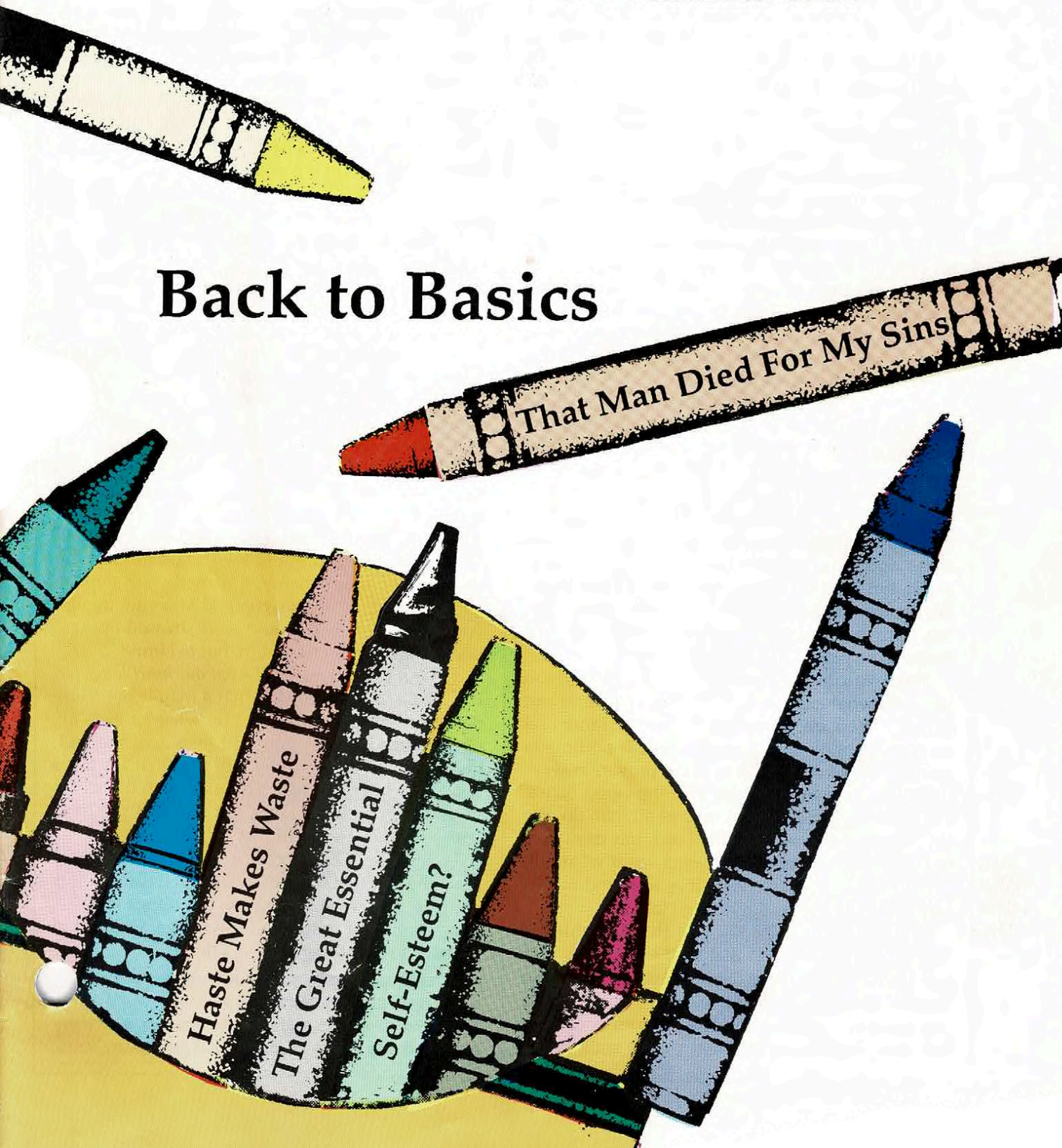
UPLOOK

SEPTEMBER 1992

Back to Basics



EDITORIAL

Back to Basics

J. B. Nicholson, Jr..

The Church in the first blush of its love for the Man who died for them had a creed of just three words: "Christ is Lord." It told them all they had come to know since they had put their trust in Him. The One who had come from God and went to God, had come that He might die for them, and gone that they might live in Him. He was theirs through faith, and they were His by grace. All that hell could hurl at them could not change that. Nor could the lusts, fears, and doubts of their own hearts.

They longed to see Him, and so this world held no charms for them. It was a cold, dark place where once the One they served had been nailed to a cross of shame. True, it was for their sins He had died, but the world and all it found dear had been judged by that act. They did not want Him then; they do not want Him still.

So it was that men like John and James, Luke and Paul lived their lives with one goal—to please Him. Come what may, by life and by death, they would seek to bring joy to His great heart. Who would not *live* for One who *died* for you?

What has gone wrong? Why are we quick to find fault and slow to help? You can get crowds to come and eat; few will come to pray. We sow much, but have no crop to show for all our work. We are fed, but are not filled. We are dressed well, but not warm (at least in heart). What we earn seems to be placed in a bag full of holes.

Have you heard that before? Of course, you have. So what can we *do?* The Lord of Hosts can tell us. "Think on your ways," He says. More and more is spent on self. It seems there is no time to read the Word of God, to kneel in prayer, to serve the saints, to reach the lost with the Good News. We have the same span of time as all men do. We say we want to use it for the Lord, but days turn to weeks, then months, and years—and what will it all look like when we view it as we stand by His side in the land we call our true Home?

Is it not time to go back to the first things? There are the *first works* that wait to be done. Can you think back to those days when you were first saved? You had just one Book as your guide and you used it to meet every need of your soul. You had just one charge, and that was to walk hand-in-hand, heart-to-heart, with the Lord of your life. You had just one goal—to please Him in all you did, that men might see your good works and it would make them think of God!

Have the times changed so much, or is it we that have changed? Can we not still find some, just saved, who live now as we once did? The Lord waits to have us back, we who have left our *first love.* What will it cost us to do this?

1) *We must get down to go up:* The low place is just where the Lord meets with His own. He went down till He could go down no more. Down to earth; down to wash feet; down on His face to weep and pray; down, down to the cross. Yes, He went up, as we shall. But now is the time to go down. In God's good time, He will lift us up.

2) *We must go back to go on:* If first love and first works are our goal, we will not find them by a grim trek through the dry land that spreads out in front of us. We must trace our steps back to the place where we turned from the sweet spring that bursts from the throne of God. When we do get back, there are two things we will find hard to solve. Why did we ever leave His will for the wastes of self and sin? And why does He stand with arms stretched out to take us back? Can you think of one time when you turned your steps to go home that He did not run and kiss you, though you smelled of the pigs and were dressed in rags? We should not run *from* Him, but *to* Him!

3) *We must give up to get what our heart longs for:* It is a rule of life with God that a man is not made rich by what he *takes up*, but by what he *gives up.* Grasp your life and you will lose it in the end; give it up to Him and you will find that He takes good care of His things! You may seek the world or you may seek the Lord, but you will not have both—for they both will cost you your life.

Is this new? Of course not. Is it what we need? It is. The fact that it is not new does not mean it is not true. When we give up on big things and fast things and your things and my things, we need to get back to first things—God's things.

As an exercise in getting Back to Basics, this article was composed only of monosyllables. John wrote in the vocabulary of an eight-year-old. May God help us to return to the artless simplicity of children—not being childish, but childlike.

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HURRICANE HELP!

A special fund has been arranged for believers from assemblies in south Florida whose houses were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Andrew. At the present time it is difficult to receive food, clothing, etc., as there is virtually no place to store them. There should be opportunity later. However, funds are being received at two locations:

Disaster Fund
c/o CMML, Inc.
P. O. Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762

Bible Truth Chapel Relief
c/o Jack Davies
13323 S. W. 9th Terrace
Miami, FL 33184

DAVENPORT, IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The believers who meet at Harrison Gospel Chapel in Davenport, IA, wish to announce their annual conference on October 2-4. Speakers for the conference are Jim Nichols (IA) and John Bjorlie (MI). Nursery and children's meetings will be provided. Also, a young people's meeting will be held Saturday night. Contact:

Patrick Bennett
(391) 388-9698

NATIONAL WORKERS' & ELDERS' CONFERENCE

This year, Lord willing, the National Workers' & Elders' Conference will be held October 6-8 at Plymouth Bible Chapel, 10605 36th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN. For information:

(612) 544-0287
(612) 545-7988

NEW ONTARIO CONFERENCE PLANNED

For many years, the National Workers' and Elders' Conference has been of great benefit to the Lord's people across this continent.

As a result of the most recent one, held last October in New Jersey, several men became concerned about the need for something similar in Ontario. A group of twelve men met on April 4 in Oshawa to discuss this need, and it was decided to proceed with an Ontario Workers' and Elders' Conference over the three days of May 4, 5 and 6, 1993. The theme of "Strength For Service" has been selected. The Wallenstein assembly has offered to host this conference. Although twelve men met for most of that Friday, it was felt that a working committee should be formed to plan and coordinate the conference. Brian Gunning of St. Catharines, Patrick Long of Oshawa, John Martin of Tavistock, Gary McBride of Timmins, Sandy McEachern of Guelph, and Jim Paul of Ottawa were asked to serve in this capacity.

Some from neighboring states and provinces are also expected to attend.

WESTBROOK'S ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Spring Hill Gospel Hall will, God willing, host a Bible conference on October 10-11, 1992. Expected speakers: Doug Kazen (WA) and Donald L. Norbie (CO). For information, contact:

Daniel F. Chick
95 Maple Street
Westbrook, ME 04092

DETROIT, MICHIGAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The saints at Curtis Gospel Chapel, 17753 Lenore, Detroit, MI, will be holding their 102nd Annual Bible Conference on October 10-11, starting at 2:15 PM. Speakers expected will be John Martin (ON); Jim McKendrick (MI); and Chris Schroeder (MI). For more information, contact:

Bob Bollman,
1997 Berch-Daly Road,
Redford, MI 48240
(313) 255-6008

MOUNT HERMON

The Pacific Coast Christian Conference at Mount Hermon, CA, celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year, October 12-16. Speakers to be Arnot McIntee (ON) and Elliot Van Ryn (FL). For information write:

Henry Kamena
1400 W. 13th Street., Sp. 91
Upland, CA 91786-2965
(714) 985-0437

FREE AT LAST

After twelve long years of trials, time in prison, and appeals, Steve Linscott has finally had murder charges against him dropped. The story was a dream that turned into a nightmare.

In 1980, Karen Anne Phillips, a 24-year-old nursing student, was brutally murdered in Oak Park, IL. At the time, Linscott was a student at Emmaus Bible College, then located in Oak Park.

When the police seemed to have no leads, Steve thought it might help if he told them the details of a dream he had the night of the murder. Authorities believed this was his way of

The believers at Faith Bible Chapel, Simcoe, ON in front of their new building

confessing the crime and arrested him for murder.

Convicted, Linscott served three years in prison but was released on bond in 1985 as a result of a partially successful appeals ruling. In 1990, the Illinois Supreme Court determined that the prosecutor misused key evidence. The state's prosecutor could have called for a retrial, but dropped the charges for lack of evidence.

"There has been this cloud hanging over us for 12 years," Linscott told *Christianity Today*. "It will take us a while to get used to the idea that it's over."

Much prayer has gone up to God for the Linscott family. We should praise Him for this news.

PASSING THE MANTLE

Greensboro, NC, is the location of the "Passing the Mantle" Bible Study Program. Meeting the third weekend of each month, it provides systematic Bible teaching on doctrinal and practical subjects, presented by a variety of brethren.

Classes will be held Friday evening from 8-10 PM, and Saturday from 9 AM to 2:30 PM. Housing will be provided by the local believers for those traveling a distance. Lunch is served on Saturday.

The program is open to men and women, college age and up. Both married couples and singles are welcome to attend. Those planning to be involved are requested to commit themselves to attend regularly for the current season (September to May). For more information:

Larry Batts
4109 Southeast School Road
Greensboro, NC 27406

CHURCH-STATE CASES

By refusing to hear several appeals involving separation of church and state, the Supreme Court ended its 1991-1992 term leaving intact lower court rulings that declared it unconstitutional for: a school teacher to read his Bible silently in the classroom while students read other books; two Illinois town to have crosses on their city seals (Austin, Texas, was allowed to retain the crosses on its seal since they were derived from the Stephen F. Austin coat of arms); a North Carolina judge to open his court in prayer; a University of Alabama professor to interject comments about his Christian faith during physiology lectures; and a town in Virginia to display a menorah in a city park.

—*International Religion Report*

REHOBOTH—THE LORD MAKES ROOM

The saints at Faith Bible Chapel, Simcoe, ON are rejoicing in the blessing of the Lord who has answered their prayers in providing them with a building of their own.

After 2 1/2 years of meeting in a motel, He has given this group of believers a building which seats 150, also a rented trailer for Sunday School.

The Christians there praise Him for this, as they seek to use these for the furtherance of the gospel, and to bring glory to God. Their address is:

Faith Bible Chapel
c/o Ivan Ferrier
P. O. Box 704
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4T2

AT HOME—AT REST

Mrs. Velma Cedolia of Sault Ste. Marie, ON passed into the presence of the Lord on July 11, 1992. Her family writes: "She was so special to each of us, and we certainly feel the emptiness daily. She was full of life, laughter, and love for each of us, and others too. However, we receive daily comfort in knowing that she is with her Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. While in the hospital, the medical and nursing staff were astounded at her compli-

ance. She was so accepting of God's will, and now we must continually remember to bow to God's plan daily. It has not been easy, but we have found so much comfort in prayer, reading God's Word, and fellowship with family and friends."

RECENTLY COMMENDED

The saints at North Ridge Bible Chapel, Sellersville, PA, commend their sister, Wendy Hulshizer, to the work at Immanuel Mission, Teec Nos Pos, AZ and the fellowship of the Lord's people there. Lord willing, she plans to teach at the Mission school and work with Navajo students and missionary children.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

South Lexington Bible Fellowship, Lexington, KY, now meets at:

160 E. Reynolds Road,
Ste. #201
Lexington, KY 40517
Phone: (606) 272-2495
Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 23312
Lexington, KY 40523-3312

Harold R. Preston
3496 Sutherland Drive
Lexington, KY 40517-2827
Phone: (606) 272-8094
Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 23227
Lexington, KY 40523-3227

CHRISTIAN UNITY

A chorus of voices keep harping the unity tune. What they are saying is "Christians of all doctrinal shades and beliefs must come together in one visible organization, regardless . . . Unite, unite!" Such teaching is false, reckless, and dangerous. Truth alone must determine our alignments. Truth comes before unity. Unity without truth is hazardous. Our Lord's prayer in John 17 must be read in its full context. Only those sanctified through the Word can be one in Christ. To teach otherwise is to betray the gospel.

—*Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

LAND O' SKY BIBLE CONFERENCE

The Christians at the Waynesville Christian Fellowship, and the Asheville (NC) Gospel Chapel are working together again on this fall event to be held, D. V., Saturday, October 17, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Lunch and coffeebreaks furnished. Speaker expected: J. B. Nicholson, Jr., Grand Rapids, MI.

They hope to be able to use their new auditorium for the conference. For information, contact:

W. R. Peck
704-254-5475

MID-SOUTH BIBLE CONFERENCE 1993

Mid-South Bible Conference 1992 is now history, however the blessings experienced over the years of this ministry continue. To God be the glory. Lord willing, Mid-South '93 will be held July 11-16 with Dave Glock of Dubuque, IA, as speaker. Mid-South is held at Horton Haven Christian Camp in beautiful Middle Tennessee. Facilities range from RV sites and modern cabins to inn rooms, suites, and furnished cottages. Meals and meetings are held in the new air-conditioned dining hall/chapel at Horton Haven. Mid-South is an affordable conference ministering to the whole family. For further information and brochures, write:

Mid-South Bible Conference
P.O. Box 90051
Nashville TN 37209
or call:
John Phelan, Director
(615) 352-1745

GERALD L. STOVER

Gerald Stover, 81, of Lansdale, PA, a longtime servant of the Lord and able Bible teacher, died Thursday, May 21, following an illness. He was the husband of Nellie E. (Weidemann) Stover. He had entered the hospital on April 1, which was their 58th wedding anniversary.

Gerald L. Stover

His ministries included many years of writing adult Bible study curricula. He traveled widely throughout the Arab states, Israel, Europe and Africa in the interests of Bible Study and missions. In the last 12 years, he had been commended to the Lord's work as an itinerant Bible teacher by North Ridge Bible Chapel, Sellersville, PA.

IT'S YOUR SERVE

Len and Esther Brooks, who have faithfully served servants at CMML (Wall Township, NJ) are to be retiring from that sphere. Mert and Jane Wolcott (MI), have agreed to a two year stint while making forays back into Zaire and continuing their translation and typesetting work for Africa. The Lord's best to both couples!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

News from Around the Globe

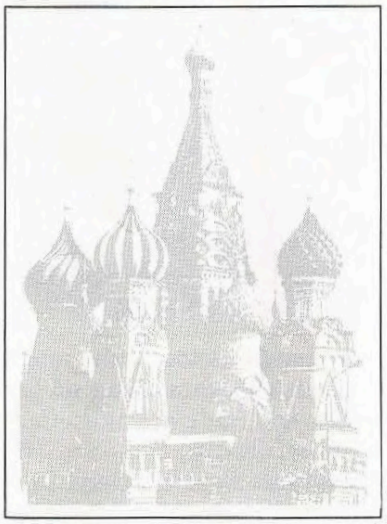
RELIGIOUSLY ANGRY

Simmering religious tensions in officially secular India threaten to unravel its pluralistic, democratic society. Right wing Hindu fundamentalists complain that Muslims, who comprise 15 percent of the population, are getting special privileges from the government. These Hindus want to reclaim what they say are their own religious sites by bulldozing mosques. The battle for Kashmir, on the other hand, continues to stir Muslim fundamentalists. —*Pulse*

BROADCASTING IN RUSSIA

As of September 1, the Russian *Family Bible Hour* program will be broadcast from three stations within Russia.

One 10,000 watt station carrying the broadcast is in the city of Rhabarovsk. Its 900,000 spiritually deprived souls will have an



opportunity to hear, believe and live eternally. In addition, the broadcast will be carried by shortwave to the Eastern area of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Siberia. In the weeks that follow, two additional stations will be added in communities yet to be named.

Also on September 6, the Family Bible Hour will begin to air over radio station CKWX (1130 on the AM dial) in Vancouver, each Sunday morning at 8:30. This very popular 50,000 watt station covers not only Vancouver and Victoria, but a large portion of southern BC. Please pray that many who listen will be reached for Christ.

WRONG WAYS

A reader survey to compare views of Roman Catholics and various Protestants has been conducted by eight denominational publications. Responses of 1,800 participants reveal that a majority of Roman Catholics and half of the generally liberal United Church agreed there are other ways to salvation besides believing in Jesus.

About 10 percent (also from the above two groups) disagreed that they have a duty to tell others about Jesus. (Strong majorities of other Protestants made opposite responses to both of these questions.) Strong majorities of all groups felt Jesus would have ordained women, including 78 percent of Catholics, whose church does not do so.

FIGHTING WORDS

The most dangerous thing for Russia is religious and spiritual pluralism," asserts a Russian Orthodox priest interviewed by the *Wall Street Journal*. "Moscow isn't a Babylon for second cults, for Protestant congregations who resemble wild wolves rushing in here, or Catholics like thieves using their billions to try to occupy new territory. Democracy is an idol that will be broken like communism was."

The report says the Orthodox Church is becoming more powerful every day, both politically and socially, as it helps Russians recover their sense of national identity. A Moscow specialist on Central Asia warns, "Russia is returning to a 19th-century imperial national state, and the church is helping this national policy." In a land where the ordinary person believes that "to be Russian is to be Orthodox," this is not good news for Protestants and other minorities, who fear being relegated to second-class status.

EXPLOSION

A Chinese researcher at the Nanjing Theological Seminary has published detailed statistics concerning the great revival of Christianity in the Fuyang area of Northern Anhui [China]. In total, nearly 2% of the population of Fuyang (12,250,000) are Christian believers. The church has multiplied eightfold since 1979 (or by 700%!). There can be few places in the world which have seen such explosive growth in a mere decade.

SUDAN'S 'DEATH SENTENCE'

Over the last few months, Sudan's militant Muslim government has driven more than 400,000 internal refugees—mostly Christians and animists—from shelters around the capital

into the desert. The head of the U.S. Agency for International Development calls the action a "death sentence." A civil war between the Muslims and coalition of Christians and animists has wracked the country for years. Muslim volunteer agencies have offered to help refugees, but only if they convert to Islam.

SPREADING DRUG ABUSE

In times past, certain countries (such as Pakistan, Burma, and Colombia) produced and distributed illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine, while other countries (such as the United States) consumed them. Today, it isn't that simple. More and more people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are getting hooked on drugs produced in their own countries. Pakistan, for example, probably has a million or more heroin addicts. Along with higher drug addiction rates in these mostly poor countries is an increased risk of AIDS through drug abuse.

CHINA'S PERSECUTION CONTINUES

Communist authorities have jailed hundreds of Christians in central and eastern China, the D.C.-based Puebla Institute claims. In addition, the Catholic human rights group says the government has closed at least 300 Protestant house churches there. Moreover, Asia Watch, based in New York, says China has arrested 141 Catholic leaders since November, 1989. It also says 70 to 195 Christian leaders are under detention. Mistreatment of religious leaders can range from minor harassment to physical abuse in jail. Some secondary schools have distributed a government statement warning students against religious practice. "The crackdown has been stepped up since 1989, and it's widespread," says Marianne Spiegel, an Asia Watch researcher. "There is definitely a movement afoot, and it's been very intense since the end of 1990—to make sure that religion is clearly under the control of the government."

HAITI'S HEALTH HORRORS

The embargo against Haiti's military dictatorship is crippling that nation's already inadequate health system. Preventive care has been devastated, and thousands of people who have lost their jobs cannot afford to go to the hospital. Tuberculosis, AIDS, and syphilis are spreading. Another casualty of the embargo, according to one relief worker, is voodoo. It seems there are not enough chickens to sacrifice in voodoo ceremonies.

SUDANESE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED

When General Omar Al-Bashir seized power in Sudan in 1989, he imposed the Shariah, Islamic civil law, making it clear that anyone who refused to submit would be considered an enemy of the state.

The law supposedly applies only to Muslims (70% of the Sudanese population), but observers predict that it won't be long before the Christians (5%) and non-Muslims who follow tribal religions (25%) will be forced to adhere to it as well.

This is not merely a situation in which Christians are being deprived of religious liberty. Persecution has become a matter of life and death in Sudan. For example, four children were killed in Juba for protesting against the government decree requiring all Christian schools to Islamize their curriculum by next year. Some two million refugees who fled from the war and famine in the south, where 99% of the Christians live, were crammed into overcrowded camps near Khartoum, but a few months ago the government began razing the camps, leaving the people completely homeless.

Even though 150,000 southern Sudanese are in danger of starvation this year, the Islamic regime's efforts to persuade them to become Muslims by offering food if they would swear allegiance to Allah have been unsuccessful for the most part.

—*Our Sunday Visitor*, July 12

ISRAEL

As Israel strives to find work and housing for the 350,000 immigrants who have arrived in the last two years, it's becoming

clear that the Soviet immigrants' lack of understanding of Judaism will have a major effect on how readily they are absorbed into Israeli society. Said one immigrant from Ukraine: "Even those who went to the synagogue had no real idea what they were praying." A major battle is shaping up: secular Jews, a strong majority in Is-

rael, hope the newcomers will be buffers against the Orthodox, whose birthrates are high and whose numbers are rising quickly. The Orthodox hope the Soviet Jews will join their ranks. Already, 30,000 circumcisions have been performed among the immigrants.

LOWER BIRTHRATES

Birthrates are plummeting in eastern Germany, Romania, Ukraine, and parts of Russia. Steady declines of the last decade are continuing in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Researchers say the trend is symbolic of economic uncertainties. Sudden drops in birthrates usually accompany wars, famines, and economic chaos. Across Eastern Europe, abortion is the basic contraceptive technique for women who want to avoid giving birth in turbulent times. Abortions have tripled in Romania since they were legalized.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The Bible Society of Mexico has shipped 92,000 Bibles, 45,500 New Testaments, 20,000 portions, 117,000 New Reader Portions, 13,000 selections, and 300 Reina-Valera Bibles to Cuba. These Scriptures have been accompanied to the island of 10.5 million people by some 62,500 Sciptures and pieces of Christian literature produced in South Korea. Cuban churches are asking for 52,000 more Bibles.

THE PLAGUE IN AFRICA

AIDS cases total more than 7 million in Africa, far more than previously stated, according to the World Health Organization. At an international meeting in Senegal, scientists said they were disappointed with the results of campaigns to educate people in poor countries about how they can prevent the spread of the AIDS virus.

TRULY . . . ASTOUNDING

A group [latest figures, more than 100] of megachurch pastors led by televangelist Robert Schuller has launched a new church alliance, Churches United in Global Mission (CUGM) . . . to share positively the message of Jesus Christ and His love for the world [in] seeking to address the needs of humanity and our environment . . . They have signed a declaration affirming that CUGM seeks "a spirit of unity that is truly Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Charismatic."

—L. A. Times

FEWER BIBLICAL LITERALISTS

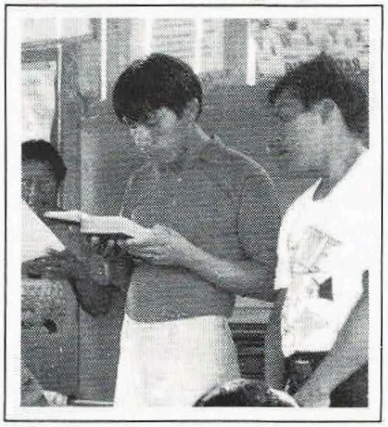
Only one out of three American believes the the Bible should be interpreted literally. In the last two decades the number holding this view has declined by about half, according to the Princeton Religious Research Center. In 1963, 65% of Americans were literalists. Now the dominant view (held by 49%) is that the Bible, though inspired by God, contains parts that need not be taken literally.

JOIN 'EM

Hindus in Bodh Gaya, India, are saying that Buddhism is really Hindu. Bodh Gaya is the site of the Bo Tree shrine, one of Buddhism's most sacred places. Buddhists don't like it one bit. The Hindus have placed their own priests on the site, treating Buddha as just another incarnation of a Hindu god. Buddhists comprise less than 1 percent of India's largely Hindu people.

THE SAGA CONTINUES

The Waorani Indians of Ecuador (once called Aucas, which means savages), responsible for the deaths of Roger Youdarian, Peter Fleming, Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, and Ed McCully, now have the New Testament in their own language.



The first Waorani-language New Testament was presented to the tribe in the remote jungle village of Tiweno. Along with several missionaries and visitors, 75 Waorani Christians attended the ceremony, including three of the men who speared the five missionaries and are now church leaders.

SATURDAY A.M. MAYHEM

The average child in the U. S. watches 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts on TV by the time she or he leaves elementary school, a new report says. Saturday morning cartoons have four to five times the amount of violence of programs that are aired after children are in bed. *—Toronto Star*, 2/26/92

IT'S A CRIME

The National Association of Police Organizations' report on averages of criminals' sentences: For burglary, 5.4 days; for auto theft, 3.8 days; for murder, 2.3 years. *—Bend Bulletin*, 6/10/92

Haste Makes Waste

William MacDonald

"He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16).

In an age of supersonic travel and high-speed communications, in a culture where hurry is the watchword, it brings us up short to learn that haste is seldom used of God in a good sense in the Bible. Seldom, I say, because there is the instance where the father runs to meet the returning prodigal, suggesting that God hastens to forgive. But generally speaking, God is not in a hurry.

When David said, "The king's business required haste" (1 Sam. 21:8), he was guilty of subterfuge, and we should not use his words to justify our frenetic rushing back and forth.

The plain truth is, as our text states, if we are really trusting the Lord, we don't have to be in a hurry. The urgency of our task can be better served by a quiet walk in the Spirit than by a frenzy of carnal activity.

Here is a young man who is in a hurry to get married. He reasons that if he doesn't act quickly, someone else might get the girl. The truth is that if God wants that girl for him, no one else can get her. If she is not God's choice, then he will have to learn the hard way, "Marry in haste; repent at leisure."

Another is in a hurry to go into so-called full-time work. He argues that the world is perishing and that he cannot wait.

Jesus did not argue that way during the years in Nazareth. He waited till God called Him forth to public ministry

Too often we are in a hurry in our personal evangelism. We are so anxious to rack up professions that we pick the fruit before it is ripe. We fail to allow the Holy Spirit to thoroughly convict the person of sin. The result of such a method is a trail of false professions and of human wreckage. We should "let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4).

The true effectiveness of our lives lies not in rushing madly about on self-appointed missions, but in Spirit-directed activity that is ascertained by patiently waiting on the Lord.

Dear Lord and Maker of mankind!
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful minds
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

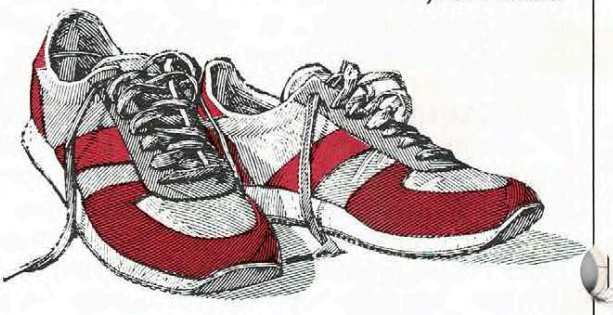
O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessings fall
As fell Thy manna down.

Drop still Thy dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heat of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!

—J. G. Whittier



What I Have Found (Part 2)

Mark Frees

In the last issue of UPLOOK, we gave the first half of some excerpts from a booklet entitled "What I Have Found: My Introduction to the Assemblies of Believers Sometimes Called 'Plymouth Brethren.'" In the first part, Mark described the liberty and joy he found in the discovery of the truth regarding the elimination of the clergy as a separate class of believers and obedience to scriptural teaching concerning the role of women in the assembly.

This booklet has been reprinted by Spread the Word, *and is available as the Lord provides:*

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3. *Exaltation of the Person and Work of Christ.* I can say with gratitude that, even before I left the denominational church, it was the "brethren" writers who taught me to glory in the Person and work of Christ Jesus. Books like *Notes on Leviticus,* by C. H. Mackintosh; *Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews* and *Lectures on the Tabernacle,* by Samuel Ridout; these began to foster in me a deep attraction to His Person and a solid doctrinal, rather than sentimental, appreciation of His work; in short, an appetite for Christ in His manifold loveliness that I had never before known. Since casting my lot with the "brethren," I have often had cause to give thanks to God for the constant upholding of the glories of Christ in these humble assemblies of the Lord's people, and to wonder that I was so long content with a shallow, insipid, and sentimental apprehension of Him.

If current teaching on Christ's work is shallow . . . teaching on His glorious Person is practically nonexistent.

And can it be denied that this accurately describes the view of Christ usually presented in current evangelical preaching, teaching, and literature? Is it not rarely that the presentation of the Cross goes beyond the physical sufferings of Christ and the assertion that "He died for our sins"? The latter is a glorious truth, no question, and perhaps the extent to which sinners can comprehend the work of Christ, but it hardly exhausts the glory of the Cross for the saints. To borrow the imagery of the Levitical offerings, ought we to stop with the trespass offering—though it be a true and blessed aspect of Christ's work—and neglect those aspects of His mighty sacrifice unfolded in the sin offering, the peace offering, and the burnt offering? Ah, the burnt offering—highest and most beautiful of all the typical sacrifices! Christ's work presented, not as it affects man, but as it is viewed by God; Christ pictured, not as our sin bearer, but as the devoted One who delighted to do the will of God, even unto death, and who in turn was the delight of the Father's heart even —yes, especially—in His death. It is Christ through the eternal Spirit offering Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9:14). Who can fathom the sweetness of that offering's aroma to God! Yet—let the reader be the judge—how often do most believers hear of these things?

If current teaching on Christ's work is shallow and unsatisfying, teaching on His glorious Person is practically nonexistent. While most, though by no means all, evangelical believers could, upon questioning, produce the orthodox answer that Christ is both God and Man, I fear that any deeper probing would most certainly produce embarrassing and disturbing results. What of the intemptibililty of Christ? Could He have sinned? Did His humanity struggle against temptation as we do? Did He lay aside certain attributes of His deity when He "became flesh?" What about His incorruptible manhood? Was it subject to sickness and death? How is His wondrous Person illustrated in the Tabernacle, the offerings of Leviticus, and other Old Testament types? Why are there four Gospels? Which aspect of Christ is particularly presented in each? Even where such questions can be answered with theological correctness, is there a real heart for Christ, a constant gazing upon

Him, a deep and daily feeding upon this One who is the "Bread come down from Heaven"?

I desire to tread carefully here, for generalities are always dangerous, and nothing could be more incongruous than boasting about one's apprehension of Christ, whether as an individual or as a group of churches. So I hope the reader will understand the spirit in which I write, and will forgive me if, as one who has been immeasurably blessed, I desire to share that blessing with others. For my personal observation is that, whatever weaknesses may certainly be noted in the "brethren" assemblies, there is by and large a keener delight in and apprehension of the Person and work of Christ than can normally be found elsewhere. I understand if the reader should take issue with this statement, and I have never heard any in the assemblies claim this for themselves, but I cannot but speak what I have seen and heard.

One of my first surprises after I began to meet with the little assembly was the arrival of a series of special meetings with a visiting speaker. My background had taught me to expect such events to be preceded by plenty of buildup and promotion, crowned by the arrival of the travelling star preacher, who, if he were not a former professional athlete or an ex-convict, would at least be a riveting speaker, primed to deliver an arsenal of dynamic, well-rehearsed sermons on a variety of topics. If such I expected, I was disappointed, for what I saw was an eager group of believers gathering, uncoaxed and unprodded, to hear an unpretentious servant of Christ give a few warmhearted messages on the life of our Lord from the book of Mark.

This same spirit I have noted since then expressing itself in many ways. For instance, in a day when Christian bookstores are filled with trendy topical studies, Christian fiction, and secular self-help psychology coated with a thin Christian lacquer, among what other circle of believers could a book written a century-and-a-half ago and entitled, *Short Meditations on the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ,* still have wide circulation? This simple fascination with Christ has much to do, I believe, with what we will mention next: the breaking of bread as practiced weekly by the assemblies. It is this practice of gathering weekly, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit alone, for the purpose of remembering the Lord in the way He requested that more than anything else, I believe, has given rise to this "brethren" heritage of exaltation of the person and work of Christ. As we sometimes sing around the Lord's Supper:

> *Our song then forever shall be*
> *Of the Shepherd who gave Himself thus;*
> *No subject's so glorious as He,*
> *No theme so affecting to us.*

I say to my brothers and sisters in the assemblies, let us beware lest we be moved away from the simplicity of devotion to Christ. And while we, in one breath, give thanks to God for our rich heritage in this, let us in the next confess that we, too, have drunk far too timidly of this vast reservoir. There are whole regions of Christ's glory that lie unexplored and unappreciated because of our laxity and dullness of spirit. How little we really know of Him! Let us confess our lack, and then let us "follow on to know the Lord!"

4. Weekly remembrance of the Lord through the breaking of bread. While Scripture gives no hard and fast requirement concerning the frequency of the Lord's Supper, it is clear that the practice of the New Testament Church was to observe it each Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17ff., etc.). Not only so, but it was the central focus of their gathering. This was another area I began to be strongly exercised about in my conscience as I studied the New Testament pattern for the Church. Acts 2:42 lists the breakng of bread as one of four items, along with the apostles' teaching, fellowship, and prayer, to which the early Church "devoted themselves" (NASB). Of how many churches today can it remotely be said that they devote themselves to the breaking of bread? In the church where I pastored, as well as most other churches I knew, the scriptural phrase, "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," had been amended, for all practical purposes, to "as

Of how many churches today can it remotely be said that they devote themselves to the breaking of bread?

seldom as ye eat this bread and drink this cup."

When told that the "brethren" assemblies follow the New Testament pattern of observing the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day, a common reaction by those who have never witnessed this observance in its scriptural simplicity and beauty is, "I wouldn't want to have the Lord's Supper every week!" Nor would I, if it were done in the fashion common to most evangelical churches today. Such a stale and staid ritual, encrusted still with remnants of Roman Catholic superstition (such as the necessity of the elements being "administered" by a "clergyman"), could hardly be expected to command the affections of the heart. Looking back on my years in the pastorate, I remember dreading even the paltry three or four times a year when the Lord's Supper was scheduled. But now, the breaking of bread has become a keen delight, to the point that I feel greatly deprived if forced by circumstances to miss it.

"What a sight! . . . Every eye is fixed on Christ; every heart is satisfied." —John Ritchie

Let me attempt to describe, for those who have never seen it, the typical breaking of bread meeting among the assemblies. The time varies, with some assemblies having this as their first meeting on Sunday morning, others preferring the evening hour. In some cases, the saints are seated in circular fashion with the table in the middle; in others, the table is at the front of the gathering place. Perhaps the first thing the visitor notices is the simplicity of the meeting hall. The "brethren" are not known for having elaborate worship facilities! But the most striking feature of this gathering to one unaccustomed to such a meeting is that there is no one officiating, presiding, or directing the meeting —no one, that is, other than the Holy Spirit.

Soon one of the brothers, as he feels led, will stand and begin the meeting, perhaps by giving out a hymn. Then another brother may give a brief thought from the Scriptures. Yet another might stand and lead in prayer. And thus the meeting continues, with different men of the assembly taking part—not professional "ministers," but businessmen, engineers, farmers, carpenters, and others, from every occupation and station in life. One will have a hymn, another a teaching, another a Scripture reading or prayer of thanksgiving, all centered around the Person and redeeming work of the Saviour.

The sisters play a vital part as they join in singing the hymns and in the silent prayer and worship which so largely sets the spiritual tone of the meeting. None of this is orchestrated or planned in advance, though occasionally visitors have been so impressed with the harmony of the thoughts expressed that they could scarcely believe it was not arranged beforehand. No, the only preparation for this meeting is the heart preparation of the brothers and sisters in self-examination and meditation on the Scriptures.

After a time, one of the brothers will rise and give thanks for the bread. Then he takes it from the table and the believers pass it one to another. Another gives thanks for the cup, and it is distributed. Again, the men taking the lead in this do not have to be elders or deacons, or members of any other approved class. Truly, here is the priesthood of believers, not in word, but in deed. Shortly after taking the bread and cup, the meeting is usually closed, characteristically with a hymn. An offering is generally taken at the end of the meeting. There is a strong feeling among the assemblies that no offering should be taken in a meeting where the unconverted are present, not only because it may give offense to some, but because it is deemed improper for God's work to be financed by the gifts of unbelievers. Thus the collection is made during the breaking of bread meeting, for believers only, rather than the public preaching and teaching meetings.

The Lord's Supper is often called the "Worship Meeting," and so it is. Some visitors might think the mood rather solemn, for there is little outward demonstration. There are often extended periods of silence, but these are not awkward times of "waiting for someone to say something," but times of rich reflection and meditation. "What a sight!" writes John Ritchie, the dear, old Scottish saint. "Every eye is fixed on Christ; every heart is satisfied." The hymns are sung at a slow, measured pace to enable full appreciation of the words. And such hymns they are! While the Church at large is abandoning the old hymns of the faith for a more trendy musical style and the singing of snappy choruses (the musical and spiri-

tual equivalent of "junk food"), the assemblies still delight to sing such songs as:

A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing,
Nor fear, with God's righteousness on,
My person and off'rings to bring.
The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.

I remember well, at the invitation of a friend, spending a Saturday evening at a Christian gathering in the local convention hall. By the time I arrived, the crowd of four or five hundred was well into the "praise and worship" time, swaying to the driving pulse of the music and expressing their praise in very demonstrative, sometimes frantic, ways.

The speaker for the evening, a very well-known, almost idolized, Christian leader, took the platform to speak. He delivered what amounted to a shallow motivational talk, consisting largely of a string of anecdotes, laced with humor that at times bordered on irreverence. I left with a deep concern about what I had just witnessed.

The next morning, being the Lord's Day, found me with thirty or forty saints, humbly gathered at the Lord's Supper. No dynamic speaker, no trendy music, no ostentatious display. In short, nothing to appeal to the flesh at all. Just the Lord's people humbly remembering Him in the way He requested. I could not help but feel that this, while falling far short of the previous night's gathering in entertainment value, breathed far more the authentic spirit of the New Testament Church.

Yet many of those who had been present on Saturday night would surely look at this little meeting with a mixture of pity and scorn. "How dry! Where's the emotion?" they say. Could it be they don't see the dear saint of God sitting there head in hands, even after several decades of faithful service to Christ, shaking his head in amazement as he contemplates the enormity of his sin and the preciousness of the One who died for him? Do they not notice, over here, a godly father and husband, pausing to wipe the tears from his eyes as the little group sings,

When we see Thee as the victim,
Nailed to the accursed tree,
For our guilt and folly stricken,
All our judgment borne by Thee,
Lord, we own with hearts adoring,
Thou hast loved us unto blood;
Glory, glory everlasting
Be to Thee, Thou Lamb of God!

Somber? No joy? Who but one who has known it can describe the inestimable sense of satisfaction, the deep welling up of joy within as the heart looks utterly away from itself and fixes its gaze on Him in whom all heaven finds its delight, and on the vast, incomprehensible work which He has so perfectly wrought. Here truly is rest for the conscience, fullness for the heart, and joy—not a joy that can be easily expressed—but "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The New Testament instructions . . . are not . . . to be swept under the rug by exegetical sleight-of-hand.

Yes, whether it is the scriptural pattern for church leadership, the role of women in the churches, the prominence of the Lord's Supper, or any other area of church life, we will invariably find that following the pattern laid down by the Holy Spirit in Scripture produces blessed results. We are fools to think otherwise. The New Testament instructions to the churches are not impractical, outdated things to be swept under the rug by exegetical sleight-of-hand. Rather, they are precious lamps lighting the Church's way through this dark age, and those who can say with the Psalmist, "I turned my feet to Thy testimonies" will surely find them a more trustworthy guide than the opinions and traditions of men.

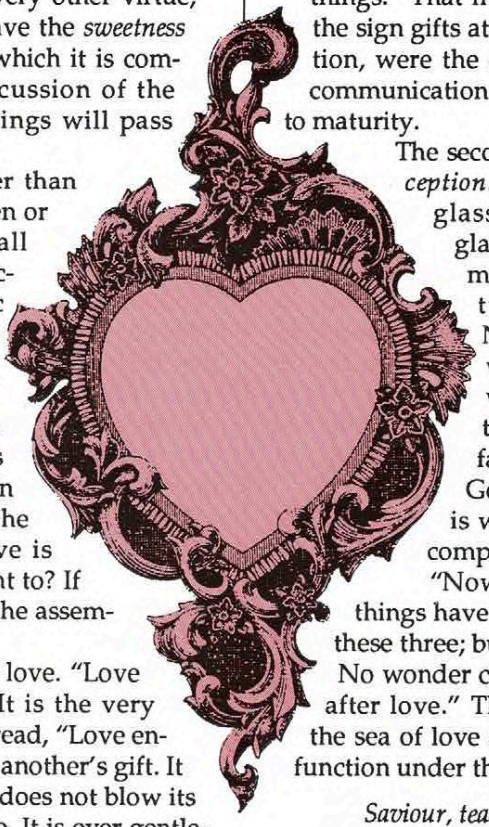
I pray that in my desire to share the blessing I have received, I have not unwittingly painted the "brethren" assemblies in larger-than-life strokes. No doubt, a thousand booklets could be written on their weaknesses and mistakes. Anyone seeking perfection, or anything near it, among any group of saints this side of glory is bound for disillusionment. This is nothing more nor less than the personal testimony of one who, like the lepers in Elisha's day, has found great spoil and cannot in good conscience hold his peace. May God bless and use this for His own glory.

The Great Essential

Robert McClurkin

Let me divide this lovely chapter into three parts. We have the *superiority* of love. It rises above every other virtue; it stands supreme. Then we have the *sweetness* of love, all the ingredients of which it is composed. Finally there is a discussion of the *supremacy* of love. Certain things will pass away, but love will ever abide.

We read that love is greater than eloquence, the eloquence of men or of angels. It is greater than all abilities. It is greater than all sacrifice. Note that in evangelistic effort, if love is missing, we will never reach a heart, and a soul will never be melted by the grace of God. In the sphere of teaching, if love is missing—what do we have? In the exercise of oversight, in the discharge of eldership, if love is missing, what does it all amount to? If love is missing, what a loss to the assembly of God's people!



But look at the sweetness of love. "Love suffereth long, and is kind." It is the very essence of kindness. Again we read, "Love envieth not." It is never jealous of another's gift. It does not parade its own airs; it does not blow its own trumpet. It is always polite. It is ever gentlemanly. It is the very essence of unselfishness. It never keeps a notebook of other people's faults. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things." That word *beareth* means to throw a covering, a protection over our failing saints. It is what Peter refers to when he quotes from Proverbs, "Love covereth a multitude of sins." And love "believeth all things." It is without that spirit of suspicion that is so deadly to Christian fellowship. It hopes for the best in our brethren. It endures many a disappointment while we are waiting for the best to come out. "Love never faileth." When all else fails—prophecies, tongues, the gift of knowledge—love will carry on.

Note two illustrations: There is the illustration of *immaturity*. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." That means that the miraculous gifts, the sign gifts at the beginning of our dispensation, were the childish forms of thought and communication of the infant church that led it to maturity.

The second illustration is that of *imperception*. "For now we see through a glass, darkly." I submit that the glass is the mirror of Old Testament Scriptures. Those Scriptures were blurred until the New Testament revelation would clear the glass and we would see clearly. We are told that Moses and Israel saw God face to face. Where did they see God? In the Word of God! That is where we, too, see God—in the completed canon of Holy Scripture.

"Now abideth," that is, after these things have taken place: "faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." No wonder chapter 14 begins with, "Follow after love." This variety of gift baptized in the sea of love rises to resurrection ground to function under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Saviour, teach me day by day,
Love's sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be—
Loving Him who first loved me.

With a childlike heart of love,
At Thy bidding may I move;
Prompt to serve and follow Thee-
Loving Him who first loved me.

Teach me all Thy steps to trace,
Strong to follow in Thy grace;
Learning how to love from Thee—
Loving Him who first loved me.

Love in loving finds employ,
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be—
Loving Him who first loved me.

—J. E. Leesom

GENESIS 18:1-15

The Divine Visitor

W. Ross Rainey

In his book entitled *Salvation Symphony*, Guy H. King relates a story which took place in the reign of King George V. A certain London hospital was informed that England's monarch intended to make an informal visit. It is easy to imagine the excitement this news caused, especially among the children. One small boy could hardly contain himself. As the afternoon wore on, many people passed in and out of the hospital. About 4:00 PM, a large party of people came in. One gentleman was very kind, patting the little fellow on the head, and speaking gently to him. Then the group disappeared. As the little lad settled down to sleep that evening, he was evidently disappointed, and said to the attending nurse, "The king didn't come."

"But don't you remember a kind gentleman who came and patted your head and spoke so nicely to you? Well, that was the king!"

The boy's eyes opened wide in wonder, but then with a frown he said, "But he didn't have his crown on!"

How well this incident illustrates the opening verses of Genesis 18. The Lord does not always appear with His crown on (see Isa. 53:1-3), and so it was here on that hot afternoon that the Divine Visitor arrived quite unassumingly and unexpectedly at Abraham's home.

Do we always recognize the Lord when He comes to us? How He delights to visit with us, and what condescending grace on His part (see Prov. 8:31; 1 Kings 8:27 with Isa. 57:15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 19:1-10; 24:28-31; John 2:1-11; Rev. 3:20).

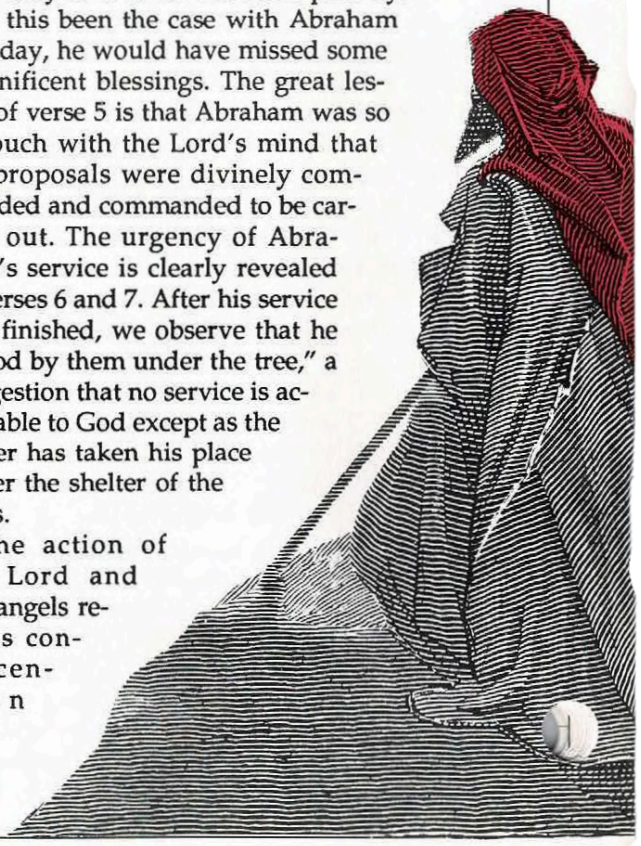
The Lord's Presence (18:1-8)

His Revelation (vv. 1-2). Once again the Lord appeared to Abraham, this time accompanied by two angels. He is always present, but on this particular occasion, He made Himself visible. Theologically, this event marks what is called a theophany, that is, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Himself. He is often called "the Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament (see Gen. 16:7). As always, when the Lord shows Himself to His people, it is for the purpose of promise and blessing. Notice the time of His appearance here: "in the heat of the day" (v. 1). All activity had ceased and Abraham was at rest, thus in a position to receive the Lord. Sometimes the "heat" of various circumstances causes us to cease from activity, forcing us to be quiet and restful. At such times we should expect that His hand is at work, preparing us to receive some blessing or further revelation of Himself.

It may be that Abraham was in a state of expectancy (v. 2) and, if so, he was not disappointed. He forgot about the heat and ran to meet the Divine Visitor and His heavenly companions. His first act was that of worship.

Abraham's Response (vv. 3-8). Abraham's address, "my Lord" (v. 3), does not necessarily mean that he immediately knew his visitor's identity, since this form of greeting was used of man as well as of God. Furthermore, if Hebrews 13:2 is a reference to this incident, then Abraham was not immediately aware of his guest's identity.

If we are inclined to be spiritually lazy, how easy it is to let the Lord pass by. Had this been the case with Abraham that day, he would have missed some magnificent blessings. The great lesson of verse 5 is that Abraham was so in touch with the Lord's mind that his proposals were divinely commended and commanded to be carried out. The urgency of Abraham's service is clearly revealed in verses 6 and 7. After his service was finished, we observe that he "stood by them under the tree," a suggestion that no service is acceptable to God except as the sinner has taken his place under the shelter of the cross.



The action of the Lord and His angels reveals condescension and

fellowship, also as He showed later to His disciples. As W. H. Griffith Thomas has said, "The supreme characteristic of a believer's life is fellowship with God."

The Lord Jesus Christ often comes in the guise of a stranger (see Matt. 25:35-45). F. B. Meyer tells the story of a little German boy who left the door open for the Lord to enter and sit with his mother and himself at their frugal supper table. When a beggar appeared at the door, the lad said, "Perhaps the Lord could not come Himself, and has sent this poor man in His place."

THE LORD'S PROMISE (18:9-15)

His Inquiry (v. 9). At this point, Abraham could have had no doubt as to the identity of his Visitor.

His Promise (18:10). "He," referring to the Lord, gave them the promise that they would become parents, even though Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and Sarah eighty-nine (Gen. 17:17). One thing is certain: whatever we do unto the Lord, He never leaves us in His debt. In time of famine, He sent Elijah to lodge with a widow and her son, and provided meal and oil for all of them for many months. Jesus accepted an invitation from friends to a marriage feast, and then returned their simple kindness to Him with earthen jars brimming with water turned to wine. He used Peter's fishing boat, and then gave it back nearly submerged with the weight of fish He had driven into the nets. He used a lad's lunch of five barley loaves and two small fishes, and not only provided the lad with an ample meal but also fed the multitude.

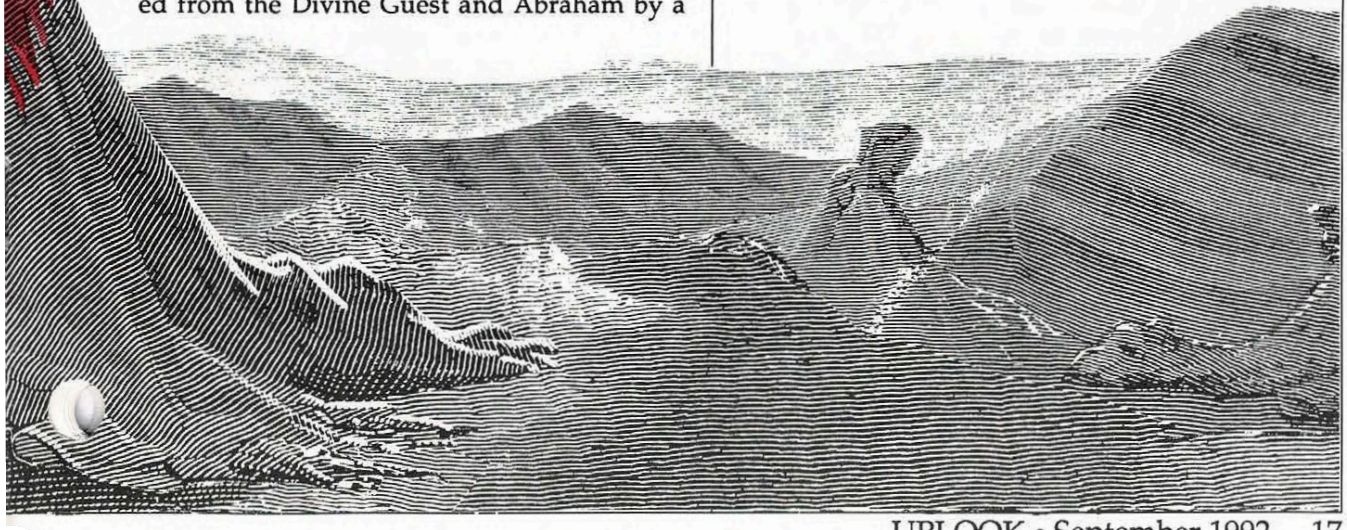
Sarah's Unbelief (vv. 11-13). Sarah was separated from the Divine Guest and Abraham by a thin tent flap, so she easily overheard their conversation. She might have been still ignorant of the Divine Visitor's identity, but following the words of 18:13, she knew. Abraham could have done her a real favor if he had just whispered through the tent flap, "Psst, it's the Lord!"

His Question and Reaffirmation (v. 14). "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The most fitting answer to this grand question is found in Jeremiah:

"Ah, Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard [lit. wonderful] for thee . . ." (Jer. 32:17).

Sarah's Denial (v. 15) was the result of fear, having realized that it was indeed the Lord speaking to her. That Sarah's spiritual life was not closely akin to Abraham's is evident. However, like all of us, she was rebuked and taught by the Lord, and she passed from unbelief to faith (see Heb. 11:11). It was C. T. Studd who wrote, "Faith laughs at impossibilities, and cries, 'It shall be done!'" God grant us that kind of faith in these days (see Heb. 12:1-3).

The very name of Sarah's son would remind her of her unbelief, for Isaac means "laughter." Was Abraham's laugh (Gen. 17:17 with 15:4-6) a laugh of unbelief? Let us assure ourselves that walking by faith, and taking to heart what God has to say to us through His Word, is no laughing matter. Today, multitudes of unrepentant sinners laugh in unbelief, but God will laugh at them in their calamity (Ps. 2:4). But, for the true believer like Abraham, the life of walking in faith with God will certainly result in the laughter of holy joy and blessing. Faith will watch at the tent door for a visit today!



HEROES

John Wycliffe

John A. Bjorlie

"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good. (Eccl. 9:13-18)

How often are nations ignorant of their greatest benefactors. If there ever was a man of whom this is so, it is John Wycliffe. Not only the churches of England, but congregations around the world owe a debt to this man called "the morning star of the English Reformation."

The three centuries immediately before the English Reformation, in the midst of which Wycliffe lived, were dark indeed. It was a period when the Church seemed overrun with religious despotism.

J. C. Ryle wrote, "The Bishop of Rome was the spiritual head of the Church—when Romanism reigned supreme from the Isle of Wight to Berwick-on-Tweed, and from the Land's End to the North Foreland, and ministers and people were all alike papists. It is no exaggeration to say that for these three centuries before the Reformation, Christianity in England seems to have been buried under a mass of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, and immorality. The likeness between the religion of this period and that of the apostolic age was so small, that if St. Paul had risen from the dead he would hardly have called it Christianity at all!"

John Wycliffe was born in the north of Yorkshire, on the banks of the Tees, about the year 1324, in the reign of Edward II. Wycliffe died in 1384(?), in the reign of Richard II. So he was born at least a hundred years before the invention of printing, and died about a hundred years before the birth of Martin Luther.

His early life is obscure. We do not know about his first schools or tutors, but do know that he attended Oxford between 1335 and 1340, where he was recognized as a primier scholar. He received a teaching appointment in 1361, and afterward taught at Queen's Merton, and Canterbury Hall.

In 1366, he became one of the king's chaplains; between 1366 and 1372, he became a doctor of theology; and in 1374 was appointed by the king to the rectory of Lutterworth. About this same time he was appointed by the king to serve on a commission to negotiate peace with France, and to deal with the Pope's agents about filling ecclesiastical appointments in England. These facts tell us that Wycliffe inspected the inner props of the day's religious facade. He would have seen be-

hind what the common man was permitted to see.

After a period on the continent, Wycliffe returned to England and began to speak as a religious reformer, preaching in Oxford and London against the pope's political power, and publicizing his ideas in tracts and leaflets. He became so outspoken against the Church of Rome that in 1377 he was summoned before the tribunal of the Bishop of London at St. Paul's.

Oxford seems then to have been his headquarters until about 1380, although he seems to have often been in London. At this time the "poor preachers" or Lollards went out from Lutterworth. These itinerant evangelists spread his doctrines until the Lollard movement became one of great strength and importance. It was said that two men could not be found together and one not be a Lollard or a Wycliffite. Lecturing, preaching, writing—both for learned and unlearned, arguing, controversy, and organizing became the main staple of his life.

> Wycliffe lived in a twilight age, working out many biblical issues without the slightest assistance from fellow believers.

In 1382, Courtenay, the Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned a council in the Blackfriar's convent hall, and there Wycliffe's doctrines were condemned and some of his followers were excommunicated. This council is known to history as "the earthquake council" because it was rocked by a violent tremor. In spite of England's sympathy with Wycliffe's position and teachings, the Archbishop of London succeeded in prohibiting him from preaching. Wycliffe then retired and devoted himself to writing, especially to the translation of the Bible.

Why was Wycliffe so unique to his generation? There are four main reasons. First, he was one of the first in England to forcefully maintain the sufficiency and supremacy of Holy Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice.

Second, he was one of the first who publicly attacked and denounced the errors of the Church of Rome. The sacrifice of the Mass and Transubstantiation, the ignorance and immorality of the priesthood, the tyranny of the See of Rome, the uselessness of trusting other mediators than Christ, the dangerous tendency of the confessional,—all these doctrines were unsparingly exposed in his writings. And this was at a time when saying such things was not the safest. In our day, we have a saying that "It is easy to curse the Pope in Orange Hall." But in Wycliffe's day, there were no Orange Halls in which to hide.

Third, Wycliffe was one of the first to revive the biblical practice of preaching. The "Lollards" (a European movement of itinerant preachers that spread to England some time before Wycliffe's birth) gathered around Wycliffe at Lutterworth. These men began to provide England with a new proclamation of a purer gospel, acknowledging the Bible as the only source of truth.

Finally, he was the first Englishman to translate the Bible into the English language. And what a task this was. Actually that translation of the Old and New Testaments was completed after his death with the help of Nicolas Hereford and John Purvey. There was no printing, and the whole book had to be laboriously written by hand and then, again by hand, laboriously copied, one by one.

Despite towering obstacles, this work was pushed ahead and hundreds of copies were circulated. Knighton, the canon of Leicester, complained, "Christ committed the gospel to the clergy and doctors of the church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker persons, according as the times and people's wants might require; but this master, John Wickliff, translated it out of Latin into English, and by that means laid it more open to the laity, and to women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding. And so the gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under swine; and that which used to be precious to both clergy and laity, is made, as it were, the common jest of both; and the jewel of the church is turned into the sport of the laity."

In spite of efforts to suppress the translation by fire and fury, no less than 170 complete copies were found extant when it was reprinted at Oxford around the year 1850.

John Wycliffe lived in a twilight age, working

out many biblical issues without the slightest assistance from fellow believers. He wrote much, and perhaps wrote hastily; but when you consider his solitary, isolated, difficult position, you wonder that he was as free from error as he was.

How he escaped without a violent death, and finally died in 1384 quietly in his bed at Lutterworth, is itself a miracle. God raised up John of Gaunt and the Princess of Wales to favor him. It was God who sent the earthquake which broke up a London Synod, when it was about to condemn him. It was God who inclined the University of Oxford to give him support.

Wycliffe enjoyed a window of opportunity. The Council of Constance had not yet set the example of burning heretics. God's protecting hand was over Wycliffe. This was the hand of the One who told Paul at Corinth, "Speak, and hold not thy peace; I am with thee. No man shall set on thee to hurt thee."

Sadly, many of Wycliffe's co-laborers did not escape the stake, and the flames. His own writings were rigidly repressed, and in 1415, the Council of Constance ordered his books burned and his remains to be exhumed and burned. This order was carried out in 1428.

For Further Reading:

Wycliffe the Morning Star, by George S. Innis
Light from Old Times, by John Charles Ryle
The Pilgrim Church, by E. H. Broadbent
John Wicklif, by W. L. Watkinson
The Lollards, the Witnesses for the Truth in Great Britain, published by the Religious Tract Society

Wycliffe: *Morning Star* *of the English Reformation*

Wycliffe is disinhumed,
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed,
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith that ancient voice which streams can hear
Thus speaks (that voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy humankind:)
As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear
Into the Avon—Avon to tide
Of Severn—Severn to the narrow seas—
Into main ocean they—this deed accurst,
An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
How the bold teacher's doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread throughout the world
dispersed.

—*Wordsworth*

Who were these Lollards?

The term Lollard became in time a general name for those deemed heretical to the Roman Catholic Church. One opinion is that the name comes from the Middle Dutch, *lollaert,* meaning to mumble or mutter. Another view traces the word to the Low German *lollen* or *lullen,* meaning to sing in a low tone, from the subdued and plaintive dirges used while accompanying the dead to the grave. If this is so, it corresponds to the contemporary scorn for hymn singing, which worldly-minded people speak of as "funeral dirges." So the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Much of what we learn of the Lollards has been gleaned, not from their writings, but from their accusers. In Broadbent's *Pilgrim Church,* we read, "One chronicle relates that in 1322 a certain Walther came to Cologne from Mainz. He was 'a leader of the Brethren and a dangerous heresiarch, who for many years had remained hidden and had involved many in his dangerous errors, he was seized near Cologne and by court of justice given over to the fire and burnt. He was a man full of the Devil, more able than any other, constant in his error, clever in his answers, corrupt in faith, and no promises, no threats, not even the most terrible tortures could bring him to betray his fellow culprits, of whom there were many. This Lollard, Walther, of Netherland origin, had little knowledge of the Latin language, and wrote the numerous works of his false faith in the German tongue, as he could not do it in the Roman speech, and distributed them very secretly to those whom he had deceived and led astray. As he refused all repentance and recantation, and defended his error most steadfastly, not to say obstinately, he was thrown into the fire and left nothing but his ashes behind.'"

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this report is that the writer appeared to feel entirely justified, even thinking he was doing God service, by assenting to such monstrous cruelty.

Simplicity

Line up on God's side. He has the power. Simply put your confidence in Him. Someday you will stand at the end of time in the dawning of eternity and look over the whole sweep of God's leading in your life. Then you will see how sure, how safe you were in putting your whole trust in Him.

The man who does his job well needs no important ancestors.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:2)

Every day ask God for a scripture to enjoy, that you might know Him; ask Him for a service to perform, that you might please Him; ask Him for a song to sing, that you might glorify Him; ask Him for a sinner to speak to, that you might witness for Him; ask Him for His strength to overcome some weakness, that you might become more like Him.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)

Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned.
—Peter Marshall

Bewildered oft with doubt and care,
To God I fain would go;
While many cry, "Lo, here! lo, there!"
The truth how may I know?

To Christ the Way, the Truth, the Life,
I come, no more to roam;
He'll guide me to my "Father's house,"
To my eternal home.
—James McGranahan

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

When I was young, I was sure of everything; in a few years, having been mistaken a thousand times, I was not half so sure of most things as I was before; at present, I am hardly sure of anything **but what God has revealed to me.**
—John Wesley

It is the dull, bald, dreary, commonplace day, with commonplace duties and people, that kills the burning heart—unless we have learned the secret of abiding in Jesus.
—Oswald Chambers

Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
In Thy grace;
All Thy ways and tho'ts about me
Only trace
Deeper stories of the glories
Of Thy grace.
—Miss C. A. Wellesley

Grace taught my wond'ring feet
To tread the heav'nly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

'Twas grace that wrote my name
In life's eternal book;
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o'erflow;
'Tis grace has kept me to this day,
And will not let me go.

Oh, let that grace inspire
My soul with strength divine;
May all my pow'rs to Thee aspire
And all my days be Thine!
—Phillip Doddridge

In a time of turmoil like the present,the need of the individual soul is to lay hold upon fundamental things, one of which is trust in the power and goodness of God. In our age, many of the things in which men have trusted have been shaken. But there are "things which cannot be shaken," and these are still available to us, if we have eyes to see them and faith to grasp them. The God who has guided the world in the past is still in control. When the tumult has died away, and man's plans have evaporated, He will still be "our refuge and strength."

Self-Esteem?

Donald L. Norbie

This generation is called the "me generation." There is talk of self-esteem, self-worth, self-realization. Marriages fall apart because each says, "My needs are not being met." Psychologists and counselors are inundated with people who feel frustrated because life is not giving them all they think they deserve.

Life focuses upon self for many. Seminars are held and books are written to encourage self-esteem and self-assertiveness. One popular preacher asserts that the greatest sin today is a lack of self-esteem: "Wake up in the morning; look in the mirror and tell yourself that you are the greatest!"

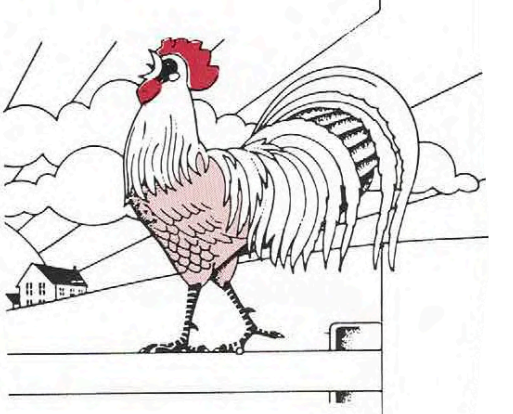
In reaction to this, some Christians are preaching that man is worthless. With Job they would say that the "son of man . . . is a worm" (Job 25:6 NKJ). Did not Paul say, "For I know in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18)? Man is depraved and defiled, ugly and detestable.

What is true of man's nature in his unconverted days? Is there nothing left of the image of God (Gen. 1:27)? The Scripture does teach that no part of man is unaffected by sin. His mind is liable to deception and rationalization (Titus 3:3). We were enslaved to sin, unable to break its hold (Rom. 6:17). Our intellect, our emotions, our will—all is tainted by sin. Paul speaks of the "filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7:1).

But even in his broken condition as a sinner, there is something wonderful about man. The image of God has been defaced, but not erased. David says of man, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8:4-6).

In his unconverted state, man still does amazing and beautiful things in science, in art and in music. At times he does kind and noble acts. Yet all are tainted by selfishness and sin. Man in his natural state cannot please God. He is a rebel and must lay down his arms. He must surrender.

At salvation this happens. Repentance is vital, a radical change of mind about himself and his actions. He is a sinner, deserving the judgment and wrath of a holy God. He must acknowledge this and desire to turn from sin. "He who covers his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Jesus said repentance was essential in salvation (Lk. 13:3) and the gospel message must always include repentance (Acts 17:30). This will bring a brokenness, an abhorrence of oneself and his actions. A person must realize his guilt and helplessness.



But with the gospel also comes hope. God sees value and worth in the sinner. The sinner is unworthy, but not worthless. Christ would not die for irredeemable garbage. "God so loved the world that He gave . . . ." Blessed message of hope for the broken, devastated sinner! There can be forgiveness—"the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." By receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour, one can be freed from the guilt and penalty of a broken law (Gal. 3:13).

Not only is the law satisfied, but the sinner receives new life from God (2 Cor. 5:17), and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell him (1 Cor. 6:19). The power and energy of God can now flow through him, enabling him to overcome sin and live a life for God. A life utterly broken by sin can now be healed and made something beautiful. No wonder John Newton, a depraved slave trader, could write after salvation, "Amazing grace!" What dignity and sense of worth can now mark the believer! He is a child of the King of kings.

The believer must walk humbly before his God. Although a child of God, he still has the old nature and should be aware of his utter dependence upon God to live a holy life. At times the flesh surges up and humiliates him and he realizes he is not in glory yet. But after such a time, there is forgiveness and healing, a fresh sense of the grace of God and of his own weakness (1 Jn. 1:9). Through it all he can cling to God's commitment and faithfulness—"I will never leave thee nor for-

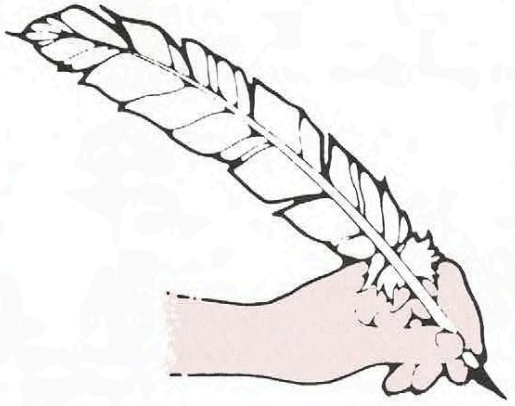
sake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

There is the confidence that God is working in his life and will not give up (Phil. 1:6). This process of change, of conformity to the character of Christ, takes place gradually, "from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). The spirit of God works patiently in the lives of God's children. One day this process will be completed. We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2). It is the blessed hope of our Lord's return.

The believer is not to be occupied with self. He knows in himself he is unworthy of salvation and deserves eternal hell. Self did not save him and self cannot improve him. To be occupied with self is to be plunged into despair. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Our salvation began by looking to the Lord Jesus, not self. Our continuing sanctification depends upon looking at Him, not self. We are exhorted to be looking away from all else "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). He alone can give victory and triumph in our lives.

What Can I Say?

I am 13 years old and I love the Lord. I worship at 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel in Vancouver, BC. During the summer, I was thinking about what God did for me, in sending His Son to die such a painful death. I was also thinking about what I could do to thank Him for such a beautiful gift. Besides living my life for Him and spreading His Word to others, the next best thing was just to come right out and say, Thank You. What could I say in gratitude besides, Thank You, but how can thanking God be enough? So I decided to write a poem, thanking God like He was standing right in front of me, and I was reciting it to Him.



What can I say?
Look what You've done for me.
I am a sinner,
You have set me free.
The wrath of Satan I could never overcome,
I was ashamed with the things I'd done.
Thank you, dear Jesus, for dying on that cross,
Without You I would be lost.
Praise you, dear Lord, for shedding Your blood,
If it had been up to me, don't think I could.
The pain You suffered,
The load You bore.
What can I say, but *Thank You, Lord.*

I noticed that in all your issues of Uplook *you have a poem on a page somewhere in the magazine. So when I wrote this I thought about sending it in, and now is just as good a time as any. I do not know if you would be able to use it in your magazine at all, but if you can, please go ahead and do it. I just want the whole world to know how I see God's beautiful gift.*

God Bless You All,

Kristina Hrachy

Stewardship Report

Kevin B. Shantz, C. A.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Shown below are excerpts from the unaudited financial statements for Gospel Folio Press for the year ended March 31, 1992. If you would like a complete set of statements, please write to us. We will be pleased to send a copy.

UPLOOK MAGAZINE

Uplook is one of many publications produced by Gospel Folio Press. The magazine is available free of charge to all who request it. Gifts for, and expenses of producing *Uplook* are included in the income statement below. We will publish a separate income statement for *Uplook* only in our January 1993 issue. We currently have a small surplus in our *Uplook* fund.

GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS
(A non-profit corporation incorporated without share capital under the laws of the State of Michigan)

BALANCE SHEET
March 31, 1992
(with comparative amounts for 1991)

	1992	1991
ASSETS		
Current assets:		
Cash in bank	$ 1,595	$ 11,665
Accounts receivable	29,283	21,881
Prepaid expenses and deposits	799	10,731
Inventory	111,996	51,526
Total current assets	143,673	95,803
Fixed assets (net of accumulated depreciation):		
Equipment, fixtures and leasehold improvements	150,895	75,943
Organization costs (net of accumulated amortization)	1,260	1,440
TOTAL ASSETS	$ 295,828	$ 173,186
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 33,701	$ 16,238
Unearned revenue	17,064	6,300
Current portion of long-term liabilities	18,996	1,015
Total current liabilities	69,761	23,553
Long-term liabilities (net of current portion):		
Annuity payable	87,740	88,832
Capital lease obligations	30,374	
Notes payable	42,726	10,000
Total long-term liabilities	160,840	98,832
Total liabilities	230,601	122,385
Equity:		
Contributed surplus	52,127	51,627
Accumulated surplus (deficit) from operations	13,100	(826)
Total equity	65,227	50,801
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	$ 295,828	$ 173,186

Approved by the board:

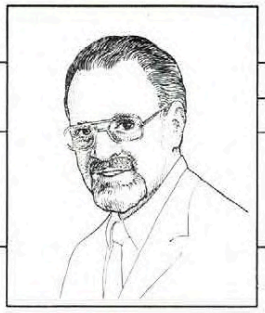
J Blackburn

W Shantz

GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS

STATEMENT OF INCOME
for the year ended March 31, 1992
(with comparative amounts for 1991)

	1992	1991
Revenue:		
Sales of publications	$ 252,065	$ 224,453
Donations towards Uplook costs	59,265	10,316
Total Revenue	311,330	234,769
Cost of goods produced and sold	252,588	184,088
Gross profit from sales	58,742	50,681
Operating and administrative expenses:		
Bad debts	1,904	1,805
Bank charges and interest	14,012	9,530
Depreciation and amortization	8,485	9,153
Employee health and workmen's compensation insuranc	5,871	3,602
Insurance	1,585	1,303
Office and clerical wages	27,053	25,381
Office supplies and miscellaneous	4,240	12,980
Retired employees health insurance premiums	4,546	3,492
Telephone	4,253	2,373
	71,949	69,619
Net loss before other income	(13,207)	(18,938)
Other income:		
Miscellaneous	2,658	2,277
Royalties on foreign calendar sales	8,972	8,515
Donations	15,503	15,620
	27,133	26,412
Net income for the year	$ 13,926	$ 7,474



LOOK AT BOOKS

A Wise Choice

Jim McKendrick

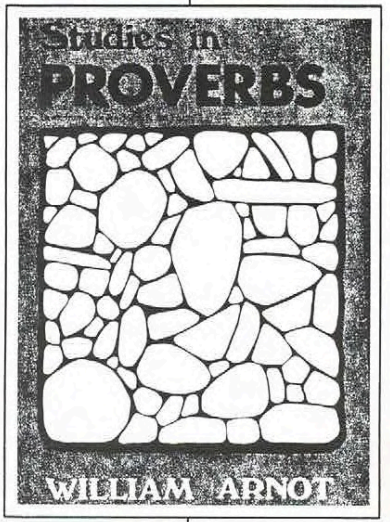
James starts his little epistle by telling us that we should "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (testings) knowing . . . " that through these we will become complete and mature. However, that presupposes we know how to deal with, and learn from, these tests. It also presupposes that we will grow and not be stumbled by them. James goes on to tell us that if we lack wisdom (and who among us doesn't?), we have a source of wisdom that will not fail us. He points us to the Word of God which, like a mirror, will show us what to do and encourages us to not be forgetful, but obedient to what we learn from the Word.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians that the Lord Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom. Thus we find the *Source* of wisdom. As we look at His life, we can learn from Him. He, with all His wisdom, has made Himself available to us.

After giving us the life of the Lord Himself to look at (as well as the historical and prophetic books from which to learn much of God's wisdom), He knew we still needed a special book to help us. That special book is called the Proverbs. In short, pithy sayings and short essays on certain topics, the wisdom of God is put at the disposal of man. What a God we have! He who is infinitely wise brings His wisdom down to the level of man so we can grasp some of it in a form we can easily memorize and use in our day-to-day struggles.

I would like to suggest some books that will help you digest the contents of the book of Proverbs, meditating all the while on its precepts. One of the recently published helps is really a booklet, published by *Spread the Word* ministry and put together by Steve Hulshizer. With the aid of modern computer technology, he has listed alphabetically over 350 subjects mentioned in Proverbs, with over 3,000 references. These are keyed to Strong's Concordance for help in the further study of these words. So if you want to know what Proverbs has to say about "justice," you can see at a glance its nineteen references in Proverbs and realize there are four different Hebrew words used to translate the English word justice. You will have a good time discovering what God has to say in a very practical way about this subject.

If you would like a verse-by-verse commentary on this book, you will not go wrong picking up Mr. Ironside's commentary on Proverbs. Unlike some of his books which are homiletic in nature, this provides a verse-by-verse look at the book. His style is clear and nontechnical, and will give you a good, basic understanding of the text. Loizeaux Brothers publishes Mr. Ironside's works.



For the analytical mind, there is a brief but excellent book by Mr. Irving Jensen on Proverbs. This is not a commentary, but an analysis of the book. Charts abound. The structure of the book, the setting, and background of the book are discussed. A very helpful volume, it will introduce you to fruitful studies of the book itself. Moody Press is the publisher of this one.

Last, but not least, is one that has been around a long time. Mr. William Arnot, a Scot of the past century, wrote a book on the Proverbs called *Laws from Heaven for Life On Earth.* That seems to really put in condensed form the heart of the book. Kregel Publishers has reprinted it and called it "Studies in Proverbs," thus catching the reality of the book's contents. In short chapters, Mr. Arnot picks some of the Proverbs (131 of them, to be exact) and comments on them. These proverbs are not picked at random, but are the ones that contain the truths that pervade the entire book. His comments are rich, full, devotional, and practical. They will stir you to richer devotion to the Lord as well as practical living.

As you study this book and apply its precepts, may you discover the Lord Jesus Christ and His wisdom, and be empowered by His Spirit to live in His light.

Every Day Reading Plan

Section 22: Proverbs — The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

October 1	Proverbs 1	To know wisdom and instruction
October 2	Proverbs 2	The Lord giveth wisdom
October 3	Proverbs 3	Trust in the Lord with all thine heart
October 4	Proverbs 4	Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father
October 5	Proverbs 5	Beware the strange woman
October 6	Proverbs 6	Go to the ant, thou sluggard
October 7	Proverbs 7	Keep My commandments and live
October 8	Proverbs 8	Hear instruction and be wise
October 9	Proverbs 9	The knowledge of the holy is understanding
October 10	Proverbs 10	The righteous and wicked contrasted
October 11	Proverbs 11	The righteous shall flourish as a branch
October 12	Proverbs 12	The tongue of the wise is health
October 13	Proverbs 13	Godliness brings contentment
October 14	Proverbs 14	There is a way that seemeth right unto a man ...
October 15	Proverbs 15	The eyes of the Lord are in every place
October 16	Proverbs 16	How much better it is to get wisdom than gold!
October 17	Proverbs 17	A friend loveth at all times
October 18	Proverbs 18	Death and life are in the power of the tongue
October 19	Proverbs 19	The counsel of the Lord shall stand
October 20	Proverbs 20	Even a child is known by his doings
October 21	Proverbs 21	He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man
October 22	Proverbs 22	Train up a child in the way he should go
October 23	Proverbs 23	Withhold not correction from the child
October 24	Proverbs 24	The field of the slothful is covered with thorns
October 25	Proverbs 25	A faithful messenger refreshes the soul
October 26	Proverbs 26	Honor is not seemly for a fool
October 27	Proverbs 27	Godly friendship
October 28	Proverbs 28	Do not show respect of persons
October 29	Proverbs 29	The righteous bring rejoicing
October 30	Proverbs 30	Every word of God is pure
October 31	Proverbs 31	God's priceless woman

Proverbs

Proverbs is unique in the canon of Scripture—a compilation of short, pithy sayings and essays which put in easily-understood and easily-memorized fashion the wisdom to live a godly life. This book is neither theoretical nor theological, but intensely practical. The majority of it was quoted from, or compiled by Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. 1 Kings 4:32 tells us that he spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. Only about 800 of them appear in this book.

Solomon was wise because he asked wisdom from God (1 Kings 3:5-9). He was a young man then and had just been given the awesome responsibility of leading the nation of Israel. Realizing his inability, he asked God for an understanding heart. God gave wisdom to him liberally (as He has promised to do with us, Jas. 1:5), as well as riches (which God has given to us already, Eph. 1:3) and honor (which will be ours at the Lord's appearing, 1 Pet. 1:7). Unable to handle the riches and fame, he sought out "many inventions." He tells us in Ecclesiastes that having sought satisfaction everywhere "under the sun," he found it all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. The whole end of man, he concluded, is to keep the commandments of the Lord. God is the Judge, and all the work of man is ultimately going to be rightly assessed by God.

Solomon tells us at the beginning of this book of Proverbs that the source of wisdom is God. To know God is the foundation of knowledge and wisdom. Solomon also tells us the way to get wisdom is to "search for it as hidden treasure." Wisdom is worth having over anything else. This wisdom could be defined as the ability to act properly in real life situations. This knowledge is one of the few commodities that can be passed along from one generation to another, so the son is to listen to the parents who pass on the wisdom of experience.

The experience that is passed along has been gained from God Himself and tested in the crucible of life. The sweep of the book covers the whole range of life situations. In the first nine chapters, Solomon seems to be addressing his son. He begins by telling him that the receiving of instruction is an evidence of being wise, a truth that should hearten us when we come under criticism ourselves. Solomon then begins to speak specifically, first about the influence of the companions we choose, and then to the whole range of situations that one will face in life. He touches on sexual purity, financial integrity, kindness to neighbors, and having a proper work ethic.

From chapter 10 to 25, there seems to be a minimal amount of *connection;* instead, it is a *collection* of proverbs. Rather than a diamond with many facets, each reflecting on the other and forming a unity of thought, it is like a string of pearls, wisdom being the thread that holds them together.

There are two basic kinds of statements. One is called *antithetic* parallelism, the contrasting of paired opposite principles. An example of this is found in chapter 10:12, "Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins." The other type is called *synonymous* parallelism—paired identical or similar principles. One of the most famous proverbs of this type is chapter 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

From Proverbs 25 to 29, there is a collection of proverbs attributed to Solomon but collected by the men of King Hezekiah and added to the book at a later date.

Then chapters 30 and 31 are the words of Agur and King Lemuel respectively. They are unidentified outside of these two passages of Scripture. Numbers seem quite important to Agur. His proverbs revolve around numbers of things and people. The phrase, "for three . . . and for four," is used as a point of emphasis. King Lemuel gives a wonderful description of a wise woman which has been the subject of many a sermon on the virtues of womanhood.

I once led a Bible study on this book. Each week we discussed a different chapter. I asked the students for every session to pick a proverb in the chapter that especially spoke to them and tell the group about it the next week. Very seldom did we have a student duplicate the proverb of another student. The diversity of each chapter matched the diversity of needs of each of the students. May each of us be spoken to by God as we read this practical portion of His Word this month.

The Master Key

A. T. Schofield

I have found the Master Key of Heaven that unlocks everything: C.H.R.I.S.T. Yes, I know it is an old story; but, oh, the newness of its wonders!

Recently, I went on a tour for the Lord in the north of England. To me it has been a series of miracles of the love of Christ. Perhaps part of the wonder is that northern English people never display their feelings. But *my Master Key unlocked every heart.*

Once I rather doubted its power. It was at a morning service, and the faces were as carved out of granite. But I tried my Master Key, and was amazed at its power—the handgrip, the moist eyes, the smile struggling to the surface, all told that each heart had been opened! At another time, two once bitter rivals met, and at the close gripped each other's hands for the first time in twelve years.

This Master Key also unlocked to me the untouched unity of God's great family. Everywhere I was with my own people. The idea of differences seemed absurd and profane. We were all so absolutely one in Christ, and that independently of all labels which we didn't even trouble to make clear.

But this marvel not only unlocked all hearts, but *all houses from the highest to the lowest*—from mansions of ancient splendor to little houses in long rows and small streets, where dear members of the Royal Family lived. The Master Key not only unlocked the door of these, but the best bedrooms, turning sometimes master and mistress out of them, all for the love of an adorable Lord.

It unlocked all purses, too, for nothing was too good for those that came in His dear Name. In two wealthy abodes, I thought it was some old link of friendship that opened the doors; but soon found that the love of Christ was the real mainspring. The widow of one of our merchant princes never failed to come to the squalid, crowded hall and sit on a hard bench to catch something of the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon.

This Master Key unlocked all classes, all races, all ages, all conditions of men, in an absolute Spirit-formed unity. But, oh, the faces! How can I describe the sight night after night when, at a certain point in the address, I used the Master Key! It was just as when the lights are turned on in a hall. The whole sea of faces became radiant with joy. The subject when the sudden change was most visible was "The Lord's Parousia." To me it was not the "path of the just" but the faces of the just that were as the light of the dawn; and I could see that all the faces were looking for "that Blessed Hope."

The Master Key also unlocks all love. Having to leave our car in the north for a long all-day journey south, we carefully arranged all our trains to correspond. But it was all in vain, for our second train was cancelled. We didn't know, but God did, and the night before had opened the heart of an entire stranger with this Key. We never thought to see him again, but as we stepped into the first train, he was in the same car! Not only so, but when we found at his destination that our second train was cancelled, he carried our luggage for us; told us of another train from another station that would reach our destination at same time; packed all our things in a taxi and sent it off, and all was well; for the Master Key had opened this stranger's heart, and goodness and mercy had followed us all that day.

Have I said enough of the real, warm family feeling among all sorts and conditions of men never seen before?

Many of the dear homes we entered were adorned with framed texts of Scripture. These always remind me of the old lady in Devonshire, formerly a nurse's aide in a war hospital, to whom a grateful French officer presented a beautifully engraved paper as a memento. She thought so much of it that she framed it and hung it up in her room, till at last a friend saw it and explained it was a French banknote for £400. So she took it down, put her name to it, and cashed it. I sometimes wonder if all these beautiful framed checks that hang on our walls have been signed and cashed by their owners!

That Man Died For My Sins

Rowland Mills

Rowland and Wilma Mills fellowship at an assembly in Fortier, MB. Rowland has 32 years of service in the care of the mentally retarded. He has held all levels to Director of Nursing and Director of Staff Development.

Human knowledge can be acquired. But the ability to know God comes by revelation. It is not an intellectual skill nor yet human wisdom that enables sinful men and women to state that once they were "blind" but now they "see." The Lord Jesus prayed: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Mt. 11:25). Where does this insight come from? And how bright do you have to be to have possession of it?

Having worked with developmentally handicapped or mentally retarded people all my adult life, I have often questioned if they can know the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. Some tell me these people have not reached the years of responsibility; but they do not say what that means. All that is said is they, the mentally retarded, are not responsible. So like children who die in infancy, they are covered by the blood of the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).

I am left confused. I agree they cannot understand God, but who can? Take a look at Isaiah 55:8. In my life, I have met many situations that would cause me to question this matter even further. Here is just one of these situations:

As a young supervisor I entered a room in a Training Center one day. There I saw a severely retarded man holding and treasuring a picture postcard of the crucifixion. I had known this man for many years. He always spoke poorly and jumbled up his ideas. Seeing his interest in the postcard, I asked what he saw in the card. His first reply was an abrupt, "You know." This was stated in his usual poorly-articulated way.

Was there any significance to his answer? I tried again, and asked for more details about the picture. He appeared to be hurt and gave me a look that clearly said, You, of all people should know! Then he, looking me in the face (to look anyone in the face was unusual behavior for him), said, "That's the Man."

I was surprised at his behavior and answer, but I was in for a bigger shock. To my next question, "What man?" I will never forget the answer. Clearly articulated in a confident voice, he said, "That Man died for my sins." Could he know what he had said? I asked him again, and again got the same answer.

He then immediately returned to his usual behavior, putting the picture in his pocket and saying, "(M)ine, ine, go, go." This was his usual type of speech. Where did the clarity come from; where did the insight come from?

I have stated that this is only one of many situations I have considered when viewing God's work in the hearts of the mentally handicapped.

I cannot explain this, but we know spiritual wisdom is not human wisdom. They really have little in common; but then neither is a talented person necessarily intelligent. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 states there is worldly and spiritual wisdom. Whatever the condition of a person's mind or body, there is no reason to believe that their spirits are inadequate to receive the Light.

Some may ask, What are the ways to witness to retarded people? I can only suggest the three standard tools of any witness: prayer, consistency, and love. Then leave the matter with God, knowing He has a place in His heart for all. He never makes mistakes, for "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

He gave me all I asked for, yea, more than I can tell,
He filled my soul with rapture, with joy unspeakable;
The hand of Jesus on my soul seemed laid so tenderly,
I had for my companion, the Man who died for me.

—J. G. Bellett

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Robert Budd, Moncton NB

It was the month of June, 1987. We had hired a contractor to do some renovations to our home. Unfortunately, he made a serious mistake and caused a fire that burned our house to ashes. We lost most of our earthly possessions.

As we walked through the rubble and looked at what used to be our home, I noticed a small booklet beneath my feet. It was wet and covered with cinders—a sodden mass. I picked it up and opened it. Only two pages were not stuck together. There was a short devotional based on Haggai 2:9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts and in this place will I give peace." Peace in a scene of ruin and discouragement? Isn't that God's way!

So He gave us peace. He had shown us that this wasn't an accident, a mishap. It hadn't missed His gaze. God was still on the throne, still in control.

Looking back five years later, we can see His hand clearly in what was a trial to test us and mold us into the image of His Son. Thanks be unto God!