


# THESE TIMES

October, 1974

A man in a dark tuxedo with a white shirt and dark bow tie stands on the left, looking off to the side with a serious expression. A woman in a white wedding dress with lace sleeves and a white veil stands on the right, also looking off to the side with a serious expression. They are positioned back-to-back against a solid blue background.

**Does  
marriage  
have to be  
unhappy?  
— page 14**



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# God's last word

by **Kenneth J. Holland**

## *What you need to know about the ever- lasting gospel*

Once you accept Christ, you will still run into trouble. You may get the idea that you must do some part of the work of salvation alone. You may have trusted in Christ to forgive your sins, but now you seek by your own efforts to live right. But your efforts will fail. Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Your growth in grace, your joy, your usefulness—all depend upon your union with Christ. It is only by keeping in contact with Him daily, hourly—by "abiding" in Him—that you can live right. In your life, Christ must be first, last, and always. He must be with you, not only at the beginning and at the end of your course, but at every step of the way.

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Just before the great climax of human history—the return to this earth of Jesus in power and glory—the Bible reveals that a special, all-encompassing message of three angels is to be given around the world. (See Revelation 14:6-12.) In this issue and in subsequent issues the editors will present in detail the segments of this most significant portion of the Word of God.

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WHY DO MOST people feel that Christianity is too complicated? As a young priest Cardinal Cushing once found himself asking the victim of an accident, "Do you believe in one God in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?" He received the answer: "Here I am dying, and you are asking me riddles."

The answer is that the basic facts of Christianity are simple. Any person can accept Christ in a moment's time. It is maturing as a Christian that presents problems, because Christianity demands reform in every aspect of life. Not that it takes a great mind to be a Christian, but it does take all the mind a person has. Christ wants total commitment to Him.

I repeat, the basics of becoming a Christian are simple: You are a sinner. You accept Christ. You ask Him to live the principles of the Bible through your life. The procedure is very simple. I suggest this prayer: "Dear God, I realize that Jesus, Your Son, came to this world to save sinners. That includes me. I accept this gift of love as the only answer to my problem of sin and death. I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me. Help me right the wrongs I have committed. Control my life. From this moment on I am Yours completely."

If this is your prayer, God immediately accepts you. He has said He would. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). You then enter into a life of growth in spiritual things. You study the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to help you live by all its principles. Christianity is absolutely comprehensive. It takes in your whole life. It demands and it rewards at the same time.

*Kenneth Holland is editor of  
"These Times."*

You may say, "Religion is for the weak. I don't need a Saviour. The gospel isn't for me." What options do you have? You have, for example, such options as Buddhism, communism, humanism, demonism. Nietzsche, a nineteenth-century German philosopher, once attacked what he called the "slave morality" of Christians and exalted the superman who accepts responsibility for his own actions and is accountable to no one. A whole generation was impressed by the thought of humanity throwing off the shackles of dependence upon God and facing its destiny as "free" or mature beings.

Bertrand Russell gave this thought an eloquent expression when he wrote of man's facing what to him was the stark truth: That there is no God directing our affairs and no eternal life to look forward to. He spoke of man's "origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs" as being no more than the result of accidental arrangements of atoms. He made a grim prediction that a vast death of the solar system would extinguish all human achievements—the devotion, the inspiration, the "noonday brightness of human genius." All of this, he said, will eventually be buried under the debris of the ruined universe. He concluded that the only certainties upon which the soul can build safely must be within the structure of these truths and upon the "firm foundation of unyielding despair."

There you have a sermon in reverse. I find little comfort in it. The gospel of salvation from the Biblical point of view is refreshingly different. God invites, "Come, let us reason together. Just give Me a chance to tell you about My plan to save you."

Right from the start we need to understand that both God and man have

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a part to play in salvation (or conversion). Let's look at God's part.

Can we not say that the great secret of the universe is that a lover needs someone to love? God is the lover. He made beings with a free will, who may choose to love Him for what He is. This God of love endlessly seeks to communicate with His human family and to attract them to Himself. He speaks to us through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, nature, angels, prayer, meditation, prophets, teachers, ministers, literature, and help in our daily lives. He tenderly calls to us in sickness, health, perplexity, sorrow, and gladness. He has a thousand ways to reach us. He is a persistent lover; of that you can be sure.

God calls every person to Himself. To each He gives a measure of faith. He has sent His Son to die for us. But why? Why has God done all this, taken all these pains with us? At one point He said, "What more could I have done for Israel than I have done?" Why? we ask. The seemingly unbelievable answer is: We are brought into this world because we are needed! Let that sink in, and never forget it!

You mean God needs me? The great Creator of the fabulous universe, whose ways are beyond understanding, needs me? Yes. A thousand times, Yes. He sees in you the unique personality that will fill a vacant spot in His great heart of love. There is no one else in this world quite like you. And God would like to get to know you better. He wants all eternity to enjoy you. He has reserved a place in heaven for you. He knows that He can make you happy now and forever. Can you imagine it? The Bible (Zephaniah 3:17) shows you

an inkling of how excited God gets when He contemplates the thought of enjoying you throughout eternity: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

What else has God done to save us? The Son of God came to earth to pay the debt man incurred by sinning. The apostle Paul tells us that "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). The prophet Isaiah reminds us that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God pardons our past sins because Jesus paid our debt. Through Christ we are cleansed of our guilt. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. . . . He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His," Ellen G. White says.

Dr. Alfred Stearns, a distinguished headmaster of Andover, told the following story: A boy had illegally kept a gun in his room. While he was cleaning it, it went off accidentally, killing his

roommate. The headmaster had the burden of telling the roommate's father and trying to comfort him. And before the father left for home with his son's body, Dr. Stearns said to him, "There's one thing I want you to do—I want you to see your boy's roommate."

"I can't do it," the stricken father said. "It would be too hard for both of us." But Dr. Stearns insisted, "You must. If you don't see him, he may never get over it." So the boy came to Dr. Stearns's office and stood there white faced. The father was an unusual man. He didn't say a word. He just went over to the boy, put his arms around him, and held him close.

Our God is like that. He puts His arms around us and forgives us.

Furthermore, Jesus changes our human nature through the presence of His Holy Spirit in our lives. Victory will be ours—victory over sin in the life—if we permit God to reverse the sin process and make us new.

God needs you, young person, with all your pep and idealism. He needs you, older person, perhaps weary, disillusioned, anxious, fearful. You are attractive to God. He sees your youth restored, your energy renewed. He sees in you a potential that you have never dreamed of. This world isn't the end of things. It's just the beginning of a grand adventure throughout eternity.

What is God's part in salvation? Let's say it again: He is the great lover seeking His beloved. Christianity is love between you and Christ. No one has written about God's proposal more beautifully than Ellen G. White in the book *The Desire of Ages*, pages 328, 329. Listen to Christ's invitation and see whether it touches your heart:

"Whether they know it or not, all

# Highlights of the everlasting gospel

● The everlasting gospel is the same unchanged and unchangeable Good News that abundant life now and a joyous, rewarding life forever are available in Jesus of Nazareth. It is the Good News that God, at a particular time in history, revealed Himself in Jesus Christ for the lasting benefit of mankind.

● The word *everlasting* is used because the gospel is permanent, and it is divine. Satan, the enemy of Christ and man, has from the beginning of human history—Adam and Eve's day—attempted to distort the purity of the gospel, to falsify it, and to destroy it.

● The everlasting gospel is unique because Jesus Himself was unique. He claimed to be a living revelation of God, doing what God does in loving, caring, forgiving, and making persons whole, and in this way disclosing what God is actually like. His death did not end His existence. His resurrection, documented persuasively by historical evidence, followed His death and showed that Jesus was indeed what and who He claimed to be. As one of His first disciples put it, He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Christianity stands on the truth of this claim as on a rock.

● The everlasting gospel means that we are saved from the frustration of trying to be "good enough" to achieve salvation. We do not have to depend on the adequacy of our theological concepts or on the strength of our religious feelings or on the perfection of our moral and ethical behavior. While, of course, we want to do our best to understand religious truth, to sense the presence of God and to do God's

will, the source of our security is not the quality of our performance in any of these areas, but rather what God has promised us and has done for us in the death of Jesus.

● "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

● "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

● The everlasting gospel means that you and I are saved for eternity by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The most important fact in this world is not what God thinks of you; it is not what you think of God; rather it is what God thinks of Jesus. And because Jesus is fascinating to God, because Jesus is acceptable to God, the important thing for all men to do is to abide in Christ. In fact, it is all Christ. As Christians we have no experience outside of Him.

It is true that there is tension in the Christian life; the battle of life continues despite one's alignment with Jesus. Satan, the great adversary, seeks to destroy everyone who casts his lot with Christ. But despite the tension in the day-to-day struggle, the Christian need not be concerned over his standing with God. Jesus, his Saviour, is acceptable to God; Jesus stands in his place. And as long as the Christian places his trust in God, seeks forgiveness for sins, and cooperates with God, his eternal destiny is certain. He can declare, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Isaiah 53:6. He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.

"The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord 'tellethe the number of the stars;' and yet 'He healeth the broken in heart,

and bindeth up their wounds.' Psalm 147:4, 3. 'Come unto Me,' is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for

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endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you be-

come in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer."

That is Jesus calling to each of us. It's hard to resist Him, isn't it? Take all your troubles to Him. He will help you.

Now we want to know our part in salvation; if it depended upon God alone, every man would be saved. But we are on the devil's ground. Our natural birth finds us with the devil as our father. "Ye are of your father the devil," the text reads. How, then, can we become sons of God?

The answer is that we must be born again. "You are a sinner," writes Ellen G. White. "You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the

man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it" (*Steps to Christ*, page 51). Five times in this short passage the admonition is given to believe—believe because God says so. Believe that when God pardons—no matter what your sins have been—He forgets your sins forever.

We human beings were actually made to depend continually upon God. We get into trouble when we try in our own stubbornness and stupidity to go it on our own. Dependence on God is the only cure for excessive anxiety, which underlies so much mental illness today. When Martin Luther walked in the woods, he used to raise his hat to the birds and say, "Good morning, little theologians—you awake and sing; but I, old fool, know less than you and worry over everything, instead of simply trusting in the heavenly Father's care."

However, dependence on God does not involve indolence or inactivity. The Lord had some crushing words for the man in the parable who failed to improve his one talent: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." He said; "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Unless you do something about Christ, you are lost. No man backs into heaven. God puts out His hand, but you must clasp it. He doesn't grab you and force you into heaven.

After we have accepted Jesus as our

personal Saviour, we must prove that our love for Him is genuine. The Lord tests us. Everything depends on the right action of our wills—not on the mere fact that our names are recorded on church books. Actually, there is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not

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possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not earnestly seek to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it.

Those who refuse to cooperate with God on earth would not cooperate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven. There is more hope for "publicans and sinners" than for those who know the Word of God but refuse to obey it. The old hymn had it right, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way." That's it!

There is no question, then, but that you and I have a definite part to play in salvation. We must make the Bible the study of our lives to find God's will, discover His principles and laws, and live by them.

You make a great mistake if you assume that a mere assent to truth constitutes righteousness. Christ doesn't need admirers only. He needs lovers. You and I must have an active faith. We are happy only when we throw ourselves 100 percent into our Christianity. The Bible says, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The Bible uses such activist language as "Fight the good fight," "What do ye more than others?" "Go ye into all the world," "Offer thy gifts," "Obey . . . and . . . live." James 2:17 sums it up: "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

It should be obvious therefore that salvation is no one-time proposition. The apostle Paul said, "I die daily." The Bible makes it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in salvation are always in danger of

## The essence of the everlasting gospel

THE ESSENCE of the everlasting gospel is the fact that "Christ died for me"—a bit of information probably neither new nor startling to you. But though the fact may be known by all, the meaning somehow escapes our attention. Take a moment to consider it with me.

Here is a doting aunt who has been entertained by her talented niece. "Susan was too cute for words," she relates afterward. "She played the piano for me."

The meaning is anything but obscure. Little Susan performed on the family upright as a favor for her aunt. She played the piano for her, and in the little word *for* there is expressed the meaning of entertainment, of benefit, of a kindness rendered which will not soon be forgotten. Simple, isn't it? Yet the usage in that case is totally inadequate to express the act which the Son of God—the Lord Jesus Christ—performed in our behalf on the cross of Calvary.

There He hangs between heaven and hell, doing business once and for all with sin and death and the judgment of a righteous heavenly Father against the unrighteousness of mankind.

He is dying as a substitute for me!

Jesus did not die to effect some vague, imaginary benefit for mankind. He did not suffer on the cross simply as an act

of kindness which somehow was destined to make life easier and more livable for those who would endorse His teachings. He died because a holy God had pronounced the wages of sin to be death and because the entire race of man had gone astray and passed under a death penalty which snatched from every created being the hope of a fellowship, either in this life or the next, with a just and sinless Creator.

He went to the cross because He loved us, and because someone had to pay the price of our sin.

It was in my place that He died! It was my sins He was taking away! It was my sentence of death which sent Him to the cross! Then He came back from the dead to prove Himself to be God. Mine is the responsibility only to believe Him and to receive at His hand the gift of forgiveness and everlasting life which is mine by virtue of His substitutionary atonement.

"He [Christ] died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:15, 17).

(Reprints of this article may be obtained from the American Tract Society, Oradell, New Jersey.)

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being lost. These people need a decided conversion to God. Conversion means becoming daily more Christlike. It is a changing, maturing, dynamic process—even though you cannot always sense this growth within yourself. The converted Christian constantly engages in stern battles with himself. He realizes that he must stop babying himself, giving in to temptation, panicking too soon. When you are really converted to Christ, everything about you reflects Him—your choice of clothes, your recreation, your TV watching, your weight, your reading, your thoughts, your vocation—everything. With the apostle Paul, you declare, "For me to live is Christ." This approach to life is unbeatable. You can't miss when you and God are in partnership.

We're coming soon to a testing time such as was never before witnessed in this world. Will your love for Christ hold up when others' love crumbles? Some have already given up. But some have weathered unspeakable abuse for their faith. Richard Wurmbrand endured fourteen years of torture in a Communist prison in Rumania. Wurmbrand now lives in the United States and has written a classic book entitled *In God's Underground*. In those black days in prison he composed a poem which may not be easily accepted by those of us who have not known any similar physical and spiritual state, but it was this man's salvation. Its words enabled him to defeat Satan.

Wurmbrand was beaten many times with hard rubber hoses, kicked mercilessly and thrown in with debased men whose conversation was utterly degrading. He existed month after month, year after year, on food we consider garbage. He contracted tuberculosis and was put in the death room, reserved for those who could not live. He went

through months of Communist brain-washing. The words "God has forsaken you" they drummed interminably into his ears. Then with his spirits at the lowest possible ebb, he met head on satanic forces you and I know nothing about. Listen and discover if these words about his terrible experience do not stir you to strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ.

"From my bed of planks they will make my coffin. Stretched upon it, I tried to find why my thoughts run to You, why my writings all turn towards You? Why is this passionate love in my soul, why does my song go only to You? I know I am rejected; soon I will putrefy in a tomb. . . .

"I do not love in hope of salvation. I would love You in everlasting misfortune. I would love You even in consuming fire. If You had refused to descend to men, You would have been my distant dream. If You had refused to sow Your word, I would love You without hearing it. If You had hesitated and fled from the Crucifixion, and I were not saved, still I would love You. And even if I found sin in You, I would cover it with my love.

"Now I will dare to say mad words, so that all may know how much I love. Now I will touch untouched strings and magnify You with a new music. If the prophets had predicted another, I

would leave them, not You. Let them produce a thousand proofs, I will keep my love for You. If I divined that You were a deceiver, I would pray for You weeping; and, though I could not follow You in falsehood, it would not lessen my love. For Saul, Samuel passed a life in weeping and severe fasting. So my love would resist even if I knew You lost. If You, not Satan, had risen wrongly in revolt against Heaven and lost the loveliness of wings and fallen like an archangel from high, hopeless, I would hope that the Father would forgive You and that one day You would walk with Him again in the gold streets of heaven.

"If You were a myth, I would leave reality and live with You in a dream. If they proved You did not exist, You would receive life from my love. My love is mad, without motive, as Your love is, too. Lord Jesus, find some happiness here. For more I cannot give You."\*

When Wurmbrand completed this poem, he no longer felt the dread nearness of Satan. Satan had gone. "In the silence I felt the kiss of Christ, and everyone is silent when he is kissed. Quiet and joy returned."

When Wurmbrand was finally released from prison, he felt he had come down from a mountaintop experience.

What a challenge Wurmbrand provides for us to give ourselves completely to the God who loves us so much and whose plan to save us is simple enough for us to understand and accept. 🕊

\*Richard Wurmbrand, *In God's Underground* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), pp. 63, 64. Reprinted by permission of Diane Publications. Available from Diane Publications, Box 488, Glendale, California 91209; price, \$1.50.





# When God said No

*God sometimes uses an angel skilled in auto mechanics to answer prayer.*

by Lawrence Joers

BECAUSE the thermometer registered near the top, I drove with the windows open on my little old car. Although the car showed its years, it was running very well as we crossed the Nevada plains on the way to California. I had as a passenger a mentally sick patient whom I must deliver to an institution in that state. He became slightly difficult at times, but he was manageable. We had made good progress, but I wanted to hurry on.

Late that afternoon we approached a town hidden in a deep gorge. It was a small town, the weather remained good, and the road looked fair; so I decided to go on. Leaving the town we climbed steeply to reach level country again. However, we had not gone far on this road when the western sky became black, and it appeared evident that we had headed into a storm. Since the car continued to run well, I didn't really become concerned until the lightning started flashing ominously. It almost seemed to jump off the radiator of the car. The thunder roared constantly, and then the cloudburst struck. We had traveled on in the blinding rain for a short distance when suddenly the car stopped.

I tried repeatedly to start the motor without the least sign of success. I did not want to keep using the starter and risk running down the battery; so I sat in the darkness, not knowing what to do. Then my mental-patient passenger began to whimper and become frightened. I must admit that I was a bit frightened too. The almost continuous lightning, the brief intervals of complete blackness, and the deluge combined with my stalled car to give me a feeling of utter helplessness. The car wouldn't move, and I just didn't know what to do.

When there is nothing else to do people often turn to God. Although I am a Christian who prays often, it took some time before I thought of prayer as a solution to my troubles. I prayed simply, "Please, Lord, help me to get this car started."

Still nothing happened but the grinding of the starter; it got weaker and weaker, and the car lights got dimmer. At last the rain stopped, and I stood out in the muddy road. Without a flashlight, though, I couldn't see much under the hood of the car. I got back in and shut off all the lights except the parking lights. I finally persuaded the patient to lie down in the back seat, and eventually he went to sleep. I did some more serious praying. In the past I had experienced many answers to prayer; I expected and needed one now.

After a few more tries the starter refused even to turn over, and all that I had left to do was pray. And so I beseeched the Lord, "Please help me to get this car started so we won't have to sit here on this strange road in the darkness. We just must go on, and Thou art the only one

who can help us now. It was foolish of me not to stop in that town back there, but here we are, and we need Thy help so very much."

The starter was dead, the parking lights had almost gone out, and I was very tired. In the midst of a prayer I dozed off behind the wheel. The next thing I knew the sun had started bringing the daylight, and I had a very stiff neck. The starter still would not turn over, the parking lights burned no longer, but I couldn't find anything wrong with the motor. There remained only one course of action—more prayer. I sat behind the steering wheel watching the road and praying that God would help me out of this predicament. Very soon I saw a car coming from behind. He pulled alongside and asked if I had trouble. I assured him that I did, indeed, and told him how the motor had suddenly stopped. "Perhaps something got wet during the cloudburst," I offered.

"Let's have a look," he suggested, and in a moment his head disappeared under the hood. Before long he gave a surprised whistle and shouted, "No wonder you stopped. I don't see how this could have happened. It looks as though someone has disconnected the gas line from the carburetor. This just couldn't shake loose by itself. Well, I'll have it back on for you in just a minute."

"I'm still in real trouble," I told him as he closed the hood. "My battery is dead."

"I'll give your car a push with mine," he volunteered cheerfully, "and that will get you going again on your way."

A little push and, to my great relief, the motor in my car took hold and began humming away as if nothing had ever gone wrong. I stopped to thank him and tried to pay for his help, but he refused and went on down the road. As so often happens after a storm, the morning sun shone bright and beautiful, and, although we were hungry, we felt very happy to be on our way again.

Traveling along, I noticed that the road showed signs of much damage from the storm. We had gone only a short distance when we came to a place where the water had rushed down a hillside, eroding the roadway. In fact, the road just disappeared right there on our side. In amazement I stopped the car and stared into the washout. Then I breathed a grateful "Thank You, Lord" as I realized that we would have been in the bottom of that hole if I could have started the car the night before. In the darkness and downpour I would never have seen that hole. We could not have missed driving into it.

I had never thought that there might be angels who specialized in auto mechanics, but the man who fixed the car had said that it looked as though someone had disconnected the gas line. The angel took control at precisely the right time.

I had always hoped to have my prayers answered in the way that I desired. This experience taught me that God always answers, but sometimes He says No when that is best for me.

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# Youth rediscover alcohol

APRIL 22 *Time* is worth hunting up if you haven't read it. Alcohol is the subject. Five chilling case histories are chronicled. The physical effects of alcohol are detailed. But *Time's* most chilling facts revolve around a new class of problem drinkers: young people.

"In the U.S., the age-old problem of excessive drinking is taking a disturbing new turn and affecting new kinds of victims. On a New York subway train, a school-bound 15-year-old holds his books in one hand, a brown paper bag containing a beer bottle in the other. He takes a swig, then passes bag and bottle to a classmate. In a San Francisco suburb, several high school freshmen show up for class drunk every morning, while others sneak off for a nip or two of whiskey during the lunch recess. On the campuses the beer bash is fashionable once again, and lowered drinking ages have made liquor the high without the hassle.

"The switch is on," says Dr. Morris Chafetz, director of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). "Youths are moving from a wide range of other drugs to the most devastating drug—the one most widely misused of all—alcohol."

## Jesus' Politics: Calling Men to Repentance and Discipleship

John F. Alexander, editor of *The Other Side*—a social-action oriented evangelical bimonthly—speaks about Jesus and politics (March/April).

"Why didn't Jesus pursue political power? Why didn't He get to be buddies with Caesar or else lead a revolution against him? To us it seems obvious that the best thing we can do for the poor and the oppressed is to get a poor man's candidate in the White House or on the throne. But what is on the headlines of the *Washington Post* may be on page twenty-seven of God's newspaper. . . . Jesus' way was to call men to repentance and discipleship. That was the center of His ministry, and it must be the center of our ministry. Calling people to repentance is the most important political act that anyone can perform, and until 'politicized' Christians realize that, our politics will be terribly inadequate."

## Holy Spirit Has Practical Functions

At a Bible conference in Tennessee a Seventh-day Adventist seminary professor contrasted what he considers to be the Biblical interpretation of the Holy Spirit's work with the charismatic movement. Dr. Walter Specht, chairman of the New Testament Department at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, tells us that rather than

indulging in uncontrolled actions and vocalizations, the man who would have the Spirit within him "must listen with humble, quiet, and devout attention." He says, according to Scripture, the presence of the Holy Spirit promises four things: He would bear witness of Christ, enable the apostles to recall His teachings, guide believers into all truth and understanding of Christ's teaching, and declare things that were to come.

## Drought Invades Ethiopia, Testing Government, Culture

Ethiopia is the latest nation to join the list of countries affected by severe drought-famine conditions tormenting sub-Saharan Africa. At least fifty thousand have died so far in the north, and drought is expected to hit the breadbasket south soon. But getting help into the ancient African kingdom of Emperor Haile Selassie is next to impossible. Government officials refuse to admit the problem exists, but it is compounded by rivalries between the Amharas (ruling tribe) and other tribal groups, interference from the Coptic Christian Church, and feudal land and cultural system unable to cope with the drought. But even if relief groups succeed in getting food and medicine into the nation, underlying agricultural and societal primitivism must be dealt with if a long-term solution is to be realized.

## American Scholar Sees Possible Redemption in Watergate Scandals

Vermont Royster, professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina and former editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, agonizes over this year of public scandals in the spring *American Scholar*.

"There is an unhappy resemblance between that attitude of the Watergate conspirators and the attitude of many among us toward the relationship of means to ends. . . . Somewhere along the line there has been an erosion of our sense of right and wrong; that is, we have lost our belief that certain actions are wrong simply because they are wrong, whether or not they violate civil statutes. The preaching has been that morality is relative, that ethics depend upon the situation. It is not wrong to steal, to commit adultery, to bear false witness, in and of themselves—it all depends. If bearing false witness results in convicting a man who is in fact guilty, then is not justice done in the end? If crime is done from sincere motives or with good provocation, should we not absolve it? It is not that we do not live up to professed moral values; the latter-day concept is that there are no fixed permanent values for anyone to profess."

Even so, Royster finds hope in all the

scandals. "The saving grace in the current scandals, for all that it sounds like an inappropriate phrase, is that they were so flagrant. While we had dishonest officials exposed and convicted, never one so high as a Vice-President. While it is true that each separate action of the Watergate perpetrators has an antecedent example, never has so much been done by so many. Scandals have been piled upon scandals, until they are impossible to ignore. This time outrage was inevitable. And out of outrage comes redemption. Or let us hope so."

## Mass Passivity: Is It an American Trait?

Gunnar Myrdal, noted Swedish economist and author of the 1942 classic *An American Dilemma*, is updating his findings of a generation ago. His conclusion: American masses have remained as startlingly passive as when he first observed them thirty-two years ago. Extremely low participation in national, state, and local elections, spotty organization of trade and labor unions, and the minimal nature of health, welfare, and social security benefits make Myrdal wonder about the strength of the American masses. He attributes this situation of individual leadership, yet mass passivity, to the status of the lower classes.

"Persons in the lower classes, except for very clear questions of immediate advantages, tend to have conservative or even reactionary views. It is in the upper classes and among the highly educated that we find more people with liberal views. This is contrary to what is the rule in northwestern Europe where, for much more than a century, people's movements and organizations have made the masses of people articulate and have educated them to perceive their interests and to organize to defend those interests."

## Network Concept Turns On Many Christian Stations

Encouraged by greater potential influence with the Federal Communications Commission, centralized production possibilities, and firmer financial footing, Christian radio and TV stations are banding together into networks. Nearly twenty have entered the field, most since 1967. Latest: eight-station Association of Christian Television Stations in Glendale, California. Biggies include Family Radio, Moody Bible Institute's midwestern network, Crawford (run by Percy Crawford's son), and Christian Broadcasting Network in Portsmouth, Virginia, run by charismatic Pat Robertson. CBN has the biggest TV network (four owned, twelve affiliated stations). Charismatics dominate in TV: They are willing to take the plunge into high-risk, high-gain fields.



### “From all the world . . . to all the world”

At a time when many small private colleges are in serious financial difficulty, one-hundred-year-old Andrews University (AU), in Berrien Springs, Michigan, is in its twentieth year without a deficit.

The university has accepted no government aid toward its \$20-million physical plant or its \$12-million annual budget.

Despite rising costs the school posted an enrollment increase of 7.5 percent this year, setting a record high of 2,276 students in the college, school of graduate studies, and theological seminary.

Andrews University began in 1874 as Battle Creek (Michigan) College, the first institution of higher education founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church itself was only eleven years old at the time, but its five thousand members raised fifty-four thousand dollars to build the college.

Latest figures show that the two-million-member denomination now supports the largest unified Protestant parochial school system in the world, with over 375,000 students enrolled in 4,600 schools.

Students at AU come from nearly all the fifty states and over sixty other countries, and one out of every six students is from a country other than the United States. The international flavor is not confined to the student body—one third of the 179 faculty members were born in other countries or have foreign citizenship.

A university slogan is “From all the world . . . to all the world,” and university administrators point with pride to over one thousand alumni serving in church-related positions outside the United States.

### Religious Subjects in School: They’re Worth Discussing

Should religious subjects be dealt with in the public schools? Michael McMahon thinks so, and in a fairer way than is now possible in most schools. The assistant professor of education at the University of Virginia shares his view in *Intellect* (April, 1974).

“The traditional reluctance of public school teachers to encourage or even entertain discussions of religious issues in class is commonplace, but regrettable.” McMahon sees a need for “open forums within established courses which would facilitate the interchange of ideas and beliefs relating to comprehensive life orientations and ultimate values.” Most teachers shy away from religious discussions because of time constraints, the sensitivity of religious topics, legal problems, and the possibility of alienation or provocation of students. Far worse, though, according to McMahon, are those who discuss religious topics but only within the “neutral,” scientific framework. This scientific naturalism is fine for many fields but “outside the realm of measurable behaviors, this positivistic ideology becomes sadly

inadequate—particularly *vis-a-vis* the religious dimension of life. Questions of a spiritual or religious nature are a vital part of every student’s experience, yet it is precisely this dimension that is ignored when uncritical and slavish allegiance is paid to the canons of scientific analysis.”

An open forum concept, thinks McMahon, would have many pedagogical benefits. “Students are interested in religious issues, and interest is a powerful vehicle for learning. . . . Coupling student interest with religious themes in literature, the humanities, and the arts makes sound pedagogical sense. In addition to sparking student interest, open discussions of religious issues provide an avenue for the enhancement of self-understanding. . . . Man’s development can not be understood without attention to the religious influences that shaped it. More specifically, the lives of one’s classmates elude meaningful understanding when the religious influences on those lives are obscured by hearsay, myth, and speculation. Honest interchanges . . . can engender profound insights into the consciousness and behavior of others.”

### “Report” Worries Out Loud About Rising Divorce

“For the fifth year in a row, divorces in America are at an all-time high,” reports *U.S. News & World Report* (April 22), “and the end of the rise is not in sight. Last year 913,000 couples, or one for every four marriages, were divorced in U.S. courts. This year or next, the number is expected to pass one million.”

But the worst news, says *Report*, is that “far too many couples are splitting up too hastily—without fully considering the financial and emotional hardships that divorce can inflict. . . . Such hardships, the experts confirm, are increasing as alimony and child-support laws change, and living alone becomes more difficult for those not prepared for an independent life. . . . Sometimes the pain of marriage is better than the emptiness of divorce.”

The biggest problems facing those considering divorce? Learning what went wrong so they won’t rush into another ruinous marriage; facing guilt, anger, and futility, the pangs most divorced Americans encounter; and giving enough attention to the shock that comes to children unprepared for a breakup of the family without vying for the child’s exclusive affections.

In light of these facts, evangelical churches ought to be ministering to these people’s needs, and not be content just pointing an accusatory finger at them.



# Poorhouse trio

by David Larson

HIS QUESTION troubled me. Not that it was a bad question. It merely seemed so out of context! He was a deacon. I was his pastor. And, as deacons and pastors do more often than they care to admit, we were patching the church roof when he turned to me and said, "Dave, what is the gospel anyway?"

Can a person attend church for years on end, can he participate in prayer meetings, fellowship dinners, Communion services, church board meetings, and religious money-raising campaigns and yet not gain a clear, crisp understanding of what Christianity is all about? Evidently so.

"The gospel," I suggested, recalling a Palestinian village named Bethany, "is the good news that meaninglessness and guilt and death have been acknowledged and overcome in the person of Jesus Christ."

Even in the days of Jesus, Bethany wasn't much of a city. Unlike Jericho or

the north and east, it could not boast of an illustrious history. And unlike Jerusalem, less than two miles to the west, it was not a center of religion, commerce, and culture. Bethany was merely a fig-raising suburb perched on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. But it had importance because it was the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, a family trio Jesus took pleasure in visiting.

## Christ Versus Meaninglessness

On one occasion, when Jesus passed through Bethany, the trio invited him home for dinner. But when Jesus arrived, Martha found herself, much to her private rage, playing culinary solitaire. Instead of banking the fire or kneading the dough, her sister Mary stationed herself near Jesus and listened.

Unable to keep her desperation to herself, Martha interrupted Mary's leisure. "Lord," she blurted, "do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

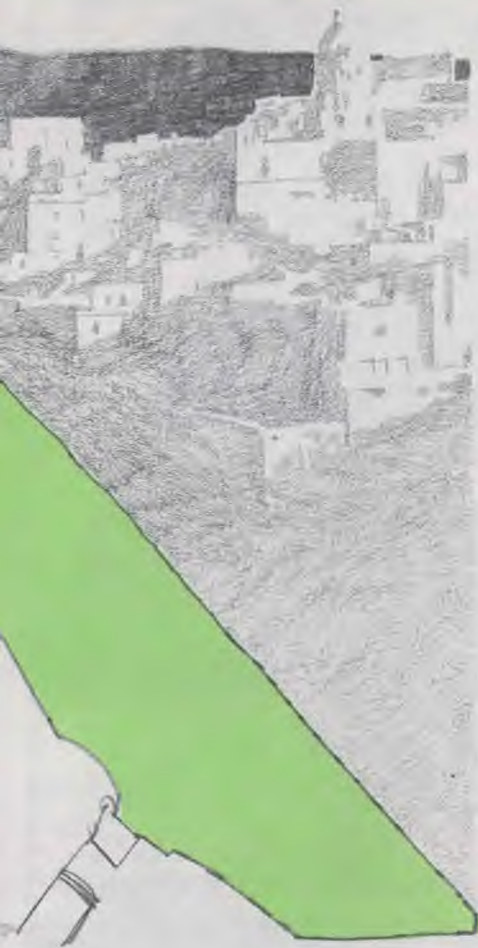
"Martha, Martha," Jesus replied, "you

are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Martha's problem lay in trying to use frenzied activity to fill an inner hollowness—a vague but persistent awareness that her life was without evident meaning, purpose, and direction. Martha could not sit down and relax. She found it impossible to enjoy moments of quiet conversation with close friends. The second she paused, questions regarding the "Why?" and "Where to?" and "What for?" of her life plagued her mind. She couldn't answer these questions on her own. And so she worked. She worked hard and well, seeking always to satisfy her craving for meaning.

Jesus didn't scold Martha. He implied that He Himself was the answer to her questions. If she would only listen to His words, Martha would learn that her life was not a puzzle with missing pieces but that across her past, present, and future Jesus had written, "God is love." She would also discover that, like

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tioned himself near the table where he could relish each delicacy and enjoy every debate. And, when she thought no one was looking, Mary opened a costly container and bathed the feet of Jesus with perfume mingled with her tears. She kissed His feet and tried to dry them with her flowing hair. But as the fragrance filled the room, Mary's secret became public knowledge.

Simon's confidence in Jesus waned as he thought to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

Simon was right about Mary. She was a sinner: a woman who had spent too many nights with too many men. But Simon was wrong about Jesus. Although He knew all about Mary's shoddy past, He refused to condemn her or to recoil from her touch. Looking into her eyes He spoke quietly, "Your sins are forgiven. . . . Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Many modern Marys need to hear the words Jesus spoke to the Mary of Bethany. Some experience guilt for what they have done; others for what they have left undone. Some feel condemned for what they have said; others for what they should have said. Still others exude self-hate for what they are; others for what they are not. Persons in this last category often experience devastating feelings of self-inflicted guilt. They feel they don't and can't measure up to popular notions regarding what it means to be "beautiful" or "normal" or "American" or "bright." To all of these, Jesus says, "Your sins, real or imagined, are forgiven. Go in peace."

### Christ Versus Death

Although the Bible doesn't diagnose the illness which struck Lazarus, its language suggests he grew weaker and weaker over an extended period of time. Lazarus' failing vitality probably caused little alarm at first. But when the ailment continued to erode their brother's strength, Martha and Mary sent a terse but touching note to Jesus across the Jordan: "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

Jesus did not respond—not immediately anyway. When first He heard of His friend's suffering, He said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." Then, after two days, He declared, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." When it was evident he was misunderstood, Jesus

spoke bluntly: "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

When they arrived in Bethany, those who traveled with Jesus saw that everything He said was true. Lazarus had been dead for several days. His body had been washed, wrapped with yards and yards of cloth, and placed in a cave which, when covered by a rock, served as a tomb. Moaning and groaning, weeping and playing melancholy dirges on a variety of instruments, professional mourners expressed the family's sorrow.


But Jesus did more than weep. He ordered the stone removed from the cave's mouth. "Lord," Martha objected, "by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus insisted, and the stone was removed.

Then, piercing the blackness of the open cave with the power of His gaze and the strength of His voice, Jesus challenged death to a duel. "Lazarus," He commanded, "come out."

Silence reigned for a second or two. Then a stir, a murmur from within the tomb, the sounds of one alive struggling with the shroud of death. "The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth."

"Unbind him, and let him go," Jesus ordered, making good His previous claim: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."

The claim that Jesus Christ stands victorious even over death is neither timid nor self-evident. It is a bold, radical, decision-evoking assertion which arrests the attention and baffles the imagination. It runs counter to everything we humans, ancient and modern alike, consider possible. Once understood, the claim can either be accepted or rejected. It cannot be ignored. Jesus of Nazareth was either Immanuel, "God with us," or a dangerous deluded charlatan.

This alternative was not lost on those who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus. Some believed. They worshiped Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Others didn't believe. They planned and proceeded to execute Him. And each person today who understands what Christianity claims—that meaninglessness, guilt, and even death have been conquered by Jesus Christ—is eventually and inevitably forced to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Lord of his life. Where do you stand? 

\*All quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

every other person, she would find her greatest joy serving God and humanity, motivated not by anxiety or frustration but by love and gratitude.

The gospel provides a satisfying answer to questions regarding who we are and why we are here. It is that we are God's children who exist only because of God's love. But this good news can be heard only if we stop, look, and listen—not to everything in general, but, as Martha was invited to do, to the person and words of Jesus Christ.

### Christ Versus Guilt

Lavish banquets were few and far between in Bethany, a town whose very name meant "the house of the poor." So it was an important event when Simon, one of Bethany's few prosperous and prominent citizens, honored Jesus with a feast befitting royalty.

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus all attended. Martha scurried hither and yon offering food and drink. Lazarus, taking a more relaxed view of life, posi-



# Does marriage have to be unhappy?

by Charles Wittschiebe

*A Christian counselor of many years discusses problems that frequently arise in marriage.*

**Do any truly happy marriages exist, or are most a matter of survival?**

There are truly happy marriages. Persons in such fortunate relationships can't conceive of any other way of life coming even close to challenging marriage. Then we find marriages which are not happy in the fullest sense, but the partners are satisfied, feel that they are doing well, and have no urge to get out. A large number we can classify as unhappy. One can quote statistics and percentages here, but they rest heavily on the particular interpretation given to the word *happy*, so it is better to make more general statements. . . .

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Even a happy marriage has moments when the spouses have to take measures to have it survive. Financial pressures, child care, frequent separations, long illness, interfering in-laws, aging—some or all can play a part in the possible death of the marriage. Personality clashes and deep emotional differences present major threats. Happy marriages survive all of them, yet they are not just "a matter of survival." When the couple are mature Christians and consider their pledges at the wedding as commitments to honor, their marriage is bound to last and to be happy.

**Do you have any suggestions on how to make Christian marriages happier?**

Yes, I think I can offer a few.

To begin with, church membership is no guarantee in itself of happy wedlock. Having the name on the church

records does not require any demonstration of the kind of emotional maturity necessary for a lasting marriage. Since the church is an association of saints at different levels in the process of sanctification, one still finds all the unpleasant symptoms of sinfulness among them. . . .

Society requires practically no preparation or training for marriage. Because persons grow up in families, exposed to husbands and wives (their parents), we assume that they will learn enough to set up their own homes when the time comes. It is almost as though one could expect to become a teacher of English in school because he grew up in a home which used the language.

Basically, getting a marriage license and a dog license are on about the same level of difficulty. The dog must have a rabies certificate and the bride and groom prove that they are free from venereal disease. By comparison, obtaining a driver's license is far harder and demands some training.

The church enters marriage at the beginning, and usually when trouble arises. She has done little to set up any type of training or education for marriage. High schools and academies often include a course or part of one on preparation for life. Colleges offer classes in marriage and the family, but they are optional, and relatively few enroll in them.

Marriage suffers from much unfair blame. The couple takes individual personality defects into the relationship, and when trouble breaks out, the institution of marriage often becomes the scapegoat. A moody bachelor bothers only his friends. If he marries, it is now a marriage problem. In wedlock the immature playboy, the stingy man, the jealous woman, the untidy girl, create tensions which we again label as marital problems. The intimacy and the permanence of the relationship highlight such faults and provide ample opportunity for increasing their aggravating power.

Christian husbands and wives sometimes fail to accept the fact that love is not often perfect, even in their marriages. To the degree that men are sinners, to that degree they are unable to love perfectly.

Anger, resentment, jealousy, discouragement, feelings of inferiority, disillusionment, fatigue, and other negative emotional conditions taint love. Christians often pretend that they do not exist. Sometimes, for example, the husband says, "I was upset with my wife last night." He means that she made him angry. She speaks of being "bothered," when she could cheerfully choke him. They need to face them honestly and frankly—then they can deal constructively with them.

Many individuals take into marriage an inability to love or to accept love. In many subtle ways the weakness works against the development of the mature and deep love that should characterize their union.

Many times we attack the leaves of the tree while the

main root of inadequacy continues to exist. Such cases need clear self-evaluation. Fortunately, the Lord is able to heal all types of illness, both physical and emotional.

Some married individuals occasionally experience ambivalent feelings. They like the security and comfort of the institution, but also want to jump over the fence and explore other pastures. Men more often experience such feelings, although today more and more wives abandon their husbands and children for lives of their own. Women adjust to marriage easier than men, and yet they give up a great deal more. At the beginning they surrender their names. Then they have to live where the husband sets up the domicile. After that, their jobs are usually secondary and supportive of the husband's main role as breadwinner. The care of the children falls mostly on them, with all of its confining and restricting aspects. In short, the wife plays second fiddle to her husband's first violin.

Christian marriages often allow minor tensions to pile up until they bring on quarrels or major outbursts. The spouse determines to remain sweet and nice and mentally tries to sweep the irritation under the rug. However, it begins a pile that soon grows large enough to trip him up.

Sitting on the porch in summer, we hit the first mosquito quite gently, but the tenth one gets a much harder blow. He is paying for the five already killed and the four that are still flying around after we missed them. Similarly, the husband has his boss bawl him out twice in the day. He gets into a traffic jam on the way home. As he enters the kitchen, he takes out his tensions and hostility on his wife by making some negative remark about the supper. The wife has had the toilet bowl clog in the morning, a salesman take up part of her time in the afternoon, a cake that fell, and Johnny's splashing into a puddle after she had just changed him. She needs comfort herself—in fact, they both do, but instead they become lightning rods for each other's charge of emotional electricity. One spouse needs the opportunity to drain off the tension without causing hurt to the other. In any case, both should recognize that the cause of their quarrel or hurt is not the immediate incident, but the gradual buildup behind it.

The Christian marriage, as with all other marriages, needs protection against circular monotony. One seems to come out at the place where he went in, and so on, ad infinitum. Without variety and a bit of spice, marriage can be a life sentence with no chance of parole. Avoid dropping into stylized roles, sometimes vulgarly pictured as "my old lady" and "my old man," "the ball and chain," and "the war department." Wives often fight the feeling by moving furniture into different positions, getting a new hat, trying some new recipes, or joining a club. Too many men seem to like ruts and resist any attempt to get out of them.

All husbands should keep in mind what some have called the "housewife syndrome." Children are a delight to have, and home is a wonderful place to be and to take care of,

**"Basically, getting a marriage license and a dog license are on about the same level of difficulty. By comparison, obtaining a driver's license is far harder and demands some training."**

but the wife and mother faces not only physical wear and tear, but emotional fatigue. The process of rearing children is enormously demanding. The mother is constantly aware of the responsibility of molding young lives. She endlessly faces their questions, which deserve better answers than "uh-huh," or "I don't know," or "ask your father." Nor should she sidestep discipline by "wait till your father comes home!" The monotony of endlessly repeating caretaker functions, none of which require any significant mental ability (washing dishes, making beds, vacuuming rugs, etc.), the constricting effect of remaining largely within the small confines of the home and the neighborhood, and the absence of adult conversation and contacts exhaust her spirit. In some women it gradually builds up to the point of "I could scream." Doubtless it is a main reason why American housewives attempt suicide far more often than college women or office secretaries. That they are really cries for help is evident from the fact that relatively few attempts actually end in death.

The best answer to such acted-out appeals is the loving care and concern of the husband. He shares some of the responsibilities, he cares what happens to her and the children through the day, he listens, he makes it evident that he can't function without her, he expresses appreciation for services and attentions usually taken for granted, he tells her he can't imagine life without her. In short, he gives his wife the feeling that she is an adult, a person, an equal—and perhaps superior—half of the family team.

Keeping romance alive is a great antidote against monotony. Never leave the Song of Solomon out of your marriage Bible. Keep up the little attentions. Romance does not end at marriage; it merely enters a different phase. The heat level drops from high to medium. To maintain the premarriage level of intensity could burn out a fuse. Never confine romance to particular days in the year like birthdays and anniversaries. The imaginative husband takes flowers home when there is no occasion. His wife says, "For me, honey?" with a tremor in her voice. And then she adds, "But it's not my birthday, or our anniversary, dear."

He replies, "That's right. Just want you to know how fortunate I am in finding you here every time I come home."

Then she gets misty-eyed, kisses him, and hurries to put the flowers in water. When visitors inquire about them, asking what event they commemorate, she takes pride in saying that her husband just felt like bringing flowers to her. "Oh, aren't you lucky?" some of them say. "I can't get my husband to remember even on our anniversary."

Making his wife always feel physically desirable and femininely magnetic is a husband's way of keeping romance alive. A pat here, a teasing gesture there, a remark that suggests more than it says, an invitation to adjourn for lovemaking—such keep life from becoming flat. Her unexpected caress, her flirty look, her teasing smile, her many

ways of saying, "You're my man, and I'm glad," make coming home more than just checking in for a meal and a place to sleep.

Is it necessary to point out the importance of humor in lubricating the daily machinery of living and in putting things in perspective? Humor often prevents sin. We have not given enough attention to that fact in our theology. The ability to smile and laugh is not the end result of an evolutionary process, but a direct gift of God in the anatomy and the emotional structure of man. One of the first proofs of personhood and of relationship the parent encourages in the child is a smile or laugh. "Look, honey; she smiled!" In fact, too much seriousness in a child becomes depressing. We wonder whether he is a sobersides or whether he is not feeling well.

Christian marriage also needs to keep open the channels of communication. By that I do not mean what you want for supper, of Eddie's need for a new pair of shoes, the breakdown of the washing machine, the suggestion of inviting the Smiths for dinner next Tuesday, or the news that mother is sending us some pickles. Communication involves an awareness of the deeper levels of each other's personalities, and a willingness to operate on them. Each can safely and without embarrassment expose himself or herself emotionally to the other. Fear of rejection, of condemnation, of estrangement, causes persons to wear masks and to keep parts of themselves locked away for good. Holy wedlock becomes unholy deadlock. The communication canals fill with silt, and the end result is communication pollution.

As part of today's social structure, Christian marriage faces the problem of role definition for the husband and for the wife. The traditional patterns of the past are inevitably changing to some degree under the impact of different living and working conditions and of social philosophies that are both the cause and the effect of altering attitudes and ways of life. The Bible reflects in large part a patriarchal concept of marriage. At the same time God inspired it for all men in all ages and in all countries. Christians, then, must extract from its pages the broad principles, unrelated to any particular time or place, that appear by direct expression or implication in all of the counsel or experiences which deal with sex and marriage.

The popularity of such books as *Open Marriage* indicates that it is high time for the church to devise an integrated, realistic, and yet spiritually grounded philosophy of marriage. While on guard against frontal attacks of heresy in doctrines, we must also watch out for any attempts to undermine the structure of the family. Erosion here can make heresy become purely academic in its importance. A marriage in which religion is declining presents the church with a challenge, but a marriage built on, and shaped by, non-Scriptural principles presents a grave threat. . . .

**"Marriage suffers from much unfair blame. The couple takes individual personality defects into the relationship, and, when trouble breaks out, the institution of marriage often becomes the scapegoat."**



### **What do you do when your husband suddenly acts as if he wants to be single again?**

That depends on why he is acting that way. His actions may mean that he has finally decided that the marriage gives him little satisfaction as a man, quite possibly in the area of sex. He may wonder why he has committed himself to such permanent responsibilities without any balancing gains. The marriage to him looks colorless, flat, monotonous, and he wants release. In all probability he has contributed heavily to its unsatisfactory nature, but has not acknowledged it to himself.

Your husband may be one of those men who never really leave their adolescence behind. If so, he prefers to turn away from increasing responsibilities rather than buckling down to meet them. Essentially he is not man enough to face up to the demands that marriage makes.

Or he may still retain a bachelor mentality. Such a man wants to live in a man's world, uncluttered by a wife and children. He has sex urges, but not strong enough to make him want a permanent arrangement like marriage. While he enjoys the conveniences and benefits of marriage, he feels that the restrictions outweigh them. In other words, he doesn't want anyone to fence him in. The momentum of the early years of marriage for the time overrides his basic preference. Now when he has to settle down for the long pull, he'd rather be off somewhere, singing to you from a comfortable distance that you're "gentle on my mind."

In any situation you'll need frank communication. You'll have to tune in to your husband's real feelings and not let the smoke screen of evasion he has created deceive you. Argument and pleading are not likely to accomplish anything. Your pastor could probably be a great help.

### **Should a husband feel he does not have to come home right after work? And does he have the right to stay out late weekend nights and feel it is all right?**

It seems to me that a husband should come home after work, and that he should not stay out late on weekend nights. Isn't his conduct symptomatic of something wrong in the marriage?

The husband may be immature and feel that he still has the right to be with the boys whenever the mood strikes him. He wants the freedom of bachelor life, without having to account to someone for his time or his actions. Such a man resents anyone asking, Where were you? Why didn't you get home? What have you been doing? He just about forces his wife into the role of a mother with an adolescent child and then relieves himself of responsibility by calling her a nagger. The more she gets after him, the more necessary it is for him to get out of the house and find some peace. In other words, nagging only adds fuel to the fire.

Another type of husband may have carried his responsibilities pretty well up to now, but then develops a pattern

of staying away. In his case the change in the relationship needs examination.

A case in point: A couple came to me on the way to the divorce court. She was a Christian. He had been one at the time of their marriage, but only in a formal sense. His parents were missionaries. Since the marriage he had dropped out of the church.

He would stop at a bar each evening after work and remain there for three or four hours. It was driving her up the wall, and she felt that she had no choice left but to break up the marriage.

When they came, my emotional radar made me feel that they still loved each other under their mass of strains and conflict.

She said he smoked and drank beer and even kept some cans in the refrigerator. The influence on the children also worried her.

"When you married him, did he promise to remain a Christian?" I asked.

"No."

"Then he has not broken his marriage vows in that sense, has he?"

"No, I guess not."

"So your love for him doesn't have to be conditioned on whether he is a Christian or not, does it?"

"Well, no—"

"Now that he does not profess to be a Christian, it is not surprising that he smokes or drinks beer, is it? They're both bad habits that he would be better off without, but he has the right to do both. Since the home is his as much as yours, he has a perfect right to keep some beer in his refrigerator, doesn't he? I think he'll agree that it would be better to keep them as much out of the sight of the children as possible." (He agreed.)

We went on in that vein for a time, and she saw that nothing prevented her from continuing to love her husband and to enjoy him as a man, in spite of their differing spiritual viewpoints and practices. She began to look at him with a sort of reaching-out-to-you look. His expression indicated that he was responding.

In the next interview, they reported that things were going fine.

"You're not stopping off at the bar now?" I asked him.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Well, it's more fun going home."

"Do you think about her while you're on the job, even about lovemaking, maybe?"

"Yes," he said, looking at her with a teasing grin.

She blushed happily, both because of his renewed affection for her and because of the implied compliment.

His wife had become a nag and a scold. The home became the place which rated him the lowest. So he sought consolation, peace, and more acceptance where no one

**"Christian marriages often allow minor tensions to pile up until they bring on quarrels or major outbursts. . . . Sitting on the porch in summer, we hit the first mosquito quite gently, but the tenth one gets a much harder blow. He is paying for the five already killed and the four that are still flying around after we missed them."**

harangued him and where people dealt with him as an equal and a good buddy.

When the basic love relationship revived to full strength and sex again became a delightful channel of expression, the home exerted an attraction that drew him. After all, the company of a woman who loves you and thinks you are *the man* in her life has a lot of pulling power.

**A husband has been married two years and is extremely jealous of his wife. He even gets angry because his wife is gone to the store longer than he thinks she should have been, and he checks up on her all the time. Please give your advice on the matter.**

You state one reason for such behavior—extreme jealousy. Here one should search for the causes. Insecurity could be the main taproot of the trouble. Some may really feel unable to keep a woman for themselves against all the potential threats they see in their world. Such immaturity often comes out of the unhealthy relationship termed “momism,” in which the son becomes overly dependent on the mother. Rather than being the healthy recipient of mother love, he is the victim of “smother-love,” and this distorts his ability to respond emotionally. In short, although he is a husband, and she has promised to love, honor, and cherish him, deep down in his emotional nature he is not sure that he has what it takes to have a woman continue to feel that way.

Or he may have had experiences in his life that have caused him to become distrustful of women. Perhaps his mother failed to make him feel cherished and loved. Perhaps the parents' marriage broke up and left him rudderless. Unsureness about his mother, and anger at her for unsatisfied emotional needs, could lead him to suspect his relationship with the second most significant woman in his life, a woman who is in some ways a mother surrogate.

A husband's tendency to watchfulness is not necessarily jealousy. If, before marriage, she confessed to him a number of affairs, he may at times have some qualms about a possible recurrence of earlier behavior. He will be watching for any signs of her straying.

Ideally, the husband and wife should be able to talk their way through to a more comfortable relationship, but the chances are that they will need counseling to achieve their goal.

**What can a loving husband do when his wife keeps talking about what happened in his previous marriage? It is spoiling our married life.**

Without any more information than is contained in the question, one could assume that your wife is quite insecure, possibly even to the point of being jealous of the previous spouse. You don't say whether death or divorce terminated the former marriage.

If you were a widower, she may feel that she is your second love and somehow inferior. Sometimes a halo forms around departed mates that makes them seem formidable when anyone makes comparisons.

If you divorced your former wife, your present wife may feel that you did it reluctantly and only because your male pride (assuming she ran out on you) demanded that you break up the marriage. She may wonder if you have a small residue of love that you are concealing from her so that she won't get upset.

For some wives the visits of children from the earlier marriage keeps an emotional wound open and unhealed.

In any case your wife reveals her insecurity by her morbid preoccupation with the past. The next time she brings it up, instead of attempting to reassure her or tell her the whole thing is unimportant, why not draw her out by listening and trying to sense what the deep roots of her uneasiness are. Too often a conversation on such a subject resembles a Ping-Pong match. Let it be more like trying to catch the mood of a musical selection, a sort of tuning in to her feelings.

Naturally, you will help her see herself in a more attractive light, a woman easily able to hold her own with your former wife, or with any other woman of your acquaintance.

**I lived an immoral life before I got married. How can I be sure my past is forgiven? Should I forget my past?**

First John 1:9 has the answer. When you confess, God forgives you. Cleansing then follows forgiveness. In effect, you are now as though you had never committed the sin. We can believe it because God sealed His promise by pouring out the blood of His Son. No surety can equal it; none can exceed it. We can trust love supported by such an incredible gift. And the wonder is that God would have endured all of Gethsemane and Calvary even if only one sinner had existed. And the one could have been you.

Accept God's forgiveness as a fact, just as you accepted the minister's words at your wedding as facts. If you didn't believe he made you husband and wife, you are now living in fornication. But you believed his words and have acted trustingly on them ever since. Do the same with the Lord's statement in 1 John 1:9.

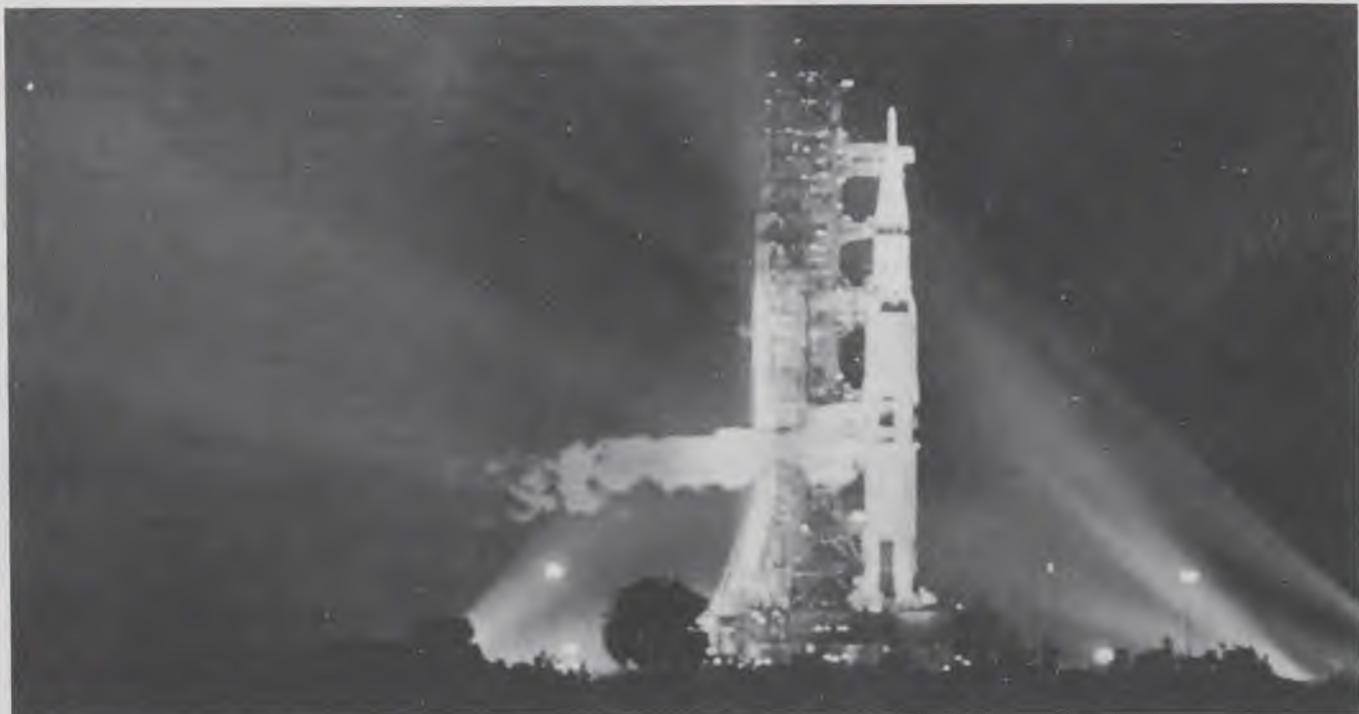
We must remember, however, that forgiveness does not cancel out all emotional scars or repair all the damage done—in short, does not remove the possibility of negative consequences. It is not a permanent guarantee of clear sailing for the future.

As to forgetting, your gratitude to God for forgiveness alone prevents you from blocking the sin out of your memory. Yet you remember less the pain and shame and more the love that forgave your iniquity and healed your disease. Each recollection of the past increases your wonder at being the recipient of love so great and so constant. ☉

**“Christian marriage needs to keep open the channels of communication. By that I do not mean what you want for supper, of Eddie's need for a new pair of shoes, or the news that mother is sending us some pickles.”**



## Big rockets, small men



"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

So WROTE Oliver Goldsmith. His words apply with uncanny accuracy to life in these times. In nation after nation there is a crisis of leadership.

All this is a far cry from the world situation ten or twenty years ago. Eisenhower, de Gaulle, Churchill, Adenauer, Nehru—it was the era of great personalities, of charismatic figures. But where are today's leaders? As able as they are, none has the personal force or commands the consent of the masses as did the giants of yesteryear. More and more, under the ever-increasing complexities of modern society, control passes into the hands of the "experts," the technocrats.

Yet ours is an age of unparalleled success in the construction of gadgets. It is an awesome experience to walk past a moon rocket; beside the enormous bird you feel like a dwarf, while its huge reserves of power are incomprehensible to the mind.

This is our age: big rockets, but small men.

As I see it, we must set off the decline in human character against the startling achievements of technology as we construct the balance sheet of our times. How will our account look then?

One of my favorite statements is the following from Ellen G. White:

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall" (*Education*, p. 57).

The ideal of leadership pictured here is breathtaking. Is it hopelessly idealistic, an echo from the strait-laced ethics of a bygone era? In our time, when we have become so used to emphasizing freedom, should we still hold out such a standard for those at the helm?

We must. Indeed, more than ever our times *demand* such leadership. The very advances of our technocracy have put devastating power in the hands of modern leaders—power to be used for good or ill.

The great issues of our day are *moral* ones. Will we allow the "creation" of babies outside a human womb? Is "cloning" of human beings to be permitted? May abortion be freely obtained at a woman's whim? And—above all—under what circumstances shall the finger press down on the button that plunges us into a nuclear holocaust?

These are not idle questions. They are not of concern to academicians only. Nor, we must hasten to add, are they the sole property of our elected representatives. We, the people, are *involved* in these issues—for life or for death.

Early in the second century of our era, Ignatius wrote to Polycarp, "The time demands you, as pilots demand winds and a storm-tossed man a harbour, in order to reach the presence of God." Our times demand *men*—men of integrity, men of vision, men of understanding, men of love. They demand that each of us, no matter what our status, turn again and search our souls lest we have become contaminated by the fallout of moral corruption.

Big rockets, small men! Let us beware lest our age go down in history as the wisest and weakest in the passing parade of homo sapiens!

Jesus Christ admonished, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

WILLIAM JOHNSON

WILLIAM BARCLAY, of Scotland, says that if a lad loves a lass, the Gaelic language has twenty different ways to tell her so. The English language limits us in the expression of love. Today the word *love* means too many things and serves too many purposes. It can refer to the purple love of one taking her fourth husband, or it can portray what happens when a father gives his life for his child.

In order to understand the word *love*, the first fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22, 23, we must look deeper. Four Greek words describe as many kinds of love. There are: *eros* (sensual love); *storge* (domestic love); *philia* (friendship love); and *agape* (a goodwill-divine love). Although they are not as defined and fixed as this appears, and there are overlapping meanings, yet look at each briefly.

*John Drescher is a pastor and freelance writer living in Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.*

by John M. Drescher

#### Four Kinds of Love

*Eros* refers to love between man and woman. It is sexual or physical love based on passion. The Bible does not reject sexual or physical love. It places it on a high plane and points out its goodness in the sanctity of marriage. Too often we associate *eros* with lust rather than with marital love.

*Storge* is family love—love of the parent for the child and the child for the parent. We love those of our own family. There is a closeness of kinship. As brothers and sisters we love each other because of our family ties.

*Philia* describes the highest kind of human love—the warm, close relationship of body, mind, and spirit. It speaks of the highest level of friendship. Since it is on the human level, this love can fade as the friendship meets difficulties or its beauty begins to fade. In friendship the circle is narrow in contrast to the all-encircling character of Christian love.

## What it means to love



The Christians took *agape*, a word both small and weak in classical Greek, and made it strong. They needed a word to describe the incredible concern of God for undeserving man as portrayed in Romans 5:8, RSV: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

William Barclay says, "*Agape* is the spirit in the heart that will never seek anything but the highest good of its fellowmen." It is love, not a mere emotion. Emotion, at times, may be totally absent. *Agape* is the love that gives, sacrifices, and has compassion. The will controls love. *Agape* love wills to love not only when people deserve love but when they do not deserve it. *Agape* love wills to build good relationships; it helps regardless of the cost.

### Not Dependent on Emotion

This fruit becomes more than mere emotion. A mother does not depend on feeling or emotion to do her duty when her baby cries at night. Even though she is tired, love is there; so she gets out of bed, feeds her little one, and rocks him to sleep. Really, when we say we cannot love another, we are saying that we no longer want to love that person.

Because Christian love is a matter of the will, God gives us the command to "love one another." We follow this command not because of sentiment or feeling but because we make it a matter of the will. Christian love becomes the response of a yielded will to the clear

command of God who "is love."

Paul Ramsey wrote, "Christian love . . . has nothing to do with feelings, emotions, taste, preference, temperament, or any of the qualities in other people which arouse feelings of revulsion or attraction, negative or positive preference. Christian love depends on the direction of the will, . . . not on stirring emotion."

Aarlie J. Mull in an article "Love Is Deed" describes her struggle to love. She was continually frustrated because she thought a Christian must always feel genuine love for everyone everywhere. She relied too heavily on human emotion. She likened love to a warm feeling. Then she came to see that simply doing what Christ's love dictated changed her whole life. She says, "The realization that Christian love is not always a warm feeling but is more often the performance of a deed has simply revolutionized my Christian life. I cannot govern my emotion, but I can govern my action, and that is exciting. . . . Oh, I welcome warm feelings whenever they happen along (sometimes coming when I least expect them), but I don't need them to experience Christian love, because that love has taken on a new dimension, . . . love is in deed."

C. H. Dodd defines love as "energetic and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to secure the good of the

beloved subject. It is not primarily an emotion or an affection; it is primarily an active determination of the will."

Christian love, however, is not simply a product of the human heart when one wills it. Rather it is a divine gift made real to us and through us to others by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22).

### Love Is What One Does

Love is more what you do than what you feel. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 tells what love does. A husband and wife in the wedding vows promise, not how they will feel together the next year, but what they will do for each other. When one does a deed of love, the feeling of love follows, not the other way around. As we find happiness when we share it, so love becomes real when we express it in something we do.

A lady wrote, "I have one besetting sin. There is a certain person who is a thorn in my flesh, and I just cannot love that person. Is this love of God which I have for another person a feeling that I can turn on and off like an electric light?"

The answer is No! Love showers good things on others even as God bestowed His love upon us while we were His enemies. Christ came to die for us when we did not love Him. *Agape* love is Christ living in us through His Spirit and letting Him live and reach out through us.

Christian love differs from mere human love. It includes the entire person—the heart, mind, feelings, and will. We do not fall into it, but we choose to exercise it even toward the unlovely. It triumphs over self. We experience it only through the power of God through the Holy Spirit. The unregenerate cannot experience the love of which the Bible speaks. Only the Spirit-filled Christian can exemplify true Christian love.

"The differentia of the Christian," said C. Anderson Scott years ago, "is that, in the Christian sense, he loves." He simply says in another way what Jesus said centuries ago, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, RSV).



# SOLVED: The mystery of Cell 8

A puzzle first reported ten years ago in "These Times" has at last been unraveled.

by Tom Dowling

BACK IN OCTOBER, 1964, THESE TIMES published an article titled "Christ in Prison." Briefly, the article was about a mysterious sketch of Christ left on a prison wall by an overnight prisoner one cold night during the Depression. Despite intense search and prolonged inquiry by the author and many other persons, the artist was never found.

In an August, 1973, issue of a prominent Sunday supplement newspaper, this writer had another very brief account of the "Christ in Prison" piece published. No sooner had it appeared in thousands of newspapers throughout the country than previously locked doors were opened up and the mystery of cell 8 apparently solved.

Relatives of the "nameless" central character of the article came forward and identified him, thereby bringing to an end the forty-year-old mystery. But let's go back to the beginning.

More than forty years ago an unusual thing happened in cell 8 of the Saint Louis Central Police Station. The identity of the man who occupied that cell one evening was completely unknown to the authorities. Cell 8 was just a place where drifters were lodged overnight out of the cold, but the man who spent that particular night there left something wonderful, something quite marvelous, really. Not discovered until the next day after he had been released was a drawing on the buff steel wall. Made by the unidentified artist, the drawing remained for many years in what came to be known as the "holy cell." Police officials had it covered with protective glass to prevent damage to one of the most unlikely pieces of art

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ever discovered in a jail cell—a drawing of Christ crucified!

Through the years, hundreds of occupants of cell 8 as well as other people have wondered about the unknown artist. Who was he? Where had he gone? Why had he drawn the picture? If he was still alive, he carried the answers in his heart; if dead, the answers had gone to the grave with him.

Eventually that section of the wall containing the drawing was removed from cell 8 and placed in the Police Academy. The thousands who have visited it have come away feeling that the anonymous artist must have experienced an extraordinary empathy with the Man on the cross. Yet, despite the amount of publicity given this drawing, the artist never came forward to accept his well-deserved accolades. He seemed

content to remain in the background, satisfied that he had left something lovely and enchanting in a place where it might least be expected. Evidently he had been set free before the work could be finished, however, for the artist had not completed Christ's right arm.

Now this writer's recent capsule account of the mystery, which first appeared ten years ago in THESE TIMES, brought about some totally unexpected revelations regarding the artist's identity. After reading the story, relatives came forward with proof that the drawing in cell 8 was the work of Mr. Melvin Perry, nationally recognized painter of many portraits and religious works.

And so ends the forty-year-old mystery of the drawing in cell 8, called by the Saint Louis police "the holy cell." ●





## Dialogue on dentists

Recently our family switched dentists. Probably we'd have gone on forever with our old one, except that Don required some nasty root-canal work which required the skills and equipment of a young DDS in town with a shiny new shingle. He came home impressed and as eloquent as he ever waxes (which isn't very) over the "atmosphere."

I giggled. That was a funny word for my man who scorns candlelit restaurants and exotic surroundings. "One needs *atmosphere* for fillings?" I asked, giggling some more.

"Well, there was *something* about the place," he said. Low key, no pressure on the rest of us to change—that's the way he is.

He had to go back several times for what I considered very unpleasant activities, but he didn't complain. In fact, I got the feeling he was quite comfortable about those early-morning appointments.

I was curious but, happily, sound of mouth. However, a few months later, contentedly munching my breakfast granola, I bit down upon something which was neither pecan nor shell, but an ugly hunk of tired filling.

"Where are you going to get it fixed?" Don asked mildly.

"I haven't decided yet," said I, woman-wise.

But you know, don't you, where I headed a few days later? To explore that atmosphere.

The hygienist, in a blue-flowered shirt and navy pants, led me into the torture room, sat me down in a pinkish leather chair, and proceeded to recline me, back, back, until I was horizontal and ridiculously comfortable.

"I'll return," she told me, with a friendly grin.

"I may be asleep," I replied, feeling a bit

foolish but pleasantly pampered. Somehow, in that position, my tenseness began to recede and my fears seemed childishly out of place.

When I really did begin to feel sleepy, the flowered shirt returned with a matching companion. This *boy* was going to patch my battle-scarred old molar? this pleasant child in a giddy shirt? Where was the white cardboard coat and the professional air? Atmosphere, indeed!

He inspected my mouth's crooked and patched interior with interest, and reported, "You have good gums. Gums are the real problem, not teeth." Well! maybe something at the medical school had rubbed off after all.

The female flowered shirt sat down at my head on one side and the degreed flowered shirt on the other. Down from its perch he pulled the familiar tool, and instinctively I tensed. What was the girl there for—to revive me if I fainted? There was a buzzing as whirling metal hit its mark. I waited for the head-jarring vibrations I abhorred, but there were none. The sensation was that of filing a fingernail—painless, not unpleasant. Bonnie, of the blue-green garden, vacuuming from my mouth the water which provided cooling action for the high-speed drill, chatted easily with the matching "garden" across the way, who wielded his various instruments with speed and precision.

"Plenty of tooth left," he affirmed, reassuringly.

His hands, I noted, were warm, comfortable, and competent. It occurred to me that the other doctor's had been cold, efficient, and faintly smelly of antiseptic and nicotine.

Warm hands shouldn't make any difference, but they did. I was absolutely relaxed for the first time ever in a dentist's office. It was comfortable to lie down and to be fussed over by friendly, highly efficient people.

Very hard to define, the difference between past experiences and this. Perhaps Don had said it all in his laconic one word—*atmosphere*. I knew somehow that these two skilled young people were interested in their work, that sparing me all possible pain was their goal—along with keeping my teeth in my head as long as I needed them.

I hate stories that have a moral tacked on the end, but this one wasn't just invented to fit the story. It really did occur to me, driving home that day, that God is like this new dentist: out to make my life, even on our problem planet, as comfortable and happy as possible, if I'd just relax into His expert care. But too often I relate to Him as to a cold professional, "out to get me"; thus I enter His presence rigid with dread and fear.

Remind me over and over again, Lord, that You too have warm, capable hands.



# I know Christians who are hypocrites

*How do you spot a genuine hypocrite? What does he look like? Is a person a hypocrite who goes to church and yet fails to live up to God's ideal? Or is he just human?* by Dick Jewett

SOMEBODY SAID to me the other day, "I don't see any reason to become a Christian. I know some Christians who go to church every week who are hypocrites." I asked how he could tell if they were hypocrites. "Well, they go to church, but they don't live up to all that the church teaches."

Is that a valid definition of a hypocrite? Not in my book. Suppose I am a baby trying to learn how to walk. Does it make me a hypocrite if I fall down while trying to learn? The same thing is true in church. There *are* hypocrites in church, Jesus points them out in His Book. But they are not identified by the mistakes they make while trying to learn to walk the way Jesus walked. The hypocrites in church are the ones who are tired of learning, period! They already know how to walk. They know all they need to know. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

But not everybody who falls is a hypocrite. Many are just beginners who need all the help and love we can give them. Most of us still have a whole lot to learn. We need your patience too.

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But let's go back to what my friend said: "I don't see any reason to become a Christian." And then he started talking about the church. Many people have the same idea. They stand on the outside looking in and think the church is the reason to become a Christian. Billy Sunday said one time, "Just going into a church doesn't anymore make you a Christian than going into a garage makes you an automobile. I'm not against going to church. And I keep my car in a garage. But the reason to become a Christian is Jesus Christ."

Look at it this way: Suppose you were God. Would you force people to bow down and worship you? Of course not! Do you say to your wife, "Bow down and worship me . . . or else"? Of course not! Instead you try to find ways to demonstrate your love.

Let's carry the illustration one step further: "Suppose you found out that your wife had taken a lover. Could you still love her? You want to think about that one a minute? Well . . . at least pretend you still could. Now, what do you do about the situation? Do you confront your wife and her lover together and ask her to choose between you? Or would you prefer to try to find some powerful way to demonstrate your love?"

Now suppose you are God. Same situation. Do you confront man and his other gods and force him to choose? Suppose you do overpower him—overwhelm him. Offer him heaven instead of the ghetto . . . immortality instead of a slow lingering death with cancer. Suppose the man did leave his other

gods. Would he be coming to you because of love or greed? Think about it. Suppose you confronted your wife and her lover and promised her fifty thousand dollars to come home with you. If she came, would she be your wife or your prostitute?

Thus, God left room for doubt to make room for faith. What God did was find a way to demonstrate His love. He sent His only Son. If your wife had a lover, would you be willing to send your only son to try to tell her how much you still love her? Even if you knew she would probably kill him? Your love isn't that great, is it? Don't you see? That is why we can't understand God. His love is too much for mortals to comprehend. That is why you must have faith. God left room for doubt to make room for faith. God didn't send proof. He sent Jesus Christ, and that is the reason *to be* a Christian.

And the reason *not to be* a Christian has nothing to do with hypocrites in the church. It has to do with other gods in the life! Gods of pride, passion, possessions, or power. You don't have to become a Christian . . . but don't blame the hypocrites. They have enough problems of their own.

And so do you; right? Just between you and me, aren't you a little curious about Jesus Christ? If He came once, isn't He likely to come again? And when you meet Him, what will you say? Will you then declare: "I didn't believe"? That's the worst thing you could say. He can forgive you for being a sinner, but not believing is not believing. He can forgive you for being a sinner. ☉



*Too often prayer can become a habit or an exercise in repeating meaningless phrases. We need to realize that . . .*

# Prayer is talking to God as to a friend

"Our Father . . ."

Yes.

Who is it? Don't disturb me. Can't you see I'm praying?

*Am I disturbing you? You just called Me.*

Called You? I am just saying my prayer. "Our Father . . ."

*I am the Father.*

My! I wasn't expecting You.

*What is it you want?*

Nothing really. As a little boy I was taught to say the Lord's Prayer; so I began tonight before I doze off. "Our Father which art in heaven."

*Do you really believe that?*

Believe what?

*That I the God in heaven am your Father? Are you My son? If so, do you acknowledge Me in all your ways, accept My plan for your life, hold My honor, My character, My family, My work, as the object of your highest interest? Do you believe that I am the Father of all man-*

**by John M. Fowler**

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kind? *Fatherhood of God demands brotherhood of man. One who calls Me Father accepts all men as his equal—regardless of race, language, color, culture, or position.*

I do accept all that. "Hallowed be thy name."

*What do you mean by that?*

I never gave it a thought. As I said, I'm just used to praying this prayer. Now that you have raised that point, let me look up Webster. "Hallow: to make holy; set apart for holy or religious use; treat or keep as sacred; to respect greatly; venerate; revere."

*More than that. My name is "holy and reverend." My name stands for My essential nature, My character. To honor such a name is to give Me priority and reverence in thought and word, in private conduct and public worship, and in every situation of human experience. Work and worship, speech and action, play and prayer, must kneel in reverence.*

That seems hard.

Well, prayer isn't easy. It is more than words: it is the expression of life itself. Go on.

"Thy kingdom come." Here You can't catch me. I know what this means. Does not John say, "The kingdoms of this world

are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"? I look forward to the second coming of Christ who will establish this kingdom.

## **Bill's not a Christian. My prayer doesn't apply to him.**

*True enough. But there is something more. "The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This kingdom precedes the one you just mentioned. Before the crown there is a cross. Before reward there is duty. Before the kingdom of glory there is the kingdom of grace. Have you experienced grace, joy, and peace? Furthermore, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." The kingdom of glory will not come "until the good tidings of His grace [will] have been carried to all the earth." Only those who devote themselves to My service can pray in sincerity, "Thy kingdom come."*

Surely You don't think I'm insincere. I go to church each week. I help the poor. I visit the sick. By these acts am I not serving You? And, moreover, I pray daily for "Thy will [to] be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

*What do you mean by that?*

Well, Lord, this world is in a bad shape. Things aren't going well—Watergate, Middle East, energy crisis, pollution, crime, inflation. Your will is openly flouted. I want You to take over this sinful world and control it.

*It's nice of you to say that, but tell Me, have I got control of you?*

Of course! Otherwise I wouldn't be praying. As I said before, I am a church member. I attend church every week. I pay my tithe. I help the poor. There's really not much wrong with me.

*Just a minute. What about that bad temper? This morning you thrashed your little boy. And there is that problem of lust. Remember that business deal you made last week? What about that magazine you left under the mattress this morning? Are you really helping My will to be done on earth?*

Well, those are little things. What counts is I am for You.

*But is My will your will? Is My law your*

way? My will for this earth is to end the reign of sin. My law is love. For My will to be done on earth, it should begin with people—like you.

OK, Lord, let it begin with me. Let me finish that prayer. It's getting late. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Of course I do and I shall. Have you not read My promise: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" Tell Me, have you ever seen a squirrel seriously meditating where its next breakfast will come from? Or have you noticed a sparrow worrying about tonight's dinner? If these creatures are cared for, how much more sure is My protection for you?

Thank You. I knew that I could depend on You. "Forgive . . ."

Just a minute. You prayed for bread, and bread I will give. But what about that thing in your mouth an hour ago, pouring out smoke? Is that bread? or that cup of wine that I warned would bite like a serpent and sting like an adder? I am surprised that the lips that kiss that cup and hold that butt can also pray.

Are you suggesting I shouldn't pray?

No. I just wonder "why . . . you spend your money for that which is not

bread." And why would you ruin your body which is "a temple of the Holy Spirit"?

I get the point. I must do something about it. "Forgive us our debts."

You have no worries there. I do forgive. Calvary is the assurance that I am always ready to forgive. My forgiveness is such that it casts all your sins into the depths of the sea—so complete is My pardon. But right now I'm interested in the next part of your prayer.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

How about your wife?

I knew You would catch me on that. You don't understand. She is mean, hard to put up with, and nagging. What's more, she is jealous.

That's interesting. But meanness, nagging, and jealousy don't grow in a vacuum. Surely you must be aware of the background to these problems.

Maybe You're right. Anyway I should make up with her. We have special music to give in the church tomorrow.

What about Bill?

What about him? He's not a Christian. And my prayer doesn't apply to him.

Really?

**I'm a church member. I attend church every week. I pay my tithe. I help the poor. There's really not much wrong with me.**





**Y**ou don't understand my wife. She's mean, hard to put up with, and nagging. What's more, she's jealous.

Of course not. You don't know this fellow Bill. He cheated me in that real-estate deal. He gossips all the time—about me. He used some very vulgar words the other day. He still has that money I loaned him two years ago.

*I know all that. But what about your prayer?*

As I said before, I'm just praying. But I'll get even with Bill and then I'll feel better.

*No, you won't. Evil is never conquered by evil. Revenge is not peppermint; rather, it is a bitter pill. Hate is a vicious circle, and you can't break it with hate. Only love can. Try love. Give compassion a chance. Forgive Bill, and see how you feel.*

I won't forgive him.

*Then I can't forgive you. Back to My previous question: Are you really willing to do My will?*

If You put it that way, I have no choice. I will send Bill a friendly note tomorrow. And the first chance I have, I'll speak to him.

*That's better. You already seem to feel the sweetness of forgiveness. But remember you may not get your money back, and Bill may not be all love and kindness. But that's his problem, not yours. What's next on your prayer?*

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

*I am always ready to help you in that. Just be careful not to place yourself in the tempter's territory.*

What's that?

*"Close every avenue by which the tempter may find access." Cut out those idle moments, change some of your friends, quit going to those gatherings of so-called pleasure, stop indulging in ease and self-gratification. Satan can only tempt you; he can never force you to sin. To sin or not to sin is something you choose. So guard well the citadels of your soul. Pray more often. Keep close to the Bible. Be interested in others.*

Thank You, Father. I feel so good that I can really finish that prayer and go to bed. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever."

*That's true. Even without your acknowledgment, Mine "is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty." And they are Mine forever. But, you know, to Me there is something more important than these. For that important object, I would empty the whole heaven.*

What is it that is so important to You?

*It's you. I am honored by every repentant soul that turns away from sin to love Me and to live for Me.*

"Amen!"

*You mean you agree? You mean you are prepared to commit your whole life to love Me and to live for Me?*

Yes, Father, I do. Now and forever.

Amen!





# “These Times” receives ACP awards

A FEW MONTHS ago Dr. John DeMott, of the Northern Illinois University department of journalism, together with other members of his staff, was asked to judge the publications of the Associated Church Press and to present awards of merit at the organization's fifty-eighth annual convention in Denver, Colorado.

Although we are pleased to announce that THESE TIMES received awards in two categories—editorials and photography—we wish primarily to share Dr. DeMott's insights into the religious press. He began the judge's report by stating that “during the past year, the religious press appears to have achieved a new level of professional competence and maturity, despite its financial losses to inflation and other economic misfortune!

“The economic crisis confronting religious journalism made its impact—a disastrous one in some cases—but the dedication, growing sophistication, and searing insight of editors into the peculiar relevance, role, and function of their periodicals produced a journalistic triumph of considerable magnitude.”

What follows is Dr. DeMott's theoretical model of the ideal church magazine:

“In many ways, of course, the church magazine should be no different from popular magazines.

“First, the magazine should be attractive—an appealing format, with layout and typography making it easy to read. Its style and makeup should give the reader genuine pleasure, in addition to information. In this age of information overload, speed in absorbing the content of print media is a precious capacity. The accent must be on readability.

“Second, the content should be diversified and highly appropriate to the magazine's readership—news of the church itself and of secular affairs related to its faith. Ideally the content should be an interesting mix of straight news, interpretative articles exploring problems of the church in depth, inspirational features, thought-provoking letters to the editor that provide a meaningful forum for the exchange of comment and criticism—praise and encouragement, too—and editorials that take a positive stand on issues of peculiar interest to members of that church.

“To give the content more meaning and impact, the magazine should be illustrated generously with colorful photography and other art, of course.

“Most important of all, however, the magazine must have editorial integrity. Although it should not be simply an organ of propaganda, the magazine must concentrate its editorial efforts on articulating the beliefs of its church as faithfully as possible, applying those beliefs to the problems of today,

thereby helping its readers relate to others in our society.

“Like other media of mass communications, the church magazine must serve as a bridge between its readers and those around them, explaining the church to others, and others to those who belong to the church.

“It cannot do that, naturally, if it withdraws into its own circle of readers and encourages an alienation of its readers. Neither can it perform any worthwhile service if it allows itself to be assimilated into secular life, aping the periodicals of popular appeal.

“It is the peculiar mission of the church magazine to bring religious faith to grips with the problems of everyday life in our pluralistic society, to articulate the faith of its own church in more meaningful terms for the benefit of both its believers and nonbelievers, and to report the results of that encounter of faith with the challenge of our troubled times.

“To bring about that encounter of faith, and to report and explain it, the church magazine must take a stance advocating the application of its faith to the solution of pressing practical problems in the secular realm—the problems of most searing salience to its readers.

“It must explain to those readers how their faith relates itself to current events outside the church, must persuade them to implement their faith in social action, must inspire them and sustain them through such effort, must keep them informed of their progress or failure, and must help them maintain their perspective—a sense of humor, too—in the face of opposition or other difficulty.

“This is the special relevance of the church magazine—its heart and soul—its journalistic salvation, perhaps.”

KENNETH J. HOLLAND

## Letters

### Bible Special receives praise

I just received my copy of the Special Bible Issue of THESE TIMES, and I want to express my appreciation to the editors for this Christian magazine. I plan to keep this Bible issue for future reference. I wish I had the words to tell you how much it means to me.—Mrs. John D. Jackson/Dallas, Texas.

Can you spare me ten or a dozen copies of the Special Bible Issue? It's so perfectly done I want to distribute additional copies. A check is enclosed.—Lawrence M. Proctor/Falls Church, Virginia.

Wonderful issue! Your book-by-book summary is very informative. I plan to keep

this magazine permanently with my Bible for study and research.—Mildred Neidinger/Middletown, Pennsylvania.

Your Special Bible Issue is really great. I was able to glance through it at a friend's home, and it made me want to subscribe. Here is my check plus an extra fifty cents which I hope will cover the cost of your mailing me a copy of the Bible issue. I do hope you can rake one up for me.—Earnestine O. George/Mobile, Alabama.

### Catholic Christians write pro and con

My copy of THESE TIMES comes to me, as it has for the past four years, through the kindness of one of your columnists. The June issue has so revolted me that I request you no longer send the magazine to me. I am a Catholic, and I cannot accept your false reasoning. No doubt you will not care that I no longer want the magazine, but please be consoled with the fact that I am praying for you, as requested by our Lord to pray for the conversion of sinners.—Ann M. Smith/Batavia, New York.

I am another Catholic enjoying your magazine, and I would especially like to thank you for your article “The Martyrdom of Perpetua” in the June issue. Thank you again for your magazine; I know I will continue to enjoy reading it.—John Henning/Detroit, Michigan.

### Some unhappy readers

I never entered a subscription to THESE TIMES; I do not know why I am getting it. Please take my name off your mailing list!—Frederick Kawka/Coleman, Michigan.

Please discontinue my gift subscription to your magazine. I do not care to receive it anymore. If you do not stop it, I will ask the post office to have it stopped.—Huntley C. Lewis/Jackson, Mississippi.

### And some happy readers

I admire the beautiful simplicity of THESE TIMES, and the content is heart stirring.—Estelle Quam/Denver, Colorado.

The June issue was supergood! Almost every article was outstanding. Thank you everyone for making it so enjoyable.—Mr. and Mrs. Paul Keller/Lewis, Indiana.

THESE TIMES is a very special publication to us because of your presentation of the Christian faith and your documentation of all you say. Thank you.—Mr. and Mrs. Carl Trowbridge/Portland, Oregon.

# Canceled debt

What can we learn from the old story of a runaway slave and his Christian master?

by Gerald Wheeler

AT FIRST GLANCE the New Testament Book of Philemon may seem little more than an interesting letter containing a bit of early Christian history. Since the average person can read it through in a few minutes, one would not think that the epistle would contain any great or deep theological thoughts. Yet Paul's letter, while appearing to record only his intervention for the runaway slave, Onesimus, also contains a living parable of Christ's relationship to mankind and to God the Father.

The Roman master held complete power of life and death over his slaves. The slave could own no property; everything he acquired belonged to his owner. He could not even legally marry. Because there were such large numbers of slaves in Roman society the danger that they might revolt was ever present. To prevent such uprisings—which did occasionally occur—the Romans enacted severe laws to punish any slave who attempted to escape or who urged his fellow slaves to revolt. The penalty for running away was death, often by crucifixion.

Onesimus, a slave owned by the wealthy Christian Philemon, fled from his master and tried to lose himself among the teeming masses in the city of Rome. Quickly running out of money, he found himself only another one of the unemployed thousands thronging the streets. Somewhere he met the apostle Paul. Perhaps he remembered the kindness of the group of Christians who met on his master's estate in Colosse and sought out the little Christian community in Rome. Perhaps he had heard of Paul from his master, Philemon, who evidently was a personal friend and convert of the apostle's. At any rate, Paul became attached to the escaped slave, and soon adopted him as his personal servant. In time he helped convert the young man, and Onesimus joined the tiny Christian church.

Now he was a Christian, but Onesimus still carried the stigma of being a

runaway slave. Christian ethics urged that the slave return to his master and comply with the existing social conditions as far as possible without disobeying God's higher standards. (See Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; Titus 2:9, 10; and 1 Peter 2:18.) Paul suggested that Onesimus return to Philemon and beg forgiveness.

The refugee slave accepted Paul's advice and prepared to return to his master's estate in the ancient city of Colosse, willing to face even death if necessary. But Paul did not send his devoted servant and convert back to a hopeless situation. The apostle had come to love and appreciate Onesimus, and he wanted to protect him. He sent a letter with the repentant slave asking that Philemon show leniency toward Onesimus.

Paul knew that Philemon had every legal right to punish the escaped slave. Onesimus had committed a capital offense under Roman law and deserved the death penalty. He had deprived his master of the service due him, and had put Philemon to the expense of securing another slave to serve in his place. Perhaps the disobedient servant had even stolen property or money from his owner. But whatever its nature, the debt which Onesimus owed, under Roman law, must be paid back. Yet it was a debt he could never repay, especially the lost service he owed his master.

If the debt remained uncanceled, Paul knew that it would jeopardize the relationship between Onesimus, the Christian slave, and Philemon, the Christian master. Even though Philemon might overlook the debt now, it would remain to possibly alienate the slave and his master at some future time. For a complete reconciliation between the two men, someone had to cancel the debt. Paul decided to assume it himself. "So if you consider me your partner," he wrote to Philemon, appealing to their friendship, "receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand, I will repay it" (verses 17-19, RSV).

The apostle, who owed the Christian

slaveowner nothing, accepted the complete responsibility for the runaway slave's debt. When Onesimus reached Colosse, Philemon would not see standing before him Onesimus, an escaped slave who owed a debt, but instead Paul, who had settled the account by canceling the debt. Paul was not indebted to Philemon, and since he had offered to accept the servant's obligation, Onesimus could be forgiven the penalty for his running away.

What Paul did for Onesimus is symbolic of what Christ did for us. The relationship of Paul to Onesimus and Philemon provides an insight into the relationship of Christ to mankind and to God the Father.

Running away from his master's estate, Onesimus placed himself in a position of debt to Philemon. After sampling the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, mankind had to flee God's estate and struggle under the burden of a spiritual debt. (See 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.) Both Onesimus and humanity faced death penalties for what they had done. Roman law called for the slave's life. God told Adam and Eve that they must die because of what they had done. (See Genesis 3:3, 19.)

Both debts were of such a nature that they could not be paid back. Onesimus had no money, and besides, it was impossible to pay back the service owed Philemon. No one can restore lost time. It is gone forever. And we can never pay back the lost service, time, and worship we have withheld from God. It's simply impossible. Someone else had to take care of the debt. Paul appealed to Philemon to forgive the obligation Onesimus struggled under. Christ appealed for mankind. (See Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Hebrews 7:25.) Onesimus was a slave with no legal rights of his own, just as mankind is in bondage to sin. (See John 8:34.) In each case someone equal in position to the offended party must take responsibility for the debt.

When Onesimus fled from his master, an estrangement sprang up between him and Philemon. When Adam and Eve fled from the presence of God in the Garden of Eden, an estrangement came between

Gerald Wheeler is an assistant book editor at Southern Publishing Association.

them and their Creator. Both cases required a reconciliation. Someone had to come along and heal the wounds of separation. Paul did this for Onesimus and Philemon. Christ bridged the gulf between humanity and God. (See Romans 5:10, 11; Ephesians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19.) Christ and Paul voluntarily brought the alienated parties together. They did not have to do it, and no one could have forced them to do it. Instead they did it from love. Paul loved Onesimus, and Christ loved mankind. The apostle offered to assume Onesimus' debt, by making it his own responsibility. Christ took on humanity's debt and died on the cross to pay it.

"How fitting an illustration of the love of Christ for the repentant sinner," one religious writer comments. "The servant who had defrauded his master had nothing with which to make restitution. The sinner who has robbed God of years of service has no means of canceling the debt. Jesus interposes between the sinner and God, saying, I will pay the debt. Let the sinner be spared; I will suffer in his stead" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 458).

The Epistle to Philemon deals only with Paul's appeal to the Christian master about the fate of the slave, Onesimus. Scripture does not record what happened when the runaway slave reached Colosse. Being a Christian highly regarded by Paul, Philemon probably forgave the slave. But suppose that after the reconciliation with his master, Onesimus had announced that he planned to repay whatever it had cost his master in lost service. Such a statement not only would seem foolish, but would be an insult to Paul and his promise to pay the debt. The indebtedness was already taken care of, canceled. When something is paid once, it cannot be repaid. Yet sad to say, some Christians do this with God. Christ took care of man's sin-debt on the cross. The cross canceled it forever. Yet many Christians are still trying to assume the debt themselves.

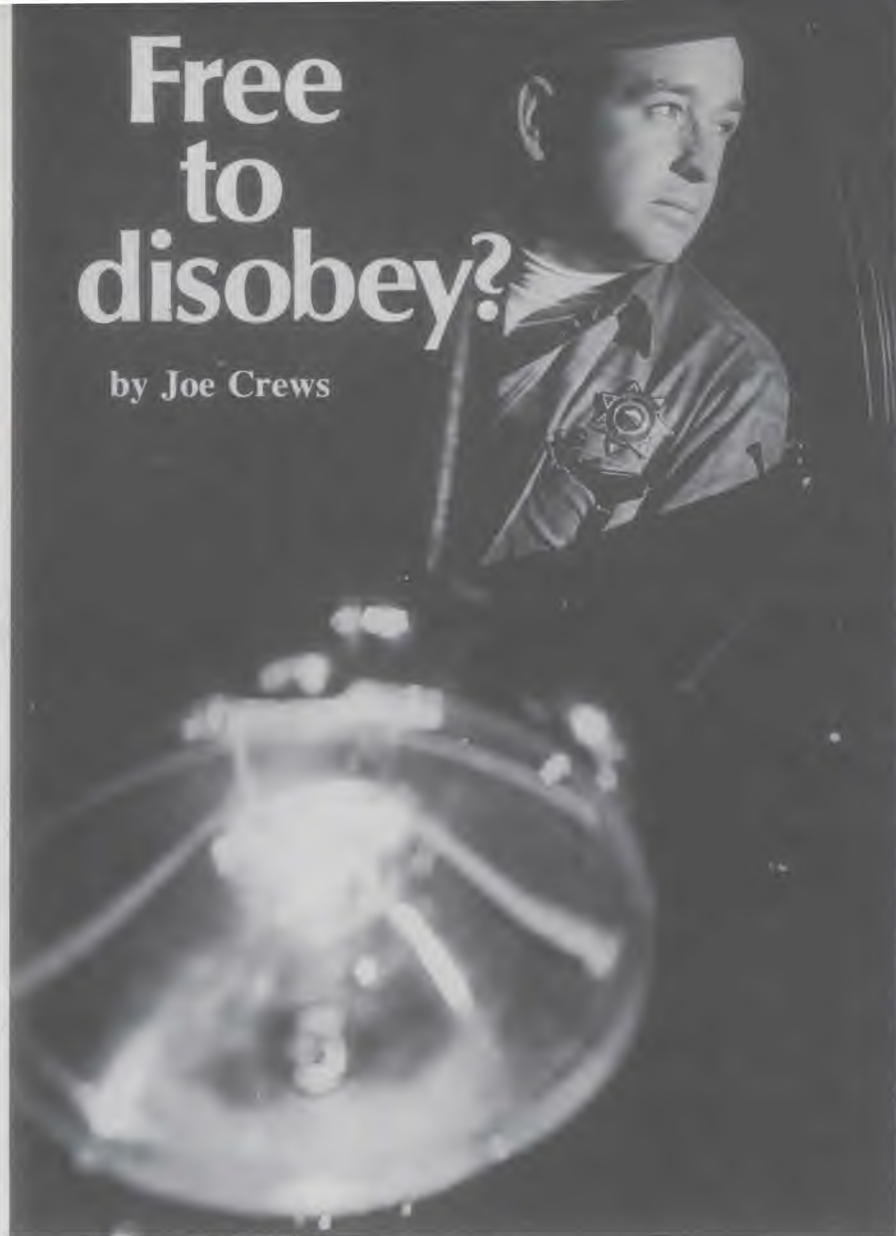
But the Christian insults his Saviour when he forgets that his debt with God is canceled and tries to make up for his former sinful life by doing countless good works. No matter how carefully one adheres to every Christian principle and standard, it is worthless if he does it with the motive of paying his way into heaven. The motivation for every act of the Christian's life is that he wants to be the best possible servant for his eternal Master, not to try to repay Him and clear his own past record, but to show his gratitude and acceptance of the canceled debt.

Paul wrote his letter to Philemon to appeal for the cancellation of one man's debt. But behind it lies the story of the cancellation of a whole world's debts. ●



# Free to disobey?

by Joe Crews



THE PRESENT epidemic of crime, violence, sex deviation, and dishonesty can be directly traced to the liberal theology of a decade ago. Shocking as it may seem, the religious establishment must share the blame for the current permissive swing away from the absolute standards of right and wrong as laid down in the Bible. Many leading preachers applauded the introduction, a few years ago, of the new morality and situation ethics. Little did they imagine how these concepts would turn a generation of youth away from the Ten Commandments and finally threaten the moral foundations of marriage and the home. Magazines and papers still debate the lively question of whether the family will survive the recent trends toward trial marriages and free-sex communes.

Nor has all the change happened to young people. Mr. Average Citizen as well increasingly allows the philosophy of doing what seems to be right in the

situation at the moment to alter his thinking and conduct. Even ministers and church leaders have changed their convictions concerning the time-tested tenets of the Ten Commandments.

When the President's Crime Commission interviewed hundreds of Americans, 91 percent admitted that they had committed acts which could have sent them to prison. Shoplifting has tripled in the past ten years, and 75 percent of store employees were exposed as thieves in a sampling of lie-detector tests. Unfortunately these reports are not isolated or exaggerated. It almost seems as though some giant mind-eraser has made a sudden sweep over the consciences of many Americans, making them forget that it is wrong to lie, and steal, and commit adultery.

What is the reasoning behind this new soft-shell theology about God's law and obedience? The answer to this question leads right back to a twisted interpretation of one of the most beautiful truths in the Bible.

The subject of law and grace has long exercised the thinking of laymen and preachers alike. Is the Christian saved by grace alone? If so, does one need to be concerned at all about "keeping" the Ten Commandments? If we are no longer under the law but under grace, why should the works of the law be important?

Let us push aside the rubbish of confusion which has obscured the truth about how men are saved. Multitudes have heard emotional discourses on sin and salvation, but they still do not understand the logic and reason which require a blood sacrifice.

Can you imagine the horror of standing before a judge and hearing the sentence of death pronounced against you? Probably not. But you *have* felt the driving guilt and fear when God's Word stabs you with this sentence: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Why fear and guilt? Because "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The words are there and the meaning cannot be mistaken. The word *all* might just as well be spelled *John Smith* or *Mary Jones* or whatever your name happens to be. The shocking fact is that *you* are under the sentence of death! You have been found guilty before the law, and there is no court of appeal in the world that can reverse the sentence and find you not guilty. The fact is that you *are* guilty, just as guilty as sin. According to 1 John 3:4, "sin is the transgression of the law," and you must plead guilty to breaking the law. Whose law did you break? Paul answers quickly, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). There it is! The great Ten Commandment law is the one which was broken, and it demands death for the transgressor.

In desperation the sinner searches for a way to be justified in the sight of that broken law. How can the sentence of death be turned aside? Can man atone for his sins by obeying the commandments of God for the rest of his life? Back comes the answer in language that no one can misinterpret: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20).

Listen! There's a reason why works will not justify a soul. If a man is found guilty of stealing and is sentenced to ten years in jail, he may indeed justify himself by works. By serving the time of his sentence the man may satisfy the claims of the law. He is considered perfectly

Joe Crews is speaker on the "Amazing Facts" radiobroadcast.



justified and innocent because he has worked out his deliverance by fulfilling the sentence. In the same manner a murderer may be justified by works if he serves the fifty years of his sentence. But suppose the sentence is death instead of fifty years? Can the prisoner then justify himself by works? *Never!* Even if he should work for one hundred years at hard labor the law will still demand death. The truth is that "without shedding of blood is no remission. . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:22-28).

This is why the sinner can never be saved by works. The penalty for sin is not ten years in prison or fifty years at hard labor. The sentence is death, and the law cannot be satisfied except by the shedding of blood. That unchangeable law with its unrelenting death sentence could no more be removed than the throne of God could be toppled. The guilt of the past cannot be erased by resolutions of good behavior in the future. The sinner finally is forced to confess that he owes something that he cannot pay. The law demands death and he cannot satisfy it without forfeiting his own life for eternity.

Now we are brought to the question which has created confusion for multitudes of Christians: If the works of the law cannot save a person, is it therefore necessary to keep the law? Apparently this was a burning issue in the early church because Paul asked the same question in Romans 6:1: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" In other words, does grace give us a license to disobey the law of God? His answer is: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (verse 2).

Paul never claimed that good works could save or justify anybody. He did not believe that the law could do anything except condemn. He said, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). All the other Bible writers agree on this point. James says that the law is a mirror to point out sin: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. . . . But whoso looketh into the perfect law . . . shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:23-25).

But don't miss this point—even though a man is not saved by the works of the law, neither can he be saved without the works of the law. Paul, who had so much to say on this subject, gave not the slightest concession to breaking the Ten Commandments. On the contrary, Paul taught that grace and faith

would produce the works of obedience. He asked, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31). In other words, the grace-saved Christian has a double obligation to keep the Ten Commandments. He is impelled to do it *because* he is saved, not *in order* to be saved. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

**I t almost seems as though some giant mind-eraser has made a sudden sweep over the consciences of many Americans, making them forget that it is wrong to lie and steal and commit adultery.**

The conclusion is inescapable that those who willfully break the law of God are not saved at all. They do not love the Lord Jesus. They do not have a saving faith. James tells us that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). John made it even stronger when he wrote, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). In spite of modern theological opinion to the contrary, the strongest Bible test of a true Christian is how he obeys the commandments of God. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not" (1 John 5:18). The entire matter is summed up in the most concise language in 1 John 3:8, 9: "He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

It is utterly astonishing that in the face of these Bible evidences multitudes of church members and preachers ridicule the keeping of God's holy law, and they actually condone sin. Apparently, the shallow excuse "I'm under grace and not under the law" justifies in their mind their scorn of the Ten Commandments. They seem to have no conception of Paul's true doctrine on law and grace or what it means to be under grace. Repeatedly Paul emphasized that forgiveness through grace does not void the law. How dare we do it?

Suppose a traffic officer stops you and says you are guilty of speeding. He takes out his book and asks for your driver's license. You are sure you are going to get a ticket. But you engage in friendly conversation, and to your surprise he tells you, "I'm not going to give you a ticket this time, but . . ." You have been pardoned by the kindness and grace of the officer; however, what do you think he means by that *but*? Does he mean that the law is abolished? No! He means, "But you had better never let me catch you speeding again." Grace does not do away with the law. It makes obedience to the law more urgent and compelling.

You are "under the law" when you are condemned by breaking it. The Bible makes this point very clear. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19).

Please notice that those who are "under the law" are "guilty before God." Obviously, then, born-again Christians are not under the law. They are under grace instead. They have been pardoned and justified by the free grace of Christ. They are not under the condemnation of the law, but the law has not been canceled by their faith in a Saviour. On the contrary, they love the Lord more than ever, and, because they love Him, they will want to keep His commandments. (See John 14:15.)

Think it through for a moment. Jesus had to die because the law had been broken. Sin demanded death. If the law could have been abrogated, the penalty of sin would have been set aside also. "For where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). So strong was the authority of that unchangeable law that God Himself could not abolish it—not even to save His own Son from death.

Look into that holy law right now for a divine reflection of what God wants your life to be. Confess that you have no strength to live up to that perfect standard. Then turn your eyes to the only One who has kept that law perfectly, and who desires this very moment to enter your life with enabling power. He will fulfill the righteousness of the law—the just requirement of the law—in you so that you can say with Paul, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).



## THIS TIME



Southern Publishing Association, publishers of *THESE TIMES*, has come up with a new book that may soon carry the "best seller" label. It is *God Invented Sex*, by Charles E. Wittschiebe. (See page 14.) The book is for young marrieds, those married for many years, even engaged couples. We predict that this how-to-think-about-sex book will make a valuable contribution to God's church in general. That is why we have printed a short portion in this issue of *THESE TIMES*.

Dr. Wittschiebe, professor of pastoral care at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, frankly and sensitively discusses sexuality from a healthy, Christian point of

view. In *God Invented Sex*, Dr. Wittschiebe has compiled the questions Christians have most frequently asked during his nationwide lectures. He then answers them with candor and dignity. The book concentrates not so much on the physical aspects as on the mental and emotional factors involved. The publishers feel that this book will in some measure serve to counteract the many books advocating anti-Christian attitudes toward sex which have flooded the market in recent years.

New York City was the birthplace of Charles Wittschiebe. He attended Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts, earning a degree in education. Later he received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Andrews University, where he is now teaching. Dr. Wittschiebe has traveled widely, lecturing on this subject, in addition to his extensive work as a marriage counselor.

We think you will see the value of such a publication when you read the excerpts beginning on page 14.

*Kenneth J. Holland*

Presenting Jesus Christ  
in all His fullness to all the world.

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to be the authoritative Word of God,  
Satan to be our great adversary,  
Jesus to be our all-sufficient Saviour,  
and the coming Christ to be our only hope  
as the world nears its cataclysmic end.

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## THESE TIMES

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*I WAS HUNGRY;  
you set going a humanistic association,  
and you discussed my hunger.  
Thank you.*

*I WAS IN PRISON;  
you sneaked quietly to your chapel,  
in the quiet neighborhood,  
and prayed for my liberation.*

*I WAS NAKED;  
you wondered wasn't that perhaps immoral?*

*I WAS ILL,  
and you went on your knees  
and praised God for your health.*

*I WAS HOMELESS;  
you preached to me—about God's loving care.*

*I WAS LONESOME,  
and you left me alone—  
to pray for me.*

*You seem so holy,  
so close to God.  
But I am still hungry and lonesome,  
and I'm freezing.*

—Unknown.

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If God exists?

How you can have better health?

Why some people are happier than others?



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**HOME. Can it really be happy?** Many families seldom see each other together. They get up, eat, work, and go to bed at different times. Discover how you can help your family grow together in spite of difficulties.

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