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THE COVER



A BEAUTIFUL head of wheat! And all from one single grain, hopefully sown.

There are few things guaranteed to the farmer. He sows in hope and IF the seed is good, IF there is rain, IF there is no blight, IF . . . IF . . . then he will reap some kind of a harvest.

How much more certain are the eternal things. We read an unconditional guarantee which says, "We SHALL reap . . . if we faint not". The only thing that prevents a harvest is FAINTING in SOWING.

Now what would cause us to faint in sowing? There could be many reasons. Here are three. We faint in sowing because we fail to reap the fruit we expected. "One soweth and another reapeth", said Jesus. Sunday School teachers in particular are sometimes discouraged and ready to faint for this reason. Years of sowing, then along comes another and does the reaping.

Failing to rejoice when there is fruit can be a factor that leads to fainting. ". . . He that soweth and he that reapeth MAY rejoice together . . ." Since the joy of the Lord is your strength, it behoves us to be ready to rejoice when there is a time of reaping.

Some times we fail to recognize the fruit when it appears. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be". For instance the fruit of tribulation is patience. The fruit of suffering for Christ, glory.

So keep at the sowing. "Blessed are ye that sow beside ALL waters" says Isaiah. Little sowing, little fruit. Much sowing inevitably means much fruit. Don't faint but keep sowing. Dig your hands deeply into the good seed and prayerfully, hopefully, faithfully SOW. Keep at it, for the guarantee stands . . . "We SHALL reap . . . if we faint not". —J.B.N.

FOOD FOR THE FLOCK is published monthly by the Committee of Food for the Flock; Chairman, Robert Hazel, 220 Vroom Ave., Spring Lake, New Jersey, U.S.A.; Editor, James Gunn, 432 Hugel Ave., Midland, Ontario, Canada. All subscriptions and business correspondence should be sent to the Business Office, Box 53, Station U, Toronto 18, Canada; editorial matters, to the Editor.

Subscriptions \$2.00 per year.

Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada.
Printed and mailed by Midland Printers Ltd., Midland, Ontario, Canada.

The Valley of Death

John Bramhall

LIFE has many valleys and canyons, each one with its darkness, danger and despair. Through them, the believer proves the faithfulness of the Good Shepherd, who dispels the darkness, delivers from the danger, and lifts the heart above the despair.

Yet ultimately, the last valley will be reached — the valley of death — if the Lord be not come. For some, it may be difficult to face, but not for others; but the comfort of the Scriptures can provide for the believer God's sustaining grace in such an hour.

The Good Shepherd who has proven Himself to us in the valleys of life, will also prove Himself sufficient for the valley of death. What He has been, He still will be — "that great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:10).

In expressing the deep conviction of his soul in view of such an hour, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me," the sweet Psalmist of Israel revealed four precious facts to comfort us in the valley of death.

HIS COMPOSURE

The tranquility of his soul is indicated by the two words, "I walk." There was no evidence of terror or panic as he faced the last dark valley; nothing but composure of mind as he entered the vale. A deliberate steadiness of mind is seen, suggesting that he would pass calmly on his way through, permitting nothing and no one to cause alarm. With equanimity he faced the vale, to walk with

steady composure "through the valley of the shadow of death." He would not run in terror, nor dart to and fro in panic. He would take the valley in his stride.

HIS CONFIDENCE

"I will walk through," he wrote. He considered himself a "through passenger" with a non-stop journey before him — no doubts as to the certainty of reaching the desired haven. What blessed optimism and confidence he possessed!

The valley might have been dark; the mountains overshadowing on every side; the path rugged and steep, painful and sore. But the outcome was sure — "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!"

The end of the valley would bring him out of darkness into eternal light; out of pain into eternal balm; out of strife into eternal peace. Instead of a temporary pilgrimage on earth, he would then reach his eternal home with all its glory.

HIS COURAGE

"I will fear no evil." There is nothing to fear, says the Psalmist. The former evils of life cannot touch him in this valley. They are left behind: the evils of sin, self, Satan, and the world.

HIS COMPANION

This is the greatest fact of all, giving eternal value to all the others: "Thou art with me!" Blessed Companion: "The Lord is my Shepherd," and He who has crossed the valleys

of life with me will also walk through the last one — the valley of death.

Loved ones cannot go with me; friends cannot accompany me; but I cannot go through without Him! The Great Shepherd of the sheep will be with me ever, bringing me into "the house of the Lord for ever."

In the preceding verses of the Psalm, David speaks about the Shepherd; but here, in the valley of death, he speaks to the Shepherd. Who else would he rather have with him? He alone is the One to whom he can express his heart and rejoice that his Shepherd for life is also his Shepherd for death.

On a bleak day in January 1681, two Scotch lassies were to be hung for worshipping God in a way forbidden by law. As they emerged from their cell, they were told to walk across the yard to the gallows. One said to the other, "Come on, Bell. This is our great day! Let's sing!" And immediately they began to sing together:

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still."

And as they stood pinioned upon the fatal platform, they concluded their touching duet:

"Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be."

Theirs was genuine composure, confidence, and courage — for their Companion to the end was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd — the very same One who is ready and waiting to accompany each of His own through the valley and upward to our heavenly home.

Book Review

THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST
René Pache: Moody Press, Chicago, U.S.A.

For the student of prophecy no more instructive volume on the Second Advent of Christ is available. The author, a lawyer by profession, has used his many natural talents and spiritual gifts to investigate with an open mind the absorbing subject. The results he has carefully and methodically tabulated.

The book was translated from the original French by Dr. LaSor who is

to be complimented for his excellent work.

There are nine parts (450 pages) dealing with the different phases of the subject, some of which are: The Time of Christ's Return, The Rapture of the Church, The World and The Return of Christ, Israel and the Return of Christ, The Great Tribulation, The Millenium, etc.

Each chapter is replete with valuable information that should be an aid to the student.

Obtainable at Christian Book shops everywhere.

The Will of God

James Irwin

THE will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures is one of the most profound, yet one of the most personal subjects that can claim our attention. Because of how it should effect our lives from day to day demands an important place in our thinking.

Some believers confuse the will of God with the purpose of God. The latter is absolute and unalterable; the former may be frustrated by our disobedience.

The will of God is, variously, defined as desire, wish, gracious design, or goodwill. All of these meanings are necessary for a complete and comprehensive understanding of our subject.

There are at least three aspects of the will of God in the Bible: The providential will of God, in life and experience; The secret will of God, in prayer and in spirit; The revealed will of God in the Written Word.

THE PROVIDENTIAL WILL OF GOD

The providential will of God is something we do not always understand or appreciate. It is wrapped up in a degree of mystery. The word used to denote this aspect of God's will is derived from a root meaning — to provide or to foresee. This aspect of the divine will deals largely with circumstances and things in life.

(Read Matt. 6:10, Acts 16:7-10, Rom. 12:1-3, Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 5:17, Col. 1:9-10, I Thess. 4:1-10, Heb. 10:9, I Pet. 2:13; 4:12-16).

As Christians do we ever stop and consider the overshadowing circumstances of our lives, how we ever came under the sound of the divine Word, how finally we were led to a saving knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? We cannot possibly explain adequately the happenings of divine providence, but we can see the Hand of God in His dealings with us. We might well ask, "Why was I born to be the recipient of God's eternal grace?" The hymn writer puts it in these words:

"Why was I made to hear His voice,
And enter, while there's room,
While thousands make the wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"

William Cowper gives voice to the mystery that surrounds the providential will of God when he says:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

He concludes his beautiful poem, "Light Shining out of Darkness"

"Blind unbelief is bound to err,
And scan His works in vain.
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

The Book of Esther is probably the best biblical illustration of the providential will of God, while Matthew 6:25-34 and Acts 17:25-26 bear out its glorious truth.

THE SECRET WILL OF GOD

Whereas the providential will of God may not be fully understood by

the believer, the secret will of God can only be understood by one of His. The revelation of His will for us comes to us in our daily experience through the medium of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God has a gracious design for each of us and it is our sacred duty to seek it out. Our prayer should be, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

It is very easy to say glibly, "God willing, I will do this or that." There must be a holy exercise of heart before anything is undertaken for God. Much of our failure is due to our attempts to serve Him from fleshly impulse. It is not only the servant of God who leaves all to work on the secret will of God. It is for every one of us to know His will.

THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD

This aspect of the will of God is clearly discernible for it is found in His Holy Word. If we wish to know the will of God in this respect it is imperative that we read and study the Bible. All the great truths concerning our witness, walk, and worship are to be found there. How little we know of this!

Let us now consider the will of God in relation to the Saviour, the Saint, and our Service.

THE SAVIOUR AND THE WILL OF GOD

The key-note of this beautiful relationship is the delight the Saviour found in doing the Father's will. Hebrews 10:5-7 reveals the complete agreement between God the Saviour at His birth, His incarnation. In the temple at Jerusalem, at the age of twelve, He confounded the wise of His day with His questions and answers. At that time He could say to His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). At Sychar's Well, He reminded His disciples of His complete subjection to God when He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work" (John 4:34). Then at the close of

His earthly ministry, when the shadow of Calvary lay dark across His pathway, He raised His voice to His Father in those memorable words, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

So it is, whether at His virgin birth, in His boyhood years at Nazareth, during His earthly ministry and service, in His redemptive work on the cross, or in His triumphant resurrection and ascension, the will of God was paramount in Christ's life. What wonderful lessons we can learn for ourselves, if we but take time to study the Holy design of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord!

THE SAINT AND THE WILL OF GOD

What is the will of God in relation to the saint? Galatians 1:4 tells us that He "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." How precious! We are delivered, not only from the penalty of sin, but from its power, that we might live unto Him as a witness and light-bearer.

In every phase of our lives, God's will plays an important part. In I Thessalonians 4:3, the will of God is linked with moral purity in the life of the saint. I John 3, that beautiful chapter on love as a guiding principle in Christian experience, tells us that, "this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment." And again in Ephesians, where our walk is so fully treated, we are reminded that God chose us before the foundation of the world, "according to the good pleasure of His will" (1:5), to walk circumspectly in light.

Not only should our behaviour and pattern of life conform to the mind of God, but it is His will that we should continue to "give thanks for everything" (I Thess. 5:18). Thus our prayer life comes within the compass of His holy design. Finally, Romans 12:1-4 makes it clear that

the extent of our devotion should serve to prove the "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." How all this emphasizes the truth: we are created for the pleasure of the Father.

SERVICE AND THE WILL OF GOD

This topic has been a problem to many, especially to young Christians. How do I know I am in the will of God? Take courage; even the beloved Apostle Paul was exercised about this vital question. Note Acts 16:7 where he planned to go to Bithynia, "but the Spirit suffered them not".

At this time, the Apostle was guided by the Spirit, the vision, and the circumstances. When all these were taken into account, he came to a conclusion, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them" (vs. 10). Some contend that this was a special case where the Apostle was called to take the Gospel to Europe for the first time. However, divine principles remain the same in every age.

The word here translated, "gathering" is translated "knit" in Colossians 2:1. Thus, there is the suggestion of a divine pattern. Prayer, the Word, and the circumstances should all be taken into consideration when contemplating avenues of service.

The Psalmist says, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. 25:9). Abraham's servant said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me." Surely there is a lesson in this for us. It requires a meek and humble spirit, yet a readiness to act and a preparation for the task. Self determination, in so far as it is the product of the flesh, can prove disastrous. On the other hand, availability may be proved by preparation.

Scripture contains guidance in the all important matters. In Acts 21 we see many circumstances operating before Paul saw his way clear

to go to Jerusalem. In Romans one he made it a matter of prayer as to his journey to Rome.

Obedience to God's will in service, may bring upon us reproach or even suffering. This is the subject of Peter's words in I Peter 4:12-19. If we are called upon to suffer for righteousness sake and the Gospel, happy are we, but if we suffer for our own folly, there can be no praise in it. How careful we should be to see that any reproach or suffering that befalls us in serving Him is according to His will, and not the result of our own false pride.

In relation to those in authority. Scripture teaches us to pray for them, and even to give thanks, for this is "good and acceptable in the sight of God" (I Tim. 2:2).

We have by no means exhausted this topic. The relationship of the will of God to the Nations, to the Church, and to the Kingdom could be explored with profit. Then, too, much might be said about the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:5), the mystery of His will (v. 9), and the counsel of His will (v.11), but space forbids. These are, indeed, water to swim in.

We close this study with the words of the poet:

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live I'd seek
To please Thee, more and more.

"He always wins, who sides with
God.

To him, no chance is lost.
God's will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost.

"Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most
wrong

If it be His sweet will."



The Book of Genesis

James Gunn

THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU AND JACOB — CHAPTERS 36 AND 37

WE have reached another transition in the book of Genesis. At this point of change the generations of Esau are merely listed; whereas, the generations of Jacob are given with considerable detail. Without doubt the Spirit of God is more interested in following the ancestry of the Messiah than engaging time and thought in the history of other peoples.

THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU

From chapter 36 we learn that Esau founded a strong kingdom which advanced rapidly to a place of some importance. The number of dukes mentioned were probably governors who were able to provide a thousand men for the Edomite army.

Esau's descendants, comparatively speaking, were more quickly organized to national status than were the descendants of Jacob. Alacrity and advancement are quite characteristic of the man of the flesh. The impressive enumeration of the names of these dukes may be in honour among men, but Christians might well rejoice that their names are written in Heaven rather than upon an honour-roll on earth.

A Canadian Christian who had been honoured by the Queen of England for his outstanding work, on being congratulated by a friend, replied, "Rejoice rather that your names are written in Heaven."

As one follows the apparent success and the increasing strength of Edom as a nation and the slow de-

velopment of Israel, he might be tempted to doubt the predictions made concerning Jacob and his posterity. In the blessing that Isaac pronounced upon Jacob he said, "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be Lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be everyone that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" (Gen. 27:29).

Centuries later, Balaam, whom God forced to bless rather than to curse Israel, prophesied, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corner of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly" (Num. 24:17-18). Seven and a half centuries were to pass before even a partial fulfilment of these prophecies appeared. God is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, and what He has promised that He is able also to perform. Eventually, during the reign of David, the type of Christ the Star and Sceptre, it was recorded, "He put garrisons in Edom, throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David withersoever he went" (II Sam. 8:14). David, God's king over Israel, subdued Edom and ended temporarily the Edom monarchy. Thus "we have the word of prophecy confirmed; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place" (II Pet. 1:19, margin).

Youth

Leslie S. Rainey

AMONG the personal letters that are treasured today by the people of God is 2 John. It is written to a Christian woman, "the elect lady" (verse 1), whose identity is concealed. The message of the book is a divine classic on a first century Christian home. Here is God's answer how to have a happy home.

THE FOUNDATION

The heart of the Apostle had been made glad by the report that had come to him concerning this woman and her household. Her home was founded upon the knowledge of the truth and the love of the same. Upon this little home the author invokes the grace, mercy and peace of God (verses 1 - 3). One can imagine that in such a home the parents, or as here, the mother was loved, honoured, obeyed and respected; the family altar was part and parcel of the home; discipline and duty were not forgotten; individual rights were not overlooked, and a right temperature was maintained by warm hearts and cool heads. In a very practical way from the youngest to the eldest they were taught, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

THE FUNDAMENTALS

After his salutation John follows on to the practical manifestation of a Christian.

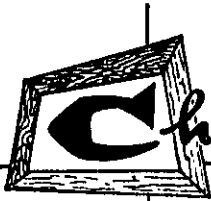
Our relation to God and one another must never be forgotten (verse 1). John, as a servant of God, was given the right hand of fellowship even as others. True love will exclude those who do not hold the sanctity of the home and the doctrine of the apostles

concerning the person and work of Christ. As fellow members of the body of Christ in the Church or in the home, love never faileth. Love is the keystone in the magnificent temple of the Christian home.

Our responsibility to follow Christ is a solemn requisite (verse 4). In the home there are certain obligations to be fulfilled if harmony is to be realized. It is when this truth is slighted that friction and a lack of peace prevail. The more one is found walking in the truth the less of self will be seen or displayed. Oh! that today in Christian homes there were found more devotion to Christ. There is no sweeter fellowship in the world than blood relations dwelling in the bonds of God's eternal love. It is no wonder Jude exhorted "keep yourselves in the love of God." If we did this, the love of Christ would constrain us to follow in all fidelity of heart and soul; walk and witness; suffering and service till traveling days are done.

Our recognition of deception, demands a constant vigilance (verse 10). In John's day there were many who would destroy the foundation truths upon which all true peace and piety depend whether in the heart or in the home. They are referred to as "deceivers" who were so bold as to declare that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh (verse 7).

The apostle had a godly jealousy for such homes as this of the "elect lady." He warns that such error could bring the whole moral structure of the home to ruin. As a man of God he seeks to safeguard the truth as well as the children of the truth. How tragic!



Children's work

The Year End Program

Robert Swatosh

THERE are a number of ways to have an annual year end program. It is always beneficial to review some of the approaches in planning a program for the coming year. Let us consider features which have proven to be successful in the past.

We should first analyze the reason we want to have a program. We should determine the objectives we want to accomplish. What are the results which we really want to see when we have a program? It is important that we clearly understand our objectives so that we can properly lay our plans to gain the results desired.

The spread of the Gospel and the salvation of precious souls are, of course, the prime and great underlying purposes of a program. There are different ways to bring these about. Two major factors are involved. The first, naturally, is the children, and the second, the parents of the children. For the children we will want to further impress the Word of God upon their hearts. We will also want to reward them for achievement and attendance, and provide an incentive for the future. For the parents we want to bring the Word of God before them, show them what we teach their children, and create an atmosphere of welcome which will make them want to return for other year end programs.

The Program should, naturally, be at a time that assures the greatest interest and attendance. The closing week or so of the year is the period when the children and their parents have spiritual things brought to their attention more than at any other time.

This is when they are most receptive to the story of the Birth of Christ, and this is when many of them will not only come but will also listen. Many parents as a result of all they have seen in the papers, heard on the radio, and seen on television will come, some hoping perhaps to hear answers to questions which have been brought to mind. To gain further assurance of good attendance the program can be held on a Sunday evening in place of the regular Gospel meeting. There are other attractions or duties on the week nights during the holiday season, but on Sunday night there is very little interference of this nature. The program can be preceded by a buffet supper for the parents and refreshments for the children.

The program should be an assembly effort. While the children and the teachers play an important part in recitations and singing, the rest of the Christians should be present to help in serving the food, and to welcome the parents. This will display the warm interest of the As-

sembly, and create an environment which will encourage them to return.

The subject should definitely be about the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, but should also include His Life, His Atoning Death, and His Resurrection, or the complete Gospel story. There is no other theme which affords such an excellent opportunity to present the complete Gospel, not only to the children but also to their parents.

The subject can be built around a Scripture such as Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulder: And His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Songs and recitations can be assembled and grouped in the orderly sequence of the Scripture. In addition there is much material available in the various Bible stories which can be used for the program. The important thing is to have a subject planned in logical scriptural order which can be easily followed by the listening audience, and which will make a lasting impression.

The program proper should be limited to approximately one hour. This is about the longest period of time the children will maintain any semblance of order and the parents will continue their interest. Anything longer than this may detract from the initial impact of the Gospel story, creating unrest and inattention.

Once the theme of approach has been established, a meeting should be held with the teachers and assignments of responsibility made on an orderly basis. This should include procurement of material, arrangement of the program, typing or printing work, seating arrangements, food and any other important things which must be handled. This meeting should be held to provide sufficient time for good preparation.

When the material has been secur-

ed, it should be assigned to the children, giving careful attention to the age of each and to his capacity and talents. The assignments should take place early in November to allow time for the children to properly memorize their recitations, and for rehearsal. The material can consist of poems, Scriptures, songs, acrostics, visual aid skits, or dialogues with appropriate objects to emphasize important truths. Care should be taken to avoid over dramatizing and thus detract from the message of the program.

The program should be planned to proceed orderly and smoothly from part to part without interruption. To announce titles and names for each part is to cause unnecessary interruptions and loss of time.

Rather than have separate announcements, program sheets can be printed in detail giving all this information, and supplied to the audience. The children should be prompted by the teachers when it is their turn to give their recitation so delays will be kept to a minimum.

Rehearsals should be held preceding the program. This gives the children a broad understanding of the entire program and helps them to firmly fix their own part in their minds. Scriptures or scriptural poems learned in this manner are often retained for many years. It also provides a smooth flow to the program so that, when given, the parents will be impressed with the message or theme rather than with any distractions or interruptions which could occur without rehearsal.

The use of the piano can help a great deal with the singing. Small children can be helped to the extent that all the words can be understood. Under other conditions the time can be lost because of some children being too fast or too slow or off tune. The net result of this is to cause the audience to laugh rather than understand the message in the words.

The use of a microphone even for small children makes it possible for everyone in the audience to clearly hear even those words spoken very softly. This, of course, requires the assistance of one person to handle the "mike" and another to handle the volume controls.

Another desirable feature is a "prompter." This is a person seated unobtrusively and very close to the platform with a complete detail of every recitation. On the night of the program the child who hesitates will be given the next word quickly and quietly without delay so as to avoid embarrassment to the child and to the parents. This action will also help to eliminate any distraction from the message of the recitation and from the Word of God.

Singing is always effective, but when done in parts by a group of young people it often provides one of the most interesting items of the program. Audience singing is almost always well accepted by most of the parents, generally even those unsaved seem ready to participate heartily in the singing of Carols.

At the completion of the recitations by the children, one of the most unique opportunities is presented to bring the Gospel home personally to

the parents and older children. A speaker gifted for this type of work can very briefly emphasize the message.

If yearly awards are made to the children at this time, they should be handed out directly after the program by the individual teachers. It should be announced to the parents that such awards have been earned by the children for attendance at the Sunday School during the past year, for Scripture memorization, and whatever other accomplishment may be involved.

Last, but most important, we must remind ourselves that the Lord Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." This program will be of no effect in gaining our objectives without the direction and blessing of the Lord. Moses said, "If Thy presence go not with us carry us not up hence." This must be our feeling with regard to the program. It will be of no avail if the Lord is not in it. Therefore, every step must be taken prayerfully, and every consideration measured in the light of the Word of God.

The annual program can be a time of real blessing and witnessing for the Lord.

The path of duty is the path that "leads not into temptation". If David had been at the head of his army at this time it is likely that he would have escaped the darkest stain upon his life. Plenty of work is a preventive of certain kinds of sin. A brook is kept pure while it is in motion, but if its waters were to be stopped from flowing, they would become stagnant.

That tendencies to sin, though not on the surface, are yet latent in the depths of the heart. To the eye of a stranger a power-vessel may look very trim and clean and safe, but the black powder is there in the hold, only needing a single spark to make its awful power felt.

Impurities in the springs of thought will be revealed in the streams of action.

Although sin is forgiven, some of its consequences must remain. "The Lord hath put away thy sin," but "the sword shall never depart from thine house."

The Four Watches of the Night

THEIR MORAL TEACHING

W. Fraser Naismith

SCRIPTURE Readings: Matthew 14: 22-25. Mark 13:30-37. Luke 12:37-38.

When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke, He did so for Eternity as is indicated in Mark 13:31. He left this impress on every thing He touched or spoke.

In Mark 13 and verse 32 there are three remarkable statements by our Lord; He refers to "the day" and "the hour" which He affirms, "no man knoweth." Down the ages speculation has been rife as to when Christ will come again. Some have fixed dates which have come and have passed, but Christ has not returned on these suggested dates.

The second observation of Christ is perhaps a little more difficult to appreciate; He adds, "No, not the angels which are in Heaven." Angels are ministers of His which do His pleasure; yet, they are ignorant of "the day and the hour."

It is the third remark that has staggered many. It is, therefore, imperative that a careful examination should be made of this passage if we are to apprehend what Christ meant when He added, "Neither the Son, but the Father." It might be stressed that as Christ is God, He would know everything, and in this conclusion we heartily agree. As the divine One, the Son of God, He does know everything by inherent, essential, and eternal wisdom. It would be interesting to note who it is that makes this record. It is Mark who states, "Neither the Son, but the Father," and this narrator presents Christ as the

Perfect Servant. Christ Himself stated in John 15:15, "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." The Eternal Word has become flesh, and as the subject One has taken the place of submission and obedience not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

The Godhead is like three partners in business. One partner looks after the sales, another is responsible for the stock, while the third takes charge of the finance. They cooperate in such a manner as will make the business prosper; yet, not one interferes with the responsibility of any of the others. In Acts 1:7, as Christ was about to ascend into Heaven, His disciples asked Him the question, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" To this Christ replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." In other words, "times and seasons" are the Father's part of the business. It is wise, therefore, to leave such factors as "times and seasons" in the wise hands of the Father. Our Lord Jesus said, "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

This introductory remark is followed by a warning and an encouragement, "Take ye heed," that is the warning, and how necessary it is today. "Watch and pray," that is the encouragement, for there is more

wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. These words are followed by an affirmation, "Ye know not when the time is." The next six words are italicized, they are an interpolation. The New Translation reads, "It is as a man taking a far journey." This reminds us of the language of Luke 19 where the nobleman distributed ten pounds to ten servants and said, "Occupy till I come."

Christ accepts the Roman division of the night into four watches. The Hebrew night was divided into three watches.

In Judges 7:19 "Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch." There is a middle watch of three but not of four! The divisions of the Roman night were evening, midnight, cockcrowing, and the morning. Each is associated with a divine movement. The first and the last watches have to do specifically with God's earthly people, and are treated so by Matthew in his Gospel.

What constitutes the night? The sun going out of sight. When the Son of God went out of sight, the night settled on this scene. Who saw Him go away? Not the Church, because it required His going away and the descent of the Holy Spirit before there could be "the Church" which is His Body. It was eleven converted Jews who witnessed His ascension from the Mount of Olives. The Minor Prophets speak expressly about a "remnant," and these will welcome back their Messiah.

In Matthew 14:23 the Lord sent the multitude away after having constrained His disciples to enter into a ship and go to the other side. Then He went up, suggesting His ascent to the Father's throne, "apart to pray." These words indicate the ministry which engages our Lord at the present time. The ministry is twofold. As our Great High Priest He

intercedes with God because of our infirmities, and fulfills a preventive ministry. Furthermore, He is our Advocate with the Father because of our sins; this ministry is restorative. "When the evening was come He was there alone." Evening is the first watch, and in the first watch Christ went away, and has been alone on high during the dark hours of this spiritual night which settled on the world.

"The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary." There is a time coming called "The Great Tribulation" when the prince of the power of the air will inspire his satellites so that the storm of persecution will burst on the faithful remnant of Israel, and unless those days are shortened no flesh should be saved. Despite all the satanic efforts, God shall bring the remnant to their desired haven (Psa. 107:30). In Matthew 14:25 we read, "In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." The manifestation of Christ as the mighty deliverer of His people, the remnant, shall allay every fear and bring deliverance to the faithful.

There are two 14th chapters one should not forget, Exodus 14 and Zechariah 14. In the former God divides the sea to make a way of escape from the tyranny of the Pharaoh at the commencement of their national life. In the latter God divides the earth to make a way of escape from the Beast and the False Prophet at the close of their national history. There are also two 15th chapters one would do well to remember, Exodus 15 and Revelation 15. In the former, the first song of Scripture appears; in the latter, the last. The former is the Song of Moses; the latter is the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Israel shall sing the same song in the coming day as they sang when they came from the thralldom of Egypt. For proof of this examine the following Scriptures:

Hosea 2:14-15. Isaiah 11:15-16, and Isaiah 12:1-2.

The first and the last watch have a special bearing on God's earthly people. Now, let us examine what Luke says about the watches of the night. "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:38). Luke speaks only of the second and third watches. Luke was a Gentile doctor as may be confirmed by Colossians chapter four. The second watch is "midnight," and that watch passed when the truth of the coming of the Bridegroom was heralded about a century and a half ago. We are at present in the third watch, that is the "cock-crowing;" Peter's the "the Day Star"; and John's, the "Morning Star." All these terms apply to the same event.

Luke presents the universal Gospel. His genealogy goes back to Adam (Luke 3). He is the only narrator who records the story of the Good Samaritan which is an epitome of human history. He alone shows us God in a hurry (Luke 15). If Matthew says, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, . . . in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 8:11); Luke says, "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29). Luke differs from the other synoptic writers in recording the scenes at the cross. Matthew and Mark announce the rending of the veil after Christ had dismissed His spirit (Matt. 27:50-51, and Mark 15:37-38). Luke in his Gospel states, "The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:45-46). Luke as a Gentile had no representative who went inside the veil so he anticipated

Christianity when "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9:8).

The midnight cry was to wake up. The cock-crowing will be to take up. He must come for His own in the third watch if He is going to bring them with Him in the fourth watch. Zechariah 14:5 states, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." I Thessalonians 4:14 affirms, "Them also which sleep in (through) Jesus will God bring with Him." This means that the saints who had departed this life had not missed the glory of the coming kingdom. When Christ comes to undertake the government of this world, He will bring the saints with Him. In Jude 14 we learn of a very early prophet, Enoch, who prophesied saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all, . . ." If the Lord is coming with His saints in the fourth watch, the time of His manifestation, then He must first come and take them away.

The prophecy of Enoch in Jude like all other prophecies has a past, present and future aspect. The past was when Enoch spoke it; the present, when the deluge came and took all the ungodly away; the future will be when Christ comes in might and majesty: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. 2:9). The character of the King of Kings when He comes to subjugate every opposing force is indicated in Psalm 45:3-5.

The first watch is the evening watch, those in that watch saw Christ go up into Heaven. The second is the midnight watch in which was heard the cry, "wake up." The third is the cock-crowing and indicates that Christ will come to take up into the Father's house. The fourth is the morning watch and intimates that Christ will come to set up His glorious kingdom and reign in equity.



This department is provided for the free and courteous discussion of biblical and spiritual problems which may be considered edifying to the people of God. Letters concerning such matters are requested.

The Churches

With a desire to comment on questions raised by K. B. in the August "Forum," while also dealing with other matters of practical interest, our Brother Schwartz has submitted the following article.

MUCH has been written on this subject, anything written now must be largely repetition. However, a few remarks on the subject are in order and, we sincerely trust, will be helpful.

The subject begins naturally with the first occurrences of the word "church" in the New Testament. These are in Matthew 16:18 ("on this rock will I build My Church") and in Matthew 18:17 ("Tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church . . ."). In these two passages the word is the same. But in any language it frequently happens that the same word many stand in different concepts. That is the case here. The mental image projected by the word in chapter 18 is not the same as that in chapter 16. In chapter 16, the Lord speaks of something that cannot be thought of as confined to any given place. It is the equivalent of what is referred to in Ephesians and Colossians as the Body of Christ. It takes in all true believers, everywhere. In chapter 18 we have something different. What is called "the church" there can be reached, be communicated with, be "told" something, express a decision and be heard or ignored. All this is strongly indicative of locality. It is what we refer to frequently as a "local church."

Other distinctions may be noticed. In Matthew 16 the Lord Himself is the Builder: He says "I will build . . ." But in the establishment of local churches men have a part. In the one case there can be no failure: all

that HE does is perfect. What HE builds is in no way vulnerable: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." That is not true of local churches. They are vulnerable. While it is true that, ideally, they are composed of believers only, actually they may include mere professors and even wicked persons. In them there may be misbehaviour which calls for rebuke (I Tim. 5:20). There may be evil-doers who must be put away (I Cor. 5:13). A dictator may arise in one of them, assuming unwarranted power, refusing even an apostle and wickedly excluding some from the church! (3 John). It is clear that while, in the sense of Matthew 16 there can be, but one Church, there can be, and are, many local churches. See the following passages, noticing that in each there is clear reference to a plurality of churches: Acts 14:23; I Cor. 4:17; I Cor. 7:17; I Cor. 11:16; I Cor. 14:33; II Cor. 11:8, 28; Phil. 4:15; Rev. 1:4, 11, 13, 20.

Local churches are variously designated. They are called: "churches of God" (I Cor. 11:16; I Thess. 2:14; II Thess. 1:4); "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16) — this speaks of their relationship to Him as Lord; "churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33; cf. Acts 2:44; 5:13; 19:9) — in reference to their composition; "churches of Asia . . . of Galatia, etc." (Rom. 16:5, 23; I Cor. 1:2; 16:1, 19; II Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:22; I Thess. 2:14; I Pet. 5:13) — referring to their locations. (Today we might erroneously say "the church in Asia" or "the Galatian church").

A local church (or assembly) consists of believers united and forming a corporate entity. As to this we quote the following from W. E. Vine and W. R. Lewis: "An assembly of

believers accustomed to gather together according to the Scriptures still continues to be a church even when some of its members are asleep, or having their meals at home or are away from the locality. They are still part of that assembly wherever they may be during the intervals between their gatherings. The churches of the New Testament are not viewed as churches only during their meetings. The messages given to them affect their lives and conduct at all times." (Believer's Magazine, April 1949). Rowland C. Edwards, in "The Church: A Symposium" writes: "The believers at Corinth . . . did not cease to be a church when they dispersed."

Corporate status is clearly indicated or implied in a number of passages which, if carefully considered, will be seen to refer to united, "authorized" or "corporate" action. Here are a few of the passages, chosen at random: Matthew 18:17, already referred to. The church hears, expresses itself, is heard or ignored. Could this be true of a something without corporate status?

Romans 16:4: churches can express themselves, as churches, in thanksgiving.

II Corinthians 8:19, 23: churches choose and send messengers. Do the messengers represent undefinable and irresponsible groups?

I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1; II John 9: churches are addressed by letter. To receive communications they must have existed as definite entities.

II John 10: a self-appointed and unscrupulous tyrant casts some "out of the church." Surely what he casts them out of was a tangible reality, having parts, and not just a casually assembled group of people.

Acts 14:27: "When they had gathered the church together." It must exist to be gathered. Compare I Corinthians 5:4: to those the Apostle had addressed as the church at Corinth, he now says ". . . when ye are gathered together . . ." They were a church, they gathered as such.

I Corinthians 14:23 speaks of "the whole church" coming together into one place. Since this would be impossible for the "church universal," it cannot be meant. It can only refer

to a local group, and the expression "the whole church" assumes, clearly, a definite entity with a definite "membership."

Philippians 4:15-16: a church can and does take specific action (unitedly, "corporately") in matters financial.

Romans 16:16: churches express themselves in salutation to saints elsewhere.

I Timothy 5:9, 16: a church can accept responsibility for a list of widows and can be "charged" with their care. From the epistles generally, and especially 1 and 2 Corinthians, it is clear that churches, as such, were expected to accept a variety of responsibilities. Responsibility cannot be assigned to a group that has not in some sense "corporate status." We trust that this matter of "status" is sufficiently clear.

Another fact that it is important to notice is this: each local church (or assembly) is a unit complete in itself. It is not a part of a larger unit. The New Testament knows nothing of an organizational connection between churches, expressed or implied. No kind of federation, association or other inter-church framework is contemplated. There is no record in Scripture of any "understanding" between churches that might lead to the formation of groups or circles. We are not forgetting (may we never forget it!) that there is a divinely-formed unity of believers as members of the one Body (Eph. 4:3-6). But it does not by any means follow that the Body of Christ is simply an aggregation of local churches, or that the churches collectively and the Body of Christ are one and the same thing. We need to be on guard against the formation of "circles of fellowship" by means of unwritten, veiled or implied understandings, or by the consent, expressed or implied, of likeminded Christians. These, where they exist, are not a whit less objectionable, from a scriptural point of view, than the expressly organized denominations. The existence of seemingly worthy motives, the use of pious phraseology, and the attempt to find justification for such circles in Scripture (where it is not to be found!) do

not alter their character. Nor does the dignifying of them by the use of the term "fellowship."

Wherever groupings of churches are found, some form of centralization will naturally follow — the very existence of the circle demands it. There will come into existence what one writer refers to as a "central organization, from which streams of thought, suggestion and personal influence flow out at once to all parts of the affiliated body." The equivalent, at least, of such a "central organization" may exist and, we fear, in some quarters does exist, though perhaps not recognized. It exists in practice wherever "leading brethren" direct the policies of a group of assemblies.

Where churches operate as individually responsible units, they normally are spared many vexations. If mistaken policies are adopted somewhere, or evil doctrines are introduced, they are not automatically brought under their blight. If strife occurs, resulting perhaps in a sad division, the trouble will be more or less localized — unless, as has sometimes occurred, individuals make it their business to spread the plague by forcing some who are not directly affected to "take a stand" or "judge the question."

It will be asked, is there no provision for guidance or control? There is, but not of the sort sometimes imposed upon assemblies. It is noticeable that, in Matthew 18, the final decision is that given by the church. If there were anywhere on earth a higher authority that could be appealed to, this would have been a natural place to mention it, but there is none. When Barnabas went to Antioch (Acts 11:22, 23), he did not suggest to Christians there that they should submit themselves to some ecclesiastical "authority," or that they should become part of some "circle of fellowship." He simply "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." When Paul was taking leave, finally as he supposed, of the elders from Ephesus, he did not leave them in the care of an administrative body, but simply commended them "to God and to the word of His grace" (Acts 20:32). Here again there was an excellent opportunity to define any

arrangement, if it existed, for the union of assemblies and for their united administration, but there is no mention of any such arrangement. In fact, the whole responsibility for the guidance of the church at Ephesus is placed upon the elders of that church, in dependence directly upon the Lord. It is evident that each assembly stood responsible immediately to the Lord, not guided by the action of any other assembly, nor authorized to adjust the affairs of any other. As my individual conduct is my responsibility, so the conduct of an assembly is the responsibility of that assembly alone. A believer going from one place to another will normally be received, not because he comes from an assembly that has been "recognized," but because he himself is considered to be a suitable person to be received. A letter of commendation, if he brings one (as usually he should) will simplify matters by clearly establishing his character, but is not to be looked upon by the assemblies involved as indication of a link between them. If the individual seeking fellowship has, for scriptural reasons, been excluded from the assembly he was formerly associated with, he will be dealt with accordingly, simply because the conduct which made it necessary, in obedience to the Word of God, for the one assembly to exclude him, makes it equally necessary for the other to do so.

We must not let ourselves forget, of course, that while Scripture knows of no union of assemblies, there is a vital oneness of believers. As united to Christ all true Christians are "members one of another" (Eph. 4:25; Rom. 12:5).

As such it is expected that they will have an affectionate regard for each others' interests and welfare (I Cor. 12:25-26). There should ever be friendly understanding, sympathy and loving care. Anything that would tend to stumble others should be carefully avoided (I Cor. 8:9). Co-operation, where possible, in the furtherance and support of Gospel activity, in the sharing of ministry, in mutual assistance wherever there is need for it, can be highly profitable and are to be devoutly encouraged. We may well pray for an increase of such co-operation.



BROADCAST BULLETIN

ALASKAN RADIO BROADCASTS

Brother Everett Bachelder of Nome, Alaska has sent the following account regarding Gospel broadcasting in Alaska.

THE GOSPEL OVER THE AIR

The steady beam of KICY is increasingly penetrating into many areas. It is a marvelous thing the way the Lord is using this means of reaching souls for Christ. Letters continue to pour in from the villages, sometimes over a hundred per mail. There are several mail-reading programs through the day and songs are requested. It is good to see the high percentage of requests being made for Gospel music. From the Aleutians to distant islands and isolated villages people write of receiving blessing. The Word of the Living God is reaching into towns where there have been no missionaries and also into mining camps and fishing camps. When we think of the coverage of Western Alaska, there must be quite a penetration into Asia. Some announcements in Russian are being aired evenings, and it is hoped to have some programing in Russian soon. Eskimo dialect is now going forth on an average of 30 minutes

each day. Tom Westwood is on with Bible Treasury Hour each weekday. We have contacted quite a few here in Nome who have been blessed by this program.

RADIO TESTIMONIES

There is a new way in which all our friends in the Lord can help in a grand and special way to get the Gospel to the Eskimos and others up here. KICY is making a library of one-minute taped testimonies. These are to be played at various times and the station can use as many as are sent in. In the testimonies one can mention their name and how they were saved, also adding Scripture references or a verse of a song as the Lord leads. Quite a few testimonies could be placed on each tape. They should be made at 7½ speed with a slight break between each testimony. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. . ." Psalm 107:2.

This is one of a series of reports on missionary radio broadcasting. For further information contact The Family Bible Hour, Box 21, Arlington, Washington, U.S.A., or Box 51, Toronto 15, Ontario, Canada.

Family Bible Hour Schedule

CJON St. John's Nfld. — Sun. 10.00 p.m.
 CFCB Corner Brook, Nfld. — Sun. 12.30 p.m.
 CFCY Charlottetown, P.E.I. — Sun. 8.30 p.m.
 CHSJ Saint John, N.B. — Sun. 9.00 p.m.
 CKTB St. Catharines, Ont. — Sun. 10.00 a.m.
 CKLB Oshawa, Ont. — Sun. 10.30 p.m.
 CKDM Dauphin, Man. — Sun. 8.00 a.m.
 CKOV Kelowna, B.C. — Sun. 9.00 p.m.

JAPANESE PROGRAM

JOUF Osaka, Japan — Sat. 5.45 p.m.

FOREIGN

WIV Vieques, Puerto Rico — Sun. 6.00 a.m.
 HLKX Inchon, Korea — Sun. 12.30 p.m.

UNITED STATES

WMUZ Detroit, Mich. — Sun. 4.30 p.m.
 KLEE Ottumwa, Iowa — Sun. 8.00 a.m.
 KBRC Mount Vernon, Wash. — Sun. 9.30 p.m.
 KAYE Puyallup, Wash. — Sun. 6.30 p.m.
 KLAY Tacoma, Wash. — Sun. 8.30 p.m.

Homeward Bound

We're homeward bound! Oh, glad anticipation!
We soon shall see our Saviour face to face,
And in our Father's house of many mansions,
We'll joy forever in His matchless grace.

We're homeward bound! And ever, as we
journey,
The hope of glory in each ransomed heart
Is Christ Himself within our hearts abiding
Both joy and courage to us to impart.

We're homeward bound! And as we travel
onward
God's love, like sunshine, doth surround our
way.
It guides and guards and strengthens and
upholds us,
And brings us cheer and comfort every day.

We're homeward bound! Let us redeem each
hour
For opportunities pass swiftly by,
And soon the time for service will be ended —
The coming of the Saviour draweth nigh.

—F.M.