayer was responsible for the outcome of the trial.

The trial began on May 17. Count Joachim had the charges read. The first seven were against all the accused, and two additional charges were brought against Sattler alone.

1. That he and his adherents act contrary to the decree of the emperor. 2. He taught, maintained, and believed, that the body and blood of Christ were not present in His sacrament. 3. He taught and believed, that infant baptism was not promotive of salvation. 4. They rejected the sacrament of unction. 5. They despised and reviled the Mother of God, and condemned the saints. 6. He declared, that men should not swear before a magistrate. 7. He has commenced a new and unheard of custom in regard to the Lord's Supper, placing the bread and wine on a plate, eating and drinking the same. 8. Contrary to the rule, he has married a wife. 9. He said if the Turks invaded the country, we ought not to resist them, and he would rather take the field against the Christians than against the Turks.

When Sattler asked that the accusations be reread the secretary replied, "He has boasted of the Holy Ghost. Now if this boast is true, it seems to me, it is unnecessary to grant him this; for, if he has the Holy Ghost, as he boasts, the same will tell him what has been done here." Unperturbed, Sattler renewed his request, which was begrudgingly granted.

Sattler's defense was skillful and courageous. Answering the first charge he said that the imperial mandates were against the Lutherans. They directed that Lutheran doctrine and error not be followed but rather the Gospel and the Word of God. "This we have observed," he stated, "for I am not aware, that we have acted contrary to the Gospel and Word of God; I appeal to the Word of Christ." He accepted the second charge as valid, defending his position with many scriptures. The third charge he did not deny, but affirmed believ-

er's baptism. In speaking to the fourth accusation, he distinguished between oil as a creation of God which is good, and the oil of extreme unction which is no better. "What God has made, is good, and not to be rejected; but that the pope with his bishops, monks, and priests, has made it better, we deny; for the pope has never made anything good." Concerning Mary, He said:

"The mother of Christ should be esteemed above all women; for she had the favor of giving birth to the Saviour of the world; but that she shall be an intercessor, is not known in Scripture. As to the saints, we say, that we who live and believe are the saints; in evidence of this I appeal to the epistle of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, etc. He always writes: To the beloved saints. We, therefore, who believe, are the saints: those who die in the faith, we consider the "blessed."

Sattler accepted the sixth charge as justified and defended the Anabaptist position with Matthew 5:34, 37. The seventh charge was ignored.

Sattler then answered the two charges brought against him personally. He defended his marriage on two grounds: first, the gross immorality among priests and monks, and second, that marriage is an ordinance of God.

The ninth charge was the most damaging because no other power on earth struck fear in the hearts of Austrians like that of the Turks. To this Sattler asserted the principle of nonresistance. He then proceeded to restate his position.

"If I approved of war, I would rather march forth against the so-named Christians who persecute, imprison, and put to death, the pious Christians, I assign this reason: The Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk according to the flesh; but you, wishing to be Christian, and making your boast of Christ, persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks according to the Spirit."

In closing Sattler pled with the judges to "repent and receive instruction." In response the judges chuckled sarcastically at Sattler's defense. After consultation, the town clerk of Ensisheim said: "Oh you infamous, desperate villain and monk, you would have us engage with you in a discussion! The executioner will dispute with you, we think for a certainty." Sattler exclaimed: "Let the will of God be done."

The town clerk became so frenzied he threat-

ened to take Sattler's life on the spot. The prisoner's composure obviously exasperated his accusers.

During the hour and a half while the judges deliberated, Sattler was threatened and ridiculed. Some cried out, "When I see you get away, I will believe in you." One man held a sword and taunted him saying, "See, with this we will dispute with you."

Eyewitness Klaus von Gravenneck wrote, "All this I saw myself. May God grant us also to testify of Him so bravely and patiently." The trial lasted two days. The sentence was read on May 18. On May 20, Sattler was executed.

Before the execution the torture began at the marketplace where a piece was cut from Sattler's tongue. Pieces of flesh were torn from his body twice with red-hot tongs. He was then forged to a cart. On the way the tongs were applied five more times. In the marketplace and at the site of the execution, still able to speak, Sattler prayed for his persecutors. Then they tied him to a ladder and shoved him into the fire. Still conscious and composed, he told the people, the judges, and the mayor to repent and be converted. Then he prayed, "Almighty, eternal God, Thou art the way and the truth: because I have not been shown to be in error, I will with Thy help to this day testify to the truth and seal it with my blood."

As soon as the ropes on his wrists were burned, Sattler raised his two forefingers, as a sign to the brethren that a martyr's death was bearable. The crowd heard his voice above the crackling flames, "Father, I commend my spirit into Thy hands."

Three others were then executed. Sattler's faithful wife was drowned eight days later in the Neckar River. They tied a large stone around her neck and threw her off a bridge.

Wilhelm Reublin wrote an account of the martyrdom which was circulated throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic witnesses could not shake off the memory of that infamous day. The Strassburg reformers, Bucer and Capito, were horrified by the report of the execution. Sattler's witness reads like a paraphrase of Acts 6 and 7. Anabaptist historian, Gustav Bossert, Jr. testifies, "Sattler's character lies clearly before us. He was not a highly educated divine and not an intellectual; but his entire life was noble and pure, true and unadulterated."

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It is often thought that when the reformation was established, Europe was divided into Protestants (whether Lutheran or Swiss) on the one hand, and Roman Catholics on the other. The large numbers of Christians are overlooked who did not belong to either party, but who, most of them, met as independent churches, not relying, as the others did, on the support of the civil power, but endeavoring to carry out the principles of Scripture as in New Testament times. They were so numerous that both the State Church parties feared they might come to threaten their own power and even existence. The reason that so important a movement occupies so small a place in the history of those times is, that by the relentless use of the power of the State, the great Churches, Catholic and Protestant, were able almost to destroy it, the few adherents who were left being driven abroad or remaining only as weakened and comparatively unimportant companies. The victorious party was also able to destroy much of the literature of the brethren, and, writing their history, to represent them as holding doctrines which they repudiated, and to give them names to which an odious significance was attached.

— E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*

The Pilgrim Church, E.H. Broadbent pp. 164-165

Martyr's Mirror, Herald Press

The Reformers and Their Stepchildren, Leonard Verduin

Michael Sattler's Trial and Martyrdom in 1527, Gustav Bossert, Jr.

The Anabaptist Story, William R. Estep pp. 40-50

According to Estep there are four extant accounts of the trial and death of Michael Sattler. Wilhelm Reublin's account is found on pp. 250-53 of *Quellen*. Klaus von Gravenneck's account is in the Wolfenbuttel library. An original German account is edited by W. J. Kohler in *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation*, II, 1908, no. 3. Another account is found in the Hutterite *Large Chronicle* which differs in some slight detail from the others. It is this last account from which the *Martyr's Mirror* version is taken.

The Temptation of our Lord

William Hoste

Many of the moral signs of the last perilous times are with us today, among which we may note false teachers, who are at once "deceivers and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). While undermining the faith of the saints, they seem able to persuade themselves that they are building it up. Thus the higher critics, who only leave intact the covers of our Bible, assure us that the book is now much more precious than before. We must suppose they think so; but if so, they are "being deceived." Again, those who, under guise of upholding the humanity of Christ, present us a Saviour whom with sorrow we fail to recognize as the Living Christ of the Gospels, seem quite self-satisfied with their views. It is they who are upholding the truth, they insist; it is their strong faith that enables them to believe as they do. To us their theory seems "another Jesus" in the making. Well, if they must "deceive themselves," it is no reason why we should be deceived.

Let us now ask, in what sense was our Lord tempted? Temptation (*peirasmos*) is used in two senses and great confusion arises from not distinguishing these: (a) of enticement, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed" (James 1:14). Our Lord was clearly never tempted in this sense. He had no "lust" to draw Him away; "In Him is no sin." It is of the nature of unclean animals and birds to love garbage, but for us it has no attraction. So the Lord passed through this scene of moral corruption, but there was nothing in Him to respond to it. What has a natural attraction for us left Him unscathed. But there is another sense of temptation, that of (b) testing. "Though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Peter 1:6). Enticement cannot come from God; "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man," but God does test all His people. It was in this sense He tempted Abraham (Gen. 22:1). We should pray to be delivered from enticements, and flee from them, but

we are to "count it all joy when we fall into divers testings."

In the latter sense, our Lord was tempted in all points, after the likeness or similitude (Heb. 4:15, *kath' homoioteta*).¹ The words "we are" are not in the original. That is, as far as it was possible for a sinless Divine Person to be tested "apart from sin," He was tested, and every test only served to bring out His perfections and proved Him to be "the Holy One of God," the Perfect Servant, the Faithful Witness. Moreover, His was a holy sympathy, never with sin unconfessed or devious ways persisted in, but with sorrow, suffering, and

infirmity. He was tested in every possible way proper to Himself. In this sense He was "tempted" of the Devil. The first temptation is enough to show up the error here combated. Satan would not appeal to us to make stones into bread. It would be no temptation to us, for an obvious reason, but he knew the Lord had the Almighty power at His disposal, if He could be induced to use it apart from the Father.

But why such efforts to enforce this one-sided view of the humanity of Christ? In order, the reply is, to insure to Him the ability to sympathize with us in our temptations. But it is admitted that our Lord did not need to be ill in order to sympathize with the sick. This admission seems to give the whole case away, for why should not the same principle hold good in other respects? Why should our Lord have to become ignorant in order to sympathize with the ignorant? Indeed, an ignorant person could not do so. But "sympathy" was not the primary end of the Lord's mission. He had something more important in view, "to seek and to save that which was lost," and more important still, to glorify the Father and finish the work He had given Him to do.

¹ This phrase, with the article, occurs again in chapter 7:15, "after the similitude of Melchizedek."



Maturing

C of course maturity does not come simply with the passing of years. Lessons must be learned on the journey. But growth takes time, and is an important ingredient along with grace and glory in the recipe of godly maturity.

No spring nor summer beauty
hath such grace,
As I have seen in one autumnal
face.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . . for by Me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased."

(Proverbs 9:10-11)

Oft have I sat in secret sighs
To feel my flesh decay;
Then groaned aloud, with
frightening eyes
To view the tottering clay.

But I forbid my sorrows now,
Nor dares my flesh complain;
Diseases bring their profit too
— The joy o'ercomes the pain.

My cheerful soul now all the
day
Sits waiting here and sings,
Looks through the ruin of her
clay,
And practices her wings.
— Isaac Watts

"They shall still bring forth
fruit in old age; they shall be
fat and flourishing."

(Psalm 92:14)

"Still" implies previous fruitfulness. After a misspent and wasted life, you cannot expect fruit in old age. But even then, God gives hope when He says: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten . . ." (Joel 2:25)

The spring, like youth, fresh blossoms doth produce,
But autumn makes them ripe and fit for use. — Sir John Denham

"Even to hoar hairs will I carry you."
As He the pilgrims forward leadeth,
Footsteps may falter, eyes grow dim,
But every sigh He quickly heedeth,
And not a pain is hid from Him.

"The hoary head is a crown of
glory, if it be found in the way
of righteousness."

(Proverbs 16:31)

"All things become real as we
grow old through grace; yet He
is always the same: sufficient for
the young, and sufficient also for
the old, and so full of tenderness
and grace." — J. N. Darby

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in
a full age, like as a shock of corn
cometh in in his season."

(Job 5:26)

To be seventy years young is
sometimes far more cheerful and
hopeful than to be forty years old.
— C. W. Holmes
to Julia Ward Howe when she turned
seventy.

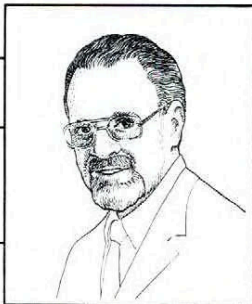
They call it "going down the hill" when we are growing old;
And speak with mournful accents when our years are nearly told:
They sigh when talking of the past—the days that used to be —
As if the future were not bright with immortality.

But oh! it is not "going down," 'tis climbing higher — higher,
Until we almost see the mansions that our souls desire;
For if the natural eye grows dim, it is but dim to earth,
While the eye of faith grows keener, to perceive the Saviour's worth.



However many years the Lord
may give us, we have this assurance that He will bear us up, no matter what the disappointments or tragedies of life. In the same way that He carried the Israelites for forty years through the wilderness, meeting their every need, so He will do the same for us today. His tenderness and care exceed that of the gentlest of human shepherds, and He never wearies.

— Dennis Hinton



LOOK AT BOOKS

Commentary Comments

Jim McKendrick

Since the translation of the Bible into English for the masses, bought and paid for by the blood of noble martyrs, God has given to the English-speaking world scores of gifted men to help explain the text of the Bible. So that now the English-speaking world is the richest deposit of helps to understanding the Bible of any language group. In Grand Rapids, MI, you can walk through a used book store that boasts of over 120,000 volumes of used religious and theological books.

Unfortunately, at this smorgasbord of helps there are some attractive morsels which are filled with poison. How can a person pick out that which is good and helpful on the market today? Let me give four suggestions. First of all, ASK for counsel of older, widely-read men. "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). Second, take time to LEARN the general theological stands of the publishers. Most publishers have definite doctrinal positions and publish books in accordance with those statements. There are still a few "safe" publishers around. However, the ones with the toughest stands are normally not the biggest. Then thirdly, READ the introduction and preface of the book before you make your purchase. This will normally tell you what the author thinks of the Scripture and his stand on certain doctrines that will be expounded in the book. And last of all, LOOK up a passage that may be difficult or revealing as to the doctrines of the author. Commentaries abound today, so spend your resources wisely.

Let's talk about New Testament commentaries this time and let me suggest two tools you can trust. First is a one-volume commentary by William MacDonald called *The Believer's Bible Commentary*. Most of the readership of this column will be familiar with him. He has been a respected Bible teacher for more years than he would like to admit. Let's just say that my mother enjoyed his classes when she attended evening school at Emmaus Bible School in Chicago when she was a young lady. Over the years, he has

proven to be an expositor who is clear, concise, and sound. He has not been swayed by "every wind of doctrine" that comes along and thus "speaking the truth in love" has been a helper of many. This commentary is the fruit of years of study and teaching. One of the interesting aspects of this volume is the treatment of thirty-seven doctrinal subjects that are often battle grounds among believers. He gives solid scriptural answers and will cause you to think carefully about

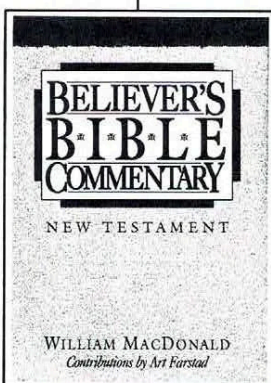
the subject, even if you don't agree with his conclusions. You can be sure his conclusions have been molded in the fires of study, meditation, and experience. This one is worth the money.

Once you have digested that one, you are ready for one of the finest sets of commentaries on the market today. It is called *What the Bible Teaches* and will be nine volumes when it is completed. Seven volumes are out now and this set deserves a four-star rating. Published in Scotland by Ritchie

Publishers, this set is written a little more technically than Mr. MacDonald's but certainly within the reach of all who are serious about Bible study. The various authors read like a Who's Who of teachers and preachers who have ministered the Word of God among the assemblies of God's people in Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the U. S. Each one of these men know their God and their Bibles, and are committed to the careful exposition of the Word of God with a view to increasing our love and devotion to Him. A careful blend of exposition and devotion without dodging the tough passages make these volumes some of the finest I have read.

You will find all these men will defend the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, their authoritative and infallible teaching of the Word of God, the impeccability of Christ, the distinctive roles of men and women in the Church, and the pretribulation rapture.

If you have no other New Testament commentaries on your shelf than these, you will be greatly enriched and your understanding of the Scriptures will be greatly enhanced.



Every Day Reading Plan

Section 11: 2 Samuel — The Life and Times of King David

November 1	2 Samuel 1:1–16	The death of Saul: the lie
November 2	2 Samuel 1:17–27	The death of Saul: the lament
November 3	2 Samuel 2:1–11	David at Hebron — King of Judah
November 4	2 Samuel 2:12–32	Civil war with the House of Saul
November 5	2 Samuel 3:1–39	Abner's defection and death
November 6	2 Samuel 4:1–12	Ish-bosheth's murder; David's response
November 7	2 Samuel 5:1–16	David, king of Israel, takes Jerusalem
November 8	2 Samuel 5:17–25	War with the Philistines
November 9	2 Samuel 6:1–11	Uzzah was a casualty!
November 10	2 Samuel 6:12–23	The ark is brought home
November 11	2 Samuel 7:1–17	The Davidic Covenant
November 12	2 Samuel 7:18–29	Worship from a grateful heart
November 13	2 Samuel 8:1–18	The kingdom is established
November 14	2 Samuel 9:1–13	Mephibosheth and the magnanimous king
November 15	2 Samuel 10:1–19	David defeats the Ammonites
November 16	2 Samuel 11:1–27	David defeats himself
November 17	2 Samuel 12:1–23	"Thou art the man."
November 18	2 Samuel 12:24–31	Solomon's birth; Ammon's defeat
November 19	2 Samuel 13:1–39	Amnon's crime and Absalom's revenge
November 20	2 Samuel 14:1–33	Prelude to disaster
November 21	2 Samuel 15:1–12	Israel's stolen hearts
November 22	2 Samuel 15:13–37	David flees Jerusalem
November 23	2 Samuel 16:1–23	Ziba's craft, Shimei's curse, Ahithophel's counsel
November 24	2 Samuel 17:1–29	The choice between Hushai and Ahithophel
November 25	2 Samuel 18:1–33	The battle of Mount Ephraim
November 26	2 Samuel 19:1–43	David returns to Jerusalem
November 27	2 Samuel 20:1–26	Sheba: another rebellious heart
November 28	2 Samuel 21:1–22	Gibeonite alliance; Philistine animosity
November 29	2 Samuel 22:1–23:7	David's song and last words
November 30	2 Samuel 23:8–24:25	His mighty men and a weak moment

2 Samuel

Continuing the narrative of 1 Samuel (remember they originally formed one book), 2 Samuel presents the biography of David from the news of Saul's death at Gilboa to his last days as king. You will be hard pressed to find more fascinating reading anywhere else. The twenty-four chapters cover a period of approximately thirty-eight years.

The drama begins with David sitting in the burned remains of Ziklag where he hears the news of the death of Saul. It ends with him standing by the burning remains of oxen on Mount Moriah where his son would later build a temple to Jehovah.

In between these two events, he would unify the twelve tribes into a nation, capture the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and make it the royal capital, the Zion of God. He would subdue Israel's enemies, and extend the kingdom from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, from the Red Sea to the Orontes River in the Lebanon.

While David's failures and folly are seen rather obviously in this book, one cannot help but also see flashes of the glorious kingdom of Messiah. It is David's royal line that would provide the "root and offspring" that would be the Anointed One of God. It is David's royal city that will one day herald the King of kings when He returns to take up the throne on earth, when He shall establish in sincerity what was given Him in mockery two thousand years ago. It will be some of David's own songs that will provide the theme for that august occasion. And the truth of the magnificent grace and mercy of God manifested in that day was illustrated by David the king in his treatment of Mephibosheth.

For seven and a half years, David reigned in obscurity, rejected by Israel and honored only by his own. But eventually, when Israel had nowhere else to turn, they acknowledged the shepherd-king from Bethlehem, who long years before had interposed himself between them and their enemy in the valley of death. Watch his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. But would the story be complete without his rival rising up to challenge his authority and seek to win the hearts of the people? One cannot help but hear the faint echo of that Other King from Bethlehem, unknown cham-

pion of His people, the "Good Shepherd" who gave His life for the sheep. Can you see them both ascending Olivet, weeping, rejected by their own? You hardly notice the thousand years between.

From the "Song of the Bow," David's eloquent lament on the death of Saul and Jonathan, to the dedication of the temple site at the end of the book, the whole breathes out the heart of the minstrel-shepherd. "Under David the harassed tribes became a conquering nation, and music, song, history, and prophetic dreams sprang to life" (C. A. Dinsmore).

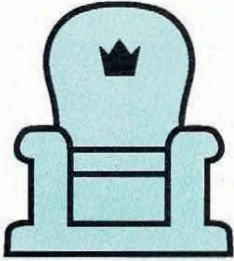
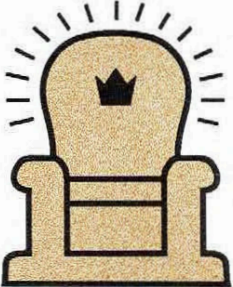
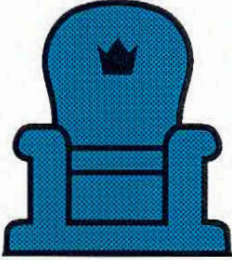
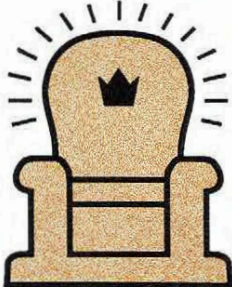
The sweet songs, the stirring victories, the gracious deeds, and wise decisions make David's failures all the more hurtful and glaring. His sin whereby he has made "the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" has been told not only in Gath and Askelon but wherever the Bible has shone its revelatory light. With what relish the ribald unbeliever tells the story of the king's shameful deed, but how surely the story is aborted before the conclusion of the matter. Profound is his repentance, and from his bitter grief is wrung the holy sweetness of Psalms 32 and 51. The student of 2 Samuel would find added blessings in reading the historical Psalms in their proper sequence as the story unfolds.

There are many rich benefits from a careful rereading of this book, not the least of which is spending time in the presence of a man, thoroughly human, who nonetheless thought the best place to be was in the hand of God, even in the time of chastisement. David trusted God's hand because he knew God's heart. As we journey through the book in the days ahead, may we also learn to trust Him more.

FOR FURTHER READING:

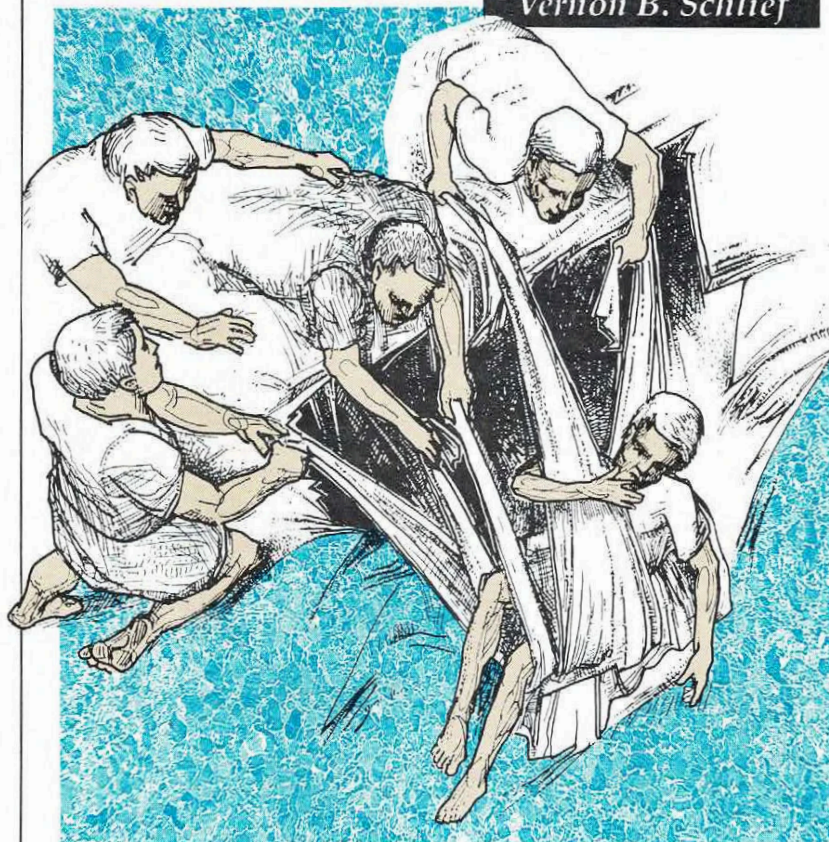
David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King, F. B. Meyer
Second Samuel, Peter J. Pell
Life & Times of David, C. H. Macintosh
Israel under Samuel, Saul & David, A. Edersheim

The Kingdom Established

Ch. 1-4	Ch. 5-10	Ch. 11-21	Ch. 22-24
<p><i>David, King of Judah</i></p>  <p><i>Beginnings At Hebron</i></p> <p>ch. 1 — Saul's death; A test of character ch. 2 — David crowned; A test of loyalty ch. 3 — Abner's defection; A test of diplomacy ch. 4 — Ishbosheth's death; A test of justice</p>	<p><i>David, King of Israel</i></p>  <p><i>Centralized At Jerusalem</i></p> <p>ch. 5 — The capture of Zion ch. 6 — The ark brought home ch. 7 — The Davidic covenant ch. 8 — The kingdom established ch. 9 — Kindness to Mephibosheth ch. 10 — The Ammonite war</p>	<p><i>The Kingdom in Turmoil</i></p>  <p><i>In Decline and In Exile</i></p> <p>ch. 11-12 — David's sin and confession ch. 13-14 — Amnon and Absalom ch. 15-18 — The revolt and David's flight ch. 19 — David's return ch. 20 — Sheba's revolt ch. 21 — Gibeonite and Philistine problems</p>	<p><i>The Kingdom Restored</i></p>  <p><i>Back to Jerusalem</i></p> <p>ch. 22 — A great prophetic Psalm ch. 23 — David's last words and mighty men ch. 24 — A story of judgment and the place where judgment and mercy meet</p>

Borne of Four

Vernon B. Schlieff



attention focused on the goal — to get a needy soul to Christ.

Each man had to consider the other three and work in accord as they encountered the third wall. Self, the "flesh" — is most often the most formidable barrier, making cooperation with others difficult. Each of the four had to depend on the other three. It had to be an effort of teamwork — togetherness. Otherwise the poor, helpless man might never have been brought to the Saviour.

There could be no self-seeking for individual glory by trying to outdo the others, no acts of stubbornness or selfwill. Only selflessly acting in unison could get the job done, to overcome the hindering walls, and get the needy soul to Jesus. What a demonstration of interdependence and grace on the part of each on this team.

The Lord enjoys seeing individual Christians in an assembly, and groups of assemblies, acting in dependence on Him in faith, and cooperating harmoniously together. Thus we can overcome walls whether of people, wood or stone, or of the flesh. In a Spirit-led assembly, there will be no contesting for power, glory, place, or recognition. Each will be esteeming the other better than themselves. There will be no backbiting or devouring of one another. May we learn from "the four" and with His help learn to take a firm hold on our corner of responsibility in the assembly, and, in cooperation with others, carry it to completion. By being steadfast in the faith, in harmony with Christ and the saints, in subjection to the elders, and putting our hands to the work, we will see lost souls brought to the Saviour, Christians edified, and the assembly built up.

In Mark 2, we see four men bearing a fifth to the Lord for help. Notice how they dealt with the obstacles they encountered on the way. Nothing deterred their resolute determination to accomplish their task, namely, to bring a needy soul to Christ.

The very first wall was the crowd, the press. This would have ended the trip for the modern-day, half-hearted, non-committed, so-called soul winner. These four would let nothing keep them from their committed purpose. In the same way today, we are often pressed (don't they call it "peer pressure"?) by people to keep from being soul winners.

Notice too, how these four removed a portion of the roof — the second wall — so they could let the sick man down to Jesus. Herein is a deep lesson in cooperation. They worked as a team. Each man had to attend carefully to his corner of responsibility, holding the bed steady, keeping his

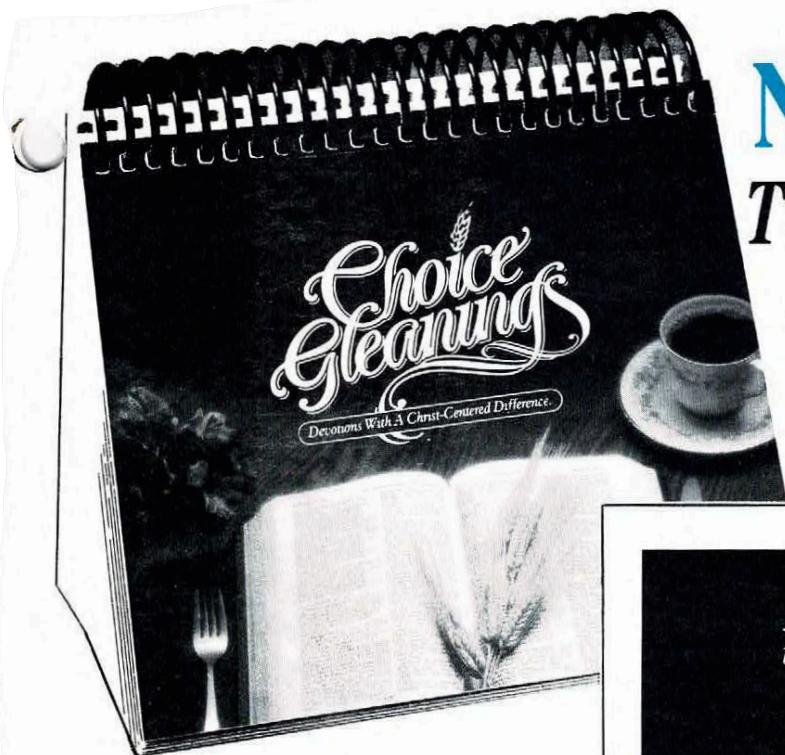
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"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

JEREMIAH 15:16

WEDNESDAY 1
JANUARY

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this. Ecclesiastes 7:10

We hear how hard it is to be a Christian in these perilous times. When we look at "the good old days," distance lends enchantment to the view. So we paint around them a brighter halo than they deserve. A subscriber complained to a magazine editor, "Your magazine is not as good as it used to be." The editor replied, "It never has been." And when has it ever been easy to be a Christian?

From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray,
Tread all the powers of darkness down
And win the well-fought day. — Charles Wesley

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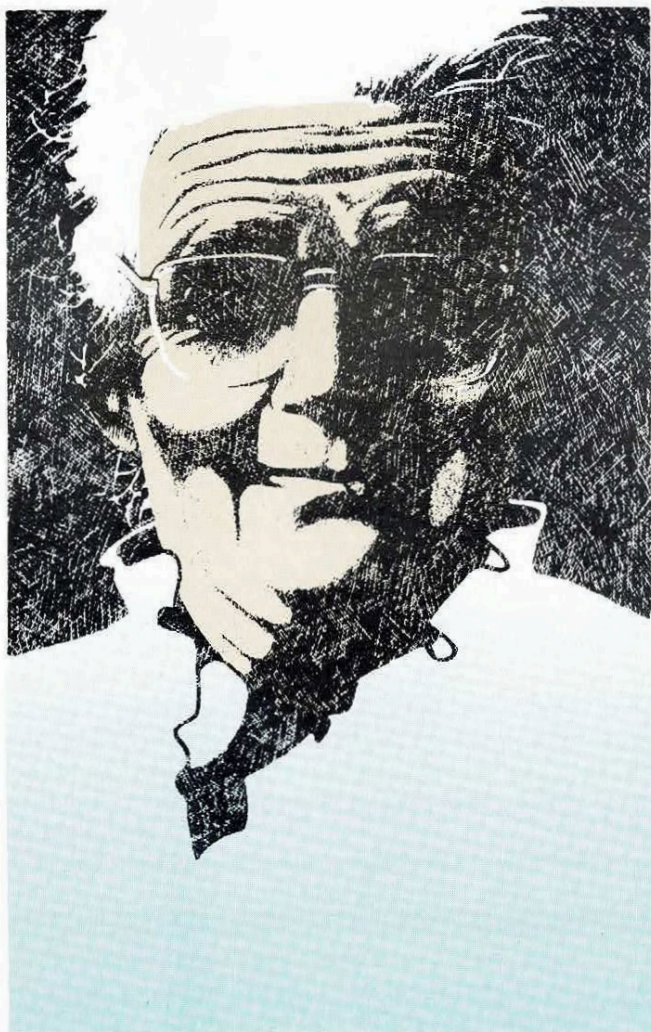
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Benediction

BLESSED are they who understand
My faltering step and palsied hand.

BLESSED are they who know my ears today
Must strain to catch the things they say.

BLESSED are they who seem to know
That my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.

BLESSED are they who looked away
When coffee spilled at the table today.

BLESSED are they with a cheery smile
Who stop to chat for a little while.

BLESSED are they who never say,
You've told that story twice today.

BLESSED are they who know the ways
To bring back memories of yesterdays.

BLESSED are they who make it known
That I'm loved, respected, and not alone.

BLESSED are they who know I'm at a loss
To find the strength to carry my cross.

BLESSED are they who ease the days
On my journey Home in loving ways.