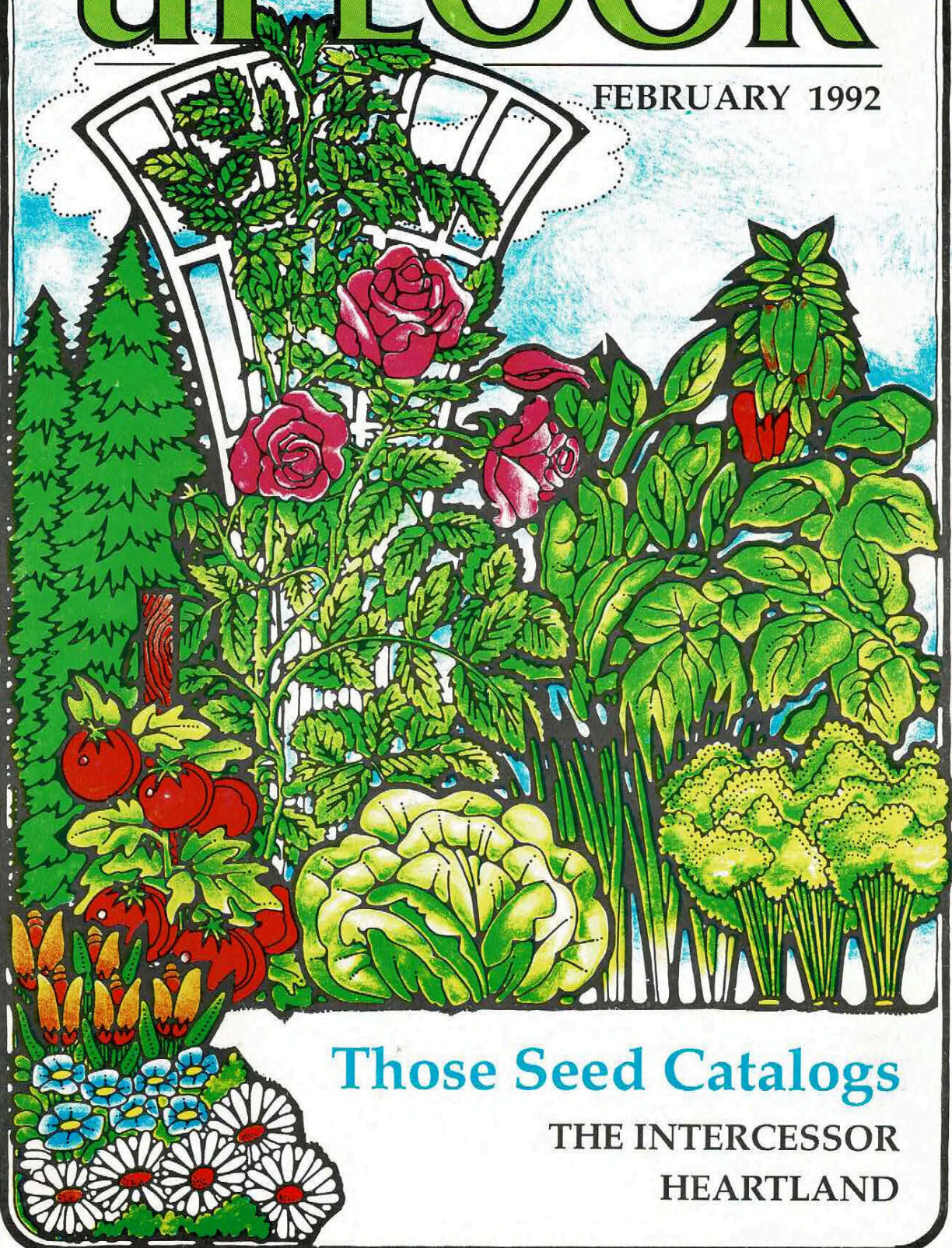


UPLOOK

FEBRUARY 1992



Those Seed Catalogs

THE INTERCESSOR
HEARTLAND



EDITORIAL

Those Seed Catalogs

J. B. Nicholson Jr.

When our northern climes are still held firmly in the embrace of winter, the brightly colored, lavishly illustrated seed catalogs arrive. As much as the melting snow (though we know we may still be in for a few hearty blizzards) and the running of the sugar maples, these hopeful little magazines are the harbingers of spring.

A "green thumb" I'm not, but I can't help from dreaming a bit as I enjoy the samplings of the world my Father made. How can it be that those little, wrinkled seeds can turn into such fragrance and fruitfulness? You could hardly guess from their drab and humble coats what secrets they hold.

We all trace our ancestry back through the ages to Adam and Eve and beyond that to the heart of God. So each potential plant you tuck beneath earth's blanket would be able to follow its line back to that word from Elohim recorded in Genesis 1:11. The seed was His idea.

It was His idea that every seed should be after its own kind. At the very beginning, He established that the kind of seed a man sowed would be the kind he would reap. It should be no surprise to the farmer who sows barley that his field yields no wheat. Nor should it surprise us that sowing to the flesh will not bring a bumper crop of the fruit of the Spirit.

It was His idea that sowing one seed would result in many more. You may count the kernels in a ear of seed corn, but who can count the fields of corn in a single seed? It was the intent of a generous-hearted God that seed should produce some thirty, some sixty, some one hundred-fold. Tragically, the seeds of doubt and rebellion sown in the fertile ground of the human soul are still bearing fruit too.

It was His idea that one seed would die in order to produce much more. The city where I grew up was the hometown of one of the largest seed companies in Canada. Its owner was not a Christian, although many in his family were. On one occasion, he said to me, "The Bible speaks about a seed dying to bear fruit. If my seeds die, I throw them away." He was thinking of death as the cessation of life, but according to the Bible, death is separa-

tion. In order to bear fruit, the seed is put alone into the darkness and dies as a seed that it might not abide alone. What a Seed! What a darkness! What a death! What a harvest!

The Lord Jesus told three stories about seeds in Matthew 13. It is essential that we distinguish these. In the first, there were *different kinds of ground*. The seed was all the same — the Word of God. The plants that did grow were not the people, but the indicator that the Word was having an influence in the individual's life. What was happening below ground only God could know. In fact, some of those that showed evidence of acceptance of the Word had done it only superficially. When the hot times came (and they do), it was discovered that they did not have the root of the matter in them. For this reason, the believer "rejoices in tribulation" because those who are real not only see endurance developed in their lives, but experience (the proof that they are genuine) and the hope of coming fruit (Rom. 5:4).

In the second seed parable, the Lord pictured a *different kind of growth*; a very little thing becomes a massive enclave for a mixture of birds. A sketch of the kingdom, it shows the phenomenal growth of a system that on the one hand acknowledges God, and on the other, becomes a refuge for anything that happens to be flying by.

In the third, there is a *different kind of germ*. Here the germinating influence is described as "the children of the kingdom" and "the children of the devil." Both will bear fruit after their kind. There has been a mighty *sowing*, the Son of Man sowing in the light, the enemy at night. They grow side by side and at times are hard to distinguish. Then there has been a great period of *growing*. But there is coming a time of *mowing*. Then the results will be assessed — at the end of the world. It is not time that will tell, but eternity.

Adoniram Judson, who died to a life of ease as a religious professional to be a servant of the Lord in the Far East, knew what he was writing:

*In spite of sorrow, loss, and pain,
Our course be onward still;
We sow on Burma's barren plain,
We reap on Zion's hill.*

U

UPLOOK

(USPS 620-640)

Founded in 1927 as *Look on the Fields*,
is published eleven times per year by



GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:
UPLOOK
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues from this publication, to God be the glory.

Gospel Folio Press is a tax-exempt corporation looking to the Lord to provide for the needs of this ministry. This magazine is sent freely to those who request it, but evidently is not freely produced. Donations should be made payable to "UPLOOK" and sent to:

U.S. donors:

P.O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI
49501-2041

Canadian donors:

P. O. Box 427
St. Catharines, ON
L2R 6V9

An official receipt for income tax purposes will be issued.

Be sure to enclose your former address label when sending a change of address. Please let us know of changes six weeks in advance.

UPLOOK is copyrighted solely for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the material. It is not intended to limit the proper use of articles contained in the magazine. Please include the words: "UPLOOK magazine, by permission" on photocopies made for personal use. For large quantities or other purposes, contact UPLOOK.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material.

N #1055-2642

Printed in the U. S. A.

© Copyright 1992 Gospel Folio Press

CONTENTS

Volume 59 Number 2

FEATURES

PUBLIC MINISTRY <i>Robert McClurkin</i>	4
SERVICE WITH A PASSION <i>Henry Groes</i>	5
THE SOLITARY SAVIOUR <i>Northcote Deck</i>	10
PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE <i>James H. Brookes</i>	13
BE AN EXAMPLE	15
THE SECRET <i>Joan Suisted</i>	17
M.E., THE LORD, AND ME	18
HEARTLAND <i>Carl Knott</i>	22
THE INTERCESSOR <i>W. Ross Rainey</i>	24
GOD'S WILL AND PRESENT LOSS <i>C. Anderson</i>	30

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL	2
FRONT LINES	6
WHAT'S GOING ON?	8
BOUQUET OF BLESSINGS	19
HEROES	20
LOOK AT BOOKS	26
MANNA: FOR MARCH	27
LET ME INTRODUCE: 2 CHRONICLES	28

Founding Publisher
WILLIAM J. PELL

Previous Editors
LEONARD SHELDRAKE
PETER J. PELL
DR. H. A. CAMERON

Editor
J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

Managing Editor
JOHN N. STELLEMA

Contributing Editors
JOHN A. BJORLIE
ALEXANDER McEACHERN
JIM McKENDRICK

Circulation Manager
HAZEL JOHNSON

How About Ministry?

Robert McClurkin

The principle of all ministry is *love*. The rule of all ministry is *truth*. And the motive of all ministry is the *glory* of God. We live in a day when the way the Word of God is ministered is more often determined by the sales manual or the entertainer's approach than the high standards of heaven. But what are the characteristics of the kind of public ministry that pleases God?

SEASONABLE MINISTRY

First of all, all ministry must be seasonable. Look at verse 3: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." What is edification? It is the enlightenment of the mind. What is exhortation? It is the enlightenment of the conscience. And what is comfort? It is the binding of the wounds of the heart. Ministry must build up. Ministry must stir up. Ministry must bind up. That is ministry when it is exercised under the superintendency of the Spirit of God.

MINISTRY BY THE BOOK

Not only must all ministry be seasonable, but all ministry must be scriptural. Look at verse 6: "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" All ministry must be scriptural. Oh, that everyone who rises to minister to others would make sure that "Thus saith the Lord" is behind what he says.

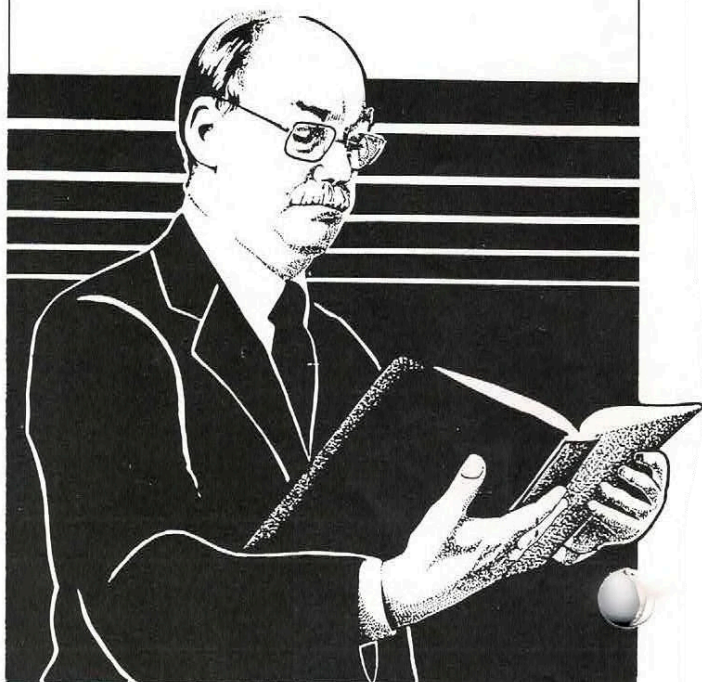
UNDERSTANDABLE MINISTRY

All ministry must be easy to be understood. Look at verse 9: "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" All ministry must be in words that are easy to be understood. After all, when we read our Bible we don't have a dictionary beside us. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is in words that are easily understood. The ministry must not only be easily understood by the audi-

ence, but the man that ministers must understand what he's talking about. If he doesn't, nobody else will. All ministry must be understood by the speaker so that he will get a message from God and he will give it in the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 19).

MINISTRY WITH GRIP

All ministry must have a grip (v. 24). Ministry must be significant. Note three musical instruments in our chapter. In verse 7, the pipe and the harp; in verse 8, the trumpet. Let us think of these musical instruments for a moment, for they are brought in to illustrate ministry and its significance. What is the pipe? It is a symbol of joy. You remember our Lord saying, "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced." All must convey the very joy of God, because the joy of the Lord is our strength. That means ministry must not be depressing. How often we have seen ministry so depressing that God's people could hardly lift themselves above it. Ministry must have the note of joy



PUBLIC MINISTRY

and the note of victory so that God's people will be lifted and made to realize that God is on the throne and He is in control of everything.

The harp is the symbol of praise and of worship. All ministry must have the note of worship so that it will touch the very strings of our hearts that we will be able to rise and respond to God when He speaks to us.

But all ministry must also have a note of warning. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself for the battle? There are snares that surround the people of God and God has His instruments to confront the forces of evil and guard the people of God from the attacks of the wicked one. All ministry will have that note of warning so that God's people will be guided around those hidden rocks and move on to the glory of God.

THE LIBERTY OF SPIRITUAL MINISTRY

Note the liberty of ministry in verse 29: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." No man is the judge of his own ministry. The church is the judge of ministry. But here is a lovely liberty. Let the prophets speak two or three — no one-man ministry here.

Then note how the church waits in verse 30: "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." That means that when I'm sitting and I feel that God may have given me a message, I'm going to wait for a moment — perhaps God has given the message to my brother that sitteth by. If so, I will keep my seat. Note in verse 32: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." That is, my spirit will be subject to my brother who will rise to give the message that God has for the people of God. And note that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Isn't it nice to note that the six times where this expression, "the God of peace," is found, it seems there's something disturbing God's people. The God of peace reveals Himself — and He's not the author of confusion.

Three verses of Scripture crown the Spirit's gentle instructions for all ministry given to glorify the Lord and help His people: "Let all things be done unto edifying"; "Let all things be done decently and in order," and "Let all your things be done with love."



Service WITH A Passion

HENRY GROVES

When the Master went away, He gave to each servant his own work — enough to occupy the whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. He recognizes, though we may forget, that we are altogether His. Our aim should be to seek a commendation like the woman of whom it was said, "She hath done what she could."

Let us not be content to simply lay down our money, or even our time, for we have something better to give. A far higher "laying down" is before us — the voluntary laying down of self, that terrible idol in the heart of man that is always the last to fall.

Christ "gave Himself" to do the will of Him that sent Him; we must also give ourselves. Then our service, be it high or low as man looks at it, will be great in the sight of God, who accepts it according to what we have, and not according to what we have not.

Paul's was not proxy service. He could say, "I have suffered the loss of all things . . . that I may win Christ." And He did win Christ. His daily life bore witness to it, and he could say, "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

There is much liberality in the church of God, and there is much in the world also. But do we not need to remember what was said of the nobles of Tekoa, that they "put not their necks to the work of the Lord"? (Neh. 3:5). What a contrast is the testimony borne by Paul concerning Priscilla and Aquila, his "helpers in Christ Jesus," that for his life they had "laid down their own necks," to whom not only did he give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:3-4).

May the Lord awaken more of this spirit in the Church at large, and we shall not hear, as we do on all sides, of the lack of laborers to gather in the sheaves of the Lord's harvest. He has labored, and bled, and died. We can enter into His labors, to gather in the fruit of His toil and travail. Then in the great harvest day, the Sower and His reapers will rejoice together.

Front Lines

A HIGHER CALLING

The Bible Chapel in Tucson, AZ was begun in 1937 through the efforts of T. B. Gilbert. One of those first saved was Clifford Livingston, in fellowship for 55 years. The Christians mourned his loss in February. He was a godly man, loved by all.

The assembly continues on well. It sponsors a prison Bible course ministry in Utah and Arizona. One of the elders has a weekly Bible class in a local prison. There is a happy mix of young and old in the assembly. Another assembly was begun some years ago and continues as Tortolita Bible Fellowship. Both are in happy fellowship.

Grace Chapel in El Paso is seeing some blessing. Young families have been added and the saints are encouraged. Prayer for continued growth will be appreciated. They are very active in the Southwest Bible Camp as are other assemblies in Arizona and New Mexico. — Donald L. Norbie

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

From the inception of Everyday Publications, brother R. E. Harlow has set before himself the goal of publishing verse-by-verse commentaries in everyday English for all 66 books of the Bible. That goal has been achieved with the publication of Robert Sykes' Bible Study Guide on 1 and 2 Chronicles. This mammoth project has and will be a tremendous source for those who translate study material into other languages as well as helping the modern reader

who stumbles over the writings of past generations. Sykes' 192-page book on Chronicles is available for \$6.55. R. E. Harlow has himself put together a helpful and straightforward book of 80 pages on Eternal Security available for \$3.15. Contact:

Everyday Publications
421 Nugget Avenue, Unit 2
Scarborough, ON
Canada M1S 4L8
Phone or Fax (416) 291-9411

CMML SPRING MEN'S CONFERENCE

On Saturday, March 21, Christian Missions in Many Lands will host a day of ministry at Terrill Middle School in Fanwood, New Jersey. The time will be 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The topic under consideration: "How Can We Really Know God?" The invited speakers will be Larry Batts of North Carolina, Sandy McEachern of Ontario, and Clint Irvin of Pennsylvania.

CMML CONFERENCE IN YORK, PA

On Saturday, March 28, CMML will also host a conference on the theme: "The Lord's Servant and the Lord's Service," especially considering Romans 16:1-2 and Colossians 4:12. The invited speakers are Jonathan Brower of Virginia, and J. Philip Morgan of Florida. From 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., it will be held in the Christian School of York, York, PA.

LADIES' MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The saints meeting at Martin Road Gospel Chapel announce

they will hold the Annual Ladies' Missionary Conference April 4, from 9:30 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. The day will include mission reports, teaching and fellowship. Write:

The Ladies of
Martin Road Chapel
20505 Martin Road
St. Clair Shores, MI

DALLAS AREA BIBLE CONFERENCE

God willing, Rob Linsted and Les Rainey will share in the ministry of the Word April 10-12 at the Wheatland Bible Chapel, 1303 West Wheatland Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116. Contact:

Bob Muldoon
2316 Anders
Mesquite, TX 75150
(214) 270-5646

PENNSYLVANIA EASTER CONFERENCE

Our brothers R. E. Harlow, Gordon Reager, Wade LeBlanc, and Alex Stephenson intend, in the will of the Lord, to minister the Word at the Annual Easter Conference April 17-19 at Marple Christian Assembly, Route 252 at Cedar Grove Rd., Marple Twp., Media PA 19063 Contact:

James J. Martindale
Tel-Hai Cottage #20
P.O. Box 190
Honey Brook PA 19344
(215) 273-3985

VANCOUVER EASTER CONFERENCE APRIL 17-19

The annual Easter Conference for the greater Vancouver Area is to be held April 17-19, 1992 at Granville Chapel.

FRONT LINES

PROPHETIC HIGHLIGHTS

In the will of the Lord, the Christians meeting at Mountain Ridge Bible Chapel will host a prophetic conference May 2. The meetings will be from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The speaker is Rob Linsted of Wichita, KS. Those interested should contact :
Mountain Ridge Bible Chapel
763 Mountain Avenue
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922

WORKING THE SOIL IN REDFIELD, IOWA

Dave and Rose Hammond have been using the booklet "Ultimate Questions" in their Gospel work in Iowa. Dave writes: "I have enjoyed beginning to follow up everyone in Redfield, asking them if they had opportunity to read the book 'Ultimate Questions' that I gave out. I spent one afternoon with a lady who just couldn't understand another dear lady who had told her she knew she was saved. She read and reread verses on being lost and separated from God, and how God demanded a blood sacrifice. I am asking God for much boldness, and no beating around the bush, but to see people face God in their sinful state." Let us join Dave and Rose in prayer that we would all have this spirit, and that good Gospel literature would find open doors.

SO WE LABOR

Since their return from the Philippines, Milton and Marjorie Haack have found their hands full as they work in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Their experience and counsel have also been a real encouragement to the new meeting in Eau Claire, WI. Homer and Margaret Payne have also helped out there.



Milton & Margorie Haack

Please pray for this fledgling assembly, that they will continue to enjoy steady growth and maturing, and that they will have an effective door of Gospel proclamation. The University in Eau Claire provides an ideal opportunity for open air preaching in the early fall and spring of the year.

GET YOUR MISSIONARY PRAYER HANDBOOK?

For those of you who are still without your 1992 Missionary Prayer Handbook, there is hope. You can still obtain them in the U.S.A. at \$2.00 per copy or 3 copies for \$5.00. In Canada at \$2.50 per copy or 3 copies for \$6.00. Order from:

CMML, Inc.
P. O. Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762

or

Everyday Publications, Inc.
421 Nugget Avenue, Unit 2
Scarborough, ON M1S 4L8

SPREADING A TABLE AT IROQUOINA

Jim and Alice Weisbecker write, "Some months back, a Bible study was begun with a local couple who were interested in the New Testament principles of gathering. The Bible study has now grown to ten

people. With much prayer and with the godly counsel of our commending elders, a few families will begin breaking bread at Camp Iroquoina. There are no local assemblies in the Endless Mountains of PA or the Southern Tier area of NY. If there are any like-minded believers in the Binghamton, NY and Montrose, PA area, we would appreciate hearing from them. They should contact Jim Weisbacker, Rt. 1 Box 176, Hallstead, PA 18822, (717) 967-2817. Please remember this work in prayer as we seek to glorify and honor the Lord in all that we do."

DAVE AND RENEE IMRE EN-ROUTE TO NEW GUINEA

The saints at Faith Bible Chapel, Simcoe, ON are happy to commend Dave and Renee Imre to full-time service in the Lord's work. Dave graduated as a Commercial Helicopter Pilot in 1990 and he and Renee were married in 1991. Both have been dedicated workers since the work in Simcoe began in 1989. After a time of prayer and waiting on the Lord, they feel He would have them serve Him in New Guinea. They are presently undergoing some training through the New Tribes Institute in Durham ON. The saints covet your prayers on their behalf.

SOUTHEASTERN WORKER'S CONFERENCE

The conference that was held in Greensboro, NC, February 18-19, 1992 was a blessing to many and was well attended. At one session, they counted over 375 in attendance. God willing, next year's conference will be at Believer's Gospel Chapel, Augusta, GA.

U

WHAT'S GOING ON?

News from Around the Globe

THE CHURCH IN EGYPT

In spite of periods of severe persecution, the church has survived 1,350 years of Muslim domination in Egypt. Recent persecution has not been the most severe or systematic, but it has been frequent since 1980 when Islamic law was recognized as the main source of the law in that country.

Muslims who convert to Christianity can face imprisonment and torture. Three such were released last year after thousands of Christians worldwide wrote the government. It is believed that perhaps 200 more languish in prison.

Yet Christians rejoice over some relatively new freedoms. Most restrictions on the publishing and sale of Christian books have been lifted. — *Pulse*

ANOTHER "GOSPEL"

Thanks to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, the Muslim World League is to distribute 6.2 million copies of the Koran in the U. S., Europe, China, and Kazakhstan.

ZONED OUT

Will church buildings remain a part of America's municipal landscape? Across the U.S., church meeting places are being kept out of neighborhoods or shackled in their usefulness by zoning restrictions.

The construction plans of many religious bodies are being rejected or postponed by opponents who object: "Not in my backyard!" This seems to mirror a rising hostility to religion.

Many new churches that want to build find there is sim-

ply no space allotted for them in carefully planned subdivisions. In other cases, congregations that existed long before the advent of modern zoning regulations, which became widespread during the post-World War II building surge, want to add on or remodel, but can't. Limits on building size, lot size, traffic flow, parking space — all can snag an assembly's plans.

Will zoning laws be a device to regulate and then seek to restrict Christians? Should that occur, perhaps we will see home churches on the increase.

HUMANISM REIGNS ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

America's most prestigious universities — Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, and Princeton were founded to prepare men to propagate the Gospel. The Bible was the chief text and theology was the main course of study. The charter of William and Mary, written in 1693, states the college was founded "to the end that the church of Virginia may be furnished with a seminary of ministers of the Gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated among the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God."

In colonial America, religion was the major influence on student life. For example, the first code of Harvard laws in 1646 provided the following: "Everyone shall consider the main end of his life, and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, everyone shall

seriously, by prayer in secret, seek wisdom of Him. Everyone shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they may be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein..."

The 1785 charter of the University of Georgia said that in order to promote national prosperity, one of the institution's first objectives would be to encourage and support the principles of Christianity and morality and to provide the instruction that would mold the students to the love of virtue and good order. To accomplish this, the ninth law of the charter required that all professors and administrators be Christians, and take a public oath of allegiance and fidelity.

This pious influence continued through the turn of the last century, though greatly weakened by the prevailing intellectualism. "The position which we occupy is that the Christian faith is the perfection of human reason; that supernatural and historical Christianity is the only Christianity which is worth defending or which is capable of being defended on the grounds of reason or history; and that such Christianity, when interpreted by enlightened judgment, as to its truths and precepts, is not only friendly to the highest forms of culture, but is an essential condition of the same," said Noah Porter, the president of Yale College in 1878.

"We all attended chapel in those days (1890), and took turns in conducting the exercises; each took his turn in reading an appropriate selection from

WHAT'S GOING ON?

the Bible and elucidating its religious and ethical meaning," said Dr. Barton W. Everman of Indiana State University.

Even so, there was a constant battle throughout the nineteenth century between the religious and the secular sectors on campuses. In the twentieth century, the majority of colleges began to develop a vast extra-curricular program. Religious organizations found themselves competing with intercollegiate athletics, the social programs of fraternities and sororities and other secular student groups. By the end of the 1930s, chapel instruction virtually died and today is nonexistent. Theology, once considered the queen of the sciences, lost academic respectability.

Although the state universities led the way in secularism, the church-founded institutions were not far behind. Campuses such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Oberlin, and other church-related institutions are today spiritual wastelands.

— excerpted from *Who Will Rise Up* by G. Smock

AN EVEN BIGGER NET

Campus Crusade's "Jesus" film is now in 200 languages and has been shown recently in Albania.

The feature-length motion picture was approved by the new Albanian government.

According to its producers, the "Jesus" film is the most widely translated film in the history of the religious film industry. Since its release in 1979, an estimated 475 million people have seen it, including four million in the Soviet Union. In 1990, the film was shown on television around the world at Easter-time to an audience of some 81

million viewers. Campus Crusade claims that 32 million people have indicated they made a profession of faith in Christ after seeing the film. — *Decision*

PRICE TO PAY IN CHINA

At least 84 church leaders are under arrest, many suffering torture, according to a Swiss human-rights organization. Numerous reports have indicated that Christians are being singled out, having been subjected to beatings, imprisonments, and heavy fines on account of such "crimes" as holding "illegal" gatherings, "maintaining contacts with overseas organizations," and for the "illegal distribution of Bibles."

In mid-September, government forces reportedly raided a church of about 2,000, beating preachers and shocking them with cattle prods.

— *Christianity Today*

BLOC PARTIES

It seems strange that, as the world falls apart, the nations are coming together.

Canada, the U. S., and Mexico began negotiations in June in Toronto on a North American Free Trade Agreement. In October, the European Community agreed to form a free trade area of 380 million people stretching from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. This not only includes the 12-member EC but also seven nations in the Free Trade Association. At the same time, the six members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed in principle to establish a free trade area within 15 years.

As well, in December, 11 republics of the former Soviet Union formed a commonwealth. A council will coordinate issues of common interest.

WONDERING ABOUT THE GYPSIES

Since the 1950s, an evangelical movement has occurred among Gypsies in France. In the decades since, it has spread through Europe, into India, Latin America, and North America. John Le Cossec, who has been working among them in France, claims that some 70,000 Gypsies profess to know the Lord in France and that there are some 200,000 professors in Europe. In spite of their nomadic life-style, they have established congregations and in some places even Bible schools.

Missionaries in Europe, such as Carl Knott, tell us that there is indeed a profession of Christianity among Gypsies that is widespread, but often very shallow. Most want to be Christian Gypsies, but there are some things common to the Gypsy life that a Christian must die to.

ZAIRE UPDATE

Brother Bill Deans reports that President Mobutu still holds power there. The population is unhappy; the



money value continues to plummet; there is the most severe dry season in many years. This drought is also severely affecting Zimbabwe.

A container of paper for the Nyankunde press is finally en route to replace another load that disappeared in transit. Pray for safe passage.

Gertrud Harlow, working in the U. S., is updating the Zaire Swahili Bible. The Bible Society does not seem to be interested in producing this new edition.

The Solitary Saviour

Northcote Deck

"And Jesus was left alone" (Jn. 8:9).

The word "alone" (*monos*) is used eight times in the Gospels in connection with the Saviour. It truly expresses one aspect of the cost to Him of becoming incarnate in this world of sin. One hesitates to speak of His being lonely; the word hardly seems reverent applied to Him.

MORAL ISOLATION

But eight times we are told that He was *alone*, and it will be profitable to consider what that implied and involved to Him. John 8:9 may be our initial passage as it stresses the moral isolation of the sinless Son of God on His shining way to the Cross. That day in Jerusalem, surrounded by a critical crowd of sinners, His searching words so convicted them of sin that they were literally driven, one by one, from His holy Presence, until "*Jesus was left alone*" with the woman.

I think that scene gives the clue, and supplies the underlying reason why so often He was alone, isolated by His innate purity and holiness. From eternity He had dwelt "in the light no man can approach unto." And in His earthly life this continually compelled that moral solitude, which must have been His experience through the years, and have cost Him so dearly.

HIS "ADOPTED" FAMILY

He had shrouded His *glory*, He had laid aside His *riches* when He came to earth, but His *purity* He could not lay aside. But having a body "prepared" for Him, His humanity longed for human sympathy and fellowship. This was largely denied Him. "God setteth the solitary in families," wrote the Psalmist, but the Saviour's natural family had failed Him as we shall see, and His "adopted" family did not really come into "the fellowship of His sufferings" till after He had gone back

to heaven, with the result that He was called to tread "the winepress *alone*" (Isa. 63:3).

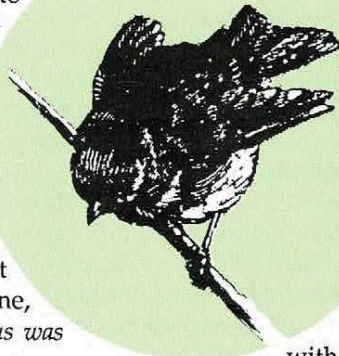
We have only one glimpse of Him as a child, when in Jerusalem His mother discovered Him "in the midst of the doctors" (Luke 2:46). And then the curtain drops, and nothing is revealed of the eighteen hidden years that follow in Nazareth. What did He do and say those unrecorded years? How did He feel? At least we know how He *lived*; as ever it was, "I do always those things which please Him." We know, too, how He *toiled* for a

living. "Is not this the carpenter?" records Mark 6:3. How much that sentence reveals and implies. He did not preach, those silent years of preparation in Nazareth, or they would have remembered it, and not merely referred to Him as "the carpenter." No mighty works were done those years either, for the "beginning of miracles" was at Cana. Of public witness there was none in Nazareth, for "His hour was not yet come."

Did He find sympathy in Nazareth with His mission, or fellowship in His solitude? Evidently the *common people* never realized that in their midst lived One so high and holy, nor shared in His sorrow over sin. His very *friends* (Mark 3:21) deemed Him "beside Himself" when He began to preach later on. They evidently had no glimpse of His glory. His "*brethren*" too, did not believe in Him (John 7:5) when His ministry began. We must suppose that in earlier years they, too, must have failed Him in real sympathy and understanding. Even then Psalm 69:8 was being fulfilled: "I am . . . a stranger unto my mother's children."

MARY, HIS MOTHER

There remains then Mary, His mother. Could He make a real confidant of her? We know at His miraculous birth "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). And with the doctors Mary "kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke 2:51). More we are not told. The scene at Cana does imply Mary's perfect confidence



THE SOLITARY SAVIOUR

in her Son and His power. But does it imply she was His confidant? Had He been able to unburden His heart to her, as to His person and mission, and coming death as sinbearer? Did He find in her that solace for His solitude, that human sympathy which He sought later on? It hardly seems as if this could have been so, even with Mary, for as Psalm 69:20 puts it: "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." So for "about thirty years" He lived in Nazareth, the solitary Saviour, cut off from human sympathy and understanding, unrecognized, unknown.

There indeed, day after day, the Lord had been living the Sermon on the Mount years before ever He preached a word of it. Yet, strange to say, that perfect life lived as an example, changed no other lives. It would take the Cross to do that.

NAZARETH

Later, when His ministry had begun, He paid a visit to Nazareth, where alone in all the world a perfect human life had been lived; and with what result? In His hometown of Nazareth, we read: "He could do no mighty work . . . because of their unbelief." Pathetic verdict! Thank God He has changed His hometown now, and dwells in the heart of every believer. Yet, alas, though His abode is different, only too often the home conditions are the same; unbelief still is in the heart, hence no mighty work, to His sorrow and our loss. "Lord, increase our faith."

Then came His public ministry, and the time when, kindly and deliberately, He had to divest Himself of His earthly relations, for now these natural ties were to be superseded by supernatural ties, and brethren after the flesh had to be replaced by brethren in the Spirit. So, to the seeking mother and brethren (Matt. 12:50) He decreed: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father . . . the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." So He turned from His natural family to His adopted family. Twelve of them He called to be His disciples. And the function and purpose of these new adopted relations is carefully and for all time set forth in Mark 3:14. He ordained twelve that: 1) they should be with Him, and that 2) He might send them forth to preach. Those words set forth

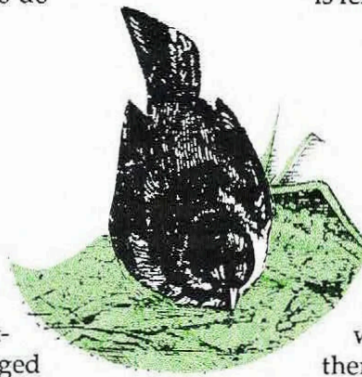
the order of importance of their purpose and call. Their office was to be twofold: They were to share His joys and sorrows with Him; they were to share His salvation with the world.

WITH HIM

Earliest man "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Even then, He was seeking fellowship with His creature man. *He has been seeking it ever since.* The disciples were called "that they might be with Him." We too are called (1 Cor. 1:9) "to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." For the highest function and possibility of man must ever be the fellowship of God. Service, however exalted and essential, is after all but a by-product of Christian life. The main, the highest function is fellowship.

Of course we need preparation for it, even as believers. When the prodigal came home, the Father did not invite him to sit at the feast in rags. It would not have been fitting, nor was it needful to do so. The loving Father could and did fall on his neck and kiss him, in spite of all his rags. They did not prevent *reconciliation*. They would prevent *communion*. Even so there is a fellowship with God which cannot be enjoyed by any believer without suitable preparation and apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness "put on." As with the prodigal, this is supplied free, on the terms that we do "put . . . on the Lord Jesus Christ" day by day.

This preparation for fellowship is often long and costly. Many lessons had to be learned by the disciples in their school of prayer. Many must be learned by each of us, yet how well worth the learning! Many indeed are the "strange ways" and acts of God. Time, too, is needed, and there is often bewilderment. Yet there must be patience and trust in the dark. "A saint's life is in the hand of God, like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer." God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, and He stretches and strains, and every now and then the saint cries: "I cannot stand any more!" God does not heed, He goes on stretching till His purpose is in sight, then He lets fly. You cannot see Him clearly just now, you cannot understand what He is doing, *but you know Him.* You



THE SOLITARY SAVIOUR

may often have to trust Him in the dark. So, only, is deepest fellowship developed.

"That they might be with Him." As He said later: they did continue with Him in His temptations; yet only in body; how far off they were in sympathy and understanding! When, "offended" at the truth "many of His disciples . . . walked no more with Him" (John 6:66), He cried: "Will ye also go away?" Then though Peter made a sincere declaration, "Thou art the Christ"; yet when the Saviour spoke of His inevitable cross, Peter, only willing for the crown, cried, "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" So, refusing to discuss His death, he failed Him in His need. Later at the Transfiguration, sent by God to revive their fainting faith, Moses and Elijah spoke with Him concerning just that, "His departure," and so supplied the disciples' lack.

But why prolong the recital of the disciples' failure and the Saviour's isolation? Only after Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit did the disciples and believers really begin to enter into "the

fellowship of His sufferings." Was there any sorrow like His sorrow? Can we not make amends today? He has promised to enable us to abide in Him. Thus by the Spirit's aid we may walk in unbroken communion and fellowship with the Saviour. Then, day by day, He may "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

SENT FORTH TO PREACH

Believers "were called Christians first in Antioch." The people knew they were actually disciples of Barnabas and Saul, yet those were not the names by which they were called. Because of their evident likeness to their Saviour, they were called Christians. The change was wrought by Him and not by men. Today *lives* must still authenticate *lips*. Because they do not, most sermons are in vain.

*"From church and creed the light goes out,
The saintly life survives;
The blessed Master none can doubt,
Revealed by sainted lives."*



U

Hold Fast

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Revelation 3:11

There is a morning talk show host in Miami, Florida, who signs off each program with these words: "You all hold on to what you all have got until you all get what you all want." That's not a bad motto for the Christian, for we are to "lay hold on eternal life." By faith we claim our inheritance, and like Moses, "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." With Peter we add, "Though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and so cleave to Christ with purpose of heart.

We look forward to getting a crown and hearing His approval in that day, but only that we may lay that crown at His feet. When we see Him, faith will be changed to sight; and we will gladly release what we held by faith when we have Him, and are like Him, in all His glory. "With joyful wonder we'll exclaim, The half hath not been told."

— Elliott Van Ryn

Paul as an Example

James H. Brookes

It seems strange at first to hear the apostle say, "Be ye followers of me." He was the humblest of men, prostrate in the dust of humility, hiding always behind the cross, and even at the close of life classing himself among sinners, of whom he says, "I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). He does not hesitate to confess, "I am the least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9); and "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). Here, in his own words, penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are characteristics of his life well worth imitating by the power of the same Spirit.

- *He knew himself.* "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). He knew that the mind of the flesh, including his own mind, "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). He never got over the memory of the time, although he knew he was forgiven, when he "was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. 1:13); and he reckons himself among those of whom he writes, "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

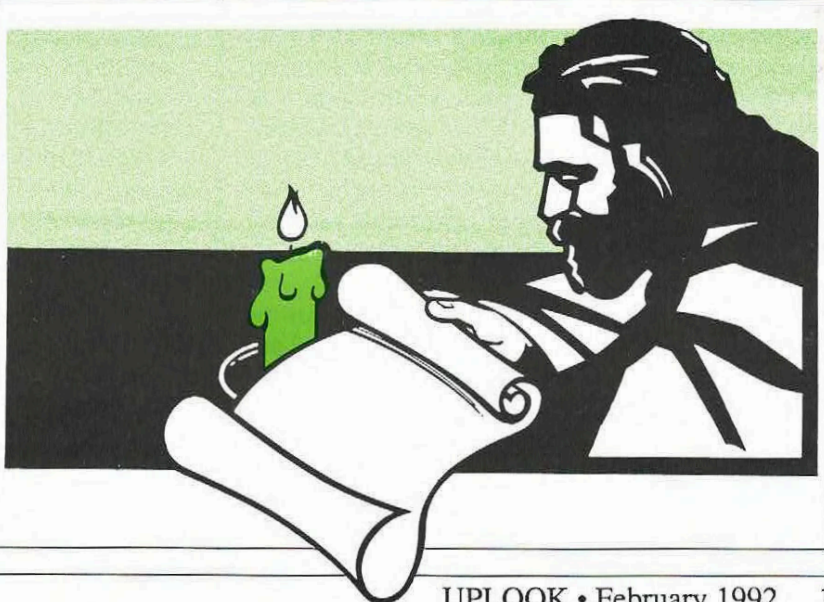
- *He knew Christ.* "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him" (Phil. 3:7-10).

- *He lived by Christ.* "I [have

been] crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). So much is this the truth that he speaks of "Christ, our life" (Col. 3:4); and he is "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10).

- *He lived for Christ.* "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8). "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

- *He preached Christ.* "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20). "... that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in



PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE

pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18).

- *He gloried in Christ.* "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world . . . From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:14, 17). "He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14). "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).

- *He proclaimed the gospel of Christ.* "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16).

- *He preached the Word.* "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). In his farewell message to his son Timothy, he says, "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2); not something about the Word, not something suggested by the Word, but "Preach the Word."

- *He spoke in the power of the Holy Ghost.* "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4). "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. 1:5).

- *He loved the souls of men.* "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:1-3). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be

saved" (Rom. 10:1).

- *He was a praying man.* "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you . . . For this cause we also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you" (Col. 1:3, 9). "Wherefore also we pray always for you" (2 Thess. 1:11). "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (Rom. 1:9). "Making mention of you in my prayers" (Eph. 1:16). "Making mention of thee always in my prayers" (Philemon 4).

- *He did not seek to please men.* "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2:4). "For even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:2-3). "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" (2 Cor. 5:9).

- *He knew that he would be with his Lord if death awaited him.* "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

- *He looked for the coming of his Lord.* "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). "The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

It is this man who tells us, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." It is the last clause of the statement which explains its meaning, for it is only as he followed Christ that he claimed to be an example. But such an example, through grace, is surely worthy of consideration and imitation.

James H. Brookes of St. Louis, Missouri editor of the magazine, The Truth, was the father of the fundamentalist movement and the mentor of C. I. Scofield..

Be An Example



The following article was prepared by the elders of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel for the good of the saints in their local fellowship. We include it here (only slightly abridged) for the good of God's people everywhere.

This was submitted by one of the elders, brother Rod Belyea

What does God's Word say about regulating our lives in the areas of personal liberties and rights under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture?

In every generation, Christians who come together in church fellowship have had to decide how to regulate their conduct. To a large extent, the quality of acceptable conduct has been determined by the place of authority given to the Bible as a governmental document. Whenever the authority of Scripture is eroded, the basis for regulating conduct is also eroded. The end-product of this is a wretched mockery of a Christian church, virtually indistinguishable from the world.

There are other genuine Christian fellowships which give the Scriptures the high place it deserves as being the sufficient and authoritative guide in all matters pertaining to faith, conduct, and church life. These have chosen to regulate conduct by what may be called the "covenant method." By this method, people, as a condition of church fellowship, are required to sign their names as witness that they covenant to do and not to do certain things. In this way, scope of acceptable activities are set. This method is widely used.

Our assembly has always chosen (as do most assemblies like ours) to regulate our conduct by being personally accountable to the Lord Jesus, whose mind is revealed in the Scriptures. There are certain areas where God regulates our conduct by *total prohibition*. For example, the New Testament Church is required by divine command to put away from its company railers, drunkards, extortioners, idolators, and covetous people. There

can be no negotiation on such matters.

There are other areas where God does not speak in terms of total prohibition. These are the so-called gray areas of *personal rights and liberties*. How does God regulate our conduct in these?

Before dealing with this subject, we must begin with a clear statement that a major foundation stone on which our fellowship rests is that of separation. The Christian who fails to build this truth into his life is doomed to be shipwrecked sooner or later, and destined to have conflict in this assembly in the meantime. No one is truly in fellowship in this assembly who is not in heart separated from this world. When God saves us, He separates us from the corrupt world system: "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 Jn. 5:19). This is a description of what the world is morally. It is unregenerate to its very core and implacably opposed to God in all its activities. With this we were once in full fellowship. God, when He saved us, separated us from it.

The assembly in Corinth was in a disastrous state. It had cast off restraint in the area of morality, so that it was harboring a notably wicked person. It had cast off restraint as to the Lord's Supper so that it had become a drunken feast. It had cast off restraint in respect to the role of women, so that the injunctions about head coverings and silence had been discarded. These things and more required correction. But before he did that, Paul set down a basic principle that would give weight to everything he said. That principle forms the second major foundation stone on which our fellowship rests.

"God has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). God has called us to the fellowship formed by or for Jesus Christ, and of which He is Lord. This fellowship is meant to replace our former fellowship (the world), and is of course with the Church generally, and the local church in particular. Thus our assembly is a fellowship formed by the Lord Jesus Christ, of which He is Lord, and is designed to replace the world system that God separated us from when He saved us.

There is a point worth making here because it is not always well understood. This assembly con-

BE AN EXAMPLE

sists of persons who have no quarrel with the idea that Jesus Christ, who saved them, is intended to be Lord of their lives. We make ourselves voluntarily accountable to the Lord and His Word for the decisions that determine our behavior. We have no denomination and no earthly headquarters to set policy for us. We have no book of rules to refer to. Nor do we sign covenants. All we have is God's Word, and we are accountable to it. We expect those who have taken the place of "being in fellowship" and those intending to "come into fellowship" to bring their lives into submission to God's Word. We trust people to do this. We trust people to live their lives in such a way as to set the best possible example to those inside and outside the assembly, not do anything to damage another person by way of bad example, and not do anything that will hinder the Gospel. We trust



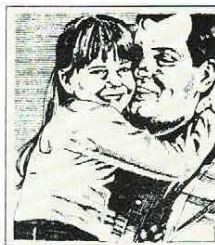
that they will not do anything that will increase the risk of ruining their lives and their usefulness to God. When elders point out areas of life that need to be judged and brought into line with God's Word, they expect that people will obey because of

Hebrews 13:17. When people refuse to bring their lives into submission to God's Word, it creates unhappy strains in the fellowship because, startling as it may seem in capital letters, GOD'S ASSEMBLY IS NOT DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE PERSONS WHO DO NOT WANT TO BE IN SUBMISSION TO HIS WORD.

We will now outline what God's Word says about how we regulate our lives in the area of our personal liberties under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture. This will be done by noting how the Apostle Paul regulates his own life in terms of his own rights and liberties. The apostle regulates his responses to things by three principles, to which Christ's Lordship requires his and our assent. They are commonly called "The Three Lest I's."

The first principle has to do with my attitude to my brother and his welfare. It is summarized in these words: "*Lest I make my brother to offend*" (1 Cor. 8:13) I will not. This principle requires that we regulate our lives in such a way as not to injure a weaker Christian. In this case, the problem was food offered to idols. Should Paul be dining out in an idol's temple eating an idol's food?

Would it damage him? He says not, but what about the brother with a conscience about eating this kind of food? Paul says this man's conscience is weak. If he tries to follow Paul in this, he will violate his conscience. People who violate their consciences



set themselves up for destruction. Paul says that when his example makes a brother bold to do what his conscience says he ought not to do, he causes that person to fall into sin, wounds his weak conscience, and sins against Christ. Paul therefore limits himself in his liberty to eat certain foods in the interest of his brother's welfare. Can we do less? Movie-going is like eating in an idol's temple. It may not harm you, but what about the younger person who may follow you there? Attraction to this form of entertainment is especially strong to younger people. No wise parent in this assembly wants their children going to movies. In order for them to follow you there, they will have to disobey a parental injunction and violate their conscience, thus taking another step on the road that ends in destruction. This is an assembly which honors parents who want to bring up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Please help us honor them by setting the kind of example they need from you.

The second principle has to do with my attitude to the Gospel and its impact on the community in which I live. It is summarized as follows: "*Lest we should hinder the Gospel*" (1 Cor. 9:12) . . . I will not. We regulate our lives that we might not adversely affect the Gospel. In this case, it was a matter of money. Paul was working with the Corinthian assembly. They had an obligation to support him and he had a right to expect it, but because there was going to be a controversy about it, and a consequent negative impact on the Gospel (as all bad testimonies have), he would forego his right.

Paul says, "Let your manner of life be as becometh the Gospel" (Phil. 1:27). This means, let your manner of life weigh as much as, or be equal in value to, or befit the sacred character of the Gospel. If our manner of life is not equal in value to the Gospel, then in the eyes of the unsaved, the Gospel becomes equal in value to our manner of life. Hence people have lately calculated the value of the Gospel as equal to the manner of life of cer-

BE AN EXAMPLE

tain TV evangelists. The Lord was very pointed in His disapproval of those who, by their actions and influence, emptied the Word of God of its effect (Mk. 7:1-23). Let us be those whose manner of life befits the sacred character of it.

The third principle has to do with what I allow in my own life: "*Lest . . . I myself should be a cast-away*" (1 Cor. 9:27) . . . I will not. This principle requires that we regulate our lives so that we not destroy that for which Christ died, and so miss the incorruptible crown made possible because of that death. Paul knows that the crown will not be gained by accident but by definite intent, so he eliminates those things that put his crown at risk. He does this by a deliberate act of his will. God has specifically instructed us to keep the flesh in the place of death and our spirits clean.

Many activities do not help us do this. The Bible says that we are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20). What sort of athlete would smoke and drink knowing that he risks ruining his body and losing the trophy? What sort of Christian would engage in things that would gratify the flesh at the expense of polluting his spirit, and risk being disqualified at the Judgment Seat of Christ? The answer is exceedingly solemn and searching. Paul describes them as follows, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18-19). Let us not use our liberties to put at risk our lives for which Christ died. They are not ours to use as we please, but His.

Earlier in this paper, we said that the happiness and harmony of this assembly depends on the persons who form it being willing to be personally accountable to the Lord for their lives, and that they will be willing to bring their lives under the authority of the Scripture as evidence of it. We would add that the spiritual vitality of our assembly depends on this too.

"Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). The Apostle Paul's advice is good: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).



THE SECRET

"And Enoch walked with God"
No other mortal ever trod
So bright a path, with such a Friend
To such a radiant, hallowed end,
We are not told the weary years,
The heartbreaks, maybe, and the tears,
But just — he walked with God.

And Enoch's path led home,
Not aimlessly to drift and roam,
To lose the way in the mists of doubt
Or pause to try earth's pleasures out,
But then, as now, one course to take
And every lesser goal forsake
And just walk home with God.

Together, day by day,
And step with step, they walked that way;
No feverish rushing to and fro,
Or with reluctant feet, and slow
To drag behind; — why should it be
So hard to travel patiently
And just keep step with God?

And Enoch's faith pleased God.
Thro' all the years the path they trod
Was made a fragrant, lovely place
By sweet communion, face to Face;
Why have we never time to spend
In fellowship with such a Friend
And just to talk with God?

But we — what fools we are,
We follow slowly from afar,
We stumble blindly thro' the night,
We miss the fellowship, the light,
So slow to learn, as learn we must
That all we need to do is trust,
And just to walk with God.

— Joan Suisted

M.E., the Lord, & Me



This is a letter sent to the Lord's people who had shown the Lord's lovingkindness to the writer. It is a testimonial to the sufficient grace of God for every trial. and the sweetness of fellowship with the God of grace

In Canada, my illness is predominantly known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (C.F.S.) although the universal name of M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) is increasingly used. C.F.S. is, in my opinion, a misnomer and only serves to trivialize this devastating illness. Using it would be like calling M.S., for example, by some name after only one of its symptoms — Painful Muscle Syndrome? Like M.S., M.E. is not a syndrome, but a very real disease.

The symptoms that continue to limit everything I do are extreme fatigue, sore muscles, painful joints, dizziness and related nausea, and severe headaches. I have seen very little progress with these symptoms and can only trust from day to day that God is working some sort of purpose in all of this. I am firmly convinced that what is being accomplished could not have been accomplished any other way. I believe that only eternity will reveal the full work.

Many of you say, "But you look so good." I work very hard to look my possible best for three reasons. First, once it sunk in that I have a chronic illness, I decided that I owe it to my husband and children to look my best. Many days I can't, but if it's all I can do that day, I do it. Secondly, I need to do it for myself to keep me from getting totally depressed. It helps me to feel a bit better myself. Thirdly, I am a very proud person. I know that is one area of my life on which God is working.

I worked very hard as a teacher and admit that I was very proud of being a good teacher. My high self-esteem was based, not on who I *was*, but on what I *did*. But God has revealed to me that I placed self-esteem above Christlikeness, and "pulling the rug out from under me," so to speak, has chosen to work on who I am. My worth now is found in being His child, growing in complete trust and dependence on Him as my Father.

As I am learning to trust Him daily and to be completely dependent on Him, I have many times felt perhaps the way John the Baptist did as he sat in prison wondering why Jesus didn't exercise His power in freeing him from his terrible state (Luke 7). When John sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if He really was the Messiah, Jesus an-

swered him by confirming the news of His miracles and further by exhorting John not to abandon his faith. C. G. Moore is quoted in the MacDonald Commentary:

I know of no hours more trying to faith than those in which Jesus multiplies evidences of His power and does not use it . . . There is need of much grace when the messengers came back saying, "Yes, He has all the power, and is all that you have thought; but He said not a word about taking you out of prison . . ." No explanation; faith nourished; prison doors left closed; and then the message, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." That is all!

So friends, although my prayers and many of yours aren't answered in the way we hope, I believe God is saying He will do something far better. He will give me grace to bear my illness. Although He doesn't give me what I *ask*, He is giving me what He knows I *need* and *want* most deeply — a life lived by His power and strength, not my own. And so I will not lose heart. I will trust Him in all things.

God has proven Himself to be the God of all comfort to me. What a wonderful God we have who so faithfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. If you are facing hard times, may you be encouraged by the endurance God has given me, and reason that if God can give me grace to suffer, He can give you grace too. In the hard times, lean hard on the Lord.

I can see good emerging both from my afflictions and the comfort God provides. I pray the comfort I have received from the Father will console you and inspire you to patient endurance as you go through difficult times in your own life.

My physical afflictions themselves have caused both my husband and I to grow daily in our faith. We are made so conscious of our own weakness that we must depend on the power of God. It is then that His power and strength are provided, and we are strong in the Lord. We know we are right where God wants us and we praise Him and thank Him in all our circumstances. Oh, how I love Him and long to see Him face to face! May we serve Him with all that we are and have until that glorious day.

U

Growth

Grow in grace! Get into the grace of God, and then you will grow. Let the light of this grace wherein we stand, exercise its holy influence upon every worthy spring of action, gratitude to God, love and sympathy towards man, and everything in human nature between these two poles.

As a matter of fact, grace never grows! Grace is infinite, therefore knows no increment. The Bible has not a word about grace growing, but it does speak over and over of our growing in it.

— Richard Ellsworth Day

As the grace we need in salvation is from God, so it is continually from Him for growing in grace, as much as light is all day long from the sun, as well as at the sun-rising.

— Jonathan Edwards

"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue . . . knowledge . . . temperance . . . patience . . . godliness . . . brotherly kindness . . . charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-8)

Are we growing in our knowledge of the Lord? Is this knowledge theoretical or experiential? One cold winter afternoon the philosopher Thomas Carlyle was sitting before the open fireplace in his library. The door opened and the new pastor of a local church entered the room. After Carlyle and the young minister had spoken for a few moments, the young minister asked the great philosopher, "What do you think this parish needs most?" Carlyle, without hesitation, replied, "What this parish needs is a man who knows God otherwise than by hearsay."

— Indian Christian

The Bible grows more beautiful, as we grow in our understanding of it.

— Goethe

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."

(1 Pet. 2:2)

*I yearned with a rapture of longing
To feel that blest Hand on my head,
And waited — when, lo, through the silence
His gentle voice tenderly said:*

*"What fruit dost thou bring of thy service?
What sheaves at My feet canst thou lay?
The fields have long whitened to harvest —
Hast thou toiled through the heat of the day?"*

— Author Unknown

"Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."

(2 Cor. 9:10-11)

To have grown at the same time both wise and kind is a real success.

— Anonymous

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."

(John 15:5)



We are not to make the ideas of contentment and aspiration quarrel, for God made them fast friends — A man may aspire, and yet be quite content until it is time to rise; and both flying and resting are but parts of one contentment. The very fruit of the gospel is aspiration. It is to the heart what spring is to the earth, making every root, and bud, and bough desire to be more.

— Henry Ward Beecher

*Like a watered garden, love bedewed,
Kissed by the zephyrs of eternal peace,
With heaven's holy nectar all-imbued,
Their full-bloomed blessedness shall never cease.* — I. Y. Ewan



HEROES

Susanna Spurgeon

John Bjorlie

Charles Spurgeon confessed that if the man is the head of the home, then the woman is the neck that turns the head. And he should have known, because there was a woman who definitely turned his head. Susanna (Thompson) Spurgeon (1832-1903) was little different from many young people who are raised in Christian homes and who regularly sit under the sound of the Gospel. We could well learn from her perception of the pious goings on around her young mind. If only we could step inside these minds, we might take ourselves a bit less seriously and be less critical of the young person who is trying hard to hold back smirks and giggles. She wrote, "I can recall the old-fashioned dapper figure of the senior deacon, of whom I stood very much in awe. He was a lawyer and wore the silk stockings and knee-breeches dear to a former generation. When the time came to give out the hymns, he mounted an open desk immediately beneath the pulpit; and from where I sat, I had a side view of him. To the best of my remembrance he was a short, stout man, and his rotund body, perched on his undraped legs and clothed in a long-tailed coat, gave him an unmistakable resemblance to a gigantic robin; and when he chirped out the verses of the hymn in a piping, twittering voice, I thought the likeness was complete!"

Carefree youth can still have serious moments. As a teenager, listening to S. B. Bergne expound Romans 10:8, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart," she said, "From that service I date the dawning of the true light in my soul. The Lord said to me, through His servant, 'Give Me thine heart,' and, constrained by His love, that night witnessed my solemn resolution of entire surrender to Him."

Susanna's pilgrimage was not a perpetual mountaintop. She remembered "Seasons of darkness, despondency, and doubt." While she was in this sickly and sleepy condition, C. H.

Spurgeon came to London to preach. At first, the nineteen year old country preacher was an "amusement" by the way he dressed. His sayings were "quaint." But seeing past the oddity of his mannerisms, Susanna began to drink in his Christ-exalting message. In this way she emerged from her Slough of Despond.



As Susanna grew, Spurgeon took notice of her. Giving her an illustrated copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, he wrote, "Miss Thompson, with desires for her progress in the blessed pilgrimage, from C. H. Spurgeon, April 20th, 1854." Two months later they were sitting together at the opening of the Crystal Palace with some friends. Charles handed Susanna a book he had been dipping into. He pointed to some lines "What do you think of the poet's suggestion in those verses?" The book was Martin Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy*. The pointing finger guided her to the lines:

*Seek a good wife of thy God, for she is the
best gift of His providence;
Yet ask not in bold confidence that which
He hath not promised:
Thou knowest not His good will;
Be thy prayer then submissive thereunto;
And leave thy petition to His mercy
Assured that He will deal well with thee.
If thou art to have a wife of thy youth,
she is now living on the earth;
Therefore think of her and pray for her weal!*

Looking up from that tortured poetry, Spurgeon leaned over and, in a soft voice, he whispered, "Do you pray for him who is to be your husband?" Though Spurgeon advised, "Marry in haste, and repent at leisure," he would also add that it is a happy man who can say after twenty years:

*"I did commit no act of folly,
When I married my sweet Molly."*

HEROES

It is apparent that Charles had committed no folly. His Susie was the quiet woman who steadied the eccentric, bombastic phenomenon who moved from one spectacle to another, one firestorm to another. Without her depth and giftedness, would he have maintained equilibrium?

In October 1856, a month after the birth of their twins, Charles and Thomas, the young preacher had prayer with his wife before leaving to preach for the first time at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. He wrote, "I was exceedingly surprised to find the streets thronged for a long distance. With difficulty I reached the door. There was a long, private road from the entrance of the Gardens to the Music Hall itself, and this appeared to be filled up with a solid block of people, who were unable to get into the building. I felt overawed, and was taken with that faintness which was, in my youth, the usual forerunner of every sermon. Still, I rallied, and was duly escorted to my pulpit in the midst of a dense throng. Here I was to pass through the greatest ordeal of my life."

Twelve thousand filled the hall, thousands more stood in the gardens, and more waited outside on the street. They sang a hymn, and then while Spurgeon offered prayer, "all of a sudden there were cries simultaneously, doubtless preconcerted, from all parts of the building, of 'Fire!' 'The galleries are giving way.' 'The place is falling!'" Hundreds rushed the exit. Spurgeon immediately saw that there was no fire, and in a firm, clear voice tried to calm the throng. But in the confusion, some jumped or fell from the balcony, the railing of the stairs broke and bodies spilled down. Some were trampled or suffocated. To compound the confusion, as fast as some exited, those from outside were pushing in at the entrance. Seven died and many were seriously injured. The meeting closed after Spurgeon failed to recover order and finally he had to be led from the platform, emotionally overcome, in "a state of apparent insensibility."

Susanna tells the rest. "When my beloved was brought home, he looked a wreck of his former self. An hour's agony of mind had changed his whole appearance. The night that ensued was one of weeping and wailing and indescrib-

In the summer of 1903, Mrs. Spurgeon had a severe attack of pneumonia which prostrated her, and from this she never recovered, being confined to her bed. One or other of her sons visited their mother almost daily to comfort and cheer her in the closing days of her life. Gradually she sank, and in the first week of September the flame of life seemed so feeble that it was expected to flicker out. Even then Mrs. Spurgeon manifested her strong faith in the God whom she had trusted for so long. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," she said feebly, and quoted the lines:

*"His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."*

asking those in the room to complete the verse.

But there was a tenacity of life about this weak woman which was little expected. Week after week she lingered, though getting weaker as each day passed. On October 7th she gave her parting blessing to her son Thomas. "The blessing, the double blessing of your father's God be upon you and your brother," she said, and then a few moments later, "Good-bye, Tom; the Lord bless you for ever and ever! Amen." When very near the end she clasped her feeble hands together, and, her face aglow with a heavenly radiance, exclaimed: "Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! I can see the King in His Glory!"

Mrs. Spurgeon passed away peacefully at half-past eight on the morning of Thursday, October 22nd, 1903.

able sorrow. He refused to be comforted. I thought the morning would never break; and when it did come, it brought no relief." In fact, the daylight did not break through for months.

Susanna witnessed that deliverance. Charles suddenly "turned to me, and with the old, sweet light in his eyes (how grievous had been its absence!) he said, 'Dearest, how foolish I have been! Why, what does it matter what becomes of me, if the Lord shall but be glorified? . . . let Him do as He pleases with me; my one prayer shall be, that I may die to self and live wholly for Him and for His honor; Oh, wifey, I see it all now! Praise the Lord with me!'"

This shy girl was more than a housekeeper and hostess, more than an editor and writer, (she was the true pen behind *Spurgeon's Autobiography*). She was more than a philanthropist (she engineered the free distribution of about 200,000 valuable study books), and a generous supporter of Christian workers. From her sickbed, she did more than most dream of doing. But her great contribution was in that feminine modesty, that anonymous servitude, that shared the burdens and bliss of an earthen vessel like Charles — two vessels fit for the Master's use.

Heartland

Carl T. Knott

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name: make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore. Remember His marvellous works that He hath done."

Thus begins the 105th Psalm, expressing our delight in Him who does mighty works. These first five verses are full of practical instruction for us to fulfill our priestly ministry. There are nine exhortations, showing us how worthy our Lord is. This should be part of the daily life of the believer. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him," the Lord Jesus tells us, therefore we should be a worshipping people every day. Then, when we gather in His name to remember Him, let us recall the guidance given:

1) "Give thanks" means that we should be grateful. Romans 1 lists ingratitude as one of the marks of fallen man. The Lord asked, "Where are the nine?" when only one of ten cleansed lepers returned to thank Him. What about us who have been cleansed of sin by the blood of the Lamb? A thankful spirit should mark our gatherings.

2) We are to "call upon His name." The first use of this expression is in Genesis 4:26 where it is the mark of the godly descendants of Seth. Romans 10:13 promises that, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is to invoke His name, to address Him in faith, and to worship and depend upon Him. All that we do should be done in the Lord's name (Col. 3:17), and certainly we should be conscious of this in our corporate worship. We gather to remember Him, and, so doing, we address ourselves to Him, not seeking anything, but giving the fruit of lips (Ps. 50:23; Heb. 13:15).

3) We should "make known His deeds among the people." Of course, in the Lord's Supper the great deed upon which we focus is His giving of Himself on the cross. To make known means to publish, to proclaim, to announce. Thus when we keep the Lord's Supper as instructed (1 Cor. 11:26), we are showing forth (announcing) the

Lord's death until He comes. The Lord's Supper is not a testimony meeting, that is, a time when various ones can give interesting and instructive anecdotes. The great theme is the Lord and His deeds, namely what He has done to redeem us for Himself. It is not a time for giving teaching, for the priest worships the Lord with his face toward the Lord, and his back towards the people.

The Lord knows His deeds, so one might well ask why we should announce them. Because it is glorifying to God, as we see in Revelation 5:12, where in heaven they proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Surely everyone in heaven knows it, but it is to God's glory that His wonderful deeds are proclaimed and acclaimed.

4) "Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him." The Lord's Supper is not a song service, but we do sing during that time. A spiritually-minded believer is able to discern the difference between songs of exhortation, invitation, and consecration and songs of worship and praise. For example, "Take it to the Lord in prayer" is a beautiful hymn with real meaning for us, but is inappropriate for the Lord's Supper. We should not give out hymns or choruses just because we like the music. It is not a question of picking favorites, but of worshipping the Lord. We are to sing "unto Him." We are to sing with the spirit and with the understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). We should think about the words, and sing them unto the Lord as a way of worshipping and praising Him. We should have songs, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord (Col. 3:16). Here we see the great value of the hymns that have a real message in the words, as opposed to many frothy choruses that repeat phrases like chants and do not communicate any real message. In Revelation 5:9 they sing a new song unto the Lord, proclaiming His worth. This is the theme of heaven's song, and should be ours as well.

5) "Talk ye of all His wondrous works," says the Psalmist, and what work is more wondrous than that of the Cross! As the hymnwriter says:

*Mercy there was great and grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me.
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary!*

In glory, we will never tire of singing the praises of Him who loved us so. Each gathering of believers to remember the Lord on earth is, in this sense, a rehearsal of heaven's praises, where we will unite our voices with those of the countless multitude of the redeemed in eternal praise to God. Will not His wondrous works be the conversation of all? We do not gather in the Breaking of Bread to teach one another various portions of Scripture or exhort one another, but to glorify the Lord by speaking of His works. Psalm 107 shows us how we should proclaim the wondrous work of His redemption. The psalmist focuses on the saving goodness of the Lord in its various aspects, and places the chorus, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men" between the various stanzas. 1 Timothy 3:16 gives a New Testament example of a way of proclaiming the works of the Lord, His incarnation, earthly ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. We should not wait until we reach heaven to begin!

6) "*Glory in His holy name.*" The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." True disciples of the Lord realize something of the holiness of the name of God. It is nothing to be taken lightly. What volumes of meaning and "fuel" for worship there are in the names of God! Brother C. J. Rolls wrote volumes about those wonderful names, and each of us could find endless themes for worship in the names of God to be found in the sacred treasury.

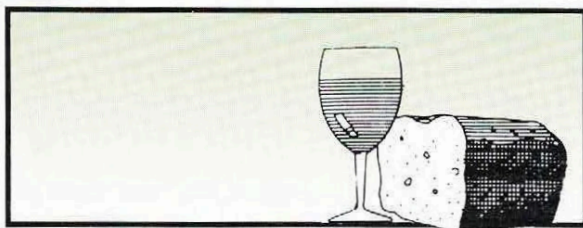
7) The Psalmist continues by exhorting us, "*Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*" While there is "sweet sorrow" in our remembrance of the Lord's death, there is also the joy of salvation and the blessed hope of His return. Joy is not frivolous happiness but the overflow of the heart of one who has been saved by God's grace. "Rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4). Although we cannot always rejoice in our circumstances, we can always rejoice in Him. This joy should be expressed to the Lord when we gather to worship Him, as well as every day of our lives.

8) "*Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face forevermore.*" Let it be remembered that when we gather in His name, He is there in the midst. At the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus is not the "guest," He is the Lord of the Supper. We do not gather to see one another, as delightful as that may be. The Lord's earthly people in the Old Tes-

tament were to come before Him three times a year (Deut. 16:16). They came to the place where He established His name, and worshipped Him in His appointed way — before Him. In the Lord's Supper, we are not to address ourselves to the other brethren, but to the Lord. We are to spiritually discern His presence and commune with Him, remembering that He hears and sees all, and is accepting our worship and being glorified by it. David spoke of his desire for one thing of the Lord, to draw near to Him and behold His beauty (Ps. 27:4).

9) "*Remember His marvellous works that He hath done.*" The common complaint, "I have a good memory, but it's short," will not do at all in the things of God. We are called to remember. In the Lord's Supper, we are instructed, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25). This means literally, "This do, calling Me to mind." It is a spiritual exercise in which we are to be lovingly involved. Other things should not be called to mind, and should be deliberately put aside. We must not let our minds wander, but follow what is sung, read, and said to the Lord in worship and praise, uniting our hearts with the brethren who take a vocal part. In all this it must be remembered that the sisters have an active part. Though silent to us, they are not silent to the Lord. Remember women like Samuel's mother, Hannah, and the worshipful women of the New Testament who anointed the Lord and worshipped Him without ever saying a single word out loud. The Lord looks on the heart, and can see and appreciate the incense of worship rising from each believer. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2). "Forget not" is the exhortation.

May our gatherings to keep the Lord's Supper be precious times of remembering and worshipping the One who loved us so. May we be a thankful, joyful, reverent, worshipful people, humbly drawing near to the Lord to offer Him the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His name.



The Intercessor

W. Ross Rainey

Three times over in the Bible, and each in an entirely different context, Abraham is called "the friend of God" (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). In 2 Chronicles 20:7, King Jehoshaphat prayed to the Lord in a time of national crisis and referred to Abraham as God's "friend forever"; while James, at the close of his argument about faith and works, refers to Abraham as "the friend of God" (2:23). Best of all, however, is the fact that, in Isaiah 41:8, the Lord Himself calls Abraham "My friend."

Chapters 17 and 18 of Genesis, perhaps as no other passages, reveal the familiarity and intimacy that Abraham had with the Lord, but what Abraham's portion was should be, in far greater measure, the portion of every believer today. The friendship of God is offered to us in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:15).

Regarding our specific study and consideration of Genesis 18:16-33, let us observe first of all:

THE PURPOSE OF GOD (18:16-22)

In verse 16, either the two angels (as in v. 22), or the Lord and the two angels, "looked toward Sodom." A guilty people may well tremble when God fixes His gaze upon them. He waits a long while before He unleashes His judgment (e.g., Gen. 15:13-16; 2 Chron. 36:16; 2 Peter 3:9; Rev. 16:19), but eventually it comes. It is noteworthy that Abraham accompanied his guests on their way in order to direct them to Sodom, and this act of courtesy opened to him a marvelous opportunity for intercession.

It is a revelation of condescending grace that the Lord desires, as evidenced in 18:17, to share His purposes and secrets with the godly (cf. Ps. 25:14; 103:7). How much do we really know of such intimate and enriching fellowship with Him? Of Abraham's experience at this time, W. Graham Scroggie has concisely yet instructively stated, "God takes certain men and women in His deep counsels, and reveals to them His purposes, and in this way history is set forward. That is the meaning of Hebrews 11. One God-fearing man is made the means of universal blessing; but that man reaches the world through his family and

that nation of which he was the origin."

In 18:18 we have the reason for the Lord's condescending grace, and just as Abraham was caught up in the purpose of redemption, so also have all true believers (see Rom. 8:28-30). God's purpose in making Himself known to Abraham was that He might bring into being a family that would give witness to Him, enabling Him to fulfill His promises (18:19). Today, this purpose and witness are being carried on through the Church, the Body of Christ, until such time as the witness of the Church on the earth is completed at the rapture and God once again starts His time clock with respect to Israel.

There is one important detail in 18:19 which has both pertinent and practical significance today, and this is represented by the words, "command his children." Parents have a definite responsibility to train their children in the ways of the Lord and to evangelize each generation (cf. Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). Part of this training includes the responsibility of believing parents to bring their children regularly to the local church, thereby making the place of worship and testimony an integral part of their family life.

No doubt the Lord addressed the angels in 18:17 and 20, but Abraham was permitted to hear what was spoken and was thus taken into the Lord's confidence. Using common human terms, the Lord's action in 18:21 is similar to that of 11:7. Here, the two angels appeared as men, though sometimes angels appear as horses and chariots of fire (cf. 2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Ps. 68:17). God went down to Sodom in the person of these two angels as His representatives (Matt. 13:41).

While there is most certainly a time and place for corporate prayer, Abraham waited until he was alone with God before he began his intercession (cf. 18:22 with Matt. 6:6).

THE PRAYER OF ABRAHAM (18:22-33)

This is the first great prayer in the Bible, and it is noteworthy that it is intercessory. Observe first of all, the basis of his prayer:

1. *The Consciousness of God* (18:23). The words "drew near" remind us of James 4:8a, "Draw near

THE INTERCESSOR

to God, and He will draw near to you" (see Eph. 2:13; Rom. 5:1-2). To pray aright, one must believe that God is, even as he must come to God in faith (Heb. 11:6).

2. *The Covenant of God* (18:17-19). Abraham had been taken into God's confidence and fellowship regarding His worldwide redemptive purpose.

Secondly, we should observe the characteristics of Abraham's prayer:

1. *It was Reverent*. Believers today should show the same spirit of reverence reflected throughout this intercessory prayer, even though it is true that we have a far greater boldness of approach and access in the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:16; 10:19ff).

2. *It Was Earnest*. There is no mistaking the earnestness with which Abraham prayed (notice the occurrences of "oh" in vv. 30 and 32).

3. *It Was Discriminatory* (18:24-25). Abraham discriminated between the righteous and the wicked, though he was concerned for both. Of course, he was thinking primarily of his nephew, Lot (19:29), and his prayer indicates that he understood what constituted righteousness in God's sight. Lot manifested almost no practical righteousness at all, yet he was, like Abraham, justified by faith (2 Peter 2:7).

That God distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked is clearly set forth in His Word (e.g., Prov. 17:15; Matt. 25:46).

4. *It Was in Accord with God's Character* (18:25; see John 14:13; 1 John 5:14-15; Jude 20). Abraham's knowledge of God's character was used as a basis for action, not inaction. He did not take a fatalistic attitude about things as some are prone to do.

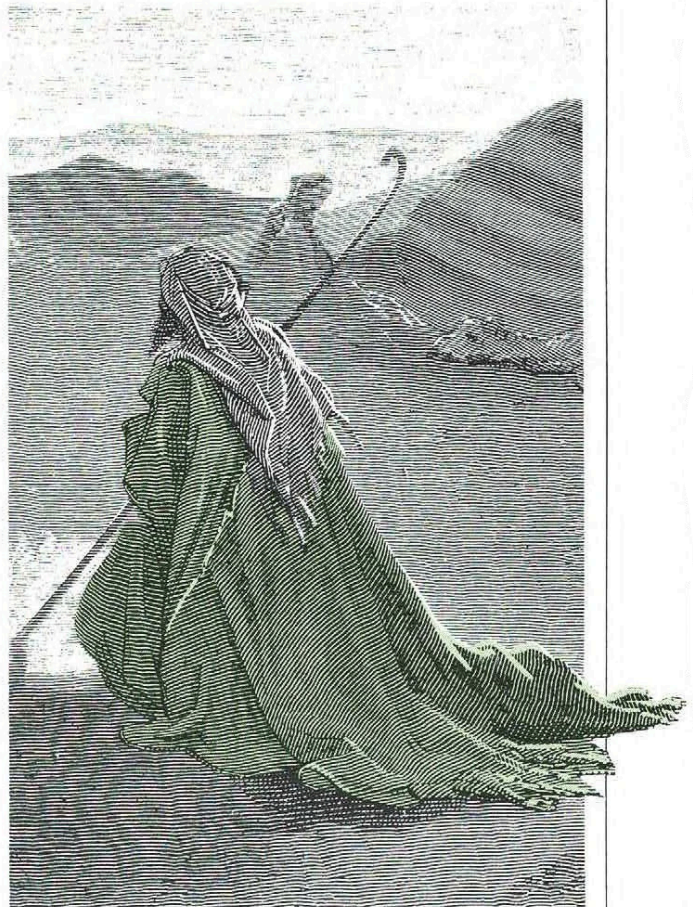
5. *It Was Definite* (18:28-32). It may be that much of our praying is so general as to be pointless, yet at the same time lacking earnestness and fervency. General praying will never be rewarded by particular answers, and at that, Abraham himself could have been more definite.

6. *It Was Persevering*. Six times over, Abraham asked that Sodom might be spared, and each time God gave him the exact answer to his petition.

7. *It Was Humble* (18:27). Abraham never lost sight of the One to whom he was praying. One of the great lessons of this passage is that the wicked owe far more to the presence and prayers of the righteous than they would be willing to admit. This is indicated elsewhere in God's Word (e.g., Acts 27). Had there been ten believers in Sodom,

the Lord would have spared the city. A further noteworthy lesson is that Abraham stopped praying of his own accord; he was not told to stop. In other words, Abraham ceased praying before God stopped promising. Perhaps he could have gone on petitioning, requesting that the city might be spared for just one soul, but he did not take this liberty, no doubt assuming that there would be at least ten believers in Sodom between Lot and the members of his family.

In these "last days" of this present age of grace, with the world hurtling headlong toward God's sure judgment, let us press on to realize more and more of our Lord's purposes through a diligent study of His Word. But we should also remember that one of the chief ways of getting to know both His purposes and His Person more fully is by prayer. Abraham's example is a good one for us today. May we be encouraged by it to frequently "draw near" to our Saviour-God — even this very moment.



Hymnbooks

Jim McKendrick

On my bookshelf are two hymnbooks that are precious to me. One is inscribed with my name and the words, "From Grandma, baptism 9/30/56." The other has my wife's name and "From the P. A. (Port Arthur, ON) Gospel Hall, Jan. 1961." In those days, it was not unusual for an assembly or an older person to give a hymnbook to a young person on some important day of their lives. Hymnbooks were used in the home as well as in assembly gatherings. But I'm afraid that hymnbooks have fallen on hard times.

We used to get together in homes to sing the old hymns with zest and learn some new ones. Assemblies had times when the saints gathered together just to sing. Why do we speak of these times almost always in the past tense? Camp songs are too often the only songs sung by young people. I'm not against camp songs — at least not some of them — but if we don't pass on the heritage of hymns we have received, we do our young people an injustice, and the Church will suffer a great loss.

There are three characteristics, I believe, of a good hymn — the kind that should be passed on. The first is *doctrine*. This is fundamental. Hymns instruct us and we need to be sure they are teaching us proper doctrine. Paul reminds us in Colossians 3:16, "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Some of the hymns and songs I hear on occasion should be abolished from our assemblies and camps.

The second aspect of a good hymn is what I will call *tone*. What is the direction of the hymn? Many of the newer songs are egocentric, subjective in nature. The writer seems to be engaged almost entirely with his own feelings and emotions. Many times that does not describe my feelings or

the feelings of many and therefore the song rightfully dies. A good hymn is Christocentric. It speaks of the glories of Christ and of God, of His Word and work. All of the Lord's people can join in and sing of Christ and His glories.

The third element of a good hymn is the *music*. The melody needs to be something that all of us can sing easily. The harmony and rhythm of the hymn should be pleasing and fitting to the mood of the song. When all three of these aspects come together in one hymn, it will last and be used by the Church for many years. You will note the ones we sing that have been written years ago meet

these three criteria. These are the kind of hymns that should be passed along to our children. They teach proper doctrine, they glorify the Lord, and they are good to sing.

We have some good hymnbooks at our elbow. "Hymns of Truth and Praise," with its wide selection of worship as well as gospel hymns, is well known and lives up to its title. "Hymns of

Worship and Remembrance" is an excellent collection of worshipful hymns. Its only problem is its brevity. Another 150 hymns could have been added to our benefit. "Believers Hymnbook" and "Hymns for the Little Flock" have lost favor with many of late, but are probably the finest collections of worship and praise hymns that have ever been compiled. You can learn each hymn from cover to cover and not be ashamed of the content. Can you say as much for the hymnbook you are presently using?

May this year be the year that a revival of hymn-singing is begun in your assembly and in your home. You will be enriched by it and God will enjoy it. "I will praise the name of God with a song . . . This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs" (Ps. 69:30-31).

Praise
the Lord
Oh my soul!

Every Day Reading Plan

Section 15: 2 Chronicles — Solomon and His Successors

March 1	2 Chronicles 1:1–2:18	Solomon's request and exaltation
March 2	2 Chronicles 3:1–17	Building the temple
March 3	2 Chronicles 4:1–5:14	The furnishings of the temple
March 4	2 Chronicles 6:1–42	Preaching and praying at the consecration
March 5	2 Chronicles 7:1–8:18	Solomon's sacrifice: the feast of dedication
March 6	2 Chronicles 9:1–31	The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon
March 7	2 Chronicles 10:1–19	Rehoboam: kingdom divided
March 8	2 Chronicles 11:1–23	Rehoboam strengthens Judah
March 9	2 Chronicles 12:1–16	Apostasy and death of Rehoboam
March 10	2 Chronicles 13:1–22	Abijah wars against Jeroboam
March 11	2 Chronicles 14:1–15	Asa's good beginnings
March 12	2 Chronicles 15:1–19	The prophecy of Azariah
March 13	2 Chronicles 16:1–14	Asa's alliance, anger, and death
March 14	2 Chronicles 17:1–19	Jehoshaphat follows the Lord
March 15	2 Chronicles 18:1–34	Jehoshaphat follows Ahab
March 16	2 Chronicles 19:1–11	Jehu's rebuke
March 17	2 Chronicles 20:1–37	Praise, the secret weapon
March 18	2 Chronicles 21:1–22:12	Jehoram, Ahaziah, & Jehu's judgment
March 19	2 Chronicles 23:1–21	Athaliah replaced by the child Joash
March 20	2 Chronicles 24:1–27	The reign, reforms, and ruin of Joash
March 21	2 Chronicles 25:1–28	Amaziah — a divided heart and civil war
March 22	2 Chronicles 26:1–27:9	Uzziah's pride & punishment; Jotham
March 23	2 Chronicles 28:1–27	Wicked Ahaz and Judah invaded
March 24	2 Chronicles 29:1–36	Good king Hezekiah
March 25	2 Chronicles 30:1–27	Reuniting the people & remembrance
March 26	2 Chronicles 31:1–21	Hezekiah's further reforms
March 27	2 Chronicles 32:1–33	Sennacherib's invasion of Judah
March 28	2 Chronicles 33:1–25	Hope — even for Manasseh!
March 29	2 Chronicles 34:1–33	Josiah starts well
March 30	2 Chronicles 35:1–27	Josiah keeps the Passover, loses his life
March 31	2 Chronicles 36:1–23	Judah, captives at last



The tomb slab of Uzziah. It is written in Aramaic and reads, 'Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah king of Judah. Not to be opened.' It is probably to be dated in the 1st century AD when the king's bones were reburied.

2 Chronicles

Sandy McEachern

From the joyful worship that accompanied the dedication of Solomon's temple to the disastrous division of the tribes that resulted from Rehoboam's foolish pride; from the establishment of the unified dynasty of David's son to the depths of immorality that accompanied the reigns of most kings from Rehoboam to Zedekiah; from the awe-inspiring revelation of the God of glory to the absolute destruction of Solomon's glorious temple by Nebuchadnezzar — 2 Chronicles is the objective, unflinching record of a people who forsook obedience to the Lord and fell from the golden days of Solomon's rule to the bitter ashes of captivity in Babylon, and this in less than 400 years.

The keynote phrase of the book is found in a charge that Azariah the prophet made to Asa the king in 2 Chronicles 15:2. He said, "The Lord is with you, while ye are with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found by you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." During the days of Solomon, the nation of Israel was given a taste of what God would do for them if they were obedient to Him. The glories and power of Israel have never been greater than at that time. But their faithfulness proved fickle and they forsook those blessings for the filth and foolishness of idolatry. Finally God gave them what they wanted. They were carried away into the heart of the world's idolatry and sin — Babylon, and the last reminder of the glorious days of faithfulness to God were shattered by the marauding armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Israel had returned to the land which had been ancient Chaldea from which Abraham had been called from idolatry in the first place.

Central to 2 Chronicles is the temple. The first nine chapters of the book are given over to a description of its marvelous construction and glorious dedication. The temple symbolized God's presence with His people. It was given to them to be a focal point for their worship and service to God. They were blessed far above all peoples on the earth to have God dwell among them. No other nation had such a privilege. And yet they departed from this place of blessing. The temple instead became the focal point of their backsliding

and sin. Conversely, any revival also centered on the temple too. We must pay close attention to the children of Israel and their relationship to the temple, and the Lord who dwelt therein. Interestingly, Solomon's failures are not mentioned in 2 Chronicles. The emphasis here is on his accomplishments in providing a house for God among His people. The Spirit of God wishes us to see the blessed situation into which God had placed His people.

From the lofty heights of Solomon's day, Israel's history is only down, down, down. Twenty kings followed Solomon, and their immorality grew worse and worse. They either defiled the temple or departed from it and simply ignored it.

During the times of these kings, there were five significant periods of revival. They are well worth noting. The first revival came under *Asa* (ch.14). His revival focused on the **removal of the idols from the land**. Unfortunately his reforms soon faded. The next revival came under *Jehoshaphat* (ch.17). His revival was based upon a **return to the Word of God**. But again, further apostasy ensued following his reign. *Joash* (chs. 23, 24), the next king to bring about a major revival, focused on the **repair of the temple**. But again the Israelites soon continued their backsliding. A fourth great revival occurred under *Hezekiah* (chs. 29, 30, 31). His reforms were based upon a **re-establishment of the temple feasts and services**. But sadly the sin of the Israelites continued unabated. A final system of reforms came under *Josiah*. He incorporated aspects of all the four previous revivals. But it was too late. God's wrath was fully kindled. Nebuchadnezzar and his armies came and obliterated the city of Jerusalem and, most significantly, the temple. From the glories described at the beginning of 2 Chronicles, the Israelites were brought to the dust.

However, the God of hope does not close this sorrowful saga on such a note. The book ends with a reference to Cyrus and his decree to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. Although His people are often unfaithful, yet our God remains faithful. May we learn the lessons that 2 Chronicles would teach us.

U

Gold in Israel to Irons in Babylon

SOLOMON: *the Heights of Glory* (Chapters 1-9)

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

Worship from Solomon
(1:1-6)

Wisdom for Solomon
(1:7-13)

Wealth for Solomon
(1:14-17)

TEMPLE TREASURES

Jews & Gentiles build the
first temple
(ch. 2)

The temple furnishings
(chs. 3-4)

The dedication
(chs. 5-7)

FLEETING FAME

Kings & queens bring their
glory to Solomon
and behold his
(8:1-9:28)

The king of terrors at last
(9:29-31)

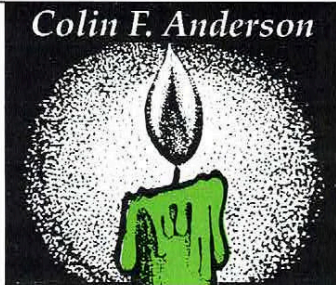
JUDAH'S KINGS: *the Depths of Despair* (Chapters 10-36:21)

NAME	REFERENCE	PARALLEL
1. REHOBOAM	chs. 10-12	1 Kings 12:1-24; 14:21-31
2. ABIJAH	ch. 13	1 Kings 15:1-8
3. ASA	chs. 14-16	1 Kings 15:9-24
4. JEHOASHAPHAT	chs. 17:1-21:3	1 Kings 22:2-33
5. JEHORAM	ch. 21:4-20	2 Kings 8:16-24
6. AHAZIAH	ch. 22:1-9	2 Kings 8:25-9:29
7. (ATHALIAH)	chs. 22:10-23:21	2 Kings 11
8. JOASH	ch. 24	2 Kings 12
9. AMAZIAH	ch. 25	2 Kings 14:1-20
10. UZZIAH	ch. 26	2 Kings 15:1-7
11. JOTHAM	ch. 27	2 Kings 15:32-38
12. AHAZ	ch. 28	2 Kings 16; Isa. 7-12
13. HEZEKIAH	chs. 29-32	2 Kings 18-20; Isa. 36-39
14. MANASSEH	ch. 33:1-20	2 Kings 21:1-18
15. AMON	ch. 33:21-25	2 Kings 21:19-26
16. JOSIAH	chs. 34-35	2 Kings 22-23:30
17. JEHOAHAZ	ch. 36:1-4	2 Kings 23:31-34
18. JEHOIAKIM	ch. 36:5-8	2 Kings 23:35-24:7
19. JEHOIACHIN	ch. 36:9-10	2 Kings 24:8-16
20. ZEDEKIAH	ch. 36:11-21	2 Kings 24:17-25:21

CYRUS OF PERSIA: *a Ray of Hope* (Chapter 36:22-23)

God's Will and Present Loss

Colin F. Anderson



The desire to have divine guidance is not limited to Christians. Down through the centuries, man has tried to invoke wisdom and help from whatever gods they worshiped. Behind this universal desire to have help from above in making decisions in life, is the fear of personal loss in whatever is being undertaken by the supplicant. The Christian should seek God's will for much higher reasons. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures teach that present loss may actually be the outcome of doing the will of God. Listen to a man devoted to doing it: "For (Christ) I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Not even loss of life was a major concern for Paul: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

These and other scriptures should teach us that the will of God is not a "safe" thing, though it is always the highest and best thing to seek. Frequently it is not so much God's will we seek, but His blessing and support in the carrying out of our own. This is too much for us to admit, so we often invest our desires with sacred overtones. In this way, we deceive ourselves and vainly hope that such an embellishing of our earthbound desire may make it more acceptable in heaven.

Yet God is merciful and may patiently wait for us while we wait on Him. He may wait, that is, for us to move from the lower (not necessarily sinful) ground to the higher. Scripture illustrates this principle in the case of Hannah. It was not wrong for her to want a child, and there is no doubt that the Lord used her natural desire to trigger the accomplishment of His will in the birth of Samuel: "If Thou wilt . . . give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life" (1 Sam. 1:11).

Thus the yearning of a barren woman and the will of God coalesced. But please note that, in the process, there was not only gain but loss, at least on the natural level, for Hannah "lost" her son to

the temple, the service of Eli — and God. She is not sorry today, of course. That is the wonder of it all. The will of God deals not so much with present reward (though often the Lord grants it in some measure) as future glory (2 Cor. 4:18).

Does the writer, does the reader, still want the will of God for its own sake, or are our prayers for help from heaven rather pagan at the root, expressing merely a natural desire to avoid some unwanted trial? Is it wrong, then, for us to pray for preservation from loss and harm? Not necessarily. It may be the most spiritual thing to do. It all depends upon our values. Ezra and the returning exiles afflicted themselves before God: "To seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance" (Ezra 8:21).

Paul solicited the prayers of the believers, "that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men" (2 Thess. 3:2). However, in both cases, the parties concerned were already committed to doing the will of God whatever it cost. Perhaps this is even more clearly displayed in the statement made by Daniel's three companions: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods . . ." (Dan. 3:17-18).

The chief point we are making is this: we who are disciples of the One who did God's will at infinite cost to Himself should not entertain the idea that prayer for divine leading will necessarily result in what we might call "safety." But there are also one or two other conclusions we must draw:

First: We should only seek help and protection in doing the will of God. Our Lord is not like Aladdin's genie, to be brought into service in an emergency by anyone having their own agenda.

Second: The will of God is something we should earnestly pursue in every circumstance and in every place. This is normal Christianity.

Third: The leading of the Spirit in any special circumstance will be more easily understood by those accustomed to doing His will.

U

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High (Psalm 92:1).

PRAISE 4 BEGINNINGS



A recording of good songs beautifully presented is hard to find these days. So we were refreshed and encouraged when we heard this arrangement of ten songs. A quartet of Christian men from the Fairbluff assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina has produced a cassette tape of superior quality. **PRAISE 4: BEGINNINGS** is a collection mostly of acappella songs that will provide hours of spiritual enrichment and enjoyment. Tenor, Don Naysmith; Lead, Howard Nicholson; Baritone, Charlie Lewis; Bass, Sam F. Williams.

The tape is available now at \$9.00 post paid from:

GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041
Phone (616) 456-9166
Fax (616) 456-5522

Canadian orders add 7% GST
Michigan orders add 4% sales tax

Catholicism: Crisis of Faith *A Lumen Video*

The decades since the Second Vatican Council have been turbulent. Attendance at mass has plummeted. Catholics worldwide are asking questions as never before. What is the cause of the crisis?

Catholicism: Crisis of Faith goes to the heart of the question by investigating the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church from a biblical perspective. Official statements by the Church are examined and testimonials of former priests, nuns, and seminarians are heard. Follow the journey of devout Catholics who courageously faced a crisis of faith and emerged with a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ.

An excellent resource for serious, inquiring Catholics. Tastefully deals with core, not side issues. 54 minutes.

\$29.00 each plus 10% for postage and handling from:

GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041
Phone (616) 456-9166
Fax (616) 456-5522

Canadian orders add 7% GST
Michigan orders add 4% sales tax



UPLOOK

(USPS 620-640)

P. O. Box 2041

Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

SECOND CLASS

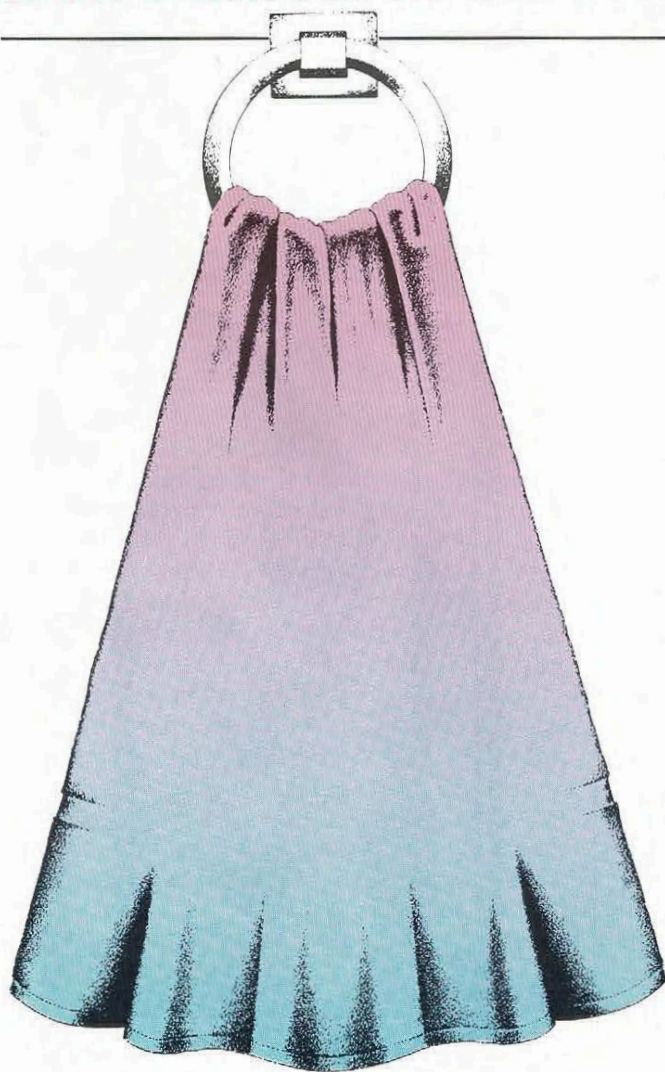
U. S. Postage

PAID

Grand Rapids, MI

Don't Throw in the Towel

*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but
now have I kept Thy word" (Ps. 119:67).*



Afflictions do not spring out of the dust. Do not be impatient with them. We need something to soften this hard life. Afflictions help to keep us right. Affliction helps to bring us to our knees. Affliction opens the Bible at the right places.

If you, strong man with the radiant face and the full pocket, were to open the Bible, it would not mean much to you. But you, brokenhearted mother; you, child of sickness; you, lonely one, your Bible falls open at the right places. Give me your family Bible and I will tell you your history. The Bible of the strong, prosperous, rich man is like himself — well kept — too well kept.

Hand me yours, man of the broken heart and tearstained eye and furrowed brow. Look at all the marks and thumbings and turnings down and marginal notes and pencil indications. I need no concordance to this Bible if I want to seek out the promises: David's Psalms, Isaiah's picture of grace and glory, a hundred places in Jeremiah, including the Lamentations. I see your guest has been sorrow, and the hospitality you have offered him has been patience. You have accompanied the Man of Sorrows as you traced His footsteps in the Gospels.

If you would know the value of the Bible in the home, consult those who have needed it most, and abide by their sweet reply.

When the pilgrims compare notes at length, it will be found that most of them learned this lesson in the furnace of affliction. The bruising and breaking opens the crust and lets the lesson

— Anon.