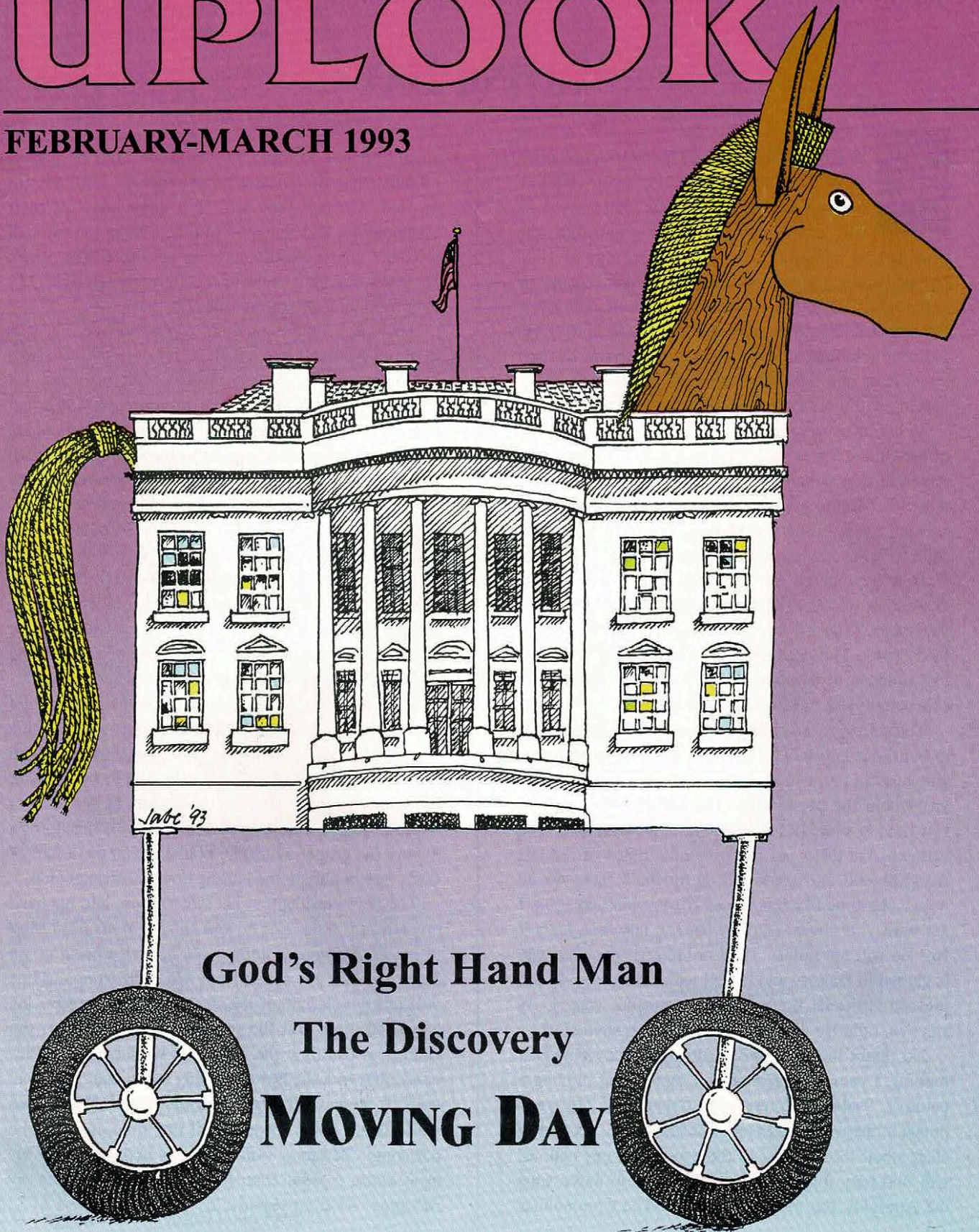


UPLOOK

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1993



God's Right Hand Man

The Discovery

MOVING DAY



MOVING DAY

The world watched as a Marine helicopter lifted off, bound for Houston, Texas, while a moving van with Arkansas plates made its way cautiously through the gate into the presidential compound. It was moving day at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and many observant evangelicals found it a moving experience indeed. They saw moving out what little gains had been made during the last two administrations. They saw moving in their worst fears of a tidal wave of moral collapse. Just how moving will this moving day be?

In his inaugural remarks, the forty-second president of the United States said, "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America." But to many Christians, his first official acts seemed to be doing the reverse: infecting what was right with the country with what was wrong.

How appropriate are the words of Psalm 93 for the challenges of '93. The ringing affirmation of its first statement, "The Lord reigneth," speaks peace to troubled hearts. The psalmist then contrasts the floodtides that threaten to overwhelm the soul with the immovable certainty of the God in whom we trust.

The shifting sands of the political world are no place to build our hopes. The eroding values of society provide no firm foundation. If ever there was a time in history when "the floods have lifted up their voice" (v. 3), that time is now. But it is not as if we have not been warned. Are these not the troublous times of the last days? Should *our* hearts fail us for fear? Have we no refuge at a time like this? Does His promise say, "Lo, I am with you alway—except for the last few years"? No! He will not fail us. The Lord reigns. The One who is garbed in majesty and girded with strength (v. 1) has dressed Himself! Such vestments are not vested. By His own right He wears them. He alone is sovereign.

No doubt the president is already discovering that running a campaign is a fair bit easier than running a country. Psalm 93:1 reminds us that there are some things in the world that God has established: six feet of clay, albeit those living in the capitals of our nations, will find only frustration if they attempt to move what the Almighty has made immovable. The Communists

should be able to teach us that. "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters." Let them lift up their voice if they will. Let them boast of their abominations and slaughter of innocents in the name of freedom. God's "testimonies are *very* sure" (Ps. 93:5). He is the Supreme Court of the Universe (Heb. 12:23), the presiding Ruler of the Ages (Ps. 93:2).

There are some things that *can* be moved, but it is the Lord who will move them. "*Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*" (Heb. 12:26-29).

Has the Christian community put its trust in political influence rather than evangelical power? In earthly gold more than heavenly gain? In temporal expediency instead of eternal principles? Are we known better for our marches than our walk? Have we gone to fighting flesh and blood rather than principalities and powers?

If we are going to triumph, our Commander-in-chief must give our orders. "If My kingdom were of this world," He said in the shadow of the cross, "then would My servants fight." He called us to be militant, but wants us to know who the enemy is. Remember that the weapons of our warfare—prayer, the Spirit's Sword, the gospel, winsome holiness, and the armor of God—are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

The new President, at his swearing-in, laid his hand on Galatians 6:8, "*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*" Time will tell which half of the verse will characterize his administration. But the real question is whether the Church will utilize the freedoms we have left to advance the work the Spirit is doing in the hearts of men. Perhaps we have forgotten our own moving day. This world is not home for us. Until that time, may this be our song: "*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my Rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be moved.*"

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LOSING HEART

MARRIAGE breakups have reached epidemic proportions. Sadly, it is now touching the church of Jesus Christ. In many cases, it is the women who are leaving their husbands and children. The reasons these women give may vary, but the bottom line is that they are losing heart.

Losing heart. It is something that all of us have experienced to some degree at one time or another—that feeling of helplessness that can be overwhelming when we allow it to continue unchecked. As women, we are especially susceptible. It can occur in any area of our lives, but when it happens in our marriages, the results can be tragic for our families.

Losing heart causes us to become reactionary. We lose the ability to act in a given situation. Instead we react. Our actions are often rash, and we make decisions that we would not normally make. The decision to leave a husband is the most dramatic reaction a woman can have when she loses heart in her marriage.

What causes us to lose heart? There are many factors, and they vary from family to family. But a few are common to most. If we are aware of these, we can avoid the pitfalls that Satan places in our path. Destroying the family is one of our enemy's objectives, for the church is only as strong as the families in it.

The first thing that we, as women, must do is clarify our commitment. How committed are we to our husbands and our families? If we are not committed before God, then when difficult times come (and make no mistake, they will), we have nothing to sustain us. We, as wives, should not only be committed to our marriages and families, we should also communicate this to our husbands. They can help us stay on track when they are certain of our commitment. As Christians, our commitment should be based on what the Word says. If this is the case, we will not crumble under pressure when we begin to lose heart (1 Pet. 3:6).

Once we have established our commitment, we should be assured that what we expect from ourselves and from our husbands is realistic. Are our expecta-



tions ours or those of the Lord Jesus? If our own, neither we nor our husbands will ever live up to them. One mistake women commonly make is to expect their husbands to fit the mold of the "perfect husband." Let's remember that the perfect husband is just as much a myth as the perfect wife. This seems to be a trap especially for those who work outside the home. We put undue

pressure on our marriages when we expect our husbands to be something that they are not. God has made our husbands special. They are not to be compared with our fathers, our brothers, or our concept of the perfect husband. God's Word reminds us that those who compare one with another are unwise (2 Cor. 10:12). Let us exhibit wisdom, thanking God for the individuality of our husbands.

To keep from losing heart, we need to unclutter our lives. Decide as a family what is important. How often do we sacrifice the important on the altar of the urgent? The things that tend to take over our lives, often without our realizing it, are often good, but we become so caught up in activities that we lose sight of what is important. Activity is a ploy of the enemy to keep us from spending time with our Lord and our family. We can become so busy doing things *for* the Lord and our family that we have no time to spend *with* either. Being involved is good, if we know it is something the Lord wants us to do. But when we are pressured into something without feeling the hand of God upon us, we begin to lose heart. If only we would spend in prayer a fraction of the time we spend in activity, our lives and our marriages would take on a whole new countenance.

For those of you dear sisters that are losing heart, be encouraged—not in your circumstances, but in the Lord. If we keep our eyes on the Lord and what He has called us to, if we remember that our husband is very special, and if we unclutter our lives, we will be less likely to lose heart. When we lose heart, our families have the most to lose. *"Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."* (Gal. 6:9).

U

FRONT LINES

EASTER CONFERENCE

The Believers Gospel Chapel (Augusta, GA) will be holding their Annual Easter Conference on April 9-11. Speakers expected are Dr. Basil Jackson and Tom Taylor. A special sacred music concert will be held on Friday evening of the conference with Alan Parks.

For more information:
Sally Hollingsworth
(706) 793-6204

WISCONSIN CONFERENCE

The annual mini-conference at Wauwatosa/Milwaukee, WI, will be held on Saturday April 17, at 2:00, 4:00, and 7:00 P.M.; Dr. James Naismith will be ministering on the subject, "The Lord's Messages to the Churches." Contact::

Frank Brown
(414) 567-8464

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

A young people's conference is scheduled to be held on April 17, 1993 at Rutherford Bible Chapel, Rutherford, NJ. Speakers include Chris Schroeder (MI). For more information, please contact:

Mark Swain
(201) 947-8740

or

Gerard Dematio
(201) 933-2867

SPRING CONFERENCE

Palos Hills Christian Assembly, 10600 South 88th Avenue, Palos Hills, IL, will hold their 23rd Annual Bible Conference on April 23-25.

Speakers expected are Alexander McEachern, Arnot McIntee, and Frank Haggerty. Meals and accommodations provided. Contact:

Robert Fiebig
7661 Sequoia Drive
Palos Heights, IL 60463
(708) 448-2552

NORTHWEST WORKERS CONFERENCE

The Pilgrim in a Hostile World will be the topic at the 1993 Annual Northwest Workers' Conference on May 11-14. The annual conference will again be held at beautiful Lakeside Bible Camp on Whidbey Island, WA. Ken Fleming will be the keynote speaker. For information:

LeRoy P. Junker
HCR 77, Box 400
Cosmopolis, WA 98537
(206) 533-5074

IN THE WORK

After a year of prayer and meeting with Mark and Cindy Kolchin regarding their exercise of heart, the saints at Bethany Bible Chapel, Toms River, NJ, are commending them to full-time work for the Lord.

Please pray that the Lord might use them for His glory and the spread of the gospel.



SPRINGING AHEAD

The Second Annual Spring Conference will be held at Claremont Bible Chapel, 432 W. Harrison Street, Claremont, CA, Lord willing, on May 14-16. Speakers will be Doug Kazen and Billy Stevenson. Accommodations provided:

Henry Kamena
1400 W. 13th St, Sp. 91
Upland, CA 91786

AVERA, GEORGIA

In the spring of 1930, evangelist David Brinkman pitched his tent in Avera, GA, and preached clearly the gospel for several weeks. This was repeated in nearby towns. The blessing of the Lord was evident and a number professed faith in the Saviour. These were soon baptized and taught the simplicity of New Testament church gathering. A chapel was built in Avera in 1931, where the assembly met for thirty-five years. With the help of brethren Owen Hoffman, Brinkman, and others, they sought to reach the surrounding communities.

During its later years, the assembly diminished to the point of closing. Even though the building was sold, the overruling hand of God is seen in its preservation and improvement. It is now privately owned by two families of the early assembly connection. With the cooperation of the present owners and the assembly of Christians of Wrens Bible Chapel, in a neighboring town, a gospel effort was undertaken in the spring of 1992. Christians prayed, announcements and gospel

FRONT LINES

tracts were circulated in the surrounding area, as well as further invitation by phone and personal contacts. Some local Christians have helped. Two local brethren have done most of the preaching.

The meetings were held for three weeks, three nights each week. Attendance seemed better on Tuesday nights, so meetings have continued at one night per week throughout the summer and fall. Although no one has openly confessed the Saviour, it is evident that there has been blessing among the saints. We thank the Lord for this token of rekindled gospel interest in this "churchy" rural area. Earnest prayer is requested for this continued effort to reach sinners with the gospel.

HOME FROM THE FRONT

Recently, Oakwood Bible Chapel informed us of the withdrawal of their commendation of Paul and Pat Hope. They previously served the Lord in Zaragoza, Spain, but felt their participation in the work there was completed and have returned home to Canada to seek secular employment.

ERRATA

In our December issue, we erroneously published some address changes which were incorrect. Please note the correct addresses:

Gerald Boisvert
2839, rue Toussaint-Dussault
Apt. 5
Ste-Foy, PQ, G1V 1K9

Mr. & Mrs. H. G. MacKay
Pittsboro Christian Village
PO Box 518
Pittsboro, NC 27312

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Royal Life Publications is having a clearance sale on all of their books by Daniel Smith and others. All books are reduced 50% or more:
Royal Life Publications
P. O. Box 23227
Lexington, KY 40523

FAMILY RETREAT

Camp Iroquoia recently held its 1993 Winter Family Retreat. The speaker was Alan Parks of Severna Park, MD. For further camp activities, contact:

Jim Weisbecker
c/o Camp Iroquoia
Route 1, Box 176
Hallstead, PA 18822
(215) 345-6275

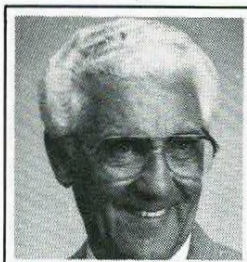
COMMENDATION

The Christians at Believers Bible Chapel in Leroy, OH, are delighted to commend to the work and care of the Lord their brother and sister, Arthur and Deborah Auld.

Their desire is that the Lord will use them in itinerant work, wherever they might be needed. They will continue in fellowship with the saints there. Please join in asking the Lord's direction in their lives.

VIDEO WITNESS

Brother Dan Snaddon was a medic in the British army during World War II. He was taken prisoner and spent four years in a concentration camp near the infamous



Death Railroad. Dan has recorded his experiences in a video entitled,

Through the Valley of the Shadow.

The video cassette concludes with a clear presentation of the gospel and can be used for evangelistic outreach. The tape is 65 minutes in length and is in VHS format. The video will be sold for \$22.00 (U.S.) which includes shipping. Profits from the sale of this video will be used in the Lord's work. Contact:

H. W. Allison
3199 Sovereign Road
Burlington, Ontario
Canada, L7M 2W1
(416) 336-8101

CONFERENCE IN THE SKY

The 36th Annual Skyland Bible Conference will be held July 3-9, 1993. Skyland Conference is a family conference with a good proportion of its guests often having family reunions there each year. Speakers will be J. Philip Morgan and J. B. Nicholson, Jr. Registrars are:

John and Tina Taylor
Box 754
Jamestown, NC 27282
(919) 454-4927

DR. LESLIE BIER

On December 22, 1992, at 90 years of age, Dr. Leslie B. Bier went to be with his Lord whom he had served so fervently. He was commended by the assembly in Brantford, ON in 1930 to missionary work in Angola. The hospital at Boma, designed, built, and administered by Dr. Bier, was a monument to his ability as an architect, a surgeon, and a teacher of African personnel. For years he specialized in the treatment of leprosy. Daily the gospel was preached and many of these people were saved and brought into assembly fellowship.

Please pray for his wife Persis and the family.

MARK LEVENGOOD

On December 24, 1992, Mark Levengood, missionary to South Africa, went to be with the Lord. Mark and his wife Joan, have been serving the Lord in South Africa for 41 years, having been commended to the work by the Yonkers, NY assembly in February, 1950. They left on January 4, 1951, to join the Fergusons at the Elim Mission Station in Natal. They served the Lord at Elim from 1951 to 1959. He is survived by his wife and three children.

DR. GILMOUR DAVIES

On October 20, 1992, Dr. Gilmour Davies was called home to be with the Lord. He was born in Bangalore, South India, on November 12, 1922, the first son of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Davies. In 1933, he traveled to England to complete his education while residing at Norman House, home for children of missionaries, in Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk. While traveling with his father in Scotland, at the age of fourteen, he accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. In 1956, he married Lila Shields and a month later they sailed for India, commended by Vancouver assemblies and Macintosh Hall in Cardiff. In 1974, they returned to Canada for the education of their children. Dr. Davies had suffered with Alzheimer's disease for the past 10 years of his life.

BETTY WALKER

Betty Walker was born in Larkhall, Scotland on November 8, 1910, and passed into the presence of her Lord on January 29, 1993.

She accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour at the age of 17 and two years later came to live in the United States where she met and married George Walker. They began their ministry and married life in the countryside just outside of Havana. Countless hours were spent in prayer, children's work and Bible study with and for the people to whom God had sent her.



In 1959, the family was forced to leave their home and work behind, and come to Miami, FL with no luggage and much heartache. It was not long after that, when they saw the missionfield where God had directed them, follow them here.

All who knew her would testify she was a prayer warrior and a godly woman.

CALIFORNIA IN JULY

The 46th Annual California Bible Conference will be held at Yosemite National Park, California, July 11-18, 1993. Speakers to be expected are Rob Linstead and Tom Taylor. For reservations call:

Mrs. Frank Dixon (Motel accommodations)
1022 West Marbury
West Covina, CA 91790

(818) 337-8733

or:

Mrs. Judy Stevens (House keeping accommodations)
5672 North Woodson Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711
(209) 439-2288

For camping and motorhomes, make reservations with Ticketron exactly 56 days prior to arrival.

PRAISE HIM ANYWAY

Bill Green writes, "We have much to praise our God for, although we have had our ups and downs physically: Rena began the year with osteoporosis, and later developed what seems to be arthritis in the lower back, which causes considerable pain, especially when walking; then in March, surgery for double hernia. Bill developed what the doctors call Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and had cortisone shots in one wrist and surgery on the other, also in March. We are both still active, though limited—Rena more than Bill."

WESTWARD HO

Western Assemblies Home has been graciously used of God as a source of care and ministry for returning elderly missionaries and saints in assembly fellowship.

The Home is presently seeking a candidate for the position of Administrator. Qualification under title 22 is helpful but not mandatory. For further information please contact:

Albin Szulc
Western Assemblies Home
350 Berkeley Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 626-3711



THE DISCOVERY

Dr. Jeff Johnson practices dentistry in Reidsville, NC, where he and his wife Jan, along with several other families, are involved in the establishing of an assembly.

NEXT TO salvation itself, one of the things I am most thankful to the Lord for is revealing to me the pattern for the New Testament church. I “discovered” the assemblies in a somewhat unusual way. It was the Lord’s Supper—the chief meeting of the church—that God used to draw me into fellowship with those who meet according to New Testament principles.

It was as a senior in college that I trusted the Lord as my personal Saviour. In the two years following my conversion, I became very involved in a local fundamental Bible church. This church (pastored by a seminary graduate) had seen rapid growth in the few

the University of North Carolina campus. At the time, there were a number of godly saints from the Pittsboro Christian Village who attended frequently. Apart from God’s providence, I can’t explain why I visited this little assembly when I was so happy at the Bible church. Little did I know that God was using that visit to greatly influence the rest of my life.

The impact of first walking in the door of that little meeting is permanently etched in my mind. As I entered, the saints were singing *Jesus the Very Thought of Thee*. I was quite struck—never had I heard hymns of worship like that before. And never had I heard godly men who could pour out their hearts in appreciation and lead us into the very presence of God as I did that morning.

In view of the way the Lord used worship to bring me into the assemblies, it is particularly disturbing to hear of the present trend among some groups to artificially structure and de-emphasize the Lord’s Supper. I wonder if today’s “progressive” version of the Lord’s Supper would have had the same impact on my life. I think not.

Obviously, my heart was moved that day as I realized I had found something very real and something of which I wanted to be a part. I never went back to the Bible church. In the 17 years since that first visit, I have enjoyed happy fellowship in several assemblies. I am indeed thankful to God for revealing to me Christ as the gathering center for His people and for giving me a right understanding of worship and its importance in the local assembly.

U



The Reidsville group during a recent gospel series with brother Neil Dougal

years preceding my involvement with it. With nearly 700 in fellowship, it had a great music program, active small group Bible studies, and good preaching. I was happy to be a part of what I thought was the “ultimate” in a local church.

Then one day I was invited to visit a small assembly a few miles south of

WHAT'S GOING ON?

LIFE AND DEATH IN INDONESIA

The death toll from the December earthquake and resulting tidal waves hitting Flores and two other islands in eastern Indonesia has reached 2,500. The military has begun mass burials and is building temporary shelters for the thousands left homeless.

In Pasuruan, East Java, a crowd of nearly 20,000 Muslim youths attacked six church buildings on November 15, totally leveling two, and looting or destroying other possessions of the churches. There were no reported injuries from the mass action, prompted by a letter distributed in mosques November 13, a video showing atrocities allegedly committed by Serb "Christians" against Bosnian Muslims, and a church bulletin that Muslims interpreted as an attack against Islam.

TURNING INWARD IN ISRAEL

In the face of unprecedented opportunities to minister to immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia, Israel's Hebrew churches are turning inward. "A renewed insularism is spreading among the Hebrew-speaking congregations in Israel," says Baruch Moaz, editor of *Israel Update*. "Congregations have not cooperated in ministering to immigrants who expressed a desire for Christian fellowship. Addresses have not been shared, resulting in a considerable number of neglected seekers and professed believers."

A WORD OR TWO

The Summer Institute of Linguistics has published three language resources: the 12th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, with information on 6,528 languages; an *Index* of 37,770 languages, dialect, and alternate names; and the second edition of the *Bible Translation Needs Bulletin*. For information:

International Academic
Bookstore,
SIL Box AB
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX. 75236-5628.

SAUDI REPRESSION CONTINUES

Fundamentalist clergy in Saudi Arabia have sharply criticized the



government and called for a stricter application of Islamic law in the country. When seven clerics on the highest religious body in the kingdom, the Supreme Authority of Senior Scholars, did not back the regime against the criticism, King

Fahd fired them, and replaced them with 10 younger men.

However, London's International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity reports that there is no lack of religious repression. "There have been many arrests, jailings, and deportations" of Christians. "We received reports that an Egyptian Christian in Saudi Arabia, Mikhail Cornelius, has been sentenced to be flogged and jailed for the crime of saying that Jesus was God and refusing to acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammed." He said Cornelius was facing 1,000 lashes, followed by seven years in prison. Three expatriate believers—a Filipino, an Indian, and a South Korean—are imprisoned as well.

STILL TALKING IN AFRICA

The African National Congress and the ruling National Party are continuing to meet, attempting to clear up remaining obstacles to new constitutional deals that will satisfy both sides. More secret talks among party leaders were held in January. One of the immediate goals is to find out how to elect a multiracial constituent assembly this year. However, the ANC and the other black opposition group, the Inkatha Freedom Party, are still apart on peace talks between their leaders.

NEW DELHI, INDIA

Prayer is requested for the believers of the Bethel Assembly in New Delhi, India. It is the only assembly in West Delhi and since its

WHAT'S GOING ON!

beginning in 1979 they have not had a place where they can meet. Pray that He who knows our needs, may provide for His people.

TEETERING

Long known as the most stable nation in Central Europe, Hungary is experiencing a disturbing movement. A million unemployed people by the end of the year could fuel further discontent. Ugly right wing incidents have an ideological justification in the writings and speeches of influential ruling party member Istvan Csurka. The rightists combine rabble-rousing, physical attacks, ethnic hatred, and anti-Semitism. Foreign investors anticipate more trouble on the way.

SOLA SCRITURA?

Germany has turned its back on Luther's confidence in the Bible. According to a survey done for the German Bible Society, Stuttgart, and the Protestant Churches in Germany (EKD), 84 percent of those in former East Germany and 78 percent in former West Germany seldom or never read the Bible. In the East, half of the households own a Bible; in the West, 60 percent do. In the West, the Bible is more in demand among young and old people; in the East, there is not much difference between age groups. In the whole of Germany, two-thirds of the unchurched said there was no Bible in their home.

Protestant and Catholic church leaders also report increasing numbers of people giving up their church membership over the last three years because they no longer want to make "church tax" payments administered by the government.

KENYA—AT THE HELM

Despite challenges from seven opponents for his 14-year-old seat as President of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, an avowed Christian, won his country's first broadly contested election in nearly 25 years. The election was considered a significant test of whether multiparty politics will continue to take hold in sub-Saharan Africa.

ROMANIANS HOPE

Three years after its bloody revolution, Romania struggles to overcome the load of 45 years of dicta-



torship. With 1 million unemployed, and inflation raging at 130 percent, life is tough this winter for the average Romanian. Reforms toward a free-market economy have slowed. Despite their hardships, people enjoy a free press and there seems to be a fair amount of optimism for the future.

EVANGELICAL "WOLVES"

Pope John Paul II opened a key Latin American bishops' meeting yesterday sounding alarm bells over the phenomenal growth of Protestant evangelical groups in the re-

gion, which he likened to "voracious wolves" threatening the Roman Catholic flock. He also suggested that the evangelical groups, mostly financed by members in the United States, were following a "clearly defined strategy" to divide Latin American countries by undermining their common Catholic culture. —*The Seattle Times*

FAMILY BIBLE HOUR

Recently, Trans World Radio informed us that of the 5,600 listeners who wrote during last year, having listened to the Telugu program, 239 clearly stated they had trusted Christ. This is all the more thrilling when it is realized that the 15 minute program is aired only once a week and then at the same time as several very popular TV programs.

Also, weekly, they beam two new programs in the Madurese and Torajanes languages from Guam to Indonesia. For the millions who speak these languages there are only 30 minutes of glorious gospel.

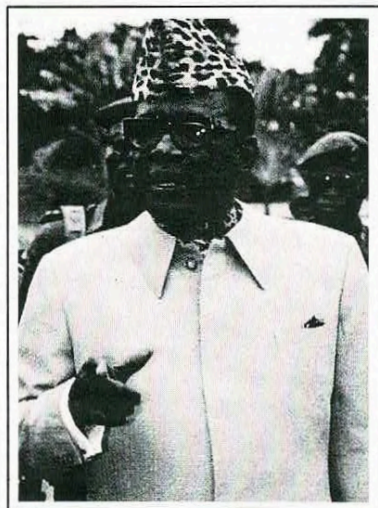
FBH recently began broadcasting in the Guarani language from four stations in Paraguay. Thank God for the precious souls who are able to hear of the gospel through radio. —*Family Bible Hour*

MISSIONARIES KIDNAPPED

Unidentified gunmen abducted three American New Tribes Mission workers January 31, from a village in Panama, 15 miles from the border with Columbia. They are Charles Mankins, Mark Rich, and Richard Tenneoff. New Tribes Mission has received several demands for the three and are working with the Panamanian government and the US State Department to ascertain which are legitimate.

ON THE BRINK

According to the United States, Belgium, and France, Zaire is on "the brink of political collapse." President Mobutu Sese Seko refus-



es to cede power to the transitional government. Fighting between the army and democratic forces killed 1,000 people in less than a week. The capital, Kinshasa, is said to be in ruins. The national currency has plummeted to 1/600th of its value of a year earlier. People have been dying of malaria, diarrhea, and other treatable diseases.

Pray for the safety of a number of missionaries still in the country, doing their best to function as the society collapses around them.

SERBIAN CAMPAIGN

A U. S. State Department report has labeled the Serbian resolve for ethnic cleansing, murder, and rape against Bosnian Muslims the worst since the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. More than 1.5 million people were displaced at the end of last year. The report also states that Iraq's human rights record remains abysmal. Slight improvements were noted in China and Haiti.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

Missions researcher David Barrett projects that by mid 1993, the number of Christians of all kinds will increase from 1992's total of 1,833,022,000 (or 33.4 percent of the world's population) to 1,869,751,000 (33.5 percent), a gain of 36,729,000 people. The number of unevangelized ("evangelized" does not necessarily mean converted) continues to drop, from 1,209,809,000 (22.2 percent) to 1,188,435,000 (21.5 percent).

For what they are worth, these figures and others, may be found in the January 1993 issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.

BONDMEN FOR CHRIST

A United Nations panel has blasted Sudan, Cuba, Iran, and Myanmar (formerly Burma) for human rights abuses. Reports coming from Myanmar claim that the military regime has turned hundreds of Christian tribespeople into slave laborers on development projects in the northeast.

HE WILL TRIUMPH!

Recently we heard of a young man from Siberia who was contacted by brother John Lennox, a mathematician who was lecturing at the university where he was located. As a youth, he sought the Lord, but had no access to a Bible. However, he *did* have some dictionaries of atheism. These books quote the Scripture in order to attempt a refutation. The young man cut out these verses and pasted them in a notebook. Through this notebook of verses, the Lord saved him.

He travelled 2,000 miles by train to Leningrad to find another Chris-

tian to baptize him. He slept in the train station, searched the city, but didn't find another Christian. Later he heard of a work of God among some Lutherans in Estonia, so travelled again by train (this time 5,000 miles round trip) to be baptized. Makes you think, doesn't it? And perhaps weep a little.

Remember the tremendous opportunities open through the printed page in the former Soviet Union. Pray for Dr. David Gooding as he works on the translation of his books into the Russian language. Also for the gospel articles regularly printed in some of the largest circulation newspapers in the world.

A WAY OF THINKING

Bosnia has been driven into the waiting arms of Islamic Kuwait. "Many Bosnians have never identified with Islamic culture. The Bosnians are only Muslims by name—they look like Europeans, they eat like Europeans, and now they are beginning to think like Muslims. Why? Because the West has failed to come to their aid and they have sought help from Arab and other largely Muslim countries.

LATIN AMERICA AND AIDS

Latin America's AIDS problem is exploding. Only six years ago, the number of cases was less than 8,000. In 1993, it's 60,000, and growing. "We are going to see something of biblical proportions," warns an AIDS expert in Brazil. "These biblical tragedies wiped out large portions of populations." Brazil has just seven free clinics where people can be tested for the disease. In Haiti, the adult infection is between 8 and 10 percent.



THE CHRISTIAN SERVICEMEN'S CENTER

The following article contains excerpts from an article in the *Sentinel*, Fort Gordon's community newspaper. The item was written by staff writer Brian Bloom

The red-lettered sign stretches across the building's facade. The sign is straight forward and unassuming, reflecting the service the facility provides.

"It's a place where you can learn the Bible . . . learn about God . . . learn about yourself," Augusta Christian Servicemen's Center director Lee Lohre softly says.

Originated in 1957, the center has been at its present location at 584 Broad Street since 1966.

A yellow business card acts as an

to military men, Lohre and his volunteer staff minister to them all.

"The Servicemen's Center started out to serve the needs of our military," Lohre said. "Years ago we would be considered the religious USO. Today we're the only downtown ministry and military social/religious organization available."

For Lohre, the center is his life's work. A native of Minnesota, he joined the Navy in his teens and became familiar with such centers in his stops around the world.

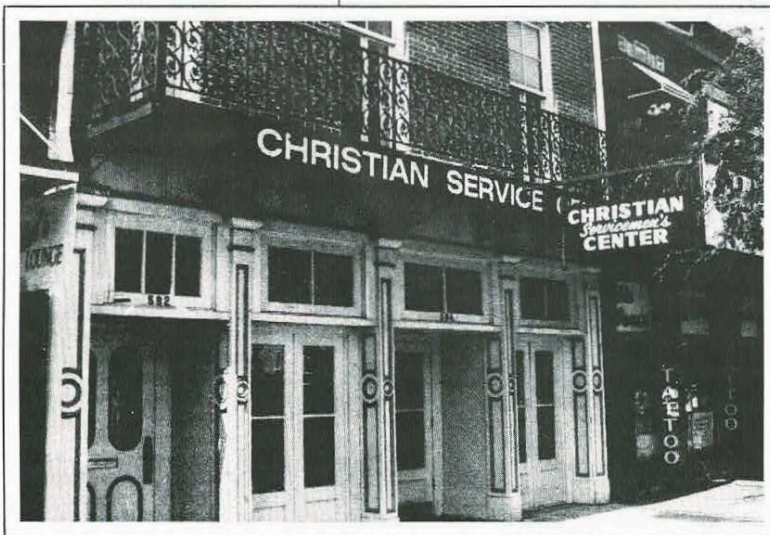
After leaving the military, and earning a Master's degree at Bob Jones University, in 1960, he was named director of the center.

"We are all volunteers here," Lohre said. "We get no salary and solicit no funds from religious or charitable groups. We are funded entirely by private contributions."

Lohre credits his family with helping make the center work. His wife, Ginny, and all seven of his children volunteer their time and talents to the facility. Others also help with everything from serving snacks to remodeling the multiple-story facility.

While the main floor is a recreational facility, upstairs renovation has provided a turn-of-the-century respite for Bible studies. The second story is a meticulously renovated meeting room complete with refinished fireplaces and hardwood floors. Seminars on the Bible are scheduled monthly and each Friday and Saturday evening Bible Study is offered at 7:34 p.m. The simple sign out front tells it all. At the Augusta Christian Servicemen's Center, you're all invited.

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The Christian Servicemen's Center, Augusta, Georgia.

invitation. Each Friday evening and all day Saturday, a volunteer stands at the entrance, card in hand, welcoming those who seek a respite from the street's other offerings.

"It's really not an unsafe neighborhood," Lohre explains. "Just a little unsavory."

But it is because of the neighborhood the center is needed. Through the doors pass the myriad of humanity. From street people to teens, prostitutes



MARTIN LUTHER

"Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox" (Prov. 14:4).

Martin Luther, (1483-1546), irreversibly changed Christendom when he faced off with an empire at the little town of Worms, Germany. This single event so stirs us that, five centuries later, parents honor his daring by naming their sons Martin Luther. That Martin left his mark is obvious. More biographies and studies have been written about him than any other figure since the apostles of Christ. Though we wince at some of his contributions, and renounce others, still we thank God for the stand he took.

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, Germany, the oldest son of an industrious miner. This pugnacious peasant went on to become the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation, and its most forceful and visible leader. He gave the Bible to the commoner, put worship in the language of the people, and reintroduced congregational singing.

As a university student, Luther was shaken after being almost killed by lightning. Knowing he was unprepared for eternity, he determined to be prepared, entering a monastery of the Augustinian Order in Erfurt in 1505. There he delved into the Bible, but also became a thorough Augustinian. Augustine's heavy emphasis on predestination, to the point of fatalism, is seen throughout Luther's writings.

He was widely read for a man of his day, and after being consecrated a priest in 1507, was asked to teach theology at the university level. In 1510, the Augustinian Order sent him as a delegate to Rome. There he was

disillusioned and shocked by the corrupt papal court. Disenchanted with the erroneous dogmas in Catholicism, from 1512 until his death he used his teaching position at the University of Wittenberg to propound his convictions. As a man with a message, he often forcefully preaching from the Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. While the common people heard him gladly, new light was dawning in his own turbulent soul. The Bible gave him the comfort that his strenuous monasticism could not give, and he was discovering the truth of justification by faith as opposed to Rome's doctrine of work-righteousness.

By 1517, the three great Reformation principles were emerging: 1) justification by faith alone; 2) every believer a priest with access to God; 3) the Bible is authoritative for all doctrine and practice.

On October 31, 1517, he pounded his *Ninety-five Theses* to the church door at Wittenberg as a challenge to debate the abuses of indulgences and other Catholic doctrines. This event riled the Roman Church, reaching even the papal court. Events then moved rapidly. While Rome postured itself to squelch his growing influence, his views only became more crisp. In 1518, Pope Leo X summoned Luther to appear at Rome (which invitation Luther refused). In 1519, he formally debated John Eck. In 1520, he publicly burned the papal bull issued against him. In the year 1521 he was excommunicated, and at Worms broke from Rome. From this point on, he turned his attention to the masses crowding to him.

After the initial tumult, Luther did not slack. He translated the Bible into German, affecting the language of the German people permanently. It did for the



MARTIN LUTHER

German what the King James Version did for English. He was not free from prejudice in his translation. In Romans 5:1, Luther translated the verse: "Therefore being justified by faith *alone* . . ." even though the Greek does not require the inclusion of the word "alone." When a Roman Catholic challenged Luther about introducing the word "alone" in that passage, Luther responded in his all too characteristic way, "It is so because Martin Luther says it is so."

Luther wrote and/or collaborated on two catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, the Augsburg Apology, and the Schmalkald Articles. These writings had a wide effect, but the real credit for spreading Luther's doctrines goes to John Calvin of Geneva. Calvin, a generation younger than Luther, was not the charging bull that Luther was. Luther was a preacher, Calvin was the systematic teacher. Despite differences, Calvin was truly a disciple of Luther. His contribution to the reformation was to systematize Luther's doctrines and to promulgate them across Europe. Calvin's *Institutes of the*

Christian Religion was to Luther what C. I. Scofield's study Bible was to J. N. Darby and dispensationalism.

In 1525, Katharina von Bora became Mrs. Martin Luther. She had been a nun for eight years. Learning Reformation doctrines, and finding monastic life insufferably miserable, she fled the convent in 1523. Luther said he married to please his father, to tease the pope, and to vex the devil. Katharina and Martin's congenial home welcomed three sons and three daughters.

Turning orthodoxy into doxology, his musical bent put a tune to the truth. He composed hymns so that we hear people sing his "A Mighty Fortress is our God" in a hundred tongues.

By 1546, Luther's health had visibly failed. After mediating a political dispute, he experienced chest pains and died the next morning. He was sixty-three years old. His widow "Katie" remained in Wittenberg, meagerly supported by the Danish king, Christian III. She died in an accident as she was travelling with her children to Torgau to escape the plague at Wittenberg.

If He Were Alive Today

How much of what Luther said in the 1500's needs retelling? If Luther were alive today, he would do more than wag his finger at those who call themselves "Lutherans." He said, "Call not yourselves Lutherans! Who is Luther but a miserable bag of dust and ashes? Call yourselves Christians after Him who died for you!" Luther's legacy is mostly lost on modern Lutherans. He was colorful, lively, vigorous, with none of the stuffy officiousness that has characterized Lutheran clergy. They contradict the lively man they claim to admire. Does this indicate that they don't read Luther? His biblical commentaries, especially on Galatians, and his *On the Bondage of the Will* are dutifully purchased and shelved in minister's libraries to this day. Including the index, the collected writings fill 55 volumes. Though pricey, they are available. But are they read?

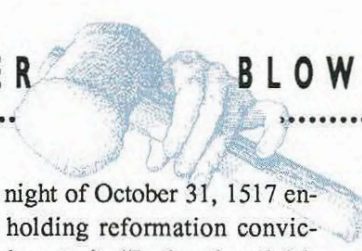
Luther also saw certain issues clearly and spoke so that action followed. This took courage. The Reformer's legacy is betrayed by all who are unwilling to consider their ways, unwilling to be corrected, unwilling to stand for truth. In our day, he would roar at the weak kneed, banana backed, mealie mouthed cowards who have sold out the truths that protestantism had stood for.

He changed the expression of worship so that people could understand and participate. A church whose worship is a spectator sport needs to rehear Luther. He also wanted the Bible to be discussed and appreciated. Of his writings, 30 volumes are commentary on Scripture. Those who make theology a secret science to be deciphered by an intellectual elite betray the heritage of Luther.

Luther impressed on the church its dependence on God's Word. He wrote: "The entire life and substance of the church is the Word of God." Without the Holy Scriptures, the church is nothing but a country club, a museum, a concert hall, or an operatic theater. Luther maintained a serious study of the Bible. What rocked the church in 1517 was not Luther, but the Word of God that Luther was explaining in his sermons, commentaries, pamphlets, and letters. The measure in which he was an effective servant for Christ was the measure in which he stuck to the Word. The world should have been spared his libelous statements against the Anabaptists and his unforgivable harangues against the Jews (quoted by Hitler to justify the Holocaust) if only he had simply preached the Word. May we take the warning to heart.



THE HAMMER BLOW HEARD ROUND THE WORLD



Luther's deed on the night of October 31, 1517 encouraged those already holding reformation convictions. As Leonard Verduin puts it, "Luther found followers before he made any, followers who later—when they saw where Luther was going—peeled off again." One Catholic writer says, "To Luther came others who, before his activity, had already distanced themselves from the doctrines of the official Church, men encouraged by his activity to give expression to their ideas and to organize them into systems." This refers to the underground Church of pre-Reformation times, Pickards, Waldensians, and Lollards, among others.

One reason they "peeled off" was their aversion to the state-church idea. Luther collided with the Anabaptists over the purity of the Church. The Anabaptists strove for a believing Church, comprised only of real Christians, while Luther could not bring himself to renounce the state Church idea (necessarily a mixed multitude of saved and lost). At one period he considered making a break. Early on he questioned the practice of infant baptism: "There is not sufficient evidence from Scripture that would justify one in beginning infant baptism at the time of the early Christians after the apostolic period." Concerning the state Church, he said, "In matters of faith we have to do with a free act, one to which no one can be coerced . . . Heresy is something spiritual; it can neither be bruised with iron nor burned with fire nor drowned in water . . . The secular authorities should keep hands off." Concerning a believing membership, he mused about a Church within a Church in which, "They who seriously want to be Christians and want to confess to the gospel in word and deed, these ought to have their names inscribed in a book and assemble in a house by themselves for the purpose of prayer, the reading of Scripture, the administration of baptism, the reception of the sacrament, and to engage in other Christian acts . . . but I neither can nor may as yet set up such a gathering, for I do not as

yet have the people for it." But throwing out the state Church idea meant sacrificing the political support of the princes. At this Luther drew back, defending an inclusive church where sinners belonged.

Luther acknowledged his former friendship with the Anabaptists: "In our times the doctrine of the gospel, reestablished and cleaned up, drew to it and gained many who in earlier times had been held down by the tyranny of the Antichrist, the Pope; however, there went forth from us at once Anabaptists, Sacramentarians, and other rabble-folk . . . for they were not of us even though for a time they walked with us . . . for they have not had in mind the pure doctrine nor did they seek it." "The pure doctrine" was Luther's formula of *sola fide* ("by faith alone"). He meant that man cannot earn his salvation, neither in whole nor in part. As such it is quite biblical. But Luther's view of salvation had a lopsided emphasis on salvation as a judicial clearing of guilt—"justification" at the expense of salvation as a practical life change—"regeneration." This worried the old underground Church. They read Luther to mean *sola fide* as "faith standing alone" or "faith unaccompanied" which they could not accept. They had paid too dearly to recover the lifestyle of authentic Christianity to accept a theology which undermined a distinctive way of life. They thoroughly approved of the book of James, and it shocked them to hear Luther call James a "right strawy epistle" which he didn't want in his translation. Lucas of Prague chided Luther for neglecting "fruits worthy of repentance."

At the end, Luther embraced the thing that he had left—the union of state and Church. He lashed the Anabaptists: "heretics who dare teach matters contrary to the faith as it is clearly founded on the Scriptures and professed by all Christendom . . . should not be tolerated but punished as blasphemers . . . Moses laid down in his law that such blasphemers and all false teachers should be stoned." Many of Luther's collaborators took these outbursts very seriously.



The Wartburg-Luther's refuge

GOD'S RIGHT HAND MAN

CHRISTIANITY HAS, among many features to recommend it, several that call for constant consideration. Neglect of their force and application can easily produce shallowness of experience and weakness of witness.

First, it can't be too frequently and too emphatically stated that *the Christian faith is historical in substance*. It is not myth. It is not legend. The Person from whom it derives its name is the greatest historical personality this world has ever known. That is a tremendous claim. None can rival Him. His category is unique, for He is the only one of His kind. He is separated from men though He was a true Man—not so much by being higher than they are, but by being apart from them altogether. The danger lies in the direction of neglecting the solid and incontrovertible facts of the New Testament story. The evangelical records are authentic.

To many people—and not altogether ignorant people—Jesus Christ is a kind of semi-mythical person, somewhat akin to King Arthur. They have only the vaguest ideas about Him, and never dream of reading the Gospels to obtain more accurate information. Even among professing Christians there is a great deal of tradition which takes the place of authoritative knowledge. Much of this misconception is due to the ideas formed from imaginative representations by popular artists, from sentimental fictionalized biographies and emotional hymns. Yet an even cursory reading of

New Testament would reveal Him as
a many-sided personality,
perfectly balanced:
strong physi-

cally, virile mentally, courageous spiritually.

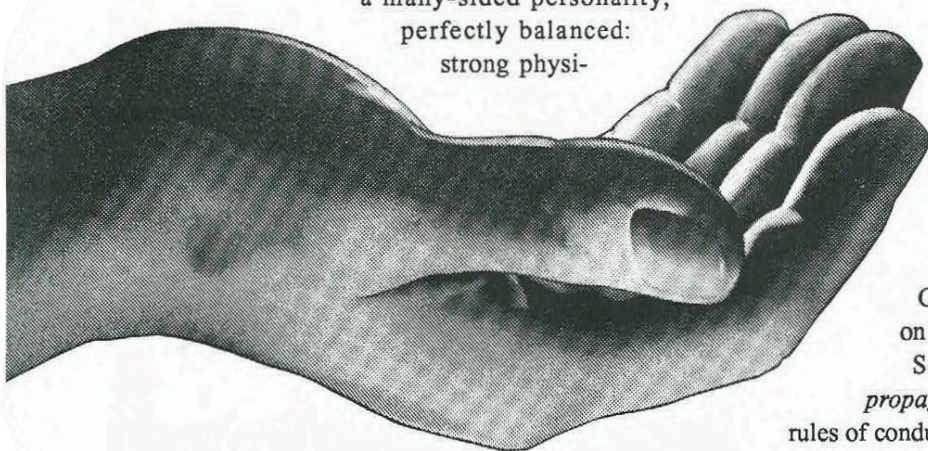
He is tender and gentle, kindly and considerate, but with nothing weak or compromising. He is the ideal Man, historically real, moving across the stage of history as "God manifest in the flesh."

Moreover, *Christianity (as a social unit) had its commencement as a phenomenal historical event*. The Christian Church had a definite beginning. It did not always exist, as some people seem to imagine. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," fifty days after the Crucifixion and ten days after the Ascension, the Holy Spirit descended on a group of believers in Jerusalem, and formed them into a New Society with its living Head in heaven. The Holy Spirit had been given in a manner never before known. He had come to abide with them, and be in them. These isolated disciples became a spiritual community, whose business was not in the acquisition of lands or riches, but in the development and enrichment of character. They became a spiritual organism capable of indefinite expansion by the preaching of the Gospel.

Further, *the Church's continuance is a historical miracle*. Never was a barque so frail launched on such a tempestuous sea of opposition. Wave after wave of fiercest onslaught, the evidence of satanic malice, broke on the infant Church, but it weathered the storm. In fact, it not only survived, it grew strong and in-

creased. Its entire history has been one of headway against inveterate hatred and undisguised opposition. Wherever its missionary bands have penetrated into the darkness of idolatry, superstition, ignorance, or priestcraft, they have encountered the forces of evil, and shown that the Christian faith can conquer the hosts of Satan. As a worldwide, virile witness to Jesus Christ, the Church is an evidence that our faith rests on historical facts. They cannot be removed.

Second, *the faith which we believe and propagate is ethical in character*. It prescribes rules of conduct for those who receive its message. It is



GOD'S RIGHT HAND MAN

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not merely a set of historical facts for a man's intellectual assent. These facts are related to his manner of living. It lays down general principles, the violation of which is considered an act of disloyalty to Christ Himself. Into these general principles are set numerous detailed instructions, so simple and so universal in their application that they are never out of place in any generation or in any society. That fact itself makes our faith unique. The proof of its truth lies in our adjustment in life to the ethical demands of our verbal confession of faith. Creed should regulate conduct; personal belief should issue in corresponding behavior.

Third, *the Christian faith is spiritual in essence*. Its power is not derived from material forces, but from contact with invisible reserves. Man-devised religious systems rely for their effectiveness very much on elaborate ceremonial and symbolical ritual, but the Christian faith, as it is disclosed in the New Testament, depends on no external trappings for its impressiveness. Its witness for God and truth and righteousness has always been most audacious and powerful when reliance on the Holy Spirit has been most complete. He is the Fountain from Whom all power is derived. The lesson for each of us is obvious—if we live in the Spirit (i.e., if we derive our new life from the Holy Spirit) we should walk in the Spirit, so that we may not fulfil the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:17-25).

Fourth, *our faith is dynamic in nature*. Its central feature is that its life and practice are related to a living Person in heaven. Our Lord is not only a historical Person, but a *living* historical Person. He lives in the power of an indissoluble life. He is more than a beautiful example of the past; He is Himself a living, personal force in every generation. He communicates His own life to all who believe in Him. "Because I live," He said, "ye shall live also."

As Paul, the great Christian thinker and apologist, put it, "Nevertheless, I live, yet not I (i.e., my former self), but *Christ liveth in me*." That is possible because our Lord has been received up into heaven, so that "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). All this arises from the fact that God has fulfilled His promise in Psalm 110, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." It is an exalted Saviour, enthroned in heaven, Who is Himself Head of the Church and Lord of the believer.

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Think On These Things

I was considering how the Lord desires and deserves first place in my thought life—which can be a real challenge to me sometimes. I'm so glad the Lord put Philippians 4:8 in His Word. We know, of course, how the Lord Himself fits every qualification in that verse. —A College Student

My mind can think on many things:
On self, or sin, or shame;
Or I can choose to please the Son
And think on Him, that holy One,
Christ Jesus is His Name.

The highest place in all our thoughts,
The Lord of lords deserves;
He is the Maker of the earth,
The Giver of the second birth,
The Master we may serve.

Our Lord is Love; the Truth is He;
A noble King so grand;
He's just, and pure, and lovely, too;
The Prince of Peace, so kind, so true,
The Rock on which we stand.

He is the spotless Lamb of God
Who died at Calvary;
He was the perfect Sacrifice,
His blood was shed to pay the price—
It's done! Now we are free.

Our risen Lord, our Great High Priest,
Our Light, our Hope, our Friend,
Our Guide and Strength, our Joy and
Rest,
Our Help and Shield—He is the Best!
The list need never end.

And here's a thought to think on too:
Soon with Him we will be!
He's coming quickly—what a sight
To see Him shine in glory bright;
We'll be with Him where there's no
night,
Forever in unsullied light,
To praise His majesty.

LOVE

When faith grows faint and feeble, and hope droops her wings, love toils on. True love, the love that is of God, is a perennial force, unwasting, undying. Neither time, nor age, nor circumstance, nor death itself can quench it. God's love is the standard of such love—"Herein is love"—and Christ's death at Calvary the fulness of it—"He loved us, and sent His Son."

Love cannot exist alone. Its influence is felt on everything in life. Love doubles joy and cuts grief in half.

The colored sunsets and the starry heavens, the majestic mountains and the shining sea, the fragrant woods and the painted flowers—these are not half so beautiful as a soul that is serving Jesus out of love, in the wear and tear of common, unpoetic life. —*Bomberger's Practical Illustrations*

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31:3)

Baron von Welz, so gripped by love to the Lord, and therefore love to the lost (for they cannot truly exist apart), renounced his title and his estates and travelled to Dutch Guinea to take the gospel to those still in darkness there. Soon thereafter, he occupied a lonely missionary grave.

Before he left Holland, he said, "What to me is the title 'well-born,' when I am born again in Christ? What to me is the title 'lord,' when I desire to be a servant of His? What is it to me to be called 'your grace,' when, moment by moment, I have need of God's grace, help, and succor? Away with all these vanities, and everything beside I will lay at the feet of Jesus, my dearest Lord, that I may have no hindrance in serving Him aright.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit ..." (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God, above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could that scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.
Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.*

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13)

Love, like faith, without works is dead. Some talk about their love for the Lord and His people, but never show proof of it. There are others who never talk of love but do the things that prove love—deep, pure, and true. Said the Lord in John 14:21: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." Again, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue in My love" (John 15:9).

The prodigal came back from the gray dust of alien streets and the smell of the swinecote, back to love. Two things he would never understand: why he had fled love for the dark streets and the black wine, or why, when he quit the swinecote, love ran to meet him on the road.

But he did not need to understand. It was enough that music from the house washed over him, and that he was kissed, and that the words fell on his spirit:

*This, my son was dead,
and is alive again; he was
lost, and is found.*

—Lon Woodrum

SHARING IN THE HARVEST

Some businesses can be carried on at home, but others cannot. A man may make shoes in his back shop, but he can't catch fish there, and

he can't sow seed there, either. It is in the nature of the case that the fisherman and the sower should go abroad. Now our great Exemplar, the Lord Jesus Christ, could not sit in heaven and see sinners die. That is how He came to Bethlehem and afterwards to Calvary.

I want to point out that in Psalm 126:6 there is (1) the sower himself, (2) his action in going forth, (3) his purpose, to sow seed, (4) his condition, going a weeping man, (5) and the wonderful results of his going.

Perhaps also, there are three contrasts: there is the going forth and the coming again; there is the weeping and the rejoicing; and there is the seed that is brought back as sheaves.

First of all, about the sower himself, the man behind the seed bag. It is all-important that the seed should be right, but it is all-important as well that the man who sows the seed, should be right—sound doctrine and a sound man to publish it. It is true that a missionary or evangelist is a messenger, yet not such a messenger as the telegraph boy who hands you a telegram; you take the telegram, and forget all about the boy. He does not in any way affect the message. But it is not so with the message of the gospel. A man's character transcends his performance. That means that what a man *is* is always more than what he *does*.

I was speaking to a young man the other day, and his testimony was this: "I was converted through the consistent character of a man with whom I was for 18 months in the Navy." We can't lay too much stress on preaching, but remember, God has other ways of bringing people in besides preaching. It was not preaching that brought the prodigal son home, and many are reached through the rugged disciplines of life, or through the consistent conduct of others.

Next, the man's purpose in going out was to sow, and he gave himself wholly to the work. I remember

Mr. Spurgeon telling an incident of a drive he took to Bath. We often ask the driver for information as to this or that place, but Mr. Spurgeon couldn't get anything out of him.

At last, Spurgeon said in frustration, "Do you know anything?"

"Sir," he said, "I know the way to drive you to Bath." And if a man is going out to the missionfield, he does

not need to have various interests in the field—it is very possible for a man who is a true evangelist or missionary to be turned aside from his own prepared work, to do other things that are not required of him. If you look at a man sowing a field, you will see that he is wholly devoted to the work he has to do. There is the seed bag on his shoulder and he is scattering the seed with both hands, right and left. He has no room for anything else, only to sow that field.

The condition of the man gives us much to consider—"He that goeth forth and weepeth." I do not suppose that this is weeping over our manifold transgressions and continuous shortcomings, though there is room for this. I think it is to be interpreted by such a passage as this: "He beheld the city and wept over it." Tears came to the eyes of the Son of God, and oh! that it were so with us when we go to speak to men about Him (e.g. the apostle Paul, Acts 20:31). Depend on this, a weeping preacher will make a weeping people. We have a saying in Scotland, that, "A house-going minister makes a kirk-going people." Often we go out in a somewhat different spirit.

"He . . . shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." If there is anything certain, this is: no man ever yet went with the Word of God, rightly affected toward God and toward sinners, but his reward was certain. It is true, of course, of the Lord Jesus in the first instance. He will come again bringing His sheaves with Him. But all forms of service to Him will share that reward.

And when it comes to the end of the day, as it must come to the Christian, he will have many regrets and see how much time he has wasted on things of no ac-



SHARING IN THE HARVEST

count, but one thing no man ever will be sorry for, and that is the time and strength he gave to preaching the gospel to dying sinners.

Look up to heaven and see the Lord Jesus there. He is the same today as He was yesterday. He came into the world to save sinners, and now He has entrusted the gospel to all who believe that they might pass it on.

In 1 Corinthians 11, where the Apostle Paul speaks about the Supper, he says, "I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you." Now all the elements of Christian ministry are there. I is just receiving and delivering. We have two great concerns, we who have anything to do with that work. First, it is to see to it that we receive the word from God, and then, that we do not fail to deliver that which we have received. If we attempted to deliver without receiving, it would be a failure. If we received without delivering, it would be a betrayal of the trust with which God has given us.


Paul uses this very figure: "I am put in trust with the gospel." What is a trustee? A man who has funds, not a penny of which belongs to him, but they are put into his hands by the disposition of another, and he has to (1) defend and protect them from all those to whom they do not belong, and (2) see that those to whom they are due, get them. Now each of us has been set in this position, and are to contend for the faith "delivered" to the "saints" (not "servants" or "brethren"), because it is only a holy hand that can touch the Ark of God. And it is "delivered," first to be defended, and next, to be propagated, and that to the very ends of the earth.

I recall our Lord's words, "I have a baptism," etc. (Lk. 12:50). That baptism is behind Him, He is not "straitened" anymore. He has not only given the gospel, but given the Holy Ghost to make the gospel effectual. All that is lacking is a believing enterprise on the part of God's children to carry that gospel to the very ends of the earth.

There are many who can tell us that there is one invincible thing, and that is faith. We think of the difficulties and temptations at home and abroad, but there is one thing that cannot be conquered, and that is, faith in God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," and all enemies. There is no possibility of defeat as long as faith is maintained.

So let missionaries at home and abroad be encouraged, and go on in the name of the Lord. And remember that the reward is sure, that the seed (what a little thing it is and how men despise it) has immeasurable

potential. Remember too that the authority of the Master is in that little seed, and by the end of the day, the seed will be turned into sheaves. U

 Our dear brother, Scott Leach, at Prattville, AL, one of the founding elders of Millbrook Bible Chapel, has a seven-year-old daughter, Sarah, who has contracted leukemia. Sarah has been undergoing treatment in the Birmingham Children's Hospital. The doctors have given Sarah a 70% chance for recovery with aggressive treatment.

Unfortunately, Scott has no health insurance. He and his wife are tireless workers for the Lord and a dear brother and sister. There is no one in the Deep South who has not been encouraged in some way by Scott and Kathy to better serve the Lord. There is simply no way their family can handle this burden by themselves. It is also too enormous for the assemblies in the Deep South, although we are doing everything we can.

The Good News Center, Inc., a non-profit corporation, has established a fund for the Leach family to handle the contributions of the Lord's people to help in little Sarah's recovery. All U. S. gifts are tax-deductible. If donating by check, please make checks payable to the Good News Center, Inc., designated for the Sarah Leach Fund.

We will deeply appreciate prayer and practical fellowship for this dear family.

On behalf of the Christians meeting at the Lake Park Chapel, (Belle Chase, LA), Slidell Bible Chapel (Slidell, LA), and other Deep South assemblies who are concerned for the Leach family.

TRACTS AND HOW TO USE THEM

A GENTLEMAN on holiday strolled across to the seat on which his wife was sitting. "What did that fellow say to you?" he asked. "He handed me this little book and inquired whether I had the supreme joy of knowing the Lord Jesus as my own personal Saviour," she replied. "Why didn't you tell him to mind his own business?" he replied testily. "Well, dear," she answered thoughtfully "he acted as though it really *were* his business."

It should hardly be necessary to say that wisdom and discretion are needed in offering a tract to someone. Let friendliness be added to courtesy, and to both a gravity that consorts with the holy business in hand. Most of the time, the tract will be accepted and read.

If you are a businessman, you touch people all day long, and can pass on a tract in a split second. One day, I offered my card to a bus conductor to whom I promised a "Traveller's Guide," with the remark, "You'll know who sent it when it arrives."

He replied, "That's all right, guv'nor, I'll know it's you; nobody else has ever bothered about me." I was able to follow this up with a Bible and booklets for the children, from whom I received charming letters.

You may notice a taxi driver waiting at the curb. These are mostly old soldiers, hard-bitten and critical. But they rarely refuse a courteously offered booklet. If he tells you he has no use for religion, agree with him wholeheartedly. Tell him of the only place in the Bible where "religion" is mentioned (Jas. 1:27). Speak of Christ in a bright manly way, and he will probably alter his mind and take your book. Above all, let him know what Christ is to you personally. A brief word of testimony may leave him wondering. Let him know you are a businessman who does this out of love to the Lord Jesus, and that you are not paid to do it. But the Holy Spirit will show you how to tackle each case; you cannot deal with two cases alike.

Leave a booklet, with a prayer for its preservation and usefulness, on the table in a waiting room, in the lounge of a hotel, or in the pocket of an airline seat.

Slip one in with your bill payments (you'll be sure to pay on time), or with a gratuity in the restaurant (with a generous tip, making friends of the world with the mammon of unrighteousness).

Someone may ask, "What's the use of tract distribution? Tracts have had their days; they're a spent force." Even if that were the case,

it would not absolve us from attempting to carry out our Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature, and this is certainly an effective way of doing it. But the objection is fallacious and based on prejudice and ignorance. Tracts have not had their day yet; they have only had their morning.

A young man, wounded at the siege of St. Quentin, read a slip of paper that had been left on the table. As he read it, he was converted to God. He was Admiral Coligny, leader of the Reformation in France. The tract was found by the nun attending to him, and, duty bound, she carried it to her abbess. The latter, too, was saved. Fleeing from the convent, she met and married a young Dutchman, William of Orange, who broke the power of Rome in the person of Philip II of Spain, and freed the Netherlands from his yoke. His stalwart Protestantism changed the face of Europe.

A pedlar gave a tract to a boy who was converted through it. He became a great preacher, Richard Baxter, the author of *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*. Philip Doddridge was saved through this book, and wrote another, blessed to the conversion of Wilberforce. He wrote a book which led Leigh Richmond to Christ, and the latter's *Dairyman's Daughter* was translated into over fifty languages, a blessing to thousands.

Here is work for you to do every day. You will reap the fruit in that day, even if you do not reap it all now. Don't excuse yourself by reciting your disadvantages—shyness, lack of time, lack of opportunity. Go in purpose of heart to God, ask Him to make you willing in the day of His power, to remove every hindrance, to take away your shyness, and to give you such joy in this service that it will overcome the other things. Then get some tracts, pray over them, and plant a seed. **U**



LABORERS AND THEIR REWARD

Then answered Peter and said unto Him, *Behold, we have forsaken all, and have followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?*" (Matt. 19:27).

Peter betrayed a wrong mind, the mind of the natural man in Matthew 19:27. His words betrayed a bargaining spirit. The Lord certainly allows the claims of service. At once He tells him that none shall ever serve Him, or make surrenders for Him, who shall not gather fruit in the Glory. But having allowed this, He lets him know that men's estimate of service may be very different from God's. Such, I judge, is the meaning of verse 30.

Then, to illustrate this and other principles connected with the state of Peter's mind, the Lord gives the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. In the course of it, the man who speaks in chapter 20 resembles Peter. As Peter judged that he was to reap a high reward, so does this man, but he gets no more than another who appeared to him to have earned only the tenth part of what he had been earning. But the Lord tells him that the last were first and the first last.

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF SERVICE

God's estimate was not necessarily like man's. Man might put some first whom God would put last. It is not that there are not diversities of glory in the kingdom. The parable in Luke 19 shows us that there will be, but the awarding of them will be different from what man had judged. And so it surely will be. Many who are high in the esteem of brethren are yielding less devoted service to the Lord (such service as His eye which sees in secret apprehends) than many unknown ones.

Together with this, we have many other principles of great moral value illustrated in this parable.

THE LORD'S JUSTICE VINDICATED

The Lord of the vineyard tells the complainant that He had done him no wrong, but that He was giving him fully what he had agreed to. So let us be assured that however the Lord may be pleased to deal either with

sinners or saints, His justice will stand triumphantly vindicated. Our thoughts may be weak in this, but let us leave this with Him, only assuring ourselves that "the Judge of all the earth will do

right" (Gen. 18:25). But having thus vindicated His justice in dealing with others, showing that He

had not wronged them of what was theirs, the Lord asks, might He not

do with what is His as He pleases? Was it not lawful for Him so to do? If they stood on law as to their claims, as they judged, they must surely allow Him to stand on the same. Therefore it was lawful for Him to do what He would with His own. This was another triumphant answer to them. Had they any right to stop His hand if He pleased to give the penny to others? Supposing even that they had not earned it—it was nevertheless His, and He might give it to them if He desired. And so with God—If He owns the fountain, may He not dispense the waters of life where He chooses? If He is the sovereign Lord of the treasures of grace, may He not bless any and all that He will? It is this generous heart of God that is manifested in the story. He was prepared to give, not according to the demands of some, but according to the need of all.

THE ROOT OF MURMURING

But beyond all this, the Lord of the vineyard suggests to the murmurer why it was he murmured. His eye was evil. There the secret spring of all this complaining is detected. Man's heart is selfish and narrow; it takes no delight in grace; it is in no harmony with God's affection; it stands in law; it is envious and grudging while God is gracious and bountiful. That is the real cause of enmity against the grace of the gospel. There is no sweeter, surer witness that we carry in us the mind of God than our joy in the triumphs of grace, whether they be in rescuing the sinner from destruction, or in restoring the backsliding saint from his follies. In whatever of its varied ways grace shows itself, thankfully to rejoice is the sure witness that the mind of God is in us. **U**





HEAVEN'S CERTAINTY

CERTAINTIES are remedies," says the poet. How true are his words. The businessman, when he has the certain knowledge that his business is sound and healthy, finds in the knowledge a remedy which kills his anxiety. The mariner, who is guided by his chart and compass, knows where the dangerous places are, and therefore has no fear of running on the rocks in his voyage, for he knows the course to steer. His certainty is the remedy against all fear. The same is true with regard to the child of God, for concerning the sure and certain hope

of Christ's glad return, and the heaven of His glory, He has said, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Or, as Godet translates it, "If our separation were to be eternal, I would have forewarned you." Therefore heaven is sure to the believer, because the promise is sure and the word given is valid.

Broadly speaking, there are four things which make the words of Christ, in their setting, a sure comfort.

Christ's precious death obtains it. "Joshua's word can open a way to the cities of earth, to the good land of milk and honey. But only the Son of God can open

to the children of earth made of clay, and sons of death, the dwellings of life and heaven." And He can only do it by His death.

Christ intimates this, in speaking of Himself as the Way to the Father and the gloryland, in the preposition He uses. The meaning of the word translated "by" in John 14:6, is "by means of." There are three other places in the Gospel of John where the word *dia* occurs. In John 3:17 it is given "through"; in 6:57, "by"; and in 10:9, "by." In each case, Christ's mediatorial death is stated or suggested. Because He has passed through the dark tunnel of death for sin, He can now bring us into the light of heaven's beauty and bliss. We look back on the empty Cross and it reminds us of the accepted Sacrifice; we look up to heaven's throne and behold the Christ, bearing in His body the marks of His toil and triumph.

Christ's priestly presence sustains it. Christ as our Forerunner has taken possession for us. He has already announced our coming. As John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ and heralded forth His coming, so Christ is our Forerunner who announces our approach. The fact of Christ being in heaven not only makes it certain for us, for He is the Anchor which holds our ship (Heb. 6:19), but He also makes it attractive to us.

He is the *Light* of heaven, for He illuminates it (Rev. 21:23). He is the *Life* in the midst of it (Rev. 22:2). He is the *Sustainer* of heaven, for He feeds with hidden manna (Rev. 2:17). He is the *Refresher* of heaven, for He satisfies with the Water of Life (Rev. 21:6). He is the *Center* of heaven, for He is on the throne (Rev. 3:21). He is the *Glory* of heaven, for His Name is on every forehead; thus no one can look at another without seeing Him (Rev. 22:4). He is the *Joy* of heaven's constant service, for His servants serve Him (Rev. 7:15).

Christ's sure, valid promise contains it. We cannot estimate nor fathom the meaning of those words of cheer: "If it were not so, I would have told you." "If David could cheer on his men to take Jerusalem from the Jebusites, with the assurance that there he would dwell, and they should have abodes with him, how

much more should we be comforted by our Lord's words!" His words of assurance give comfort to our hearts and joy to our spirits.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother of one who had none.

"Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to Jesus. He was mother's Friend, and He's mine, too."

"Jesus Christ is in the sky. He's away off, and has so many things to look after in heaven."

"I don't know anything about that," said the orphan; "all I know is, He says He will—and that's enough for me."

Yes, it is enough to faith. His Word is like a rock for *stability*, none can move it; it is like a check for *reliability*, and He will surely honor it; it is like a banquet table for *accessibility*, and none need leave it hungry.

Christ's coming "parousia" will attain it. There is a pathos-filled incident in the life of Hugh Miller. He tells how, after his father had left home in his ship, he used to go and watch for his return. His own words tell the story best:

"I used to climb, day after day, a grassy protuberance behind my mother's house, which commands a wide reach of

the Moray Firth. I would look wistfully out, long after everyone else had ceased to hope, for the sloop with the two stripes of white, and the two square topsails I never saw."

What a ring of disappointment, and a note almost of despair is heard in the words: "I never saw!" Such disappointment can never be the believer's lot, for one glad day the heavens shall glow with splendor, the trumpet-voice of the Archangel shall awake the dead, and the gathering shout of the Lord shall summon the living; and then in clouds together shall we be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and be forever in His presence.

Such certainty will change our lives. We will have no difficulty living for the right world, or serving with the right motive, or having our hearts set on the right objective, if we have heaven in our eyes.



**We will have
no difficulty
living for
the right world
if we have
heaven
in our eyes.**





THE HOPE WITHIN

I WAS RAISED in a Christian home. The Bible was held in high esteem as God's Word, historically true, inerrant in content, completely trustworthy for all matters of life and doctrine. The Book itself was held in high regard. If you carelessly dropped a school book on the ground you were reproved—but dropping your Bible carelessly was an offense of much greater magnitude. So it was at a young age I rested my soul's eternal welfare upon what it said. It seemed so simple. "God said it, I believed it, and that settled it."

When confronted with evolution, I scoffed it off as foolishness and never even spent time thinking about the answers to such nonsense. When I said so in class, the teacher was unhappy, but the majority of the students didn't even comment. Thus I brushed it off and continued with life.

All that was 30 years ago. Now we live in a completely different world—a world in which Christianity is being systematically undermined by the educational system and the media. The time we live in has been called a post-Christian era. Many people under 30 today have no real sense of the Bible or its contents. Why should anyone believe in the Bible? What makes it different from any other piece of classical literature? Is it not a relic from the past filled with myths, stories, and superstitions that have no relevance for today and should be housed in some museum? When confronting non-Christians today, a host of questions are being asked that never even entered my mind. They do deserve an answer if we want to be credible witnesses.

Does this mean I need to take a crash course in humanistic philosophies, or logic, or archeology? No, by no means. But it does mean, I need to ask myself a variety of questions as I read and study the Scriptures. In that way, as I am confronted, I may be able "to give an answer to every man that asketh . . . a reason of the hope" that is in me (1 Pet. 3:15).

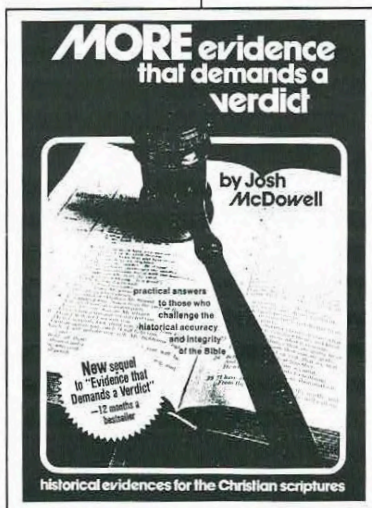
Three books that have helped me in this regard are Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, and Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks' *When Skeptics Ask*. These are complementary books but certainly not the same.

Mere Christianity is a compilation of radio broadcasts given in the mid 1940's. In this book, Lewis demonstrates the distinctiveness of Christianity from non-Christian philosophies. He makes a great case that Christianity is in fact intellectually as well as spiritually satisfying. It has been used of God for many years to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ as Someone whose claims are worth considering.

Evidence That Demands a Verdict deals with the historicity of the Bible. This book examines the arguments of those who say the Bible is not reliable or has historical errors in it. The Bible is shown to be a reliable book, as demonstrated in its unique compilation, the many prophecies that have been fulfilled, as well as extra-biblical evidences such as archeology and ancient documentation that agree with the biblical account.

When Skeptics Ask is set in a question/answer format. When a skeptic asks about God, evil, miracles, or the afterlife, how do we answer him? This book goes a long way toward answering those questions.

These books are written in a non-technical style that is easily grasped. If you are bothered by these questions or are reaching someone who is, these books can be a great help. Remember that not all people have these philosophical questions and the answers to these problems do not lead a person to Christ. But sometimes nonbelievers have good questions that need answers before we may have a hearing for the greatest message in the world: that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this world, lived, died for our sins, and rose again the third day for our justification, thus making a way for all to live forever in His presence.



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EVERYDAY READING PLAN FOR MARCH

Section 27: Ezekiel

March 1	Ezekiel 1:1-28	Ezekiel's vision and the glory of the Lord
March 2	Ezekiel 2:1-3:27	Ezekiel's commission and warning to Israel
March 3	Ezekiel 4:1-5:17	Pictures of the siege of Jerusalem
March 4	Ezekiel 6:1-7:27	God's message against the mountains of Israel & the end
March 5	Ezekiel 8:1-9:11	Idolatry in the temple & vision of the Jerusalem slaying
March 6	Ezekiel 10:1-11:25	Visions of the cherubims & wrath against the lying princes
March 7	Ezekiel 12:1-13:23	Pictures of the exile & condemnation against false prophets
March 8	Ezekiel 14:1-23	Vision of the elders & condemnation of Israel
March 9	Ezekiel 15:1-16:63	Jerusalem: the useless vine and prostitute
March 10	Ezekiel 17:1-24	Parable of the great eagle & the rebellion of Zedekiah
March 11	Ezekiel 18:1-19:14	Israel in captivity & lamentation for her princes
March 12	Ezekiel 20:1-49	The judgment of Israel
March 13	Ezekiel 21:1-22:31	The parable of the sighing prophet and the sins of Israel
March 14	Ezekiel 23:1-24:27	The Parables of Aholah, Aholibah, & the boiling pot
March 15	Ezekiel 25:1-28:26	Prophecies against the nations
March 16	Ezekiel 29:1-32:32	Continued prophecies against the nations
March 17	Ezekiel 33:1-34:31	Ezekiel the watchman & message to the faithless shepherds
March 18	Ezekiel 35:1-36:38	Prophecy against Mount Seir & message to Israel
March 19	Ezekiel 37:1-28	The valley of dry bones and the sign of two sticks
March 20	Ezekiel 38:1-39:29	The prophecy against Gog
March 21	Ezekiel 40:1-49	The vision of the temple—measuring the courts and gates
March 22	Ezekiel 41:1-26	Measuring the temple—its decoration
March 23	Ezekiel 42:1-20	The priests' chambers
March 24	Ezekiel 43:1-12	The glory of the Lord returns to the temple
March 25	Ezekiel 43:13-27	Israel returned to the burnt offering
March 26	Ezekiel 44:1-31	Instruction regarding the Prince and the priests
March 27	Ezekiel 45:1-46:18	The Prince and His personal worship
March 28	Ezekiel 46:19-47:12	The place for the trespass offering and the river of the temple
March 29	Ezekiel 47:13-23	The boundaries of the land
March 30	Ezekiel 48:1-29	The apportionment of the land
March 31	Ezekiel 48:30-35	Jehovah-shammah, "The Lord is there"

VISIONS OF GLORY

Ezekiel saw visions of glory. Glory is mentioned repeatedly by this man who spoke to a people sloshing through the inglorious realities of captivity to Babylon.

He is referred to a hundred times as the son of man. This was our Lord's most frequent description of Himself. That title associated Him with lowly mankind, but it also anticipated glory (note Ps. 8). We thrill at our Lord's answer to the high priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mt. 26:64).

Ezekiel's prophecy is an example of the proper and right place for sanctified imagination. If Isaiah was the poet and Jeremiah was the preacher, then Ezekiel was the painter. This verbal artist has left us a profuse mosaic, richly illustrated. But the artist does not get lost in the intricacies of his work. There are bold strokes and forceful images in Ezekiel, and here are the proofs of great art. It holds our attention. It does not easily let go its secrets, so that we have to wonder at it. It has an enduring appeal because we never quite comprehend it; it keeps us searching its lines for more clues.

You are not totally left out, however, because artwork is meant to make you feel or understand something. Ezekiel has left just that impression. God communicates, saying so much, so soon, so briefly, and yet so fully in His talking pictures. For instance, His method in chapter 1 leaves you silently marvelling, but the simplest Christian understands the tenderness and the love represented in the face and the hands of a man. Our limited comprehension staggers and despairs at the dreadful height of the wheels and the all-seeing eyes that filled their rims (1:18), but there is the welcomed sight of the Man above, upon the throne. Leonard Shel-drake points this out: "The first chapter of Ezekiel has the distinction among prophecies of being a vision of overwhelming disaster and at the same time visions of God. God in His most perfect revelation—"the face of a man"—is seen amid the mysteries of the vision; while the whole structure of baffling movement and wonder leads upward to a throne of government and control above it all. Beyond and above the throne, which might seem cold and unsympathetic in its great-

ness and power, was the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it (v. 26) . . . a man with a feeling heart above all that seemed so beyond the sphere of human weal or woe. Above the throne of Sovereign Will was a Man—a Man with face and hands. A face to look with compassion and mercy; hands to lift from the roadside; hands to feed the hungry; hands to calm and cool a fevered brow; hands to touch the filthy and unclean, to give him a happy home inside the camp; hands to hold the children and the lambs; hands to touch, to hold, to lift, to help—"the hands of a man under the wings" (v. 8)."

So there is a tenderness behind Ezekiel's stern words, but you do have to look for it. Compare him to Jeremiah, who had already prophesied some thirty-five years when Ezekiel received his first vision. Jeremiah stayed with the poor in the land after the Babylonians conquered Israel and enforced a massive relocation of the Jews. Jeremiah and Ezekiel felt these tragedies, but look at Ezekiel's austere response. When his wife died (Ezek 24:15-27), he was not to weep! How strange alongside Jeremiah's lament. But Ezekiel's detachment from the land of Israel did not hinder him. Instead, it let him survey God's wider purposes (a view often missed by those in the vortex of the problem).

Ezekiel is almost as neglected as Leviticus and Chronicles. These books are large. They have some detailed, tedious chapters, require careful attention (let lazy readers beware), and they all concern priesthood. To my mind, this last fact is the chief reason why these books repel the general reader. Their chief topic is heaven's perspective, a vista foreign to the natural mind. The lengthy descriptions of the house of God and its service enthrall the worshipper in the sanctuary, but are strange and forbidding to those who have never entered the holy place by the new and living way.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Ezekiel the Prophet; A. C. Gaebelein
Ezekiel; Charles L. Feinberg
Ezekiel; William Kelly
Ezekiel—The Numerical Bible; F. W. Grant
Ezekiel; H. A. Ironside
Dead Bones Live; F. Tatford

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EVERYDAY READING PLAN FOR APRIL

Section 28: Daniel

April 1	Daniel 1:1-7	How Daniel came to Babylon
April 2	Daniel 1:8-16	Daniel turns vegetarian
April 3	Daniel 1:17-21	God's gifts
April 4	Daniel 2:1-13	The dream
April 5	Daniel 2:14-23	Daniel as a man of prayer
April 6	Daniel 2:24-45	The dream interpreted
April 7	Daniel 2:46-49	Daniel as a man with power
April 8	Daniel 3:1-7	The king's command
April 9	Daniel 3:8-23	Daniel's three friends accused and sentenced
April 10	Daniel 3:24-27	God's deliverance
April 11	Daniel 3:28-30	Faithfulness rewarded
April 12	Daniel 4:1-18	Nebuchadnezzar's dream described
April 13	Daniel 4:19-27	Nebuchadnezzar's dream explained
April 14	Daniel 4:28-37	Nebuchadnezzar's dream fulfilled
April 15	Daniel 5:1-9	Belshazzar's feast: The handwriting on the wall
April 16	Daniel 5:10-12	The call for Daniel
April 17	Daniel 5:13-28	Daniel explains the handwriting
April 18	Daniel 5:29-31	Reward and ruin
April 19	Daniel 6:1-4	Daniel: the man of integrity
April 20	Daniel 6:5-9	The plot against Daniel
April 21	Daniel 6:10-18	Daniel in the den of lions
April 22	Daniel 6:19-23	The mighty deliverance of God
April 23	Daniel 6:24-28	The royal proclamation
April 24	Daniel 7:1-28	The vision of the four beasts
April 25	Daniel 8:1-27	The ram and the goat
April 26	Daniel 9:1-19	The pause for prayer
April 27	Daniel 9:20-27	The seventy sevens
April 28	Daniel 10:1-21	The prelude to prophecy
April 29	Daniel 11:1-12:4	A vision of kings
April 30	Daniel 12:5-13	The final vision at the river

STILL AMONG LIONS

Daniel was one of the first books to be attacked by the ravaging lions known as higher critics. They denied that Daniel was a prophet, suggesting that he lived at least 200 years after the days of which he wrote. After all, if Daniel was written as prehistory, this is solid evidence that the Bible is the Word of God.

But the nineteenth century lions found it no easier to finish off the book of Daniel than those who sought to destroy the man centuries before. H. A. Ironside points out that no one less than the Lord Jesus calls Daniel a prophet (Mt. 24:15). He adds: "As a simple believer, who owes everything for eternity to what the blessed Christ of God accomplished on Calvary's cross, I prefer to accept His testimony."

Included in the *Kethubim* (Latter Writings) in the Hebrew Bible—with Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 & 2 Chronicles—Daniel is both historical and prophetic.

Daniel ("God is judge") was part of the mass deportation from Judah in 606 BC, being about 20 at the time. Three years later, his recorded ministry began, deep in the heart of the Babylonian Empire. He must have been more than 90 when he died. His contemporaries were Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Obadiah.

Commenting on the words, "Daniel continued unto the first year of king Cyrus," Alexander MacLaren writes: "These simple words contain volumes. During all the troubles of the nation, from the king's insanity, and the murder of his successors, amidst whirling intrigues, envies, plots, and persecutions, this one man stood firm, like a pillar amid blowing sands. So God keeps the steadfast soul which is fixed on Him; and while the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof, he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Daniel's life and ministry spanned the reigns of four kings—Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar of Babylon, Darius and Cyrus of Medo-Persia.

Subsequently we discover that Daniel is brilliant intellectually, but chapter 1 gives us something better. Daniel determines to be pure morally. Destined to be a great man, first God shows him to be a good man.

Daniel found himself in a palace full of fortune-tellers. How would you know whom you could trust?

Chapter 2 gives the acid test. Anyone can pretend to predict the *future*, but it cannot be verified. But Nebuchadnezzar's dream is withheld from the court; now who can reveal the hidden *past*? This is verifiable. The wise men are nonplussed. This is against all the rules! Only the gods, they say, can reveal such things.

But one in the palace *can* reveal the dream and its meaning. Daniel declares to the king, "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets . . ." So unfolds the "times of the Gentiles" in the great image—Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, symbolized in materials of decreasing value and increasing strength. The king is so enamored with the image, he builds one, and demands that it be worshiped. A godly remnant, like those who will not bow to the "abomination of desolation" in the tribulation, are supernaturally preserved.

Chapter 4 gives a graphic display of the difference between a man and a beast. If the king will act like a beast, then let him live like one. What is the difference? (See the king's statements in Dan. 4:30, 34-35.)

Chapter 5, (answering to Rev. 17-19), prefigures the godlessness and doom of the nations when, at last, God writes their judgment on the wall. Chapter 6 shows, in Daniel's preservation, divine care of the godly.

Chapters 7 and 8 describe the ravenous menagerie that tear one another, God's view of the nations, rather than the glorious image Nebuchadnezzar saw.

In chapter 9, Daniel prays for a remnant that has been in captivity for 70 years, but God reveals to him His purposes (always grander than man's) for the nation and describes 70 weeks (or heptads) of years.

The last three chapters (10-12) give the struggle for sovereignty in history as a preview of the end. Like Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist will demand pagan worship. But, concludes the book, "Blessed is he that waiteth." Daniel's God will triumph in the end!

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

The Prophet Daniel; A. C. Gaebelien
The Coming Prince; Sir R. Anderson
Daniel; John F. Walvoord
Bible Class Notes on Daniel; P. J. Pell
Daniel; H. A. Ironside
Climax of the Ages; F. Tatford

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HYMNS

AFTER 80 vigorous years, she had fallen prey to a stroke that left her unable to speak or even to steady herself in a chair. Faithfully though her graying children visited her, they despaired of making contact with her—until the day they began on impulse to sing a familiar hymn and found her joining in, softly but in time and tune.

Her daughter-in-law, who shared that moment with the *Christian Century*, marvelled that “deep below the frost line, the hymns of faith survived when all else seemed gone.” And each friend to whom I have told this story has recalled some other aged victim of a pitiless ailment who could nevertheless still sing hymns.

Yet if here we have a frost line, perhaps we have also the tip of an iceberg.

Obviously that woman had taken the trouble to learn hymns herself during the First World War, and to see that her children learned them during the Depression and the Second World War, or the hymns would not have been in all their memories. But she learned and taught hymns, and probably Bible passages as well, in decades when she could reasonably expect them to last, in the form she knew, at least as long as she did.

The overwhelming majority of the half-million hymns in English have been written by and for people who knew the Bible in one translation, and one only: The Authorized Version of 1611. The scholarly clerics who produced it dealt daily with people who were, and would remain, unable to read. To reach these people, they arranged words in sequences which, when taken in through the ear, lodge readily in the memory—a skill reserved among us mostly to making TV commercials.

Hymn writers proceeded to draw predictably on the Bible's concepts and incidents, but even more on the Authorized Version's striking turns of phrase, mindful, until this century, of the needs of illiterates. Their lines might be altered by compilers of hymnals, themselves usually experienced pastors, but normally to make them more scriptural, more memorable, and more quotable. For example, the Christmas hymn we know as *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* originally began,



“Hark how all the welkin rings, Glory to the King of Kings!”

But since 1950, the hymns we trusted to see us out have sustained several body blows, each delivered with the noblest of intentions.

First, the primacy of the Authorized Version has been eroded by successive new translations more accurate than elegant, and aimed at the eye rather than the ear. Future generations may know the content of the Scriptures as well as we do (and will, let us hope, obey their precepts better), but already I cannot quote a scriptural phrase and count on your recognizing it as one, for you may know a different wording than I. Hymns studded with allusions to the Authorized Version must increasingly baffle users unable to make the connections their authors took for granted. On what shared store of evocative phrases can their successors draw?

Then we have the current craze for gnawing at words or phrases in time-tried hymns by way of placating people bent on taking offense where none was intended, who seldom show up to sing hymns anyhow. I think not just of carnage wrought among the pronouns by feminists, although I wish they would apply their talents to *A Mighty Fortress* and play fair by amending all masculine references to the devil as well as to God. Every special-interest group demands the right to wrest hymns into line with its own obsession, though surely they all have bigger fish to fry, and might better go fry them.

Lately I attended a service whose hymns included *Amazing Grace*. The minister asked us to alter the line “That saved a wretch like me” because, he said, we weren't wretches. Well, let him think that while he can. But wasn't he treating that hymn much as a debilitating disease treats an aging person—draining away distinctive qualities till only a shattered hulk is left?

Give people like him free rein and who will be able to sing with you the hymns that are already below your frost line, should illness close off every other way of reaching the essential you?

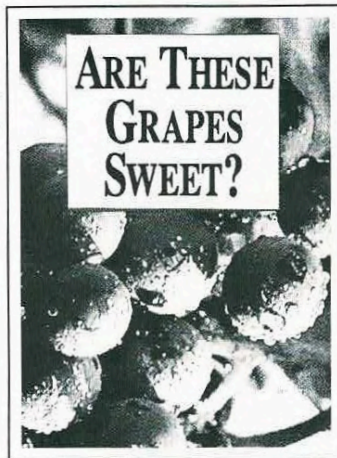
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- "I Know Someone ... Who Can Mend Broken Hearts"
- "What's the Difference Between a Monkey ... And You? (No Offense)"
- "When All is Said and Done ... More is Said than Done"
- "You Actually Believe the Bible? ... How Quaint!"



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"Thanks A
Million".....*

*..... But
You're Worth
More
Than That*

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full when He died for us. If we accept His forgiveness, He gives us a whole new life.

He wants to serve you too. He thought so highly of you and loved you so much that He actually *died* for you. Here's what He said: "What is a man profited, if he gained the whole world, but lost his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). You're worth more than a million to Him—more than the whole world! He proved it by giving His life for you.

I know you appreciate it

when someone says thanks for what you do for them. And you feel slighted when someone doesn't say it, don't you? Well, has there been a time in your life when you received God's gift of eternal forgiveness in the Lord Jesus? Have you thanked Him for it? "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). It's your serve.

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All Fullness In Him LEONARD SHELDRAKE

"It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19).

There is more than one reason that all fullness in Christ should bring pleasure to the heart of God. First of all, for His own sake, our Lord emptied Himself till He was alone and a curse upon the cross. Those downward steps took Him finally to "the death of the cross." With everything gone and with God forsaking Him, emptier He could not be. Sinking where the floods overflowed Him in the deep waters, lower He could not go. When we consider that this sorrow, and depth and darkness to Him was in direct obedience to the will of God, we cease to wonder at the honor and glory the Father has heaped upon Him. When we think of His infinite worthiness, it is most appropriate that in none other but Him should all fullness dwell.

He alone is the One who is able to be a faithful steward of the "fullness of God." "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." Grace and judgment are committed to Him. God can rest in heaven while all His blessed purposes are being triumphantly fulfilled by Him who once hung on Calvary. All fullness dwells in Him because He is and ever was the Son of God. No creature, however exalted, could wholly contain the fullness of God.

But there is a blessed reason as far as *we* are concerned why all fullness should dwell in Him. The Father not only looked at Him when it pleased Him that all fullness should dwell in Christ; He also looked at me. He looked at me in my ignorance, and put my wisdom in Christ that I might have to go to Him for guidance and light. He looked at me in my weakness, and put strength in Christ that I might go to Him for victory in His might. He looked at me in my nothingness, and put my all in Christ that I might have to go to Him for everything. The Father looked at me in all my needs when it pleased Him that in Christ should all fullness dwell. What greater calamity could there be for me than to be independent of Christ. What is more blessed than to be empty; my emptiness beside my blessed Lord and dependent on Him for everything! So it pleases me, too, that it "pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."