

Present Truth

A magazine dedicated
to the restoration
of New Testament Christianity
in this generation

Sola Gratia Solely by Grace
Solo Christo Solely by Christ
Sola Fide Solely by Faith

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Editorial—page 3

**Church Unity and the Reformation
Teaching of Justification—page 5**

It Is Finished—page 13

The Ideal Government—page 15

On the Religious Front—page 17

Present Truth

Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the great Reformation truth of *justification by faith* in this time when that truth is being threatened by humanism, Pentecostalism and ecumenism.

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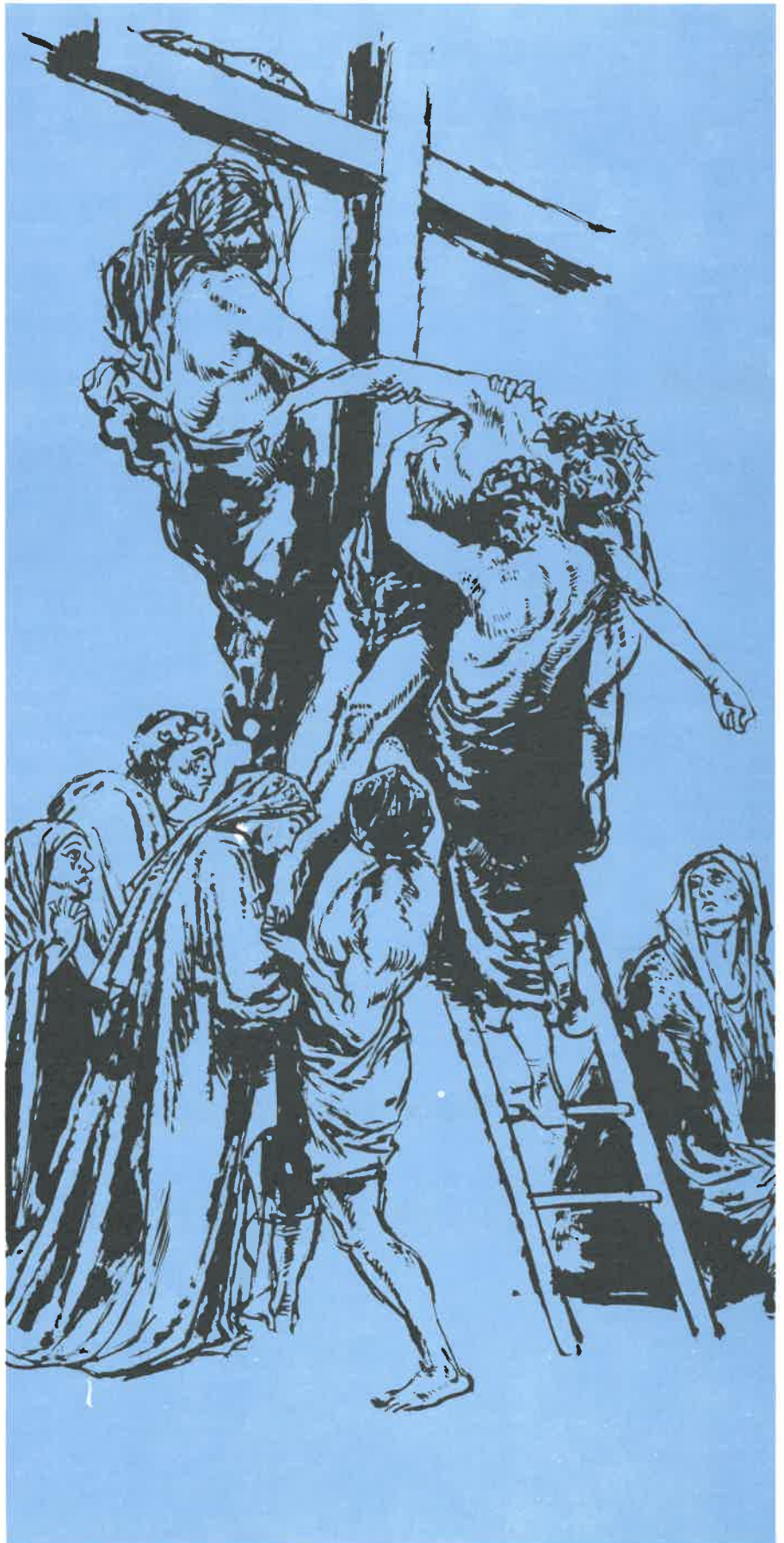
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The Christ of History and the Christ of Experience

As we read the reports about the Jesus Revolution and the rapid spread of the charismatic movement in general, it seems that the world is suddenly "turning on to Jesus." The most outstanding characteristic of this development is the testimonials from those who are experiencing Jesus in their lives. They proclaim the Christ of their experience. To them, Jesus seems real — so real that they can witness to it by remarkable experiences in their own lives. The Christ of experience has, therefore, become the great evangelistic point of the Jesus Revolution. Many contend that this Jesus is real and tangible, while the Christ of history is somewhat far off, impersonal and unreal.

In proportion as the Jesus Revolution has exalted the Christ of experience, it has put the Christ of history very definitely in the background. But in doing this, the Jesus Revolution is in real danger of putting Christianity into the background.

Before we get confused with any sentimental or mystic religious experience, let us consider that **Christianity is the only truly historical religion.** It proclaims a salvation that is based on objective, historical events — events that are entirely outside of a man's personal experience. Every other religion bases its "salvation" on the worshiper's own mystic experience. Thus "salvation" becomes a matter of one's own personal achievement, i.e., the achievement of a subjective experience. It does not matter if the adherent of the religion claims that salvation is by grace, for grace is made to be an experience. And to be sure of salvation, he has to look into his own experience — a very disquieting and uncertain thing at best. The Christ of experience is not so real after all. In fact, he can disappear in the fog of human feelings and impressions, and the worshiper can easily be left the empty idol of his own

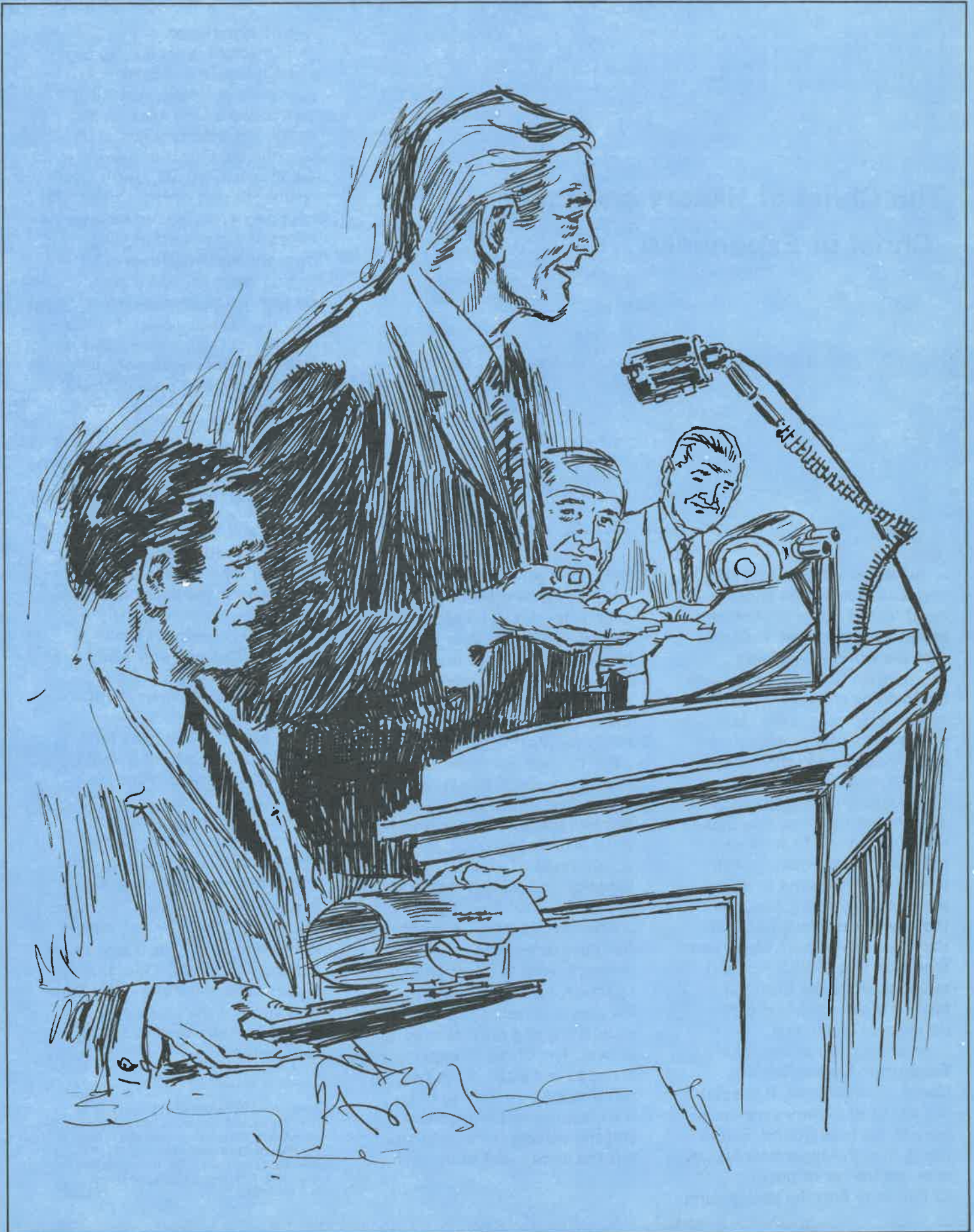
mystic experience.

The gospel is good news because it is sure and certain. It proclaims objective, historical events (see 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Salvation has been brought to us by concrete events in history — the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ. Christ has conquered. He has secured salvation for poor, lost, sinful men. By His experience in tasting death for every man, He justifies all who believe (Isa. 53:11; Heb. 2:9). It is His experience (a historical reality) that is of supreme importance. This is to be the focus of the Christian's thinking, faith and witness. Faith must rest on something entirely outside of a man's experience, i.e., the Christ of history.

Of course, this Christ of history still lives because there has been a resurrection. As men put their faith in what He has done for them and what He is to them, He lives in their hearts. Experience of the indwelling Christ springs from faith in the "outside" Christ. Paul could say "Christ liveth in me" simply because he could add, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

God is known only in Christ crucified. The cross is the revelation of God. Any attempt to know God or to experience Him outside of the cross is idolatry. The only way to test the validity of a "the Christ of experience" is to ask, "Was this religious experience gained by the revelation of the cross, or is it something unrelated to the historic gospel?"

Reprints of "The Christ of History and the Christ of Experience" are available on request. Write to either of the following *Present Truth* addresses. U.S.A.: P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028. Australia: P.O. Box 333, Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485.



Church Unity and the Reformation Teaching of Justification

A Forum on Ecumenism

Editorial Note: We believe that our readers will be interested in the following transcript of a forum on ecumenism which was recently conducted in Brisbane, Australia. The significant topic of church unity and the Reformation teaching of justification was discussed by a panel of speakers from the U.S.A., New Zealand and Australia. The panel consisted of the chairman, a teacher from New Zealand (Mr. John Slade), a doctor from the U.S.A. (Jack Zwemer), a Lutheran clergyman (Pastor H.P.V. Renner), and the editor and his brother (Robert and John Brinsmead), who are Australians.

The Chairman

This evening the subject is that of church unity. Is the current church-unity movement compatible with the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith? In our forum tonight we have a guest speaker from the Lutheran Church, Pastor H. P. V. Renner. Pastor Renner, how do you regard the ecumenical movement?

Pastor Renner

As everyone knows, there is a very profound yearning for to-

getherness among Christians today. I believe that this is more than a sentimental desire to be in fellowship with each other. I think it is more than a contagion that has spread across the world — more than a reaction to the scandal and to the agony of dividedness. I think it is the fruit of an eagerness to see the will of the Lord done among us. I believe it is connected with a desperate endeavor to reach the end of the suffering and the frustration that sin and separation have caused in our world and in Christendom in particular. And I think, too, it is possible to see in this yearning for togetherness, an anxiety about the survival of Christianity.

So the cry is for union among churches. We note that even the word "ecumenism," which denominations once used quite proudly to describe the extent of their churches' world-wide influence, has now come to mean a kind of movement toward interdenominational union among churches which had hitherto been separate. The cry, "In Jesus Christ, we are all one; let us forget our differences and join in a happy fellowship!" has attracted quite a large and enthusiastic

chorus. But in this confluence of denominations, I think most of you know that some of us Lutherans have been notoriously slow-footed and quite cautious. And one might justifiably ask, "Why?"

It is not that we want to cling jealously to our identity. You know that Luther hated the term "Lutheran." Neither do we necessarily want to preserve that identity. It is not that we have forgotten the high-priestly prayer of our Lord either. And it is not that we feel holier and more faithful to the truth than others. It is rather that in this haste toward, and expression of, the oneness in Christ Jesus, well-meaning people have not come seriously to terms with the questions: "What is the nature of this Jesus Christ in whom oneness is to be found?" and, "What is the nature of the oneness which Jesus Christ establishes?"

Sentiment and brotherly love are essential ingredients belonging to the atmosphere of any confluence of Christians, but we contend that they can never be the basis for union, i.e., union in Jesus Christ. Neither can the basis be the highly subjective experiences



The unity of the church lies in Him who is its Head

of those whose association with the faith is accompanied by ecstasies, signs or speaking in tongues, or manifestations of sanctity and piety in any form. The unity of the church, we believe, does not lie in such phenomena, much of which is present anyway in non-Christian religions and associations.

The unity of the church lies in Him who is its Head. It lies in the work of reconciliation by which He gathered men out of their estrangement from God, out of the darkness of sin and death, and, through the operations of His Holy Spirit, made them sons of God — those who are justified by faith in Him. It is amazing, and I believe quite distressing, with what facility people are able to name the name of Jesus Christ and to confess allegiance to Him, and at the same time remold and reshape His nature in their own reconstructed ideas of Him so that His nature is disfigured into an acceptable and credible form. Only the Jesus Christ of Biblical revelation can be the Head of the church. A Jesus who is an example only, a

heroic moral reformer, or a wise pundit, or a man vested with divinity, or embodying in a symbolic way the character of the Deity — a Jesus who is anything less than the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved — is not the Jesus of the sacred Scriptures. And any group of people giving service to such an idea, such a construction which bears the name of Jesus Christ, or to such a caricature of Him, cannot, we believe, be in communion with those who know and confess Him as God incarnate, virgin born, human and divine, crucified, bodily risen, King of Kings, destined to return personally to judge the living and the dead. The two groups thus described are reaching out to two entirely different directions; and though they may even kneel side by side in a church, in a building, they are really worlds apart.

The Fundamentals of Christian Faith

Crucial in our search for the one Lord in whom oneness is to be found, is a humble, earnest and worshipful return to the sacred

Scriptures in which this Lord is revealed to us. And crucial also is an acknowledgment and an acceptance of everything those sacred Scriptures make known about Him for our salvation.

At the heart of all that the sacred Scriptures make known about Jesus Christ, is the truth that He is in word and in deed the God of our salvation, who has made complete atonement for our sins, so that by faith in Him we are declared just in the sight of God. Again let me stress that it is a simple matter to give lip service to such a summary statement as, "He who by faith is righteous shall live," and to declare that justification by faith is the basis of Christian unity. But if, as the history of theology has shown, by justification is meant both acquittal before the bar of a righteous God, and the infused grace of sanctification or the bestowal of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, we know that there is an essential rift with those who hold that justification is nothing more, nothing less than the declaration of God that man is righteous in spite of his continuing state of sinfulness (in spite of his charismatic

impoverishment, if that is what some people emphasize). Again, if by faith is meant the capacity in natural man to accept what God offers in Christ Jesus, we know that there is an essential rift with those who hold that faith cannot be a human capacity. So entire is man's fall into sin that faith itself must be a gift of God.

Under the same caption, "Justification by Faith," diametrically opposed theologies can be accommodated. It is quite possible to have togetherness in such circumstances, but it is not possible, we contend, to have oneness in Jesus Christ in such circumstances. Either we would say, "Christ alone is our salvation (as we sing in the hymn), and we contribute nothing to our salvation"; or, "Christ is not alone our salvation, and we have a part to contribute." To confess Him as Saviour and Lord, in our opinion, does not mean both points of view. To accommodate both points of view is to divide the house against itself, in which state the best that can be hoped for is not church union, but a kind of agglomerate separateness.

What is desperately needed for true church union is the return to the sacred Scriptures themselves, where the gospel, that great basis for union, is presented to us faithfully by the Holy Spirit through His chosen servants. True unity will come when we allow the gospel to call us, with unimpeded clarity, out of our alienation from God, across the barrier of sin, into an unconditional faith in Jesus Christ. When we allow that to happen, I believe we will understand what true union really is. Only the unadulterated gospel of God in all its theological depth and all its simplicity (and not human negotiations, let alone human circumlocutions, amendments, compromises and appendages to this gospel) can gather divided man into God's communion of saints.

The Chairman

Thank you very much, Pastor Renner. We are deeply appreciative of those stimulating remarks. Friends, dialogue with Rome seems to be the fashion today. I have a news item here from *Christianity Today* of December 3, 1971, page 45, under the heading, "Pentecostals to Rome":

"Pentecostal theologians — in Rome — for official dialogue with Catholics? Yes, this month. A team, representing the classical as well as neo-Pentecostal ends of the movement, will meet there, according to an announcement made at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, which convened in Des Moines following the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America . . .

"Killian McDonald, Catholic theologian and Benedictine monk, broke the news to the thirty-five members present. 'This has greater meaning for the Secretariat in Rome than dialogue with Lutherans, Presbyterians, or Methodists,' he urged. 'And it would be embarrassing and narrow, to say the least, if you Pentecostals should remain silent, waiting for Rome to announce this historic event.'

"But Pentecostals, especially their educators and theologians, have come a long way since the days when the pope was attacked as anti-Christ in Luther-style. No negative ripple followed. . ."

Religious boundary lines are becoming obsolete. Denominational groupings are becoming irrelevant. The Bible says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." 2 Peter 1:19. What light does prophecy throw on the question of union with Rome? John Brinsmead, would you answer this question for us?

John Brinsmead

If charity would cause us to forget or set aside what is written in Revelation 17, we are blinded by false charity. The prophecy of Revelation 17 presents a description of a certain church. It is so plain that he who runs may read it.

In prophetic symbolism, a woman represents a church (Jer. 6:2; 2 Cor. 11:2). A pure woman represents a pure church, as presented in Revelation 12. A corrupt woman represents a corrupt church, as in Revelation 17. Now let us examine the identifying characteristics of this corrupt church brought to view in the prophecy of Revelation 17:

1. She is a corrupt Church.

" . . . the great whore . . . " Verse 1. " . . . with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." Verse 2. " . . . the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Verse 5.

2. She is a wealthy church.

" . . . decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand . . . " Verse 4.

3. She is a mother church.

" . . . Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother . . . " Verse 5.

4. She is a persecuting church.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Verse 6. Historians tell us that millions were put to death by the ecclesiastical system which ruled during the Dark Ages and medieval period.

5. She is a powerful church.

" . . . which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Verse 18.

6. She is a politically affiliated church. " . . . with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." Verse 2.

7. She is the purple and scarlet church. “. . . arrayed in purple and scarlet colour.” Verse 4.

8. She is a world-wide church. “. . . the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” Verse 1. “The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Verse 15.

9. She is the seven-hilled city church. “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” Verse 9. “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Verse 18.

It is not necessary for me to name this wealthy, world-wide, persecuting “mother” who has ruled the world from the famous seven-hilled city. The Reformers had no difficulty identifying this great antichrist of Bible prophecy. God has left this vital information on record so that we need not be in the dark about the present church-unity movement. And as the book of Revelation repeatedly says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear. . . .”

The Chairman

Is the church-unity movement in Protestantism a sign of spiritual bankruptcy? We will now hear from Dr. Jack Zwemer.

Dr. Zwemer

I will state my thesis at the outset. It is this: The Protestant churches are turning to Pentecostalism and toward union with Rome because their alliance with secular and scientific humanism has failed.

We can explain this only if we look back into history to the close of the Middle Ages. It marked the end of a thousand years of human stagnation and corruption. The Dark Ages were the inevitable fruition of a system wherein men tried to find fulfillment through a mystical, spiritual experience.

At the close of the Middle Ages, two great movements arose. On the one hand, there was the Reformation, which recovered that Pauline gospel which declares that human fulfillment is found only in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there was the Renaissance — a movement to recover the ancient classical Greek ideal of fulfillment in this life through the reason, the rational processes, the ingenuity of men, through the effort of men, and through the exploitation by man of the resources around him, both human and material. The Renaissance was that great rebirth of classical learning which began in the fourteenth century and made tremendous creative contributions to civilization — in literature, the languages, the arts, in architecture, in medicine and science.

The Renaissance made a most significant contribution to the Protestant Reformation. With the Renaissance there came a breath of tolerance and a freedom of inquiry which could only promote the study of the Holy Scriptures. The Renaissance contributed outstanding Christian scholars like Wycliffe (earlier), Erasmus and Melancthon (later). The Renaissance brought the recovery of the ancient Biblical languages — Hebrew and Greek. It brought to the Reformers the original text of Scripture in Greek and Hebrew. In the Guttenberg invention of moveable type, it gave to the Reformation that engine for the

distribution of the Word of God.

So it is understandable that the humanistic revolution known as the Renaissance was most attractive to the Reformers and to those who succeeded them. Indeed, it was not long before this Renaissance philosophy was introduced into the very halls of learning in the Protestant universities. History records that even Luther himself acquiesced to the request of Melancthon that the philosophy of Aristotle be taught at Wittenberg.

The contribution of the Renaissance in human civilization has been very great. It brought an age of enlightenment to the earth. It gave birth to the industrial revolution and the golden age of biology and medicine, with all their benefits to men. And this century has brought to us an unparalleled development in technology and science, directly attributable to the thrust of the Renaissance.

The Protestant nations have been the leading nations to foster the spirit of the Renaissance. I think of my own native country, America, which in this century has witnessed the outburst of the computer age, cybernetics, the atomic age and the space age. It is an age that has come to fruition in this last decade. It found its personal symbolism in the mystique of a young and dynamic President, John F. Kennedy, who proclaimed a new frontier for mankind—that man would not only ex-

plore this earth, but would explore outer space and make his thrust to the moon. That hope has been fulfilled. Man has reached the moon. He has explored the lunar crust, and he has found that it is dead. Returning to earth, he finds that the mystique of the age is also dead. All his triumphs are turning to ashes. He finds that his own earth is defiled. His own cities are polluted. All human classes are alienated. His very homes are divided, and his children debauched. And all that he sought through the Renaissance (to unite men and to usher in the golden, millennial age) has ended only in division of men.

So the Renaissance itself is dead. The disillusionment with secular and scientific idealism has created a tremendous vacuum. Modern man has not found fulfillment in brilliant human progress. The young and the old are dropping out. They are going hippie, they are going Pentecostal, they are going into the Jesus Revolution. Protestantism, which has been more enamored with the Renaissance than with the Reformation, is greatly affected. Her alliance with humanism has failed. She now seeks alliance with her old foe — the Roman Catholic Church.

The Chairman

Where is Protestantism going to go from here? What is the road ahead? Mr. Robert Brinsmead.

Robert Brinsmead

Modern man does not really know too much about the real distinction between Protestantism and Catholicism. The average Catholic and the average Protestant have very little insight into the es-

sential difference between the two streams of thought. That a person calls himself a Protestant may not mean very much today. A few years ago, one of the world's leading German theologians took a chair among the theological faculty in one of the leading Protestant universities in the United States. He observed that the real doctrinal insights of the Reformers were unknown in that great Protestant institution. If this state of things exists in the halls of learning, what might be expected among the common people?

There is a reason why Protestants in general have little knowledge about the great insights of the Reformers. Our age has been a very secular, scientific and materialistic one; and the Protestant churches have been affected by the spirit of the age. In fact, Protestant societies have been the most progressive, the most scientific and the most materialistic. In short, they have been most deeply affected by the spirit of the Renaissance. Protestant youth have been educated by the spirit of humanism far more than by the spirit of the Reformation.

In the last few years, there have been some profound changes taking place. Until recently, the scientist was like the high priest of society. But not any more. There has been a real reaction against the illusion of scientific infallibility. Secular and scientific progress has not brought man his much-sought-after fulfillment. The most developed societies are the most affected by the feeling of emptiness that comes through failure to realize ful-

fillment. Take developments in the United States as an example. Young people from high-class homes are turning to hippie-type movements. Some of the oldsters say with disgust, "They live in the wealthiest nation on earth, yet they are not satisfied." Those who criticize the hippies may sometimes be more foolish than the hippies, for they think that man can live by bread alone — or automobiles, television and the affluence of suburban materialism.

Modern man has been drunk with the dream of secular and scientific idealism. He has aspired to create an ideal environment and to find his fulfillment in human progress. There has been a rude awakening. The most developed societies are foremost in discovering that man cannot find fulfillment and satisfaction in materialistic achievement. In the wake of the great disillusionment, there is a great spiritual vacuum. Multitudes are now bent on finding satisfaction in a spiritual experience. Hence we are confronted with the phenomena of neo-Pentecostalism and the Jesus Revolution.

Those involved in the Jesus Revolution are often young people who have unsuccessfully tried to find fulfillment in the things of the flesh — in drugs and in sex. They have not changed their aim. They have only changed their method. Now they are desperately trying to find fulfillment and satisfaction in spiritual experience. This pronounced trend toward religious experientialism is having a tremendous impact in the world. Neo-Pentecostalism is jumping the denominational barriers and making many of the old religious groupings obsolete.

Now the crucial point which I wish to make is this: **This great outburst of religious experientialism (which is especially manifested in neo-Pentecostalism and the Jesus Revolution) which is directed toward finding satisfaction in a spiritual experience, is in harmony with the classical thought of the medieval church. In short, this religious trend definitely belongs to the Roman**

Catholic stream of thought. I will now direct my remarks to explain this central thesis.

Christian versus Greek Philosophy

The Greeks were the greatest idealists the world has ever known. They were committed to the vision of man finding fulfillment and satisfaction by means of his own self-development. Although this ideal gave promise in the classical and golden age of Greece, the failure of the Greek ideal was never more apparent than it was in that morally and spiritually bankrupt civilization at the time Christ was born.

The Christian message turned the Greek world upside down. In the first place, it declares that fallen, sinful man cannot find fulfillment and satisfaction in his own experience. But in the place of man's failure, it brings, in the gospel, a message of faith and hope. Man does not have to seek satisfaction in his own work or in his own experience. By faith he may find his satisfaction in God's work in Jesus Christ and in the saving experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of faith declares that our fulfillment is found in Jesus Christ, the one perfect, ideal Man (Col. 2:10, N.E.B.). Christ is our righteousness, Christ is our life, and all that He has done and all that He is in His perfect humanity are ours by faith. The gospel brings also a message of hope, for instead of expecting life to be fulfilled within the historical process, the believer looks to the *Parousia*—the second appearing of Christ—when all that he now possesses only by faith will be realized by visible reality.

Yet this great truth of righteousness by faith was lost through the development of Romanism. The fathers of the early church were educated in Greek philosophy. They tried to harmonize the learning of

Greece and the truth of the gospel. They took the Greek ideal—human fulfillment and satisfaction—and tried to achieve it by the Christian means—grace. This "marriage" was the foundation of the Catholic system. Men became absorbed in the pursuit of finding satisfaction in a spiritual experience. **Their own spiritual experience became the primary object of their concern.** To understand this is to understand the heart of Roman Catholicism.

Thus the church lost the great Pauline truth of justification by faith in God's work in Christ. It finally sought justification by God's work in its own experience. Absorbed in subjective experientialism, the church lost the hope of the *Parousia*—the return of Christ. This preoccupation with trying to achieve fulfillment through one's own spiritual experience, led to the stagnation of the Dark Ages.

Then came the Reformation, which was a revival of the faith and hope of the New Testament. The Reformation insight was embodied in its great doctrine of justification by faith. Briefly, what did this doctrine mean to the Reformers?

Because of their understanding of "original sin" (the sinful nature of all men), the Reformers clearly saw that life could not be fulfilled within the historical process. They saw that, with or without grace, no man could find fulfillment and satisfaction in his own experience. This discovery was the foundation of the Reformation. In this context, their message of justification meant this: Instead of looking inward to his experience, the believer

looks outward to Christ's experience for him; rather than looking inward to his own work or even to God's work in him, the believer looks outward to God's work in Jesus Christ. The righteousness which makes a believer acceptable in the sight of God, said the Reformers, is not some quality that God pours into the soul, but it is the personal righteousness of Jesus, which remains inherent in Christ and resides only in heaven. With this rebirth of the truth of justification by faith, there came a rebirth of eschatological hope. Those who accepted the truth of the Reformation looked forward in hope to the coming of Jesus, when life would be fulfilled by visible reality.

Just as Greek thought captured the early church in the development of Romanism, so again Greek thought captured the Reformation church in the development of the Renaissance. As we have seen, the Renaissance was a revival of classical Greek thought. It grew up alongside the Reformation. Its humanistic philosophy gave great promise. Consider the brilliant achievements of the Renaissance—the arts, sciences, discoveries, material advancement. It gave to the world a dazzling display of human progress. Humanism promised man unlimited progress, indeed human fulfillment and satisfaction through the unparalleled development of human powers and earthly resources. In contrast, what did the Reformation offer man? *Sola fide* (solely by faith)! And poor little *sola fide* seemed so unspectacular that the sons of the Reformers became much more enamored with the spirit of the Renaissance than with the spirit of *sola fide*.

But we have again reached the great turning point in history. Men are realizing that the achievements of humanism are not so brilliant after all. Protestantism stands at the crossroads. Before her there are two alternatives.

Two Roads Ahead

The popular trend right now is to say, "Human fulfillment cannot be found in the pursuit of secular, scientific and materialistic values. Satisfaction for man can only be found in spiritual values and through a spiritual experience." Among the Protestants, Pentecostals and the Jesus Revolutionaries are foremost in moving in this direction. If Protestantism moves in this direction, then it will be a return to the very principle of Roman Catholicism.

Is this possible? It is not only possible, but a study of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation will show that prophecy foretells this startling development. First of all, this chapter brings to view a leopardlike beast, which the Reformers had no difficulty in recognizing as a description of the papal system. The prophecy shows that this beast would receive a "deadly wound." Rev. 13:3. The Protestants recognized this to be a prophecy of the Reformation, whose truth of justification by faith inflicted a mortal blow on the papal power (see the Introduction to the King James Version of the Bible). But the prophecy of Revelation 13 goes on to describe that this "deadly wound" would be healed and once again the entire world would wonder after the beast. Obviously, this could only take place if the Protestant world lost that great truth which broke the papal power in the sixteenth century.

The prophecy describes the very thing which will lead the world back to Rome: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and de-

ceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Rev. 13:13, 14. Thus, he "causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Verse 12.

This "fire . . . from heaven," which deceives men and leads them to return to their allegiance to Romanism, is undoubtedly some demonstration of spiritual power which appears to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It appears to be heavenly fire as at Pentecost (see Acts 2:2, 3). Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is significant that this neo-Pentecostal development is often called "fire from heaven" by those who experience it and advocate it to others. It is significant also that this Pentecostal development is not only sweeping through the Protestant bodies, but it is now being received with great favor by Roman Catholics. In fact, leading Roman Catholic theologians and prelates are endorsing Pentecostalism as a genuine religious experience which is in harmony with the classical doctrine and experience of the medieval church.

Thus does Bible prophecy show us where the religious world is heading right now. Protestants and Catholics are going to unite in one desperate, final effort to establish a kingdom of God on this earth — a scheme of human betterment which will promise men their much-sought-for fulfillment and satisfaction.

There is another alternative before Protestants. The Bible indicates that a remnant will accept this alternative. This will be a thoroughgoing revival of the truth of New Testament Christianity and the great Reformation truth of justification by faith. This will mean three things:

1. A full and final abandonment, on the part of God's people,

of the hope of ever finding fulfillment and satisfaction in their own experience in this life.

2. A reaffirmation that our fulfillment and satisfaction are found alone in Jesus Christ. This means that it is His experience, and not our own, that is of supreme importance and is the object of our concern. It also means that God's people must glory in what God has done in Christ and not in what God does in their own little experience.

3. A confession that our hope is in the personal and visible coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can bring the lives of God's people to fulfillment. This means that the Christian hope is not in any scheme of human betterment in this life. It is not in a kingdom of God to be set up down here by men, neither is it in grand religious alliances of human devisings. But the Christian's hope is in the kingdom that God will establish "without hands." Dan. 2:45. When Christ comes and rolls up the scroll of time, then it will be that God's people will actually possess by visible reality what is now theirs only by faith.

Thus, there are two alternatives before Protestants today. Either they turn back to the Catholic system of trying to find satisfaction in religious experience, or they turn forward to a hope in the return of Christ, who alone can fulfill history.

It Is Finished

Michael D. Marsh



All that is necessary to obtain our salvation has been accomplished by the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. He did this alone (Isa. 63:3), and finished it fully and completely (Heb. 1:3). No man or angel can add anything to His finished work (Eccl. 3:14; Gal. 3:15-17).

All that Christ did was for us. His incarnation was for us (Isa. 9:6). He never would have been the Son of Man but to make us the sons of God. He never would have been made in the likeness of sinful flesh but to raise us up into the likeness of God. All His miracles were performed to confirm our faith (John 11:42). While He lived here on earth, He was wholly set apart for us (John 17:19). He was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), and died for us (2 Cor. 5:14). He was bruised for us and buried for us (Isa. 53:5; Heb. 2:14, 15). He arose and ascended to heaven for us (Rom. 4:25; John 14:2). He lives for us (Heb. 7:25). And when He finally comes again, it is for us (John 14:3).

He who intends to build high must lay the foundation broad and deep. The plan of salvation is founded on the infinite humil-

iation of the Son of God. He was the brightness of God's glory (Heb. 1:3), yet was so humbled in the form of humanity that He looked not like Himself, nor scarcely like a man (Ps. 22:6; Isa. 52:14; 53:3). His humiliation was real and voluntary before God and man. It is not said that He was humbled, but that "He humbled Himself." Phil. 2:8. He came to this earth in the body of our humiliation and was made "under the law," yet He was "God blessed for ever." Rom. 9:5.

The eternal God was born in time. The Creator became a creature. He who was equal to the Ancient of Days became an infant of days. For the sun to fall from its sphere and become a wandering atom, for an angel to be turned out of heaven to be converted into a worm, would be no such great abasement; for they were but creatures before, and so they would abide still, though inferior creatures. The distance between the highest and lowest species of creatures is a finite distance. But for the infinite Creator of all to become a creature is a mystery exceeding all human understanding. The distance between God and the highest angel is an infinite distance. Yet Christ became a man, not an angel. He humbled Himself, and the world scorned Him (Isa. 53:2, 3). He was called

Beelzebub, an illegitimate child or just "the carpenter's son." At His trial one could only refer to Him as "this fellow." (Matt. 26:61).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. He came into this world, and there was no place to lay the infant. He walked the earth, and there was no place to lay His head. He died, and there was no place to lay the body. When He took our place, He had nothing. As one has said, "He went lower and lower until there was no lower place to go." As Christians we may be humiliated, but irrespective of how low we go, there is always a lower place. But not so with this Man. The infinite God, who is all wisdom, could truly say, I can search heaven and earth, but I cannot find a lower place to go.

Did man offend and violate

the law of God? Behold, God Himself became man to repair the breach and to satisfy for the wrong done. The highest honor that ever the law received was to have such a One as the man Christ Jesus stand before its bar and make reparation to it. This is more honor and far more glory to the law than if it had poured out all our blood and vindicated itself upon the ruins of the whole creation. It is not so much to see the stars overcast as to see the sun eclipsed. The greater Christ was, the greater was His humiliation; and the greater His humiliation was, the more full and complete was His satisfaction; and the more complete His satisfaction, the more perfect and steady is our consolation. If He had not stooped so low, our joy and comfort could not have been exalted so high. The depth of the foundation is the strength of the superstructure, and "ye are God's building" which is built upon that "foundation" (1 Cor. 3:9-11).

In the light of the cross, the heart can cry out, "The condemnation was Thine, that the justification might be mine; the agony was Thine, that the victory might be mine; the pain was Thine, that the ease might be mine; the stripes Thine, that the healing balm issuing from them might be mine; the vinegar and gall Thine, that the honey and the sweet might be mine; the curse was thine, that the blessing might be mine; the crown of thorns was Thine, that the crown of glory might be mine; the death was Thine, that the life purchased by it might be mine; Thou didst pay the price, that I might enjoy the inheritance." And because of this, "Ye are complete in Him." Col. 2:10.

Though we cannot perfectly and fully satisfy the claims and demands of the law (although we can perfectly keep it by His grace), yet Christ's complete obedience is imputed to us and stands us complete and without fault before God. Oh, what a complete and perfect thing is the righteousness of God in Christ! Let the searching eye of a holy and jealous God turn it every way, view it from every side, and He will not find the least flaw or defect in it. Let Him thoroughly weigh it and examine it, and it will ever appear pure and perfect, containing in it all that is necessary for our atonement. How pleasing, therefore, and acceptable to God must be that faith which presents so complete and excellent an atonement to Him. Hence the acting of faith upon Christ for righteousness, the approaches of faith to God with such an acceptable offering, are the work He is well pleased with (John 6:23, 29). One such act of faith pleases Him more than if we should toil all our lives at the task of obedience to fully satisfy all the demands of the law. It is more to God's honor and our comfort to pay all that we owe Him in one payment, in one lump sum, than to be paying by very small degrees and never be able to make full payment or see the debt cancelled. By one such act of faith, God counts that all is paid and the debt is cancelled.

Because we are accustomed in this world to time payment (buying a thing and paying it off by degrees), in our Laodicean blindness we bring that system over into our spiritual life. We think that by some keeping of the law — and that poorly done — and other services and reforms, we will satisfy the demands of the law. But it is all an abomination to God because it comes from a wicked heart of unbelief, for the debt has already

been paid and we are free in Christ. We are inclined to cry out like that poor man in Matthew 18:26, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." But, like that man, we have no just conception of the greatness of our debt or the greatness of our wretched poverty.

We are not called to Mount Sinai, to the covenant of works, but to Mount Zion, "to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:18, 22-24). It speaks not a debt to be paid, a life to be forfeited, but of a debt already paid and a life already given.

It is he that has been forgiven much that loves much. If we examine the Scriptures, we will see that in one sense there is no such thing with God as being forgiven little or much. God either forgives all or nothing at all, and we either pay all in one lump sum or nothing at all. For in this matter there are no degrees with God. If Jesus sets us free, we are free indeed (John 8:36).

The words of Paul to Philemon are but an echo of the words of Jesus to His Father concerning us: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account . . . I will repay." Philemon 17-19.

Let us then hear His cry, "It is finished!" and come to God by and in Jesus Christ. Then we will not only go away free, but new men and women in Him (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Ideal Government

Cedric Taylor

The ideal government must combine the principles of justice and mercy. Justice means equity, impartiality and the unerring application of an inexorable law. But who could endure a stern justice where there was no hope of mercy for erring men? Everyone who is conscious of his own failings, will be compassionate toward the mistakes of others.

The exercise of justice and mercy appear to be inimical. "Justice" means to treat every man as he deserves. "Mercy" means to treat him better than

he deserves. The human mind requires both, but finds them impossible to combine. The ideal government will extend absolute justice and at the same time will not fail to show mercy. And any system of government that fails to combine justice and mercy will one day fall by the weight of its own corruption. This is why human history knows of no enduring system of law and order.

Yet the "impossible" has been achieved. Such an ideal system of government has already been established. It will soon be set up and, without question (as a great statesman once said), "it shall stand forever."

Amazingly, this ideal government was not established by force of arms or by popular vote. It was established by one lone Man who died on a

cross. But you will ask, "Why this mysterious death? What did that have to do with establishing a perfect government for all men?" The explanation deserves the serious consideration of every man who wants to see the rule of equity and compassion in society and in the family of nations.

The Almighty God, as Creator, Ruler and Judge of all, has a government. It rests on two great pillars: justice and mercy. ("Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." Ps. 89:14.) When some of His subjects committed rebellion and treason, the Judge had a God-sized problem on His hands. If He

executed the rebels (which His righteous law demanded), how could He satisfy His yearning desire to show mercy. On the other hand, if He exercised compassion, how could He be true to His own inexorable justice. Each principle was as strong as the other. God's desire to show mercy was as strong as His desire to uphold justice. How could He establish His government on the basis of eternal security and be true to Himself?

This is what the cross is all about. The Judge of all came to this planet in the person of Jesus Christ. Though Lord of all, He became servant of all. He left His throne because His love called Him that way. Though innocent, He voluntarily stood in our place

and assumed our guilt. Justice demanded that sin be punished and the death penalty be executed. This Son of the infinite God suffered as we deserve in order that we may be treated as He deserves. Divine justice unsheathed its sword against our substitute. The suffering of Christ was incomprehensible. Yet there was no relenting until justice was fully satisfied for the sins of the whole world. Those who think that God is some easy-going, indulgent benevolence, should consider the cross and see that the Ruler of the universe is clothed in terrible and impartial justice.

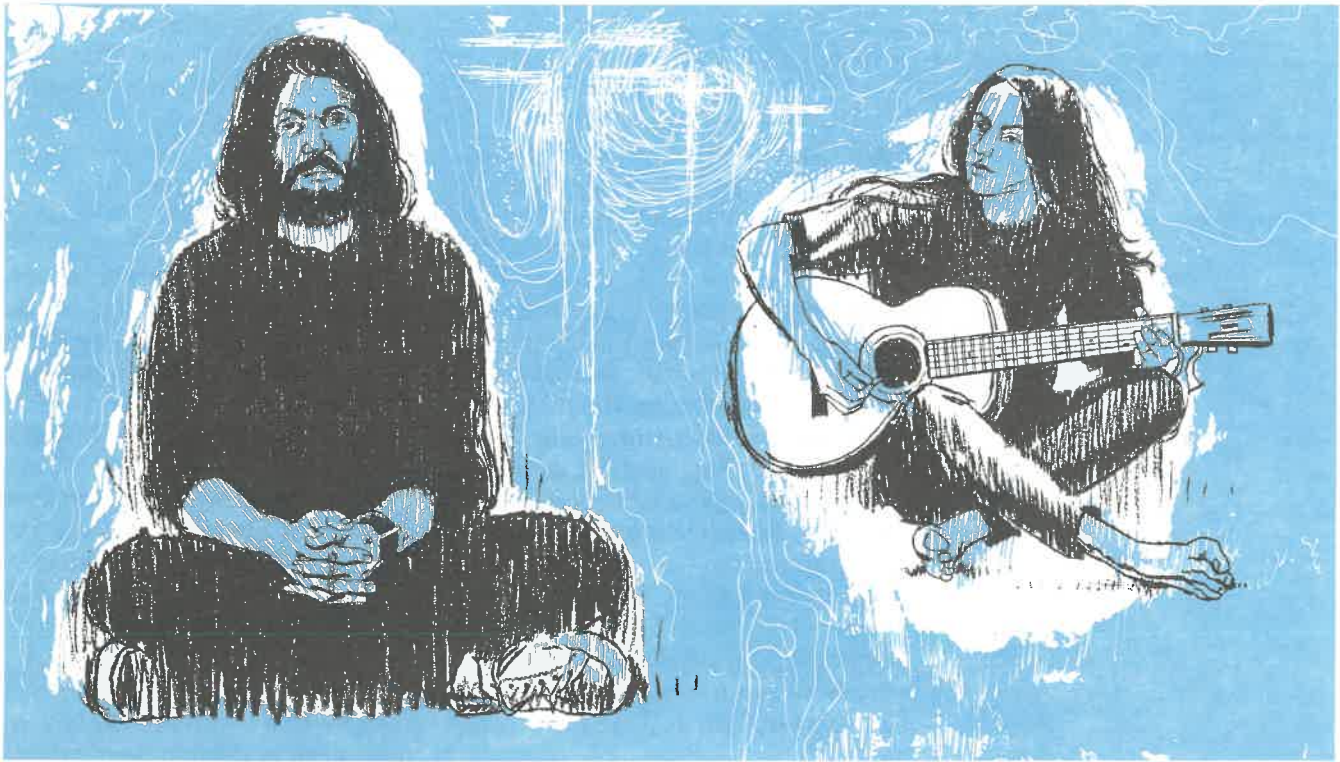
Not only did justice have to be fully satisfied at the cross, but mercy too. Here God's mercy was seen to be as great and as strong as His justice. At the cross, God absolved the whole world of its guilt and forgave the race. "If One died

for all," says St. Paul, "then were all dead." 2 Cor. 5:14. That is to say, since Christ has died in every man's place, it is the same as if every man had died and paid the penalty for his own sins. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is God's witness to us that Christ has taken away the sins of the world, that we have been redeemed, that mercy higher than the heavens and deeper than hell has been extended to us for Jesus' sake.

Of Christ, the ancient prophet declared, "The government shall be upon His shoulder." Isa. 9:6. This is because justice and mercy met in Jesus Christ and "kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. That is why God has appointed Him to be Judge and Ruler of all. With Him and Him alone, there is perfect justice and mercy. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." 1 John 1:9. Justice himself embraces the believer in Jesus as a righteous man. If we refuse His mercy and continue to trample on His law, mercy herself will punish us with "everlasting destruction." 2 Thess. 1:9.

If Christ thought God's government was worth dying for, we think His kingdom is worth living for. We cannot help establish it. That is already done. Neither can we help to set it up, for that will be done when Christ comes again in power and great glory. But we can extoll its virtues and the goodness of Him who made it possible. And we do extend to you the King's invitation to be part of His ideal society: "Who-soever will"!

Reprints of "The Ideal Government" are available on request. Write to either of the following *Present Truth* addresses. U.S.A.: P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028. Australia: P.O. Box 333, Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485.



On the Religious Front

Significant Quotations on Pentecostalism and the Jesus Revolution

Pentecostalism: an Experience

In the words of one of its well-known leaders, Donald Gee, the central attraction of the Pentecostal movement consists purely of a "powerful, individual spiritual experience." — Donald Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, p. 30 (quoted by F.D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 21).

"We are currently in the midst of a latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit on people of all denominations, including Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Churches of Christ and others who are finding that 'Pentecost' is not a denomination but an experience." — FGBMFI *Voice*, Mar., 1971, p. 29.

"Pentecostal experience, then, is distinguished by precisely the emphasis on experience . . . In a word, the theology of the Pentecostal movement is its experience." — Bruner, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Pentecostalism: the Greatest Force in Christian Revival Today

"The force that appears to be making the greatest contribution to the current Christian revival around the globe is Pentecostalism. This movement, which began several decades ago, and which in its early years was very sectarian in character, is now becoming ecumenical in the deepest sense. A neo-Pentecostalism has lately appeared that includes many thousands of Roman Catholics. . . . A new era of the Spirit has begun.

The charismatic experience moves Christians far beyond glossolalia . . . There is light on the horizon. An evangelical renaissance is becoming visible along the Christian highway from the frontiers of the sects to the high places of the Roman Catholic communion. This appears to be one of the most strategic moments in the Church's history." — *Christianity Today*, Feb. 4, 1972, p. 8.

Jesus Revolution Sweeping the Country

"It is a religious phenomena, striking suddenly with mysterious, charismatic simplicity, and it scares you because you can't understand it or explain it away. It stomps out rationality. The Jesus Movement is sweeping the country [i.e., the United States] from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It's real. So real you run out of adjectives. It's bright, dizzying, exciting, unnerving, vibrant, puzzling, ecstatic, even frighteningly simplistic. It is unorganized, freewheeling, unstructured dynamite—a non-movement, led by non-leaders." — Methodist Dept. of Christian Education, Brisbane, Qld., Australia, *In-depth Study of the American "Jesus Movement,"* pt. 1, p. 19.

Pentecostals to Rome

"Pentecostal theologians — in Rome — for official dialogue with Catholics? Yes, this month. A team, representing the classical as well as neo-Pentecostal ends of the movement, will meet there, according to an announcement made at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, which convened in Des Moines following the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America

"Killian McDonald, Catholic theologian and Benedictine monk, broke the news to the thirty-five members present. 'This has greater meaning for the Secretariat in Rome than dialogue with Lutherans, Presbyterians, or Methodists,' he urged. 'And it would be embarrassing and narrow, to say the least, if you Pentecostals should remain silent, waiting for Rome to announce this historic event.'

"But Pentecostals, especially their educators and theologians, have come a long way since the days when the pope was attacked as anti-Christ in Luther-style. No

negative ripple followed'
"— *Christianity Today*, Dec. 3, 1971, p. 45, under title "Pentecostals to Rome."

Dialogue With Pentecostals

"The Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity has agreed to enter into dialogue with some pentecostal churches and with representatives of the Pentecostal movement within the Anglican and Protestant Churches.

"The dialogue will extend over a period of five years and will take the form of yearly meetings at which theological discussions will focus on the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian and the Church.

"The first of these meetings will take place in Zurich, Switzerland, in June, 1972. Names of the participants have not yet been announced." — *The Catholic Leader*, Feb. 6, 1972, p. 2.

Pentecostalism Breaks Down Denominational Barriers

" . . . one of the most startling aspects of the Pentecostal movement [is] it is truly ecumenical.

"While we speak of Catholic Pentecostal groups, it has to be remembered that at any predominantly Catholic meeting one is



likely to find Baptist, Methodist, Anglican or Presbyterian Pentecostals.

"Belief in the Pentecostal Baptism of the Spirit appears to break down most, if not all, denominational barriers." — *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1972, p. 8, art. "What Sort of People are the Modern Pentecostals?"

"That the Holy Spirit would descend on believers in the last times, is something that Pentecostal Christians already knew because we have experienced it. But that this blessed promise with the demonstrative phenomena of glossolalia would reach to Roman Catholics is something which has left us perplexed and surprised. It has helped us to remember the divine admonition made to Peter, 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.' (Acts 10:15) It is a glorious and tremendous reality that the Spirit of God is filling with His glory the living temples of sincere Christians who seek Him with all their hearts." — *The Australian Evangel*, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 13, 1971, art. "What is Happening in the Roman Catholic Church?" (a publication of the Assemblies of God in Australia — a Pentecostal source).

"The Pentecostal phenomenon has shown no respect for denominational boundaries. And with the appearance of Roman Catholic Pentecostalism, the movement may have achieved something like an ultimate. John Hardon has, perhaps, put his finger on one reason for its popular appeal. He writes: 'Commentators on the religious movements in the country point out that Pentecostals offer what other more sedate churches fail to give their people: a sense of the sacred and a realization of God's saving grace in those who believe.' " — Donald L. Gelpi, S. J., *Pentecostalism — A Theological Viewpoint*, pp. 33, 34.

Pentecostalism: Essentially Roman Catholic in Nature

"My conclusion, for what it is worth, is that the Catholic Pentecostal Movement holds great promise for genuine renewal within the Church. Its power to revitalise the faith of many Catholics (particularly young people) is quite remarkable. Its possible ecumenical value is far reaching. Whatever our personal attitude to it may be, I feel that we priests cannot afford to be uninformed about a movement which is spreading so rapidly among our Catholic people here in Australia." — Rev. Thomas A. White, circular letter to priests from the Catholic Enquiry Centre, Sydney, Australia.

“Within Catholicism Pentecostalism has met with considerably less resistance than it has within the historic Protestant churches, partly because the concept of the ‘wondrous’ is more at home in Catholicism than in main-stream Protestantism.” — Kilian McDonnell, *Catholic Pentecostalism*, p. 31.

“Although they derive from Protestant backgrounds, the Pentecostal churches are not typically Protestant in their belief, attitudes or practices.” — Edward O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, p. 23.

“ . . . it cannot be assumed that the Pentecostal movement represents an incursion of Protestant influence.” — *Ibid.*, p. 32.

“ . . . Catholics who have accepted Pentecostal spirituality have found it to be fully in harmony with their traditional faith and life. They experience it not as a borrowing from an alien people, but as a connatural development of their own.” — *Ibid.*, p. 28.

“ . . . the spiritual experience of those who have been touched by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal Movement is in profound harmony with the classical spiritual theology of the church.” — *Ibid.*, p. 183.

“ . . . the experience of the Pentecostal Movement tends to confirm the validity and relevance of our authentic spiritual traditions.” — *Ibid.*, p. 191.

“Moreover, the doctrine that is developing in the Pentecostal churches today, seems to be going through stages very similar to those which occurred in the early Middle Ages when the classical doctrine was taking shape.” — *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 194.

“*The Cross and the Switchblade* is the account of the life and spiritual adventures of David Wilkerson . . . The book spoke of the indwelling and powerful Spirit as the motive and moving power of our Christian lives. It was very old doctrine. It was a very traditional doctrine. It was a very Catholic doctrine.” — Kevin & Dorothy Rana-ghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*, pp. 9, 10.

Pentecostalism Increases Catholic Devotion

“The Catholic Pentecostal movement . . . has greatly deepened the attachment of its members to the Church. They have a livelier appreciation and heightened reverence for the Church’s institutions.” — O’Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

“Similarly, the traditional devotions of the Church have taken on more meaning. Some people have been brought back to a frequent use of the sacra-

ment of Penance through the experience of the baptism in the Spirit. Others have discovered a place for devotion to Mary in their lives, whereas previously they had been indifferent or even antipathetic towards her. One of the most striking effects of the Holy Spirit’s action has been to stir up devotion to the Real Presence in the Eucharist.” — *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

“It [the Pentecostal movement] has no new doctrine but simply a lively belief in the traditional Christian doctrines.” — *Ibid.*, p. 15.

“ . . . the Pentecostal movement does not discredit the institutional Church, but revivifies and revalidates it.” — *Ibid.*, p. 24.

“ . . . the charismatic renewal can be considered a movement — a Catholic pentecostal movement. The goal is a charismatically renewed Church, not a separate ‘pentecostal’ organization ‘for people who go for that sort of thing.’ Having some identity as a



movement may be necessary for a time in order to accomplish the larger goal. But the larger goal is the significant one: a charismatically renewed Catholic Church." — Kevin & Dorothy Ranaghan, *As the Spirit Leads Us*, p. 244.

Catholic Admission That Pentecostal Experience Was Introduced From Protestant Pentecostal Sources

" . . . most Catholics have received the Pentecostal experience through the intermediary of a non-Catholic Pentecostal. David Wilkerson's book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, was the seed from which the movement at Duquesne was engendered. In Boston, Rochester, St. Louis, Cincinnati and many other places, it was through a non-denominational Pentecostal association known as the Full Gospel Business Men that Catholics first encountered this new activity of the Spirit." — O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

"One could not accurately relate the story of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among Roman Catholics in the last four years without repeatedly pointing out the outstanding contribution of Protestant pentecostals (both classical pentecostals from the traditional pentecostal denominations and neo-pentecostals from within the historical Reformation Churches) to the charismatic renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. Not only has there been a shared unity and fellowship in the work of the Holy Spirit in the last few years, but time and time again the Lord has used the service of brothers and sisters in Christ from denominations other than Roman Catholic to initiate, to nourish, and to mature the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among

Roman Catholics." — Ranaghan, *As the Spirit Leads Us*, pp. 118, 119.

Worshiping the Holy Spirit Dwelling Within

"The Catholic Pentecostals are facing up to what can probably be called a blind-spot in the thinking of many Christians, and are making a point of worshiping the Holy Spirit dwelling within them and calling up the Holy Spirit to guide them in their lives.

"Rather than allowing this indwelling of the Holy Spirit to remain a neglected dimension, they are keen to show forth daily what many only say on Pentecost Sunday or special occasions — 'Come Holy Spirit.'" — *The Catholic Weekly*, Apr. 13, 1972, p. 9.

Bubbling Over — What Jesus Is Doing in Their Lives

"Everywhere they go they bubble over with the news of what Jesus is doing in their lives. They bring friends to church, Bible studies, communes, rock concerts. They pass out tracts on the streets." — Methodist Dept. of Christian Education, *op. cit.*, pt. 2, p. 22.

Billy Graham on the Jesus Movement

"Evangelist Billy Graham says that the Jesus Movement is a genuine movement of the Spirit of God. His article in the November issue of *Christianity Today*, states that it is highly encouraging, and 'comes at a time when other American young people are involved with permissive sex, drugs and violence.' Graham observes that the Jesus Movement is 'affecting nearly every denomination and every social and educational stratum.' It is a topic of discussion from the *New York Times* editorial room to the White House dining room." — *North Pacific Gleaner*, Jan. 17, 1972, p. 3.

Alan Walker on the Jesus Movement

"A widespread religious revival was occurring within America, the president of the NSW Methodist Conference, the Rev. Alan Walker, said yesterday . . .

"Mr. Walker said the Jesus Revolution was undoubtedly the biggest thing happening in the world today . . .

"He said that one of the most startling outcomes of the Jesus Revolution was the way many young people were being set free from drug addiction." — *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia), Mar. 25, 1972.

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