

Integrity

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INTEGRITY seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.

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SOME GOOD READING

Editor

SOME VIEWS ON A CONTROVERSIAL TEXT

David F. Graf

THE RESTORATION OF CHRIST

Philip Roberson

LIMITATIONS ON AUTONOMY

Hoy Ledbetter

THE WORTHY WOMAN

Wanda Hatcher

Some Good Reading

One of my teachers used to insist that anyone can be a scholar today, because we have so many good reference works. If so, ignorance is becoming more inexcusable, for the flood of good books continues. Harper & Row recently released C.K. Barrett's *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, a much-needed commentary. New commentaries from Eerdmans are *The Gospel of Mark* by William Lane (NICNT) and *The Gospel According to St. Luke* by Leon Morris (TNTC). Baker has reprinted the old but still very valuable *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* and *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* as a four-volume set entitled *Dictionary of the New Testament*. John T. Willis has translated the first volume of *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, a projected twelve-volume companion to *TDNT* (which is now complete, except for index volume). Expository preachers should not neglect the expert J.R.W. Stott's volumes (I have Galatians and 2 Timothy) in *The Bible Speaks Today* series (Inter-Varsity paperbacks). The *Translator's Handbooks* (United Bible Societies) are generally excellent (and cheap) aids for moderate-to-serious students. The American Bible Society has issued the TEV translation of Hosea, Amos and Micah under the title *Justice Now!* It only costs a dime and is a good text for a group study.

There are others, but these series and/or authors have taught me much. I am especially indebted to Barrett; his commentary on 1 Corinthians is one of the most exciting books I have read, and I eagerly await his treatment of Acts. Perhaps it will save us all some

trouble if I point out that we do not sell books.

Restoration Quarterly devoted the first number of this year to J.W. Roberts, Professor of Bible and Greek at Abilene Christian College and *RQ's* editor until his death April 15. The issue includes a short biography, an exhaustive bibliography of Roberts' writings, and 42 pages of reprints of his shorter articles. Some of the articles deal with hot topics among us (e.g., the rulership of elders) and will repay study. Single copies are \$1.50 (subscriptions: \$5/year; students, \$4). Write Box 8227, Station ACC, Abilene, Texas. I had started to write Dr. Roberts a note of commendation for his excellent critique of an alarming trend among us (see "How Many Articles in Your Creed, Brother?" in *Firm Foundation*, April 3, 1974) when I learned of his death.

A fine paper for children is the monthly *Living for Jesus* (P.O. Box 103, Farmington, NM 87401). Our 8-year-old girl really looks forward to it. You can get it free, but the publishers depend on contributions.

Last summer Review Editor Bob Marshall set out to interview for *Mission* a dozen religious notables, including William Barclay, F.F. Bruce, Hans Küng, Martin Lloyd-Jones, G.R. Beasley-Murray, Malcolm Muggeridge, J.B. Phillips, J.A.T. Robinson, H.R. Rookmaaker, Francis Schaeffer, John R.W. Stott, and Helmut Thielicke. *Mission* has already published his interviews with Schaeffer and Stott, the one with Küng is scheduled for July, and others will follow. You should not miss these. —HGL

SOME VIEWS ON A CONTROVERSIAL TEXT

DAVID F. GRAF

Ann Arbor, Michigan

The appearance in recent years of the Jerusalem Bible (1966) and the New English Bible (1970) marks the continuing effort of linguists to translate the ancient Hebrew Scriptures into the ever-changing vernacular of English-speaking people, but it hardly represents a change in attitude of those who rejected previous efforts. When the RSV Old Testament was published in 1952, the passage most frequently cited to demonstrate that the new translation was a clandestine plot by modernists to undermine the divinity of Jesus was Isaiah 7:14, where the words "young woman" had replaced the familiar "virgin" of the KJV and the ASV (which, however, had "maiden" in a footnote). It is interesting that the reaction was a complete reversal of the position of conservatives in previous centuries.

When Rationalists had argued that the virgin birth of Jesus was not historical but a contrived doctrine suggested by the words of Isaiah 7:14, the conservatives of that time were quick to point out that the word used by the prophet did not actually mean "virgin"! Now it is argued that (1) the Hebrew word *'almah* is a clear and precise term for virgin, (2) that the term "sign" in the passage demands a supernatural event, and (3) the inspired interpretation of Matthew (1:23) indicates that the passage was "fulfilled" in the birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary. The new versions ignored these matters when they translated *'almah* as "maiden" and "young woman," and helped revive many of the arguments which assailed the RSV.

This should help explain the controversy the late J.W. Roberts of Abilene Christian College precipitated when he defended the new translations and their rendering of the Isaiah passage. In an article in the *Firm Foundation*, he stated: "The Isaiah reference (where 'young woman' is the literal translation) simply furnished Matthew an argument to his Jewish readers (Luke does not use it) that the Messiah like the child of the young girl mentioned in this passage would be subject to an unusual birth" (March 9, 1971). The debate provoked by this statement soon made its way to the editorial pages of the *Gospel Advocate*, where the following stern judgment was made: "To deny that this prophecy had any reference to Jesus the Messiah is to deny the inspiration of Matthew. It is to impeach the integrity of the Gospel narrative. Such denial is modernism—rank infidelity" (June 3, 1971).

Roberts made some effort to silence his critics by suggesting that the prophecy also had a secondary fulfillment in the birth of Jesus—besides its immediate partial application to the events of the eighth century B.C.—but it was too little too late as the onslaught continued (*Firm Foundation*, August 17, 1971). Alan Highers contended that only "bad exegesis" would lead any Bible-believer or minister of the Gospel to conclude anything else than that Isaiah 7:14 was "a direct Messianic prophecy" (*Spiritual Sword*, October, 1971), and Guy Woods saw it as a result of the "long draughts from the wells of denominational theology" by Chris-

tian scholars which had "bemuddled their minds and beclouded their vision" (*Gospel Advocate*, February 22, 1973). In accelerated rhetoric, Woods concluded that such views were in violation of the Restoration heritage and the principles for which Christian education had been established:

There are those among us, in ever increasing numbers, who are being influenced by liberal and modernistic theologians to deny the Messianic character of Isaiah 7:14. . . . Men have no right to teach error who are employed to teach the truth. . . . If they cannot conscientiously teach that which they accepted employment to teach, they ought to quit—not corrupt unsuspecting children of Christian parents, who do not learn until too late that their offspring have been offered up on the altars of liberalism and permissiveness.

Alternative Interpretations . . .

It is not to be denied that the Messianic interpretation has had a long tradition among conservative scholars, including Franz Delitzsch, James Orr, J.G. Machen, and Edward Young. It was also held by J.W. McGarvey, whose commentaries on the Gospels have been widely used in the Restoration movement. What must be questioned is that this has been the *only* interpretation advocated within conservative ranks or the Restoration movement itself. Many conservatives have followed the second century Jew Trypho in finding the fulfillment of the passage in the birth of Hezekiah by the wife of Ahaz. Others have viewed it as referring to Mahershalahashbaz, the child of Isaiah and his prophetess wife, since his birth immediately follows the promise of the child Immanuel (8:1-4). Albert Barnes, Milton S. Terry, Arthur W. Evans ("Immanuel," *ISBE*), Gleason Archer, and most recently, Herbert M. Wolf of Wheaton College, have been advocates of this interpretation, while John Broadus and William S. LaSor prefer to leave the child and his mother anonymous but contemporaneous with the prophet. These names alone should indicate that the non-Messianic

interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 has been a respectable position among conservatives for centuries and is not to be attributed to the influence of recent theological developments.

More important for the descendants of the Restoration movement is the interpretation by Alexander Campbell. Since to my knowledge Campbell's view has never been cited in a discussion of the passage (either because it is unknown or ignored by the advocates of the Messianic interpretation), a full description of it may be appreciated by those who find his writings virtually inaccessible.

In two "Essays on the Style of the Living Oracles" (*Millennial Harbinger*, Vol. V, 1834, pp. 198-204; 270-273), Campbell appealed for the Scriptures to be understood according to the "peculiar idiom, and mode of thinking" of the original authors. He illustrated his hermeneutical principle by taking up the phrase that has played such an important part in the recent controversy: "this took place to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet." Campbell maintained that the phrase had two meanings: (1) a strict and literal significance and (2) a looser accommodated or adjusted sense. The primary meaning was predictive, but in the N.T. it also had a secondary sense in which the phrase meant no more than "an event similar to that described by the Prophet."

As an example of this secondary sense, he discussed a number of Matthew's Old Testament citations which included the phrase: 2:15 (Hos. 11:1), 2:17 (Jer. 31:15), 13:13 (Isa. 6:9), 13:34 (Ps. 78:2), 15:7 (Isa. 29:13), and finally 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14, where he argued that Matthew found the words only "remarkably agreeable to the miraculous birth of Jesus, and not as prophecy of his birth." They were "no more than an *accommodation* of the Prophet's words to the case in hand." Campbell was, of course, not rejecting predictive prophecy, but merely suggesting that the fulfillment phrase was not

an automatic guarantee that such was the case. Only the original context of the passage could determine this, as the term "fulfill" (*pleroun*) must be understood according to its usage in Jewish literature (the Talmud and Midrash); not by our presuppositions about its meaning. Campbell believed this was the key to understanding Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14—the passage was not Messianic, but merely an adaptation of the prophet's words to the birth of Jesus. In his view, the "modernist" was the interpreter who projected his own understanding of the fulfillment phrase on the ancient writer:

The difficulty or objection against this interpretation arises wholly from our unacquaintedness with the Jewish phraseology. . . . To understand them, therefore, we are not to judge of the sense and meaning of the Evangelists from the common and ordinary sounds of words among themselves; but we must enter into the Jewish phraseology and see what the Jews meant by such and such expressions and upon what principles *they* reasoned. Their ways of speaking and of quoting, which can be learnt from the Jewish writers only, must be looked into; and how unnatural soever they may seem to us, yet we must be determined by them, and only by them.

A Respectable Position . . .

It may be of little consequence to those who have defended the Messianic interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 that Campbell held a contrary opinion. However, his statements that have been cited should make it obvious that a denial of the Messianic view is neither a departure from the exegesis characteristic of the Restoration pioneers nor an open expression of liberalism, modernism, or infidelity. Moreover, the espousal of the non-Messianic view by a professor of Bible in a Christian college should never be the basis of a charge that he has violated the trust of the parents of his students or the cause of his dismissal from a college. Campbell's interpretation alone is enough to give respectability to any who advocate a fulfillment of the passage in the birth of some child other than

Jesus, and in chronological proximity with the reign of King Ahaz of Judah.

There is, I hope it is clear, not the slightest suggestion in this presentation of Campbell's ideas that they should be determinative for the heirs of the Restoration movement or anyone else. The overshadowing of truth by the aggrandizement of pioneer viewpoints is pure sectarian loyalty. The manner in which Campbell interpreted Isaiah 7:14 is not as important as how the prophecy should *properly* be understood—his position must be evaluated in the light of the best available evidence. Is Campbell correct in observing that the fulfillment phrase of Matthew is not to be understood in the literal predictive sense, but taken to mean only a similarity to a previous event?

Recent study has failed to reveal any parallel to the Matthaean phrase in Jewish literature, but it has confirmed Campbell's suggestion that the *method* of exegesis operative in Matthew was held in common with his Jewish contemporaries. For example, the Jewish sectarians at Qumran who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls use and even alter the O.T. text in order to apply it to imminent events of their own day. The fulfillment formula of Matthew is absent, but the text cited is frequently preceded by the phrase "the interpretation is" (Hebrew, *peshet*). The Hebrew term (*male'*) comparable to the Greek "fulfill" (*pleroun*) used by Matthew appears only in the most literal sense, e.g., the "filling" of the hand. Yet the similarity in their method of exegesis with Matthew has led Krister Stendahl to suggest that the Gospel is using the *peshet* exegetical method (*The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the O.T.*). The original context and meaning are ignored as the passage is pressed into the service of some impending event. In short, the sermon precedes the text rather than emerging from it, in the same spirit of homiletical principles that characterize much of our modern preaching.

However, Robert Horton Gundry (*The Use of the O.T. in St. Matthew's Gospel*) finds a wider practice of this style of exegesis in the rabbinical method of reading and interpreting the O.T. in synagogues. Like Campbell, he finds it practiced in the Jewish Targums (free renderings of the Hebrew text into the Aramaic vernacular) and Midrash (homiletical interpretations). Since Jesus and the early Christian preachers did their preaching in the context of this religious culture, it must be assumed that they operated in the same style of the targumizing rabbis of the synagogues. In the words of Campbell, Matthew was using the O.T. according to the "peculiar idiom, and mode of thinking" characteristic of the synagogue, i.e., as a rhetorical device of literary allusion to illustrate the topic under discussion.

McGarvey and Roberts . . .

This has long been recognized in Matthew's other O.T. quotations, as when he applies Scriptures dealing with the Exodus (Hos. 11:1) and Exile (Jer. 31:15) to incidents related to the early years of Jesus. For example, McGarvey says of the latter passage, "It was the fulfillment, not of a prediction, properly speaking, but of certain words spoken by the prophet . . . the words had originally no reference at all to this event. It is a verbal fulfillment, and not a real fulfillment" (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*). This is precisely what J.W. Roberts argued regarding Isaiah 7:14, yet it would be considered outlandish for anyone to suggest that McGarvey denied the inspiration of Matthew, or was a modernist and an infidel. Why then level such charges at Roberts?

This is not to deny that Matthew's O.T. quotations had apologetic value for his Jewish readers. However, his effectiveness depended upon the exegetical *modus operandi* then current in Jewish circles, not our conceptions of prophecy and fulfillment. He realized, like Paul in his encounter with

Greek philosophers at Athens, that his argumentation must proceed along the lines of his audience in order to possess any apologetic value. Therefore, his defense of Jesus is in the best rabbinical tradition. He is concerned to establish *and illustrate* the truth that in Jesus the activity of God was present.

As for the apologetic intent of the Isaiah 7:14 quotation, the other O.T. passages cited in Matthew in which the fulfillment formula appears leads us to conclude that the decision must be based on the context of the passage and not on the formula itself. Is Isaiah 7:14 a prophecy which found its fulfillment in the natural sequence of events of the eighth century B.C., or is it a prediction of the supernatural origins of the Messiah?

It is usually argued by the advocates of the Messianic view that the language of the prophet demands a miraculous fulfillment—that such is implied in the word "sign" (Hebrew, *'oth*) and the promise that a "virgin" (*'almah*) will conceive. For example, Machen argues that the word sign "naturally leads us to think of some event like the turning back of the sun on Hezekiah's dial, or the phenomena in connection with Gideon's fleece" (*The Virgin Birth of Christ*, pp. 290-291). Machen is usually a cautious scholar, but at this point his argument is based more on intuition than a careful analysis of the term, which is frequently used for natural events that became a "sign" only because they had been predicted (see Ex. 3:12; 1 Sam. 2:34; 10:1-2). In fact, Isaiah himself uses the word in this fashion (37:30), as well as for the names of his children (8:18) and his own walking naked and barefoot for three years (20:3), which may not be considered natural, but are hardly to be categorized as transcending human achievement or miraculous.

In the Jewish letters on ostraca discovered at Lachish and contemporaneous with Jeremiah, the term appears for "fire signals" used to warn of any approaching military threat. We may conclude that there is as

much basis for believing the sign given in Isaiah 7:14 should be similar to those just cited as of a supernatural character.

The Elusive Hebrew Term . . .

The ambiguity of the Matthean fulfillment formula and the absence of any inherent miraculous connotations to the Hebrew word for sign reduces the basis for the Messianic view to the precise meaning of the enigmatic and elusive Hebrew term *'almah*. The word appears only nine times in the O.T. and to my knowledge, no translation consistently renders it "virgin" (not even KJV or ASV). In four of the instances the context provides no evidence of virginity (1 Ch. 15:20; Ps. 46:1; 68:25; Song of S. 1:3), in three others it is a possible meaning (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Song of S. 6:8), and in one instance it is perhaps questionable (Prov. 30:19). It is frequently stated that the word is never used of a married woman, but it would be just as appropriate to say it is used for young girls *about to be* married (Gen. 24:43) or even *about to lose* their virginity (Prov. 30:19). In fact, in the Tariff of Palmyra of A.D. 137, the Aramaic cognate term appears with the meaning "prostitutes." For these reasons, linguists are satisfied that the etymology of the term is devoid of any sexual connotations and simply means "young." This is precisely the way the KJV translated it when it appeared in its masculine form: "stripling" (1 Sam. 17:56) and "young man" (20:22).

Moreover, when the O.T. context demands a clear and precise term for virginity, *'almah* never appears. This fact alone should produce some reticence in those who wish to argue that *'almah* is a clear and unmistakable term for "virgin." For example, before Rebekah was married to Isaac she is described as "a virgin (*bethulah*), whom no man had known" (Gen. 24:16), and it is said of Tamar before she was raped by Amnon, "she was a virgin (*bethulah*)" (2 Sam. 13:2).

In these instances it is the Hebrew word *bethulah* that appears, a word that the KJV translated "virgin" 38 of the 50 times it appears in the O.T. Thus, it would seem certain that if Isaiah wished to unequivocally designate a virgin as the mother of the Immanuel child, he would have used this term (*bethulah*), or even more likely, a qualifying phrase like "who has known no man" (Num. 31:35; Ju. 21:12; cf. Mt. 1:18, 24), but not the obscure and indistinct term *'almah*.

The only possible remnant of a miraculous residue in the passage is the name Immanuel, which Matthew interprets as "God with us." This is possible, but the name is also capable of being rendered "God is with us," since Hebrew regularly omits the overt correspondent of the English verb "to be," with the tense being derived from the context in which the expression or sentence occurs. Indeed, the idea of the presence of God with his people is certainly not foreign to the O.T. (Gen. 26:3; Ex. 3:12; Ju. 6:11; Ps. 23:4), and those who find the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 in the birth of Hezekiah by Ahaz and his wife are not lacking for "proof-texts" either (2 Ki. 18:7; 2 Ch. 32:8). Also, occasionally in the O.T. when a symbolic name is given, the interpretation of the name is provided in an explanatory clause (Gen. 16:11; 17:5; Ruth 1:20). Such a clause is provided by Isaiah in 7:16: "For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." The context reveals that the threat Judah faces is the coalition of the kings of Damascus and Samaria that was present in the time of Ahaz. Why should the birth of the child not also be contemporary with the crisis?

It should also be noted that the focus of the explanatory clause is not the mother but the child, and only then in regard to his growth to maturity which parallels the time involved in the removal of the political threat to Judah (Damascus fell to Assyria in

732 and Israel in 722/1). There is not the slightest hint in Isaiah that this will be accomplished by the child Immanuel himself. He is not the redeemer but only a token of the redemption. The implicit indications of the text are that the birth of the child is firmly anchored to the historical situation described in Isaiah. There is not a shred of evidence in pre-Christian Judaism of the expectation of a virgin birth of the coming Messiah.

The Origin of the Messianic View . . .

Where then did the Messianic interpretation arise? We have already seen that it is venturesome to assume that this is the implication of the fulfillment phrase in Matthew. In my opinion, we must look to the second century A.D. Christian apologist Justin Martyr for the origin of such views. In a discussion with a Jewish rabbi, Justin advanced *in toto* each one of the Messianic arguments just considered (*Dialogue with Trypho*). It should not be forgotten that Justin had a propensity for finding the Messiah in the most unusual and obscure places in the O.T. Typology is not distinguished from predictive prophecy but merges with it. He even found the virgin birth of Jesus in the blessing of Judah by his father Jacob in the phrase "the blood of grapes" (Gen. 49:11), which he suggested was a prediction that the Messiah would be procreated by God's power, not the seed of man! He avoided the contemporary implications of Isaiah 7:14 by interpreting Damascus and Samaria as "parables" of the wise men who visited Jesus and Herod the Great! When his Jewish protagonist responded that learned Jewish opinion felt the Septuagint from which Matthew quoted had misinterpreted the Hebrew *'almah*, the strongest reply that Justin could summon was that the Jews had deleted many of the references to the Messiah in the O.T. Neither the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 (where *'almah* is clearly in the text)

nor the three Greek translations of the O.T. in the time of Justin confirm his contention (Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus all translate *'almah* by *neanis* or "young woman," instead of the *parthenos* or "virgin" of the Septuagint). Yet it would appear that all modern Messianic interpreters of Isaiah 7:14 have been influenced directly or indirectly by the fanciful exegesis of this old apologist who was saturated in classical Greek philosophy and knew little if any Hebrew.

Returning now to Campbell, it should be obvious that he operated with an entirely different hermeneutic principle than Justin, i.e., the Scriptures were to be interpreted *within* the context of Jewish thought, not against it. The value of rabbinical exegesis for an understanding of how the N.T. uses the O.T. has received the commendation of modern interpreters and given support to Campbell's view of Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14. It is unfortunate that his view has been apparently forgotten in the recent controversy. Hopefully, this restatement of his interpretation will help mitigate against the dogmatism that has characterized some of the recent Messianic interpreters.

This is not to deny that other interpretations have inherent difficulties, e.g., Hezekiah is too old to be Immanuel (2 Ki. 16:2; 18:2), and Isaiah's wife has already conceived and could hardly be considered an unmarried woman (7:3). But it should also be apparent that the Messianic interpretation is hardly as indisputable and obvious as we are often led to believe. It would also do those well who oppose new translations to remember Campbell's critical remarks about the KJV and his advice that those who read and use many translations would have a stronger faith than those who read but one. It is not to be forgotten that Matthew himself was using a controversial translation of the Hebrew scriptures when he quoted the Immanuel prophecy. □

The Restoration of Christ

PHILIP ROBERSON

South Korea

In all our efforts to restore the church we read about in the New Testament we seem to have neglected the Christ of the New Testament. I seriously question the authenticity of a restoration plea which renders the church of Christ *Christless*. Such, unfortunately, is the present situation throughout much of the "brotherhood." The preaching and teaching, the Bible classes and gospel meetings, the seminars and workshops, the internal controversies and conflicts—the substance of much of our daily Christian lives—deal predominantly with *Christless* trivia.

If Christ is not in the "restored" New Testament church—there for modern man to see and follow—then it is probable that the "Restoration Movement" has failed miserably. All our concern for being right, for being scriptural, for doing all things "by the Book," for speaking at the right times and keeping silent at the right times—for being the true church—are to no avail if we have not first restored Christ to his proper place among his people. Modern man does not need a First Century Church: he needs rather to experience the presence of Christ in his life—to be able to see him, to feel his presence, to know him and the assurance of salvation through faith in him.

"But what of the church," you demand, "and what about acceptable, scriptural, New Testament worship?" It is precisely here that our failure to restore Christ is most apparent. We have grossly complicated a simple gospel message—the good news of what Christ has done for man. We have perverted it, added to it, and included in it a contrived "plan of salvation" which has much to say

about man's response to the gospel message, but very little about the glorious free gift God made to man in sending his Son to die for hopelessly lost sinners. We know a great deal *about* Christ and his church (or at least we think we do) but very little is ever said of really *knowing Christ* or the beauty of being a part of his body. If ever a people preached and lived a *Christless*, "God-is-dead" religion, it is our brotherhood. Christ is not even a part of our "religious lives," let alone a part of our "daily lives." And there seems to be little concern that there is indeed a difference between our daily and our religious lives! Where *is* Christ today?

Just suppose the Christ of the New Testament was to come to live among modern men. How would he live? Where would he go? How would he worship his God? What would modern man think of him? The life Christ lived in the flesh is clearly depicted in the Four Gospels. That life gives us an insight into the kind of life he would live today. Christ's physical life was overwhelmingly a life of service. Worship and service were one with him: he worshipped God through service to his fellow man. He served God by ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of his fellow men. When he comes to judge mankind, the questions he will ask will be about our service: "Did you feed and clothe the needy? Did you visit the sick and oppressed? Did you demonstrate love for your fellow man? Did you learn the real meaning of self-sacrifice?" If we earnestly desire to follow Jesus today, we must learn to follow the example he left for us as a man. Christ's life was one of love and sacrifice.

The Body of Christ . . .

Our efforts to restore a New Testament church are misdirected. Let us restore Christ—make him a living reality for modern man. This we can do, brethren, by simply becoming the body of Christ. Not a “body of believers,” not just a “group of Christians,” not the “congregation on Main Street,” but the physical body of Christ—his hands and feet, his eyes and ears, his mouthpiece—his *BODY*, brethren.

The body of Christ should be to modern man exactly what the Son of Man was to First Century man. We should be doing the *very* things he did in his bodily life—sharing and caring, loving friends and foes, concerned for the physical as well as the spiritual needs of mankind, reaching out, lending a helping hand, sacrificing, being despised, ridiculed, rejected, hated, persecuted, even *killed*. Modern man needs *Christ*; not the “right church.” He needs *love*, not a comfortable place to “worship.” He needs to experience *salvation*, not conform to “a plan.” Let *others* provide these nonessentials—the Christless trivia. In their place, let us give modern man a picture of the redeemed life *in Christ*. Let us become the body of Christ.

The Cost . . .

“But what of the cost?” you ask. Yes, the cost would be high. But then Christ never promised living for him would be easy—or cheap. But he did promise a reward which would far outweigh what we deserved. And the reward will be a gift, too, not a payment for something earned. What Christ did save: he paid the price. All that is left for us to do is to believe that, because Christ lived and died, we are heirs of salvation in him. By becoming his body, and attempting to live as he lived—worshipping God through our service to our fellow man—our lives really count for Christ. We will *never* earn salvation, but perhaps, *just perhaps*, we will

show our fellow man a glimpse of Christ. Shall we respond as did the rich young man in Matthew 19, who turned his back on the Master because the price was too great? Shall we, like him, conform to a plan, follow the law, and meet the prerequisites, and yet have that deep inner feeling that still “something is lacking” in our lives? Shall we, like him, be unable to let go of self and really let Christ be the Master of our lives? We *must* let go of self, brethren, and really let Christ live in us. We *must* become his body if he is to become a reality for modern man. The cost, unfortunately, will be more than many are willing to pay—money, time, energy, sleepless nights, tears, friends, jobs, homes, families, *even lives*. It was not so much the riches which the young man could not sacrifice; it was self. If he could first have given himself to the Master, the material things would not have mattered. Real Christ-like self-sacrifice, even unto death, is the price which must be paid so that we might share the blessings Christ earned for us through death.

The Gain . . .

Just consider these gains: self-respect, commitment, peace of mind, assurance of salvation, a faith to make things happen—miraculous things, the sheer joy of knowing that, because of my life, others have come to know the Christ of the New Testament. “But what of the church?” you ask again. What of the church? If only we could restore the Christ of the New Testament today, the body of Christ would become the church of Christ we all *really* want. And we would be the kind of people Christ wants us to be, too. Let us look to Jesus. Let us look closely at the life he lived. Let us look at his relationship to his fellow man through service, and his relationship to his Master through the Spirit. Let us look closely, too, at the implications of really becoming the body of Christ in the Twentieth Century. □

Limitations on Autonomy

HOY LEDBETTER

It is not uncommon for contributors to this and similar publications to emphasize autonomy, and I would not deny the propriety of such stress in the right context. But since neither this word nor its Greek counterpart (*autonomos*, self-ruling) appears in the Bible, we must be careful not to ascribe to the church, and especially to the individual, an independence that is without scriptural warrant. There is a liberty in the Lord that must be jealously guarded, but there are also God-given limitations.

It is a fact that we are the sons of God with all the advantages that accrue to this exalted position, but the freedom we have as sons does not mean that we are autonomous in every sphere of life. Our baptism, for instance, is into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19). The prepositional phrase *into the name (eis to onoma)* was a common Hellenistic commercial formula equivalent to *to the account* (over which the name stands). “Through baptism [into the name of someone] the one who is baptized becomes the possession of and comes under the protection of the one whose name he bears; he is under the control of the effective power of the name and the One who bears the name, i.e., he is dedicated to them” (Arndt-Gingrich). This concept of possession by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is consonant with other scriptures which show that we are slaves of the Lord and therefore owe to him our obedience. There is no conflict between this fact and Jesus’ statement, “No longer do I call you slaves . . . but I have called you friends” (Jn. 15:15), since in the preceding verse he defines “friends” in terms of obedience: “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

Or looking at the matter horizontally, Paul’s treatment of the Corinthian problem reveals that a liberty that provokes us to autonomy against others is shown by a lack of love to be only a semblance. If we ask, “Why should my liberty be determined by another man’s scruples?” (1 Cor. 10:29), Paul answers that although his conscience need not be ours, at the same time we must respect his scruples because of the one body to which we both belong. Twice in 1 Corinthians Paul deals with the slogan, “All things are lawful” (1 Cor. 6:12, regarding sexual immorality, and 10:23, regarding food offered to idols), and he answers it with two principles which limit autonomy:

(1) “Not all things are (spiritually) helpful.” Christian freedom is limited by a proper consideration of oneself. This statement focuses on the individual himself and warns that there is no freedom without danger, that Christian liberty does not extend to behavior which is spiritually damaging.

(2) “Not all things build up.” Christian freedom is limited by regard for others. It considers the community and gives priority to what is helpful to it. “‘Knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up” is Paul’s response to those who ignore the spiritual furtherance of their brothers. The problem with tongues provided him with an occasion to point out that the community must be controlled by love, which produces edification. “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church” (14:4) is why he gives preference to prophecy. One who prays in a tongue “may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified” (14:17). The tongues-speakers were not oriented to the community and the individual brother, but to themselves; their behavior

was selfishness rather than service because it was not dictated by love. As was the case in their abuse of the Lord's supper, their autonomy did not permit them to "discern the body" (i.e., the church) and was wrong.

A further illustration from Corinth is 7:4: "For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." A church, like a marriage, cannot survive assertions of autonomy. It is true that we are called to freedom, but "how does this freedom come to realisation in us? The decisive answer is love. It is not in isolation but in life with others that the Christian attains to freedom" (Heinrich Schlier, *TDNT*, II, 500).

Even the demands of self-control (the word is from *egkrateia*, which expresses power or lordship) does not support individual autonomy. Although we must take some steps to avoid being tempted through our lack of self-control (1 Cor. 7:5), at the same time our lives are determined and directed by the command of God, and there is no place in them for the self-mastery of autonomous ethics (cf. Grundmann, *TDNT*). "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things" (1 Cor. 9:25), but the context of this statement hardly encourages meritorious asceticism.

Faith Expressed in Love . . .

On the positive side, the work which the Christian does is not his but God's. Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (Jn. 6:29). Note the singular: there is one work. The works of God and those performed by believers cannot be separated. Paul carries this farther: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6). "Faith working through love" is "faith which is effectively expressed in love." All work is an expression of our faith, which begets love.

If it is not, it is a sin in that we fail to be what we should be. This applies even to so-called secular actions, but the New Testament puts a special emphasis on the community. Paul makes it clear that the work of God is the building up of the community (Rom. 14:19-20), which autonomy was tending to destroy. Good works are the work of God through human hands.

When Paul speaks of his continuing to live as "fruitful labor for me" (Phil. 1:22), he shows that the truly Christian life is that which results in the divine work going forward, since "for to me to live is Christ." There is no thought of individual achievement. A practical application of this is Eph. 4:28: "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need." This direction follows a characteristic Pauline *therefore*: the demand reflects "the new nature, created after the likeness of God." The enemy of such benevolence is inordinate greed, which only the Spirit can overcome. Theft is loveless and selfish defiance of fellowship. The new disposition of love, which effectively expresses faith, rules it out and replaces it with work and service characteristic of the new creation of God.

There is, therefore, as Ethelbert Stauffer (*TDNT*, I, 46) has pointed out, a shift in the Christian's orientation from *I* to *Thou*. Thou becomes the center of his concern. The Good Samaritan was free from restricting love to himself and his compatriots and therefore was able to detect *in his heart* the distress of the robbers' victim, while the Jewish notables had an inadequate (i.e., restricted) love. The priest and Levite practiced an autonomy that has no place in Christian ethics.

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18) shows how angry God is when the forgiven fail to forgive. The same point is made in Rom. 2, where Paul criticizes those

who pass judgment on others (v. 1) and then asks, "Do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (v. 4). These verses show that despising God's love and a lack of love for one's brother as a response to the gospel are basically one and the same. God's wrath is directed against lovelessness as a reply to his love and mercy as a reply to his mercy.

The autonomous man betrays an inadequate sense of forgiveness. Those who know they are forgiven are able to forgive; they can leave everything and love God and men with a passionate devotion. Jesus said of the woman who washed his feet with her tears: "The great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. Whoever has been forgiven little, however, shows only a little love."

Here is the difference between the joyful service of the real saint and the grudging servitude of the independent. It is all a matter of heart. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mt. 11:29). "Learn from me" here means that we should observe him (like the fig tree in another connection) as an illustration of the truth required. He can show us how to be gentle and lowly, for he is such "in heart." He found his freedom in assenting (in the heart) to God's way for him. His yoke is easy when our service is his service. In the context of this humility *in heart* Peter said, "You that are younger be subject to the elders," and Paul said, "Count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Obsession with autonomy is symptomatic of serious heart trouble. If the body is to be one, and if the Lord's work is to be done, we must be treated by the Great Physician who specializes in cardiology. □

THE WORTHY WOMAN

1974 Version of Proverbs 31

A worthy woman who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.
Her whole trust is in the Lord Jesus,
and her faith is not lacking.

She does good to all, not evil,
all the days of her life.
She seeks to be a ray of light
to a world lost in darkness.
She has learned from her mother's teaching
to shop wisely at the market.

She rises early in the morning
and prepares breakfast for her family.

Having studied and prepared herself in her youth,
she has a job to supplement the family income.
She goes about her work with enthusiasm
and organizes her schedule with efficiency.
She gives her employer an honest day's work
and works at home many hours into the night.

She is a central figure in her household
and holds much responsibility in her job also.
She welcomes the opportunity to serve the needy
so that Jesus might be seen in her.

She is afraid of Satan for her household
and has warned them how he walks about seeking to devour.
She makes herself fruitful in the knowledge of the
Lord Jesus Christ,
and her covering is the whole armor of God.

Her husband is known to be a Christian
among those with whom he conducts his business.

Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and love and kindness are on her tongue.

She is busy with the needs of her family and others
and has no time for idleness.
Her children rise up to say, "I love you,"
and her husband praises her also, saying,
"Many women are worthy,
but you are the one I love and respect.
Charm is but a delusion, and beauty is fleeting,
but a woman who loves God shall be honored."

May the fruit of her life be Christian children
who rejoice in the Lord and praise Him always.

—WANDA HATCHER

Doubting Thomas

Re: Thomas Lane's "The Significance of Jesus' Baptism" in the June '74 issue of *Integrity*: I must take issue with his statement that "we have examined a traditional argument and found it wanting." The only things I have found wanting is Mr. Lane's reasoning, his assumption of the authority to put his own words in place of Christ's, and his knowledge of God's Word relative to baptism.

E.g., Lane's statement that "John's baptism was a powerless symbol that presaged Christian baptism. . . ." etc. Just how much of a powerless symbol was John's baptism? Mark 1:4 states, "And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (New International).

Now John was not preaching Christ's baptism—obviously, because at this point Christ didn't even have one. So he had to be, and was, preaching John's baptism: *a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*. In addition, Luke records that many who came to him for baptism asked specifically what changes to make in order to conform to God's will. Sound *powerless* to you? Certainly not to this reader.

A brief personal note to Mr. Lane: My friend, study the Scriptures—not to the intent of amplifying them with imagination, private interpretation or distortion; nor to the intent of developing insights that may be more precisely characterized as oversights or undersights. But study the Scriptures for the simple message of salvation in Jesus Christ and guidance for daily life so wonderfully and marvelously provided by God for all generations through His book.

Ronan, Montana

LOWELL J. LUND

I strongly object to the significance that Thomas Lane applies to baptism in his article "The Significance of Jesus' Baptism" in the June issue. My concern is not with the significance of baptism to Jesus but that salvation is attributed to baptism.

The mere thought that baptism plays a part in salvation is a mockery to the beautiful Grace of God. While I realize that this idea of baptismal regeneration has been the tradition of Campbellism for quite some time it is about time that somebody spoke up.

First of all, there was no difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism. We cannot prove it by the scriptures and truthfully there is no reason why they should be different. The fact that the Holy Spirit was not yet given or that Jesus was alive during the time that John baptized is no reason to make a distinction. When one was baptized as a sign of his repentance before Jesus died the believer was told that he was to believe on the one who was to come after him, i.e. he should believe on Jesus. This is exactly what Paul is telling the Ephesians. The reason for their being baptized again was because of their imperfect conversion. It's quite possible that Apollos, with his limited understanding (Acts 18:24-26) while at Ephesus, or others of similar understanding were instrumental in converting the Ephesians to John rather than Jesus. So Paul explains the true Gospel of Jesus. "When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Do we really believe that all those converted by John, by the seventy that were sent by Jesus to preach the Good News, plus those converted by the 12 apostles, were re-baptized after the death of Jesus?

Water baptism contains absolutely no power whatsoever in conversion, whether it be before or after the death of Jesus. The "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5 is not water baptism but baptism or washing by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it would be helpful to read the beginning of verse 5, which says that regeneration or salvation does *not* come "by works of righteousness, which we have done" and baptism is definitely a "work of righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Brother Lane states that one can be "trapped by truth." He should be aware that one can be trapped by that which is false. Often, this is the case when one follows along with tradition. Of course, he is not alone in holding to the teachings of men. Even those

Churches of Christ that feel they are "free" still find themselves victims of this satanic trap. I strongly urge all to check for themselves, and not just those writings from those of the restoration movement. Let us not confuse the symbolism of baptism with the reality of that great sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Let us realize that no ceremonial act can take the place of what Jesus has done for us. To attribute salvation, in any sense, to baptism is to rob Jesus of his glory in having given full submission to the father and to place a secondary importance on that great sacrifice that could be accomplished only by Jesus.

New Orleans, Louisiana W. CARL LIVAUDAIS

Sympathetic Sentiments

Thank you so much for your journal. It is indeed a ray of sunlight into a picture coated with a layer of the dust of division and of bondage. Praise God for the freedom we have in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thank you for proclaiming that freedom and providing a format for the discussion of opinions.

Victoria, Texas

SUE McDONALD

We send with our prayers our small gift for your work of publishing articles of interest and stimulation. Though I find considerable to "wonder at" and disagree with, I believe you are still with *Integrity* looking at Scripture and as the word of God. I hope you keep to that standard forever.

Cincinnati, Ohio

GRAYSON H. ENSIGN

Even though I am only a recent subscriber to your magazine I have found myself saying "amen" to your articles more than once! I really agree that we in a fundamental church need to take a closer look at many of our traditions, before we start throwing stones at the "denominations." I rejoice that concerned Christians like yourselves speak out boldly, and yet with real *agape*, even if it doesn't "go down" with most conservative Restoration Christians.

Kelowna, British Columbia

NORMAN HOPE

May God grace you with His charisms so that you can be pipelines for His blessings.

I would like to register my vote on the side of balanced journalism. Young people don't consider monologues as being communication. I think the modern evangelism must take the form of a dialogue, which values another person's point of view

and responds to it. Half of loving people is listening to them, allowing them to contribute of themselves.

Cincinnati, Ohio

JIM WARNER

Christian Discipline

Thanks be to God we received the April issue just when we needed it most. Mr. Ledbetter's article on Christian Discipline was very helpful to us as we are deeply involved in disfellowshipping of some dear friends. It certainly pointed out some interesting concepts on the New Testament use of disfellowshipping. I'm afraid as new Christians we were being fed only one side of the issue. Now we look forward to the next installment of "open-minded" Christianity.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

BETTY J. KARLESKI

Another Christian's Viewpoint

In response to "A Christian's Viewpoint" [January; foreign readers receive their copies very late]: Most of what Bro. Abernathy had to share strikes a responsive chord in my heart, but a statement or two strike discord, for they do not sound at all like what I read in the Word of God. For example he wrote, "Who is to say that the mini-skirt or bikini is less moral than was the mid-calf skirt fifty years ago, when a woman who even exposed her ankle was considered indecent?" Such a statement sounds ridiculous to me for at least three reasons.

(1) It is self contradictory. A mid-calf skirt doesn't even reach a woman's ankles, so the era when a woman was considered indecent to even expose her ankles was not the era of the mid-calf skirt. (2) His reasoning is what I call argument by extremes. One does not reach moderation by arguing in extremes, yet the Word of God tells us, "Let your moderation be made known unto all men" and exhorts us to "be temperate in all things." (3) The apostles admonished women to adorn themselves in modest apparel, which demands the necessary inference that there is such a thing as immodest apparel. If a bikini can be considered modest apparel (no less moral than a mid-calf skirt), what kind of apparel would be considered immodest? The only thing left after the bikini in the direction of immodesty is nudity, but then you have left the realm of apparel without ever finding anything that is immodest apparel. Ridiculous? It's almost embarrassing. Somehow I just can't feature one of the apostles saying what Bro. Abernathy said (even if he lived in the 20th century).

Gechingen, West Germany

RICK DEIGHTON