

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4



FALL 2010

REFORMATION: *A Work of God*

BY MARK W. EVANS

Only God can revive the souls of men. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Whether or not our Saviour will deliver our land in this dark hour is unknown, yet there is encouragement from God's Word. The Lord enabled King Hezekiah, in

a time of apostasy, to lead Judah into a thorough reformation (2 Kings 18:1-6). Following the reign of wicked Manasseh, the Lord used Josiah to turn His people from their idolatry and wickedness to "walk after the LORD" (2 Kings 23:3). After the

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Quick & Powerful ... *but is the internet the best tool for applying God's Word to our lives?*

BY BRAD K. GSELL

I hope you won't write me off as a dinosaur — futilely attempting to put the brakes on technological wonder and advancement. I'll admit that I was around BEFORE the first cassette tape was released and I even had to type all my papers in college and seminary on an old Smith-Corona typewriter. Many hours were spent searching the "card catalog" in the library just to find books dealing with any particular subject at hand.

That seems light years behind our present technology, with iPods, iPads, cell phones with a multitude

of "apps," and ubiquitous internet access.

Along with this technological revolution have come many wonderful tools for the student of God's Word. An abundance of great Christian books written throughout the centuries is available with just a few clicks of the mouse. There is more to be found on one small computer than was previously available in a large theological library. We can praise the Lord for these exceedingly powerful aids to fruitful Bible study.

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Remembering *the* Reformation

BY ROBERT W. ANDERSON

Joshua 4:1-7

After the children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the Sinai wilderness, God parted the waters of the Jordan River to allow them to enter the land of Canaan, which He had long before promised them. God directed that stones should be carried out of the river and piled up as a historical monument. What was His purpose? Joshua 4:6,7, tells us: "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." This was a memorial to remind them and their children of what God had done for them.

There are events in our own lives which we easily recall and have joy in remembering, such as vacations and birthdays. The last Sunday in October is a "birthday" for Bible believers to celebrate. The 16th century Protestant Reformation is traced to an event which occurred on October 31, 1517. We are not going to look at a heap of stones by a river, but we are going to look back at the Reformation, which had its begin-

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Faith Presbytery 2010 Family Camp



See photos on pages 7-9



Plenary Speakers

photographically reproduced
from an ad appearing recently
in Christian magazines.



AL MOHLER

RC SPROUL

T. ANYABWILE

FRANCIS CHAN

RICK WARREN

JOHN PIPER

Rick Warren to Speak at Desiring God Conference

Many evangelical magazines and websites have recently carried ads for the Desiring God 2010 National Conference, October 1-3, 2010. Among others, such well-known speakers as R.C. Sproul (Ligonier Ministries), Al Mohler (President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), John Piper (Pastor for Preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis) and Tullian Tchividjian (Billy Graham's grandson who pastors the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale) are listed. Many of these leaders, despite their alliances with compromising groups and individuals, have had many good things to say, and are held in esteem by many in Reformed churches.

Also appearing on the list of speakers is none other than Rick Warren of "Purpose Driven Life" fame. Apparently conference organizers received so many protests, that John Piper felt compelled to put a 12-minute video explanation on the conference website. Obviously not

very comfortable, Piper proceeded to defend Warren as a faithful Christian, and said "I don't put Rick Warren in the group that I'm going to hold at arm's distance." He acknowledged that separatism, "or who you do things with," is an important Biblical question, but had his biggest criticism for the stand taken by "a brittle, ugly, excessively separatist movement."

"I believe [the Bible is] inerrant in what it claims to be. The Bible does not claim to be a scientific book in many areas."

Rick Warren

It is quite amazing how so many in evangelical circles, in order to justify their questionable alliances, are willing to defend all sorts of individuals and groups with aberrant theology, causing great confusion among God's people. Yet, they are quick to use the harshest of terms against those attempting to be faithful to God's Word. Piper's video is one more example.

Piper stated assertively that Rick Warren believes "The Bible is totally inerrant and valuable in every way." Yet, Warren himself was not quite so clear when *Newsweek* editor John Meacham asked him "Is the Bible inerrant?" in a March 31, 2007, interview.

Warren apparently was unable to answer the question with a simple "Yes." Instead he responded with these telling qualifiers: "I believe it's inerrant in what it claims to be. The Bible does not claim to be a scientific book in many areas." That doesn't sound like "in every way" to us! Although we would commend Warren for stating in a following question that he does not believe in evolution, yet, his qualifying statement on inerrancy is a real problem. Similar answers have been given by many, particularly over the last century, to seek to say that the Bible may have errors concerning history and science, but not in its "spiritual" message.

The late Dr. Francis Schaeffer replied to those who held this same position: "Unless the Bible is without error, not only when it speaks of salvation matters, but also when it speaks of history and the cosmos, we have no foundation for answering questions concerning the existence of the universe and its form and the uniqueness of man. Nor do we have any moral absolutes, or certainty of salvation, and the next generation of Christians will have nothing on which to stand. Our spiritual and physical children will be left with the ground cut out from under them, with no foundation upon which to build their faith or their lives" (*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, chapter 2).

In our man-centered culture, Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* and *Purpose Driven Church* have propelled him to international fame, as millions of copies have been sold. However, Warren has a profound misunderstanding of the church, and gives preeminence to the desires of sinful man over what is pleasing to God. His *Purpose Driven Church* states: "Adopt your style to fit your audience.... You cannot start with a text, expecting the unchurched to be fascinated by it. You must first capture their attention, and then move them to the truth of God's Word" (pp. 294-295).

At another place, he wrote: "To the unchurched, dull preaching is unforgivable. Truth poorly delivered is ignored. On the other hand, the unchurched will listen to absolute foolishness if it is interesting (p. 231). At a seminar in 1998, he is reported as saying: "The unchurched culture determines our style.... The key question is, 'Who are you trying to impress?' The unchurched populations determine our goals."

But our goals are to be determined by what pleases God! We gather together each week for WORSHIP services. The PURPOSE is not to try to attract ungodly men and women. Romans 3:11 tells us: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Our purpose is the glory of God and the edification of His saints.

We certainly are commanded to spread the Gospel message, but even then it is not carnal methods, but rather the working of God's Spirit which draws men unto Himself!

May the words of the Apostle Paul be our example: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And

my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

We can rejoice at many good things which some of these present-day evangelical and Reformed men have to say, but we must continue to warn against the compromise which brings confusion to God's people and is displeasing to the Lord. •

Quick & Powerful ...

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However, author Nicholas Carr gives us much reason to be cautious in his recently-released book *What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains: The Shallows*. Carr's credentials both in the fields of English literature (a member of the Encyclopedia Britannica Board of Advisors) and in computer technology (named by *e-week* as one of the 100 most influential people in information technology [IT]), do not allow him to be easily dismissed. Carr's fascinating discussion is not at all aimed at believers in particular, yet many of his conclusions have a surprisingly direct application to the place of the Word of God in the life of the Christian.

The Word of God and the Christian

Hebrews 4:12 tells us: "For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Westminster Shorter Catechism states: "The Word of God, which is

contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.... The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."

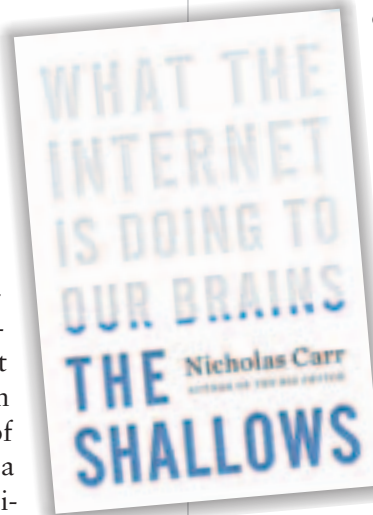
In short, the Word of God is indispensable and crucial to the salvation and godly living of the Christian. There is no substitute, no replacement.

The child of God must read and study his Bible. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This is no mere intellectual pursuit.

The Bible in many places also speaks of meditating on God's Word. Psalm 119:97: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

Memorization is also important. Psalm 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Of course, this also is so very much more than just a mere intellectual mastery of the words; but, that is certainly involved.

With all of our study, meditation and memorization, it is the Spirit of God who teaches us and illumines



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QUICK & POWERFUL:

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the Scriptures to our understanding: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

Actual Changes in the Brain

Nicholas Carr, in the previously mentioned book, quotes various sources to show that the human brain is endowed with “neuroplasticity” — it changes based on our physical and mental activities. He states: “The chemically triggered synapses that link our neurons program us, in effect, to want to keep exercising the circuits they’ve formed. Once we’ve wired new circuitry in our brains, [research psychiatrist Norman] Doidge writes, ‘we long to keep it activated.’ That’s the way the brain fine-tunes its operations. Routine activities are carried out ever more quickly and efficiently, while unused circuits are pruned away.” Carr posits, with the use of much documentation, that the internet is making fundamental changes in the mental circuitry of millions of people.

Dangers to Study

Following are a number of brief quotes from throughout Carr’s book which give us much to think about when we study anything, but — most importantly — the Word of God. He writes: “The Net’s cacophony of stimuli short-circuits both conscious and unconscious thought, preventing our minds from thinking either deeply or

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

Gleanings from *The Christian on the Mount: A Treatise on Meditation* by Puritan minister Thomas Watson (first published in 1657)

- “If you would delight in the law of God, purge out the delight of sin; sin will poison this spiritual delight. If you would have God’s law be sweet, do not let wickedness be sweet in your mouth (Job 20:12). When sin is your burden, Christ will be your delight.”
- “Meditation is like the watering of the seed: it makes the fruits of grace to flourish.”
- “Carnal professors have their thoughts roving up and down and will not fix on God; they are like the bird that hops from one branch to another and stays in no one place. David was a man fit to meditate. ‘O God, my heart is fixed’ (Psalm 108:1).”
- “The memory is the chest or cupboard to lock up a truth; meditation is the palate to feed on it.”
- “[Study and meditation] differ in their nature. Study is a work of the brain, meditation of the heart; study sets the mind to work, meditation sets the heart to work.”
- “[Study and meditation] differ in their design. The design of study is notion; the design of meditation is piety. The design of study is the finding out of a truth; the design of meditation is the spiritual improvement of a truth. The one searches for the vein of gold; the other digs out the gold.”
- “The necessity of meditation appears because without it we can never be godly Christians. A Christian without meditation is like a soldier without weapons or a workman without tools.”
- “Reading is the oil that feeds the lamp of meditation.”
- “Meditation keeps the heart in a good spiritual health. It plucks up the weeds of sin, it prunes the wasteful branches, it waters the flowers of grace, and it sweeps all the walks in the heart so that Christ may walk there with delight. For lack of holy meditation, the heart lies like the sluggard’s field (Proverbs 24:31), all overgrown with thorns and briars, with unclean, earthly thoughts. It is rather the devil’s pigsty than Christ’s garden. It is like a house fallen to ruin, fit only for unclean spirits to inhabit.”

creatively. Our brains turn into simple signal-processing units, quickly shepherding information into consciousness and then back out again....”

“The time we spend hopping across links crowds out the time we devote to quiet reflection and contemplation, the circuits that support those old intellectual functions and pursuits weaken and begin to break apart....”

“We revert to being ‘mere decoders of information.’ Our ability to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction remains largely disengaged....”

“[When on the internet,] our little thimble overflows as we rush from one faucet to the next. We’re able to transfer only a small portion of the information to long-term memory, and what we do transfer is a jumble of drops from different faucets, not a continuous, coherent stream from one source....”

“Try reading a book while doing a crossword puzzle; that’s the intellectual environment of the Internet....”

“Even though the World Wide Web has made hypertext common-

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REFORMATION: A WORK OF GOD

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crucifixion of Christ, the darkest hour the world has ever known, the Holy Spirit descended and some 3,000 souls called upon the name of the Lord. We also read of Peter's sermon to the crowd that gathered at Solomon's temple. Some 5,000 believed the Word that was preached (Acts 4:4). So, the Gospel spread "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The Holy Spirit enabled Christ's Apostles to write the infallible, inerrant Word of God and complete the canon of the Bible. Thus, Christ gave His true Church the sacred Scriptures, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. In His written revelation, He prophesied that His people would suffer persecution: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). His flock must endure cruelty, hatred, and the malice of the kingdom of darkness. The Roman Empire resolved to destroy Christ's Church. Believers were boiled in oil, crucified, made human torches, thrown to wild beasts, and scourged until their sinews and veins were bare. This hellish opposition did not wane until the Emperor Constantine granted full toleration to the Christian faith in the year 313. However, the embrace of the world brought a deluge of pagan beliefs and practices into the Church. Christ's doctrine, worship, government, and discipline were corrupted. Out of this confusion, an external, ecclesiastical body emerged that replaced the true Church. By the year 600, the bishop of Rome, Gregory the Great, assumed universal supremacy over the "Church." He claimed the title of "servant of servants, which is Peter, the 'Vicar [Representative] of Christ on earth.'"

Thus, the "Dark Ages" began. The teachings of men created a counterfeit Christianity of salvation by works, auricular confession (private confession to a priest), ceremonies, candles, crucifixes, idolatries, indulgences, sacraments, rosary beads, prayers to the dead, prayers to Mary, worship of angels, relics, holy water, incense, pilgrimages, holy days, purgatory, and other means not warranted by God's Word.

The pope headed a hierarchy of clergy — priests, monks, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and others — which claimed authority over the souls of men and over the nations of the world. Mr. Loraine Boettner, in his book *Roman Catholicism*, quoted the words used for the placing of the triple crown upon the head of a new pope: "Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art the Father of Princes and Kings, Ruler of the World, the Vicar of our Savior Jesus Christ...."

He also quoted the Roman Catholic *New York Catechism*: "The pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth.... By divine right the pope has supreme and full power in faith and morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the entire church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth."

This pretended ecclesiastical authority forced obedience by intimidation, threats, and brutal persecution. Those refusing to bow the knee faced excommunication, imprisonment, torture, exile, and execution.

Yet, the Lord preserved a remnant of faithful believers. As the centuries passed, the evil power and authority of Rome grew into a monster of religious and civil tyranny. The mightiest kings could not escape the bondage.

King John of England, during the time of Pope Innocent III, dared to defy the papacy. In the end, King John placed his crown on the ground before the pope's legate and submitted himself, England and Ireland to the pope.

When English noblemen learned of the disgrace, they unsheathed their swords and resolved to defend England's liberties to the death. The king objected, "I will not grant you liberties which would make me a slave." The noblemen replied in effect, "if he [King John] was to be the slave of an Italian priest, he could not be the master of Norman barons." On the

15th of June, 1215, the king signed the Magna Carta, which rescinded his surrender to Rome. J.A. Wylie, in his book *History of Protestantism*, said that the Magna Carta "was constitutional liberty standing up before the face of the Papal absolutism, and throwing down the gage of battle to it." The noblemen were ignorant of theology, but their stroke for civil liberty from unlawful tyranny began a process of deliverance for England. A century later, God raised up John Wycliffe (1320-1384), whose proclamation and translation of God's Word prepared the way for the Reformation.

John Wycliffe stood against the usurpations of Rome. He saw that the only Head of the Church is Christ (not the pope). He rejected Rome's pretense to infallibility concerning matters of faith and rejected auricular confession, purgatory, pil-

Only God can revive the souls of men. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

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Coming Events:

The Fall Convention of the **American Council of Christian Churches** will be held from October 19-21, 2010, at Hope Baptist Church, Hanover, PA.

Speakers will include: Dr. Stephen Hankins, Dean of the Seminary and Graduate School at Bob Jones University; Rev. Jack Hilton, Bible Evangelical Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA; Rev. Dave McClelland, Grace Free Presbyterian Church, Litchfield, NH; Dr. John Vaughn, President, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International, Taylors, SC; Dr. Ted Clater (KCEA Director); Rev. Dave Saxton, Bible Community Church, Cuyahoga Falls, OH; Rev. Jonathan Smith, Tipton Bible Church, Tipton, IA; Dr. E. Allen Griffith, Biblical Family Ministries, Myerstown, PA; Dr. Robert Anderson, Bible Presbyterian Church, Marcus Hook, PA; Rev. David Mook, Free Presbyterian Church, Phoenix, AZ; Dr. Kevin Hobi, New Boston (NH) Baptist Church; and Dr. John McKnight, ACCC President. Whiteford, MD. (accc@juno.com).

The Association of Ministers of the Reformed Faith will hold its annual meeting October 27-28, 2010, at Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC. The opening address will be given Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m. On Thursday, speakers will deliver messages throughout the day, concluding with a sermon in the evening. The theme is "America's Christian Foundation." Speakers will include Dr. John McKnight, pastor in the Evangelical Methodist Church and President of the American Council of Christian Churches; Dr. Ron Cooke, President of Breckbill Bible College; Dr. David Beale, professor at Bob Jones University; Dr. David Woehr, church historian and member of Hope Presbyterian Church; and others. The meeting is open to all. Please contact Pastor Mark Evans for more information (home: 864-235-6471; cell: 864-631-8952; markwevans@bellsouth.net).

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grimaces, worship of saints, and veneration of relics. His greatest labor for Christ was the translation of the Vulgate Bible into English, thus, for the first time, giving Englishmen the privilege of reading God's Word in their own language. He organized humble preachers, called the Lollards, to distribute the Scriptures and teach its saving doctrines. Because of God's protection, his enemies failed to take his life. Years later, his bones were dug up, burned, and cast into the River Swift. The Lollards continued their evangelism and circulation of God's Word for many years, even in the face of execution by fire. Through their labors, the doctrines of God's Word were spread throughout England and even into distant lands.

Jon Hus (1371-1415), a Roman Catholic priest of Bohemia, was appointed to preach the Word of God in the language of the people at the Chapel of Bethlehem in the city of Prague. The city was notorious for its open vice and wickedness. As Jon Hus taught the Bible, his eyes were opened and the city changed into a place of moral uprightness. In God's good providence, Hus read the writings of Wycliffe that arrived from England. When the papacy learned of Hus's teachings, particularly of his belief in the supremacy of the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, he was summoned to appear at Rome. Such a summons was a death notice. Although the great ones of Bohemia defended him, the opposition of his enemies forced him to leave Prague. He began a new ministry of traveling to towns and villages, proclaiming God's Word. When the storm calmed, he returned to his pulpit in Prague. With even greater zeal, he proclaimed the truth. Roman Catholic

opposition once again arose, and Rome's Archbishop placed the city under interdict. For the last time, the preacher left the city. Later, he was summoned before the Council of Constance and granted a "safe conduct" by Emperor Sigismund. In spite of the emperor's solemn promise, Hus's enemies put him in a foul prison, which made him ill. He endured humiliation and a treacherous trial. The emperor shamefully transgressed his solemn promise of protection. Jon Hus was condemned and burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

J.A. Wylie writes: "The winds as they blow over Constance are wafting the spirit of the confessor and martyr to all the countries of Christendom. The nations are being stirred; Bohemia is awakening; a hundred years, and Germany and all Christendom will shake off their slumber; and then will come the great reckoning which the martyr's prophetic spirit foretold: 'In the course of a hundred years you will answer to God and to me.'"

A little over one century later, in the year 1517, a German monk named Martin Luther stood before the Diet at Worms in Germany and declared: "I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the Councils, because it is clear as day they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or on plain and clear grounds of reason, so that conscience shall bind me to make acknowledgement of error, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything contrary to conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other. May God help me. Amen." •



The Rev. Mark Evans is a minister in Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, and is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC.

Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, 2010 Family Camp



PHOTOS: JAN COLEMAN / BRAD AND SHEILA GSELL



Messages From God's Word: "The Battle Against the World: Encouraging Holiness"



Rev. John Mills
Allen Park, Michigan

Rev. Randy Ardis
Charlotte, North Carolina

Rev. Mark Evans
Greenville, South Carolina

Rev. Jerry Gardner
Knoxville, Tennessee

Rev. Ken Olson
São Paulo, Brazil

Miss Judith Collins
Nairobi, Kenya

Rev. Chris Sidwell
Apollo, Pennsylvania

Rev. Bob Anderson
Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania

Rev. Keith Burd
Baltimore, Maryland

Elder Dan Swain
Fallston, Maryland

MISSIONARY PRESENTATIONS



REMEMBERING THE REFORMATION

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ning with Martin Luther nailing 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

A thesis is a proposition. In the days of Luther, when a person wanted to propose a debate or discussion on some topic, he would post his “thesis” in a public place. Luther was a monk who wanted to debate 95 religious subjects — and what public “bulletin board” was better to post a notice than a church door? What was born out of those theses was an event which God brought about for His own honor and for the good of men, and He would have us remember it. While God used men to bring about the Reformation, ultimately it was His own doing. Though many would oppose it, God brought it about to bless men’s souls.

To the shame and loss of many, all memory of that day has blown away like fine dust; but we do not wish to forget it. Though we and others may not be aware of it, the benefits of the 16th Century Reformation reach down to affect us all.

Luther’s Life

Martin Luther was the central figure God used in bringing the Reformation to pass. Born to a

German peasant family on November 10, 1483, Luther early showed himself a precocious child. His father, who was a poor miner, had great aspirations for his son. Law was a place for Luther to make a name for himself, so his father sent him away from home to receive his education. The family was so poor that Luther had to beg to pay his way; but, at the age of 18, he received his Bachelor’s degree (two of them in fact) and two years later he was awarded a Master’s degree. From there he went to law school, as his father planned.

However, while he was in law school, Luther was caught in a tremendous electrical storm. Lightning bolts flashed around him and the thunder roared. He trembled for his life. Praying to one of the saints, he promised that if his life should be spared he would become a monk. Shortly thereafter he entered an Augustinian monastery and in 1507, at the age of 24, he was ordained a priest. Continuing his theological education, he received his Doctor of Theology degree in 1512 and began a career as a professor of theology in the University of Wittenberg. Five years later, he posted his 95 Theses, which in time would lead to his excommunication from the Roman Church. God used his many gifts as a professor, preacher, Bible translator, and writer to establish Protestantism. This is a very brief survey of Luther’s life.

Now consider some of the great realities and doctrines which God worked in the understanding of Luther and of thousands in his day, which would bring a sudden but lasting change in the lives of individual men, the church, and society as a whole. The first great reality which lit the reformation was ...

The Consciousness of Sin

It was not just a thunderstorm which drove Luther into the monastery; it was his consciousness of sin which was so terribly heightened

and deepened by the thunder of God’s power in the German countryside. After Luther entered the monastery, where he pursued that which should have brought inward peace, his consciousness of sin did not subside and go to rest. Actually, his sense of sin was intensified in the monastery. This kept him in perpetual fear of God.

He desperately wanted to have the favor of God, to be reconciled to God, to be at peace with God. In an effort to obtain that peace, he fasted, he prayed, he beat himself, he performed the most menial of tasks, he went sleepless. But none of those things gave peace to Luther; he was a man in acute spiritual agony because of his sense of sin. If he had never faced the great reality of his sin and searched for peace, there would have been no Reformation.

Sin is a problem with which not just Luther — but every person born into this world — must reckon. Sin involves failure to obey the law of God. Sin makes us guilty before God, it corrupts, it disables. Every human being is, by birth and by personal choice and action, a sinner — guilty, defiled, powerless to do what pleases God. We have not and cannot conform our thoughts, our speech, or our actions to the law of God. On every hand we have transgressed. God tells us in the Bible, which is His Word, that “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Along with the reality of sin permeating our being and our lives goes the reality of the consequences God has threatened against it. Sin has its earnings, it has its W2 forms. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). That word “death” should send a dreadful earthquake rumbling through the soul. Death is not simply the annihilation of being, it is a separation — separation of the soul from the body, yes — but also of the soul — from the favor of God.

The Good News...

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”

(Ephesians 1:6,7).

If sin is not taken care of, it results in permanent separation of the soul from God, whose favor is the life of the soul.

Nowadays many find pleasure in unrighteousness; they do not make much of sin. Often it seems that the only really big sin is to believe in the Bible's idea of sin. But sin has never changed and the power of God at work in the conscience and by the teaching of His Word still can bring men, women and children to say in terrible conviction, "I have sinned." Unless and until God brings men to the awareness and acknowledgment of sin, there never will be reformation in which men will say, "Woe is me, for I am undone" (Isaiah 6:5).

A second great truth is ...

The Righteousness of God

What kind of righteousness would God approve and accept? In Luther's search for what would quiet the distress of his soul over his sin, God led him to the answer. It was not in church rituals, pilgrimages, personal privations or suffering. As a doctor of theology and a university professor, Luther was studying and lecturing on the books of Romans and Galatians, among others. While studying Romans, Luther came upon the seventeenth verse of the first chapter. Paul was speaking about the gospel of Christ being the power of God unto salvation. Luther read these words, "for therein [in the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

The light began to dawn and the first glimmer of hope and joy penetrated his thinking. The gospel of Christ reveals or discloses the righteousness of God, a righteousness of which He is the author, a righteousness which He will accept and approve. All the time Luther had been seeking relief for a sin-distressed conscience in the righteous-

ness which his church taught and commended. All the time he had been seeking peace by a righteousness his own thinking commended. But now, in Romans 1:17, Luther found himself in the presence of a righteousness which is "of God" — a righteousness made known by God, provided by God, accepted by God.

In a sense, Romans 1:17 was the key which opened the rest of the Scripture to him. Luther understood that the only righteousness God would approve and accept was that provided by the obedience and suffering of Christ in His sacrificial death upon the cross. Further on in Romans were emblazoned the words of chapter 3:20-25a, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood..."

Justification is, to coin a word, "righteousification." Justification is when God declares the sinner to be righteous. That declaration is founded on the redemption paid for by the shed blood of Jesus. A sinner is declared righteous, not because of anything he has done in serving God, but only by what God has done for him. Redemption from sin, rescue from sin, deliverance from sin, rests in what Jesus did. "Jesus

paid it all, all to him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain — He washed it white as snow."

The pressing and unavoidable question which has ever been before man since Adam fell into sin is this: "How shall a man be just before God?" We are sinners; we are unrighteous. That means that God will not accept us and admit us into His favor and fellowship. The great crying need of sinful man is this one

Justification is, to coin a word, "righteousification." Justification is when God declares the sinner to be righteous. That declaration is founded on the redemption paid for by the shed blood of Jesus.

thing: a righteousness which will meet the approbation of God and in which man can know he has been pardoned of his sins and be admitted into the green pastures and led by the still waters of

communion with Him. The Reformation turned men away from the filthy rags of their own worthless righteousness to the perfect righteousness of God. The discovery of that righteousness was not a cold intellectual or a hot emotional group discovery. It was the discovery of one man from the Bible, brought about by the operations of the Holy Spirit.

A third vital truth of the Reformation was ...

The Necessity of Faith

Luther found the gospel in Romans 1:17: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." He realized that righteousness comes by faith — not by faith in what Luther himself had done, but by faith in what Jesus had done. Paul made that clear by adding, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Propitiation is that which satisfies, appeases, which quenches enmity and wrath. The shedding of the blood of Jesus on the cross satisfied the demands of God's justice in

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respect to sin. Sin was dealt with, not by God ignoring it or arbitrarily dismissing it from consideration, but by justice: Jesus paid the penalty by His sufferings. The benefits of His death accrue to a sinner by his faith in Jesus Christ, through *faith in His blood*, His atoning sacrifice. That faith is not blind; it is based on knowledge of the truth revealed in the Bible. Genuine faith embraces the truth and receives and rests in Christ alone for salvation.

As Luther was brought to understand and rejoice in the knowledge that his acceptance of God was not founded upon his own efforts, but on the work of Christ for him, there was a reformation in his own life. And as the knowledge of the gospel spread, a great reformation changed the known world of that time. Even today, whenever men renounce all confidence in their own works and acts of charity and believe on Jesus as God's Son, accepting His sacrifice for themselves, and assenting to His resurrection, there will be reformation in an individual life, in a church, or, even more widely, in public life.

A fourth blessed truth which brought about the Reformation, which sustained and widened it was recognition of ...

The Authority of Scripture

When Luther realized what the Scripture was saying about the righteousness of God, that it is all by faith and faith alone, he came to recognize that what the church had been teaching and what its visible head, the Pope, was saying, contradicted God's own Word. What especially led Luther to post the 95 Theses was the activity of a man named Tetzel. At that time, St. Peter's Basilica was being built in Rome.



Statue of Protestant Reformer Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany.

The cost of building it was tremendous. In order to raise money for the building, the Pope had authorized the sale of indulgences, which amounted to certificates of pardon for sin. One of the active and enthusiastic salesmen for the indulgences in Luther's neck of the woods in Germany was John Tetzel. He was proclaiming far and wide such things as, "Indulgences are the most precious and most noble of God's gifts.... Come and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned.... But more than this, indulgences avail not only for the living but for the dead.... Priest! Noble! Merchant! Wife! Youth! Maiden! Do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss: We are suffering horrible torments! A trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not." Tetzel was announcing, "When the money clangs in the box, the souls spring up to heaven."

Luther searched the Scripture; it gave no authority for the idea of indulgences. Pardon was by grace and through faith alone; it was not to be auctioned by the church or its representatives. At first, Luther thought Tetzel acted on his own and would not have the approval of the Pope; but in fact, the Pope did sanction Tetzel's activity. This led to a collision between Luther and the Pope, and ultimately the Pope excommunicated Luther. As time passed, Luther found more and more doctrines and practices held by the Roman church which contradicted or had no foundation in Scripture. Luther argued that any idea or practice that is not taught by Scripture has no authority and is actually anti-Christian.

Today we live with the innumerable blessings resulting from a Reformation which took place almost 500 years ago. The Bible has been preserved and translated into the language of the people, so all can read it. We enjoy the concept of Constitutional, representative gov-

ernment and our individual freedoms. Our own nation was founded on principles brought to light by the Reformation. There are many more good effects we have no time to mention.

But the greatest blessings of the Reformation are spiritual: We preach and believe in the Scripture's teaching of the great fact of sin. It is our spiritual bankruptcy, our consciousness of sin, which makes us yearn for a righteousness which will pass muster with God — a righteousness which, according to Scripture, is from God and is accepted by Him. It is a righteousness which is not of our own production, but is a gift of the grace of God. This righteousness is not imparted by some spiritual act of transfusion or injection, but rather is an imputed righteousness. It is charged to our account by God on the solid ground of Christ's obedience in life and His satisfaction of the demands of God's law by His death. Scripture teaches that salvation is by faith, that is the God-given instrument by which we trust in Christ, who is God's gift of a personal Savior to us. But this is a day when the authority of Scripture is rejected and undermined, often by those who seem to teach it and speak reverently of it.

If and when another reformation comes, it will take men back to the Bible as the revelation of God and they will accept that its teachings in all things have been kept from error. If reformation comes again, men will pick up the Bible with the confidence that the pronouncements of its pages are "Thus saith the Lord."

As we become more and more acquainted with the Protestant Reformation, the truth which is driven home into our heads and hearts is that it was ...

By God and for the Glory of God

It was God who raised up men like Luther. God gave Luther as a son to German parents. God gave

him the gifts of mind and personality which were used in igniting and fanning the flames of the Reformation.

It was God who gave Luther the father who, with hopes for his son's greatness in the world, sacrificed to give him an education. But it was God also who overturned the father's wishes about how Luther would attain to greatness, not only in Germany for his particular span of life, but throughout the whole world and down to the present age. We think his father's sternness toward him toughened Luther for the suffering and trials he would meet as the instrument God would use for bringing about the Reformation.

God used the power of nature through an electrical storm to turn the young Luther to a monastery where, with an overwhelming consciousness of sin, he struggled to find a righteousness which would gain him the favor of God. It was God who enlightened him to the truth of Romans 1:17 that "the just shall live by faith." It was God who put men in place to be, either knowingly or unknowingly, a help to the spreading of the Reformation. It was God in His absolute sovereignty, His absolute rule over men and events, who sent His Holy Spirit to deal with men concerning their sins and the inability of the church or themselves to save from sin, and to lead them to faith in Christ. The Bible says concerning God, "for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things...." But the Bible does not stop there. It goes on to declare, "to whom be glory forever" (Romans 11:36).

One cannot read the history of the Reformation without seeing that by God's own almighty power and sovereign will the glory of His grace radiated through the events of that period in history, during which thousands upon thousands turned to righteousness. In every place, in every time, in every life, God is still

sovereign. But it remains true that God can act at certain times and places in an exceptional way, an extraordinary way, to exhibit all the greatness of His being. That movement in history, when God turned multitudes to Christ for salvation in the 16th century, was by Him and for Him. Whatever lies before us, we may be sure of this: there will be a day when men will see Christ coming again in the glory of His Father with His holy angels. In that day we will understand, rejoice in, and be thankful for what God did by Luther, and also for what he has done for us, with a greater clarity and power. Thank God for the inspired and inerrant Scriptures. Thank God for our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God that we are saved by grace and through faith. Thank God for Luther. Thank God for the 16th Century Reformation. •



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REDEEMING THE TIME

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Redeeming the Time is a quarterly publication with the purpose of encouraging God's people and applying God's Word to the issues of our day.

Individual copies are distributed free of charge, but the generous donations of God's people are necessary for this ministry to continue. Checks may be made payable to "**Redeeming the Time**," and mailed to: **P.O. Box 26281, Charlotte, NC 28221-6281**. All donations are tax deductible.

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The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23

Faith

by Brad K. Gsell



In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes for us the fruit which is to be found in the life of every Christian. This is the eighth in a series of articles which will discuss these characteristics of the Christian life.

One may wonder why Paul includes “faith” in this list of the “fruit of the Spirit.” “Faith in Christ, after all, would seem to come before any of these “fruit of the Spirit” would be possible. Further, the word “faith” is found near the end of this list.

English theologian J.B. Lightfoot offers this good answer. He states: “The Greek word *pistis* seems not to be used here in its theological sense ‘belief in God.’ Its position points rather to the passive meaning of faith, ‘trustworthiness, fidelity, honesty’ as Matthew 23:23, Titus 2:10.... Possibly however it may here signify ‘trustfulness, reliance,’ in one’s dealings with others....” The verses referenced help with this understanding. In Matthew 23:23, Christ chides the Pharisees for omitting “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith....” In Titus 2:9-10, Paul writes: “Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity....” In both of these passages, the words translated “faith” and “fidelity” indicate something other than our initial belief in God.

In agreement with Lightfoot, William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, in their *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, state that *pistis*, in the passive sense, means “trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith.”

Lightfoot has a significant discussion of “The words denoting ‘Faith,’” in his commentary on *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*,

*“Moreover it is
required in stewards,
that a man be
found faithful.”
(1 Corinthians 4:2)*

located between his discussions of Galatians chapters 3 and 4. This study is quite helpful in showing the subtleties and full range of meaning involved in properly understanding the uses of this Greek word *pistis* [faith].

Lightfoot states: “The Hebrew אֱמוּנָה, the Greek πίστις, the Latin ‘fides,’ and the English ‘faith,’ hover between two meanings; trustfulness, the frame of mind which relies on another; and trustworthiness, the frame of mind which can be relied upon. Not only are the two connected together grammatically, as active and passive senses of the same

word, or logically, as subject and object of the same act; but there is a close moral affinity between them. Fidelity, constancy, firmness, confidence, reliance, trust, belief—these are the links which connect the two extremes, the passive with the active meaning of ‘faith.’ Owing to these combined causes, the two senses will at times be so blended together that they can only be separated by some arbitrary distinction.... In the case of ‘the faithful’ for instance, does not the one quality of heart carry the other with it, so that they who are trustful are trustworthy also; they who have faith in God are steadfast and immovable in the path of duty?”

The truth expressed in this last statement is central to the understanding of our passage. Those who have truly been saved by the power of God, through faith, are those who will stand firm for truth, and will be known for their “constancy,” “steadfastness,” reliability, and trustworthiness. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says: “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Being unreliable, undependable and willing to compromise the truth for the sake of personal ease and selfishness, is the opposite of this fruit of the Spirit. Are you one in whom people have confidence and trust, or do they have to look over their shoulder to make sure you will follow through and that you are totally honest in your dealings? John Calvin uses these opposite traits to bring home the true meaning being taught.

He writes: “*Faith* means truth, and is contrasted with cunning, deceit and falsehood, as *peace* is with quarrels and contention.”

Matthew Henry writes that Paul, in Galatians 5, refers to “fidelity, justice, and honesty, in what we profess and promise to others....” *The Pulpit Commentary* states: “[Faith] is having such a love for our neighbour that we would not injure him by breaking our promise to him. God is a Rock, with infinite tenderness, and there should be something of a rock in us, that dependence may be placed on us in the various relations of life.”

This “faithfulness” refers both to our relations with our fellow man, and much more importantly to our relationship with God. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

The Apostle Paul uses the word *pistis* or one of its various forms to describe his fellow laborers in the Gospel. In Colossians 1:2 he speaks of “saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” In Colossians 1:7, he describes Epaphras as “a faithful minister of Christ.” In Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21 he says that Tychicus is “a faithful minister.” In Colossians 4:9, he says that Onesimus is “a faithful and beloved brother.” 1 Corinthians 4:17 describes Timothy as “faithful in the Lord.” Peter describes Sylvanus as “a faithful brother unto you (1 Peter 5:12). These were not mere niceties, but showed that the Apostles considered these men to have this “fruit of the Spirit”!

The faithfulness described in this article is absolutely crucial in order for the Lord to use a man or woman for His service. Paul uses this word to describe himself in 1 Timothy 1:12: “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me

into the ministry.” Paul told Timothy: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). Unfaithful men were not qualified for this service to the Lord. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

Christian martyrs through the centuries have given everything in

order to remain faithful to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. The Lord tells us in Revelation 2:10 that the child of God is to be “faithful unto death.” We are to give our lives — our all — to serve the King of kings. Despite personal pain and tribulation, the one who loves his Saviour more than life itself will be “stedfast, unmoveable,” in his relationship with others and in his stand for the truth and obedient and loving service to God. •

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place, indeed ubiquitous, research continues to show that people who read linear text [such as books] comprehend more, remember more, and learn more than those who read text peppered with links....”

“The Net is, by design, an interruption system, a machine geared for dividing attention....”

“[We are going from] being cultivators of personal knowledge to being hunters and gatherers in the electronic data forest....”

“[We are becoming more like computers,] which are programmed for the high-speed transfer of data in and out of memory....”

Dangers to Memorization

Concerning memorization, Carr writes: “... by the middle of the twentieth century memorization itself had begun to fall from favor.... What had long been viewed as a stimulus for personal insight and creativity came to be seen as a barrier to imagination and then simply as a waste of mental energy.... The Net quickly came to be seen as a replacement for, rather than just a supplement to, personal memory.”

Dr. J. Gresham Machen warned of the folly of this thinking. He wrote: “The undergraduate student of the present day is being told that he need not take notes on what he

hears in class, that the exercise of the memory is a rather childish and mechanical thing, and that what he is really in college to do is to think for himself and to unify his world. He usually makes a poor business of unifying his world ... for the simple reason that he has no world to unify. He has not acquired a knowledge of a sufficient number of facts in order even to learn the method of putting facts together. He is being told to practice the business of mental digestion — but the trouble is that he has no food to digest. The modern student, contrary to what is often said, is really being starved for want of facts.”

Later, Machen wrote: “A mass of details stored up in the mind does not in itself make a thinker, but on the other hand thinking is absolutely impossible without that mass of details.... It is impossible to think with an empty mind.”

Carr would concur. He believes that “The web is a technology of forgetfulness,” and writes: “With each expansion of our memory comes an enlargement of our intelligence. The Web provides a convenient and compelling supplement to personal memory, but when we start using the Web as a substitute for personal memory, bypassing the inner processes of consolidation, we risk emptying our minds of their riches....”

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“As our use of the Web makes it harder for us to lock information into our biological memory, we’re forced to rely more and more on the Net’s capacious and easily searchable artificial memory, even if it makes us shallower thinkers....”

“When we outsource our memory to a machine, we also outsource a very important part of our intellect and even our identity....”

Carr brings up a case in point: “Don Tapscott, the technology writer, puts it ... bluntly. Now that we can look up anything ‘with a click on Google,’ he says, ‘memorizing long passages or historical facts’ is obsolete. Memorization is ‘a waste of time.’”

Just as bluntly, Carr closes this section by saying: “But there’s a problem with our new, post-Internet conception of human memory. It’s wrong.”

Dangers to Meditation

Meditation upon God’s Word is undoubtedly one of the most important duties of the child of God. A mere learning of facts, or memorizing words does not a godly Christian make. Princeton theologian Charles Hodge defines meditation simply as “the serious, prolonged, devout contemplation of divine things.”

Again, a direct corollary can be made from what Carr observes about the internet. He states: “The linearity of the printed book is shattered, along with the calm attentiveness it encourages in the reader....”

“The practice of deep reading that became popular in the wake of Gutenberg’s invention [the printing press], in which ‘the quiet was part of the meaning, part of the mind,’ will continue to fade....”

“The silences, the arts of concentration and memorization, the luxuries of time on which ‘high reading’ depended are largely disposed....”

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11).

When writing my main article for this issue, I couldn’t help but think of Mrs. Maurine Gordon when considering the subject of Scripture memorization.

When I was a teenager, Mrs. Gordon would often assign me — unsolicited(!) — portions of Scripture to memorize. I did memorize a number of those verses, but I fear I did not always meet her expectations! But, Mrs. Gordon didn’t expect anything of me and countless other young people who received her assignments, that she didn’t expect of herself!

Now, at 102 years old, Mrs. Gordon can still recite the ENTIRE book of Proverbs. I spoke with her recently on the phone. Totally blind, and with diminishing hearing, Mrs. Gordon spoke of “rejoic[ing] in the Lord.” She said if she ever starts to feel down, she claims Paul’s admonition to young Timothy: “...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).”

When I last saw Mrs. Gordon in person, a few months before her one hundredth birthday, she quoted a whole chapter from Proverbs word perfect! It certainly left an impression on me, and hopefully on several children who were also in our company.

When I called, I asked Mrs. Gordon for her formula for effectively memorizing portions of God’s Word, so I could pass it on for the benefit of the readers of *Redeeming the Time*. (Let me not forget to mention that Mrs. Gordon has been a school teacher to thousands of children throughout her life.)

She immediately responded that she knew of nothing better than the 3-R System.

The 3-R System

- Read each verse five times aloud. (Hearing it helps!)
- Recite each verse five times.
- Review each verse five times.

In addition, Mrs. Gordon suggested that it might be good to limit yourself to five verses at one sitting and to review these verses five days in a row. Also, doing this right before going to bed allows you to go to sleep with these verses on your heart and mind. Continual review, she insisted, is necessary to keep fresh the verses which have been learned.

—Brad Gsell



Conclusion

The internet has provided many wonderful tools and conveniences for all of us. However, as with most new technologies, it comes with its share of dangers and disadvantages (many of the more obvious ones not even discussed in this article). We

would urge all believers to take heed to the warnings stated here, and to be faithful in reading and studying, memorizing and meditating on God’s Word in a manner where “the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” •