

*35th Annual*  
**ABILENE CHRISTIAN  
 BIBLE LECTURESHIP**

Feb. 21-25, 1954 ● Abilene, Texas

**T H E M E:**

*"Overcoming Dangerous Tendencies"*

Approach: Positive discussions of vital issues facing  
 the church today.

**THEME TOPICS**

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| "Overcoming Modernism"                            | Jack Lewis, Covington, Ky.    |
| "Overcoming Eldership Problems"                   | Dr. John G. Young, Dallas     |
| "Overcoming Dangers in the Work of an Evangelist" | Glenn L. Wallace, Abilene     |
| "Overcoming Professionalism in the Ministry"      | Paul Southern, Abilene        |
| "Overcoming Worldliness"                          | Ira North, Nashville, Tenn.   |
| "Overcoming Denominational Tendencies"            | H. A. Dixon, Henderson, Tenn. |
| "Overcoming the Tendency to Phariseeism"          | J. P. Crenshaw, Plainview     |
| "Overcoming Problems in Worship"                  | Frank Pack, Abilene           |

**SPECIAL LECTURES**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| "Ways and Means of Doing Mission Work" | John H. Banister, Dallas                |
| "Caring for Widows and Orphans"        | George H. Stephenson,<br>Memphis, Tenn. |

**OTHER FEATURES**

- Four Panel Discussions
- Approximately 30 Classes Daily
- Choruses and Secular Programs
- Preachers-Elders Dinner
- Mission Field Reports
- Special Exhibits
- Three Auditoriums for Simultaneous Evening Lectures
- No Conflict between Panel Discussions and Classes

Abilene Christian College regrets it cannot provide guest accommodations for all of its visitors. However, we shall be happy to make reservations for you. Address your requests to J. D. Thomas, Lectureship Director, ACC Station, Abilene, Texas.

**Abilene Christian College**

*Emphasizing Christian Living*

Abilene, Texas

Lindsay A. Allen  
 816 Childs St.  
 Corinth, Miss.

7-54



*20th Century Christian*

"NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN THE PRESENT AGE"

JANUARY ● 1954

SO MANY found our special issue on "Overcoming Sorrow" helpful that we were encouraged to bring out this issue on this practical theme. Long after this month of publication is past we believe copies of this issue will bring welcome encouragement to those who are suffering in hospitals, in homes, in far away places.

There is a prevalent idea that happiness consists in the absence of any pain. Christ does not so teach. He challenges us to win the crown of righteousness, to overcome through suffering. Through him, even our suffering, can work for us. In him, there is purpose even in pain.

## Victory through Suffering

We send this out with a prayer that you who read it will turn to God through Christ to find victory through suffering. When you are through with these pages please pass them on to someone else who needs this message from the Master.

May we appeal to any who may read this who are not yet obedient servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why not believe on him this hour? Repent of your sins and turn to God. Then confess your faith in Christ to others, and be baptized (buried) into Christ unto the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4). You can find some believer who will assist you. Don't put it off. Render this trusting obedience today and live each day as a new creature. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sins" (1 John 1:7).

—M. Norvel Young.

• Additional copies of this may be obtained through the years by writing to Jim Bill McInteer, 3909 Granny White Pike, Nashville 5, Tennessee. Other similar pamphlets are available on these subjects: "Making Marriage Work," "Overcoming Sorrow," "The Lord's Supper," "Understanding the Bible," "God's Way of Salvation," "Examples of Conversion," "God, Man and Money," "Prayer," "Church Music," "The New Testament Church." (Price: 10c each or \$8 per 100.)

## 20th Century Christian

VOLUME XVI • NUMBER 4 • JANUARY, 1954

### "Why Am I Sick?"

By Carl Spain, Houston, Texas

FROM our early childhood we have asked "why" about a multitude of things, especially the painful and unpleasant realities of life. Of all the questions that deal with the mysteries of human existence none is more disturbing and difficult than the one that begins with that baffling interrogative "why."

Through Jesus Christ God has supplied us with many soul-satisfying answers to this question. But, God cannot explain everything fully to us because we are so utterly incapable of comprehending many aspects of these mysteries, even as a child cannot fully understand when parents tell him why things have to be the way they are.

As we seek the answer as to why we are made to suffer, we must be cautious as we listen to the counsel of an Elihu or a Bildad or a Zophar, who "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge" (Job 38:2). We are hesitant to express any personal opinions as to why any particular individual must suffer, for fear that we, like Job, may have to confess: "Therefore have I uttered that I understand not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job 42:3).

The pattern of human suffering is so complex. Any given case of suffering may involve several causes and purposes. It



THE AUTHOR

may be the act of God to accomplish disciplinary results that are good for us. It may be a moral retribution for some transgression of God's laws. It may be the dark consequence of the sin of someone else. Or it may be a sickness that comes because of the futility that prevails in the whole creation as a result of man's rebellion against God. Sin introduced suffering into the pattern of life. The refreshing rains fall upon the fields of the just and the unjust, so does sickness come to people whether they be just or unjust.

It has been said that when the Almighty speaks the poetry of the book of Job takes its highest flight. We, too, take our highest flight when we let God himself speak on this great problem. Search the following Scriptures prayerfully and carefully and you will find many inferences or plain declarations concerning the causes and purposes of suffering. You will notice that the pattern is complex. Only God knows fully just why you in particular are suffering in any particular way. We cannot judge. Perhaps your spirit will bear witness with God's spirit, and together you may determine in a measure just why you are sick. If you cannot find the answer to your own satisfaction, then rest in the calm assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

### **Disciplinary Suffering**

*Hebrews 12:6-11:* "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth . . . God dealeth with you as with sons . . . Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live. For they verily for a few days chastened us as seemeth good to them: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

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Published monthly at 3909 Granny White Pike, Nashville 5, Tenn. Subscription price: \$1.50 per year. Entered as second-class matter Nov. 18, 1938, at the post office, Nashville 2, Tenn., under act of March 3, 1879.

Printed letterpress in U.S.A. by Williams Printing Co., Nashville

### **Providential Suffering**

*John 9:2-3:* "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

### **Universal Suffering**

Individual character and special iniquity are not always implied by particular pain of a person in particular. Paul's language is worthy of consideration:

*Romans 8:18, 20, 22:* "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us . . . For the creation was made subject to vanity" (futility) "not fillingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

*Hebrews 9:27:* "It is appointed unto man once to die." Much of human suffering is related to this reality. The pains of suffering will be universal until the fetters of death are broken. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

Sin is so vicious that many people suffer as a direct result of the selfishness and carelessness of someone else. The iniquities of the wicked often cause pain to the innocent.

### **Vicarious Suffering**

*Mark 14:34-36:* Jesus said to his disciples: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." . . . "He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Read Isaiah 53:4-6).

*John 19:17-18:* "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull . . . where they crucified him."

*1 Peter 4:12, 15-16, 19:* "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to prove you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings . . . But let none of you

suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters, yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed . . . wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

### *Suffering and Satan*

Luke 13:11, 16: "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself." Jesus said of her illness: "whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years."

→ In our sickness, let us direct any bitterness or antagonism toward Satan rather than toward God. Because of him we live in a creation subjected to pain and futility.

No matter who or what is to blame for your sickness, or why you are thus afflicted, it is a test of your character and a trial of your faith. The challenge is yours to use such adversity as a stepping stone to the life eternal. God did not promise Christians that they would be spared the trials and testings of life that prove men's souls. But he did promise that the person whose character is built upon the rock of truth and righteousness would endure and stand against the winds and rains and floods that test each man's buildings (Matthew 7:24-25). May God bless you in your sickness, and help you to endure life's chastening suffering as a child of God. He will reward your patience with eternal health and happiness.



### **"HERALD OF TRUTH" GOING ON TELEVISION**

We are happy to report to our readers that the nation-wide "Herald of Truth" radio program is going on TV early in 1954. February 12 is the tentative date set for the first broadcast. Sample films of a typical program are available for churches to show as "previews." The TV program will be under the direction of the Elders of the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and will feature James W. Willeford and James W. Nichols as speakers in a weekly Sunday broadcast and TV program. It is hoped that it will go on more than fifty TV stations at the beginning. If you wish to know more about this, or to contribute to its support, you may contact John F. Reese, Box 1264, Abilene, Texas.

Incidentally recently the Herald of Truth offered to send our special issue on "The Alcohol Problem" to listeners who would write for a copy and more than 3,000 requests came in. The Nielson report estimates 3,000,000 listeners hear the radio program each Sunday afternoon. Let us remember, "If we sow the seed of the Word of God, he will give the increase."

## "Does Jesus Care?"

By Wayne Hargrove,\* Houston, Texas

A SUDDEN, unexpected illness comes upon you. Overnight your plans are changed by physical infirmity. Perhaps pain and suffering attend your every conscious moment. And sometimes (apparently) there seems to be no one to whom you can turn! Perhaps you feel as the Psalmist once felt: "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psalms 69:20).



THE AUTHOR

*But there is One who always cares—no matter how old or young you are, no matter what you have done or haven't done, regardless of how rich or poor, important or unimportant you may be! That one is Jesus Christ, the Savior.*

Jesus, while here on earth, was interested *particularly* in those who were sick and in need. The crippled and diseased were his special concern. To those who thought he was showing favoritism to a certain group, he explained: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick" (Mark 2:17). It was seldom the happy and the prosperous and the well who are mentioned in connection with his name.

Jesus healed impartially those brought to his attention. And he healed those with "permanent disabilities" as readily as those afflicted with sudden illnesses. The impotent man who had had an infirmity for thirty-eight years (John 5) and the woman who "was bowed together and could in no wise lift up herself" and had borne her affliction for eighteen years

\* The author is an effective minister of the gospel. He personally has overcome his own struggle with a serious illness and you would never guess from his strenuous program of work that he is a diabetic.

(Luke 13), Jesus healed with the same loving touch that he bestowed on Peter's mother-in-law, who "lay sick of a fever" (Mark 1:30). Whether it was friend or stranger to him, Jesus *cares*. He worked *overtime* caring for the sickness, suffering and pain of others (Mark 1:32-33).

### "Acquainted with Grief"

Jesus *sympathized* with those who suffered. He himself suffered! "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Jesus thirsted (John 19:28). He was "acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). There was no human sickness, trial or tragedy that Jesus did not touch. *Jesus knows what you are experiencing!* He is not one who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

But does Jesus care for *me*, and does he care *today* as he did when he was in human form on the earth?

Perhaps you are thinking: "Cancer, polio, incurable paralysis, or some other dread disease leaves me with no hope from medical science. Does Jesus care for *me*?" Frank E. Graeff puts it in a song this way:

*Does Jesus care when my way is dark  
With a nameless dread and fear?  
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,  
Does He care enough to be near?*

*Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Savior cares!*

Yes, Jesus continues to care for us, though he has been gone from Palestine almost two thousand years. Jesus is at the right hand of God, making intercession for *us* (Romans 8:34). God has not granted to men the power to heal miraculously, as in the days of Jesus and the apostles, but his love, his comfort, his presence still may be ours today. Jesus promised: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). *Into the sick room, into the operating room, into the*

*lonely abode of old age*—wherever you may be, Jesus *will* come! He cares! "Lo, I am *with* you always!" (Matthew 28:20).

Faced with grave physical danger, intense pain and suffering, what a comfort the Christian has in the knowledge that Christ is *with* him! Paul had that assurance, and thus he could say, regardless of adversities: "Christ *liveth* in me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul was a sick man, but he knew that Jesus cared, and so we hear him singing: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, . . . in distresses for Christ's sake . . ." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

If you are not a Christian; you should become one. Jesus cares for the sickness of our physical bodies, but he cares infinitely more that our sin-sick souls might be made whole! In Mark 2:1-12 is recorded the story of a cripple let down through the roof that Jesus might heal his body. But Christ attended to the man's *greatest* need first: "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee!" The *first* need was not for his crippled and diseased body, but that his soul might be made whole. Jesus did not neglect the man's physical infirmity—*Jesus never did that*—but he gave us a lesson as to which is more important.

Does Jesus care?

*Yes, for me, for me he careth,  
With loving, tender care;  
Yes, with me, with me he shareth  
Each burden and each fear.*

—HORATIUS BONAR

By trusting in Jesus, the loving, sympathizing, ever-present Savior, I can face any crisis. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Jesus does care! Jesus can strengthen you! Jesus can help you when all others fail! Trust in him. Say with the prophet, "I *will* trust, and not be afraid!" (Isaiah 12:2).



### TWO FINE TRACTS AVAILABLE . . .

"How Shall I Use the Lord's Day?" by S. C. Boyce and "Four Things God Wants You to Know" by R. S. King are fine tracts available without cost to those who can use them to advantage. Write: Church of Christ meeting at David Lipscomb College, Nashville 5, Tenn.

# DOES GOD REALLY ANSWER PRAYER?

By Harold Thomas,\* Bangor, Maine

**H**E CERTAINLY DOES. Don't you doubt it for a minute. God is your Father. In one sense he is the Father of every person. Every man and woman that breathes is of God's creation, and he created them in his own image. And as his child in this sense you can be sure that he loves you and hears you when you pray.

The Christian is a child of God in even a more blessed sense and he must not doubt that his Father hears and answers prayer.

"Our Father," Jesus taught us to pray.

"What man of you," he added, "If his son ask for a loaf will give him a stone? Or, if he ask for fish, will give him a serpent? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him" (Matthew 6:9; 7:9-11).

God is our Father and he loves us and cares for us. We know he will listen when we pray.

But God *can* give us anything and everything we need and that we are ready to receive. Our parents in the flesh cannot do that. What they can do is very limited. But God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

Let these words always be in your heart. Make a song out of them to sing by day or night. *God is. God can. God cares.*

\* The author is a vigorous Christian who has cut logs, and built church buildings with his own hands in his efforts to spread the kingdom in New England. He now conducts a popular weekly Bible television program.



THE AUTHOR

But does he *always* answer our prayers?

Yes, he *always* answers the sincere, earnest petitions of his creatures.

But does he always give us what we request?

No, he doesn't always give us that for which we ask. No earthly father could do that for his child. Our children sometimes ask for things they must never have. And sometimes they ask for things they cannot use wisely or without damage to themselves until they are much older.

## *Answers God Gives*

So our Heavenly Father sometimes answers, "Yes, my child," and gives us our requests. Sometimes his word to us is this: "Not yet, my child—later perhaps." And sometimes his answer is "No." But even so, in such a case his "No" is a richer blessing than his "Yes."

The person who prays thoughtfully will not chafe or complain when that specific thing for which he asks is not given. By the very act of prayer he knows he has appealed to a higher Power and a higher wisdom than his own. He knows that power and wisdom are one with love immeasurable. And so he submits to that higher wisdom and love and says, "Thy will be done." He looks for the greater blessing which God has given—the blessing greater than that for which he has asked. He looks for the reason his request was denied—for the good that must be associated with the circumstances from which he sought relief. He prays another prayer—a prayer for wisdom to understand better God's plan for his life and to see how the things which he must endure can be used for God's glory. And he finds these and rejoices in this fellowship with God.

## *"Will God Make Me Well?"*

"But if I pray for him to make me well," you ask, "will he make me well?"

He *can* make you well—if it is his will. He can do all things. And he has made sick people well and added years to the span of their lives. He made Hezekiah well—even after Isaiah, his own prophet, had told Hezekiah he could not live. When Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed, God heard his prayer and promised him yet fifteen more years of life. Isaiah brought the message and directed that a poultice of figs be placed on the angry sore that had brought the king so close to death.

So he *can* make you well and he *will* make you well if his own love and wisdom so direct. But if he doesn't make you well, and you will still keep your trust in him, he will make you *better*. He will make you *better than well*. He will give you peace of heart and soul. He will give you the joy of the hope that he gave to men through his son. He will give you understanding and sympathy with others who suffer and words of grace with which to bless them. He will give you a sense of the worth of eternal life and a glad anticipation of the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. Perhaps all these he will give you and still will make you well. God will answer your prayer. He will make you well—or better than well if you will believe in him and give yourself to his will. That's what you are doing with your physician. Do that with the Great Physician as well.

Does God really answer prayer? He really does. God is! God can! God cares!



## Getting Acquainted With Our Staff Writers

James O. Baird, Dean of Central Christian College, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, was formerly business manager of the 20TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN. He is a native of Lebanon, Tennessee, and was baptized by C. L. Overturf in 1938. He began preaching in Wilson County, Tennessee, shortly after his conversion.



He studied at Freed-Hardeman College, Rutgers University, George Peabody College, and Princeton Theological Seminary.

He has served as local evangelist for Grandview Heights and Grace Avenue churches in Nashville and the church in Coffeyville, Kansas.

In 1937 he made a world study trip to Europe, Egypt, Palestine, India, China, and Japan for six and a half months.

He served on the faculty of David Lipscomb College from 1944 to 1950, as professor of sociology and Bible.

His wife is the former Miss Avanelle Elliott, and they have two children.

• For similar information to the above about 1,360 gospel preachers and pictures of most of them, order your copy of *Preachers of Today* at \$3.50 from 20TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN, 3909 Granny White Pike, Nashville 5, Tennessee.



## How Can I Face This Operation?

By

William S. Croom, M.D.\*  
Lubbock, Texas

LATE one afternoon I sat in my consultation room considering what I would say to a patient for whom a major surgical procedure was inevitable. It is always a problem for the doctor to know just what approach to follow in order to allay as much anxiety as possible. In this particular case the patient was a mature Christian woman, and that fact caused me to think of the many reassurances I could discuss with her—reassurances which many patients are denied because of their lack of a genuine faith in God.



THE AUTHOR

The usual discussion of the great strides made in anesthesiology and surgical techniques as a means of reassuring her seemed insignificant and secondary to those promises she already had as a part of her Christian inheritance. An abiding faith and a trust in God's providential care are instruments that can be found only on the surgical table of a sincere child of God. They are instruments that a wise surgeon is grateful to see before him, for his skill is naught but for the blessings of his Maker.

\* Dr. Croom is a practicing physician in Lubbock, Texas. A graduate of Abilene Christian College he has already gained respect in his chosen field of internal medicine. However, he is first of all an active Christian.

Since the time of the earliest physicians, the influence of the mind over the functioning of body organs has been recognized. However, only in recent years has the proper importance of these psychosomatic concepts been realized, so that they are now being stressed in all fields of medicine. Worry is detrimental to anyone's health, but doctors know that it is especially injurious to one who is ill—whether the illness requires treatment with medicines or surgery.

### *Confidence Helps*

On the other hand, tranquility of mind is most advantageous. Two of the most obvious of these advantages to the surgical patient include the probability of a less difficult anesthesia than is usual with the extremely nervous individual. It is also known that the pain threshold is higher in confident patients. Thus, they are more comfortable following the operative procedure and less pain-relieving medication is necessary. This reduces the possibility of several ominous complications which may result from over-sedation.

Unfortunately, a surgeon cannot expect a cure in all operations. This is particularly true in dealing with cancer, although many times it is curable if discovered early. But regardless of the outcome, the Christian who is facing an operation for suspected or known cancer is entitled to great hope by virtue of his relationship to God through Christ.

### *Influence for Christ*

In addition to these benefits which the Christian enjoys at the time of surgery, there is a rare opportunity to let his light shine before men for the glory of God. We are living in a very fast-moving world, which is rapidly filling up with people having various types of anxieties and fears . . . anxieties that are sharpened into neuroses by the added weight of an illness. Therefore, composure of mind and a spirit of love emanating from a patient does not pass unnoticed by those with whom he comes in contact. The influence of such a person for the cause of Christ cannot be measured.

We are all given various experiences in life to test our faith in God. While no one eagerly looks forward to an operation, we can all learn to accept each event we face with the knowledge that God is with us always . . . understanding that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

## How Can I Face Permanent Disability?

By Jim Taggart,\* Dallas, Texas

FROM THE DAY you were born, you began to die. The day of your birth marks the beginning of that onward march which ends in inescapable death, and between the first and last day of life, the body undergoes considerable changes which account for a certain amount of pain and suffering. This is because we live in the flesh, which is not eternal.



THE AUTHOR

Although it is wise to give thought to the perishing outer man in order to prolong our days upon this earth, we should, with Paul, thank the Lord that with his divine help "our spirits are renewed day by day," and it is our spirits that never age with time but keep on growing.

Glance over any audience, and you'll see in any segment of mankind from radiant youth to withering age, evidence of man's frailities—the four "B's": bunions, bifocals, bulges, and baldness. When I notice that nearly everyone around me has some outward imperfections, I am forced to admit my own physical limitations are more or less normal.

I suppose the editor assigned me this subject of facing a permanent disability because I am a C.P., possessing the much publicised "cerebral palsy." Possibly I can judge, because of the experience of my "growing up" years, what my attitude might be if I were faced with such a seemingly miserable situation. Like everyone else, I have had to rely on the

\* Jim has overcome a serious physical handicap. He and his wife "Dolly" are happy, well-adjusted Christians. He runs a magazine subscription service from his office at home. You may order any magazine you subscribe to through him. Why not surprise him with your renewals this year. Write to him at 2826 Kirven Drive, Dallas 17, Texas.



Lord, use my own wits, and accept the loving help of many, many friends.

### ***Giving and Receiving***

Although it is more blessed to give than receive, it is not easy on the part of the recipient to be always on the receiving end. Often the giver does not realize that there is something humbling, something which relegates the recipient slightly to a lower level, when he is placed in a situation where he must always accept and never reciprocate.

There is a certain adroitness in the proper manner of receiving a gift which blesses the giver. Here is where the disabled person can compensate for his lack of physical ability. He can be an example of gratitude—there are few muscles needed: a smile, a friendly hand shake, or some remark to cause a laugh.

The little I have learned in the more than forty years the Lord has given me is that the best therapy in the world, spiritual or otherwise, is to turn your mind inside out.

Instead of turning your thoughts inward upon self and your own difficulties, let your mind go outwards and think of others. How did Jesus go through life with the cross staring him in the face? He knew from his early years what his end on this earth would be, because he was God's Son and he knew all things. With the cross always before him, how could he be happy? John answers, when he says, "He went about doing good." Jesus cared for others.

I've known a lot of cripples in my life. Without exception, they all resent being placed in a "class," being socially ostracized. I admit that I had that idea until I awoke to the fact that I was placing my own self in a "class." Let me explain.

People with facial paralysis, who have difficulty in using the right smile muscles or using their mouth and lips properly are often ugly for "normal" people to look at. I admit that. But put self-pity or contempt on those unsightly lips, and you have a pathetic person indeed.

In my travels in California, I once met a C.P. who was greatly handicapped with facial paralysis. He was just plain ugly to me until I came to know him, and then I forgot his face because I could only see the kindness and admiration in his eyes.

But supposing I were stricken—bed-ridden—so that I must be waited upon hand and foot. That would be a much greater

test. Would I still be able to thank our Heavenly Father for life, for the divine gift of his Son? Would I radiate to the world that love for others that Christians must possess? Could I each day see something beautiful, say something kind, and make someone else glad that I was around?

Paul was chained between two soldiers, but no chains, however strong, held him back from preaching the gospel. Nor did it prevent his saying, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I'm in, therein to be content."

When we speak of Paul, we are reminded that the Lord did not heal every one who asked for physical healing. Paul asked the Lord three times to remove his thorn in the flesh, only to receive the Lord's reply that his grace was all sufficient, worth much more than physical healing.

We are all God's creatures, made in his image. We were created to glorify him, and at best our time to do this is short. All of us, despite our physical maladjustments, can accomplish the all-important purpose for our existence, for every life *does* have a purpose.



### **WATCH FOR FEBRUARY ISSUE**

Here are a few of the outstanding articles of interest. "A Protestant Looks at Protestantism" by Jack Bates, "Sacred or Secular" by Avanelle Elliott Baird, "It Isn't Where You Win or Lose, but How You Play . . ." by the editor of the *Atlanta Journal*. This last one is a story of honesty and sportsmanship on the playing field shown by a Christian. Wanda Campbell has another story of Christianity illustrated today. "Working Together" is by Bob Wear. "The Grace of Giving" is by R. Gordon Clement.

Then look for special issues in March and April. Send in your renewal promptly so that you won't miss an issue. Why not renew four years for \$5. These years go by so fast.

### **STAFF MEMBER HONORED . . .**

Jim Bill McInteer, 20TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN business manager, has been elected president of the Alumni Association of David Lipscomb College. Jim Bill is a man of many talents and has meant much to the growth of this magazine in recent years and to the work of the Lord. He is regular preacher for the church on Grace Avenue in Nashville.

# Is This Suffering Wasted?

By Homer Hailey,\* Tampa, Florida

AMONG life's most baffling problems, there are times when none is more perplexing than that of suffering. "Why should this have come to me?" is so often asked. Then, after much anxiety and questioning one still does not have the answer to the "Why?" From thence we turn to the question of "What?" If I cannot know "why," then what use shall I make of it? Surely, in a world of order, governed by a God of love, there must be some use which suffering may serve. It cannot be that God allows suffering with no purpose to be accomplished by it. Surely my pain, whether mental, or physical, or in the deep recesses of conscience, is not to be wasted.



THE AUTHOR

## Knowledge of God

For the past two months I have spent much time with "a perfect and upright man, a man that feared God and turned away from evil." This man had been brought to the brink of death as he drank to the full of calamity and physical suffering. Being a man who had feared God and enjoyed all the bounty of this life, he could not understand why he should be called upon to suffer as he did. In my association with him I learned much about suffering. Among other things I learned something of the use to be made of it. The man's name is Job. Every sufferer should meet and become acquainted with him.

Through suffering Job came to know God as he had never known him before. At times he thought God was cruel to him; at other times he would conclude there was no moral govern-

\* The author is vice-president of Florida Christian College. By the grace of God he has overcome the serious threat of cancer, and is carrying a heavy schedule of teaching and preaching the Bible.

ment in the universe—God just did not care. But throughout his experience his faith was deepening and expanding. Finally Job was able to say, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5).

## Suffering Humbles Us

Job was humbled by his experience. He had learned to trust when he could not see. He came to realize his own ignorance of God's great and mysterious universe. He came also to know God and of his concern for the sufferer as he could never have learned except through experience. He now knew what it was to walk by faith and not by sight.

Here is one of the greatest uses of suffering: to the man who will *trust* it brings a knowledge and understanding of God which can be acquired in no other way—knowledge by experience. God does care. He was intensely interested in Job from the first, and so in us. He is a God of purpose and of order, as revealed throughout his universe. And even though man suffers, God is not indifferent, but uses the suffering to bring man closer to himself. Job came to know God, not as a tyrant, but as man's friend. So may you and I.

## Comfort of Others

Suffering may be used to teach one a deeper sympathy and compassion for others. It should teach us to share the experience of another, to encourage and inspire as we could not have done before our own experience. Though Paul was writing of Christians suffering for the cause of Christ, his statement may serve in any suffering: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Through one's own experience in suffering, and the comfort he receives from God, he is able to comfort as can no one who has not himself experienced such affliction and such comfort. He has learned through experience, and can now teach and help through that which he knows. Let the sufferer make this use of his suffering.

## Patience and Hope

Another great use of suffering as presented in the Scripture is that of the development of patience and hope. Paul rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, but he did not stop there. "We also rejoice in our tribulations," he continues, "knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope putteth not to shame" (Romans 5:3-5). As one overcomes wave after wave of tribulation, adversity, suffering and pain, he grows stronger in his own steadfastness, and his hope flashes more gloriously.

Trials, and also pain or suffering, may become tests of faith. James writes, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3).

Patience is not a fatalistic submission to "come what may"; but it is a steadfast enduring, waiting, letting the Lord work out the end. James himself so explains it, "Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful" (James 5:11). Job was doubly rich at the end of his experience: he had not only his abundance of material wealth, but a richness of faith and knowledge of God which he did not have at the first.

Then there is that suffering which is vicarious: suffering on behalf of and for another. Christ's sufferings were such. So may your suffering be used as the means of bringing Christ and the spirit of the Christ to the heart and life of another. Your own faith and steadfastness may teach by example where one will not listen by the ear.

Shall my suffering be wasted? By no means! "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Let God use suffering in the life of us all as a means of bringing us to know him as never before. Let him use it to teach us faith, humility, steadfastness, hope. Through it let us learn that we can trust when we cannot know; we can walk when we cannot see. Faith is greater than sight, and loving trust than scientific knowledge. Let us thank God for his providential use of suffering, as he uses it to make heaven's glory more brilliant, and earth's sojourn one of humble trust in him.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity"

## The Uses of Adversity

By Elbridge B. Linn,\* Austin, Texas

PAIN, though never pleasant, may be an appointment of God instead of a disappointment of life. The humiliation of ill-health may humble us under his almighty hand. The loss of friends and loved ones may lead us to "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). All forms of adversity, when rightly borne, may be used. They become stepping-stones toward success rather than stumbling-blocks toward defeat.



THE AUTHOR

Let us examine the uses of adversities in counseling and helping those who have just come face to face with some sort of trouble, or who appear almost destroyed by the particular adversity which they face?

Definite indeed is the responsibility of those who have passed through trial to teach others, to sympathize with them, and to help them.

### Teaching Others To Rely upon God

One who has passed through some form of adversity has learned how inferior and untrustworthy physical things sometimes are, especially when compared to the spiritual. Human help is frequently unavailing. Only God can come to our aid. Sometimes men trust in earthly securities, only to find that they fail. Adversities teach us humility, reliance upon God, and obedience to his will. The Apostle Paul wrote: "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not

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be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Earthly troubles frequently make us pause to reflect upon past failures and mistakes. They teach us not to expect to have our own will, but to bow to the divine. Blind indeed is that person who cannot see or dumb is he who cannot say:

*"Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after thy will,  
While I am waiting, yielded and still."*

### **Teaching Others To Pray**

Trouble is the school of prayer. Here almost prayerless Christians are taught to pray. In fact, there are some people who consider themselves to be faithful children of God, who never pray except in time of adversity. Perhaps even prayerful Christians should admit that no prayer to God is quite like that offered in time of great need or distress. May the one who has passed through trouble encourage those in distress to learn the meaning of prayer, both in times of need, and during their daily experiences.

*"Eyes that the preacher could not school  
By wayside graves are raised;  
And lips say, 'God be merciful!  
That ne'er said, 'God be praised!'"*

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Like Peter of old may we learn to cry, "Lord, save me."

### **The Ministry of Sympathy**

Only those who have passed through dire circumstances really know how to sympathize with one in trouble. The word sympathy means "to feel with." Naturally, then, we understand how helpful the experiences of another may be to us. This is the very point of scripture concerning Christ. He is our sympathetic High Priest. Since he understands he can help us in time of need.

Those who have lost loved ones or experienced financial losses, or who have been sick should be able to offer real sympathy to those who have met with a similar form of adversity. This is not simply pity; this is "feeling with" those in trouble.

### **Helping Others**

While there is certainly nothing pleasant in adversity, the fruits can be most helpful. The one who has experienced trouble realizes that he is a better person because he has overcome his sorrows or difficulty with the help of God. He realizes that adversity does not hinder progress. In fact, if it be a form of God's discipline, both moral and spiritual progress may be made. Christ taught "every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2). When the plant needs pruning the process stimulates growth.

### **Of Help to All**

Believers of the Word of God realize that some experiences of adversity are present in the lives of all God's children. One such form is the chastening which proves we are sons of God. "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11). "Count it all joy my brethren when ye fall into manifold temptations; [footnote 'trials'] knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

*"This is not the whole sad story of creation,  
Told by toiling millions o'er and o'er!  
One day, then black annihilation,  
A sun-lit passage to a sunless shore!"*

—EMERSON

Man instinctively recoils at this thought! Man's love protests against the severance from his friends who have gone before. Man's hope of seeing them again enables him to endure the sorrows of time, but the Christian's faith solves the problem and overcomes the tragedy of death and fills the soul with longing aspirations.



### **"LORD'S SUPPER ISSUE" WELL RECEIVED**

This issue has been well received. If you missed it, be sure to write for a copy. Keep a supply on hand for use as a tract. So many Christians have found it helpful in observing the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day.

## JOB'S TRIAL

By J. D. Thomas, Abilene, Texas

THE PRESENCE of pain and evil in the world has long plagued man. Why must man suffer? Why do the good and the bad people suffer alike? Why couldn't our world have been made without this blight? Is there an underlying meaning and purpose? How can man profit from his suffering, or can he? Why doesn't a good God stop wars and cancer and blindness and other evils? Why should a man like Hitler or Stalin be permitted to bring so much suffering to innocent hearts and lives?

The Bible tells us that suffering and pain and heartache and death are all because of sin—Adam's; and no doubt also *our sins* play a part as well. *Sin is at the root of it some way, some how*, but such a declaration as the Bible makes is not satisfying to the philosopher or to the unbeliever. And even the faithful ask the question many times—"Why did this have to happen to me?" What fairness or what sense is there for me to have to go through this?

Some suffering can be explained as *punitive*—we suffer here and now for our own admitted misdeeds. Some suffering is clearly *disciplinary*—we can realize that we have made moral gains from having endured the experience. Some suffering is *redemptive*, leading to the saving of someone from sin. But much suffering is unexplained. There seems to be no logical explanation why a morally good person should go through life as a polio cripple, for instance.

To get at the meaning of pain, then, we have to look beyond our own human philosophical reasoning, and enter the wonderful realm of faith. In this domain we can get answers that satisfy, and see purpose and meaning that transcend our normal reasoning power's ability to discern. Through faith we can come to a calm, deliberate realization that there is meaning and purpose and value in our suffering, and because of this can rise to new heights in endurance. We can smile and be happy in spite of our pain.

## Job Stands the Test

*Job is a case in point.* You know the story, but we mention some of the high points. He was a good man, well-favored, and faithful. Satan desired to overthrow him, and God permitted the test. When Job was vindicated, Satan wanted to test even further, and was permitted to do anything except take his life. After the loss of everything, and with sore-boils from head to foot, even his wife asked him to curse God and die! Job was magnificent, in holding on to his faith. He could see no meaning in his suffering, but he didn't question God's right to send it upon him. He yet believes it will be righted.

Job's three friends come to comfort him, but their only explanation for suffering is that "piety pays, and perversity punishes," so Job must have been guilty of some great wrong which he will not admit. They make his problem worse, rather than help, since he knows that he was not being punished for his own evil deed. However, soon Job begins to be impatient. He curses the day of his birth, and wishes even now that he could die. His calamity is unexplained. He grows stronger in his idea that God has just arbitrarily done this to him, and that it is unfair and unjust. At first he supplicates for mercy, then he feels as a mystified man in trouble, then he is overwhelmed, and finally, as the debate with his friends progresses, he decides that God is but an arbitrary tyrant who uses no method in punishing people. Occasionally we see his faith creeping out in Job's statements, and even at the height of his trouble he reflects a hope that God will finally vindicate him. His physical suffering is intensified by his loss of faith, which became, no doubt, the worst part of his difficulty. If he could have felt that God knew, and was working out a purpose; if he could have maintained his implicit faith—he could have stood the physical pain.

Finally Jehovah appeared to Job in a vision, and gave him an examination, which no doubt was aimed at restoring his humble, implicit faith. Job had presumed to know a great deal, by his accusations; but after Jehovah showed him the wonders of the physical world and asked him what he knew about it all, he had to admit that its wonders were too great for him.

Job's outlook had been limited, and the trouble of his weak faith was caused by his extreme self-concern. After God continued his examinations, Job admitted his own ignorance and insignificance, and that he had talked too strongly. He now

realized that God had been there all the time, that God still had abundant powers, that God knew about him and his sufferings, and no doubt had a purpose for them, and that there was a basis for faith after all. The revelation released Job from his problem, although it did not answer the "why" of human suffering. But Job was now satisfied and content, and his spirit soared above his difficulties.

Faith is, after all, the very heart of religion, and it brings unspeakable peace, though we may still have many unanswered questions. The world's misery does not at all contradict the love of God. At the end of Job's story he was greater than ever before in spiritual character and efficiency. Job's perplexity was a small item in the great mysteries of the universe, but God hadn't forgotten! The private soldier who acts as sentry on a cold rainy night can do it easily if he knows that there is a general in charge who is thereby working out a purpose. When we know that there is a God in heaven who cares for us and who knows even the very number of the hairs on our heads—who is powerful and wise and purposeful—this can give meaning to any adversity in our lives.

To trust God only when we understand him would be a sorry religion—but to trust him when we have every reason for distrusting, is the supreme victory of religion! Job was on trial, to see if he would serve God without pay. God was also on trial in this story—can man trust God, in suffering? The answer is yes—and there is basis for a full faith, regardless of any pain! *Job shows us that in human nature there is the potency of the noblest manhood. Man is a free moral being!*

The sufferer of today, then, may learn from Job. He may lift up his eyes to the heavens, and forget himself and his problems in the realization that God is, and God cares, and his suffering has a meaning and a purpose.

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## LISTEN TO THE HERALD OF TRUTH

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"The Misuse of the Bible"; Jan. 3:  
"Handling the Bible Aright"; Jan.  
10: "Search the Scriptures"; Jan.  
17: "Matching Pennies."

# Victory through Suffering

By Athens Clay Pullias,\* Nashville, Tennessee

HERE IS a passage in the Old Testament which declares a principle that mankind has largely forgotten: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better" (Ecclesiastes 7:2-3). The Master learned obedience by the things which he suffered (Hebrews 7:8). The awful agony of Gethsemane and Calvary were essential steps to the resurrection, the ascension, and final glorification on the throne of David at the right hand of God.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, referred to his own humiliating thorn in the flesh in these words: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

When you look at the sweet face of an innocent baby, lying in a spotless cradle of blue or pink, you see sweetness, innocence, and purity, but you do not see strength, courage, and character. These qualities can be seen on the battle-scarred

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THE AUTHOR

face of the aged veteran who has smelt the smoke of many a hard fought battle and carries the wounds from many a struggle. The crown will belong "to him that overcometh." It is the reward of victorious living.

When the Apostle Paul neared the end of his life in a prison cell at Rome he spoke courageously of the future—of a crown waiting just over the river. The basis of his hope was expressed in these words: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

### *Paul's Tribulations*

The thrilling strength of the aged apostle, as he neared the end of his earthly journey was the product of victories through suffering. Listen to him in one of his appeals to the Corinthians: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

In contrast to this display of spiritual muscle based upon victory through suffering this pleasure-loving age in which we live too often has been described by the Old Testament statement, "They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." Enduring hardships as good soldiers of the cross is an essential part of character development. The Master made the cross, intended for his eternal shame, the insignia of his cause. He was *victorious through suffering, a principle the world has never understood. It is not in pomp and glory; it is not in ease and luxury that character is built.* It is in the fiery furnace of hardship, heartache, and disappointment through which we

come to strength, to faith, and to victory. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:13-14).

### *Age of Materialism*

The ideal of the present age has become physical security, material prosperity, and pleasure through satisfaction of the senses. These for many have become the chief ends of life. The successful life is largely defined by the degree to which these temporal ends are achieved. Ask the average father about the progress of his son and notice the terms in which he defines the success of his son. Too often these terms will be salary, short hours, luxurious surroundings, and anything else that would make life easy and fat. *This is dangerous and finally ruinous materialism!*

The ultimate in security is the product of suffering, of hardship, of righteous character, and of achievement in the field of service to God and man. Victory in heaven that will endure forever will belong to those who have served, who have sacrificed, and who have suffered for righteousness' sake. There is no intimation in the Scriptures of any prospective reward in eternity for material success and the achievement of luxurious life. The possession of great wealth should be regarded as a solemn trust requiring correspondingly greater service and sacrifice for God and man. Eternal life, which is the eternal victory, will belong to those Christians who have suffered and served and who have become thereby the true children of God.



"Have thine own way, Lord,  
Search me and try me, Master, today,  
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,  
As in thy presence, humbly I bow.

"Have thine own way, Lord,  
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray.  
Power—all power, surely is thine,  
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine."

# THINKING HEALTH

By M. I. Summerlin, Port Arthur, Texas

RECENTLY a young man, in apparent good health, came to me complaining of a painful physical disorder which had troubled him for several weeks. Five physicians at different times had given him a thorough examination, and their findings were identical; in substance they read: "His trouble is not physical, but a psychosomatic one." There was nothing physically wrong, but he *thought* there was. His thinking was wrong; therefore he was ill. Wrong thinking can bring on illness, and the only cure lies in straightening out the crooked thinking.

## *Old Truth Rediscovered*

Solomon said, "As a man thinketh . . . so is he." More than ever before, physicians are studying our attitudes when diagnosing our ailments because, like Solomon, they recognize the relationship of our thinking to the emotional, spiritual, and even the physical part of us. Certain doctors tell us that over 75 per cent of our ills are psychosomatic in nature. If this be true, it is a remarkable fact. That is not to say that pain is not real or disabling. It does mean, however, that a major portion of our illnesses never would have occurred if our thinking had been healthy; moreover they can be healed by right thinking.

William James, the father of American psychology, had this arresting comment: "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind." To have good health we must *think* health. The Bible says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Wrong attitudes can bring real sickness.

God created man and then gave him a guide book for correct thinking. Not everyone uses it; in fact, many Christians deny themselves the rich privileges of that treasurehouse, the Psalms. In times of discouragement, grief, disappointment, loneliness or illness, there is nothing so rewarding or comforting as those great Psalms written by one who had these same experiences, and then found the sought relief at the hand of

God. Just as the Creator, by his Word, brought order out of chaos in nature, he can, by his Word, bring order into the chaotic life. These words of encouragement and assurance, as recorded by the singer of Israel, came as a benediction from heaven to lift the weary spirit.

Psychiatry, in its effort to correct ills through the proper mental approach has found in the teaching of Jesus the solution for such problems. Dr. James T. Fisher, a psychiatrist, in his book *A Few Buttons Missing* confirms this.

## *Confusion Causes Trouble*

The confused mind is a principal contributor to physical and mental illnesses. Not long ago a young officer in the merchant fleet of the company which employs me hanged himself. He was a member of the church with a splendid future in his chosen field. He left behind a farewell note, explaining his tragic action, saying he was "confused." Somewhere along the way this young man had permitted his thinking to shift Christ away from the center of his life, and then his thoughts were off center. Having lost his bearings he became confused. He did not place first things first—"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—thus the strain grew until it became too great. Jesus says when this strain becomes great he will relieve it if we come to him (Matthew 11:28).

## *Want To Be Happy*

Abraham Lincoln said that he had learned that everyone was just about as happy as he wanted to be. Our own experiences confirm this. If we make up our minds to be unhappy there is nothing on earth that can change us; if we make up our minds to be happy, very likely we shall be.

The secret of the happiness of Jesus, even in the face of his death, is found in the fact that his happiness was not at the mercy of men and circumstances, but came from the spiritual which "no man taketh away." He was an unconquerable soul. This selfsame source that sustained him has been given to us that our joys may be full. That life which is bound up in Christ, and has disciplined its thinking so that it refuses to be upset by the trivial, the petty and the unimportant, but delights in the spiritual will be the happy life.



# Try Counting Your Blessings

By J. P. Crenshaw, Plainview, Texas

OF ALL the means at our disposal which we might spend a few moments, possibly none is more enjoyable or profitable than counting our blessings.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalms 103:2). When you are ill which of your countless benefits does your mind turn to first? I think of having such a good, clean, comfortable bed; just the right amount of clean cover; the needed food for strength and recovery; and many other such blessings belonging to my room.

Then maybe your mind will turn to the fact of personal contact. How wonderful it is that, in spite of every handicap, you still have the chance to influence so many people who enter your room from time to time. Not very many circumstances of life offer the impressive opportunities that come to the shut-in. Paul did most of his remarkable writing from the prison cell. Let that thought remain in your mind today when you read one of his letters. It will add greatly to your appreciation of the uplifting thought you find there to picture him in a much more unpleasant circumstance than your present one as he finds it possible to write such inspiring messages.

"The trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye might be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3-4). Maybe you have been chosen to show those close to you how a Christian can use adversity. Here is an opportunity frequently overlooked. I suppose that there is no other road to perfection but the one over which you are now traveling.

But let us now take the thought a little higher. Have you thanked God today for such benefits as your well printed, easily read Bible? And maybe for someone who is willing to read



THE AUTHOR

it to you? Did you ever try to imagine yourself in the position of our fathers of the restoration movement? That has not been so very many years ago. No one ever pointed out to them that their salvation depended on their faith in Christ, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ. They were obliged to hunt these conditions out one at a time and then place them in the order in which the inspired men of the long ago presented them to a lost world. Did you ever think how long it would take you to link these teachings in such a clear way as they were presented to you? How did it happen that you live in an age in which these things are so easy to grasp and accept? All peoples, in every age, have not enjoyed the blessings that we sometimes take for granted.

## Let's Count Our Blessings All over Again Today

"Who knowest whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). The beautiful history of Esther has in it many lessons of encouragement for us, not the least of which is that our lives do join with those round about us in such a way that our interests cannot be separated from theirs. Mordecai told Esther that if she failed to use the God-given opportunity to deliver the Jews that deliverance would still be accomplished, but that she would lose her blessing and her life. It might do us good to think about our responsibility and our opportunity in our contacts today. Are we using every chance God gives us to influence others for good? There are sick that I have known from whose room I always come with a new vision and determination just because of their outlook on life from their sick bed or their chair. Such conditions do give you an opportunity denied one with more freedom of movement.

If God's plan for your life calls for your influence to be spread from such conditions, do you suppose that you can count it a blessing just because of what it has been used to accomplish in the life of someone else? I am not suggesting that God sent your sickness upon you. I am suggesting that since it has come, you are in a position to make great use of it.

Jesus told Peter one day "by what death he should glorify God" (John 21:19). Surely we may use our trials and even our death to this same end.

Can you count even these things among your blessings? "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

# "Heirs According to the Hope of Eternal Life"

By G. C. Brewer, Memphis, Tennessee

THE FEAR and dread of death is universal, and it places man under bondage (Hebrews 2:15). In early life we see death come to creatures about us, and often it comes to some of our own loved ones when we are not yet old enough or mature enough in mind to understand or even to be adjusted to this wreck, which awaits all of us. We see that death brings an end to that which makes man a vital, companionable and wonderful being. It brings a dissolution to his body, and the decay of the human body is a loathsome thing, and the thought itself fills us with horror. Robert G. Ingersoll said, "Whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck at last must mark the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love, and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven out of the warp and woof of the mystery of death. . . . Life is a narrow veil between the ground and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond its heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry." From the point of view of the unbeliever, life is a disappointment, and death is a tragedy. We often sing of the "sweet mystery of life," and, indeed, life is a mystery if we do not read it through the focus of faith. Life is a mockery if death is its eternal terminus. Science can tell us much about life, but it leaves unanswered the most pertinent, the most anguished questions.



THE AUTHOR

"Tell me, thou strangest and unfathomed mystery—  
Tell me, I pray—  
Whence thy beginning? What is thy history?  
Where dost thou stay?  
What of the pilgrims through thy domain trav'ling?  
Tell me I pray thee this mystery unrav'ling.  
Body and spirit held fast in thy keeping,  
And end but in sleeping  
'Mid sorrow and weeping—  
Why such an ending of the mystic day?  
Tell me the secret of thy short abiding,  
In body with breath  
And then, in a moment so swiftly divided  
Thy portion with death—  
Where shall I be in the time intervening?  
Tell me, I pray thee, this mystery explaining;  
Tell me the secret—Oh! tell me the meaning  
Of Life and her twin sister Death."

But the Christian has a hope of continuing to live when this body is dissolved. The Apostle Paul speaks of the inner man and of the outer man, and he calls this body, in which we are living, a tabernacle and declares that while we are in it, we groan and long for the time when that which is mortal shall be swallowed up of life. "That which is mortal" means the part that is subject to death. That which is immortal is not subject to death. The apostle says that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. The Lord is a spirit, and he cannot be reached by any physical means or perceived through our physical senses: but man's inner man is spirit, likewise, and when this spirit is released from the body, it then may be at home with the Lord. Spirit communes with spirit, and man's liberated spirit is then qualified for the companionship of the Infinite Spirit.

## *Promise of Life Eternal*

The teaching of God's Word upon man's dual being is the only explanation that we have of life and of death. This same Word of God fills us with the hope of living with God forever when this brief life is over.

It is the promise of life everlasting that makes the gospel good news. The Apostle Paul tells us what the facts of the

gospel are: Christ died for our sins; he was buried and rose again for our justification; he abolished death and brought life and immortality to light and reveals it to us through the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:4; Romans 4:25; 2 Timothy 2:10-12). "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again," then we believe that we shall live with him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13 to close).

Paul states the gospel in one verse in 1 Corinthians the 15th chapter, and then he writes fifty-four more verses on the final point of the three-point gospel—the fact that Jesus rose again. He closes with a triumphant shout as he contemplates all of the dead being brought back from the land of death's captivity to live forever.

### **"Faith Is the Victory"**

This hope serves as an anchor to our souls, and this faith enables Christians to overcome the world. In nothing except the gospel do we have any promise of life or any hope of immortality. Science and philosophy cannot read the riddle of life and death. None of the devices of men, no discovery, and no invention can remove death from the earth or give comfort to sorrowing loved ones when they stand by the open grave, which is ready to receive a form they loved and which offers no reply to their wondering souls and longing hearts. The wisest scientist that lives is helpless in the presence of death. All the light of philosophy goes out at the portals of the tomb. Darkness, deep and dismal, hangs between us and the boundless beyond; and but for our faith, it would mark the wreck of the body and the doom of our being. But the light of eternal truth—the light of revealed truth—enables us to see beyond the narrow limits of death and beyond the darkness of the tomb the land of eternal bliss; and it enables us to envision the reunion with our loved ones, from whom death has separated us for a while. Our faith is the victory, and our hearts tell us that death cannot be the end of our existence.



"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:35, 37).

## *From the Book Shelf . . .*

*Sermon Notes on the Sermon on the Mount* is one of the latest works from the pen of that master writer, Frank L. Cox. A neat, beautifully printed work, divided into three parts, this brings you ten expository sermon outlines and twenty textual sermons.

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## *Book Review . . .*

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