

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word!" (II Timothy 4:2)

"Feed the Flock!" (I Peter 5:2)

"AND HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER..."

By James E. Gibbons

READ Matthew 26:36-46. We find the Lord Jesus earnestly praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. His career on earth was fast drawing to a close; his hour had come. Jesus was much used to praying, but that night he prayed a lot.

Among the prayers he prayed that night we find John 17. It begins in this manner: "Father, *the hour is come*; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." This "hour" had been a terrible weight upon the mind of Jesus from the beginning. He lived his life under the shadow of the cross. His first miracle was performed in Cana of Galilee after he had said to his mother, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4). His unbelieving brothers tried to get Jesus to identify himself prematurely at Jerusalem, but Jesus replied, "My time is not yet come" (John 7:2-8). Many other times Jesus had spoken of this "hour." Now it had come! He faced the awful prospects of the cross!

The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is a heart-touching and an agonizing experience. Since their secluded withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had tried to condition his disciples for this night (Matthew 16:21; 17:22, 23; 29:18, 19). The same dis-



ciples who had been privileged to witness the transfiguration slept during the ordeal of the Garden. As Jesus penetrated more deeply into the Garden (and into his sorrow), leaving the three disciples supposedly stationed behind, we read: *"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (Matthew 26:39).

Beloved, any way we look at it, this matter of going a little farther characterized the whole life of Jesus, and it likewise should characterize our lives. Let us use this theme to bring out several lessons on how Jesus "went a little farther."

I. JESUS WENT A LITTLE FARTHER AS FAR AS SIN IS CONCERNED.

The Biblical history of man (and any other history) is the history of sin. From Genesis onward the sorry story is the same. Listen to Isaiah: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6a). "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (64:6). Paul in the epistle to the Romans shows that all men can be justified by the gospel (Romans 1:16). However, his first main argument is to show that all are under condemnation because of sin, whether Jew or Gentile. Hear him: "...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:9b, 10). Then he

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Proverbs of Today

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Faith keeps the man who keeps his faith.

"Excuses are really so small that a person can be seen every time that he tries to hide behind one."

A body ought to be busy, but not a busybody.

"Faith changes the heart of the sinner, repentance the life, and baptism the relationship (Galatians 3:27)."

The best way to get your mind off yourself is to get it upon others.

"Growling all day will make a fellow dog-tired at night."

If we fail to plan, then we plan to fail.

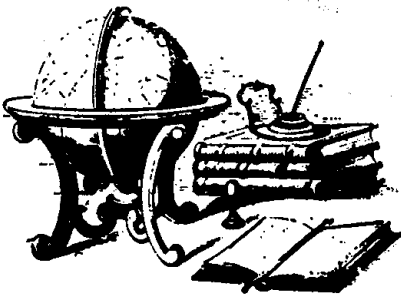
"The right use of today is the best preparation for tomorrow."

Fill each day with good deeds, and you will have a full life.

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ORDER BOUND VOLUMES OF THE SWORD AND STAFF (Two books, covering 4 years, 1957-1960, with only 2 or 3 issues missing; plenty of sermons, studies, and devotional material): Total price: \$3.00.

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EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

CATCHING UP TO DATE

For some time THE SWORD AND STAFF has been going into the mail a little late each month; then with the slowness of second class mail that has made the delivery even later. We are trying to get caught up with the date on the paper. Consequently we are doing the following. On this issue you will find the dates of June (July), 1968. This will in no way change the number of papers you will receive for your subscription (you will receive the full twelve). And this will bring the date on the paper up to date.

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Answers to: KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE Bible Quiz

- 1. (1) Book; (2) Writings; (3) Contract or Agreement; (4) The "called out;" (5) Dip or Immerse; (6) Anointed; (7) Father of a great multitude; (8) Laughter; (9) Supplanter; (10) Prince of God.
- 2. The Pentateuch. 3. Genesis 3:15; 4. Adam was 930 years old.
- 5. Southern part: Judaea; Northern part: Galilee; Central part: Samaria.
- 6. Nazareth. 7. The last week of his life leading to the cross.
- 8. First, James; Last, John. 9. Read I Timothy 2:12-14 for the answer. 10. Read Revelation 1:9 and 10 for the answer.

How Much Does Sin Weigh?

An open air preacher was telling the gospel story, when a thoughtless youth yelled out, "You tell us about the burden of sin, I feel none." Then he flippantly added, "How much does sin weigh? Eighty pounds? Ten pounds?"

The preacher answered, "Tell me, if you laid a four hundred pound weight on the chest of a dead man, would he feel it?"

"No, because he is dead," answered the youth.

The preacher responded, "And the man who feels no load of sin is dead spiritually."

The youth's remark only proved where he stood. How true is the declaration of the scripture, "Dead in trespasses and sin." (Eph. 2:1) Do you feel the burden of your sins?

-Voice of Truth

INNER REBELLION

Mother told her boy to "sit down," but he didn't obey her. So she took hold of him and sat him down. He looked at her defiantly and said, "I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside."

One's true attitude is measured by what he does on the "inside"—the heart—rather than the outside, which is merely "outward appearance."—Christian Victory

SYSTEMATIC

Scriptural Studies

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Introduction:

1. We didn't get to see Jesus the first time he came, but Jesus is coming again!
2. It is a shame that this subject has been clouded with controversy and speculation.
3. Let us eagerly look into the Scriptures on this wonderful subject.

I. WHEN WILL CHRIST RETURN?

A. We do not know the exact time.

1. There are many false conceptions.
 - (1) During the last century it was a common practice for men to set dates.
 - (2) Out of some of that thinking has come the 7th Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, etc.
 - (3) In recent time some modern critics have said the 2nd coming of Christ happened on Pentecost and others when one accepts religion, thus really no 2nd coming.
2. Scriptural teaching.
 - (1) Christ is coming the 2nd time in reality (Hebrews 9:28).
 - (2) No man nor angel in heaven knows the time --only the Father (Mark 13:21-23; 32,33).
 - (3) His return will be as "a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:1,2; II Peter 3:10).

B. However, certain things point to the time of His 2nd coming.

1. The great religious apostasy would come first --*It has come* (II Thess. 2:1-12).
2. False Christs and prophets would arise--*They have* (Matthew 24:11-13, 23,24).
3. The gospel would be preached to all nations --*It evidently has been* (Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:23).
4. Times would be as in the days of Noah--*They are* (Matthew 24:37-39).
 - (1) Normal everyday life--not expecting flood.
 - (2) People were exceedingly wicked (Genesis 6:5-7).
 - (3) Only a few people were saved: 8 people of the entire world (I Peter 3:20; Luke 18:8)
5. It is important that we always be ready for we don't know when Christ is coming (Matthew 24:42-44).

II. HOW WILL CHRIST RETURN?

A. Every eye shall see Him.

1. In like manner as His disciples saw Him go in-to Heaven He will come (Acts 1:10,11).
2. Every eye shall see Him (Revelation 1:7).
3. Like the lightning (Matthew 24:27).

B. He will be accompanied when He returns.

1. Accompanied by angels (Matthew 16:27; 25:31).
2. Accompanied by 10,000 holy ones (Jude 14).

C. Explanation of His 2nd coming.

1. Notice I Thessalonians 4:16,17.
2. He will descend with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.
3. The dead in Christ will arise from the grave.
4. After the dead have arisen, those still living will be changed and caught up with them into the clouds.
5. They will meet the Lord in the air to go to be forever with the Lord.

6. NOTE:

- (1) All (righteous and wicked) will be resurrected at the same time (John 5:28,29)
- (2) The earth will be destroyed upon Christ's coming (II Peter 3:10-12).
- (3) No where does it say that Christ will set a foot upon the earth.

III. WHY WILL CHRIST RETURN?

A. A summary.

1. To raise the dead (John 5:25,28,29).
2. To judge all men (Jude 14,15).
3. To reward the righteous (Matt. 25:31-34).
4. To punish the wicked (Matthew 25:31-33,41).
5. To destroy the world (II Peter 3:10).
6. To deliver the kingdom to the Father (I Cor. 15:24).

B. The Judgment.

1. This great judgment of all men will follow the return of Christ.
 - (1) Judgment is as certain as death (Hebrews 9:27).
 - (2) All must appear before the judgment seat (II Cor. 5:10).
 - (3) Men will be separated as sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46).
2. The kingdom will be presented to the Father.
 - (1) I Corinthians 15:24.
 - (2) Revelation 21:3-6.
 - (3) John closes the Revelation in 22:17 and 22:20 with a great invitation and a great anticipation.

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There is nothing petty about Christianity--and there should be nothing petty about Christians.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

By James E. Gibbons

A FEW YEARS AGO while "making tents," I was continuously approached about joining the local Ministerial Association. Finding time, I finally said to the denominational preacher, "If you want us to work together, why don't we really come together: drop the name _____, conform to the Bible plan of salvation, and take the Bible as your only rule of faith. True unity is more than a non-aggression pact. After all, this is what the Lord wants." The immediate reaction was, "Oh, no, no! I think denominationalism is a good thing. It makes everybody do a better job."

Nevertheless there is a great move toward unity and union in the religious world. There is the National Council of Churches and the World Council where the basis of unity seems to be association rather than conviction. What one believes or does not believe seems not to matter--evident from the fact that many in that association do not accept the inspiration of the Scriptures nor the actual deity of Jesus. There is the Roman Catholic Church which claims that unity can be reached only by submitting to the pope and recognizing so-called apostolic succession. Then there are those who profess some sort of allegiance to the concept of the "New Testament" church but who seem to have developed a distorted view of unity (or fellowship). There is much talk of "dialogue" with denominations. Sometimes it appears hard to put your finger on what people mean by "unity" or "fellowship."

But let us say that: all effort toward unity and fellowship must be the "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT" (Ephesians 4:3), and hence the "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13), or all such effort completely meets God's disapproval and is not "Christian" unity. It becomes an unholy thing in the sight of God.

Therefore, since the "unity of the Spirit" is what God wants, let us seek to know what all this involves.

I THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS ATTAINED IN THE BODY WHERE THE SPIRIT DWELLS.

When the gospel of Christ is preached, the Holy Spirit brings about conviction in the sinner (John 16:7-11; Eph. 6:17). According to I Peter 1:22, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Acts 2:38 shows the details of this operation where this same apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name



of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" Thus, as a man repents and is baptized into Christ, he is "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). Then to sum this up, Paul says it is by the agency or influence of the ONE Spirit that we have all been brought to be baptized into ONE body (I Cor. 12:13).

The ONE Spirit has brought us into the ONE body; this ONE body is the church (Colossians 1:18), which is also referred to as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit in two different ways. The individual member of the Body (the Christian) has the Spirit and is a personal temple of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; I Cor. 6:15-20). The second way is that the church in a collective sense, as the church at Corinth, is the temple of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:21,22; I Cor. 3:16,17). Therefore, any way you look at it, the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit--the Spirit dwells in the body.

Why all this talk? Our subject is "the unity of the Spirit"--the kind of unity God wants. The unity of the Spirit must be attained where the Spirit is--in the church. How can we talk about unity with the denominational world on a "dialogue" basis? For the most part, they practice sprinkling and do not baptize for the remission of sins if they do immerse; thus, they have not been baptized into the ONE body where the Spirit dwells. Rather we must preach Christ to these dear people, which involves preaching baptism (Acts 8:35,36). We must tell them to

accept Christ Scripturally, and "Christian" unity will be realized when they are united with Christ (Galatians 3:27) by being baptized into the ONE body through the influence of the ONE Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) and where the Spirit thereafter dwells. "Christian" unity is determined by whether I am united with Christ and am consequently following His Word and not by whether I support any man's organization of any kind.

II. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS ATTAINED BY THE TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

Jesus promised His apostles, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Note also John 16:13. Paul reminded Timothy that all Scripture has been given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16:17), and Peter pointed out that holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20:21). In speaking of the words of the Old Testament, they are called words of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16). The New Testament is the Spirit speaking to the churches (Revelation 2:7, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22, etc.).

Therefore, if we are to have "the unity of the Spirit," it must be on the basis of what the Spirit teaches, His very doctrine, which is the Word of God. That is the reason Jesus prayed in John 17:20-22, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me *through their word*; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Notice it says, "through their word" (the apostles' word, which was inspired by the Spirit). Paul charged in Romans 16:17 that division was caused by teaching doctrines contrary to what they had learned--contrary to the apostles' doctrine and hence the teaching of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to that, the Spirit-inspired doctrine of the apostles was the basis for unity.

John, the beloved and inspired, says to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1). The only way we can do this is by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Then as a follow-up of this verse: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6). When one departs from the doctrine of Christ and will not repent, he is to be avoided (Romans 16:17). If we bid him "God speed" we are partakers of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11). True unity (or fellowship--the expression of it) is a triangular experience. Our fellowship with one another is determined by our fellowship with God (I John 1:6,7). If one of us breaks this fellowship with God by sin or false hood, we "automatically" break it with one

another. To have fellowship with apostasy is not "Christian" nor is it "the unity of the Spirit" but it is an unholy thing in the sight of God.

The platform for unity as taught by the Holy Spirit is outlined in Ephesians 4:4-6. Seven things are laid down. Seven in the Bible suggests completeness. We read, "There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

III. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS BASED ON THE WORDS OF THE SPIRIT.

The apostle Paul said, "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 (words)" (I Cor. 2:13). Furthermore, "Hold fast the form of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13), and Titus was likewise exhorted to use "sound speech" in his teaching (Titus 2:8). The word translated "sound" in II Timothy 1:13 means wholesome in contrast with that which is sickly and diseased. They were to use healthy words and doctrine which the Holy Spirit revealed. Paul did not use the high sounding philosophical terms of the Greeks, nor did he use any other diseased terminology which would distort the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Beloved, if we are going to have real unity, if we are going to return to apostolic Christianity in all its purity, we must call Bible things by Bible names. This is a language all of us can understand, and all who accept the Bible can accept it without question. This language conveys just exactly what the Holy Spirit meant. I don't mean that all of us will have to learn Greek and to conduct our worship in an "unknown" tongue. No, just use the Bible language as it can be most literally translated into the language of our day, language which gets across what the Holy Spirit meant. Let us weed out of our vocabulary the diseased terminology which suggests apostate religion.

The religious world is flooded with artificial, philosophical, theological, and denominational words which, in the language of the Holy Spirit, are not wholesome. They do not convey the doctrine revealed in the Bible. We could give a list that would be legion. Denominational names stand opposed to the glory of God, promote division, and must go (I Cor. 1:12,13; 3:3-5; Colossians 1:18). Religious titles such as "Reverend," "Father" and "Doctor" are completely out of harmony with the religion of Christ (Matthew 23:1-12; Psalms 111:9). As another example, the "clergy" and "laity" concept is not found in the New Testament. People talk about the "sacrament" or the "eucharist"--words which furnish false ideas. In reference to salvation, people speak of "join-

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ing the church" and of "praying through." You cannot join the Lord's church; you must be born into it (John 3:5) or added to it (Acts 2:47). Salvation is not gained by "praying through". Then there are certain Bible terms which are used incorrectly in current religion. Among these are to be found "Brotherhood," "Disciples," "Baptism," "Pastor," "Evangelist", "Altar," "Sanctify," and many others.

Perhaps it is hard to correct our religious vocabulary, but it is imperative to attaining "the unity of the Spirit." Our Lord said, "Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh." The depth of our concern to return to the pattern of the unity set forth in the Scriptures will be reflected in our language because that reveals our innermost selves. The Bible is my textbook of religion; I know what you are talking about when you use the language of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise I am confused.

IV. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS REALIZED BY THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

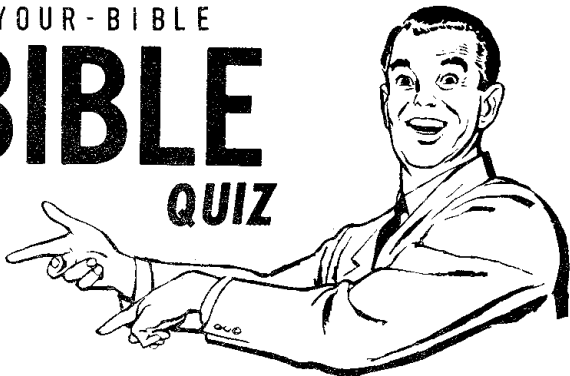
Beloved, we may be orthodox in our convictions, but if we do not manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit, I am afraid there will not be unity for long. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Listen to the apostle Paul: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law' (Galatians 5:22,23). Hear Paul again: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). All of these characteristics emanate from a soul that has surrendered to Christ. The good and gentle Spirit of the Saviour has clothed the convert with a pure, gentle, and refined nature. Where there is no fruit of the Holy Spirit, there is no Holy Spirit.

It is of interest to notice that Paul prefixed his seven "ones" in the platform for unity with these words: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). Such words as these stand out: "all lowliness and meekness," "long suffering," "forbearing...in love," and "in the bond of peace." It took much of the influence of the Holy Spirit to help the Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14-17) live together in harmony in the one body. No doubt their different backgrounds would tend toward trouble without the fruit of the Spirit.

But, of course, "goodness," "righteousness," and "truth," are mentioned as fruit of the Spirit. One may have been baptized, but if he does not produce these things in his life, there can be no "unity of the Spirit." It is futile to talk of having fellow-

KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE

BIBLE
QUIZ



1. What do the following words literally mean?
(1) Bible: (6) Christ:
(2) Scriptures: (7) Abraham:
(3) Covenant: (8) Issac:
(4) Church: (9) Jacob:
(5) Baptize: (10) Israel:
2. What are the first five books of the Bible commonly called?
3. Where is the first promise of the coming Saviour found in the Scriptures?
4. How old was Adam when he died?
5. What was the major southern part of Palestine called in the time of Christ? the northern part? the central part?
6. Where did Jesus grow up and spend the early part of his earthly life?
7. What short period of the life of Christ do the gospel writers give more attention to in detail than any other?
8. Who was the first and who was the last apostle of Christ to die?
9. What two reasons does the New Testament give for women not teaching or usurping authority over man in the church?
10. Where was John and on what day did he receive the Revelation (last book in the Bible)?

(Answers to "KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE" Bible Quiz found elsewhere in this issue).

ship with everyone who was once baptized with that alone as the sole criterion. I would have to believe "once in grace, always in grace" to hold such a view. I would have to disregard what the Bible teaches on disfellowshipping the unrepentant erring "brother." These qualities of character must be developed to maintain "the unity of the Spirit."

Therefore, in the light of our examination of this subject of unity, we conclude that the kind of unity God wants and recognizes is "the unity of the Spirit," which is manifested in a very practical way. It is reached and manifested in at least four ways: (1) the unity of the Spirit is attained in the body

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sums it up by saying, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). It seems that all men are helplessly and hopelessly lost because of their sins.

But this is not the end of the unhappy story. There was someone who "went a little farther." Hebrews 4:15 relates: "For we have

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where the Spirit dwells, which is the church; (2) the unity of the Spirit is attained by the teachings of the Spirit, which is the Word; (3) the unity of the Spirit is based on the words of the Spirit, Bible terminology for Bible things; and (4) the unity of the Spirit is realized by the fruits of the Spirit, which is essential in our relationships.

"Christian" unity is determined by whether I am united with Christ and consequently am following his Word and not by whether I take part in these pseudo-unity movements, nor by whether I support any man's organization of any kind. In fact, the said organizations are a detriment to "the unity of the Spirit" and are prolonging denominationalism. The organization of the church is local and functions from a local base. With no organization save the church, with no rule of faith save the Bible, with no name save those divinely given, and with no headquarters save that in heaven, denominationalism is an impossibility. Though the whole denominational world unites to become one denomination with their man-made organizations and agencies and neglects the simple teachings of the Scriptures, it would no more be the Lord's church and they would no more be practicing "the unity of the Spirit" than before they united.

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not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." The Lord Jesus Christ was tempted following his baptism, but not then only. We read: "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13). What Peter has to say about this is likewise wonderful. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:22, 23).

Isn't this amazing?! Isn't that wonderful?! From the rank and file of humanity came one whose lot was not to be the common lot of all. The Son of Man, the Son of God, has gone a little farther! And what does this mean to us? "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). For further prophecies read verses 10 and 11. Let Peter conclude his words in I Peter 2:22-24, where he speaks of the sinless Christ. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Oh, here is the apex of it all: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). Beloved, Jesus, "went a little farther," and, Oh, the eternal consequence of this for humanity!

II. JESUS WENT A LITTLE FARTHER AS FAR AS LOVE IS CONCERNED.

The history of man is the history of war and violence. Man in his natural state is selfish, self-centered and much of the time given to hate. The law of Moses even allowed man to hate his enemies (at least this was the interpretation put on it by

the Pharisees), for Jesus observed: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy" (Matthew 5:43). The "golden rule" was the best that the law of Moses had to offer. It reads: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). That is a very good rule, but not without defect. One's standards would determine its worth. *As we would have men do to us might leave the door open for sin with some people.*

But Jesus "went a little farther." The Pharisees said to love your neighbors and to hate your enemies. What did Jesus say? "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:44, 46). Then Jesus gave a new commandment concerning love. Listen: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" What made this commandment new? How did Jesus go a little farther? Love one another *as I have loved you*. This puts it on a plain above every other command concerning love. Jesus loves us more than we love ourselves. A slight insight into the dimension of this love is found in John 15:12 and 13 where this command is restated. This additional information is given: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Don't you agree that Jesus "went a little farther" by dying for us on the cross, then by commanding that we should love one another as he has loved us? I John 3:16.

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This should make us want to go a “little farther” in every respect. In the first place this goodness of God should lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). John testified that “we love him, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19). This love should make us want to keep his commandments (John 14:15; I John 5:3), and by God’s love and mercies we present our bodies a living sacrifice in his service (Romans 12:1). Can we do any less? This is our “reasonable service.”

III. JESUS WENT A LITTLE FARTHER AS FAR AS HIS TEACHINGS ARE CONCERNED.

The ancient Greeks developed great systems of learning and philosophy, but in the midst of it became exceedingly depraved and morally bankrupt. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 3:7). First Corinthians 1:18-31 is a very good treatment of this--“the world by wisdom knew not God.” The Jews thought of themselves as superior since God had given them the law, and they gloried in being teachers of this law. But they converted the righteousness of the law into self-righteousness by pride (Romans 10:1-4). The teachings of the Old Testament were good, but deficient and not permanent. The scribes and Pharisees took this law and taught a legalistic, traditional righteousness which they allowed to be dominated by pretense and materialism (Matthew 5:20-6:33). The letter of the law was taught, but the very heart and spirit of the law neglected.

But Jesus “went a little farther.” His teachings surpass anything this world has ever heard. He was and is *THE MASTER*. The Greek philosophers sought to define truth and the reality of being. Jesus introduced people

to reality and truth, while at the same time being the perfect embodiment of what he taught. He claimed: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). According to Paul, he is the Christian’s “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (I Cor. 1:30). In him are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). All wisdom and knowledge, both spiritual and physical, are found and are ultimately to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father through him made all things and sustains them by the word of his power (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus replaced the law of Moses, it being nailed to the cross, with a more spiritual system. As elsewhere has been brought out, he “went a little farther” and solved the sin problem. Then by prophecy Jeremiah envisioned that the law of Christ would not be merely external, but internal, being obeyed by changed hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34). These teachings begin within and work outward, not just an external legalism. It is the law of the Spirit (Romans 8). It involves the total person. The Sermon on the Mount definitely shows that the Lord “went a little farther.” The very principle and spirit behind the law must be obeyed from the heart. Legalism is not enough.

Let us go a “little farther” with the teachings of Jesus. Let us sit at the feet of the Master. We must be Scriptural in what we do and teach, but that is not enough if by this we mean legalism. Let us be imbued totally with our total person in the religion of our wonderful Master.

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ “went a little farther” into the Garden that night, “and fell on his face, and prayed.” Oh, what an ordeal he had to endure! On the heels of the prayers came Judas with the betraying kiss. The mock trials, the humiliation followed. The Lord was ready for

it. Calvary, crucifixion and death--he experienced it all to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. He drank the bitter cup. He tasted death in behalf of all men. He “went a little farther” again. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead” (I Cor. 15:20,21). “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin...But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:55-57).

Beloved, any way you care to look at it, Jesus “went a little farther.” As far as sin is concerned, as far as love is concerned, and as far as his teachings are concerned--and these are only a few of many things we could list. May he really be the Lord of our lives; let us go all the way with him! What a wonderful Saviour!

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