

*“Here Am I,
Send Me”*



Leslie Diestelkamp

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"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me"

Isaiah 6:8



“Just we three”

Chapter One

How Did It

Happen This Way?

It is a beautiful day to be alive in Australia! The sun is shining brightly; there are a few cumulus clouds floating against a background of deep blue sky. Here at Inverell, in the Australian New England Highlands, there is no pollution in the atmosphere and all the handiwork of God may be beheld in its most significant glory. I look somewhat longingly to the northeast and think of the mountains and the valleys, the plains and the prairies of my own beloved homeland — "the land of the free and the home of the brave." There, twelve thousand miles away, live two of my sons, two daughters and eighteen grandchildren. Roy, my youngest son, is 250 miles away from me at Lismore, here in Australia. I stir myself up to ask the natural question: "How did it happen this way?"

The answer to that question started a long, long time ago. In the summer of 1925 I lived with my aunt and uncle in Owensville, Missouri. I was 13 years old and had graduated from the eighth grade that spring. My grandfather had made arrangements for me to spend the summer out on the farm of his brother-in-law, my Uncle Fred Ritterbusch, who lived eight or ten miles from town. The theory was that it would be good for a lad from

the town to get out into the country and to learn to work with his hands. During those months, as I chopped weeds from the cornfield, dug Canadian Thistle from the pasture and worked in the hayfields, I had time to think, to meditate. I remember well, how that I came to realize that summer that I was a sinner, and in a lost condition. I resolved to be saved. That August, when most of the farm work was done, I returned home. Then one Saturday my grandfather and I walked twenty miles, out to Oak Grove, where the church was conducting a gospel meeting. That night I confessed my faith in Christ and the next afternoon I was immersed into Christ by W. B. Ragsdale, in a pool near the meeting house.

In those days it was the custom for the Christians to file by the newly-baptized person, shaking his hand and congratulating him. As my grandfather came to shake my hand, tears filled his eyes, though I could not remember ever having seen him weep before.

From that beginning has developed a life of joyful service to Christ and to humanity, as God has blessed me with the opportunity of preaching the gospel on five continents in the last four decades. Through no superiority of my own, nor even because of any high degree of excellence in me, opportunities have come to me that seemed to be far in excess of my abilities. These came to me by diligent dedication to the goal of world evangelism, and by what I truly believe is the providence of an all-wise God. I have been challenged by those circumstances to share the saving Word with so many. I have been caused to give thanks to God for those quiet days on the farm in 1925, for the later nurturing by Oak Grove church, for the unfailing encouragement of a faithful companion, and for the cooperation of a host of brethren in Christ who have, from beginning till now, had such a great part in this work.

My grandfather, William Diestelkamp (known by his neighbors and relatives as "Old Uncle Bill"), was an honorable man in the community, being neither rich nor poor. He had come to America from Germany when he was nine years old, and had only a few weeks of American schooling (though he could read the Bible in both English and German, and he taught me to read English and to do considerable mathematics before I ever entered school). I had come under his care when my mother died when I was only three months old. When I was five my grandmother also died. But my grandparents' youngest daughter, Amelia, was still at home, and she, along with my grandfather, gave me excellent care.

When I was eight or nine my Aunt Amelia married Elmer Ferris. Their home became my home in my youthful years. His very nature, character and quality became a great influence in my life. Four children were born to them, one of whom died in infancy. The three remaining are: Velva

(Mrs. Raymond) Breuer, Darlein (Mrs. Jack) Duncan, and Ray Ferris, a well-known gospel preacher. They all seem like brother and sisters to me, though they will naturally want me to stress that they are not nearly my age!

Schooling for me was somewhat abbreviated by the Great Depression. I graduated from high school in 1930 just as the panic was beginning. I had ambitions of being a lawyer, but college was "out-of-the-question" for me then. W. B. Ragsdale tried to get me to go to Freed-Hardeman College, and he wanted me to become a preacher, but my mind was not settled on that so early in life.

In later years my wife and I sometimes reflected upon what the outcome would have been had I gone to Freed-Hardeman College in my youthful days. Sometimes I teased her by saying that in such case I would probably have married some southern girl and gotten me a "job" preaching for some good church in the "Bible Belt," settling there for life. Instead, I taught in a one-room country school, married a high school schoolmate, farmed for four years, learned to preach a little bit by studying my Bible a whole lot, and finally launched out to take the gospel to as much of the world as one man could do, with the help of a wife who was just as fully dedicated to that task as was her husband.

In later years I think I have never been sorry I did not go to Freed-Hardeman College, or any other such school. Understand, I am not opposed to such schools as are operated by brethren if they function to supplement the influence of the home, and if they do not become attached to the church, either by means of support by congregations or by means of undue influence upon churches through faculty and/or students. Four of my children attended such schools; one son-in-law, James A. Hodges, has taught at Florida College in the Bible department for eight years; and I have spoken in six college lectureships (twice at Abilene, twice at Florida and once each at Harding and Freed-Hardeman). So you see, I do not oppose them, as such.

My defense of such schools is an old-fashioned one. I simply say they do a good work in providing a wholesome atmosphere for young people to get an education, and since that is obviously, and indeed, a good work, any Christian may contribute to such as he may choose. Paul said, "Be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). Because of such a broad, comprehensive directive for us, I believe an individual can help in any work that is entirely good.

For instance, if two brothers in Christ build an orphan home and decline church support, I can donate to their endeavor as they help unfortunate children with food, shelter and training, which may include Bible teaching. Or if two brethren start a hospital, declining church support, I can help them to minister to the sick, and even to teach the Bible to patients and visitors. So likewise, if brethren operate a school, declining church support, I can assist them with funds and/or with work while they provide education that may include Bible teaching.

But this does not mean that my support of such schools is unqualified. I reserve the right and recognize the responsibility to constructively criticize, and to clearly recognize dangers. As I see them, we need always to be concerned that such schools do not become domineering over churches. They would not intentionally do this, but they could easily slip into such action without deliberate intent. And they must not become sensitive regarding those brethren who do not patronize them. For instance, the colleges should take the lead in recognizing that a preacher who has not attended such a school is just as highly qualified, or may be at least, as those who did attend. It will be a sad day when a diploma from such a school becomes a criterion of excellence and/or quality among preachers.

In recent years I have been dismayed, and forced by conscience to offer strong reproof, when brethren have suggested that Paul was able to do so much more, and better work than the other apostles because of his education. Paul said, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth . . ." (1 Cor. 2:13) and, "the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12). Indeed a preacher needs to be educated, but it is not at all important where he got that education —whether in the halls of colleges and universities, or in the school of hard knocks and the university of private study.

Finally, in spite of the statement I have already made in this chapter that schools operated by brethren provide a good environment for the youth, I do not believe the oft-suggested theory that those who do not attend such schools must almost surely be lost and may indeed be considered "second class." Of course no one, in promoting the schools, would state it so frankly, but some do slip into remarks that convey such ideas. The determining factor in saving the youth is influence of the home — the parents — and if properly done it can overcome those gross and dangerous problems that confront students in public schools. I do not

believe the theory that we must provide private schools to save our youth from the supposed blight of public education. Solomon said, train them up in the way they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). It will still work in our modern day.

Today I heartily recommend Florida College to young men and young women who are Christians and who want a college education. And, to a young man who wants to preach, I believe you could not spend some time more wisely than to go to Florida College. But if there is somewhere a young man, or one not so young, who cannot go to college, do not let this hinder you from preaching. Do not suppose that a college diploma will make of you a skillful preacher, and, conversely, do not suppose that you will be less skillful without the diploma. If you will study the Word, meditate upon it, give yourself wholly to it, keep yourself pure in heart and life and develop all the natural ability you have to proclaim the message of salvation, God will bless your efforts and brethren will use your talents to the fullest degree.

Whether you go to college or not, you should never be proud or arrogant about the sources of your training and learning. Those who go to college must not be boastful about it and those who do not go must not become bitter and/or haughty regarding their own self-training. Those who go to college must not assume that those who do not go are necessarily less educated, and those who do not go to college must not cringe in fear of the ones who do go. Get a reasonable command of good English and a mature understanding of God's Word, and go preach! And don't worry about a few mistakes in English. It is quite amazing to notice how many of the college graduates and even the teachers frequently say, "It was for him and I," or "We appreciate your hospitality to my wife and I." And I do not mention these errors to profess excellence myself, but to show that my sentence structure and split infinitives are no worse than those of others; that many get college degrees and still use poor grammar; and, principally, to stress that the worth of a gospel preacher, his fruitfulness for Christ, and even his recognition by brethren, is not dependent upon the number of years of academic training.

There are indeed a few areas of Biblically related scholarship in which a high degree of academic training is important, but I insistently urge that understanding of the kingdom message — the message of salvation with its attendant duties, privileges and hopes — has no necessary relationship to academics. Likewise, one's usefulness and faithfulness in disseminating that kingdom message, though it may sometimes be implemented somewhat by a college education, is not dependent upon it.

In the four corners of this good earth there are hungering souls, pleading for salvation which they cannot receive because they have not heard. "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). Indeed, "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Lk. 10:2). The urgent need today, as always, is for more men who will give themselves and their families wholeheartedly to the task of world evangelism. This includes the regions far and near — the people next door, the next town down the highway, those across the state line and even the millions across the seas. And Jesus said, "Go ..." (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15).

Down Memory's

Lane of Yesteryear

"We want you to preach today." That's what Paul Breuer, an elder, said as soon as I got out of the car and entered the shady lawn surrounding the old Oak Grove meeting house. You could have almost pushed me over with a feather! It was just a few minutes until time to begin the service, and this was my first clue that I was to be used. It was in August, 1934, and it was the day for the beginning of the customary gospel meeting. But the visiting preacher who had arrived on Saturday had been called away by an emergency — an accident that involved his wife. As usual, a very large crowd had already gathered. The grove of oak trees was full of wagons, buggies and cars in which many had come, from far and near, to hear the beloved W. B. Ragsdale again.

Naturally I suggested that an elder preach but he said, "They don't want to hear me." You see, Oak Grove is one of those good rural churches that has never used a full-time preacher. The elders and others handle the services, though they do have preachers come for regular appointments. On previous occasions I had "made the talk" and otherwise helped, but this had to be a full-fledged sermon, or at least we all thought so. Well,

what could I do? Previously I had, as Andy Griffith says in his monologue about the football game, "studied about it" — that is, I had contemplated some preaching, and had made some basic preparation. So that day I did indeed preach my first sermon, basing it upon James 1:27, "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Perhaps it is fortunate that there were no cassette tape recorders in those days. Frankly, I would not want to listen today to my speech made that day more than forty years ago. You see, I had a disadvantage. Oak Grove had had some of the best preachers in meetings, and my uncle, H. H. Diestelkamp was a great preacher who had spent most of his life in that general area. Perhaps the people expected too much of me that day. Anyway, years later some of them admitted to me that at first they thought I would never make a preacher! In fact, I doubt that anyone present that hot August day believed I would "make it," except my young wife. I think she never doubted!

Perhaps Alice had an advantage over most of the others that day. Some years before she had heard me win a place on the debate team in high school, and go on to win in competition with other schools. She and I both knew I could make a speech if I had the material in my mind. I believe she may have been the one person who knew I could get the material for preaching.

Alice had been a Baptist when I began to date her. But she learned more truth and she was immersed again, this time unto the remission of sins and to be just a Christian. From the beginning she had a wonderful grasp of non-denominational religion, and of the great principles of God's kingdom. She also became very devoted to the high ideals of world evangelism and her joy in later years, as she willingly accompanied her husband into far away corners of the earth, was great. To give suitable tribute to the place she filled in my life as a preacher, I am sure it is now wise to place in this volume the exact contents of the November, 1973 issue of *Think On These Things* (a publication produced now, and for some years, by me and my family).

The Preacher's Wife

This issue of *Think* is dedicated to preachers' wives. After all the attention that is given to preachers, surely the wife is due some consideration. Furthermore, there seems to be considerably misunderstanding of the proper role of a preacher's wife, as well as a distortion of facts regarding her treatment and the life she lives. I choose to develop

this subject by using my recently deceased wife as an example, and I shall proceed by supplying the obituary which was read at her funeral:

"Sarah Alice Diestelkamp departed this earthly life at 4:45 a.m., Thursday, September 20, 1973. She was the daughter of the late Fred and Ethel Wright, and was born in Crawford County, Missouri, October 6, 1912. Thus, at her death she was sixty years, eleven months and fourteen days old. Alice, as most of us identified her, was the wife of Leslie Diestelkamp to whom she had been married more than forty-one years, represented for us today by forty-one red roses in a floral arrangement. She is survived by, in addition to her husband, two daughters, Mrs. James A. Hodges of Temple Terrace, Florida, and Mrs. Robert E. Speer of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, and by three sons, Karl of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Al of Avondale, Pennsylvania, and Roy of Chester, Virginia. Eighteen grandchildren also survive and one is deceased. Additionally, she is survived by four sisters, Mrs. Esther Spurgeon, Mrs. Mable Spurgeon, Mrs. Iva Robinson and Mrs. Freda Keller, and three brothers, Jim, Charles and Thomas Wright, all of whom live in or near Springfield, Illinois. Two aunts, one uncle and some other relatives also survive.

"When Alice was a youth she joined the Baptist church. Later she studied more and decided she should be immersed again, unto the remission of sins and to be just a Christian. After a few years of marriage, her husband began to preach the gospel, and thereafter, for more than thirty-five years they have worked as a team in service to Christ and to humanity, living in Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and in Nigeria, West Africa. Accompanying her husband in gospel work has carried her into more than half the states and into twenty-two foreign countries. She was a "keeper at home" and never worked for wages one day after her marriage. Following her husband in gospel work was an experience for her, which many women abhor because of the many moves required, but which she cherished because of the great good that was accomplished in the name of Christ.

"Once when she was asked to comment upon the transient nature of her residences, and regarding other privations that accompanied such work, she said, 'It has been a full life.' Her quiet, serene and godly manner endeared her to thousands. Over six-hundred cards have been received during her ten-month illness, plus 150 to 200 letters and phone calls from across the nation. Her three sons all preach the gospel, as do her two sons-in-law."

Funeral services were conducted at the Johnson Funeral Home in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she resided at the time of her death, with

graveside services at Oak Grove Cemetery near St. James, Missouri. Albert Wanous and Fred McKinney spoke in St. Paul and David Ogunsola and Luther Martin spoke at Oak Grove.

Togetherness

In the autumn of 1927 I enrolled as a sophomore in high school. I was a new student at that school, as was Sarah Alice Wright who sat right behind me in classes. It was a convenient arrangement, for she was an excellent student in certain subjects where I was weak, especially spelling and writing, and my strength was in math and history which were her weaknesses. So we naturally developed quite a friendship through the school year. But it was almost two years later, on June 22, 1929, that I first took her home from a party, and then it was more than three more years before we were married on August 3, 1932.

Those were the days of the Great Depression and when I paid the man for the ceremony, Alice and I together didn't have \$10.00. We began immediately to farm, but times were hard. We sold eggs for six cents per dozen and wheat for thirty-five cents per bushel. Finally, in the spring of 1938 I was approved for a government loan to enable us to go into the dairy business. (Others who did this soon prospered because of World War II and increases in farm prices, etc.). But even after the loan was approved I decided to preach the gospel. Naturally dairy farming and preaching are not very compatible, so I rejected the loan.

At first I preached "by appointments" but in 1941 we moved to the Fort Leonard Wood area to start a congregation there and to work with the many Christian who were being trained there. From that beginning we soon became involved in carrying the gospel to as much of the world as we could reach. It became our practice to go into the new fields and/or very weak ones and build them up and then move on to another. Thus in our forty-one years of married life we lived in twenty-two houses. Only once or twice did we move to a church that was as large as the one we were leaving. We never left a church as small as we found it and we never left one that was in serious trouble, though we did move to several that were divided before we got there and then brought together after we worked with them.

Our furniture was almost always second-hand and somewhat damaged by the moving, but Alice did not complain. She kept a tidy house and never apologized once for the furniture. All kinds of people, from every walk of life and of various financial means visited us frequently and they always seemed happy there. One preacher stayed with us and wrote back describing the home Alice managed as a place of serenity. The family was

large and the house sometimes small and we sometimes had to have a full bed in the living room, but we were a happy family. We had lots of fun together. I believe the children always preferred to be at home rather than any other place. For all these years I have maintained an office in the corner of one bedroom or in some such place in the home, and Alice shared intimately my work there. If I would get a new book we would often read it aloud together. If I wrote something, she usually proof-read it. If I couldn't spell a word, I didn't look in a dictionary (that was too slow), I just called out to her.

We had our share of joy in fruitful gospel work, seeing one work after another in the north prosper and then participating in the great work in Nigeria for three-and-one-half years. When we moved north in 1943 there were only five congregations in four states, with fifteen members each, and one preacher in all of them. Think of the tremendous change since then. When we moved to the western part of Nigeria in 1959, there were no churches of Christ — now there are dozens. But there have been heartaches, too. When we left for Nigeria in 1959, I was welcomed in every congregation in the north — in Wisconsin, Minnesota, northern Illinois, etc. But in two years, when we returned from our first tour of duty overseas, many of the congregations would not allow me to preach. They had formulated an unwritten creed that forbade preaching against church support of human institutions and against the sponsoring church arrangement wherein one eldership oversees part of the work of many churches. Alice knew her husband would not be bound by that creed. But it grieved her greatly to see the division thus wrought. Then, in 1968 and 1969 when division came to Nigeria — six months after we finished our second tour of duty there — she was especially grieved. But she did not become bitter nor did she lose sight of our great objective to help bring the saving gospel to the whole world.

In 1970-72, in twenty-five months I preached in sixty-five gospel meetings in fourteen states and the Bahama Islands. Alice was with me in almost all of them, though in earlier years she did not go with me in meetings, but stayed home caring for the children. In these last years we stayed in dozens of homes and I have said that I felt that her influence often did more good than my preaching.

We moved to St. Paul in the summer of 1972 and were away for five meetings in the fall. Immediately when we returned she showed signs of illness, and on Thanksgiving Day we received the verdict that she had cancer of the descending colon which had already spread to the liver. She suffered in varying degrees the next ten months, while we did everything medical science could do to help her. When she died on this September 20

I could only say that we wanted to see her rest — she had struggled long enough.

Other Witnesses

As stated elsewhere in this issue of *Think*, this is being submitted in memory of my wife and dedicated to the wives of all preachers, hoping it will serve to encourage them in their times of worry and turmoil. I believe the example of my wife, if studied and imitated by many younger ones today would bring them much joy and satisfaction as partners with their husbands in this greatest work on earth, and it might help prevent many discouragements. But some may think, by reading these articles, that this is just the melancholic musings of an old man recently bereft of his companion. So, to help you understand what I am trying to say to such wives, especially the younger ones, I wish now to present the testimony of many witnesses. During her long illness my wife received over 600 cards and scores of letters from across the nation. I shall simply present a few sample comments:

Ray Ferris, gospel preacher of Rockford, Illinois, my cousin in the flesh, who has known Alice almost his whole life, wrote to her, "We think of you very often and never a day passes that we do not ask the Lord's blessings to be with you and your family. You have always been an inspiration to my entire family, and even now in your suffering and pain you are a marvelous, patient Christian."

Jim Smelser, preacher of Bald Knob, Arkansas, wrote to me, "You and your wife have raised some fine children, and they're a credit to the Lord's kingdom. You and your wife have left a mark on the hearts of many, many people. And we're all grateful and richer because of the life you two have lived. We love you and we're thankful that we've been influenced by your wonderful lives."

Jeanne Weaver, wife of Richard Weaver, gospel preacher of Birmingham, Alabama, wrote to Alice, "It was about seventeen years ago that you took us and our four children into your home until the Grand Avenue brethren made provision for us. During that time and as a result of later association with you while we lived in Chicago, we learned to love and appreciate both of you very much. The thing that most impressed me then, and that I remember well even now, was the mutual respect and love you and brother Diestelkamp held one for the other. It was beautiful then and I'm sure it has grown through the years . . . I'm sure you rejoice in having reared such a fine family of children who are faithful to the Lord."

Last May, our older daughter, Wanda, wrote, "I was unable to go pick out a Mother's Day card this year. But I want you to know that thoughts of

you are always treasured. Somehow as you lie so sick with cancer the memories become more precious ... As a mother you have always been my model. Nothing means more to me than the thought that you were content to be a keeper at home and were always there to guide us children in the steps that we should go. That is a hard-to-follow pattern but one very worthwhile. I treasure your life of devotion to God, hospitality to all, patience in well-doing and self-sacrifice. These thoughts of you help make my days a little brighter — that I am blessed with such a wonderful mother."

Leslie Breuer, an old schoolmate of ours, and now an elder of our old home congregation, Oak Grove church, St. James, Missouri, wrote to us, "Please accept this belated note as an expression of concern and sympathy for both of you. We allow ourselves to become frustrated by our inability to help in a better way and neglect to do what we can. We fail to recognize that no greater force or power exists with human beings than love. Sometimes it should be expressed. I am trying to do that now. If I were asked to name the couple that I consider to have been the most successful in life it would be you two. I suppose it is because you figured out a long time ago the things that are really important, and concentrated on them."

Iola Butterfield, widow of the late Paul Butterfield, gospel preacher, wrote, "I may have never told you this, but I have told others many times that you have been my ideal as a really true Christian woman. I have tried to pattern my life in many ways as I saw you live yours. You always seemed calm and 'collected' - probably 'in control of yourself would be a better way to say it."

Mrs. Findley, of Hazelwood church near St. Louis, Missouri, wrote, "Alice, I meant to write so many times and tell you that the scripture about adorning yourself with a meek and quiet spirit has always troubled me because I leaned heavily on outward adornment and others I knew did also. The courage to stop working so hard on the outward woman came after my family met yours."

After Alice's death, messages of sympathy and comfort have come to me in great number. I quote from a few for example: Hazel Broadus, of Downers Grove, Illinois, wrote, "Truly she lived a full rich life as a Christian, and memory of her and her example will never be forgotten by those of us who were privileged to know her."... Esther Clark, of Dixon, Missouri, wrote, "Just to know Alice was to love her. Her influence for good will go on and on, not only here in our own country, but in Nigeria too." . . . Jackie Saunders, of Batavia, Illinois, said, "Sister Diestelkamp

was one of the best women we have ever known and we know she will leave a spot that will never be filled by anyone." . . . Aude McKee, gospel preacher now of Louisville, Kentucky, who followed us in work in Nigeria years ago, wrote, "Alice was a fine woman and probably few people could be more adequately described by proverbs 31 than she. I suspect that there are relatively few couples who can look back on a life as full as yours was."

When she had returned after the funeral service, our older daughter, Wanda Hodges, of Temple Terrace, Florida, wrote, "I am so thankful that I can speak of Mom as does Proverbs 10:7, 'The memory of the righteous is blessed.' And I'm thankful for the Psalm (116:15) which says, 'Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints' . . . I've always been proud to call you my mother and father. I cannot think of any other couple who portrayed a more beautiful married life than the two of you did."

Bill Crews, preacher at Park Forest church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, wrote in his bulletin, "We announce with sorrow (but not the sorrow of this world) the passing of one of God's great women, Alice Diestelkamp. Ravaged by cancer, her body gave up its spirit Thursday the 20th . . . May the memory of her good life assuage the grief of husband, sons and daughters." . . . Barbara Shaver, wife of Dennis Shaver, a young gospel preacher of Florida wrote (Barbara is the daughter of Bob Leigh, an elder the West Side church in Aurora, Illinois, where we lived for four years. She lived just a few houses down the street from us). She said, "She was a truly godly woman. Whenever I read the Proverbs account of a virtuous woman I always thought of her."

In Hebrews 11:4 we read, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain . . . and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Alice Diestelkamp offered to God her body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). She accomplished this by faithful devotion to her husband and her children (Ephesians 5:23; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Proverbs 31:25-28) and by fidelity to Christ and faithfulness in his church. She being dead yet speaketh!

Sharing the Load

There are a few preachers who can do quite well alone. Most of us need someone to share the problems and frustrations. And some preachers' wives cannot cope with such burdens, emotionally, and must be shielded from them. Sometimes this may be cause for the preacher to fail. I shudder to think what might have happened to me if I should not have been able to share my joys and my burdens with Alice. Our work was almost altogether in new and/or hard fields and there were often

disappointments almost too great to accept. But throughout the years I have often said, "If there is peace and security at home, I can face the old devil himself."

In the mid-fifties we moved to the Chicago area, specifically to fight real modernism which was sweeping the churches there. In seventeen years, seventeen gospel preachers either lost their faith entirely, or else they abandoned the church for modernistic denominations. Almost all of them had been men just like myself, except perhaps better educated, academically. Many of them had gone to Chicago for that same purpose—to oppose modernism. Gradually they softened and became infected with it themselves. One time after we had lived there awhile someone inquired of Alice about my work. She said, "I'm just watching for one thing: that he doesn't go soft."

I am fully convinced that the nagging, pouting, complaining attitude of many wives breaks the spiritual back of many preachers, and contributes greatly to their failure and/or to a diminished work on their part. I don't see how any man of conviction and faith could have lived with Alice and have done anything less than the very most and best he could have done. This does not mean that she was very forward in her activity. In fact she was reserved. She seldom taught a class, she almost never suggested a sermon subject, she didn't try to run the church. But she knew the truth and she knew false doctrine. I don't think there is a man in the world that will say she took him aside and corrected him, but there are some men who will admit they sought her out and asked her to help them understand! This was especially true in those days of the hard fights against modernism in Chicagoland and then just after that in the struggles with institutionalism.

A few times I have sat beside Alice in a gospel meeting when it became evident to both of us that I would have to respond to a false doctrine the visiting preacher was teaching. It is a task I loathe, and that I have only had to do a few times, and then only because of deep love for the blood-bought church. And, without saying a word to each other, or even looking at each other, we both knew I had to do it, and my trembling hand was made steadier by her very nearness in heart and spirit.

Alice did not lead a young Missouri farmer named Leslie to become a preacher, nor did she run before him afterward. Likewise, she did not drag behind him as a burden to be borne. But she was always beside him to share the load. She exemplified the principle, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her . . . She will do him good and not evil. . . She openeth her mouth with wisdom ..." (Proverbs 31:11, 12, 26).

Adornment

Surely a preacher's wife should dress herself attractively. I think she should appear before him and others modestly and without vanity or gaudiness, but at the same time in a pleasing, even charming manner. Now everyone that knew her understood that my wife was not the least bit pretentious, nor even stylish. She wore a lot of hand-me-downs (without complaint) and the only expensive garment she ever owned was the beautiful winter coat with the mink collar which she wore these last few years, and which was a gift from Marie Coslett, a devoted sister in Christ. But she was always neat, clean and managed to dress in an attractive manner (see Proverbs 31:22).

But Peter identifies the real adornment for a woman who is a Christian. He says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4). If I understand that passage, it does not forbid the wearing of ornaments, even of gold, nor the stylish arrangement of the hair, nor the wearing of nice garments, but it does declare that those things should not be trusted to accomplish the influence that is important to a Christian.

Alice always wore her hair long, though the pictures you will see in this paper may not show that since they do not show the roll of hair on the back of her head. She never had her hair done by a beauty operator (or by anyone else, I believe) after our marriage. This does not mean she opposed such, or thought it was wrong. In fact she had a sister who is a beauty operator, professionally. But Alice chose, without any suggestion by me at all, to keep her hair long and to arrange it herself. She was not prudish about this, and never tried to suggest the same arrangement to others, even to her daughters.

Usually preachers' wages are very modest and any preacher is in deep trouble if his wife is extravagant with regard to clothing. It is, I believe, very important that preachers' wives realize that the success of the work in which they are partners does not depend upon the fanciness or the style of their clothing. However, I have seen the other extreme. A few women, discontent with too little income, in protest, just "let themselves go." They become shabby, and blame it upon poverty (or at least upon poor support). This is so unnecessary and also so very hurtful. Just as pride and pretention have no place in the lives of preachers and their families, likewise, spitefulness is wrong, and unneatness, untidiness or sloppiness are all unbecoming to Christians as well as damaging to their influence.



Alice at age forty, 1952.

Repeatedly I have said that Alice looked upon the privations of a preacher's wife and family as a labor of love and a work of joy. Perhaps it is best that I let her express her attitude herself. I shall quote from the last letter she ever wrote to me. It was just five weeks before we discovered that she had cancer. I was in a gospel meeting at the time and she was helping care for an invalid uncle of hers in the very same home where she had lived much of the time during the three years of our courtship. When we were separated on such occasions throughout the years, as I went in meetings, we always wrote to each other every day. On that day in October, 1972, she did indeed write what was to be her last letter to me, part of which I quote:

"Wednesday I walked down memory's lane of yesteryears . . . Literally I walked down the lane to Uncle Tom's mailbox. How those memories rushed back. The girl of yesteryear ran to that mailbox . . . Now the "girl" walked down that lane with the same anticipation of the letter she thought would reward her efforts . . . Then I reflected: what happened to this girl of yesteryear? Ah yes, I remember — she left that lane of memories with a handsome, strong, young man and entered another pathway of life. And it broadened into other lanes and highways, seas and skies. And everywhere we left a memory. Perhaps the world would not understand our joys of spreading the word of God, but memories have a way of recompensing, knowing some received the truth who otherwise would not have heard.

"Then what more could one need than God's heritage of children and grandchildren?"

"Some say, 'I wish I were 15 again.' Not me. I would not want to try again. I am satisfied with the full life we have shared together and hope we have a few more happy years together. So now, good-night and happy dreams while we walk the rest of the pathway.

Love, always, your 60 year old girl,
Alice D."

Eleven months later, after much suffering for her and much anguish for those of us who cared for her in our home while we watched her body waste away, she departed from the pathways of this earth. But her departure makes her expressions of joy more meaningful. Those who knew her would not dare suggest that they think she would have wanted to do less! And, significantly, the joys she expressed were the same ones that filled the heart and life of this preacher with whom she had such a significant partnership in service to God and to mankind.

Chapter Three

"Rome Wasn't

Built In A Day . . . But"

Some of the neighbors thought we would starve. I had quit teaching school and began to farm when we were married in August, 1932. Of course it would be a full year before harvest, so it was a serious matter to provide a living then. Almost everyone was hard pressed by the depression, so, for wedding presents, several gave us some chickens from their own flocks. Thus we always had eggs to eat and even an occasional Rhode Island Red hen graced our table. If worst came to worst, we would take a few hens to market and use the few cents in cash they brought to buy flour and sugar. But in addition to my own farming effort, I also worked for other farmers, sometimes chopping all day for fifty to seventy-five cents. Many folks soon went on "relief (welfare) and some would not work. So I soon gained a reputation. If a farmer had a hard job to do, he would call me. By this means we did indeed survive those early times.

My farming was done before the tractor age, and we used horses and mules. I had learned to use them in my work for Uncle Fred Ritterbusch and for Ben McIntosh. My work with mules led me to have a strong

affection for those animals, and those who heard me preach for much of my life are acquainted with my frequent reference to mules in various illustrations. In 1968 our good friend, sister Joyce Bickford, of the Piano, Illinois church, painted an excellent likeness of Alice and me riding a mule-drawn cart, with our suitcase, as though we were using that means to go into all the world!

We lived, during my farming days, in a spare house on the farm of Ben McIntosh, in the northern part of Phelps County, Missouri. I had worked for Ben for three summers between school terms. He had made a great impact upon my life and attitude. Ben had to get things done! I learned from him. When we worked together, I may not have kept up with him, but stayed close enough that he did not complain. The habit of "getting it done now" has stayed with me all of my life. One time, in the mid-fifties, several preachers were working together on a certain project in Chicagoland. I urged greater speed. Bryan Vinson, Jr. said, "Oh, Leslie, Rome wasn't built in a day," to which Gordon Pennock replied, "Yes, but if Leslie had built it, it would have been." That pretty well sums up the philosophy of life that I learned from Ben McIntosh.

In those early days of my life, Ben was a young man with a young family. Later, after my work took me far, far away, he became an elder at Oak Grove, and continues in that work even yet. When I first left that community to preach in new fields, Oak Grove endorsed me and helped me. They have been a pillar of strength and a source of helpfulness ever since. In the last twenty years, when others would support me, sending me afar, I would often call upon Oak Grove to help another preacher. Reports of men who have gone into many fields of the world will show significant help from old Oak Grove church (sometimes it was listed "Cuba, Missouri" and other times, "St. James, Missouri" - it is about equi-distant from the two). Leslie Breuer and Leonard Blackwell now serve with Ben as elders, and the assurance from all three of them, that "if you ever need our help, just let us know" has been a source of encouragement that is too great to express in mere words. And the effect that this small, but strong, church has had is certainly not limited to their influence on me. Besides several gospel preachers who were born near Oak Grove, and whose backgrounds may be traced to that influence, there are many others — elders, deacons and other strong Christians in many congregations, especially throughout Missouri, who came from this old and faithful church.

In December, 1940, I secured a job helping build Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Soon I saw the desperate necessity for the establishment of a

church in that community for the benefit of the many civilian workers, as well as the thousands of young men who would get their basic training there. So, in March, 1941, I started a new congregation near Waynesville. Later we built a meeting house and in March 1942, I started the church in Rolla, Missouri, not too far away. Thus I had become acquainted, by experience, with all the details of getting a work started. So, when many strong men moved to Waynesville, and some to Rolla, I felt unneeded there, and determined to go to more destitute fields. That is when, in June, 1943, I launched myself and my family into the gospel work in America's great "upper-Midwest" (Wisconsin, Minnesota and Chicago-land in northern Illinois).

In the work at Fort Leonard Wood I was supported for two years, or nearly so, by many Missouri churches, each sending directly to me in amounts ranging from \$2 to \$25 per month. The average support for my time there was a total of \$80 per month. But we lived in a modest cottage and fared quite well. We had enough to eat and Alice always managed to have suitable clothing for all the family. I think I still have copies of the reports I sent directly to each supporting church. When we moved to Wisconsin, many of the same churches helped us, and others responded to that need also. Again, each church sent directly to me. In all these years, most of which I have worked with small groups that could not support me, I have never been supported by a sponsoring church arrangement. No church ever received funds from other churches to ultimately send to me for wages.

Why should brethren be divided over this sponsoring church affair? It originated in the fertile minds of men, not in the scriptures. It is a product of human wisdom, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). There is not one valid argument that can be made to sustain the practice of the sponsoring church. Instead, it is obviously an infringement on the absolute autonomy of each congregation. It contravenes the independent action of each flock as directed by 1 Peter 5:2 Its ultimate and climactic example of unauthorized domination by one church is seen in the Herald of Truth arrangement, which is indeed a mighty missionary society, supposedly under the direction of elders of Highland church in Abilene, Texas.

The Bible pattern is clear. By pattern, I mean that which is clearly authorized by precept, approved example or necessary inference. Paul was supported by the church in Philippi (Phil. 1:5; 4:15, 16) and on another occasion, by "other churches" that obviously sent directly to him, not to Antioch. or any other congregation.

In view of the foregoing arguments which I have made for so many years, some brethren say, "Diestelkamp is opposed to cooperation." But it is not so. Most of my life I have been supported by cooperating churches. They not only cooperated with me by sending to my support, but in doing so they definitely cooperated with each other as they acted concurrently in a common cause. Besides this, through the years I have helped secure support for many, many other preachers, both in America and abroad, all of whom were then supported in the same way.

It is true, however, that I oppose cooperation that becomes "combination." That is, I oppose as unscriptural any action that puts part of the work of a plurality of churches under the oversight of one church. It is just like the music question. I do not oppose music in worship; I simply oppose unscriptural music. Likewise, I do not oppose cooperation of churches; I simply oppose unscriptural cooperation.

Significantly, all over the world, there are thousands of congregations that are happy and content to engage themselves to the full extent of their abilities in scriptural cooperation in support of gospel workers everywhere. Let us rejoice and be glad, and at the same time let us press forward without rest until we have done all we can to bring the saving message to all men everywhere. "The field is the world," you know, for Jesus said it in Matt. 13:38, and Christians are the workers. The church is the "pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), and "how can they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15).

The "upper-Midwest" became a very fruitful field of labor. When I moved to Wisconsin there were only five congregations in four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota) that did not use instrumental music. Each church had about fifteen faithful members —with only one preacher in the whole area! We moved to Green Bay, but soon started churches at Madison and at Amberg. The latter actually was a restored church — one that was using the instrument and put it away. Eighteen months later we left Green Bay — without a church there — in order to go to the challenging work at Stevens Point. There were only fourteen faithful members there, but within two-and-one-half years it had grown so well that it was fully self-supporting, and continued to support its own preacher for some time after that, until some mistakes in judgment and other related matters caused it to slip backward.

Division had stalled the Stevens Point church earlier, and for some time before we went there, only D. R. Dean and wife; Jim Cater and wife; Arthur Nieman; the Woods family; the Barges; Dorothy, Emma and John Athorp; and Amanda, Florence and Bill Benedict had remained steadfast.

Others had quit, but soon the Robert Frosts, the Albert Niemans, the Arthur and Everett Deans all returned, and many of their young people were baptized. (In recent years, the Robert Frosts, as well as their son, Garth and his family, along with Irene Nieman and her sons, became the nucleus of the new church at Wisconsin Rapids, assisted from the beginning by my son-in-law, Robert E. Speer, and his family).

While I lived at Stevens Point (1945-1947) gospel work carried me nearly every Sunday afternoon to Granton, Wisconsin, to aid the tiny group there where Frank and Bertha Dubes had kept the faith and maintained a lonely work. I also did considerable work at Oneida, Wisconsin, among the Indians, where James E. White had pioneered a good work, and at Stanley, Wisconsin, where the brethren had joined in with the "Church of the Brethren."

The first preacher to follow me into Wisconsin for gospel work was W. J. Stanley, who was supported in the new Madison, Wisconsin, work by the Columbus Avenue church in Waco, Texas, beginning in 1944 (just a few months after the beginning of the church in Madison). Charles Calvin was one of the original members we found in Madison when we started there in 1943, and I believe he is still faithful there.

From Stevens Point I moved to Milwaukee in 1947. There I was supported by the Polytechnic church in Ft. Worth, Texas. The Milwaukee church consisted of 39 faithful members, meeting beside a tavern, but we began to grow. We bought a building at 35th and Cherry Streets, and continued to prosper until there were 110 members when I left in 1951. Then we moved to Minneapolis to work with 49 members in the only congregation in that city. Three years later there were 95 members in Minneapolis, at which time we moved to Brookfield in Chicagoland.

While we were in Minneapolis, the Herald of Truth was begun by two good friends of mine, James D. Williford and James W. Nichols. Almost immediately my wife pointed out errors in such an arrangement. It took me a few months to discern it. I, like so many others, was so ambitious for the spread of the gospel that it was difficult to consider the matter objectively. However, it was not long until I was using the blackboard to illustrate the unscriptural organizational structure of the program. What a pity that well-meaning brethren have pressured others and have prevailed in maintaining the Herald of Truth, even though it was probably the greatest divisive power in producing present-day division.

The eleven years in Wisconsin and Minnesota (1943-1954) were indeed fruitful ones for the cause of Christ. I am thankful for my humble part in that great period of development there. Much of my work in those early

years consisted, not only of preaching everywhere I could get a hearing, starting churches and strengthening the small ones already there, but also in "promoting" other preachers to "go north, young man." This promotional work was so important, for the field was big, the need was great, and the workers were all too few. Many good men were induced to go there, giving at least a few years to that fertile, yet difficult field.

Shortly after I moved to Chicagoland, Bennie Lee Fudge published the second edition of *The Harvest Field*, and had various men in each part of the country report on their fields. Monroe E. Hawley, who succeeded me in work at Milwaukee, wrote the report of these states. In his report he honored me significantly, perhaps above that which was due me, by saying that my work in those states had probably been the most significant influence in those years. But really it was simply a great opportunity and in God's providence I happened to be the man present at the right time. I certainly had no real preparation for such a responsible work, and my training and ability were far below that of some others. But I am grateful that God was able to use me, that the Word did have "free course" (see 2 Thess. 3:1), and that the kingdom of Christ prospered.

The Diestelkamp name has continued through all these years to have influence in Wisconsin. My oldest son, Karl, who now lives in Kenosha, preached at West Allis in Milwaukee for ten years. He has spent his entire preaching career in Wisconsin, and he is now about eight years older than I was when I entered that state in 1943. Furthermore, my son-in-law, Robert E. Speer (married to my younger daughter, Lavon) now preaches for the church he helped establish in Wisconsin Rapids. Robert has spent much of his preaching career in Wisconsin, except for two years in Nigeria, three in Missouri, and two in Illinois.

Robert and Karl both began preaching when we lived in Minneapolis, and in connection with training classes there. Then they were roommates for two years at Freed-Hardeman College (where they even kept a hive of bees in their room in Paul Gray Hall for several weeks).

So, by the end of this chapter, we have come a long way from that beginning as a husband-wife team in August, 1932, and from that start in gospel preaching in August, 1934. We moved to Chicagoland in September, 1954, and that, in and of itself, begins another epoch in our lives that deserves its own chapter.

Chapter Four

"Anti,

Anti-Anti"

"If you are reading the speech in that book, you just as well put it down — I'm not going to follow it anyway!" That was a remark I made at the opening of my second appearance on the Abilene Christian College Lectureship. It was 1956. Naturally I had submitted a manuscript months earlier, but I had warned J. D. Thomas, lectureship director, that I would have some of my best thoughts after the manuscripts were printed in the book. He agreed I should just preach what was on my heart. I still have a tape recording of the speech, and I actually tried to include all that is in the book and several other points also.

At that time I was living in metropolitan Chicago, and had gone there specifically to fight the modernism that was sweeping the churches there. In 1954 when I moved there, only a handful of churches in that vast population center were unaffected by the inroads of modernism. I had moved to Brookfield where some were filled with modernistic ideals and where premillennialism had some foothold also. The church had stopped growing and had, in fact, fallen on bad times. The elders, Lee Newman, Tom Strane and Everett Champney, realized that they must make a

turn-around. As soon as strong lessons were presented, calling for strict obedience, full acceptance of New Testament authority, etc. there was considerable objection from a few. One deacon and one elder (Champney) soon left for a less conservative congregation, but the church grew by leaps and bounds. I remember one time when there were eight Sundays straight on which there were responses to the invitation, which is quite unusual in the north.

During this time, I did considerable writing, and accepted preaching appointments in more than thirty Chicagoland congregations, while I consistently lashed out at modernism. Others joined in the fight who had previously either remained quiet or who had failed to make themselves heard significantly. Perhaps my strongest ally in those first months there was Clyde Summers, an elder at Blue Island church. Such men as John Gerrard, Bryan Vinson, Jr., Brodie Crouch, Walker Petty, Evard Hamilton and a few others soon became active in the struggle.

In seventeen years, seventeen gospel preachers quit the Lord's church, either to lose faith altogether, or to go to the most modernistic denominations - all from Chicagoland. Many of them had come to that area for the same purpose for which I went - to fight modernism — but instead were overcome by it. But modernism was mostly overcome in the area, at least as much so as in most other cities. Men who advocated modernistic positions were exposed and faithful people rallied in concurrent action that resulted in great growth. In a few years literally dozens of congregations were started and others grew and prospered.

However, we had hardly stifled the spread of modernism when we were confronted with the new struggles made necessary by the great pressure for support of human institutions, the Herald of Truth and the social gospel concept. But by then there were many strong men in the area and a significantly fruitful stand was taken by such men as Avon Malone, Foy Vinson, Paul Earnhart, Norman Fultz, Gordon Pennock, Glen Shaver, Charles Caldwell, Jr., Aubrey Belue, Eural Bingham, Ray Ferris, Billy Boyd, Karl Diestelkamp, George Pennock, Vestal Chaffin, Rudolph Berry and others.

Perhaps the most significant victory for truth was produced by the work of Richard Weaver at Grand Avenue church in the very heart of Chicago, Richard debated Elza Huffard on the limited-benevolence issue and truth was made to shine brilliantly. Grand Avenue church became, in those days, a bulwark among the faithful.

Another major event in the fruitful fight for truth in that northern area was the beginning of *Truth Magazine* in 1956. This resulted from the

friendship of Bryan Vinson, Jr. and myself, and our mutual desire to launch out more significantly to lead more sincere brethren out of the labyrinth of institutional errors. I wanted to start a free paper but Bryan was more visionary than I, and we compromised by going his way. In this venture we were especially encouraged when we were joined by Ray Ferris, Gordon Pennock and Foy Vinson in a close-working partnership. A few others who were not preachers helped in financial ways with much support, especially Rip Littlejohn, Bill Lindoo and Herb Matthews.

Truth Magazine immediately began to have a significant impact on that area, and to some degree, far and wide. In those years I wrote the news for the magazine and many other articles, also. When I went to Africa in 1959, my son Karl began to write the news, and has done so ever since, except for a brief interval in the early sixties.

It is quite easy to take old issues of *Truth Magazine* and trace the division. As long as I wrote the news (until 1959) I included news of the whole brotherhood. No lines were drawn. When I returned from Africa in 1961, no news was being included from those who were involved in sponsoring churches, support of human institutions by churches, etc. The lines were now drawn firmly.

In fact, while I was in Africa, Karl and Ray Ferris both wrote to me and told me that I would not be welcome, they were sure, in many northern churches. This seemed impossible to me, for before leaving I had still been welcome in every church, though there were disagreements among us. Anyway, they were right, and when I returned, many would not even call on me for a prayer.

Some may ask, "Where should the blame be placed?" Some will indeed blame those of us whom they call "Antis." Because we opposed their promotions, some will say we divided the church. Well, there are two responses to that: (1) If we are eating bread and drinking fruit of the vine at the Lord's table and some begin to bring in the practice of also eating ice cream at the table, who divides the church when some oppose it? (2) If a church is engaged in carnal feasting with the Lord's supper — see 1 Cor. 11 — and someone comes in and opposes it, is the consequent division justified? If the opposition actually caused division, was it not for a good cause?

Perhaps no one loves peace and unity more than I, and few preach more to promote such. Yet purity must always come before peace (see Jas. 3:17). The New Testament teaches that there is indeed a time for separation (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15, etc.). So, there would have been no division in Chicagoland, nor in the nation, if a line had not been drawn by those who refused to allow any opposition to their promotions.

Steadfastly I have refused to draw lines on these matters except with regard to perverse people whose attitude forbids association, but I have always been forced to recognize a line others have drawn.

Early in 1954, while I still lived in Minneapolis, I was asked to speak at the Abilene Lectureship on what they called "United States Missions." I was to discuss work in new fields in America. It was probably the best speech I ever made, resulting in a number of good preachers going into destitute fields. Then, two years later, while I was in Chicagoland in the midst of the fight against modernism, I was asked to speak again, this time on "The Results of Modernism." That is the speech I was beginning when I told them to put the book down because I was not going to follow it anyway.

For awhile after that I was nicknamed by some, "Anti, anti-anti." In the speech I lamented that some had become so obsessed with fear of being branded as an "and" that they had become "anti-anti." They were almost opposed to opposing anything. So I said, "I am anti, anti-anti." That is, I am opposed to being against opposing!

My speech was at the "Chapel Hour" and at the very same hour on the previous day Reuel Lemmons, editor of *Firm Foundation*, and a member of the Board of Directors of Abilene Christian College, spoke. He read his speech from the printed book, word-for-word, and as I listened I could hardly believe my ears. So, I checked the book, and found he had indeed read it correctly - exactly as he had written it. He said, "Questions of church government, human agency, congregational autonomy and other such things have grown, through controversy and debate, to occupy such places of prominence in our thinking that these minor matters now control whole segments of the church" (See: *Abilene Christian College Lectures*, 1956, page 356). In my speech I branded his remarks as "the language of modernism" and that naturally stirred up quite a turmoil. J. D. Thomas rebuked me, saying, "You know Reuel Lemmons does not think church government is a minor matter." I said, "I did not say he believes it; I said he said it!" My point was that modernism may have infected some so much that they carelessly drift into statements that actually foster that apostasy.

After nearly three years with Brookfield church, I moved to Berwyn, five miles closer to the heart of Chicagoland. We started Berwyn church in August, 1956, and for eight months I had preached for both churches. Six or seven times I have done this for long periods, preaching for two churches on the same days. The first Sunday at Berwyn there had been 23 people and the second Sunday there were 46. The church continued to

grow rapidly. About two years after I left Brookfield, that church took a definite step that committed them to a much more liberal position, but throughout the years Berwyn has remained steadfast and has been, and still is, a strong, fruitful church that is a bulwark in that area. In those early months of the congregation it wasn't easy. Some wanted to join the march into institutionalism, but we opposed it strongly and such advocates left. Frank Paschall, William Vermillion, Chester Davis, John Lacewell and Bill Caudill were among the first men in Berwyn church. Vermillion soon went to Brookfield, Paschall and Lacewell moved to Tennessee after some years, but Bill Caudill has continued very actively at Berwyn even until now, and perhaps Davis is also there.

In the meantime, changes were taking place in my beloved Wisconsin, just north of Chicagoland. Several churches were taking a more and more liberal stance and became creedalistic in their defense of the Herald of Truth, etc. In the mid-fifties Johnny Ramsey worked some years in Wisconsin. His preaching was true to God's Word and his stand for truth was significant. He sat in my living room in Brookfield once and talked of the impending division he could see coming. He said, "If division comes, I want to be on the conservative side." I tried to point out that it would be better to determine to be on the right side, but he and I were indeed in substantial agreement on such issues then. Perhaps there is still not a wide gap between us, but his influence has been on the more liberal side, not the more conservative, as he had so strongly declared to me.

The churches at Racine and Kenosha have always taken strong stands against inroads and have also been fruitfully active. Ray Ferris worked several years with each of them, and made a great contribution to their stability. Billy Boyd, Gordon Pennock, Paul Earnhart, Robert Speer, Ronald Glass and Albert Wanous have all made great contributions to the strength of churches in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Lawson Winton, a scientist, has been a great factor at Green Bay; Garth Frost, a lumberman, at Ashland and Wisconsin Rapids; Johnny Marlett, a teacher, at Sheboygan Falls; Ernest J. Krumrei, Jr., a teacher, at Milwaukee and West Allis, and Melvin Krumrei, a businessman, at Duluth, have all made a mark in the history of the faithful churches in those states.

Except for Racine, Kenosha, and Summit Avenue in St. Paul, all of these churches are still quite small, and so are some others not mentioned that are faithful (West Bend, Amberg, Antigo and Waupaca in Wisconsin and Rochester (23rd & Gates) in Minnesota). Yet there is cause to rejoice. Compared to 30 years ago, things look real good. Division has wrought its usual havoc, not only in alienations, but in hindering growth. However, faithful people press on, and souls are saved. God is glorified.

One of the bright lights of these years that brings joy to our hearts, and that has abounded to great fruitfulness, was the conversion of Albert and Bernice Wanous in the early fifties. Albert was a successful farmer at Pine City, Minnesota. He was also a Lutheran. And he was stubborn! But truth won a great victory. When he obeyed the gospel, he gave his whole heart and life to God. Later he began to preach the Word in many places, especially in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He has won the high respect of all sincere people; he learned his lesson well and he stands as a mighty soldier of King Jesus. His impact upon the cause of Christ in the northland may finally be as great as that of any. I count the impact of my influence upon Albert Wanous as one of the major accomplishments of my life.

Harley Amick was another one who caused me to rejoice because of opportunities I had to lead him into fruitfulness. As an unfaithful Christian he had been a bartender. When he was restored he was at first casual in his attitude, but after a few months of association with him he became enthused, and studied as I had never seen anyone study. He learned well and he began to preach the gospel, doing so for about twenty years until his death in the early seventies.

Some faithful women have had much to do with the development of the church in the north. Ella Krumrei and Lois Wartick have kept the meeting house doors open at Amberg. Margaret Parks, Patsy Johnson and one other woman, whose name I have forgotten, started the church in Rochester, Minnesota, which now meets at 23rd & Gates. In Racine, Geneva Morrow and Jeanette Yarborough instigated the beginning of the congregation so many years ago. When I moved to Milwaukee in 1947 there were very few men, and none with much maturity or strength. There were several strong women, among them Zeva Selbo, Myrtle Benedict, Arrilla Lindquist and Susan Gourley. These women became a part of the strong nucleus that later came out of 35th and Cherry church and started the West Allis church. The first three are still there and are still a bulwark of fidelity and a strong factor in faithfulness. "Gourley," as we all called her, moved to Arch Street church in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she is highly respected. Before leaving Wisconsin she had probably made as significant a mark on the church in metropolitan Milwaukee as few men will ever make. Another woman, Eunice Morris, was for years a strong influence in the greater Milwaukee area, and did much to help further efforts there.

And now, before we temporarily leave Chicagoland and take a journey across the seas, let us re-trace some steps and look more closely at some aspects of the life in Christ which is so precious to us. Such will be the intent of -the next chapter.

If You Can't Whip Them,

Don't Join Them

When I preached that first sermon, in 1934, if you would have asked me about the Missionary Society, the College-in-the-Budget and the Sponsoring Church, I would hardly have known whether you referred to a man in Utah who had two wives, or to some new program in the Roosevelt Administration to help us get through the depression! Yet I was a reasonably literate young man with average intelligence, and I had been a Christian nine years. The great preachers of those days had been burdened with the necessity to constantly oppose instrumental music in worship, which they had done so well while they also exposed denominational doctrines regarding salvation. However, we hadn't heard of institutionalism at Oak Grove, and I suspect most places were the same.

This may be the very reason some were overwhelmed by inroads of innovation two decades later, and it should be a warning to all of us who preach today. We cannot relax on any issue. If it is not a major problem in the congregation now, it will be if we do not keep brethren informed. Error has a way of creeping in, little-by-little. Today, while we continue to expose errors of the sponsoring church, support of human societies by

churches and the social gospel concept, we must not forget instrumental music and immorality. These two, it seems to me, pose as threats to faith and fidelity, regarding which we need constant vigilance.

My discernment of the "college-in-the-budget" issue came as a result of instruction in truth that I received in the mid-forties while associated with Guy N. Woods and Harvey Childress. That the latter has since completely repudiated the things he taught me, and that the former is now so completely associated with those who have fostered church support of schools, does not alter the validity of the truth they taught me in 1945 and 1946. To me their vacillation on this issue is just as disappointing as is the compromise many now make regarding modesty — it is the "situation ethics" problem — the "if you can't whip them, join them," tactic.

The New Testament describes the Lord's church as a totally spiritual body. Peter said it is "a spiritual house ... to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). Paul said it is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Individual Christians have great responsibilities in every area of human endeavor — regarding action that is social, civic, economic, domestic and religious (see Titus 3:1; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; Rom. 13:1-7, etc.). But, with divine authority the church has responsibility only in spiritual matters. Consequently the church may not Scripturally function in social, civic, economic or domestic activities. Thus we have no authority to use church treasuries to support schools, hospitals, businesses or even families, generally. The exception is that the church may, and indeed should, support families who are destitute and with whom the church (the Christians) have a spiritual relationship. In other words, we do have obligation to support needy saints because they are a part of the spiritual body.

When churches build and maintain secular schools of any kind (kindergarten, primary, secondary, college) they are engaging in unscriptural work. The same is true of church support of hospitals, whether they be in America or in Africa. And such unscriptural work is just as wrong as is unscriptural worship that includes use of instrumental music.

The argument is made that "We have to heal their bodies before we can save their souls, or "You can't preach salvation to starving people." Others say, "We must train their minds so that we may better teach them the gospel." All kinds of hypothetical cases can be given in efforts to justify such activities. But again remember, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men ..." (1 Cor. 1:25). God wants people converted by the gospel, for that is the only way to real conversion. He obviously does not

want them to be won by any worldly physical means. Pure, unadulterated truth will save souls, whether they be hungry, sick or ignorant. More or less than that pure truth may fill church buildings and may win the applause of men, but it will not put names on the Book of Life (Rev. 20:15).

God's people have always, it seems, been tempted to follow the ways of men. In 1966, enroute to Nigeria, my wife and I shared a seating arrangement with a Lutheran missionary who was also returning to Africa for a second tour of duty. He admitted to us that "his church had almost lost sight of the real purpose of "missionary work" and had become bogged down in the almost totally social work of education, benevolence, etc. In Australia I talked at length with a preacher from the "Associated Church of Christ" (comparable to the Christian Church in America) who had spent many years in India. He admits that most of his work and that of his associates was in the administration of schools, hospitals, etc.

If some would say we should do the same to guarantee success in reaching the people, let me remind you that the greatest fruitfulness in gospel work in this century has been in both Nigeria and India, and that it has resulted from gospel preaching, not from social services rendered. Of course some brethren have established some schools and hospitals, but they are not proven factors of success. Those who operate them know very well that the work prospered abundantly without such, independent of such, and even where we opposed such. They also know that the same time, money and energy that was expended for social services would have obviously resulted in salvation for many, many more souls, had it been expended in gospel preaching.

The blight of human societies, and their raids upon church treasuries, sometimes reduces the body of Christ to little more than a money-raising institution. The paradox is that it is conceded the churches have great ability to raise money, appealing to the hearts of sincere people, but it seemingly is considered impossible for the church to spend that money wisely — it must donate it to some human society for spending.

Some profess to be unable to see the difference between the action of a church in paying its due bills and in making a donation to an institution. If the church pays a Catholic hospital for services rendered to a destitute saint, the church has thus done its own work, just as it does when it pays the fuel bill for the meeting house. In contrast, if the church then makes a donation to the hospital, it has not done its work at all, but has simply contributed to the work of the institution, just as it would if it donated funds to the fuel company.

Because of the great social programs conducted by denominations all over the world, people of the world have come to look upon such activities as the real work of the churches, and give little heed to spiritual considerations. When preaching in the streets of Lagos, the capital of Nigeria, we always allowed questions from the large crowds that would hear. Frequently they would ask, "Where are your hospitals?" But it never seemed difficult to explain to them the exclusively spiritual work of Christ's church. It was quite easy to put this spiritual principle in complete contrast to the denominational work to which they were accustomed. It is significant that I have frequently heard E. J. Ebong, D. D. Isong Uyo and others who had been taught by Gene Peden, Howard Horton, Wendell Broom and other such men, answer thus: "Building hospitals and schools is not the work of the church." I hope those who taught them so well, so long ago, are still teaching the same principles to the students who sit at their feet in America today.

Those of us who oppose the use of church funds for various social, civic and business enterprises are sometimes accused of being hard-hearted, unsympathetic and devoid of love for our fellow-man. Of course, if this were true, it would still not make any unscriptural action right. But let me ask: Who is the most sympathetic, the one who goes to the treasurer to get help for a needy person, or the one who digs down into his own pocket and helps? Furthermore, who shows the most love: the one who concentrates on physical benefits to bestow upon people around him, or the one who concentrates on the welfare of souls?

Perhaps it would be wise to include some charts to make this whole matter clearer. Individuals may give to any totally good work:

C		
H	—————>	Home for widows or orphans
R		
I	—————>	Schools
S		(Gal. 6:10
T	—————>	Hospitals
		Tit. 3:1
I		Jas. 1:27
A	—————>	Red Cross
		Eph. 2:10)
N		Etc.
S		

However, the church may only use its funds for spiritual purposes:

C —————> Needy Saints	1 Cor. 16:1
H F Ac.	11:29,30
U U —————> Preacher	Phil. 4:15,16
R N	2 Cor. 11:8
C D —————> Worship & Work	1 Tim. 3:15
H S	Eph. 4:12
	1 Cor. 11:20,14:23

All over the world human bodies are suffering privation, pain, disease and hunger. Christians have the great privilege and the significant duty to help make life here on earth more tolerable for all humanity. But, most importantly, all over the world, souls are hungering for the bread of life — for the soul-saving gospel — and it is the exclusive duty of Christians to respond to those needs for salvation. This they do by personally teaching (Acts 8:4), by personally supporting others who preach (Gal. 6:6) and by giving into the treasury and using those funds for the preaching and teaching of the Word (Phil. 1:4, 5; 4:15, 16; 2 Cor. 11:8; 1 Cor. 9:14).

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The Quarantine

Pinches

Emotions can pack a big punch in any religious discussion, and if some people can't win an argument, they may resort to name-calling and derogatory accusations. So, today, in vain efforts to justify support of human institutions by the churches, some proponents of such, failing to produce scriptural authority, resort to accusing us of "hating orphans," opposing orphan homes, etc. Of course neither is true, and the most terrible thing is that those who make the accusation know it is not true! We all believe in caring for orphans and in providing homes for such. But this is the God-given duty of individuals, not the obligation of the exclusively spiritual body, the church. James, in speaking of a man's religion, showed the duty to the fatherless and widows (Jas. 1:27) and Paul said a man or woman should care for the widows so that the church may not be charged with such (1 Tim. 5:8, 16). Yet certain widows, who are elderly saints, may indeed be cared for by the congregation as a part of spiritual responsibility because of the spiritual relationship that prevails (1 Tim. 5:9, 10).

In the mid-fifties, the "orphan home issue" came to an emotional and practical climax. A quarantine was imposed by those who favored support,

by the churches, of such institutions. No amount of persuasion could avail to prevent division. The appeal to support such societies on an individual basis was ignored and rejected, and the opponents of such church support were branded as "Antis." Indeed, the "quarantine" hit the Diestelkamps in the 1955-56 school year at Freed-Hardeman College. Karl, our oldest son, who was by then married to the former Delores Steen, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and who was in his third and final year at Freed-Hardeman College, was given a scholarship to secure his help with the school paper of which he soon became the editor. After he had received the scholarship for one quarter of school, Karl was enrolled in a Bible class under brother H. A. Dixon, President of the college, in which class they studied the orphan home and cooperation issues. In this way Dixon became aware of Karl's convictions on the orphan home question and he became concerned that the school would lose the scholarship, since it was supplied by people who were strong supporters of such institutions. Dixon did not want the college to lose the scholarship, and naturally Karl did not want to receive it under those conditions, so it was withdrawn. After a family conference by telephone, we secured the money and repaid it to the one who had supplied it. Though he lost the scholarship because of the "quarantine," Karl did continue the remainder of the year as editor of the school paper, and, to his credit I must say that brother Dixon did not seem to hold it against Karl or the rest of the family. More than once he wrote me that, "We still miss the Diestelkamps here" (There had been three of our children there at one time in the 1954-55 school year).

Many mature brethren warned in those years (the mid-fifties) that the "orphan home issue" was merely being used, because of its emotional impact, to establish the practice of support of human institutions by churches in order to finally get such support for the colleges. Fifteen years later they were proved correct on this matter when the colleges, or at least some of them, abandoned the subtle approach of simply accepting donations from churches, and began to openly and aggressively appeal for such funds. It was argued, and correctly, that the orphan home and college stand or fall together as far as church support is concerned. And since so many churches had, by that time, become accustomed to supporting the orphanages, and since the emotional appeal about "the poor little starving orphans" had won their hearts, the next step was not difficult — to support the colleges too, as well as kindergartens, elementary schools and high schools.

To this good day no one has been able to produce a scriptural argument for such support, by the churches, of any human society. It is easy to show that a Christian may indeed give money to such institutions in response to

the broad authority to engage in any and every good work (Titus 3:1; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27). It is equally easy to show that the church is responsible to provide for destitute saints — to care for its own (1 Cor. 16:1; Ac. 11:29, 30; Ac. 4:34, 35). But it is impossible to find New Testament authority for a church giving its funds as a donation to any human society, and when a congregation does such, it usually violates God's law in two ways: (1) By supplying funds for support of those for whom it has no responsibility, and (2) by turning its funds over to a human institution instead of spending those funds in its own work.

Often brethren will argue in favor of unscriptural practices, appealing to our sympathies. I am, by nature, an emotional person, and it is easy to appeal to my sentimental nature regarding unfortunate people. My own early family history is spotted with tragedies. I was born on December 24, 1911 near Royal, Missouri (a post office near St. James that has long since been closed). My father was Henry Diestelkamp, eldest son of "Old Uncle Bill Diestelkamp." My mother, who was Eda (Breuer) Diestelkamp, died of pneumonia when I was only three months old, and I never again lived in my father's house. Tragedy was a common thing there. Two years later my father married Jennie (Thompson) Pruitt, a widow with four sons, who then joined my three sisters and one brother in my father's home. About ten years later both my brother and my step-mother also died of pneumonia. Later my father married Frances Matlock who also preceded him in death, succumbing to cancer.

My brother was named Henry, after our father, and was two years older than I, but it was never my privilege to associate with him much. My second oldest sister, Irene, who married Wright Ridenhour, did not live nearby, and I associated with her very little before her death in the late forties. But my eldest sister, Alma Sorrell and my younger sister, Nora Pruitt, have become very dear to me in these later years as our association grew with the passing of time. Francis Pruitt, Nora's husband, is an elder of the good church in St. James, Missouri. He has served there as an elder many years, along with two cousins of mine, Ward Rinehart and Marshall Sewell. There is a close affinity between old Oak Grove church (14 miles north) and St. James church, because of physical relationships and because of a common bond of faithfulness and fidelity to truth. Luther Martin, gospel preacher of Rolla, Missouri, (and businessman there) has had great influence in both Oak Grove and St. James churches in the last three decades.

During the years my wife and I were in Africa, my sister Nora faithfully wrote to us every two weeks. Indeed she and her husband and my oldest

sister, Alma, have all been real sources of encouragement to us as they share our interest in salvation for souls everywhere.

However, nobody has stood more solidly, behind my wife and me in gospel work than our children. One of the greatest thrills of my life was thus: I was to speak on the Freed-Hardeman College lectureship in 1955. Three of my own children were not only present, but they were students there that year. In my speech I had committed myself to say some things that I knew would bring objections from the faculty and the lectureship audience. I especially attacked the sponsoring church concept represented in the Herald of Truth. Before my speech I was sitting by my older daughter, Wanda, (now Mrs. James A. Hodges). I said to her, "I am nervous!" She said, "I am not!" She knew approximately what I was going to say, she knew the reaction the crowd would have, but she was unafraid! She trusted her God and her daddy! I could not have failed to respond to such confidence.

Twice when my wife and I went overseas for gospel work, our second son, Al, took over our business affairs — caring for our American interests with diligence. Now this last time that I have left America, because of geographical advantages, my younger daughter, Lavon, (now Mrs. Robert E. Speer) is taking care of my U.S. interests, and doing so with excellence.

Al, my son mentioned above, represents to me a vast number of men who have sacrificed much to preach the Word. He was a journeyman printer by vocation, though he had preached considerably for many years. In 1972 he gave up his vocation, taking a very large salary cut, in order to devote full-time to gospel preaching. His first full-time work was with the good church in Avondale, Pennsylvania, and now he is with the Paris Avenue church in Peoria, Illinois. He and Karl, my oldest son, who both have offset printing equipment, cooperate with me and the rest of the family, by printing the free paper, *Think*, which I edit and which is read by people around the world with appreciation.

In recent years — especially the last two decades — so many good men have done as Al did. They have left lucrative secular employment to go into the harvest fields of the world with the gospel. And in most cases they have done excellent work, have been appreciated by faithful brethren and have found satisfaction in the life of genuine service to God and to mankind. Conversely, it has been disheartening to see a number of able, experienced preachers diminish their work in the vineyard of the Lord in order to go back to secular employment or business ventures. Some may have done so with sincere motives and may indeed continue their fruitful work. Many, however, seem to have been wooed by materialism and have greatly reduced their effectiveness in service to Christ.

Most of the time a preacher's wife determines, at least to a great degree, his attitude toward material things. For instance, Al's wife, Connie, (formerly Connie Hennecke, of Chicagoland) had to be, not only a willing partner in the financial sacrifice they made, but she had to be a very real encouragement to him in making such a decision. The preacher's wife and family always bear great influence upon the preacher, and usually either stand between him and his greatest usefulness or else they stand between him and the thrusts of Satan to put him down. Thankfully, those known by me have usually taken the latter course, and most of them do so with gladness and with fidelity. It is especially true that the wife of a preacher becomes a determining factor when one wants to give up secular securities to devote more service to Christ, as well as those who want to launch out into foreign service.

If there were special rewards in heaven, surely some would go to the wives of preachers who go into foreign evangelism. No one knows, who has not been there, the sacrifice those wives make in terms of anxieties, frustrations, loneliness, etc. The preacher may indeed be overwhelmed with the challenges of the field, but the wife must deal with the sternest realities of making a safe and satisfactory home life for her husband and children; and this under circumstances that are not only strange to her, but that are fraught with dangers to her, her husband and her children. In this regard it would be wise and thoughtful if elders would give greater consideration to the needs of such families as they supply their support, so that those wives would at least not be burdened with any financial worries, and so that their work in meeting the needs of the families would not be hindered with a shortage of money. If I were an elder of a church supporting a man overseas (or even in remote areas of our own country) I would be unable to sleep if I thought that wife, out there on the spiritual frontier, was made anxious and her task made more difficult because we supplied too little support.

In this regard, elders need to remember that the sacrificing wives of preachers in the destitute fields of the world, both in America and abroad, would usually rather deprive their families than to ask for more money! Now think about that, seriously. As good stewards of the Lord's money, you are not simply charged with the obligation to prevent misuse of those funds, but you are also responsible for proper allocation of all such money. Surely it would be very wrong to allocate too little and thus risk damage to the life, the health and the total welfare of the wives of preachers — wives who bear such a great load and who largely determine the emotional welfare of the whole family.

Elders can help relieve the great loads such women bear by voluntarily increasing the preacher's support, or in another way by simply sending an occasional "bonus" check for the personal needs of the family. I am thankful for the generosity most elders demonstrate in these regards, but I hope they may grow in their perception of the needs of families who have already made so much sacrifice in leaving the home community for some remote field of labor. If there is some preacher reading this who sneers at my emphasis of the sacrifice the families make in the new and hard fields of America and of other nations, I challenge that preacher to get up out of the fields of ease and of plenty and go far out into the areas of spiritual destitution, and share in that kind of work for at least a few years.

But some will say, "I don't have to go far away to be faithful." My response is, "Somebody does!"

Chapter Seven

"You

Have A Fault"

"I love America; I don't want to go." That is what Roy, who was then ten, said when Alice and I decided to go to Nigeria in 1959. His frank statement made our departure all the more emotionally difficult (We kept an American flag displayed all the time we were there, especially for his benefit), but other heartaches were involved too. Al graduated from high school on Thursday, and the next Monday we left — leaving him 7,000 miles behind. During our entire time in Africa he worked as a printer in downtown Chicago, and lived in the home of Glenna and Marie Coslett and their youngest son, Ron. The Cosletts have been some of the closest and dearest friends we have had, ever since we moved into the Chicago area, where they were, at that time, members of the Brookfield church. In later years they became a part of the Downers Grove church, and at present they live near Mountain Home, Arkansas. Our other children were married and some grandchildren were involved in our memories, but we never looked back!

A strange coincidence cast us into the Nigerian work. Some Chicagoland preachers were eating lunch together (remember, this was

before lines of fellowship had been drawn) and were discussing the "college-in-the-budget" question. Brethren Elza Huffard and Cecil Wright argued that churches were supporting schools overseas, and that they could also be supported in America. The Nigerian work was mentioned in the discussion and this led me to write to Wendell Broom in Nigeria and ask some questions about the support of the Bible School there, as well as to ask if a man could go there and just preach the gospel without attachment to schools, etc. I actually had no intention whatever of going, and was not even considering it. I was simply trying to get information to use in response to the arguments that had been made by brethren Huffard and Wright.

Broom answered to my satisfaction, but he also gave my letter to a co-worker there, Tommy Kelton. Tommy grabbed the ball and ran with it! He assumed I was interested in going there. In re-reading the correspondence, I can see why he believed this, though it was not so. Anyway, he did a good job of promoting me to go. It was not long until I had received assurance of the Thomas Boulevard church in Port Arthur, Texas, that they would support me. Many others gladly furnished travel and work-fund expenses. On June 15, 1959, Alice, Roy and I departed Chicago's LaSalle Street railroad station for New York, and after a few days of preaching in the New York and New Jersey area, we were on the old Queen Elizabeth passenger ship enroute to England.

B. C. Goodpasture and Batsell Baxter were scheduled to preach in a meeting in Alyesbury, England, but because of some unavoidable circumstance, were unable to be there. It was arranged, between the Alyesbury brethren and myself, that I would do the preaching. However, local circumstances prevented this, or at least such were given blame. I did speak there two or three times, as well as a few other places in England (London and Liverpool, at least).

Finally we sailed out of Liverpool, down the African coast, stopping in the Canary Islands, in Sierra Leone, in Ghana and finally arrived in Lagos, the capital of Nigeria. We were met there by Billy Nicks and family, and even the first Sunday we were in Nigeria we had a part in the beginning of the first congregation in the western part of that great land. In a short time we travelled to Ikot Usen, in eastern Nigeria, where we lived for four months. It was, perhaps, the most fruitful time of my life, as we started four churches and baptized 350 people in those four months. Because there were many able native preachers in that area, and a few Americans, I determined to break new ground — to spend my time where I would not be building on another man's foundation (see Rom. 15:20). We moved to Lagos, 500 miles from the many eastern churches, and began to plant the

good seed of the kingdom in the many big cities of that area. We returned to America from Nigeria in 1961. After Roy graduated from high school in 1966, Alice and I returned to Nigeria and Roy went to Florida College. When we finally left Africa in February, 1968, we had spent a total of three and one-half years in Nigeria; had started 17 churches and baptized 1,800 souls. In January and February, 1974, Jim Sasser and I spent six weeks in Nigeria, travelling 4,000 miles and preaching to scores of churches in seven states. Jim knows Nigeria, loves the people and is a great co-worker.

In Nigeria, one preaches and/or teaches morning, noon and night, insofar as he has strength to endure the extreme climate and the rigorous environmental conditions. Even then one always feels that he has been unable to do nearly as much as should have been done. One time I was consulting with a native preacher about the plans for our work and he shocked me by blurting out, "You have a fault; you are indivisible!" Oh, how one wishes he could be two men in that land of gospel opportunity!

Others have indeed started schools there, and even a hospital. They are obviously church-related and are probably supported and sponsored by churches to some extent. We started nothing but churches! Sewell Hall joined me in Lagos, and Bill Hall, Aude Mckee, Paul Earnhart, George Pennock, Jim Sasser, Robert Speer, Jim Gay and Wayne Payne all followed in that work in western Nigeria, and all did great work. All of us conducted training classes, developing men to teach and preach; meeting in our dining rooms, in rented school buildings, in church buildings, etc., but none of us started anything that became a functioning entity, except churches. In proportion to the number of men involved, and the amount of money spent, we believe the work of evangelism, as well as that of training preachers, was just as successful as was that work in the fields where some brethren started and maintained schools, etc.

The true gospel work had been started in Nigeria in about 1947 by two native men who learned the truth by correspondence and then baptized each other and began to preach what they had learned. One of them was C.A.O. Essien, perhaps the most fruitful preacher of the Word since the days of the apostles. Now, after a little more than a quarter century, there are, perhaps, 700 to 800 churches and about 100,000 Christians in that land.

But one of the great side-effects of the Nigerian work has been the benefit received by those who have gone there, and have thus been touched with the emotional impact of such bountiful harvests, and by those churches that have supported men there and have obviously been influenced so greatly by the same impact. A quarter century ago, if a good

man wanted to go overseas to preach the Word, he would need to spend several months touring America, receiving \$25 in one place, \$100 in another, and sometimes nothing but cold expressions that "We haven't converted all our neighbors yet." But today, any good man can get support easily because the American churches have learned from experience, much of it in relation to the work in Nigeria, the great joy of worldwide evangelism. Some who have been critical of such work, overseas, have gone or are now planning to go themselves.

Churches that once looked only to the local community and who carried the gospel hardly beyond the four walls of their own meeting house, now gladly and happily spend thousands of dollars to support preachers around the world. I do not mean Nigeria has caused all of this, for other places have shared also, but no place has had such a great impact upon American brethren as has the fruitful field in Nigeria.

Alice gave her heart to the Nigerian work. Many times when I was preaching in the streets of Lagos and its suburbs, she would mingle with the crowd and some man would draw her aside and ask her the questions that I didn't have time to answer. Sometimes he would not be satisfied with my answers and would ask her to explain to him privately at the edge of the large circle of listeners. At times I was too sick to stand and preach, and would sit on a chair in the streets, preaching. During those hard days, some would come to our room to discuss problems, and Alice would help to make them understand, thus helping me to save my little strength. But she never taught a public class there, wielding her great influence personally, as she did mostly in America also.

From 1965 to 1967 our son-in-law, Robert E. Speer, with his wife (our younger daughter, Lavon) and the five children they then had, lived in Ibadan, Nigeria. When Alice and I went back to Lagos in 1966 we were only 85 miles from the Speers. It is said that Alexander The Great wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Well, I have seen Robert Speer and other strong men weep, not because there were no more fields in Nigeria to reach, but because each of us was only one man to go into those rich harvest fields. Robert, along with my oldest son, Karl, spent six weeks in Nigeria again in late 1974, in a great and fruitful tour of six states, preaching to thousands of people and scores of churches. On one occasion Robert preached to over 1,400 at one time! Indeed, "the field is ripe unto harvest." And, indeed, "the laborers are few."

At this point, please allow me to inject a suggestion to gospel preachers. I know you sometimes get bored, become discouraged and are restless upon your pillow because of a gnawing ache in your heart and a troubled

conscience. Yet so many spend hundreds of dollars, even thousands, sightseeing around the world. I do not mean that such is wrong, and I do not want to diminish the time you spend with your family in vacations which they need with you very badly, but if you want a new lease on living, a new view of God's harvest fields, a new incentive to study more and to preach better, then go to Nigeria for six weeks. You will never be the same again! Now don't laugh this off as the ravings of an old man with an obsession — ask any man who has been there. If you will go, it will be one of the brightest chapters in your whole life, and besides that, and most importantly, it may mean multitudes in heaven at last!

To the above paragraph I need to add some words of caution: Don't go to Nigeria unless you are strong physically, unless you are sure you can be away from your family safely for six weeks, unless you are prepared to stand and preach several times daily, unless you are ready to give Bible answers to any question that may be asked, and unless you are ready to sweat until you are almost dehydrated and work until your body is bone-tired. You must be ready to preach at 5 a.m. and at 9 p.m. and many times in between. You must travel horrible roads, eat unfamiliar food, endure some probable diarrhea, and yet keep a pleasant attitude at all times. You will be one white man among 10,000 black people, and you will need to behave accordingly — as any guest should in a strange land. But you have never been treated better than the Nigerians will treat you, and your work has never been appreciated as it will be there, I guarantee!

Some may now ask, "Why don't you go and live there again?" Well, the Nigerian government will not grant resident visas to any man to go there simply to preach the gospel. Some have gone lately under a subterfuge of being engaged in other work — teaching, etc. — but if one is altogether honest with the Nigerian government he may not be allowed to live there. However, visitors visas are granted for shorter terms.

It is easy for those of us who have been to Nigeria to become oblivious to the rest of the world, though we may not intend to do so. Jesus urged us to remember that "the field is the world" (Matt. 13:38). No, you don't have to go to Nigeria; you can choose your own favorite piece of this good earth. Souls everywhere need salvation, for God is no respecter of persons, and perhaps everywhere there may indeed be some who hunger and thirst after righteousness. You can help them to be filled. That field may be some destitute place in America, or it may be far, far away. Place is of little consequence. People count — as far as God is concerned.

It is easy for each of us to look at the challenge of world evangelism impersonally. We may rejoice in what others do, or in what the congregation does. We may even harbor in our minds that old, tired

statement that others have made, "You don't have to get seasick to be faithful." My answer is always the same, "Somebody does!" I do not apologize for repeating this kind of exhortation more than once in this brief book!

Giant steps have been taken by men and by churches in the last three decades — steps toward the Christ-centered goal of real world evangelism. But we must not relax. We must do a better job everywhere so that we can, with God's help, do a bigger job around the whole world. To that end we must lift up our eyes and see the whole human race, and we must take inventory of our great abilities in regard to manpower, money, facilities, etc. that should enable us to meet the challenge of that vast field of human souls.

Extraordinary

Epitaph

When I moved to Lagos, the capital of Nigeria, in December, 1959, after four fruitful months in the eastern region 500 miles away, Raphael Williams, a native of the east, was already living in the big city. He had not started a church there until we arrived earlier (in July) but he became a very effective and cooperative worker with me in those first months of city work. I have never known a man with greater ability to find a certain verse in the Bible quickly. I am sorry to report that in later years he abandoned his family, went to America for schooling, and as far as I know became completely unfaithful in life and work.

When I announced plans to take the gospel to the big cities of western Nigeria, the Americans in the field (Glen Martin, Wendell Broom, Billy Nicks and Reese Bryant) all commended the work, but warned that it would be much more difficult in the city than it was in the "bush." They were correct. In the city we had to deal with a completely different language, we had the extreme problem of immorality, and a mixture of poverty and materialism added to the difficulties. But from the very beginning the work prospered so very well and there were even some

advantages — more people could understand English, for instance. Furthermore, in the city we could reach people from every part of the nation, and they in turn would, when converted, become a means of taking the gospel to many other sections of the country.

Of course I was fully aware that I could not meet the challenge of those big cities alone, so I determined to help some good native preachers from the east to move to the cities and assist in that work. I asked Wendell Broom to recommend eastern preachers for the city work. He gave the names of four: E. Ekanem, D. D. Isong Uyo, E. J. Ebong and Solomon Etuk. All agreed to go to the city work, and all became significant workers with me in planting the church in all the west and mid-west of Nigeria. They were four of the best men one could have had and it has never been my privilege to work with four men anywhere who surpassed them for quality of character, for competence in the work and for devotion to God and to truth. Only eternity will tell the full story of their great and sacrificial work.

Of the four mentioned above, Ekanem died in 1973, leaving a void felt by thousands of Nigerian Christians. Etuk and Ebong have moved back to the eastern part of the country, and there carry on a great work in their own language groups, but not until they had given many years to the work in the cities and to the people of another tribe. Isong Uyo is still in metropolitan Lagos and is without a peer with regard to service rendered to the cause of the Lord, to devotion in life and fruitfulness in work.

Our greatest challenge in the west was to convert and then train some capable men of that tribe — the Yoruba tribe — to carry the work most effectively. In the early years of that big-city work, before the end of my first tour of duty there, such men as Samuel Odewumi, George Oginni and E. O. Abimbola became pillars of strength and zealous workers in the various parts of the west. In later years the number of Yoruba men became so many that I must not attempt to name them. At the same time, in the midwestern part of the country, and in different tribal language groups there, such men as Henry Keremu, David Kerume, Johnson Bakpar, Vincent Oritsejolone and John Onasha became significant workers.

It must not be assumed that such a fruitful work as that in all of Nigeria is without grave problems. In fact, the more fruitful the work, perhaps the more significant the problems. One of the hardest problems, especially among the older ones, is polygamy. It is easy to declare that one man should have one wife and that one wife should have one husband. When this is completely true, then there can be no polygamy, for no polygamist's wife can truly say each has her very own husband — he must

be shared. But consider this: A girl of 14 or 15 is told by her father that she must become the wife of a man who already has two or three wives. This girl has no real choice in the matter. The polygamist has paid the dowry and by Nigerian law and custom she is his. Later this girl learns the truth and wants to be a Christian. What would you tell her? Or, later the man obeys the gospel and puts away all his wives except the first one. Thus this girl is released. Now what does she do?

Perhaps the greatest problem in Nigerian churches is with regard to giving. Many converts have been members of some denomination and have been taught to give a coin at every service. Then when they obey the gospel and find the church only collecting money once a week, they give the same — one coin. It is hard to break life-long habits, and getting them to give liberally is a very real problem, especially when one surveys the extensive poverty that prevails. Finally, even when the money has been given, it is difficult to get the churches to spend it in support of their preacher, though they may more easily be induced to send it to another man in a distant place.

These last two problems, of course, prevail everywhere. If all of God's people in America, for instance, would give with the same degree of generosity as some already do, there would be money in the church treasuries to send men to every nation under heaven and to every tribe and every nationality. In view of our own prosperity, and in view of the abundantly luxurious life we live, most American Christians have not begun to give as they are prospered.

Furthermore, American churches still often concern themselves mostly with building payments, new carpets, finer pews, etc., instead of keeping the emphasis upon truly spiritual matters. This fault must be charged, principally, to the preachers. If the preachers will teach and preach, week after week, the significance of the spiritual mission of the church (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), the brethren will respond with zeal. When I first moved to work with the West Side church in Aurora, Illinois, in 1962, every month in the business meeting someone would suggest some maintenance, repair or improvement of the building that would use up every spare dollar in the treasury. Well, I did not fight it in business meetings, but I preached on it, again and again. Soon, without any coaching by me, other men would insist that we spend money for spiritual things. The whole attitude was reversed and soon that church was supporting a number of men, wholly or partially. This does not mean that the change was made because of my superior work, but because these brethren, like most brethren everywhere, were responsive to teaching of truth. Generally, you can say that if a church is not involved in world evangelism, it is mostly because they have not been taught to be.

Bob Leigh and Charles Owen, elders at West Side in Aurora, responded to teaching and encouragement, by leading that church into a very active program of scriptural work. Others will do the same if the preachers will remember that "the field is the world," and keep that high ideal constantly before the people.

When I went to Africa the first time, I was supported by the Thomas Boulevard church in Port Arthur, Texas. They consisted of about 250 souls with a very heavy load, financially (their building payments were \$1,000 per month, and they were supporting me and some others, I think). But after I had been in Africa a few months, I received word that the Thomas Boulevard church had divided. About 100 strong members had left. But I didn't lose a moment of sleep over that, as far as my support was concerned. In fact, in spite of the very heavy load, I received word from both groups with offers to support me. In later years the new group, now known as Imhoff Avenue church, has become, perhaps, the most zealous church with which I am acquainted. I don't know any other church that spends as much money per member in world evangelism as Imhoff Avenue does. Bill Cavender, their preacher, has contributed much with his teaching, and the elders have led the church in dynamic dedication to spiritual service to the people of all nations. In this work, throughout the history of that church from its very beginning, those elders have been led and inspired by the life and devotion of J. A. Bruton. Until he recently departed this life, he was wholly devoted to truth, to righteousness and to the spreading of the gospel by every scriptural means.

There are many, many congregations that have learned the joy of sharing the glorious gospel with the whole world. It would be unwise for me to try to name all those I know, lest I forget some, but large ones and small ones participate generously. I know churches that never have a full-time preacher, yet they help send one to a far away place. I know congregations that have poor buildings of their own, but they send gospel preachers around the world. I have known churches that were so determined to help send the gospel to the world that they didn't even buy pews for their meeting house, but sat on folding chairs for years to enable them to do more elsewhere.

Nigeria has not been the only beneficiary of the enlightenment that has permeated the brotherhood. Besides going into the many destitute fields of our own country, many good men have gone into so many fields of the six inhabited continents — to Norway, England, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, India, the Philippines, Mexico, South America, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia and other places throughout the world. But there are vast regions of untouched territory and we must press forward with

zeal and wisdom in search of sincere hearers of the pure Word. We must not relax our efforts until we have preached the pure gospel to as many souls as we can possibly reach with scriptural means.

Instead of an ordinary epitaph on the double monument at my wife's grave in Oak Grove cemetery, 14 miles north of St. James, Missouri, where, hopefully, my body will lie beside hers some day, there is inscribed across the back of the stone the words "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." Our children thought those words would be best suited to memorialize the life-long ideals of both their mother and father. This book is being written for the same purposes — to project into the future some influence for those ambitions we had and those ideals we held — ambitions and ideals that included peace among brethren; purity of life, doctrine and practice by all of God's people, and zeal for souls around the world.

Tide and Time

Wait for No One

If you will drop a pebble into a pool of quiet water, the ripples will spread out in ever widening circles. Likewise, when the gospel is preached, believed and obeyed, its influence and power will reach out into other communities in ever widening circles, bringing others to Christ also. For instance, Samuel Otobo was converted in Ajegunle, Lagos, in 1960. Soon, through letters he wrote, his brother Johnson, who lived 400 miles away, was also converted. Johnson studied and began to preach truth. He led many to salvation and started several churches. When he died unexpectedly, Otobo went back to that village and continued the work. He is still there doing great work, and out of that has come, not only several good churches, but other gospel preachers.

Abraham Udeme, Benjamin Chimeziri, John Obijuri and Samuel Daramola are other men, just to name a few examples, who learned the truth in the Lagos area and went out into the interior of Nigeria bringing the pure gospel and the true church to their communities.

I could take you to one certain spot on an inlet of the Gulf of Guinea where I am sure I have seen 300 people baptized. This was in metropolitan

Lagos, the capital, but the influence of such work has permeated the whole southern half of Nigeria. Just as the mighty tides of the ocean come twice a day and no power can prevent them, so the gospel moves sinners to obedience and no power of men can prevent it. After all the modern systems of "reaching the people" have been surveyed, as for me, I still have utmost confidence in the power of the preached gospel, if we can get honest hearts to hear the message.

Before I went to Africa I had barely seen the ocean and was completely unacquainted with tides, but I found them a fascinating study. Sometimes we would go to baptize and we had to wade far out into the ocean to find deep enough water. At other times, at the very same spot, we would only go two or three yards before the water was plenty deep. I learned that I could read the paper and see the time of high tide and low tide, predicted and invariably fulfilled. How can this be? It became another refutation of evolution and of unbelief to me, for it is so absolute in occurrence and yet so unpredictable by a casual observer.

The tide is as certain to come in and go out as is the sun to rise and to set, yet the timing varies from week to week and month to month in a completely unpredictable fashion unless one is guided by scientific calculations. Well, the Bible says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). To an unbiased person, the tides, like so many of the works of God which we call the works of nature, defy explanation except to admit that they are the work of an all-wise and all-powerful God. Let us not be deceived by the theories of theistic evolution today, which simply dresses old-fashioned evolution in a religious garb and denies that God did more than create the head of a pin upon which all the angels sat and out of which evolved the earth, the heavenly bodies, and everything else.

No amount of evolutionary concepts can adequately explain even the human body. Kirtley S. Mather, in *Science in Search of God*, said that sensitive protoplasm rolled about over the earth for thousands of years but could not see, because there were no eyes. Finally, because the sun beat upon that protoplasm so long, eyes evolved to utilize the light. He says our ears developed in the same way, to utilize the noise of pealing thunder and falling trees. Of course, he does not explain why one eye is not under my arm and one ear is not situated on the tip of my finger. Nor does he explain what caused the thunder to sound and the tree to grow.

Indeed, when someone said, "Time and tide wait for no one," he was stating a principle of divine law. All the things over which God retained control are completely uncontrollable by man. God created; God set in

order; God still rules. If you want a first class demonstration of that principle, go to the oceanside and study the tides as I have done many times on the five continents to which gospel work has taken me. If you don't have a clock or watch along, and if the sun isn't shining then look in the newspaper; see the time for high tide; mark its high point in the shore and you can be assured of the correct time!

Just as God's order for the sun, the moon, the tides, etc., are unchangeable by man, so also is God's law of morality. We need to learn the lesson of the laws of nature well, for they should impress upon us the laws of morality also. Just as man cannot alter for one moment the coming and going of the ocean tides, so man cannot change in any way the will of God on moral matters.

We can indeed change our clocks, utilizing "daylight saving time," but when we have done so, it has not changed the rising or the setting of the sun. Likewise, men and women can change their views about marriage, divorce, nudity, modesty, etc., but when we have thus changed, we have not altered the will of the Lord the least bit.

Today it is distressing to see Christians abandon the real principles of morality. In America, the "situation ethics" theory would have us believe something that is wrong in one place and under some circumstances, may be right in another place and under different conditions. In Nigeria some speak of "our African culture," and they may like a religion that adapts well to polygamy, etc. In Australia we find some brethren seem to think we are trying to "Americanize" them if we speak much on moral issues —as though there might be a difference in Australia and in America as to what is moral and what is immoral.

Not too long ago one American preacher defended mild profanity in the case of one who was vexed with the task of driving a stubborn mule. In Australia one Christian emphatically defended her right to break the speed limit if it were too slow to suit her. Also in Australia one Christian insisted that we could not say a girl was immodestly dressed if she appeared on the street in a bikini, until I asked if his wife could do it, and then he quickly insisted it would be wrong for her to do it.

In these days when God's people are divided on great doctrinal issues, and when gospel preachers are struggling to preserve purity in matters of church government, practice, etc., it may be easy for us to become neglectful of doctrines of morality. Many times brethren who will uphold us in defense of truth on those divisive issues, may themselves be lax in moral matters. Those who preach may be tempted to avoid a confrontation with the very ones on whom we depend for backing on "the issues."

We must remember that regardless of how true the church may be in organization, in worship and in work, it is not pleasing to God if the people are not morally clean. So regardless of the strength of the church, no preacher wastes his time when he preaches the truth on moral matters. At no time in the history of the human race has God ever smiled upon immorality and even in this day of grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:17), God hates sin just as badly as he ever did. Throughout history, God has always blessed nations that were moral and, conversely, has always withheld blessings from the immoral. Extremely stern warnings were given to churches that tolerated immorality (see 1 Cor. 5 and Rev. 2 and 3). Furthermore, this is an individual matter, and many of the things that are listed as "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21) are matters of immorality. Against such the curse of God is pronounced, so much so that "they shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Let us remember that we have gained nothing for the cause of Christ, nor have we gained souls for heaven, if we convert people from denominationalism but don't convert them from immorality. And it has been my experience that it is usually easier to convert people away from unscriptural music in worship or from unscriptural organization of the congregation, than it is to convert them away from unscriptural divorce, ungodly immodesty or blasphemous profanity.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest evils among God's people today is the use of impure speech. Not only do some, defile their lips with ugly, filthy language, but some are careless in the use of the Lord's name, especially in using euphemisms. Such language is frequently excused because "everybody is saying it," or because "I hear it so much at work that I just picked it up." I have known some people 40 years whom I never heard say one bad word, yet they live in this same world and deal with the same kind of people. It is not at all necessary to "pick up" the language of the world. If you begin to admire filthy speech, if you can be amused by it, if you can smile when it is used, then there is danger you may soon use it yourself. But as long as profanity and vulgarity are repulsive to you, as long as you hate it and object to it, then you will not be overwhelmed with such yourself.

Guard your mind and your heart, and your lips will not be defiled. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34), and "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). In Old Testament days God ordered the immediate death of those who cursed, and though he does not punish sin by immediate death today, those who transgress would be getting by easy if they could just be killed for punishment and that was the end of it. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body,

according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Indeed, God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ (Ac. 17:31).

Each time we have gone to Africa, and then as we have seen conditions in Europe, Asia, Australia and back in America, we are reminded that "one event happeneth to them all" (Eccl. 2:14). Sin prevails in evil hearts everywhere, but truth overcomes in any honest heart and righteousness shines brilliantly in any godly life. There is not one gospel for America and another for Africa or Australia, but there is one and only one gospel for all humanity everywhere. Oh, if we could just get God's people everywhere to "shine as lights in the world." But to do this we must each "be blameless and harmless . . . without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation ..." (Phil. 2:15).

In a similar sense, false doctrines are found on all of the continents, and no place has a monopoly on the difficulties of getting the gospel message across to the people. Sometimes when one goes to a new place, brethren will tell him immediately "This is a hard place. The denominations are strong here. It is hard to get anyone to hear the Word here." Usually it seems these brethren honestly believe their community is worse than others. My conclusion is that one event happeneth to them all. My late wife used to say, "If you've seen one, you've seen them all."

Even in Nigeria, where the fruitfulness was so great, it must not be supposed that it was because there was little opposition. In fact, every denomination is there that we have in America, I suppose, and many that Americans never heard of. They are not all docile. They don't lie down and play dead. Some of them challenge gospel preachers in the street meetings and in every public place. Many Nigerians have engaged in debates with every kind of false teacher. I debated a Moslem prophet four nights in the streets of Lagos in 1960, with up to 600 people in attendance. The first three nights my wife, Roy and I were the only white people present, but we were not at all fearful, though both debaters spoke very plainly about the issues of debate. Paul Earnhart debated a "God's Kingdom Society" preacher in the Mid-Western State, and perhaps other Americans had such discussions in Nigeria.

Truth prospers in the face of opposition. The blacksmith's arm was strong because the iron was hard, and Christians grow strong when they must fight for their faith and when they must resist opposition. The weakest churches in the world are usually those in communities where there is little opposition and where the Lord's church has become so popular that the people think of it as just another denomination.

If you have heard the story of the Nigerian work, do not be misled to believe that you can go there and have easy sailing and little opposition to your preaching. In fact, you must go fully prepared to have your preaching publicly challenged every night. Somebody may shout, "It's a lie." Or he may say, "It is not so in my Bible," but that is when you can make the gospel light shine more brilliantly simply by showing that it is not a lie and that it is indeed in his Bible. When you do, the whole crowd will murmur agreement, and then you had better be ready "to go to the water," for some will believe and repent and will want to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to growth in America and Australia, as well as many other places, is lack of conviction on the part of those who now follow false doctrines. If we could get many stirred up to fight what we preach, some would then be able to see truth and obey it.

When Alice and I returned to America in 1968, we began work with the little church in Rochelle, Illinois, where Joe Thiele, a school administrator, has been a great source of strength for so long. While there, Roy lived at home and finished his work at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. During the two years we were at Rochelle, I helped start the new congregation on Rockford's south side, now known as Ogilby Road church. From the beginning, Bert Riffle and Jerry Parsons were devoted men in that church and Bob Proctor helped a great deal until he moved away in the early Seventies. Ray Ferris now works regularly with the Ogilby Road church and they are engaged in constructive and good work.

This brings us to another distinct and significant period in our lives, as we began an itinerant work that lasted two years. It took us all over the eastern half of the United States providing an association for Alice and me, and an opportunity for service in so many small and large churches. That work deserves a new chapter to contain some descriptions of events and conditions we encountered. When it was time to leave one place and go to another, I would often tease Alice by saying, "Hurry up, let's get this show on the road," and that is what we will do in chapter ten.

Flat-Landers and Mountaineers

Sewell Hall and his family, along with a group of Nigerians, stood on the dock at Lagos and waved to us as our ship left the harbor there in June, 1961. It had been a bright chapter in our lives — two years of fruitful work, mostly in completely new territory. Roy had "grown another foot" while we were there, and was now taller than his mother. Two years earlier, as we traveled to Nigeria on a British ship, we occupied a three-berth cabin and they provided us with three towels. So that we would know which towel was our own, Alice had arranged them on the rack telling Roy and me that "the one on the left is Big Bear's (that was me), the one in the middle is Middle Bear's (that was Alice) and the one on the right is Little Bear's (that was Roy). But while we were in Africa, this had to be changed, for Roy became Middle Bear and Alice was then designated as Little Bear.

Sewell Hall and family had come to Lagos in 1960 to help in that work and to be ready to carry on when we left. They stayed in our home seven weeks while they searched for a house. It was a very great association we all had and a great work we then did together. A few days after we

departed, Aude McKee and his family sailed into Lagos to replace us, and he also did a fruitful work there. Then, in following years, Paul Earnhart, George Pennock, Jim Sasser, Robert Speer, Jim Gay and Wayne Payne all gave some years to that fruitful work.

When we had departed from New York in 1959, we had been given a good "send-off" by our old friends, Richard Donley and wife, who were then located in White Plains, New York, and by the Jim Finney family from Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Upon our return in 1961, the Donleys had left that area, but the Finneys met us and gave us a very hearty welcome, as they have done through the years to any brethren traveling in and out of New York. Soon we were on the train and were met in Chicago by all the children and grandchildren, some of whom we had never seen.

Almost immediately I plunged into a schedule of gospel meetings that lasted fourteen months, taking me into many states east of the Rocky Mountains. In that work my support was supplemented by the Boston Street church in Aurora, Colorado, where Harry Pickup, Jr. was then preaching. The work was good and very interesting to me, but it was not altogether a happy work because I was gone from home too much, so in the autumn of 1962 we moved to Aurora, Illinois, and I began work with the West Side church there. It was the only time in my life that I worked for a long period of time with a church that did not really need me. My conscience bothered me all the while I was there, and I frequently told them so. I said, "Any boy could do this work." Charles Owen and Bob Leigh were elders, the church was at peace and I felt that my long experience was wasted.

In 1966, Roy graduated from high school in Aurora, and that fall when he enrolled in Florida College, Alice and I returned to Nigeria, this time going by air. Though I hate flying, we felt we could not afford to waste all the time it takes to sail. Less than twenty-four hours after we left New York, I was preaching in metropolitan Lagos.

We had planned two years there, again, but by February 15, 1968, Alice had become so ill that we had to return prematurely to America. We had witnessed the beginning of the Nigerian Civil War and it had come very near to our house. For their safety and peace of mind, the wife and children of E. J. Ebong, native Lagos preacher, had lived five weeks in our home, during which time we learned to love them even more dearly than before. I remember well the days when John Obijuri and Benjamin Chemeziri came to our home and told us goodbye as they left the city to go back to their home tribe-land because of the war. In a very real way all of

that tragedy has turned out for good, as these men and many, many more who learned the truth in Lagos, now preach that truth in the far-flung corners of the country.

When we returned to America in 1968, we settled at Rochelle, Illinois, but in 1970 the Downers Grove, Illinois, church offered to underwrite my work, financially, if I would take up an itinerate work. They wanted me to go especially to many small congregations for short periods, in meetings and other such work. So we put our furniture in storage for the third time, and in the next 25 months, I preached in 65 meetings in 16 states in the eastern half of the United States. We would usually end a meeting on Friday night and start another one several hundred miles away on Sunday. Alice helped with the driving. We usually lived with the people and everywhere we made friends and found opportunity to help struggling groups to grow and to reach more maturity in Christ. Frequently I felt that the influence Alice had upon the women, and through them upon the whole church, was greater than the influence of my preaching. In her own quiet, unassuming way she influenced even those whom we had never known at all before.

From North Dakota to Florida and from Texas to Pennsylvania we criss-crossed the nation again and again, trying always to arrange the schedule so as to save as much time and distance as possible. By some coincidence, we spent more time in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky than in any one other area. But we also spent six weeks in the Bahama Islands, in 1971, working with the little church at Marsh Harbour.

There were many amusing incidents that occurred in our travels. For instance, one time, in Livingston, Kentucky, we stopped to mail a letter at the Post Office. Alice dropped it into the box and then, as many of us do, she looked to see when it would be picked up. The schedule was not arranged in the usual way and after studying it a minute, she said, loudly so I could hear, "Only a mountaineer could understand this." Just then a big, rugged mountain man came out of a nearby doorway, smiling broadly at her remark. Was she ever embarrassed! Ever afterward, if something was perplexing, we would say, "Only a mountaineer could understand it."

One time we were driving on the Interstate Highway that winds its way so majestically down the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. We stopped at one of those state operated rest stations, and while Alice sat on a bench resting, I went inside. The building is semi-colonial, with pillars out in front, and as I approached from an angle, between the pillars I could see the word "MEN." Without looking further I went inside, but it was an

unusual place to me. I entered a booth but soon heard strange sounds —the voices of women. Quickly I made my exit and saw that I had been able to see only part of the sign over the door — it was really "WOMEN," not just "MEN." I was, of course, thoroughly embarrassed, but after I told Alice, we sat there and watched. Sure enough, soon a lady approached, saw the same sign I did, and automatically turned and went into the other door — without looking at the sign over it. Quickly she rushed out, though, obviously just as embarrassed as I had been. I wonder how many people make the same mistake every day at that place.

Then one time we were staying in the lovely and hospitable home of the T. B. Smithermans in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The first night we went to our bedroom and both sat on the edge of the bed at the same time to begin undressing. Bang! Down went the bed! Naturally we were embarrassed while brother Smitherman came with some bricks or blocks to build up a foundation for the broken bed railing!

Obviously we had to find our way into many strange places via highways, country roads and mountain trails, but I have always seemed to have an instinct for the right road. Yet, sometimes we did get lost. On one occasion before we found the right road out of Indianapolis, Indiana, we passed three times by a church building that had Jimmy Tuten's name listed as the preacher. Sometimes I teased Alice by saying, "We are lost." She had a standard reply (in fact that is why I would say it — just to get her to respond in this way). She would always say, "Well, I would rather be lost with you than with anyone else anyway!" I liked that! And it had a double meaning: she had confidence I would get us out of it, and at the same time she just liked to be lost with me!

Alice had spent much of her youth in Illinois, and always preferred the more level country. One time she was driving as we were traveling west on Interstate 70 in eastern Ohio. When we left the hilly country and came into the prairies, she said, "Now this is my country - I am a flatlander." Earlier in life, when we first left Missouri to "go north," Alice had said, "I will go with you anywhere you go to preach the gospel as long as I don't have to cross the waters (ocean)." She thought she would surely die of sea-sickness. But later she did indeed cross the ocean four times — twice by ship and twice by plane, and was sick very little. In contrast, when we left the Bahamas in 1971 we came out by mail boat and it was too small and the ocean too rough. Both of us became so very seasick. We understood the old saying that one is not so sick he thinks he will die, but he is so sick he is afraid he won't die!

After 25 months of traveling together, we decided to settle in St. Paul, Minnesota, and work with the Summit Avenue church there. We had lived

across the river in Minneapolis at the time of the very beginning of the St. Paul church, in 1951, and had followed with interest the outstanding work of both Billy Boyd and Paul Earnhart with the Summitt Avenue church. Little did we suspect that within six months we would find that Alice had a cancer, already in its late stages, and that our work there was thus to be made such an unhappy one. Needless to say, after her departure, I was frustrated there and welcomed the invitation to go to Australia in mid-1974.

While we were in St. Paul, Bob Speer and Fred McKinney and their families pulled out of the old Central church in Minneapolis and started a new work in downtown Minneapolis. For so long they had patiently worked with Central church, trying to stem the tide of error and to correct unscriptural action. Finally, they found no other way than to start afresh.

Years earlier (in 1962) I had been fired in the midst of a gospel meeting with Central. Bob Speer was out of the city on an emergency, and three other men succeeded in firing me, claiming to me that it was the decision of the whole church. One of the three was the local preacher, named Paul Woods, and one month later he was also dismissed. I have never felt any resentment over the matter, and still hold no ill will toward any of them, but I am glad there is now a church in Minneapolis that stands solidly with Summit Avenue in St. Paul to hold up the banner of truth in the great Twin-Cities metropolitan area.

The sermon I had preached at Central that caused me to be dismissed was on the subject, "The Glorious Church" based on Eph. 5:27. The local preacher said he agreed with almost all of it - except five minutes of it in which I used the blackboard to illustrate the unscripturalness of the sponsoring church and church support of human institutions.

The Twin-Cities of Minnesota are quite precious in my memory for quite personal reasons. It was from Minneapolis that two of my "in laws" came — Robert E. Speer, married to my younger daughter, Lavon, and Delores Steen, who married my oldest son, Karl. Robert was a high school youth, beginning to preach, when we first moved there in 1951, but Delores was a neighbor girl who was very active in the Presbyterian church nearby, and who was not quickly converted — not for a couple years after she first began to study with us. Both of them have fitted wholeheartedly into the sacrificial service that characterizes the work of this whole family, and both have shared significantly in gospel work in that great northland which has been the target of much work by this family for so very long.

As I write this chapter in March, 1975, my work in Australia is only six months old, so there is not much I should write about it yet. Suffice it to

say that it is the most difficult work I have ever tried as Roy and I travel, usually separately, from place to place, working with the small groups that are scattered over such a vast area and that are so much in need of teaching and encouragement. In an area as large as the 48 contiguous states in America, there are only about 20 or 25 congregations that will use us and they are all very small. Australians in general are not very religious and the progress is very slow indeed in most places here.

The 77th Street church in Birmingham, Alabama, that supports us, asked that I go through the Philippines enroute here, and spend some time with Ruben Notarte whom they support there. It was a great two weeks I spent there in September, 1974, and I found Notarte a great worker with a devoted family. He took me to many, many villages where we preached to the many congregations he has started and nurtured with the help of other Philippine brethren. The fruitfulness of the Philippine work compares quite favorably with that in Western Nigeria (of course, there is no work anywhere with which I am familiar that compares to that in Eastern Nigeria for fruitfulness). Most Americans who go to the Philippines for a few weeks of gospel work go in teams of two or more. This is ordinarily good, but circumstances made it quite practical that I go alone. While there many Philippine brethren asked, "Why have you come alone?" to which I replied, "I am not alone; I am in the midst of forty-two million friendly Filipinos."

I think one reason 77th Street church chose Roy and me to come to this work in Australia is that we are both single — he is a bachelor and I a widower. Thus, we are free to move about from place to place without leaving a family behind and, therefore, we have not even established a residence anywhere here. We stay a few weeks in each place as opportunity and wisdom demand and then go on to another place to do the same. In this way, working separately, we are able to nurture many and, hopefully, strengthen some.

Miscellaneous

Reminiscence

Some people who will cherish this book would want it to contain this chapter for their remembrance, and anyway, these things really didn't fit into any other chapter nor into the subjects discussed in them. While my mind is still capable of recalling these four decades of gospel preaching and related incidents, perhaps it may be interesting, and even edifying to some readers, to deal briefly with a series of "little things" that touched this life.

RESPONDING TO ERROR

There were three times that I can remember when my conscience demanded that I respond immediately to false teaching that was done in assemblies where I was ordinarily the preacher, but where a guest speaker was involved. To me it was a nerve-wracking task that I abhorred, but love for truth and concern for souls and for the body of Christ required that I speak.

The first time was in Milwaukee. It was probably 1950 or 1951 in a lectureship there in which many northern preachers had participated and

were all present. In one speech one man made a strong defense of the use of the church building for social affairs — parties, dinners, etc. - and pleaded with us to use the large facilities we had there. When he finished I got up and responded as kindly, but frankly, as I could. He was not offended and the audience accepted the matter without strife or trouble.

Many years later, in Berwyn, Illinois, while that church was quite new, and while there were yet some there who differed on the institutional questions, a young man spoke one night as our guest and really ridiculed those who "hate the poor orphans" and "oppose orphan homes." He was caustic and harsh in his treatment of the matter. When he sat down I got up and replied, again with all the kindness I could muster and without bitterness or anger. He did not comment afterward, but the audience was not upset at all at my response.

Then in 1972, just a few weeks after I started work with the Summit Avenue church in St. Paul, Minnesota, we had a meeting in which several different preachers from that area spoke. One of them surprised me much by some very forcefully made statements about the new birth, about the Holy Spirit and one or two other matters that were all very dangerous. They were all obviously a part of the new emphasis some were making on grace and related matters. When he finished, I spoke, trying to clarify and edify without malice or bitterness. Afterward there was quite a turmoil, and though the young man did not seem to resent it, some others did. At last report I had, the young man had gone much farther into defection from truth, but after some controversy the Summit Avenue church was not affected by that matter further, or at least not as a result of that lesson.

HENRY S. FICKLIN

One of the bright spots of my life was my fairly close association with Henry Ficklin, beginning in about 1947. Already he was an elderly veteran while I was in the prime of life, but we worked together happily. He was truly a man of God, unusual in character, deep in the scriptures and sensitive and humble in attitude. He was the last of a generation, and in a very real way was "one of a kind." He liked to tell of his schooling under the great teacher, J. W. McGarvey, just at the turn of this century. He portrayed McGarvey as a scholar extraordinary whom he admired a great deal. He sometimes said, "McGarvey didn't have much use for question marks." And Ficklin himself seemed to have coined the expression, "Everybody ought to have an exclamation point in his life."

Ficklin knew from experience with McGarvey the disaster of compromise with false doctrine, for though McGarvey always opposed instrumental music in worship, he extended fellowship to those who used it, and consequently his influence was almost nil in the battle to oppose it. A lot of preachers today should learn a lesson from that. They may oppose

the college in the budget, etc., but they do their work with and wield their influence among those who favor such, and in the end will have made no significant contribution to the effort to stop such unscriptural trends and practices.

Very late in his life Ficklin made a speech at a Florida College lectureship on "Reminiscing With McGarvey" in which he dramatically issued a challenge that should touch the heart of every preacher of the Word. He said, "They sound like a battle cry to me. Listen! 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.' If we do that, brethren and sisters, we'll be sound; we'll be safe; and we'll have the approval of God Almighty."

I only wish Henry Ficklin had been known by many more brethren across the country for his influence would have been a blessing to others, I believe, as it was to me.

THE SEWELLS

Two other men who greatly influenced my life and work were F. E. and G. B. Sewell, who were both elders for so long of what was then the great Spring and Elaine church in St. Louis, Missouri. They are both distant relatives of mine, and natives of that same old Oak Grove community north of St. James, Missouri. G. B. Sewell encouraged me as much when I first began preaching as any other man and still does whenever possible. Of F. E. Sewell, Foy Wallace, Jr. told me about 18 years ago that he considered F. E. Sewell the best informed elder he knew anywhere. All who have known him were well aware of his scholarship in the scriptures. Here in Australia, from whence I now write, I received the news of his death with real sorrow. He was also a great source of encouragement to my son, Karl, in Karl's long-time work in the north.

BACK TO THE MUD-HOLE

Peter said that those who learn truth and then turn back to false ways are like a "sow that was washed" that returns "to her wallowing in the mire." And some brethren are indeed like that. I find them everywhere — in America, in Nigeria, in Australia. Some supposedly come out of denominationalism but do not come out far enough! In their hearts they stay too close to the place which they supposedly left, and as a consequence, never really have a happy experience nor a meaningful service to God.

Of course, usually, those who come out of error are stronger in truth than those who were never engulfed in sectarianism. They know why they left error and usually say, "I don't want to go even one step backward." In Australia this is significantly true of many who have left the "Associated Church of Christ" (comparable to the Christian Church in America). Some

of the strongest Christians in the land "came out" of that denomination and are stalwarts for the truth today. But some others, here and everywhere, did not really "come out" — they changed their fellowship but not their convictions very much. In Nigeria some go back to their idols in times of emergency, which means they did not really give them up at all. In America some go back to the foot-stomping, hand-clapping, hallelujah, praise the Lord, amen-shouting religions. It is because they never did really come into a truly scriptural commitment to worship that is strictly "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). If you've been washed, don't go back to that mud-hole again!

EDIBLE PEOPLE

Some people in America think Nigeria is a heathen land, but of course, that is not so at all. In fact, even sixteen years ago we found it the most peaceful place we had ever been. Since then they have endured a civil war and learned some violence from that, and from American television which is broadcast in Africa. But in our years there I believe not one of us really felt fear at all.

All white people there are called "Europeans." One night in 1960 I was preaching at the District Council Grounds in Ajegunle, suburban Lagos, with a large crowd. As the people would approach the circle of listeners, Alice and Roy would hand each one a tract. At one point a group of men went by on bicycles and seeing Roy nearby, yelled out, "Are those Europeans edible?" But, though he was only eleven years old, even Roy did not become frightened for he knew they were joking.

One time, earlier, in 1959, when we were about to baptize 54 people from a remote eastern village in which there had been no church of any kind, my interpreter said, "Some of these older people may have tasted human flesh!" We rejoice that they have now tasted the good Word of God.

CALL FOR JOINERS

Shortly after I began preaching I was invited to a rural church where I was a stranger to almost all the members. It was a Sunday close to Memorial Day, and a "homecoming day" there. As I entered the building, I was approached by an elderly leader of the congregation who whispered to me, "Since this is a special day here and there are many from other churches, we don't call for joiners today."

Well, I went ahead and preached the material I had prepared and told the people how to be Christians without joining anything, but I'll admit I was then really unprepared to depart from my outlined material and teach all that was needed that day. I trust they have learned since that one doesn't join God's church anyway, but that all people must hear the Word

(Rom. 10:14, 17), believe (Jn. 8:24), repent of sins (Ac. 17:30), confess Christ (Rom. 10:10) and be baptized in water for remission of sins (Ac. 2:38), in order to be saved by God's free grace and added to the church by the Lord himself (Ac. 2:41, 47).

TOBACCO

When I started to preach, I had very strong convictions about cigarette smoking (still do, too). But I was about to set out on a crusade against it and make it almost a test of fellowship. My sister Nora gave me advice which I didn't like then (I thought she was compromising) but after reflecting on it I followed her advice anyway and have always been thankful. I have never preached a sermon on tobacco though I have taught some on it occasionally. Usually, though, I appeal to highest ideals and for greatest influence. Many, many have quit the habit because of my preaching, yet I did not take an extreme position that would have made me their judge. I am thankful for that good advice Nora gave.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THIS?

In the street preaching, almost every night in Nigeria's big cities, all kinds of questions are asked and we must turn to the Bible and give straightforward answers. But one question that was often asked was also one that I always dreaded. They would ask, "Sir, we have many denominations here and now you come to us with the church of Christ. If the church of Christ is the true church, why were you not here when the denominations came?"

That's when you wish the earth could swallow you up, at least temporarily. But I had to answer! So I would try this: "We are to be blamed. We should have come much sooner." Usually that did not satisfy the questioner, so I would add, "But the gospel came to Africa about 1300 years before it went to America," (and I would refer them to the Ethiopian eunuch - Ac. 8:27, 39). I would insist that "It is not our fault that you let the gospel get away from you." But if they pressed me further, and in spite of the fact that one seldom jokes them there, I would say, "More preachers would have come to Africa if you people had not eaten so many of them." They would then laugh and go on to the next question, for it was obvious I had no more answers to that one.

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

We enjoy fellowship with any brother or sister in Christ, even though we may differ on many things, so long as the fellowship does not: (1) involve us in wrong practice, (2) commit us to unscriptural doctrine or (3) constitute an endorsement of his or her error.

BAPTIZING

When I was young the gospel preachers, when they were to baptize in those Missouri streams, would take a sturdy stick and measure out the water hole before baptizing. So, the first time I was called upon to baptize was a cold November day at Owensville, Missouri. Brethren took us to a stream and I found a stick, but I couldn't find a suitable place! I examined several places and rejected them all (bank too steep, water too deep or too shallow, or other objections). Finally, they found an ideal place and there was just no objection I could devise. I used my stick, examined the water hole and finally did a good job of baptizing. Since then I have baptized many, many in streams, but never used a stick again — I just "feel it out with my feet."

One time I wished I had used a stick. I lived at Waynesville, Missouri, near Fort Leonard Wood, and a lady wanted to be baptized one Saturday. We met at the river with a group of people, but the river was flooded and was "from hill to hill." We could not get within 50 yards of the main channel. Well, anyway, at the appropriate time I took her down into the muddy water and as I did so her husband said, "I suppose there is no fence there?" I paid no attention, baptized her, and as she came up from the water a piece of barbed wire was attached to her dress! Was I ever scared! I thought: suppose I had gotten her neck under that fence? Suffice it to say, since then I've made sure there is no barbed wire fence nearby!

JOKES ON ALICE

We had lots of fun in our family and some jokes on all of us. Two that "stuck" were against Alice. First, since she had no birth certificate, she decided to process the matter and get one. But when the State of Missouri finally sent her certificate, it indicated that she was born a *male* child. Naturally she sent it to her parents to have them process the correction. But for some reason there was an unusual delay, and even no letter came from her mother for a while. So we really joked Alice. The children and I would greet her in the morning with, "How is he today?" She had a ready answer, though. She would say, "I think there is plenty of evidence around here that he is a she!"

When we were going to Nigeria via ship in 1959, we, like all other passengers, would always go out on deck when the ship pulled into port somewhere along the route. Everyone wants to watch the proceedings (unloadings, loading, etc.). Well, usually I am ahead of others, but this time she and Roy were a few steps ahead of me. When I stepped onto the deck, Alice stood by the rail, with Roy on her left and with her right hand on a strange man's shoulder and her head leaned against him. Instantly

she saw her mistake and I would like to have a picture of her expression as she turned and saw me behind her (I was wearing a shirt almost like that of the strange man). Well, after that we never saw that man again on the rest of the voyage. I said, "He may have jumped overboard." Alice said, "No, he is down at the bar, drinking it off!" But Roy and I always remembered the incident and were able to "use" it against her when we needed to get even with her for something!

TRADITIONS

It is a great delight to me to notice that all over the world I find Christians doing the same thing as they express the worship that comes from their hearts. That, of course, is because they all do that which the New Testament shows is what God wants. He has told us what he wants us to do to express that worship - to sing, to pray, to study his Word, to give and to partake of the Lord's supper.

However, in such widespread travel among Christians, I do find many different traditions. And I do not try to change them at all if they are not wrong in and of themselves. I do, everywhere, urge the Christians to be sure they are following truth and not binding tradition. I believe I found more unusual traditions in England and in Australia than anywhere else.

For instance, some in both of these places seem to think it is almost necessary that we stand while singing. Consequently, we find ourselves bobbing up and down like a puppet on a string. We stand to sing, sit for a brief prayer, stand again to sing, sit for a brief reading and stand again, etc. It isn't wrong, but it is wrong if it is bound as a necessity.

One congregation in Australia (one of the best, too) has an unusual practice for communion. All the Christians go up and surround the table, standing reverently throughout the eating and drinking. I admit I like it. It was a change from the nearly traditional way to which I was accustomed. But again, it must not be bound as the only right way — and obviously, if it is followed without alteration at all for many years, it will be fixed in the minds of some as "the way" it must be done.

There are plenty of American traditions just as firmly fixed in some people's minds and in some localities. I wonder what would happen in one of our meetings if someone would imitate the following: My family and I sat in our car to hear the preaching at a big tent meeting conducted by the Baptist church in a Missouri town. The preacher preached his heart out on repentance. He made sin look so very, very bad and repentance so very, very important. But just when he had reached a high point, and we were all stirred thoroughly by his message, he shouted, "That's all!" He left the tent, and gradually the crowd realized it was over and began to go home. I have often wished for the nerve to do the same. He evidently

wanted us to leave thinking about his message, not about some songs, prayers and announcements. And he was right — we did leave thinking of what he had preached. He broke tradition and I think we might do well to do something similar occasionally.



Addendum

The preceding chapters were written during the first half of 1975 while I was in Australia, but publication was deliberately delayed by me so that I could include this additional material that may be of some interest to readers.

On May 1, 1976, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I was married to Miss Myrtle Benedict of that city. The story unfolds as follows:

In 1947 when I moved with my family to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Lord's church was a very small, struggling band that met in a rented hall beside a tavern. There were only a few men, but several faithful women, and among them was Myrtle Benedict. She has continued that faithfulness throughout all these years, and finally became a charter member of the West Allis church there. Thus, after I had preached to her for four years, later she heard my oldest son, Karl, preach for 10 or 12 years. To say the least, she has been a close friend to me and my family for over thirty years.

Early in 1974 I was asked to go to Australia for gospel work, and planned to depart America in late June of that year. However, I was delayed because I could not get an Australian visa, and during two months of delay, I preached a great deal in all of Wisconsin, but especially in West Allis. And during that time, Myrtle and I renewed our friendship and had a few dates. Then while I was in Australia, we corresponded, and finally on August 15, 1975, I called her on the phone from Tasmania, Australia (half-way around the world) and asked her to marry me. She consented, and because we had made previous arrangements, our conversation then went like this: I asked, "Do you have the ring?" She said, "Yes, I do." I said, "Will you help me put it on your finger?" She replied, "Yes, I will." I then asked, "Is it on your finger?" She said, "Yes, it is." "Then," I said, "you are mine." She agreed!

After concluding fifteen months of work in Australia and two months in the Philippines, I became quite ill and had to be hospitalized for twelve days, and had to return suddenly to America, and naturally I returned to Milwaukee.

Myrtle is the daughter of the late Oscar and Amanda Benedict, of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, both of whom were faithful Christians in that community. Myrtle is the youngest of seven children. She obeyed the gospel early in life and has never faltered from that faith. For some years she was a school teacher, but for the last thirty-three years she worked in Milwaukee, principally with the U.S. Forest Service Office. She was never previously married and she brings to this union a character unblemished, a reputation untainted and a fidelity to the Lord that is respected by all who know her.

We hope for a joyful, rewarding companionship, and we expect a fruitful partnership in service to God. I consider the delay regarding my Australian visa in 1974 as a providential matter that enabled Myrtle and me to get re-acquainted, and I count myself very fortunate indeed to now launch a new segment of my life, for whatever time remains for me here on earth, in togetherness with Myrtle.

And now, the reader may think this would be a good place to end this chronicle of events. (All of us know that some preachers spoil sermons by failing to quit at the right time, and so it may be with this book). But there are still some things I need to say, perhaps not so directly connected with events in our lives, but nevertheless very significantly connected with our ideals and with what we believe is scriptural teaching and practice. To some of the most pertinent of these we should now turn our attention.

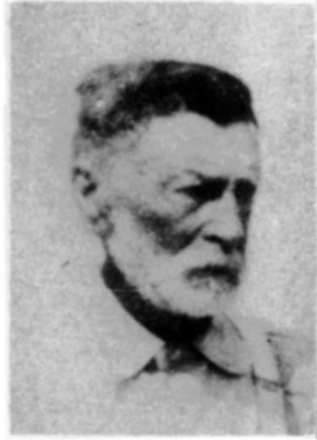


The author as a baby.

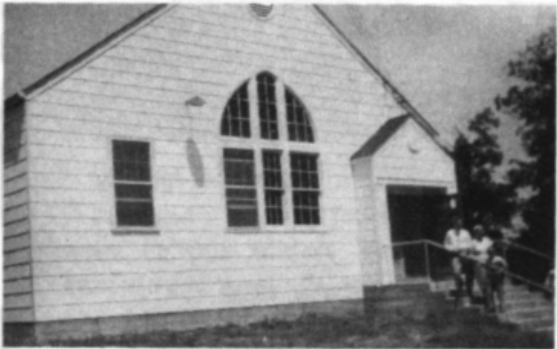
My Granddad,
"Old Uncle Bill."



The old Oak Grove meetinghouse.



The present Oak Grove building.



H. H. Diestelkamp
gospel preacher



Alice and I
in 1932



Uncle Elmer and
Aunt Amelia
Ferris



My family, 1945.



Ray Ferris and sisters, Darlein Duncan and Velva Breuer.



Diestelkamp family, 1952.



Author at age forty.

Author and sisters, Nora, Irene and Alma standing behind father and his wife, Frances, in late 40's.



Roy, Alice and I in front of our truck in Nigeria.

Essays on Romance and Marriage

Perhaps it is risky for a sixty-three-year-old man who is a widower to write on this subject, but some who have known Alice and me have encouraged me to do so, hoping it may help some younger ones. It was obvious to those who knew us intimately that our marriage was characterized by a significantly-continuing romance. We scrupulously avoided any public display of such, but there was a spontaneous, romantic attachment that was mutually evidenced, and that never diminished until the day she slipped into a coma shortly before her death. We disliked and avoided the use of "honey" and "darling" and all other such designations that are so often used, but even our children, I believe, came to realize that they were the product of, and the witnesses to a great romantic love affair.

Without hesitancy, I recommend that young married people cultivate a healthy romantic love, for it will not only help to sustain a good marriage, but it will make such a marriage a joyful life-long adventure in happiness.

And now, quite aside from my own experience, let us study the specific subjects of "Romantic Love," "Before The Wedding," "Home Security"

and "Home Wreckers." These should be studied by single people, because they may someday be involved, and by married people also, to help all of us understand principles that may lead to more satisfaction in life and more righteousness before God.

ROMANTIC LOVE

This essay is not intended to deal with the love that God has for us, nor with that which we should have for him. At the same time, it does not consider the love which we are to have for all human beings, nor even that which pertains to our dearly-beloved brethren in Christ. Finally, I am not herein writing about parental love, nor the love which children have for their parents. Rather, in this paper we shall consider that most personal, that highly sensitive, that delightfully precious love that involves romance. This is not to be confused with passion, but it does not exclude that ardent desire.

Perhaps much too little has been taught about romantic love. Some seem to think of it only as a joke, others as such a secretive matter that it must not be discussed. Yet empires rise and fall because of various love affairs. Men are changed from beasts to docile, agreeable persons by the power of love in their hearts for some woman. Women rise from the mire of selfishness and greed as their hearts are tendered by genuine love for a man. Some people sell their eternal souls for a mess of pottage that consists of unwise love that leads them into sin and disobedience. Solomon was a significant example of this. Conversely, some people are rescued from Satan's grasp and are led heavenward by wise choices in romance. Ruth was a significant example of this.

Romantic love is not a subject to be avoided, for it is neither vulgar nor impure. It is, in fact, a significant Bible subject, not only with regard to straightforward lessons on the subject, but with regard to examples given. For instance, God said to man and woman, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28) and again, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Paul said, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. 7:3, 4).

The example of Jacob's love for Rachel — so great that when he had to work seven years to have her for his wife, the Bible says, "and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her" (Gen. 29:20) - illustrates ideal romance. Perhaps the greatest love story ever told is that of the Song of Solomon. I do not pretend to know all the far-reaching and underlying meanings that may be drawn from the book, but I do know that it paints a vivid story of true romance between the young maiden and

the shepherd youth — a romance that prevailed in fidelity in spite of the effort of Solomon, the king, to win the heart of the maiden. Anticipating fulfillment of their romance in marriage, the maiden said to her sweetheart, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-loved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts" (Song of Solomon 1:13). Take time to read the whole story sometime, being careful to remember that there are three principal characters: the maiden, the youth and Solomon. For the purposes of this study, forget the theological ramifications that may be involved, and see the significance of romance in the most beautiful and meaningful portrayal.

Love of man for woman and of woman for man is not a vile, ugly, secretive thing, but a beautiful and fulfilling means of reaching the highest pinnacle of human satisfactions and of life's joys. Expression of love, and its intended climax in the marital relationship, is not something merely to be endured by either partner, but is the most rewarding opportunity for partnership, for sharing, for mutual satisfaction. Marital love was not intended solely for the processing of the reproductive system, nor was it intended as a mere business proposition. It was meant to bring moral safeguards to both partners, to provide them with a meaningful bond to tie them together for a lifetime, and to give them emotional release for continuing happiness and stability.

We must not treat romance as an enslaving war-club, nor as a childish play-thing. Properly utilized and wisely guided, this love can bring one man and one woman into a complete fulfillment of all the emotional needs of both of them for a whole lifetime. Let us thank God for his creative genius in making us as we are, and let us regard our God-given emotions with respect and honor, and thus enable those emotions to bring to us godly joy and sublime happiness.

BEFORE THE WEDDING

Parents have a grave responsibility and a precious opportunity to prepare their children for marriage. This is best accomplished by example, not lectures. Give the youth something beautiful, something rewarding, something holy to observe in your marriage. For that's what marriage is: it combines all the beauty of an ever-fresh, full flower of love; all the reward of life's most meaningful relationship, and the holiness of a blending of two lives in fulfillment of the very purposes of God for man and woman.

Young people, and any others who contemplate marriage, must remember three scriptural principles, and these must be recognized before the wedding and made a significant part of the commitment each party is to make:

1. Each one must be absolutely sure, he has a scriptural right to marry and that the companion has this same right. Don't take anybody's word for it! Be certain. One naive girl married a man who admitted a previous wedding to a girl in a very distant place, but who denied any relationship with that first one. But later, because he came to love the second one so much, he had to tell her the truth; that he had a child by the former wife. By then it was too late ever to correct the matter and still be altogether happy. It is still "better to be safe than sorry."

2. Each one must plan beforehand to keep the one companion. This must be a part of the wedding plans. Too many people get married as I trade cars — if I get one I don't like, I trade it in on a new one! Before the wedding each must resolve that "if she can't cook, I'll keep her anyway"; "if he is lazy, he is mine for life"; "if she becomes sloppy and unbecoming, I'll love her still," and, "if he mistreats me and neglects me, I'll be faithful to him always" (see Rom. 7:2, 3).

3. Marriage produces a new union that must supersede all other human loyalties. It does not mean that a bride or groom should forget or neglect a parent, but it does mean each is now to recognize a greater duty to the new companion than to the parents (see Eph. 5:31). Too many marriages have failed because someone didn't cut the apron strings of home (parents).

Finally, please consider these additional ideas. Do not confuse passion with love, nor infatuation ("puppy love") for the real thing. Do not suppose that love without proper commitment of heart, body and life, will avail for a happy union. Remember, marriage is not a heavenly relationship (see Lk. 20:34, 35), but it is a divine arrangement, sanctioned by God for maximum human happiness (see Heb. 13:4), for mutual satisfactions (see 1 Cor. 7:5) and for moral safeguard (see 1 Cor. 7:2-4). You do have a right to expect marriage to be good, wholesome and joyful. It is not a burden to be borne, but a great privilege to enjoy. It is not merely a load to be carried, but it is humanity's richest physical partnership to be shared.

Insure yourself for a great marriage by preparing your heart and mind for it properly, well in advance of the wedding. You are not wasting time when you are getting ready for marriage. Years of joy may be your reward.

HOME SECURITY

Contrary to the dreams of some young lovers, marriage is not automatically successful. It must be nurtured as a tender plant, guarded as a precious treasure and cherished as a holy relationship. All married people, as well as those contemplating marriage, should seriously consider the following three rules for home security:

1. There must be an abundance of mutual love. This is not just a superficial love that will vanish with the first quarrel, or that will fly out the window when poverty (or riches) come in at the door. But it must be a deep, abiding love that will survive every trial and trouble and that will mature and grow with the passing of years. And it must be mutual. Too many women and some men have had to endure years of one-sided love. Let each love the other as he loves himself (Eph. 5:28, 29). This love of which I now write is not a response to physical attractiveness alone, but it is a response to the total character of the companion, as well as a responsible love, deliberately cultivated and maintained by each partner.

2. If marriage is to succeed there must be sincere endeavor. Just as unity in the church is dependent upon such determination (see Eph. 4:3), so it is in the home. No accident will happen to give security to your marriage, nor will God send a miracle to produce peace in the family circle. But, with deliberate effort the two companions can indeed live in peace and happiness.

3. An attitude of humility that manifests itself in reciprocal apologies will heal so many wounds in the marriage relationships. It is absurd that we apologize to strangers and to most others, but we sometimes take our companions for granted. What a pity that we fail to apologize to the very ones we love the most — and thus sometimes stifle development of greater love. There is hardly anything you can do that will help your marriage more than to humbly recognize your own faults and to generously admit them to your companion, sincerely saying, "I'm sorry."

These three items do not guarantee success — they are just starting points and important principles of peace. It is not only necessary that each one love the other, but that each one try to be altogether lovable (one who inspires love). Not only should each one try to be at peace, but each one must so behave as to inspire the other to endeavor. Not only should each one apologize to the other, but each one should so live as to make such apologies from the companion spontaneous and eager (instead of grudging and forced).

Most healthy, vigorous marriages need a continuing romance. It is neither right nor wise for romance to stop when the honeymoon is over or when the first child is born. Love is like a delicate orchid and romance is the food upon which it grows and blooms. One woman wrote:

*"I know your love is greater now,
Than ever in our courtship days;
Somehow you show it,
In a thousand different ways.
But sometimes I think, wistfully,
Of how nice it was when you loved me less,
And told me so more frequently. "*

If men and women would just use as much tact, effort and skill in maintaining marriage as they did to produce it, all would be well.

HOME WRECKERS

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed," someone has said, and also, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." So it seems good to consider some of the obvious things that ruin so many marriages. This is done with the hope that readers may be prepared in heart and body to avoid these pitfalls, and also that we may all warn others — the children, the youth and all who might be susceptible to these dangers. Consider the following three significant wreckers:

1. Marriages are destroyed by accumulative quarreling. I do not mean that arguments and quarrels break marriages, but I mean when these become accumulative in nature they certainly do. It is like this: we quarrel on Monday, but finally we settle it and kiss and make up. On Tuesday we quarrel again (I hasten to add they should not come so often as this) and this time we do not begin afresh, but we review Monday's arguments. "I told you that yesterday," we exclaim. Finally, though, we settle it again, and again we kiss and make up. But, on Wednesday we have another argument, and we review Monday's troubles and Tuesday's problems. When we settle it this time, we make up, but we do not kiss. Then, on Thursday we go at it again, and it becomes like a snowball rolling downhill — it gets out of control. This time we don't make up! To save our marriages, we must refuse to hold grudges; we must forgive and forget. We must not let arguments accumulate as described above.

2. Unwise intimacies also destroy marriages. Too many men and women spend much more time with someone other than their own husband or wife, at least in waking hours. And too many times this leads to an intimate association that, in turn, may lead to overwhelming temptation and/or to jealousies by the real companion at home. If you count your marriage precious, then avoid, at all cost, intimacies with others that would jeopardize your soul, your marriage and your home.

3. Many marriages fail because of unsatisfied emotions. Paul warned *of* this in 1 Cor. 7:5: "Defraud ye not one the other . . . that Satan tempt ye not for your incontinency." When either partner is not emotionally satisfied, either may be tempted unnecessarily. It is important for each marriage partner to realize that one of the greatest joys of the marriage relationship is not only to be satisfied, but to give satisfaction to the other! This requires devotion and wise discernment of the needs of the companion, and it may produce the greatest of marital joys.

Marriages are often wrecked, not by one great tragedy or by one major mistake, but by many little errors such as unkind words, rudeness, harshness, selfishness and jealousies. However, marriages may also be

destroyed by little failures, such as, refusal to apologize, lack of gratitude, absence of tenderness and thoughtfulness.

Married people need always to be watchful for those little things that may accumulate into tragic proportions of strife and discord. These must be stopped early for later it will be too late indeed. "A stitch in time saves nine." and a marriage may be saved by alertness in eliminating little difficulties immediately, lest they grow into insurmountable obstacles and lead to ruin and eternal destruction for one or both partners.

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Parenthood and

Family Circles

Throughout the centuries concerned people have felt the need to urge greater fidelity and devotion to home life. Perhaps in almost every generation many have lamented the decline in conditions of that day and praised "the good old days" when home was sacred and the family circle was secure. I think it is unwise and speculative for me to say today that the family circumstance has degenerated to its lowest level ever, or that things were never so bad before. However, one would have to be less than honest if he did not take note of terrifying degrees of delinquency —juvenile delinquency and parental delinquency.

It is an observable fact that there are not many "family circles" left, in comparison to the total population. Home has become a place where people go when everything else is closed! Husbands and wives sometimes hardly meet at home; seldom are both there together with the children, and do not enjoy the time they feel they must spend with the family. Children often avoid home as long as they can, and when there, seclude themselves in a room with loud music or spend their time on the telephone instead of in family sharing.

However, there are still some precious relationships and happy circumstances and it is not true that all parents and children have made shipwreck of their lives. Some still count the home as the sanctuary from the ills of the world and the family circle as the divine arrangement that produces greatest security and joy in this life. Let us have courage and look to these better things.

PARENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

So much of what is today called juvenile delinquency must finally be recognized for what it really is - parental delinquency. These little children didn't ask to be born, but were begotten and born for our pleasure; yet so many times they are allowed to grow up like a wild weed in a field or like a beast of the forest. Parents were designed and equipped to give direction to the lives of their children. The destiny of nations, the quality of the church and the population of heaven is largely dependent upon the efforts of parents.

We can safely say that parents must carefully devote themselves in at least the following three ways if they are to be successful:

1. Parents must set good examples before their children. There is no word you can teach them that will register as deeply or will be remembered as well as the influence of your example. You may deceive the neighbors and the brethren, but hardly will you deceive your children. They may be able to detect hypocrisy in you more readily than others do, and by such they will certainly be turned aside from truth and righteousness.

In 1945 or 1946, I lived in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and Al, my second son, was just under school age. He and I walked to the Post Office and crossed the street that was wet from the melted snow. When we stepped upon the sidewalk, it was dry because it had been swept long before. Soon Al dropped behind me and said, "Daddy, do you know what I am doing?" I said, "No, what are you doing?" He said, "I am walking in your steps." You see, the soles of my shoes were wet and wherever they touched the dry sidewalk they made a dark imprint. Al was stretching his little legs as much as he could to step in each track I left. I didn't smile. It wasn't funny! I thought, "As I go down this street today, and down the pathway of life in the weeks and months and years ahead, there is a little boy following me. Wherever I go, he will go; whatever I do, he will do; whatever I am, he will be." Since that time I have been telling that true story, hoping it will help some men and women to see that their children are walking in their steps, also.

Our trouble today is not because the parents lack ability, but rather because they lack dedication to the tasks of parenthood. Edgar A. Guest put it like this:

*"We think of orphans only, as the little girls and lads,
 Who haven't any mothers, and who haven't any dads.
 They are grouped with other children and in groups they 're put to bed,
 With some stranger paid to listen, while their little prayers are said,
 All the grownups look with pity on such lonely children small,
 And declare, to be an orphan, is the saddest fate of all.
 But sometimes I look about me, and in sorrow hang my head,
 As I look on something sadder than the orphans of the dead,
 They 're the orphans of the living, left alone to romp and play,
 From their fathers and their mothers, by ambition shut away.
 They have fathers who are busy, and so weighted down with cares,
 That they haven't time to listen to a little child's affairs.
 They have mothers who imagine, life could give them if it would,
 Something better, something richer, than the joys of motherhood.
 So their children learn from strangers, and by strangers hands are fed,
 And the nurse, for so much money, nightly tucks them into bed.
 Lord, I would not grow so busy that I cannot drop my task,
 And answer every question which that child of mine can ask,
 Let me never serve ambition here so selfishly, I pray,
 That I cannot stop to listen to the things my children say.
 For whatever cares beset them, let them know I'm standing by,
 I don't want to make them orphans, till the time I come to die.*

2. Parents must also discipline their children, for that is the very purpose of parenthood. We are to give direction to their lives and we are to form their characters. They are like concrete and we are the masons. They will take whatever form we give them. Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Paul said, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

3. Parents sometimes fail because they have set the wrong goals for their children. Sometimes a man will say, "I grew up in a shack by the side of the road; I wore patched pants and had no shoes, no radio, no education. And I want better things for my Johnny." Well, that sounds good, and in itself is not bad. But if that represents your ambition, then you have the wrong goal for Johnny. It should be possible to provide the "better things" for Johnny which you did not have, and at the same time provide for him a background in righteousness and produce in him a character that will be much more important than any of this world's "things." Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ..." (Matt. 6:33), and this surely applies to the duties of parenthood as well as other things.

Before I close this brief essay, one word of urgency is on my mind.

Parents, don't wait to begin training your children. Don't wait a minute! The very day the nurse hands you that bundle of love to take home from the hospital, begin right then to make the right impressions on that tender mind. And once you have begun, do not quit — don't relax your effort as long as that impressionable mind is under your influence. Somebody said:

*"I took a piece of plastic clay
And gently fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It bent and yielded to my will.
I came again when days were past,
The bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it, still it bore,
And I could change it nevermore.*

*"I took a piece of living clay,
And gently fashioned it one day,
And molded with my power and art,
A young boy's soft and yielding heart.
I came again when days were gone,
It was a man I looked upon,
He still that early impress wore,
And I could change it nevermore."*

HOME, SWEET HOME

When, more than a hundred years ago, John Howard Payne, wrote, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home," he touched the heartstrings of sincere people everywhere, and he reached the highest ideal in poetic portrayal of the most sublime of human relationships. One of the great, undergirding foundation principles upon which America was built was the sanctity of the family. I can even remember when divorce was a disgrace and when disobedience by children was almost unthinkable. I cannot speak for others, but throughout those many years when the Leslie Diestelkamp family was a separate, distinct, specific, domestic entity, we enjoyed a true "family circle" circumstance. Our domicile, whether a small Missouri cottage, a Chicagoland apartment, a house owned by the church or a temporary residence in an African city, was always, "Home, Sweet Home."

Home must necessarily include a shelter, but that of which I write today, and of which I have so frequently written in the last few decades, is most especially the people, not the place. It is the relationship, the association — not the facilities or the circumstances — and it relates to real living, not just to being there!

Home should be a sanctuary from the storms of life and from the floods of worldly turmoil that so frequently press upon all of us in this fast-moving, worldly generation. It is the precious privilege of each husband and each wife, as well as each child, to not only capture in the family circle the greatest of this world's God-given joys, but also to contribute in that same home environment to life's greatest satisfactions for others there.

As in God's providence I have been permitted to travel into five of the six inhabited continents of the earth with the gospel message of salvation from sin. I have gone everywhere also with the appeal for a joyful life in Christ. Paul said, "we ... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be ... strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness ..." (Col. 1:9-11). Isaiah said, "God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid . . . Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:2, 3). Everywhere I have urged that Christians provide and utilize the best possible family relationships to help secure the life of happiness that rightly belongs to us here. In that regard, I suggest that: (1) Home is the cradle of civilization; (2) Home is the bulwark of the church; and (3) Home is the vestibule to heaven.

Somebody said, "As the home goes, so goes the nation," and students of history know that no civilization has ever risen above the ideals that prevailed in the homes of that day or of that nation. Men have gone out into the four corners of the earth as pioneers, politicians, preachers, engineers, doctors and lawyers, all because of incentives they received at home. Our own Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my mother," and it has always been true that, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

However, as surely as it is true that, "As the home goes, so goes the nation," even more significantly it is true that, "As the home goes, so goes the church." No church can ever rise in quality above that quality which emanates from the homes of the Christians. In righteousness, in devotion, in fidelity and in fruitfulness, the greatest possibilities of development and the greatest means of progress come from family circles. A few people do indeed rise above the evil atmosphere of a degraded home, but, in most cases, "as the twig is bent, so will it grow," and most of us do no better out in the world or in the activities of the church than we do in our homes.

One cannot go to heaven directly from the home, because of it alone, and without the church, but hardly will one be obedient to God, and the prospect of faithfulness is unlikely, unless there is a good environment at home. Heaven will be filled with people who have either cast aside the shackles of a bad home circumstance or who have been made into good

soil for gospel seed by the influence of good home-life, and the latter will surely be the much greater number in that eternal home of the soul.

We don't know what kind of man Enoch was before he became a father, but after that the Bible says he "walked with God" and "he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Gen. 5:22; Heb. 11:5). Joshua said, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and Cornelius demonstrated the same kind of dynamic leadership in his family, for it is said that he "feared God with all his house . . ." (Josh. 24:15; Ac. 10:2). Hannah was so devoted in her family life that she pledged to give her son to God and she accomplished this, so much so that she set Samuel at the feet of Eli, the priest, in the house of God. He then served all his life there because he had a mother who molded his character in the family circle. (See 1 Sam. 1:11, 19-28.)

The home life of Solomon brought defilement to that great and wise man of God and brought his house and the kingdom to disaster. Indeed, home at its worst can be an almost insurmountable obstacle to godliness, while home at its best can be one of the greatest safeguards as we travel the way of life from the cradle to the grave and from earth to eternity.

As I conclude this essay, I plead with husbands and wives, with fathers and mothers, to make home good, make it wholesome, make it delightful, make it a place of serenity, of safety, of satisfaction. Make it a place of happiness, of joy, of contentment. Make your home a place of peace and tranquillity, a place of refuge from worldly ideals and from evil companionships. Remember, no accident will happen and make your home good, nor will God perform a miracle to produce such association for you, but God's Word will guide your heart and mind and body and enable you to make it truly, "Home, Sweet Home."

Favorite

Sermon Outlines

Thousands of people around the world have heard me preach the sermons that are briefly outlined in this chapter, for they are some of my favorites. Those who have heard know that my preaching is never deep, scholarly material, so these outlines will also be given in simplicity and without the depth that may suit some who have ability to reach more deeply than I. Sometimes on a difficult subject I use an outline in the pulpit, but most of these I preach without an outline and, when practical, without a pulpit.

You may notice that I never use the word "Christian" as an adjective, but I use it only as the New Testament does; that is, as a noun. Likewise, I do not speak of "the five acts of worship" but rather I suggest that God has authorized five ways in which we may express the worship that comes from our hearts.

Perhaps no one has a completely original sermon, and if he does it is surely something other than a gospel sermon. But I do claim complete originality for the arrangement of these sermons, and if others have

similar ones, it is evidence of the coincidence of different men with the same ideals and the same authority producing the same thing.

I shall even include an outline of "Home," the sermon I have preached most often, I think, though a fuller discussion of that subject, in a different form, is included in chapters 11 and 12.

THE SECURITY OF A CHILD OF GOD

Perhaps the assurance I have may best be expressed by Paul's words in Rom. 8:1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." But before we consider this matter further, we should emphasize the following:

1. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of "once saved, always saved." The Christian's security is absolutely conditional, and he may indeed fall from grace by: (1) Unfaithfulness in worship and service — Heb. 10:25-31; Rev. 2:4, 5; 3:15-18); (2) Immorality — Gal. 5:19 - 6:1; Eph. 5:1-11; (3) Departure in doctrinal matters - Gal. 1:8; 2Jn. 8-11) 2Tim. 4:1-5, 10, 14; 1 Tim. 1:19; and (4) Other ways.

2. Furthermore, the Bible does not teach that God overlooks any sin. He does not turn his face so that he will not see our sins. "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 Jn. 5:17). "Be sure your sins will find you out" (Nu. 32:23).

Since John said that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves —(1 Jn. 1:8) - how then may we have assurance of a home in heaven? The answer is that we must depend upon the continual cleansing power of the blood of Christ (1 Jn. 1:7). But this continual cleansing is for those who "walk in the light." What does this mean? Remember, it does not mean sinlessness — see vs. 8. Therefore, it must mean that we must continue in a condition wherein God will continually forgive our sins. So, what do the scriptures teach are conditions of pardon for the erring child of God?

1. He must repent of his sins, confess them to God and ask for forgiveness - Ac. 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9.

2. He must forgive those who offend him just as he would have God's forgiveness - Mt. 6:12, 14, 15.

But the question arises: what about sins of ignorance and of weakness —sins of which one is not aware and/or sins which one has been unable to overcome completely? For instance, what about the sin one commits in a moment of weakness just before he dies and regarding which he has no opportunity to repent and seek forgiveness?

Specifically, some ask, what about the driver who exceeds the speed limit slightly and immediately dies in an accident? Or we could ask: what of the preacher who mis-interprets a passage of scripture and does not learn of his error in time to repent? What about all those preachers who have changed their convictions on such questions as the covering (1 Cor.

11), the war problem, etc.? Were they lost before they changed? Are those who differ with me now on those questions lost? If you and I differ on the interpretation of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (in Ac. 2:38), is one of us necessarily lost?

If I was lost last year because I did not understand as well as I do today, must I not then fear for today, in view of the greater discernment that I still need to acquire? Must I toss upon my bed tonight for fear there may be at least one unknown sin in my life, or for fear I may be misinterpreting just one scripture?

If the answer to the above questions is "Yes," then there is no such thing as security for a child of God — it is then a hopeless, vain life we live and almost no one will go to heaven. With that outlook, why should we even try? Our lives would be characterized by nothing but despair.

However, I do not believe for one moment that we need to live in such fear, for God's grace will avail for sincere children of God who: (1) specifically confess sins of which we are aware, seeking forgiveness by repentance and prayer, and (2) generically confess imperfection regarding other things, of which we may not even be aware, with such expressions as, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Lk. 18:13).

Because of the relationship we have with God, in Christ (Eph. 1:7, 2Tim. 2:10), and because of the prevailing mediation of Christ in our behalf - as our merciful high priest (Heb. 2:16-18; 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:5), we can indeed have real hope, not because of our own merit, but because of God's amazing grace (Rom 5:1, 2). My concept of this security is expressed quite well in the following quotation: (a comment on 1 Jn. 1:7).

"Being in the fellowship with God the source of all light, is like being constantly in the stream of the blood of His son. That blood is constantly flowing (figuratively) through the body or church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the natural body of a man whose blood stream is healthy, if germs slip into the person that blood, being always present, will be like a disinfectant that will destroy the germ. Likewise the blood of Christ is ever present to cleanse away the mistakes and incidental sins that a true Christian does. Hence if a man is a worker in the Lord's vineyard and his life as a whole is one of obedience to the law of Christ, he does not need to worry about the mistakes he might make which he does not realize, for the blood of Christ will take care of it and wash them away," (*Bible Commentary*, by E. M. Zerr, published by Cogdill Foundation).

Let us try to be sure that we do not encourage people to suppose that grace gives license to sinfulness. At the same time, let us try to be sure we do not lead anyone to trust in his own merit. Finally, let us try to be sure we don't cause others to turn back to the world in despair and that we do not, ourselves, forget that we need forgiveness far beyond those sins which we can specifically identify and far beyond our own accomplishments in overcoming sins which we do acknowledge.

THE GRACE OF GOD

Grace means unmerited favor. This lesson involves us in discussion of God's love, manifested in giving his Son (Jn. 3:16). But God's grace did not begin with Jesus — it was climaxed then and there.

- I. God showed grace for humanity in:
 - A. Creation: earth, food, shelter, clothing, etc. in laws of nature; created man in his image to rule all else (Heb. 2:6-8).
 - B. The flood - destroyed the wicked world but spared human race.
 - C. The Jewish race: through it he gave our Savior and the 12 apostles who gave the gospel by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:20).

- II. But God climaxed his grace in Christ:
 - A. God saw our necessity — (Rom. 3:23).
 1. In this sin we are alienated from God (Isa. 59:1, 2)
 2. The end result of sin is spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; Ezk. 18:20).
 - B. God saw that we could not save ourselves from sin:
 1. We cannot run away from guilt (Num. 32:23).
 2. We cannot do enough good to earn forgiveness (Eph. 2:8).
 3. We cannot wash ourselves from sin (Heb. 9:22-28).
 - C. By grace God provided that which we could not supply - he paid the price for us (Jn. 3:16).
 1. A price had to be paid so that God could be a just God and still justify the ungodly (Rom. 3:24-27; 5:6; 8:3-4).
 2. No man could have earned this pardon, but it was freely offered and provided to all who come to God by Christ (Heb. 7:25).

- III. So, in Christ, God made a way for us:
 - A. This salvation by grace is for all: (Ac. 10:34).
 1. Even for the murderers of Christ - (Ac. 2:23, 36-41).
 2. Even for ignorant unbelievers, as the Jailor - (Ac. 16:30-34)
 3. And also for good people, as the Eunuch - (Ac. 8:26-40).
 - B. God supplied the way of salvation in Christ - (2Tim. 2:10).
 1. The penitent believer gets into Christ by baptism in water -(Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3, 4).
 2. Redemption is in Christ - (Eph. 1:7).
 3. Being near Christ is not enough - to admire him, applaud him, etc. - but it is necessary to obey him - (Jn. 14:6; Heb. 5:9); Mt. 7:21).

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Grace is unmerited favor; gospel is good news. So the gospel of the grace of God (Ac. 20:24) is indeed the good news of God's unmerited favor to sinful man. Grace began with creation and was climaxed in Christ. The gospel was preached in fullness on Pentecost Day and we have it today in the written Word.

- I. Some "good news" had come in the O.T. era:
 - A. God gave the good news that the earth would not again be destroyed by water - (Gen. 9:13).
 - B. Abraham was promised seed that would become a great nation -(Gen. 12:1-3).
 - C. God gave the good news in promise - that the Messiah would come to bless all - (Gen. 3:15; 22:18).
 - D. The prophets gave the good news of the coming kingdom - (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-4).

- II. But "gospel" began to be emphasized by Christ:
 - A. He proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom which was then coming -(Mt. 4:23; 9:35).
 - B. This, when the promise was accomplished in reality is called the gospel of Christ - (Rom. 15:19).
 1. This is the gospel of grace - (Ac. 20:24).
 2. It is God's power to save - (Rom. 1:16).

- III. The gospel of the grace of God consists of:
 - A. Facts to be believed: (Mk. 1:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 1:1, 14; 1 Cor. 15:4).
 - B. Commands to be obeyed: (1 Pet 4:17; 2 Thes. 1:8).
 - C. Promises to be received: Eph. 3:6; Jn. 14:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

- IV. Remember, all gospel facts, commands and promises are of grace, not of human merit:
 - A. The facts are abundant and believable - (Jn. 20:30, 31) (Discuss reasons for faith).
 - B. The commands are explicit and practical - (Ac. 2:38, etc.) (Discuss the simplicity and exactness of commands to sinners & saints).
 - C. The promises are attractive and superlative: (Jn. 5:28, 29); 1 Thes. 4:16-18; etc.).

Conclusion: The gospel of God's grace is unbending and unending. It is universal in scope and unalterable in quality (Gal. 1:8; 2 Jn. 9; 1 Cor. 4:6; etc.).

SCRIPTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARD GRACE

God's part in our salvation is grace. We did not and cannot deserve such favor. Yet it is possible to have an unscriptural attitude toward God's love and grace.

- I. Salvation for us is *not* by grace alone:
 - A. Grace does *not* save those who never hear the gospel -(Rom. 10:13, 14)
 - B. Grace does *not* excuse deliberate sin - (2 Pet. 2:20, 22).
 - C. Grace does *not* overlook impenitence - (Heb. 10:26-31).
 - D. Grace does *not* miraculously change our natures -(Ac. 8:21-23).
 - E. Grace does *not* give liberty to change the will of Christ -(Jude 3; Gal. 1:8).
 - F. Grace does *not* permit us to change the work or the worship God has authorized for his church,

- II. But grace does supply that which we cannot do:
 - A. Grace provides a reason for faith - (Jn. 20:30, 31; Rom. 10:17).
 - B. Grace provides inducement for repentance - (Rom. 2:4).
 - C. Grace supplies a means of cleansing - (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7).
 - D. Grace provides the power for conversion - (Rom. 1:16, 17).
 - E. Grace supplies directives for useful and satisfactory living -(2Cor. 9:8; 12:9).
 - F. Grace gives real reason for hope - (2 Thes. 2:16; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4).

Indeed, how God loved us — even when we were sinners — and demonstrated his love with unmerited favor that enables us to have life eternal.

GRACE

by Al Diestelkamp

*We look with wonder and appreciation,
 At the universe, our God's creation.
 But the greatest wonder — it takes first place,
 Is man the sinner — redeemed by grace.*

FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

Paul said, "I do not frustrate the grace of God" (Gal. 2:21). To frustrate means to hinder, to nullify, to counteract. For instance, a brake frustrates the movement of a car. So we may frustrate the grace of God.

- I. Grace is frustrated when we try to earn forgiveness (Eph. 2:8).
- II. God's grace has always been frustrated when men followed human wisdom -
 - A. Heathen unbelievers built altars *very high*, supposing they would be nearer to God, frustrating in their minds his universal presence - (Ex, 20:26).
 - B. Graven images frustrate in the minds of the people the fact that God is alive.
 - C. Moses, at the rock (Nu. 20:8-12) frustrated grace in the minds of the people by making it appear it was Moses' work.
- III. Today many may frustrate grace by:
 - A. Binding the O. T., thus nullifying the "one sacrifice," (Heb. 9:28) and minimizing the all-sufficiency of the gospel for our salvation (Rom. 1:16, 17).
 - B. Expecting God to do our part (he has done his own part) - (Heb. 5:9; 7:25).
 - C. "Faith only" doctrine frustrates God's demand for obedience -(Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38; Mt. 7:21).
 - D. "Water regeneration" (salvation by baptism alone) frustrates the benefit of the shed blood (Heb. 9:22; Rev. 1:5).
 - E. "Morality alone" (salvation by following the golden rule, etc.) frustrates (denies) truth (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 59:2).
 - F. The "church of your choice" frustrates God's choice - (Eph. 4:4; Mt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25; 1 Cor. 12:20).
 - G. Human creeds frustrate the pure Word - 1 Pet. 4:11; Gal. 1:8; 1 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 22:19, 20).
 - H. Modernism frustrates grace by denying benefits of the blood of the Son of God - (1 Jn. 2:22, 23).
 - I. Strife, discord and division frustrate grace by hindering united action of God's people - (Jn. 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10).
 - J. Stinginess, greed, lack of faith, etc. frustrate grace by hindering gospel work - (1 Tim. 3:15; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor. 3:9).
 - K. Indifference, complacency and cowardice frustrate grace by minimizing fruitful action the Christians would do - (Jn. 15:1-3).

Conclusion:

The greatness of God's grace should cause us to try hard to avoid anything that would hinder, diminish or prevent its full benefits being received by us or by others.

GOD'S GRACE AND THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Paul said that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). Indeed, at the cross grace was demonstrated most significantly

- I. Satan offered Jesus a crown (Mt. 4:9) but he refused the crown to accept a cross. The multitude again offered him a crown (Mt. 21:9) but Jesus chose to die sacrificially rather than to receive the applause of men here.

- II. Calvary may have seemed like a victory for Satan, but actually it was one of God's greatest accomplishments:
 - A. Satan had tried to prevent the coming of Jesus:
 1. By trying to destroy the Hebrews - Ex. 1:6-10; 15-22).
 2. By trying to eliminate the Jews while in captivity (Est. 3:5-13).
 - B. Then Satan tried to destroy Jesus and his work after he came:
 1. Herod tried to kill him - (Mt. 2:11-14).
 2. His neighbors tried to destroy him - (Lk. 4:29).
 3. A storm was about to drown him (Mk. 4:37-39).
 - C. Finally Satan *seemed* to be winning when he turned the multitude against him:
 1. The rulers of Israel opposed him - (Jn. 7:48).
 2. Even his own followers "went back and walked no more with him" (Jn. 6:66).
 3. One of the twelve betrayed him - (Mt. 26:14-16).
 4. Finally those who had honored him less than a week earlier demanded his death - (Mt. 27:19-23).

- III. But in the death on the cross God's grace was fully manifested and total victory began:
 - A. Thus he purchased our redemption through the blood of the cross - (Eph. 1:7).
 - B. By the death on Calvary we are reconciled to God - (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:13).
 - C. Christ's death on the cross abolished the O.T. law - (Col. 2:14).
 - D. The "middle wall of partition" was broken down by the grace of the cross - (Eph. 2:14) and all people now may be reconciled under the same covenant (Eph, 2:16).

- IV. Evidently Satan was not aware of the victory God would win at Calvary for it is said that Satan entered into Judas, causing the betrayal.
 - A. But think of Satan's dismay when he learned that Jesus had risen from the grave. Satan would not have wanted him to die if he had known he would rise!!!

- B. Especially think of Satan's sorrow when he learned that by the death on the cross, redemption was provided for all of us! No doubt Satan would rather have had Jesus alive than to have allowed Jesus to become our Savior!
- V. But when Satan lost at the cross, he didn't quit:
 - A. He tried to pretend that Jesus had not risen - (Mt. 28:1-15).
 - B. Today he tries to get sinners to reject the risen Christ - or at least not to fully obey him. He will even be pleased to have men say "Lord, Lord", just so they do not obey - (Mt. 7:21).

Conclusion

Remember, if Jesus had become a King in Palestine he would not now be King in heaven. If he had accepted a crown then, he could not have purchased salvation for us now. Thus we see God's love, mercy, GRACE, perfectly manifested and fully completed by the death of Jesus on the Cross.

GOD'S MOST GENEROUS OFFER

Al Diestelkamp

A Sinner must pay for the sins
he's committed;
But the price is too high,
it must be admitted.
For the cost of one sin,
if valued in gold,
Would be more than I'd have
if I saved til I'm old.
But Jehovah my God saw the
plight that I'm in,
And provided the payment
for all of my sin.
Now all I must do,
is believe and obey,
And Jesus will wash
my sins all away.
Why, I'd be a fool,
an ungrateful scoffer,
If I let pass by ...
God's most generous offer!

HOW WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE

All believers agree that we are saved by grace, but some say it is by "grace alone". One famous preacher (Cornelius Stam of the Grace Gospel Fellowship) says in his book, "We are saved by grace plus nothing". He further says there is no action man must take to be saved. What does the Bible teach about salvation by grace?

- I. Grace is unmerited favor:
 - A. If a stranger has fallen into a river, I may throw him a rope. When he takes hold and I pull him to shore, he has been saved from drowning by my grace,
 - B. If a man passes my door during a rainstorm and I say, "Come in and get a raincoat", if he accepts, he will have been saved from the storm by my grace.
 - C. So when we accept God's conditions of salvation, we are thus saved from sin by his grace, not by our merit.

- II. Examples of grace:
 - A. Gen. 6:8 says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord", (Consequently he was able to be saved by the ark he built in accord with God's conditions).
 - B. Paul the sinner was saved by grace (Titus 3:7). But he "arose and was baptized" (Ac. 9:18), thus meeting God's conditions.
 - C. This grace is for all men, alike - (Heb. 2:9) (7:25).

- III. Actually those who teach "grace only" do not practice it, for they all admit the sinner must believe and that he must repent, but neither faith nor repentance are grace, for these are action of the sinner.

- IV. We must remember that our salvation is altogether of grace as far as God is concerned. We could never earn it nor work it out and deserve it. But it is by obedience as far as we are concerned:
 - A. We are justified by grace, to receive redemption in Christ (Rom. 3:24).
 - B. But Paul also said we are saved at obedience (Rom. 6:17, 18).
 - C. Paul's work clearly shows how one is saved by grace:
 1. But Paul was baptized to be saved - (Ac. 9:18; 22:16).
 2. Paul preached salvation by grace - (Eph. 2:8).
 3. And Paul did baptize sinners for their salvation - (Ac. 18:8; 16:31-33; 1 Cor. 1:14-16).
 4. Paul taught people to be baptized (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:27).

- V. Salvation by grace is conditional (not unconditional):
 - A. God provided the sacrifice (Savior) (Jn. 3:16; Heb. 10:10).
 - B. God supplied the location (relationship) "in Christ" - (2 Tim. 2:10)
 - C. God purchased the church with the blood of His Son (Ac. 20:28).
 - D. By the Holy Spirit God gave the gospel, his power to save -(Jn. 16:13; Rom. 1:16-17).
 - E. But this salvation is received by faith - (Rom. 5:1; Ac. 13:39).
 - F. It is obtained at obedience - (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:17, 18).

Conclusion: Trust God, accept his grace, obey his will, receive salvation full and free.

A STRONG CHURCH

Introduction: We can see the need for a strong church when we see: (1) Its high cost — Eph. 5:25; (2) Its significant mission — 1 Tim. 3:15; and (3) the amazing results: souls saved or souls lost, depending on whether the church is strong or weak.

- I. Misconceptions as to what constitutes a strong church:
 - A. Not size — it may be filled with half-converted people (but God is not satisfied until we have reached every soul that can be reached by nothing more or less than the pure gospel).
 - B. Not riches — some may be giving much to try to cover their sins, (but God is not happy until each Christian gives as prospered).
 - C. Not the "kind" of people cultured, educated, etc. But it must have the right kind - devoted, godly, righteous).
- II. To be strong the church must be at peace — Eph. 4:3; Amos 3:3;
- III. To be strong the church must be united in action: 1 Cor. 1:10; (Unity in worship, work, devotion, etc.)
- IV. To be strong the church must be pure — Jas. 3:17
 - A. Pure in membership - 1 Cor. 12:13
 - B. Pure in worship — Jn. 4:24
 - C. Pure in work — 1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:10
 - D. Pure in organizational structure — Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9.

Conclusion: We have wasted our time, talents and energies if we produce big churches but do not produce strong ones. But strength must be brought by our own efforts. God will not bestow it miraculously. He has done his part well; now we must do ours to make it strong and to keep it that way.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Introduction: This love of which I speak is not like a fuzzy feeling in the pit of your stomach; it is not to be confused with passion, either. It is not like a bruised apple that will be vile tomorrow, but it is like a deeply dug foundation; like a strong and mighty tower, unshaken by the storms of life. It is like a mighty driving hammer, a mighty magnet, a delicate orchid.

- I. When Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you" (Jn. 13:34-35), he was putting a new emphasis upon love of one another. (See Mt. 5:43-46; Lk 6:27; Mt. 19:19; 22:39; 2 Jn. 5).
- II. It is commanded again and again - Jn. 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8, 9; Gal. 5:14 (all we have to do to our brother is to love him); 1 Thes. 4:9; Jas. 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:9-11; 3:10, 11, 14, 18, 23; 4:7, 8, 11, 12, 20, 21.
- III. How this love is manifested:
 - A. Begins at home - Eph. 5:22-25; Col. 3:18, 19; 1 Pet. 3:1-7. Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21.
 - B. Reaches to our enemies — Mt. 5:44-47
 - C. And to the poor and troubled - Lk. 14:12-14; Jas. 2:1-9; 1:27; 2 Cor. 9:9.
 - D. But also to the brethren in Christ - Col. 1:4; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22.
- IV. Limitation of love for human beings — Mt. 10:37.
- V. Proof of our love - 1 Jn. 5:1-3.
- VI. Love for one another should be motivated by human ties: Ac. 17:26; and spiritual relationships - Eph. 2:14-16.

Conclusion: Love is not always spontaneous, but must be cultivated, fed, nurtured and it may have to be deliberate and determined love. Love is not always *responsive*, but it must be *responsible* love. Love is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end - service to God and man.

LOVE AND I

*He drew a circle that shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.
Anonymous*

THREE ARE LOST

Introduction: Think of the terribleness of being lost: a lost hunter, a lost child, a lost driver, but especially a lost sinner (Isa. 59:1, 2). Now read Lk. 15:4-24.

- I. It is so terrible to be lost because:
 - A. A soul is so precious: Mt. 16:26.
 - B. Sin is so terrible: Prov. 13:15
 1. Sin brought physical death to humanity - Gen. 2:17; 3:19, 24.
 2. Sin brought spiritual death: Rom. 5:12, 19-21, to all who disobey God, then and now. (Rom. 6:23)
 3. Sin is universal - Rom. 3:23
 4. We cannot work our way out of guilt - Heb. 10:4; Rom. 3:20
 5. We cannot cleanse ourselves, for we have no cleansing element - Heb. 9:22 (Pardon is at obedience - Mk. 16:16; in Christ - Eph. 1:7; Gal. 3:26, 27)
 6. We cannot run away from guilt - Num. 32:23.
 - C. Judgment is so sure (Heb. 9:27), so exacting (2 Cor. 5:10), so final. (Ac. 17:31).
 - D. Punishment will be so very bad (Rev. 21:8; Mt. 7:23, 25:30).

- II. A study of the parables of the lost in Lk. 15.
 - A. Why were they lost:
 1. The sheep was stupid - knew he was lost but could not find himself without help (man, the sinner, is often the same).
 2. The coin was unaware - lost because of another's carelessness. Many people are the same.
 3. The boy was rebellious. Some people rebel against God.
 - B. Attitude of the loser:
 1. The shepherd pitied the sheep - left 99 to save one; searched
 2. The woman valued one coin - represented much savings searched
 3. The father loved the son, but just waited for him to "come to himself" and turn from rebellion.
 - C. Application to: ignorantly immoral; deceived religious people; willful followers of human religions, etc.

Conclusion: If you have listened to this lesson, you can't be like the sheep or the coin. Don't be like the boy.

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

Introduction: The church was bought with the highest price ever paid for anything (Eph. 5:25) and its very establishment, its very nature, its very purpose is to glorify God — (Eph. 3:10, 21).

- I. It is not an accident or afterthought but a purposeful body (Eph. 3:11).
- II. It is not of human origin but is a sanctified body (Eph. 5:26).
- III. It is not a sinless body, but a cleansed one (Eph. 5:26), with continuing cleansing always available (1 Jn. 1:7).
- IV. It is not under human authority but only under God's law given through Jesus Christ (Mt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1, 2; Eph. 5:23).
- V. It is not established for social reform or cultural attainment, but for spiritual service (1 Pet. 2:5, 1 Tim. 3:15).
- VI. It is not a democracy, but a kingdom — an absolute monarchy (Col. 1:13, 18).
- VII. It is not an institution you can join, but a spiritual body to which all saved people are added by the Lord (Ac. 2:41, 47).

Conclusion: The church is not a "house-keeping" body, but it is a soul saving instrument — by means of the gospel it is to uphold (1 Tim. 3:15). It is not an American institution, but world-wide in scope. It is big enough to include all the saved, but small enough to exclude all pretenders, etc.

THE GREAT SALVATION

(Heb. 2:3)

Introduction: Salvation from sins is so great because (1) Guilt is so terrible (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Isa. 59:2); (2) Grace is so wonderful - (Eph. 2:8; Jn. 3:16; Rev. 1:5); and (3) A soul is so precious (Mt. 16:26). That great salvation is:

- I. Purchased by blood (Col. 1:14; Rom. 3:24, 25; Heb. 9:14).
- II. Received by faith (Rom. 5:1; Ac. 13:39; Gal. 3:26).
- III. Supplied in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10).
- IV. Secured in the church (Eph. 5:23; Ac. 2:47).
- V. Obtained at obedience (Rom. 6:17, 18; Heb. 5:9; Mk. 16:16).
- VI. Retained by faithfulness (Mt. 10:22; 1 Jn. 1:7-9).
- VII. Delivered in heaven (1 Pet. 1:4, 5; Col. 1:5).
- VIII. Enjoyed for eternity (Heb. 5:9).

Conclusion: This great salvation is for "whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17).

IT IS WORTHWHILE TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Introduction: One could secure many reasons for being a Christian in various parts of the New Testament, but for this study we shall confine ourselves to the book of Hebrews, as follows:

- I. Because we follow the confirmed Word (Heb. 2:3) not a doubtful, unproven way.
- II. Because we may accurately be described as "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1) not by our own merit, but because of God's grace.
- III. Because we become partakers (partners in our salvation) with Christ (Heb. 3:14).
- IV. Because we have a promised rest (Heb. 4:1, 9) Rest from guilt because of pardon and rest eternally in heaven.
- V. Because God never forgets our good works (Heb. 6:10). If he "credits our account" with something it will not be forgotten.
- VI. Because God never remembers our iniquities that he has forgiven (Heb. 10:17, 18). If he has blotted out our sins, he will never charge them against us again — we need not look back at all!
- VII. Because we can come "boldly" before his throne of grace — not with quivering lip, but with assurance (not pride) and hope (Heb. 4:16).
- VIII. Because through Christ, God has granted to us "some better thing" than even to the great people of old (see Heb. 11:40 in context with vs. 33-40). We have the salvation, full and free, paid for by Christ's blood, for which the "olden people" could only look forward.
- IX. Because the Christian doesn't seek a continuing city here, but he seeks one to come (Heb. 13:14).

The Graveyard
by Karl Diestelkamp

*Monuments, at nearly every tiny lot,
That mark for us a special spot,
And all around the eye can see
Reminders, for our memory.*

*Thank God! Our loved ones are not here!
Those to us who are so dear.
Only dust resides beneath this sod.
The living soul is home with God.*

PEACE AND PURITY

(Jas. 3:17)

Introduction: Almost all of us love peace. Purity comes first.

- I. Consider peace: (Rom. 12:18; 1 Pet. 3:11; Ps. 133:1; Gen. 13:8; Eph. 4:3; Mt. 5:9).
- II. Consider purity:
 - A. Purity of heart (1 Tim. 1:5; Jas. 4:8; Prov. 23:7; Mt. 12:34).
 - B. Purity of life (1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:22).
 - C. Purity of worship (Jn. 4:24; Mt. 15:9).
 - D. Purity of work. Individuals (Gal. 6:10; Tit. 3:1; Jas. 1:27; Congregations: (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Cor. 16:1; Ac. 11:29, 30, 2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15, 16).
 - E. Purity of organization (Ac. 14:23; Tit. 1:5; Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).

Conclusion: Purity of doctrine (Gal. 1:8) produces all the others.

SALVATION FOR GOOD AND BAD

Introduction: This is a study from the actual text of the book of Acts with the purpose to show that the most wicked can indeed be saved by God's grace, and that, at the same time, even the very good must be saved by that same grace and in the very same way:

- I. Study salvation received by these evil people:
 - A. A wicked unbeliever (Ac. 16:23-34). [The Jailor]
 - B. A wicked believer (Ac. 9:1-18 [Saul of Tarsus] See also Ac. 22:6-16). (Note: He had already repented, too).
 - C. Some wicked murderers (Ac. 2:22-41). [Pentecostians]
 - D. Some immoral, wicked people (Ac. 18:8) (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11) [Corinthians]
- II. Study salvation that was received by these good people:
 - A. A devout, God-fearing, benevolent, praying man (Ac. 10:1-48). [Cornelius]
 - B. A religious lady (Ac. 16:13-15) [Lydia]
 - C. A sincere, religious man, follower of the Old Law (Ac. 8:27-40). [The Ethiopian]
 - D. Twelve men who had already been baptized (Ac. 19:1-5).

Conclusion: Both the wicked and the good had to hear the gospel and be obedient to it. Then all were saved alike; added to the same body.

AIM HIGH

Introduction: Jesus challenged us to highest ideals and Paul gave inducement for highest ambitions when they said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Mt. 6:33), and ". . . seek those things which are above . . . Set your affections on things above" (Col. 3:1, 2).

- I. Perhaps God is less displeased with mistakes we make than with our failure even to aim:
 - A. Examples: Baseball batter who doesn't take the bat off his shoulder.
 - B. Christians who never try to win souls, to lead prayers, to sing, to help the unfortunate, to defend truth, etc.
- II. Examples of some who did indeed aim high:
 - A. Hannah aimed to "give him unto the Lord ..." - 1 Sam. 1:11
 - B. David aimed to glorify God, not just kill Goliath - 1 Sam. 17:45-47.
 - C. Joseph aimed for personal purity - Gen. 39:12
 - D. Daniel, The three Hebrew lads, Paul and others aimed high.
- III. We will not be blamed because we did not convert the world, but we are guilty of neglect when we don't try to:
 - A. Give the gospel to all men everywhere (Mk. 16:15).
 - B. Keep the church pure and untainted (1 Tim. 4:1-7; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).
- IV. We must all aim high:
 - A. The youth - Eccl. 12:1; 1 Tim. 5:22
 - B. Parents - Eph. 6:4
 - C. Preachers - Rom. 1:14
 - D. Elders - 1 Tim. 3:1; Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3.
 - E. All Christians - Mt. 23:11

Conclusion: Let us all aim for personal purity, individual fruitfulness, high ideals, a heavenly home (Heb. 13:14).

THE MISSION OF A PREACHER by David Ed Harrell

"I have often said that I do not conceive of the mission of an evangelist as badgering those who have no inclination to accept his faith. His mission is to find those who are of a mind to share his mind. The gospel of evangelization is not the compelling of the unwilling, but the search in your times for those who will in your way seek the Lord. My religious quest is to seek those who would be 'peculiar people.'"

THE CHALLENGE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY

Introduction: Jesus did not call us to ordinary faith or duty, but to the extreme, the unusual: Mt. 6:33; Col. 3:1, 2; Jn. 12:25, 26; Mt. 16:24, 25.

- I. The gospel gives extraordinary inducements -
 - A. The love of God (Jn. 3:16)
 - B. The terribleness of sin (Rom. 6:23)
 - C. The assurance of pardon (Rom. 6:14, 17, 18; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5).
- II. God always required extraordinary acts: Noah-Gen. 6; Abraham-Gen. 12:1; 22:2; Red Sea crossing - Ex. 14:15; Jericho - Josh. 6:2-5.
- III. God has always given extraordinary results of faith - David - 1 Sam. 17:45-51; Gideon-Judg. 7:19-24; Elijah- 1 Kings 18:19-46.
- IV. And God has always punished wickedness with extraordinary ways - Nadab and Abihu-Num. 3:4; Uzzah-2 Sam. 6:6, 7; Ananias and Sapphira-Ac. 5:1-10.
- V. Jesus called us to extraordinary activity:
 - A. Give up so much (Mt. 5:29, 30; Mt. 13:44-46).
 - B. Follow so closely (Mt. 7:21; Mt. 6:33; Col. 3:1, 2).
 - C. To love the unloveable (Mt. 5:43-47).
 - D. To obey such apparently unreasonable commands — without asking, "Why?" (As baptism, etc.)
 - E. To base one's hope upon such unworldly things (as virgin birth, resurrection, blood of the cross, etc.).

Conclusion: Faith in Christ, obedience to him and worship and service to God in Christ all require extraordinary devotion in view of an extraordinary reward in heaven, the extraordinary eternal home.

BETTER THAN LIGHT

“And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown!

"And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put thine hand into the hand of God. That shall be to thee better than light and safer than a known way. "

Author unknown

SCRIPTURAL RELIGION

Introduction: Jesus said, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:9). We may have a sincere religion, but be wrong.

- I. Source of scriptural, authority: Ps. 119:89
- II. Importance of scripturalness: Eph. 5:10; 1 Thes. 5:21; Mt. 7:21
- III. Credentials of scripturalness:
 - A. Statement of scripture — Example: Confession (Rom. 10:10)
 - B. Command of scripture — Example: Repent and be baptized (Ac. 2:38)
 - C. Approved apostolic example-Example: Time of communion (Ac. 20:7)
- IV. Silence proves nothing: (Deut. 29:29)
- V. Factors in scripturalness:
 - A. Necessary inference - Example: 1 Cor. 11:26 - "as oft" necessarily infers repetition.
 - B. Specific authority of scripture - Example: (Mt. 26:28) - bread (not fish, bitter herbs, etc.).
 - C. Generic authority of scripture - Example: water for baptism —salty, fresh, clean, muddy, etc.
- VI. Applications:
 - A. Music in worship: Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16 (specifies, "sing")
 - B. Frequency of Lord's supper - Ac. 20:7 and context exemplifies once each week, on Lord's day.
 - C. Government of congregation — Ac. 14:23; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5: 1-3; Ac. 20:28. (Elders over local flock only).
 - D. Cooperation of churches — 2 Cor. 11:8 (concurrent action in same purpose). Also Rom. 15:26 — same in benevolence.
 - E. Support by church of needy saints and of preachers — Phil. 4:15, 16; 1 Cor. 16:1.

Conclusion: Consider: 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Pet. 4:11.

SUCCESS:

He is a success who lives well, laughs often and helps much; who leaves the world a little better than he found it, and who makes the mysteries of God legible in his thoughts and actions.

Anonymous

WORLD EVANGELISM

Introduction: To bring the gospel to all the world in each generation is the singular mission of the church (1 Tim. 3:15) and it is the marching order for Christians (Mt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15, 16; 2 Tim. 4:1-3).

- I. The field is the world (Mt. 13:38).
 - A. A big field, today — more people than any generation ever had.
 - B. An uncultivated field — half the population never heard.
 - C. Part of the field is good soil — fruitful fields in Nigeria, Philippines, India, etc.

- II. We have more ability than any other generation.
 - A. Probably more qualified preachers than ever before. But more could be developed (2 Tim. 2:2).
 - B. We are the richest people that ever lived - Think of Hag. 1:4
 - C. We have the greatest facilities - transportation, communication.

- III. The preciousness of even one soul (Mt. 16:25, 26).

- IV. What we can do.
 - A. Some can go into the destitute fields (Mt. 6:33; Rom. 10:14; Rom. 1:14, 15).
 - B. Some can help to send others (Gal. 6:6; Phil. 1:5; 4:15, 16).
 - C. We can all pray (2 Thess. 3:1, 2).
 - D. We must do a better job at home so that we can do a bigger job around the world.

*"There was a door that stood ajar,
That one had left for me,
But I went seeking other doors,
To which I had no key.*

*And when at last I sought,
A refuge and a light,
A gust of wind had shut the door,
And left me in the night.*

CONSIDER CHRIST JESUS

Introduction: Our text is Heb. 3:1, which contains the simple sentence that is our title — "Consider Christ Jesus." Let us do so, by seeing him portrayed in the book of Hebrews, chapter after chapter, for that is what that great book is about:

Chapter One - He is the only begotten Son of God — vs. 5, 8, 13.

Chapter Two - He is the Son of Man — shows his humanity — vs. 16-18.

Chapter Three - He is "Son over his own house," showing his authority (contrasts to Moses, a servant) - vs. 3-6.

Chapters Four-Seven - He is our High Priest - the one to go to God for us with a sacrifice - (Heb. 10:10).

Chapter Five - He is the author of salvation — vs. 9.

Chapter Six - He is our forerunner — vs. 20.

Chapter Seven - He is the able one — able to save to the uttermost - vs. 25.

Chapters Eight-Ten - He is the giver of the new covenant - 8:6, 13; 9:15-17; 10:9-10.

Chapter Thirteen - He is the unchanging one - altogether dependable - vs. 8.

Conclusion: Perhaps there is no other portrayal of Jesus Christ in all the Bible that is so full of the complete meaning of his life, his death, his resurrection and his intercession for us. He is indeed our mediator - Heb. 8:6; 1 Jn. 2:1.

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Reprints

from Other Years

Perhaps as all of us progress through the years toward greater maturity, both physically and mentally, but especially spiritually, we may look back upon previous years with some anxieties, contrasting our abilities and knowledge then, with that which we think we have now. Sometimes I even wonder how I managed to preach 25 or 35 years ago. In more serious moments of reflection I realize that I probably did so with more power then than now, and though I have learned some things since then, what I knew then was truth and what I preached was sufficient for salvation to all who heard.

For many years now I have been writing a great deal. At first, some articles were submitted and subsequently printed in various papers, but mostly the *Gospel Guardian*; until we started *Truth Magazine* in 1956. In those first years of *Truth Magazine* I wrote the news page, and some other material. However, sometimes we would come together to proofread and find we had too little, so Bryan Vinson Jr. would say, "Well, Leslie, go home and write an article for us." Later, while in Nigeria, and afterward when we no longer published *Truth Magazine* from Chicago-

land, I wrote again for the *Guardian* considerably, as well as some for *Truth*. Then in November, 1969, my sons and I started to publish *Think On These Things* (normally just called *Think*) every two months. Later my son-in-law, Robert E. Speer, and my cousin, Ray Ferris, became involved in this production. Anyway, through the years I have written a great deal, and it is my purpose now to reproduce for the concluding chapter of this book a few of what I consider to be the best articles I have written on various subjects.

Reprinted from *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 16, No. 42, Mar. 4, 1965

IS IT CAUSE FOR JOY?

Love for Christians may cause us to rejoice that no brethren were killed or even suffered in the recent persecutions in the Congo. Love for the souls of lost humanity will cause us sorrow that no brethren were there to suffer.

Perhaps it is easy for most of us to dismiss the whole matter. A brief bit of pity may strike our hearts for widows and children left after the bloodbath. Shallow compassion may even stir within us for the parents and other loved ones who were made sad by the murder of Missionaries of various kinds. But for the most part we will almost all soon forget it. But not I. And my chief sorrow is not for the comparative few who suffered, and even died, but for the many, many who did the killing. More specifically, I am concerned about us — about me. **Why didn't we have some brethren in the Congo?** I am sure there are men who would have gone. But who would send?

And even more significantly, the Congo is just one of many nations where nobody is preaching the pure gospel. Many, many nations would gladly receive us. Few indeed would persecute us. Hundreds would soon become obedient to Christ, who now know not the way, and cannot know "except some man should guide" them (Ac. 8:31).

Brethren, let us not sit complacently by some quiet fireside tonight, or walk tomorrow on the pleasant avenues of our own fair cities, rejoicing that none of our brethren were killed in the Congo massacre. Rather, let us in humility acknowledge our own failure to provide a true servant of Christ and a faithful proclaimer of his word in that far-away land. Nathan Hale, a famous American patriot exclaimed, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." Frankly, I regret that in many nations God's people have **not even one life ready to be given for the welfare of eternal souls of the people there.**

Reprinted from *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 12, No. 1, May 5, 1960

"THE WOMAN THEN LEFT HER WATERPOT"

The challenging story of Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman and later with the men of her village is recorded for us in chapter four of the gospel according to John and contained in this narrative are some very vital lessons for us. There are three particular lessons that can be derived from this chapter that I wish to emphasize in this article. Each of the three stresses a common theme — the duty and privilege of Christians to take the gospel of Christ to all people everywhere.

"Why Talkest Thou With Her"

Verse 27 says that the disciples came to Jesus as he talked with the woman of Samaria and marveled that he talked with her. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, and almost no Jew would speak to them, much less engage them in a friendly conversation as Jesus did this woman. In the minds of the disciples were those two unasked questions, "What seekest thou? or Why talkest thou with her?" They dared not ask them, but their hearts were filled with concern that their Master had so openly violated their national and religious custom.

Many months ago when I was still in the U.S. our plans for going to Nigeria were being discussed with a preacher and his wife. She said, "One would surely have to love the Negroes to go to Africa". She was so right! Likewise those who would go with the gospel to any other nation, or people, and even those who have the courage to go north or south or east or west in the U.S., leaving the ties of home behind, must do so out of a heart of love for strange people. Terrifying indeed will be the day when gospel preachers go anywhere for money, for fame, for honor or for ease. Furthermore, it will be a disastrous day for the church of the Lord when preachers have not that abundant love for any and all, people, rich and poor, black and white, red and yellow, educated and illiterate. Finally, this love for all people must be demonstrated in our lives and not just declared from our lips. Love that is declared and not demonstrated is useless and the one who shouts and boasts of his love for everybody ought to be sure that the use he makes of his time, his talent, his energy and his money is a certain proof of the truth of his words.

"The Woman Then Left Her Waterpot"

That verse didn't mean much to me until I came to Africa. Here, just like it was in Samaria in the days of Christ, women and children carry water on their heads, many times drawing it from wells first (but here sometimes getting it from streams also). These water vessels are relatively precious to the people. When a woman has walked a long

distance (sometimes two or three miles) with her empty vessel, she fully intends to return with it filled with water for her household. She will not readily leave the vessel behind — in fact I think it would be very difficult to get a woman to do so. Even if she is hurried and excited she will at least fill the vessel first and take it with her, for two reason: (1) She values the vessel itself too much to leave it behind and (2) she knows her household is depending upon her to bring the precious water for their needs.

Why did the Samaritan woman leave the waterpot? Why does the New Testament give us this little detail? Precisely this: the woman now was only concerned with informing her people of the great discovery she had made! She said, "Come, see the man which told me all things that I ever did: is not this the Christ?" Hers is the story of a woman who had been fully convinced of the divinity of Jesus. She was sufficiently attracted to Him that worldly concerns became secondary to her. Today so many people have a half-hearted interest in Jesus. So many just have enough religion to make them miserable! The kind of conviction manifested by this Samaritan woman will cause people today to put down the tools of their trade, the instruments of their profession and the devices of their household to 'take up their cross' and follow Jesus. Her first concern was to tell others, and the Deity of Christ will also be filled with the zeal to share the good news with all people.

". . .And To Finish His Work"

When his disciples asked him to eat, Jesus said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of". When they asked if someone had brought him food, he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work". Jesus had now become so fully concerned with teaching the Samaritans the enemies of Israel, that he forgot the pangs of physical hunger and eloquently charged his disciples to "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest". He was teaching one of his first lessons to them about the universal nature of the gospel which they would soon be preaching to all men, beginning in Jerusalem, but going on to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world.

Jesus dramatically clarified to all who had ears with which to hear that he had a two fold task before him: (1) To do the will of the Father and (2) To finish the work he had come to accomplish. His one task involved him in strict obedience to the will of God, for even though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, (Heb. 5:8) and it was necessary that he follow explicitly every commandment of the Father. His other task required perseverance. He could not quit. Only on the cross, could he say, "It is finished". The great life he lived, the many miracles he performed, and the perfect words he had spoken could not

bring remission of sins to lost humanity. He had come to "seek and to save the lost" and to do so he had to live perfectly before them, teach every true principle, and demonstrate his divinity by his mighty works, but not until his blood was shed on Golgotha's hill was the price for redemption settled in heaven.

Christians need to say, "Our work is to do the will of God and to finish the work he has given us". In everything — in personal conduct, in worship, in gospel work — we must be subject to heaven's directives. We must "learn not to go beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6-R.V.) and to "abide in the teaching of Christ" (2 Jn. 9). Likewise we must "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1), possess the pure religion of James 1:27, and "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Each and every day we must be busy finishing the work God has given us to do. We are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10), and we are declared by the Lord to be "The light of the world" (Mt. 5:14). The Lord has not commanded that we convert the world, but he has commanded that we "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Our responsibility does not include forcing people to believe, and we have never failed just because men and women do not obey, but our obligation does include looking out upon the harvest fields of the world with love in our hearts and truth upon our lips and we have never succeeded until we have "sown the good seed" into as many hearts as possible.

The life of a gospel preacher will be a life of frustration if he constantly reads, writes and quotes, "Go into all the world", but if he still tries to satisfy the demands of his own conscience in a work where he is hired to do the work that elders should do, where he is general custodian of the building, where he is a nurse-maid to a group of weak-kneed Christians, where he preaches again and again in the same four walls to the same sleepy people, and where the ones who are supposed to be already saved take so much of his time that he must neglect to "do the work of an evangelist," for which specific work, God, through the gospel, has called him to preach. But the work of any Christians can be a satisfying work when it is characterized by the fruitfulness that comes to the pioneer, the real soldier of the cross, the one who goes into the highways and by-ways, at home and away, near and far, seeking honest people of all nations who will hear the truth that can make them free.

Brother, look out upon the harvest today — and go sow the good seed, for the harvest is indeed great. Remember, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, so let us preach the goodness and severity of God that brings sinners to conviction and conversion, to every soul in all nations.

Reprinted from *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 13, No. 6, June 8, 1961

THE OVER-ACTIVATED CHURCH

Nobody likes a sleepy church. Christ sharply condemned a church that was lukewarm. (Rev. 3:15, 16). Every church should utilize its time, its talents and even its property to the fullest extent in an active program of gospel work. Yet it is my firm belief that many, many churches are over-activated. In at least the following three areas, there is too much activity much of the time and in many places.

Preachers have entirely too many activities. Many good and capable men are now devoting almost all their time as "Youth Directors," "Educational Directors," "Family Counselors," "Marriage Counselors," etc. Even those who do not have such specific responsibilities are often required by a spoiled church to spend too much time in social calling upon the members, and upon entertaining. In *Time* magazine, April 7, 1961, in an article discussing "The Organization Church" we find the following significant declaration from a denominational preacher who sees the menace of present trends among preachers: "A drastic prescription for the organization church's organization minister is offered by Pastor Floyd Doud Shafer of the Salem Presbyterian Church, in Salem, Ind., in last week's *Christianity Today*: 'Fling him into his office, tear the office sign off the door and nail on the sign: STUDY. Take him off the mailing list, lock him up with his books . . . and his typewriter and his Bible . . . Force him to be the one man in our surfeited communities who knows about God . . . Set a time clock on him that will imprison him with thought and writing about God for 40 hours a week. Shut his garrulous mouth spouting 'remarks' and stop his tongue always tripping lightly over everything non-essential. Bend his knees in the lonesome alley, fire him from the P.T.A. and cancel his country club membership . . . Rip out his telephone, burn his ecclesiastical success sheets, refuse his glad hand, put water in the gas tank of his community buggy and compel him to be a minister of the Word'."

While visiting a certain church, one member complained to me that the local preacher had sometimes failed to visit this member's home for as long as three months! At another place the local preacher and his wife felt that they had to both go out every day, and usually twice a day, with their two babies, taking meals with the various members, though it was a terrific burden upon the wife. I have seen many church buildings which contained a room called "The Preacher's Study" but which served as a place where all the disgruntled, disturbed and dissenting members came to pour out their woes, but I have hardly seen even one building which contained a room called "The Elder's Room," where any and all members

could go at certain times and expect to find their overseers ready to help them.

Many times the elders indirectly designate the preacher as the general superintendent over everything, and they expect him to do just as little actual preaching and teaching of the word as conscience will permit. We certainly need to release the preacher from such bondage and give him time to study, meditate and teach. We ought not to judge the work of a preacher by the number of hours he spends in his car, the number of miles he drives and the number of calls he makes, and we should determine his quality by his real knowledge of the word and by his use of it in his life and in preaching and teaching.

Over-Active Elders

Everywhere we see elders being involved in almost every kind of activity except that God-given work of feeding and overseeing the flock. They are Directors of homes, programs, and projects. They are overseers of missions and of missionaries. According to modern standards, the elders must be good business men and capable executives, but they may not know what to tell an erring child of God to do to be saved and the extent of their teaching is to read something from the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians at the Lord's table on Sunday morning. (Please do not infer that this is an accusation against all bishops in the Lord's church, for many are dedicated, godly and informed men and do their authorized work effectively; but this is intended as a criticism of trends and practices that are prevailing in many places.)

Over-Active Congregation

A look at many church bulletins will show that some churches are involved in all kinds of unauthorized projects while they do very little of that which is truly the duty of the church. Social halls are built and get more use than the auditorium. The stage is used more than the pulpit. There is more eating and drinking together than there is singing, praying and studying. Announce a party and 100 people will come, but announce a prayer meeting and perhaps ten will be present. Invite the people to come together to sing and there will be a good hand-full, but invite them to come for a picnic and it will be a house-full. Ask for a contribution for flowers, or for curtains for the nursery, or for pavement for the parking lot and the money will be abundant, but ask for money to send a preacher into the slums or across the tracks or to the other side of the world and somebody will surely say, "We just have all we can do to support the work at home." (Again, please do not construe this as a complaint regarding our own work here in Nigeria. Brethren everywhere have been so very, very liberal — **yes conservative brethren are liberal!!!** - and our every

necessity has been provided and abundant gifts have come to help us do this gospel work. However, I have observed attitudes described above in many places and it is always shameful to see brethren show little interest in gospel work while they are so enthusiastic in other activities which are usually unauthorized to begin with.)

Today we need less activity and more religion; less worldliness and more godliness; less human wisdom and more of the "foolishness of God;" fewer suggestions and more complete subjectiveness. Let there be less human dignity in the pulpit and more of the Divine revelation. (1 Cor. 2:13, Gal. 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15; 4:11) Let there be less human vanity in the pew and more virtue and true spiritual vitality (Rom. 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-10) We need to quit trying to "glorify the church" by making it subject to the desires and dreams of men, and determine to make the church subject to Christ in all things, remembering that he purchased it with his own blood so that he might "sanctify and cleanse it" and "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27).

Reprinted from *Think*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Mar.-Apr., 1975 A

DOUBLE DOSE

A few years ago a popular song was expressing the idea that 'What the world needs more of is love, love, love.' Well, we can surely paraphrase that and safely say that what Christians need more of is love, love, love! (I don't mean that is all they need, either). And this love is not simply a fuzzy feeling in the pit of one's stomach, nor is it merely a sentiment held nor a thrill experienced. It involves the one who loves in action. So we need more love - love for God, for Christ, for truth, for the church and for the lost. And as I travel about among my dearly beloved brethren in Christ, I notice a specific need for more love for one another.

In the August, 1975 issue of *READER'S DIGEST*, Mr. Howard Whitman said, "A wise physician said to me, 'I have been practicing medicine for 30 years, and I have prescribed many things. But in the long run I have learned that for most of what ails the human creature the best medicine is love'.

" 'What if it doesn't work?', I asked.

" 'Double the dose', he replied."

In this brief note today I am pleading with my brethren to seriously consider the above suggestion. Don't cast it aside as an idle joke. It isn't a joke — nor is it a joke to observe the strife, jealousy, hatred, envy and

division that prevails in so many places and among so many otherwise good brethren. "Love one another with a pure heart, fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22). And if that doesn't work, double the sincerity and the fervency!

Reprinted from *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 16, No. 48, Apr. 15, 1965

SAY "YES"

To be pleasing to God we must very often say "Yes". There seem to be some people who determine to say "No" to almost everything. Some such people are mad-at-the-world. Others are habit-bound. Some may simply be fearful — afraid that if they do something it will be wrong. But one who lives in the negative is an obstructionist even though he does not intend to be.

Of course no one appreciates a "Yes man" — one who agrees with everything. He is like the preacher who boasted that he could preach that the world is either flat or round, to suit his crowd. A "Yes" on our lips that does not come from our heart and that does not lead to affirmative action is worthless and hypocritical.

Say "No", Sometimes

Loud and clear, and with strength, we must often say "No". To sin, to false doctrine and to unscriptural practice, we must, with sincerity and with vigor say "No". We must not allow majorities, promotions or personalities to prevent us from forthright rejection of all error and evil. We must willingly stand with a minority, or even alone as we oppose every false way. Moses stood with the minority against sin in high places (Heb. 11:25). Elijah seemed almost alone in opposition to Baal's prophets (1 Kings 18). John did not flinch before the governor, but denounced sin even in such place (Mt. 14:4). The courage to say "No" and the fidelity to mean it are essential qualities of those who would find favor with God.

"Yes" Must Predominate

But life must not be negative. Accomplishments are almost always dependent upon "Yes". Fruitfulness in service to Christ is necessarily a result of positive action. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) but because so many think and act negatively so much, the church sometimes seems more like a **pillow** and the truth is often grounded.

In evangelism, while we decline any form of missionary society we must press forward enthusiastically with truth. In helpfulness to the unfortunate, while we resist movements that would degrade the church

and make it a social and cultural society, we must ever be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8), keeping Christians active in pure religion (Jas. 1:27) and ready to every good work (Titus 3:1). While we stoutly oppose the support of human institutions from the church treasury, we must put more emphasis upon the individual activity according as every man has opportunity (Ga. 6:10). As we oppose that cooperation of churches that brings about the loss of autonomy, we must strongly encourage that cooperation of churches that is characterized by concurrent action - each church doing her own work, and all the churches working toward the same objectives with zeal.

It is not enough for us to build a **negative** fence that will keep out digression. We must, with **positive, forward** action press ourselves and the churches into the battle for truth and righteousness. We must build up, and not simply tear down. Indeed, we must pour out of our lives every sin and every evil, and we must determine to cast out of the church every false doctrine and corrupt practice, but we must remember that **emptiness is uselessness**. We must be filled with holiness and godliness, and the church must be richly possessed with fruitfulness. And remember, just as "No" may help to eliminate evil, "Yes" helps to fill us with good.

Reprinted from *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 22, No. 17, Sept. 3, 1970

A RESPONSE TO, "WHY I BELIEVE IN SEGREGATION"

In the July 23, 1970 issue of this magazine our beloved brother R. Ervin Driskill argued strongly for segregation of the races. I regret that this emotion-packed controversy has thus been added to the issues troubling God's people. It should have been possible for brethren to have held differing views on this question without causing it to become an open issue. However, in view of brother Driskill's strong and provocative assertions, I must, for the sake of truth, respond. I have the very same obligation that Paul had when he said of his brother, Peter, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11). My conscience will not allow me to let this matter pass unanswered. With malice for none and with love for all I must reply as follows:

1. Brother Driskill asserts that God made the white race and that he made the black race. But he fails to quote even one verse of scripture as proof. Indeed, there is no such verse. The fact is that God's creative work ended on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2) and he had then made one man and one woman, both of the same race (Gen. 2:21-23). No one knows whether

they were white, black, red or yellow. All human beings who have lived since then have been a result of God's law of reproduction — that every thing should reproduce "after his kind" (Gen. 1:24-28). Thus it is obvious that God did not make "kinds" of people — he did not create races. Since this is true, it is equally obvious that every distinguishing racial characteristic which we see today is the result of the reproductive process whereby various features are developed (such as stature, color of skin, etc.). Indeed, Paul said, God "hath made of one blood all nations . . ."

2. Brother Driskill says that he contends for the "fixed order" which God established. But again he cites no scripture at all to prove such a fixed order. In fact, if the color of the skin were a fixed matter, then we would all have the same color as Adam and Eve had. But we do not have the same color — we cannot have since there are various skin colors.

3. This does not mean that I am urging a mixture of races or that I even contend for a required integration. But I am contending earnestly that: (1) God did not create races (Gen. 11:1, 6—they were all one people). (2) God does not regard races today (Ac. 10:34 — he is no respecter of persons). (3) God's people must not regard any race or any individual as "second class," which attitude is almost inevitable if one believes the things brother Driskill teaches.

4. Brother Driskill accuses those who oppose segregation of cooperating with the communists. The fact is that communism as we know it today is no more sympathetic to integration of races than is any other system. But a further fact is that Christians must oppose all injustice and inequality whether it be in communism, capitalism, Christianity or anywhere else. In our troubled world today I can have no sympathy for racism whether it manifests itself among the white or the black. Physically, the Christian needs to recognize that he is an absolute brother to every human being (Rom. 2:11). God "regardeth not persons" (Deut. 10:17). "There is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons" (2 Chron. 19:7). When we become more and more like God in whose image we are all made, then we will surely have the same attitude he has toward all men.

Reprinted from *Think*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Nov., 1970

INTENSIFY THE SEARCH

The intensity of our search for truth will surely increase in direct proportion to our desire to know the whole will of God, and in exact comparison to our comprehension of the significance of our guilt and the magnitude of God's grace.

Reprinted from *Think*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Mar., 1972

"I'LL PICK UP MY MARBLES AND LEAVE"

There is one in almost every crowd. He is self-willed. He will gladly and enthusiastically play marbles with you just as long as every detail of the game proceeds according to his own desires. He may not be much concerned about the rules of the game but he is insistent regarding each incidental. And if things don't go just exactly as he wants, he immediately threatens the whole arrangement with the declaration that, "I'll pick up my marbles and leave."

Regretfully we must acknowledge that self-will is not only exhibited in boys who play marbles. The same unyielding, domineering attitude is frequently manifested among God's people. It does not relate, in this consideration, to matters of doctrinal authority but to matters of human judgment: "If the elders call John Doe for a meeting, I'll quit"; or "If they don't support a preacher in Big Tussle, I'll take my family to another congregation." Some say, "If they waste the Lord's money by putting in air conditioning, I won't give here anymore" while others say, just as stubbornly, "If they don't put in air conditioning, I'll go where they do have it." The list of items over which brethren feud and fight and even divide is almost endless and perhaps 99 per cent of such items are in the realm of judgment and altogether incidental to the doing of God's will.

Paul said, "Speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

But some will say, "Don't worry about it. If such a self-willed person leaves, the congregation is better off." Yes, this may be true. But, he will go to another church and become a source of friction there also. Furthermore, his own soul is in jeopardy. Those whose hearts are filled with bitterness and who hold malice and or resentment in their minds cannot expect to receive forgiveness from the Lord. I fear that some brethren whom I love very dearly may miss heaven, not just because they picked up their marbles and left, but because, after doing so, they hold bitterness in their hearts.

Every gospel preacher teaches Christians to "walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7) in order to have continuing forgiveness. But how can such a preacher expect to receive forgiveness of his own sins while he, teaching others to walk in the light, walks in darkness himself (See 1 Jn. 2:9-11).

For the sake of the house of God, whose house we are, and for the welfare of every living stone in that house, one of which each Christian is, I plead that all arrogance and pride, all self-will and selfishness and all malice and bitterness be put away.

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"GIANT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW"

Every little program and each new promotional scheme has the potential of growing into a separate or at least a satellite entity. Just as a multitude of raindrops finally make a creek and many creeks make a river and just as that river is not simply a creek nor is a creek simply a raindrop, likewise many apparently innocent projects *become something else*.

Thus small orphan homes that functioned mostly as clearing houses became huge human societies that prey upon church treasuries relentlessly in their frenzied effort to grow bigger and bigger. In like manner, simple, orderly arrangements that bring youngsters together for camping, play and Bible teaching, frequently develop into powerful forces among brethren, often wielding influence over and above that of the church, and expecting support from the congregations. The Herald of Truth has escalated from an unscriptural organizational arrangement into a mighty machine that is idolized by some and feared by others — so much so that they dare not oppose it.

It seems almost impossible to have any cooperative work of Christians in addition to the functions of the local church without such cooperative effort becoming an entity in itself. For instance a number of Christians might utilize a booth at a County or State Fair for purposes of teaching the Word. But usually it doesn't stop there. The tail soon begins to wag the dog! It becomes a big conglomerate — a county-wide or state-wide organization that functions unscripturally from the standpoint of both organization and finance. The same is true for "Youth Meetings." It is not wrong for young Christians (or old ones either) from a dozen towns to meet together. But simplicity in more orderly arrangements is often soon swallowed up in organization structuring.

I believe it is right for Christians to cooperate in scriptural work. Paul and Barnabas did so. Likewise Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke did so. They cooperated without forming a Cooperative. They worked together in orderly arrangements without establishing any kind of entity other than the church. They did not organize the "P.T.S.L. Proclaimers" with Paul as corresponding secretary, Timothy as exhorter, Silas as errand boy and Luke as health advisor. Why can't we cooperate without establishing entities that may be or may become unscriptural?

Finally, when two or more people do band themselves together for good work such as they may do in establishing a hospital, a school, a benevolent arrangement, etc., let such be kept completely separate and distinct from the church. This means no support would be sought or accepted from church treasuries. And it also means that such organizations would in no

sense undertake to do the work of the church. They would not become substitutes for or adjuncts of the church.

If someone would operate an orphan home on this basis and would do so with wisdom and prudence I could support it. Certainly if some doctors and nurses want to operate a hospital, here or overseas, as a genuine humanitarian work and if they do not make it a subsidiary of the church, I can cooperate with them. But we must ever remember the human inclination to attach all such arrangements to the body of Christ — to make the human arrangement dependent upon the church and to imply that the church can hardly exist without the other.

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"KEEP THYSELF PURE"

Paul wrote the words to the younger man, Timothy (I Tim. 5:22). Consideration of these words naturally divides itself into the *four* following parts:

1. No man is absolutely pure, for "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23) and "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (I Jno. 1:8). So, before we can keep ourselves pure, *we must be purified*. This is accomplished by the grace of God and through the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Indeed we are purified when we obey the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 6:17, 18; 1 Peter 1:22). By our obedience in faith, God pardons our past sins because of the mediation of Christ (Heb. 9:15).

If I give my shirt to someone and tell him to keep it clean, he may reply that "First it must be washed." One cannot keep something clean or pure until it is first cleansed or purified. So we cannot keep ourselves pure until we have first obeyed Christ for the purifying of our souls.

2. To be continually pure before God's throne requires two very significant things: (A) We must avoid sin. This means we must learn more truth so we will not be overtaken in ignorant sin (Acts 3:17). We must train ourselves in carefulness so that we are not overtaken in sins of carelessness and weakness (Mt. 26:41). We must certainly keep ourselves from wilful sin (Heb. 10:26). (B) We must repent and pray. Since none are perfect, all must acknowledge guilt and plead for mercy (Ac. 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9). Thus, by the same blood that purifies us when we are born again, we are purified again and again.

3. If we are to apply Paul's words to Timothy to our own case, we must remember that he said, "Thyself" - he did not make Timothy steward of another man's purity. We can surely be grateful, too. It is a full-time job for each of us to keep himself pure without being burdened with the guilt

of another. But it is also challenging, for no other person is responsible for our own purity. Timothy was to be an example to others (I Tim. 4:12, 16). By personal purity he was to lead others instead of becoming a watchman over them.

4. The demands of Paul's words are great. Paul didn't say, "Keep busy," or "keep awake." He didn't say, "Keep thyself happy" or "keep thyself strong." He commanded the highest ideal, purity. And purity on our part demands at least the following:

(A) We must be pure in heart (Mt. 5:8). That is, we must have pure motives (intents) (Heb. 4:12). This eliminates hypocrisy.

(B) We must have pure thoughts (Phil. 4:8). Solomon said, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

(C) We must have pure words (Titus 2:8). David said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14). Words that are cheap, profane, vulgar have no place upon the lips of God's children. Unclean words, deceptive words and all other forms of impurity should be kept from our lips.

(D) We must have pure deeds. That is, we must avoid doing evil and at the same time we must do good. (1 Pet. 3:10-12). We cannot possibly please God if our deeds are evil. But an empty life is also quite useless, so we must not only empty out the bad, but we must fill up our lives with good.

Paul's admonition to Timothy can be summed up quite well with the words of John, "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:6, 7). Indeed, to keep ourselves pure we must walk in the light, which will certainly help us avoid sin and will assure us of forgiveness when we are overtaken in fault.

For God's glory today, and our own eternal salvation, let us all determine to keep ourselves pure.

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WILL GOD GIVE US VICTORY?

David said, "The battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47). Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). In view of these and other inspired messages of confidence, won't God always bless his own people?

The Answer: "No"

1. He will not bless us if there is sin in our camp. Joshua was God's own chosen leader of God's own chosen people. Achan was one of those people — just one among many. But because of Achan's sin, the whole battle was lost. God did not give victory to his own people, fighting for his own cause (see Josh. 7). So, today, if we are not winning spiritual battles, perhaps there is sin in our camp. God can not give victory to those whose lives are filled with lying, stealing, profanity, adultery, etc.

2. He will not bless us if we "pitch our tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12). Lot chose the fine pasture land of the Jordon valley, but his desire for fat cattle and sheep caused the loss of everything (Gen. 19:24-30). And today if we set our hearts on worldly gains God cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) in a heart filled with greed, vanity and covetousness.

3. He will not bless us if we live in disobedience. Saul was religious. He would not go to battle until a sacrifice had been made to God (1 Sam. 13:12). So he said, "I forced myself". He offered the sacrifice even though he knew he was not authorized to do that work. His disobedience cost him his kingdom. We too may be religious, and we may do great and mighty works (Mt. 7:21-23). But "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). We must not become so involved and enthused with religious projects, programs and promotions that we forget to obey God. We may indeed be "on the march" without orders from our King!

4. He will not bless us if we make unholy alliance as Balaam did (Nu. 24:1-9); if we follow our own self-will as Cain did (Gen. 4:3-5); if we reject God's own arrangements for us as Korah did (Nu. 16:3) (See Jude 11).

5. He will not bless us if we have little faith and follow afar off as Peter did (Mt. 14:31; Mt. 26:58).

Another Answer: "Yes"

1. He will give us victory if we fight the good fight as Paul did, and as Elijah did against the people of Baal (1 Kings 18:19-46).

2. He will give us victory if we trust him and follow his own way even as Gideon did (Judges 7:19-24).

3. He will give us victory in spiritual pursuits if we will (1) Seek first his kingdom (Mt. 6:33); (2) Set our affections on things above (Col. 3:1); (3) Pray without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17); (4) Labor together with him (1 Cor. 3:9); (5) Walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7); (6) Keep ourselves pure (1 Tim. 5: 22) and (7) Overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

"The battle is the Lord's!" He is still able to deliver the enemy into our hands just as he did in David's day. Who will volunteer? Who will put on the whole armor, take the sword of the Spirit, and go fight? The victory will be eternal life - for the volunteer and for others whom he enlists in the service.

The enemy is everywhere, even next-door to you! And God has no hands but yours, no lips but yours, to do the work and speak the Word that will bring victory.

You are not David. You don't have to fight a giant. You are not Paul. You don't have to be beaten, stoned and shipwrecked. But you are a Christian! If you can't win a battle as David did, you can win a soul! If you are not permitted to die for Christ as Paul did, you can live for him, which is your spiritual service (Rom. 12:1). Then God will give the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 15:57).

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"AND THEY ROSE UP TO PLAY"

"The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" - Ex. 32:6. The Lord does not condemn eating and drinking nor does he criticize playing. But inspiration does say, "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose" - Eccl. 3:1. Likewise the Word teaches the appropriateness of certain circumstances for such physical, fleshly indulgences. Paul asked, "What? Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" - 1 Cor. 11:22.

But many brethren are turning the church into a social club and are using church buildings for entertainment centers. Functions that God intended for the home have been transferred to the "fellowship hall" which is really nothing less than a party room! Activities that should be the responsibility of parents have been *assumed* by the church and money that should support the teaching of the Word is often used to pay for stainless steel kitchen ware in the meeting house. Pots and pans that should be in the family cupboard now frequently occupy space in the church pantry and are paid for with money that is borrowed from a bank, supposedly for the purpose of saving souls.

And all of this is done under the guise of "keeping our young people." But it won't work. Oh, yes, parties will bring them to the meeting house but such will not bring them to repentance. Indeed, entertainment will fill the church building with laughter and will tickle the hearts of the worldly, but it will not go up before the throne of God as praise to him nor will it fill the hearts with faith.

In the long ago when Aaron saw the golden calf he proclaimed a feast to the Lord. Early on the morrow they made offerings and the people feasted and played. But the Lord said to Moses, "Thy people . . . have corrupted themselves ..." - Ex. 32:7, 8. And, alas, it has happened again! The

idols today are not molten images, but rather refrigerators, stoves, tables and tableware, couches and coffee pots. Oh, the people will offer adoration and praise all right — to the religion of fun and frolic, to the spirit of pray and play and to the mission of sip and sing!

Indeed the church building may echo with the sounds of a busy place —the rattling of dishes and silverware, the shrill laughter of playing children, the boisterous noise of teenage fun-makers and even with the strumming of the banjo or the thumping of the piano. Noise? Yes! Is it suited to the meeting house? No. Is it suitable as a function of the church? No. Did God authorize it under such circumstances? No. Is it necessary as a means of bringing the youth to Christ? No. The gospel is still God's power to save — Rom. 1:16. And the purpose of the spiritual house, which is the church, is to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ - 1 Pet. 2:5.

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MARTHA, MARTHA

Jesus said to Martha, "Thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed." And today many people are like Martha. They think in terms of delicious food, delicate clothing, exquisite furnishings. They want to be gracious hosts (or hostesses), hospitable friends, pleasant companions. Of course none of those "things" are bad —they may indeed be good. But Mary had chosen the better part (see Lk. 10:38-42). Mary did not offer him tea, but she accepted the life-giving drink by hearing him gladly. Martha's attitude was that of serving him in worldly things, Mary's attitude was in spiritual benefits from him. What of you and me?

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"LEARN OR BURN"

You have often heard that man must "Turn or burn". That is, he must repent or perish (Lk. 13:3). Much emphasis must be placed upon repentance. God cannot be reconciled with sin. Rather, man, to be reconciled to God must quit his wickedness. How true it is: "Turn or burn".

But for use in this article let us also see that we must also, "Learn or

burn". A lazy, indifferent attitude toward God's Word may indeed be the cause of eternal destruction. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". Notice that truth does not make us free unless that truth is known.

Penicillin did not make people free from infection until the truth was known about it — so that such truth could be applied for man's good. So it is in every field of science, it is also true in industry, agriculture, commerce and other fields. Truth must be known to be most beneficial.

But in religion truth is even more important. False religions prosper everywhere. The hearts of men are led astray by untrue doctrines. The unlearned become the unstable. Those without knowledge of God's Word are most susceptible to evil leaders and to false teaching.

Why Learn

If we learn truth we will know our own faults. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Thus we will not trust in our own goodness. We will be driven, by knowledge of our own guilt, to rely upon the grace of God (Eph. 2:8).

If we learn truth we will understand the fullness of God's love and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7).

If we learn the truth we will comprehend the conditions of salvation that were given by Jesus, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

Must The Christian Learn, Too?

Yes, indeed, God's very own people must "Learn or burn". "Study to show thyself approved . . ." (2 Tim. 2:15).

If we learn truth we can overcome temptation. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

If we learn truth we can serve fruitfully. Jesus said, "Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (Jn. 15:2). Again he said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (Jn. 15:8). But the scriptures "completely furnish unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17), so it is very important that we know truth in order that we may be fruitful servants of Christ.

If we learn truth it will enable us to live righteously. "By his divine power he hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

If we learn truth we can worship acceptably, for those who do not follow truth worship in vain (Mt. 15:9). God wants us to worship him, but he has also told the way that pleases him (Jn. 4:23, 24; Ac. 2:42, etc.).

If we learn truth we can live most satisfactorily here. "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Peter 3:10-12).

If we learn truth we can have a true hope of a better life after this life on earth is over. "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). He has not promised eternal salvation to all who believe and are baptized, but to all who do that and then go on in daily obedience. But to be obedient to God, one must know what his will is. Truly, without a true knowledge of God's Word, one cannot hope to enter heaven. Those who deliberately neglect to learn must indeed expect to burn!

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TAKING A DOG BY THE EARS

If the dog is small, or if he is docile, one might indeed "take him by the ears" to teach him to bark, or at least to cause his "bark" to develop greater volume, etc. But if the dog is large and especially if he is cross, one would hardly "take him by the ears" at all. And it is evidently this kind of dog that is anticipated in Solomon's words in Proverbs 26:17 when he said, "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears." The lesson is very obvious. One who injects himself into affairs that do not belong to him is likely to be hurt by the action. It is a very dangerous business.

Yet we have seen, lately, the very opposite extreme demonstrated here in our own good land. People have been known to stand by and refuse to assist one who was being robbed or assaulted. In one case in one of our modern cities, forty or more people — mostly men — stood passively by while a woman was beaten to death. They declined to give heed to her plea for help. No doubt their excuse would have been that it was not their affair.

In religion the same spirit sometimes prevails. Even among good brethren there is a tendency to look with pity upon those who are drifting into sin and error but to decline to approach them in any positive manner regarding their departures. Because they don't want to be called

meddlers, some brethren seem to be afraid to grab the dog by the ears to protect and perhaps save a soul from apostasy, or to prevent digression in a church.

As the term is ordinarily used today I do not mind to be called a meddler. In fact I admit the charge. When a soul is wandering in error and when a church is marching toward apostasy it becomes my duty to meddle in their business, for their welfare is also my business. (James 5:19, 20). Because it is my business to help them as much as possible, my business may involve me in meddling in their business!

We must, of course, diligently try to avoid interference in matters wherein we have no responsibility. Yet we must have the courage to do our best to help any brother or sister in Christ solve even some personal problems that may jeopardize his or her soul, and we must have the fortitude to exert all the influence we can upon any church that may be doubting, drifting, departing or dying. If such action be called meddling, then let it be so called, and let us not be embarrassed or embittered by such descriptions that may be cast at us. In order that they and we may be in heaven at last, we must help people to know and to follow truth. To do this, sometimes it is necessary to ignore the sensitive feelings and the bitter accusations of those who are going astray and of others who are leading the unsuspecting into apostasy.

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UNILATERAL LOVE

It seems to be a part of our nature to love those who love us. Of course the Christian is challenged to love even those who have not deserved our love. We are to love the un-lovely and if we only love our brethren, we have no greater love than do the people of the world (Mt. 5:46, 47). And yet it is so easy for us to consecrate our love, showering it upon the very ones who love us and who have motivated our love by the good they have done to us. It is especially difficult for us to love the hateful, the perverse, the vile, the profane. Some of us seem to be content if we can assure ourselves that we do not hate them. We are satisfied to take a neutral, passive attitude toward such people. We would do them no harm, but at the same time we do not manifest love for them by an active, aggressive, zealous interest in them and goodwill for them.

But consider God's love for us. His love is indeed unilateral. He did not wait until we deserved his love. Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mt. 9:13). God didn't send his Son

to die for innocent little babies who are altogether lovable, but for sinful adults whose transgressions have made them enemies of the heavenly Father. God loved us (and still loves us) even when we were altogether filthy and defiled. He loved us in spite of our wickedness and not simply because of our holiness.

And all of this has been written to help us to appreciate the love of God more, and to encourage us to imitate his love for all humanity. While we hate their evil deeds and abstain from them, let us love those who do evil and manifest that love in the only way that is practical; that is, by doing good to them (Gal. 6:10) with sincerity (Phil. 1:9, 10).

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WHAT IF YOU DON'T DIE?

Sometimes we say, "Life is uncertain; death is sure". But it really isn't true. No living person can be sure he will die. Herein lies one of our worldly problems: we don't really expect death soon, so we pacify our conscience by postponing reformation of our lives, supposing that the only end that can come is by death.

One false teacher of this century wrote the now famous but untrue words, "Millions now living shall never die." He predicted that the end of the world would come in his lifetime, but he missed!

In complete rejection of the above prediction, many good people fall into an equally false and destructive attitude. They hardly believe the end can come at all in our lifetime. Therefore they indulge in a false security that may actually lead to their eternal ruin. Every one of us needs desperately to face squarely the truth that, "Billions now living *may* never die".

Some denominations place much emphasis upon the second coming of Christ. Sometimes they display signs that say, "Jesus Is Coming". And most of us almost sneer when we read them!

Let's face it: most of us don't really believe Jesus will come before we die. Do we?

Please don't misunderstand me. I do not predict that Jesus will come soon. He may indeed wait ten thousand years and violate no passage of scripture (Mt. 24:36).

However, we must face the fact that Jesus may come now. Even before I lift my fingers from this typewriter, he may come, and leave no scripture unfulfilled. In view of this challenging truth, and because of this scriptural reality, what should we do?

1. We ought to live as though every hour is the last one (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

2. By continuing in faithful obedience, we ought to maintain the salvation that is "in Christ", by God's grace. (Rom. 8:1-13; Mt. 10:22).

3. Not with fear and dread, but with assurance and consolation, we ought to confidently say, "Jesus is coming".

We have heard of two little boys: the father of one was a cruel drunkard. When the father approached the boy would run away, screaming, "Daddy's coming". The other father was kind and good. When he would approach, the son would run to meet him, shouting jubilantly, "Daddy's coming".

Today, many with anguish of heart despairingly cry, "Jesus is coming". To them it is a dreadful thought. Or else they just try to forget about it, and ignore the subject. Others joyfully, triumphantly say, "Jesus is coming". To them this is victory. To them this brings peace of heart.

Dear reader, what if you don't die? What if Jesus comes now? Are you ready?

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HOW BINDING ARE BIBLE PATTERNS?

In a desperate effort to justify certain practices, some brethren have been driven to declare that we are not to be bound by New Testament examples. They ask "How do we know that they are meant for patterns for us to follow? May they not have been just incidents that happened to happen? They will all admit that such patterns authorize us to do anything thus "patterned," but they deny that we are limited to the doing of those things without addition. Specifically they say that the examples of church cooperation (where several churches helped in one specific work — 1 Cor. 16:1-4; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 11:8) do not bind us to doing it that way. They say that Paul didn't tell us not to do it another way, and that for all we know they may have sent **through one church** on other occasions about which we have no record.

To so argue is to abandon the basic principles for which we have stood through the years. It is to completely ignore the silence of the Scriptures. By the same reasoning we could conclude that we only have examples of observing communion on the first day of the week, but for all we know they may have met for that purpose on other days. It would definitely open the door to Thursday night communion. Likewise, by this rule we could conclude that the Scripture only says, "sing" but for all we know they may have "played" too, and just didn't mention it in the inspired record. The New Testament gives a pattern for church government, showing that each

church is to have its own elders, but by the method of reasoning being reviewed we could conclude that there may have been some organization ABOVE the elders which just isn't mentioned in the Bible.

If we are not to be bound by precept and example, then we are not bound at all, except when the Lord says "Don't." If divine positive law does not LIMIT as well as authorize, then we can do anything unless the New Testament specifically says "don't do it." By this rule, we would like to see brethren try to oppose a Ladies Aid Society, a rummage sale to raise money for the church, instrumental music in the worship, bitter herbs on the Lord's table or a dancing interpretation of a spiritual song.

But when the Lord directed and authorized us with command and example, He did not have to tell all the things we cannot do. The silence of the New Testament forbids all that is not specifically authorized. An example is: "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." (Rom. 15:26). There are other patterns that agree with this one. Thus cooperation of many churches with one church in special need is authorized. There is no pattern or precept of one church sending to another church for a work to which they were equally responsible. Philippi did not send to Corinth so that Corinth could do Philippi's work, nor did Corinth send to Jerusalem so that Jerusalem could do Corinth's work. Neither did Antioch solicit aid from Philippi so that Antioch could do Antioch's work in Jerusalem.

One prominent preacher says frankly (*Guardian*, Nov. 4, page 9, column 2) that he doesn't believe we are taught exclusively by direct command, approved example or necessary inference. He says, "The one cup brethren wanted an example of a plurality of containers. Now where are you going to get it?" But, brethren, what are we **doing** when we use such containers? Are we "glassing"? No, we are drinking the cup of the Lord. (1 Cor. 11:27.) So also when we gather in classes — what are we doing? Classing? No, we are studying, (teaching). We do have precept and/or example for thus doing! We do not have, nor do we need, a direct word from the New Testament telling us what we may USE when we do what God says for us to do. But we do have such direct word telling us what to DO. We have liberty to USE anything that is right in itself to aid us to do what God Authorized us to do, **so long as in using it we do not do something else**. When we use a song book, all we do is sing, and we do have authority for that (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, etc.). But when we play, even only to aid us to sing, we do something other than sing. (This is the only real answer to the "aid only" argument on the music question.) The command to sing authorizes us to USE anything that will aid us to sing, so long as we don't do something other than sing.

The New Testament "completely furnishes us unto every good work."

(2 Tim. 3:17). God has "granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3.) To fail to be limited by the commands and examples of the New Testament is to fail to respect the wisdom of God and His ability to direct the church in the way that would please Him and accomplish His purposes.

With regard to benevolent work, the New Testament pattern authorizes several churches (like those of the provinces of Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia), to send to one church (like Jerusalem) on a temporary basis to relieve a special need. (Acts 11:27-30; 2 Cor. 8:13-24; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) With regard to evangelism, the New Testament pattern authorizes churches to send to the support of gospel work in the place where the work is being done, and to the one doing the work. (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15, 16.) Let us try harder and harder to "Do Bible things in Bible ways, and call Bible things by Bible names."

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SHOULD WE DRINK A LITTLE?

In this article we shall not consider medicinal uses of alcoholic beverages, such as were suggested by Paul for Timothy's stomach trouble. I Tim. 5:23. But, aside from this use, and if we practice temperance, should the Christian engage in social drinking? I list the following reasons why the Christian should not drink intoxicants at all:

1. Each of us is a custodian of a powerful influence — for good or bad (Matt. 5:14-16). Consider: (1) If I drink with a weak and tempted brother will I thus influence him for good or for bad? (2) If I drink, even only a little, and this is known by a clean, pure and untempted youth, will he be strengthened or weakened by my action? (3) If I drink publicly will this be a good example to the world? (4) If I drink secretly will my conscience accuse me of hypocrisy? (Rom. 14:23).

2. The Holy Spirit warns of the dangers of intoxicants: "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" - (Prov. 23:31, 32). The context had previously warned of the results of drinking *much*, but this text warns of the danger of looking upon it - that is, of favorably contemplating it.

3. All Christians agree that drinking much and the consequent drunkenness is indeed sinful (Gal. 5:21). But drinking much is always preceded by drinking little. Every drunkard began with "just a little nip." No drunkard ever intended to be one! and *we should not deliberately subject*

our bodies to unnecessary temptation. This cannot be compared to over-eating for there is nothing about food that enslaves man — that attacks his nervous system so that he may be *unable* to resist. But intoxicants attack man and upon some men the drink fastens itself so forcefully that he can hardly resist taking more and more. It imposes a bondage upon him which is not true of food even in the person who sinfully over-eats.

4. The Christian has no more right to take a little drink than he does to dance with his neighbor's wife. It is only because the dancing will probably result in lasciviousness that it is sin. And it is because a little drink will probably result in addiction that is wrong, though there are other reasons, also, as we have already noticed.

5. The Christian should not drink even a little because he often then becomes a hazard to the lives of many innocent people - in driving, etc.

6. And the Christian should not drink even socially and in small quantity because by so doing he thus weakens his natural or acquired inhibitions and therefore makes himself more susceptible to many other various temptations.

Intoxicating drink — even a little - never did make a man more manly or handsome or strong, or kind, or happy. It never did feed his hungry child, pay for his home, make his wife happier or drive away real trouble. Think of the murder and adultery that would not have been committed if that *first drink* had been avoided. Think of the jails that would be unused and the graves that would not yet be dug except for the evil influence of drink and except for the consequences after that first small indulgence.

The only safe way, and therefore the only right way for the Christian, is not, "just a little drink," but "no drink at all."

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A MORE MEANINGFUL LORD'S SUPPER

After traveling among churches of Christ throughout much of America and also abroad, I am increasingly distressed with the Lord's supper in many places. Indeed, in some places and on some occasions it is handled in an excellent manner, but usually one of the two following rather meaningless procedures is used:

1. Someone waiting on the table clears his throat two or three times and says, "Let us pray". Then the bread is passed and the same procedure is repeated for the fruit of the vine. And that is all! Any stranger present would wonder what we are doing. Any weak member would be made no

stronger. It is a ritual. One would think our objective is to get this thing over with quickly so we can go home!

2. In some other places someone reads from Matthew 26 or First Corinthians 11. Of course someone has read these same passages last Sunday, two weeks ago, and in fact almost every Sunday for months. These passages tell us who is to partake, what we are to eat and drink, and why we do so. They are good, suitable passages for occasional use at such times, but surely we don't need to be told who, what and how every Lord's day.

After all, we are to remember Christ. If the Lord's supper is to be most meaningful, and if it is to strengthen the weak and encourage the strong, then we ought to read something that will help all of us to truly think of Jesus and of his death. Paul said that because the people did not really remember Christ "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30). Surely it is the duty of the one waiting on the table to help all of us partake worthily so that we will not be condemned because of our forgetfulness regarding the very thing for which we have come together.

It is certainly proper to briefly remind the people of the purpose and the plan for the Lord's supper. But then surely we should be able to read something from the Bible that would bring their minds into sharp focus with the desired objective.

Too Much Time

Some people will complain if much time is used at the table, but these complaints usually are due one of the following faults:

1. The "time" is all used for something else, and we hardly have any time left for the Lord's supper. Then why not cut out one song, or cut the sermon short by five minutes so that we can have sufficient time to really set our minds to the Christ of the cross? He bore the pain of the cross all day, surely we need to take time to remember his sacrifice just as vividly as possible.

2. Sometimes some man insists upon making a long, tired speech at the table, and quite often he really doesn't have anything dynamic to say either. He just rambles. But whoever waits upon the table should prepare himself to do the work with enthusiasm, dignity and scriptural discernment. With a few well-chosen words, read or said, he can make the Lord's supper the real center of the worship.

3. Then, as already stated, people complain of the service when the very same, identical passages are read every Sunday, especially if those passages only tell the who, the what and the how of the matter.

Real Christians will never complain if someone takes four or five

minutes to really remind them of the death by which they are saved. In fact we will be delighted and profitably humbled if someone will step to the table and in a clear, audible voice will read with sincerity the 53rd chapter of Isaiah or a portion of one of the last chapters of one of the gospels telling the vital story of the greatest sacrifice ever made.

The Lord's supper must not degenerate into a ritual or a ceremony. It is for our spiritual betterment. Regular remembrance means never forgetfulness! Let's try to improve the Lord's supper where we worship so we will bring our minds and hearts ever closer to Christ our crucified Redeemer.

Reprinted from *Think*, Vol. 5, No. 6, Sept., 1974

GIVE ME LIBERTY

When Patrick Henry declared, "Give me liberty or give me death," he may have reached the highest ideal, politically. Today I am little concerned with such idealism, but in a very large spiritual area I must maintain the same determination. I must not be enslaved by the creeds of men.

1. Denominational sectarian law, imposed by manual, catechism or constitution must not come between my conscience and God's revealed, written Word.

2. Likewise, opinions, verdicts and decisions imposed by my brethren in Christ, whether in written edict, oral pronouncement or mere mental reservation, must not prevent my own studied discernment, and such unofficial creeds must not hinder my own application of that which I believe to be truth.

Just as Christians are freed from bondage to the law of Moses, so also we are unshackled by opinions of men. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). Then Paul admonished, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1).

Of course we must not use our own liberty to enslave others — to cast a stumbling block before them. "Take heed lest . . . this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9). (See also 1 Cor. 10:29 and 1 Pet. 2:16). Indeed, if there is to be true liberty in Christ, it must be a shared freedom, not an imposed one.

But it is so very easy for all of us, especially preachers, to fall into the trap of credalism in at least one of the following ways:

1. In matters of individual application that ought to be settled in the conscience of each Christian we may be tempted to impose our own

conviction upon others! This imposition may be accomplished through pressure tactics and/or by declining fellowship to those who disagree with us.

2. Likewise, we may be tempted to surrender to intimidation — to stifle our own conscience — for the sake of a favorable report among brethren.

In other words, we may be tempted by circumstances about us and throughout the brotherhood to withhold liberty from others or to settle for less than true spiritual freedom for ourselves. As for me I shall insist upon the fullness of every liberty that is consistent with the will of Christ, and I pray for wisdom that will cause me to respect the freedom that rightly belongs to all other Christians.

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UNUSED TREASURIES

This is November 12, and the September 15 issue of the GUARDIAN has just recently arrived in Africa. In it was a fine article by brother Tom O. Bunting regarding "Misuse of the Treasury". Every word in the article was good, and all of it needed to be said. What I am writing now is only an addition to his material, and in no sense a criticism.

The Greatest Misuse

Surely the very greatest misuse that can be made of money in the church treasury is non-use of it. Satan is evidently most happy when the funds are not used at all. Lying there in the bank, accumulating a little interest, such funds certainly do no harm to the devil and no good for the cause of Christ.

Failure to use money in the treasury is such a great tragedy for at least two reasons:

1. The church immediately becomes a steward of any and all money given by the Christians into the treasury. But since the mission of the church is saving souls and not saving money, then money unspent is a demonstration of poor stewardship. The church is not a financial investment firm, nor a money-saving institution. The total business of the church with money is in spending it! The Christian must give. The church must spend.

2. Christians will give more money if the church will spend it freely (but Scripturally). Any church that fails to use its funds promptly thereby discourages liberal giving. Why should Christians give money into a certain treasury if it is only being saved there?

Bank Balances

If there is a large balance in the treasury, and if it is there for very long and for an unspecified purpose, then it shows lack of proper planning and also unconcern for lost souls. Any church that deserves to be called by the name of the crucified Lord ought to love souls for whom he died so much that careful plans should be made to expedite the scriptural expenditure of every dime and dollar very soon.

Evidently there is enough money lying in bank accounts that belong to faithful (?) churches to supply the necessities of all the preachers who have determined to "do the work of an evangelist". And if there is any lack in such funds now available (but unused), the shortage would quickly be supplied by the Christians everywhere if the funds presently available would be used now to support men at home and far away.

In all my years of work in new fields, and in regard to all the appeals I have helped to make in behalf of such work for many others, I have never known a church to fail if it planned and determined to help. In other words, I have never known Christians to fail to supply what the church determined to use. The only failures I have known were those where the church didn't plan and didn't determine.

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MONEY — TO GET IT, TO USE IT, TO ADMIRE IT

When I refer to money in this article I include the things that money will buy, and hasten to add that some people seem to think that money will buy anything they desire. But this is so wrong. In fact, anything you can buy with money isn't very important after all. Health, happiness and real hope, love, friendship and security are all things that cannot be purchased with money. Whatever money buys is necessarily very temporary and highly vulnerable.

But money is not bad. Indeed it is very usable. So, from the Bible standpoint, let us discern three principles to guide God's people in their relationship to money.

1. Get money honestly. Paul said, "Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor . . ." (Eph. 4:28). (See also II Thes. 3:10-12). I remember those days long ago when we had to pay tuition even to attend high school, and when we had to live away from home for the same high school work because there were no buses. Some of us had to work our way through high school and when I was a senior, and a full-grown man, I was offered a chance to become a shoe-shiner (income from which work would

indeed help a great deal in school expenses). It was not a proud occupation for a boy who had just become a man! I consulted a trusted teacher about the matter. She said, "Anything that is honest is honorable."

But today many loathe the principle of toil. Many do not understand that "Honesty is the best policy." And many follow the easy road of crime to secure the money they think they must have for the vanities of life. But "Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov. 16:18), and money secured through any honest labor is always better for us than any amount received through subtility, trickery, deceit or dishonesty.

A reputation for absolute integrity is a precious possession. To be regarded as upright and honest, and to know that you deserve such acclaim, is much more satisfying than anything money can buy.

2. Use money wisely. Hoarding has no real reward (Mt. 6:19, 20). Likewise, a spend thrift is without comfort in the end (Lk. 15:12-19). So the real benefit of money is in its proper use. This excludes abuse, either by selfishness or miserliness or wastefulness.

Paul said, ". . . let him labor . . . that he may have to give to him that is in need: (Eph. 4:28). This great admonition goes far beyond the use of money for mere subsistence for oneself. Indeed we are challenged to "Be rich in good works" (I Tim. 6:18). But some readers may say that Paul only gave this advice to the rich, not to you and me. *But you and I are rich!* At least we are rich enough to do what Paul asked. But we are also rich by the world's standard. Perhaps almost all who read this journal are definitely rich as compared to the population of the world. Do you realize that *you are probably among the top ten percent financially, among all humanity living today?* If you are an American factory worker, farmer, school teacher, etc., then you are rich! But are you rich in good works? Of course Paul also teaches the poor to use their money according to the very same principle (II Cor. 6:4-10).

3. Admire money very little. Remember that it is "The love of money" that is the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10). Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. He gave up a very great blessing and he received so very little in return. In just a few hours he was hungry again but a priceless inheritance that would have blessed him for a lifetime was gone forever. He loved a worldly possession too much! Elisha's servant, Gehazi, gave up his integrity and also his health just to get a few garments and a little silver (II Kings 5:2-27). The price he really paid was so great and the reward was so small. Ananias and Sapphira gave their lives for a little vainglory (Acts 5:1-10). They wanted to keep some money and still get credit for giving it. The part they kept, but which they said they gave, was necessarily very meager wages for the crime they committed against God.

Judas loved "the bag" (John 12:6) and was so concerned about getting something from it that he criticized the sincere worshipper of Christ (John

12:4-6) and finally betrayed the Lord for thirty silver coins (Mt. 26:15). What he got was so little (it was only enough to purchase a cheap plot for the burial of paupers) but what he gave up was so very great.

Conclusion

So, let us not hate money, but at the same time let us be very careful to educate our own hearts and those of our children to: (1) Get money honestly; (2) Use money wisely; (3) Admire money very little.