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**WORDS FOR LIVING MINISTRIES**

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Dear Ones,

Spring 2020

I will make this as brief as I can make it and still make sense. I am going through a difficult time. But it is a magnificent time; for it will allow me more years to work, write, and serve you all.

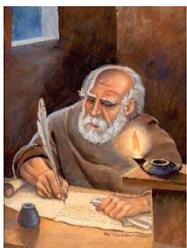
About 2 weeks ago I had a routine appointment in Gulfport for a chest X-Ray. As I got into my van to go there, I began to have significant pain in my chest but thought nothing about it. The farther I drove, the worse the pain became; and, as I drove west on I-10, I had a heart attack.

I didn't realize what was happening and just kept driving, anxious not to be late for my appointment. I never got the X-Ray—I guess I will sometime. Upon arrival I was taken by ambulance to the larger hospital in Gulfport. After tests, CT scans, etc. and one milder episode of the pain, cardiac catheterization found 90% blockage in the largest coronary artery (left main). Three days later I was taken home.

Nine days later, as I drove to church to teach our weekly Bible class, I had a second, very severe episode of the chest pain, and I couldn't walk from my van into the church. A friend who is a nurse and her husband got me into the church, I took a nitroglycerine tablet, and in about 30 minutes the pain subsided. I could walk with someone holding me, and my daughter Susan took me back to the hospital. Three stints were put into the large artery to open it.

I am back home now, recovering for a month; then I will have the aortic valve, the largest valve in my heart, replaced. After another month of recovery, I should be hunting bears with a buggy whip.

--Tom



*In the December newsletter we said that the Introduction to Acts would be continued in the next newsletter. The following is the conclusion to the Introduction to Acts:*

**C. Occasion.** Luke, a careful and diligent historian, desired that the history of the birth and early years of the Church be carefully and fully recorded, in the same way that he had researched and written his gospel account.

**D. Theme.** This book might well be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit," for throughout the book the principal character is the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus had promised, and for Whom He had commanded the disciples to wait ("...tarry ye in Jerusalem...")<sup>1</sup>. It is the Holy Spirit Whom they received in power at Pentecost, and it was He Who guided and empowered everything that the early Christians accomplished. Throughout the book, the emphasis is on the person and work of the Holy Spirit (and still is).

Acts is a book of miracles. There are so many miracles recorded in Acts that Dr. H.H. Halley (*Halley's Bible Handbook*) has observed appreciatively, "Take the miracles out of the Book of Acts and there is very little left."

***A Point to Ponder***

*"No one can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life."*

--Albert Einstein

**Christianity vs. Liberalism**

J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) was a Presbyterian New Testament scholar and Professor in the early 20th century at Princeton Seminary (1906-1929) who led the revolt against modernist theology at Princeton and formed Westminster Theological Seminary. The battle in his generation was against the "modernist" rejection of Biblical miracles and repudiation of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, and the bodily resurrection. Today's generational battle is the liberals' repudiation of Biblical sexual ethics, redefining marriage, and categorizing sin as not sin. Professor Machen was dedicated to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, a world-class authority on the New Testament (his text book on New Testament Greek is still used in

seminaries today), and a fearless warrior for the Bible as the word of God. He brilliantly summed up the difference between liberal and conservative theology: "*Christianity is founded upon the Bible. Liberalism on the other hand is founded upon the shifting emotions of sinful men.*" The stone marking his grave is inscribed "Faithful unto death" in Greek.

*In looking back at "The Good Word" of years gone by, we find that truth is timeless. The one below is from April/May 1997.*



Moses and the Ten Commandments

### When was the Old Testament Written?

Liberal theologians teach that the Old Testament was not put in writing until perhaps 200-400 B. C. They also teach that Moses was an illiterate tribal chieftain, and therefore he couldn't have written the law (Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible). What we call the Old Testament, they say, was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth ("oral tradition"), so that with the passing of time, much myth, fable and error crept in, especially in the first five books. This of course makes them able to say that vast portions are not to be believed; and this makes them able to choose which parts they believe (the parts they like) or not believe (the parts that make them uncomfortable), like sin, judgement, and miracles.

**But what are the facts?** Moses was reared in Egypt, the world's center of learning of that time, as the cultured grandson of Pharaoh. He received the best education on earth and undoubtedly could read and write several languages. And what does the Bible say about itself? That God told Moses, when he was 120 years old, to **write** all the words of the law **in a book**; Moses obeyed, and then commanded that copies of the book be made. Furthermore, Moses directed that when the Israelites crossed the river Jordan and entered the promised land, that they were to build a huge stone monument, plaster it and **write** the law on the plaster. Yes, Moses wrote the first five

books of the Bible in the last year of his life, and it has been in writing ever since. Scripture references are numerous: see for a start Ex 2:1-10, Deut 27: 1-4, Deut 31:22-26.

And, incidentally, the "Dead Sea" scroll of Isaiah, the oldest such copy known, is virtually identical with the book of Isaiah in your KJ Version Bible and the Masoretic Hebrew Scriptures: no "creeping error" there, in the last 2,200 years or so.

### Our Fathers' Wisdom

"If the power of the gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end." --Daniel Webster

### An humble man

Very early in January 2020 we learned that William (Bill) Lee, age 71 of Leesburg, VA, went to be with the Lord on December 31, 2019 after an auto collision. Bill was a long-time friend who was the developer of the mailing list for this (*The Good Word*) newsletter and also the creator of the original WFLM website, serving as webmaster for many years. During high school Bill began his love for media and for Christian ministry—a love which continued through his years as a high school band director, as founder of a youth ministry, and as a pastor of Christ Fellowship Church in Purcellville, VA. Bill was what everyone would call "a good guy" and someone about whom we can easily imagine hearing the Lord say, "Welcome home, good and faithful one."

### Milestones

**Died:** 27 May 2019 – Billie Russel Webb in Jackson, TN. He was an Army Veteran, farmer and botanist who shared the Lord through counseling and as a volunteer Chaplain to inmates at the Madison County jails and penal farm.

**Died:** 27 February 2020 -- Zina Lillard in Gulfport, MS at the age of 93. Zina served with her husband Bob as a full-time missionary for more than 35 years in Italy and then in Honduras at Hospital Loma de Luz and El Camino Bilingual School. Zina, the mother of my daughter-in-law Rosanne Lillard McKenney, was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother and was a blessing to all who knew her.

### A Final Word

I thank you, dear friends, for the Christmas cards and the get well cards. I can't answer so many, but each one is very precious to me.