

The **Sword** AND **Staff**

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

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

OFFENDING PEOPLE

By **DAVID KIRK**
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• *"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe on me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea"—Matthew 18:6.*

SINCERE GOSPEL PREACHERS strive to present the truth simply and without unnecessary offense. Their earnest desire is to so preach that many will believe and obey the gospel of Christ, and so that babes in Christ will mature unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But in spite of our best efforts some are offended by the message we preach, or the way it is presented.

Some with a desire not to offend and others with a desire to please people have resorted to such watered down and weak and anemic preaching that souls are undernourished and ready to perish. They remind me of poor cattle that have foraged all winter for food and that look like if the spring grass had waited one day longer in its appearance, they would have died.

The subject of offending people is often misunderstood. What does the word offend mean? (1) "To cause someone to sin." (2) Secondly, to displease. We must seek constantly to avoid causing someone to sin. We also should strive to please people, but not at the expense of compromise.

Let me illustrate these two ideas which are used to define offense. When a false doctrine is preached, all who accept it are offended—caused to sin by it. On the other hand, when



the truth is preached, some are also offended—they are displeased with it because it exposes some sin in their lives or some false doctrine that they have been taught to believe.

In daily life we speak of "offenders of the law." The offender breaks the law. He may be punished because of his crime. One who is led to violate the law through his example or teaching is offended—led to sin.

Law abiding citizens who preach keeping of the law may offend the lawless; in other words, displease him. The law breaker feels condemned by the law abiding citizen. To illustrate with a Bible example, Abel obeyed the command of God and offered the sacrifice required by the Lord. Cain killed Abel because he was offended by his brother's example. Cain was so angered by the rejection of his sacrifice and God's acceptance of Abel's, he was so displeased, that he killed the only brother he had.

Some contend that Matthew 18:6

would rule out strong preaching that denounces sin. They say that kind of preaching offends people. Let us ask just one simple question. Does this type of preaching cause people to sin? Or does it just displease some because they do not want to give up things that are wrong in their lives, or to give up traditions that they have cherished from childhood?

The apostle Paul wrote, "...if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (I Cor. 8:13). While he was careful to avoid causing offense in matters of indifference, yet he commanded Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5:20). From these Scriptures it is readily seen that faithful gospel preaching is commanded rather than condemned by the Word of God.

Let us examine further the ways preaching offends people. First, let us look at some examples of preaching that offended because the hearers were caused to sin by it. Jeremiah writes, "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray..." (Jer. 50:6). Being led by unfaithful shepherds, Israel came to despise and kill the faithful prophets. Stephen, with this in mind, said to his audience, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers per-

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Proverbs of Today

Water seeks its own level and likewise we know what kind of person you are by the company you keep.

"A lie is never so dangerous as when it is woven into a fabric of truth."

Some people are more interested in the applause of men than they are the approval of God.

"If you were arrested and tried for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

Sometimes you hear people say that what we need is a little more tolerance and understanding—HOWEVER, if we understand some things we can't tolerate them.

"If you have not often felt the joy of doing a kindly act you have neglected much and mostly yourself."

When your religion becomes a source of pride, rather than humility, then there is something wrong with your religion.

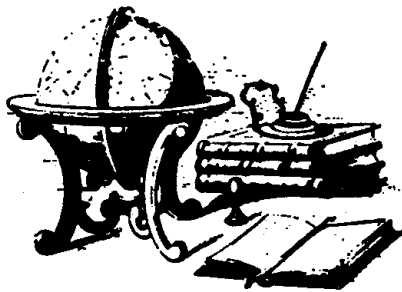
"The Lord offers no consolation without first the necessity of reconciliation."

No man can teach others what he does not understand himself.

"Brooding over your troubles will hatch despair."

Verily I say unto you, He who comes to church to win a pin or beat a contest has his reward.

"It is better to die doing right than to live doing wrong."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT necessarily a set of rules, prescribed law, or a moral code. If the essence of Christianity were these things, why did Christ come into the world? Man already had a law that must be rated superior in these respects. The Psalmist wrote: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psalms 19:7-9).

However, we can safely and truthfully say that Christianity is Christ. It is that simple. Paul, writing of his preaching among the Corinthians, said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). The Great Commission had said to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). What is the gospel (good news)? Paul defines it as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4) and consequently and ultimately our resurrection (I Cor. 15:20; II Tim. 1:10). To the Ethiopian, Philip "opened his mouth... and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). In the following verse, the Ethiopian spoke, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" How did he know he had to be baptized when Philip simply preached unto him Jesus? The obvious answer: to preach Jesus is also to preach baptism. Even as Jesus died, was buried, and then resurrected, sinners must die to sin in self-crucifixion, be buried in baptism with Christ, and resurrected to walk in newness of life (Romans 6; Gal. 2:20). To accept Christ and serve him is to become "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). To the Colossians (and to us), Paul admonished, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Paul wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). Peter wrote that Christ had left an "example, that ye should follow in his steps" (I Peter 2:21-23). John wrote, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (I John 2:6). To preach about the church is to preach about the kingdom of Christ and the body of Christ (Col. 1:13, 18). We observe the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:20), which concerns the body and blood of Christ, on the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7). Prayer is to be made in the name of the Lord Jesus (John 14:13). These observations concerning Christ, doing everything in his name, etc., could be multiplied many times if we examined this matter further. It is evident that every particular of Christianity involves Christ. Christianity is the living, loving, pure and surging personality of Christ embodied and relived again in Christians. Redemption through Christ brings us into this experience with Christ.

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OFFENDING PEOPLE...
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secuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). Isaiah shows the attitude of Israel toward faithful teachers in Isaiah 30:10, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things..." And Isaiah warns, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

Becoming offended at the faithful word was not confined to Israel of the Old Testament period of history. Jesus said of the seed (the word of God that fell on stony ground), some who heard it "dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the WORD, by and by he is OFFENDED" (Matthew 13:21).

The Pharisees were offended at the preaching of Jesus when he exposed their transgressions. The disciples said to Jesus, "...knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying" (Matt. 15:12). (Jesus accused them of worshipping in vain, see Matt. 15:9).

Paul wrote, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:23). The preaching of the cross offended, displeased, many of the Jews and Greeks. But Paul kept right on preaching the cross and Christ crucified. He further wrote, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ,

and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). He thus preached for he knew that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation. And the gospel includes the fact that "Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3). Because of his faithful preaching some were offended at Galatia for Paul wrote, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16).

Faithful evangelists today offend some (displease them) when they expose their false teachings. For example, when it is shown that there is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5); that this one baptism is described as a burial and resurrection likened unto the burial and resurrection of Jesus (See Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12)—therefore sprinkling and pouring are not baptism, but are traditions of men. Some are offended, displeased.

When it is preached and taught that there is "one body" (Eph. 4:4), that this one body is the "church which is his body" (Eph. 1:22, 23) and therefore there is only one true church of Christ, multitudes who have been deceived by false religionists are displeased, made unhappy and often angered. What they fail to see is that their anger while directed at the faithful preacher is in reality against God and the Lord Jesus Christ who commanded men to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2).

When Mark 16:16 is preached: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" throngs cry out in protest to the words of Jesus. Many of these attempt to use the last half of this verse to deny that Jesus meant

what he said in the first half. But all such are not rejecting the faithful man who presents this truth, they are rejecting the Christ who commanded that this message be preached in "all the world... to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Cries of angry protest go up by crowds of deceived people when the words of Peter in Acts 2:38 are preached—"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." They insist that baptism is NOT for the remission of sins. Such are not disputing men but God, for Peter was speaking "as the Spirit gave... utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Again a cry of anger goes up when a preacher quotes Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." All who oppose these words seem to forget that it was the Lord who said to Saul: "...go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou MUST do" (Acts 9:6). And it was the Lord who sent Ananias to Saul with the words found in Acts 22:16. To reject the message of Ananias to Saul is to reject the Lord who sent him.

Many professed Christians are angered when we quote "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy..." (I Cor. 3:16, 17), and use it as a warning against Christians smoking, drinking, using narcotics, etc., because they are harmful to the body and do destroy the temple of God.

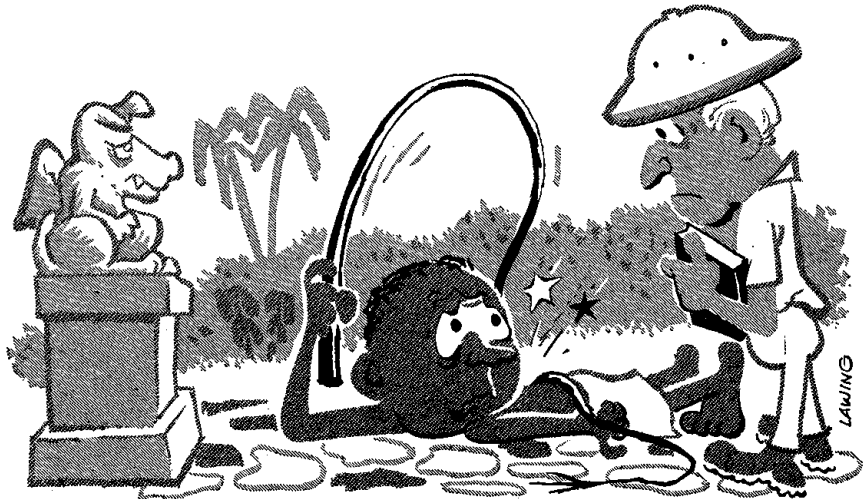
For example, the average non-smoker lives six years longer than the smoker. The best medical authorities testify that the use of tobacco causes lung cancer. Only one out of twenty who discover that they have lung cancer are alive five years later.

As to alcohol, the average non-drinker lives twenty years longer than the alcoholic. To say nothing of the fact that the institutions for the insane are crowded with the victims of the use of alcohol. And thousands die on the highways every year because of drivers who drink. Prisons are crowded with the victims of drink. Children go hungry, homes are broken by divorce, and all kinds of crimes are committed by people filled with alcohol.

Narcotic users, according to an authority in the U.S. Treasury De-

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WHAT IF ...



"No thanks. I figure one religion is as bad as another."

OFFENDING PEOPLE...

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partment, die of tuberculosis at the rate of four to one; pneumonia, two to one; premature old age, five to one; bronchitis, four to one; brain hemorrhage, three to one, and more than two to one of a wide variety of other diseases. And besides this, suicide is common among drug users.

It is a fact beyond contradiction that tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics do destroy the body. Therefore those who object to the teacher or preacher using I Corinthians 3:16, 17, against such use would do well to examine themselves and see if they are resisting the will of God or man.

How can we keep from being offended?

We can keep from being offended by studying the Bible so as to be able to recognize the truth when it is preached. We need to be more like the Bereans who "...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). We must "study to show thyself (ourselves) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). If we carry out the instructions of these two verses of Scripture, we will recognize the truth when it is preached. We will by the same means be able to recognize error when it is taught.

When the truth is convicting us, we need to get rid of sin or accept the light of God's word instead of getting angry (like the Pharisees) at the preacher.

When truth is rejected, persecution in one way or another often follows. Stephen was killed by his audience when he preached them the truth. Herod's brother's wife whom he was living with was so infuriated by the truth that she had John the Immerser beheaded when he exposed her sinful life.

We may not know all the false doctrines in the world, but if we know the truth we can avoid the questionable and doubtful courses that we face in life. We can be like the seasoned river boat captain who had piloted ships on the Mississippi river for many years. Once he was asked: "Captain, do you know all the dangerous places on the river?"

He answered, "No, I do not know all the dangerous places on the river, but I know the safe course and I follow it all of the time." It would certainly be wise if we would so acquaint

ourselves with the Word of God that we too can follow the "safe course," the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life.

It behooves us to preach carefully and teach the truth lest we cause any to be offended, led into sin. We must preach it even if all men are offended (angered) by it.

Christ himself was a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (I Peter 2:8). He makes it clear that the majority will not accept the truth when he teaches that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). Thousands turned away from Jesus because they were offended (displeased) with the truth. See John 6:66. Since they turned away from Jesus because he brought them the truth, should we be surprised when the truth is offensive when we preach it today?

Because men do not like the truth is not sufficient reason to cease from preaching God's message. Paul wrote, "If I were yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). And "so we speak not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (I Thess. 2:4).

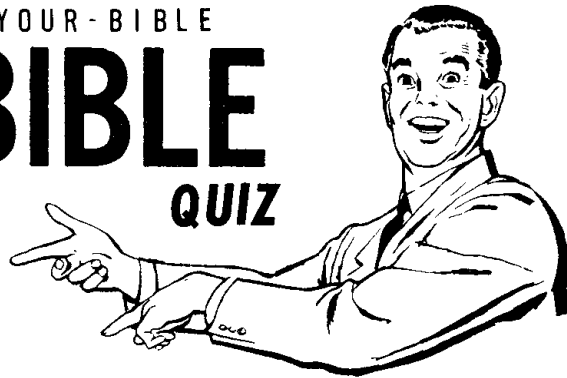
The truth must be preached for it alone will free—"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32), and it is the truth that purifies the soul. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..." I Peter 1:22.

Getting back to the illustration of the undernourished cow, she may die from lack of food or she may die from poison. And people may die spiritually from lack of truth presented

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KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE

**BIBLE
QUIZ**



1. Not counting the women and children, how many Israelite men came out of Egypt in the exodus?
2. In the first "numbering" of the children of Israel in the wilderness, how many men were counted "twenty years old and upward"?
3. In the "numbering" just before the conquest of Canaan how many were there?
4. What ancient Palestine city was called the "city of palm trees"?
5. What interesting details does Jude give about the death of Moses which are not found in the O.T.?
6. What were the names of Job's friends who came to visit him during his afflictions?
7. The superscription placed over the head of Jesus was in what three languages?
8. Where was Paul when he wrote the I Corinthian letter?
9. Who jointly sent greetings with Paul in I and II Thessalonians?
10. What was the problem in reference to Diotrephes in III John?

(Answers found elsewhere in this issue)

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

Luke 17:11-19

• By Russell Crum
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AS JESUS WAS on his way to Jerusalem, passing through Samaria and Galilee, he entered into a certain village. There met him ten men who were lepers, which stood afar off. They lifted up their voices, pleading for mercy to be healed. When Jesus saw them, he gave them instructions to be healed when he said, "Go shew thyself unto the priests." As they obeyed and went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. Notice how many returned to thank the Lord and give glory to God for being healed. Verse 15 says only one out of the ten returned to give thanks and praise God. This one was a Samaritan, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel, as is spoken in Ephesians 2:12. This is the thing that caused Jesus to ask the questions in verse 17—"WERE THERE NOT TEN CLEANSED? BUT WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

We might think within our own minds that maybe the other nine were so happy to be free from their leprosy that they forgot to return and thank the Lord. Or maybe they were afraid to return for fear that they might contact the disease again. Or perhaps they thought that it wasn't important or didn't make any difference to Jesus whether they returned or not. Or maybe they were so excited that they didn't want to take time to return and thank the Lord. But whatever their thoughts might have been, it still remains that they were not grateful enough to return along with the one and give thanks unto the Lord and glorify God for his goodness to them.

As I read the account of the ingratitude of these nine lepers, it reminds me of some of the members of the church today.

I can hear Jesus say when the church gathers together, "WHERE ARE THE NINE?" Did he not cleanse more than these? Revelation 1:5 reveals that "he loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Do his promises mean nothing to the nine? Jesus promised in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Do not his warnings have any effect on them? Hebrews 10:25,26 reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves



together... For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Do they not know and realize they are treading under foot the Son of God and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing and have done despite to the Spirit of grace? This is spoken of in Hebrews 10:29. Do they not know that the church is the most important thing to Christ on earth? Acts 20:28, speaking of the church, says, "which he hath purchased with his own blood." Do they not realize that there are more services for the Lord than just Sunday mornings? Where are the nine on Sunday night, Wednesday night, or any other night that the church gathers together?

I read a story about a man who owned a dog. It seemed that this man wanted to get rid of the dog, so he stopped along a highway and dumped the old dog out thinking that he would find some other home. But the faithful old dog, not knowing why his master put him out, never left the area where he was dumped from the car. He still had faith that his master would return for him. People of that area say the dog stays in the same spot and watches faithfully as cars come and go, longing and ever hoping that each distant car drawing nearer will bring his master back.

As we visualize that faithful dog, our thought change. We now see the Lord Jesus himself, patiently waiting week after week, longing for the return of those who at one time in the services confessed him with their mouth as they said, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" as they surrendered their

lives to him to be buried with him in baptism that they might be cleansed from their sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And so, week after week he waits with his church for their return. WHERE ARE THE NINE?

WHERE ARE THE NINE who should be setting aside their tithes and offerings as the Lord has prospered them? Do they not realize that everything belongs to the Lord anyway and that he just lets them use these things for a little while? I Cor. 10:26 reads, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Do they not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel are to live of the gospel? (I Cor. 9:13,14). Do they not know that Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). Many of God's "store-houses" are empty because some of the members are not giving as the Lord commands. I ask, WHERE ARE THE NINE?

WHERE ARE THE NINE when there is visiting to be done? Do they not know what pure religion is? James 1:27 tells us what pure religion is. (There must not be respect of persons as far as visiting is concerned. James 2:9 says, "But if ye have respect of persons ye commit sin."). Notice the condemnation pronounced upon all who do not minister unto the needs of the ones in Christ. Read Matthew 25:41-46. Yes, WHERE ARE THE NINE when there is visiting to be done?

WHERE ARE THE NINE when there is work to be done at the church buildings? It is a lot easier to hire it done than put forth an effort to do it ourselves. Many are not willing to take a little time from other things to help in the upkeep of the buildings so that the money saved could be used to spread the gospel. Notice I Cor. 3:13. Too many are letting the cares and riches and pleasures of this life choke out the Word from their lives and therefore bring no fruit to perfection as spoken of in Luke 8:14.

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ANSWERS to "KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE" BIBLE QUIZ

1. Exodus 12:37; 2. Numbers 1:45, 46; 3. Numbers 26:51; 4. Deut. 34:3; 5. Jude 9; Deut. 34:5,6;
6. Job 2:11; 7. John 19:19,20; 8. I Cor. 16:8; 9. I Thess. 1:1; II Thess 1:1; 10. III John 9,10.

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OFFENDING PEOPLE

(Continued from Page 4)

by compromising teachers and preachers, or they may die of the poison of false doctrine, the doctrines of men, for such makes worship vain. See Matthew 15:9.

The words of Jesus about offending in Matthew 18:6 are a frightening warning, not to the faithful preacher of the gospel, but to the compromiser who withholds truth or who preaches false doctrine.

We who are teachers and preachers must remember that our commission to teach is from God, not man; that our message is from God, not man; that we must answer to God and not man in the Judgment day. And remember the warning of James – “My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive greater condemnation”(Jas.3:1).

To all who listen as the message of God is preached, be like the Bereans, receive the words with all readiness of mind, do not become offended (angered) by the message of God for it is the Word of God that we shall face in the Judgment. Jesus said “the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”(John 12:48). He also said, “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God”(John 8:47).

May we examine our own hearts. Are we of God? If so, we hear God’s word. Are you of God? Do you receive all the message of the Lord? Do you gladly receive the word when it is preached?

Let us also examine our teaching and preaching. Are we faithfully presenting the message of life to a world dying in sin? Are we living the life required by the message we preach? Remember we may cause others to stumble not only with our teaching, but by our example as well. God help us to be an example in word and deed that our lives may be acceptable to the Lord and an influence in the world that will cause none to be lost and many to be saved. □

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

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I ask, WHERE ARE THE NINE when things need repairing on the Lord’s house?

There are many other things concerning the church that we could ask about, “WHERE ARE THE NINE?” but let me conclude with this thought.

God wants his servants to have initiative and fervency of spirit. He also wants his servants to do good to all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith. God does not want his servants to have to be pushed continually in order to keep them devoted to his cause. He wants them so devoted and consecrated to his cause that no one will have to try continually to get them to attend all the services all of the time; so devoted that no one will have to plead continually with them to visit the sick, the fatherless and widows in their affliction; so devoted that when there is work to be done on the buildings, the repairs will be made because all “had a mind to work.”

There is no doubt that there are some who are idle who must be petted, babied and exhorted to get them to do more than they do. James 4:17 condemns this. “Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

I plead with the church today. Let us not be guilty of being one of the nine, but let us be the one to thank the Lord for all his goodness to us and live so as to bring honor and glory to God.

**ARE YOU ONE OF THE NINE
OR ARE YOU THE ONE?** □

God Is Seen in All His Works

I sing the mighty power of God,
That made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad,
And built the lofty skies.

I sing the goodness of the Lord,
That filled the earth with food;
He formed the creatures with His
word,
And then pronounced them good.

Lord! how Thy wonders are displayed,
Where’er I turn my eye!
If I survey the ground I tread,
Or gaze upon the sky.

Creatures that borrow life from Thee
Are subject to Thy care;
There’s not a place where we can flee
But God is present there.”

—Watts

We are living in the era of the short sermon—short in length, short in content, and short in pleasing God!

THE NUMBERS OF CALVARY

THE LORD’S SUPPER retells the story of Calvary, symbolizing in a meaningful picture all the minute details of the sacrifice. If we can remember those details as we partake, then we may do so in “a worthy manner.” Perhaps aiding our remembrance of that sad day, we might recall the simple numbers, one through seven, that are woven into the story of Calvary.

“ONE” describes the cross upon which our Savior died, for he alone lived “without sin” and he alone “died for our sins.”

“TWO” is the number of robbers who died on the crosses beside Jesus. A believer on the right side and an unbeliever on the left. The cross of Christ is still the line of demarcation between a believing and an unbelieving world.

“THREE” points to the superscription, written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, proclaiming Jesus “King of the Jews.” Perhaps the three languages suggest the universal significance of the event.

“FOUR” is the number of the soldiers who parted Christ’s raiment.

They sought his meager material possessions to the neglect of a priceless spiritual opportunity.

“FIVE” wounds pierced the body of the Savior. With five stones David went forth to slay the giant and with these five wounds Jesus crushed the head of Satan and laid a rose of immortality upon every grave.

“SIX” hours of spiritual “death” were suffered by Jesus upon the cross. Forsaken by God, he knew the separation from the Father, which is death. An infinite being, without sin, he suffered hell for us in those six hours.

“SEVEN” times Jesus spoke as he uttered his last words to man while suspended there upon the cross. These words offer hope to all who will hear them and accept Jesus as the Son of God.

There is divine purpose in the detailed story of the crucifixion. We must never be unmindful of what Jesus has done for us. Let us remember these events, one through seven, when we again “break the bread” and “drink the cup.”

—Words of life

EDITORIAL COMMENTS . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

The preaching of the gospel needs to be and must be Christ-centered. We need Christ-centered obedience—not just response to a set of rules. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). Christianity involves obedience to the faith” (Romans 1:5; 16:26; Acts 6:7) —not “obedience to the law.” Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Christ is the object of faith and the motive of obedience. It is not enough, nor is it sufficient to preach a rigid moral code—the law of Moses provided that. We must convert people to Christ, and then through Christ they can be properly motivated and spiritually empowered to be found obedient unto God. The law of the Spirit in Christ brings victory whereas regular law, though perfect, proved to be a failure in producing obedience (Romans 8). □

MORE ABOUT THE ALLEGED DARWIN BOOK

IN THE OCTOBER issue of this paper we reprinted an article from a publication on our exchange list under our own caption, “Evolution: Darwin’s Other Book.” We got this article from THE TRUTH publication, where it was titled, “Evolution: The Untold Story of Charles Darwin.” The information was new to us, and we passed it on to you. However, certain questions have come up about this supposed book in the which he was said to have repudiated his former views on evolution. The editor of THE TRUTH has this to say about the article and book.

In our July issue we reprinted (from a paper in West Virginia) an article entitled “EVOLUTION: The Untold Story of Charles Darwin” in which it was said that he wrote a book, in his old age repudiating his earlier teaching which contradicted the Mosaic account of Creation. The editor of the paper from which the article was taken wrote me that he had read the book. He said his father brought home a copy from a seminary in Germany. The book, he said, was printed in England.

We have received numerous letters and telephone calls concerning the matter. Some were from scientists who believe and literally the biblical account of creation. A brother in Louisville, Ky., reprinted the article from THE TRUTH. He, too, has had numerous inquiries. Several of us have been trying for several weeks to verify it. The one who said his father brought a copy from Germany says he has written his brothers and sisters to see if they can find the copy among their books.

If a copy can be found, or if, in any way, the matter can be verified we will publish the facts in THE TRUTH. Many who would like to know that Darwin wrote such a book feel sure he did not. I am beginning to feel doubtful about it. We are still trying to verify the article. We will publish the results of our search when we get something definite. We are sorry we published it without making further investigation.

THE CASE OF THE ROTTEN VIOLIN

The great violinist, Paganini, willed his marvelous violin to the city of Genoa, on condition that it must never be played upon.

Wood, while used and handled, wears but slightly. Discarded, it begins to decay. The lovely-toned violin has become worm-eaten and useless except as a relic. It is only a reminder that a life withdrawn from service to others becomes quite useless. □

—20th CENTURY CHRISTIAN

CHURCH IN THEIR HOUSE

(From GOOD NEWS)

IT’S REALLY a sad occasion when a child of God has to leave a church organization because it isn’t the Lord’s church. It’s even sadder when he can’t locate another group which is following the New Testament plan for the church. But all is not lost!

There is another alternative. It’s a bold step, an ambitious undertaking. Few are willing to try it. But the rewards are rich.

Did you ever consider throwing open the doors of your home and inviting others in for church? Consider it now.

In making farewell acknowledgments to Christians in Rome, Paul greeted Priscilla and Aquila and “the church that is in their house” (Rom. 16:3-5). Paul didn’t feel the significance of his statement like we do. In this day of palatial church structures the idea of a church convening in a private residence seems incongruous. It seems almost beneath God’s dignity!

The Biblical fact of the matter is that no congregation of Christians owned a church building in apostolic times. A private residence served well for their religious gatherings.

And so it has for revolutionary saints in the 20th century. Church buildings are expensive and small groups of Christians have found homes to be satisfactory for assembling for Bible study, preaching, the Lord’s supper and prayers. Stained glass, oak pews and a pipe organ don’t make a church of Christ.

“But there are too many churches already,” someone protests. There are? Too many where Christ is glorified as Lord? Too many where His blood is offered as remedy for man’s sin? Too many where His plan for the church is being carried out?

Nonsense! □

How to Guard Your Lips

1. Open your mouth WIDE at the THRONE OF GRACE;
2. Open it SLOWLY in CONVERSATION;
3. THOUGHTFULLY in AFFLICTION;
4. NOT AT ALL in repeating the faults of others, except when the honor of God and your duty to man requires.

READERS'
... Response

SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA:
■ "Please stop sending this maga-
zine to my wife as she believes you
are wrong about sanctification, bap-
tism, and feet washing—I know so."
(We have never written on the sub-
ject of "feet washing"—how did you
come to a conclusion about that?—Ed).

BLOOMFIELD, IOWA:
■ "We liked the way you answered
Mr. Meadows. Many need the truth but
a genuine love needs to go with it or
people tune us out. Some of us Chris-
tians think by keeping silent its be-
cause we have love. I guess we do—
love of self."

WEST JEFFERSON, N. CAROLINA:
■ "Just received and read the Jan.
issue of The Sword and Staff. I heart-
ily commend you on the article 'Are
Visions, Dreams and Religious Ex-
periences Proof of Salvation?' and
the excellent answer to the letter in
'Speaking Out'. Surely anyone who
believes the truth can see the error of
this man's reasoning..."

BAYAMON, PUERTO RICO:
■ "Thank you for the paper 'The
Sword and Staff' and may our heav-
enly Father continue to bless you in
this endeavor. Too bad this paper is
not in Spanish, but we have some Span-
ish speaking people that also read
English. I also appreciate your article
on the Lord's Supper which is appear-
ing in various papers; also I took
the liberty and translated in Spanish
for our Spanish Bulletin and mimeo-
graphed it last year. Thank you for
writing it. I noted you have a sequel
and with your permission I may trans-
late that one."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
"In fellowship with Jesus, He BEARS
our burdens and SHARES our joys."

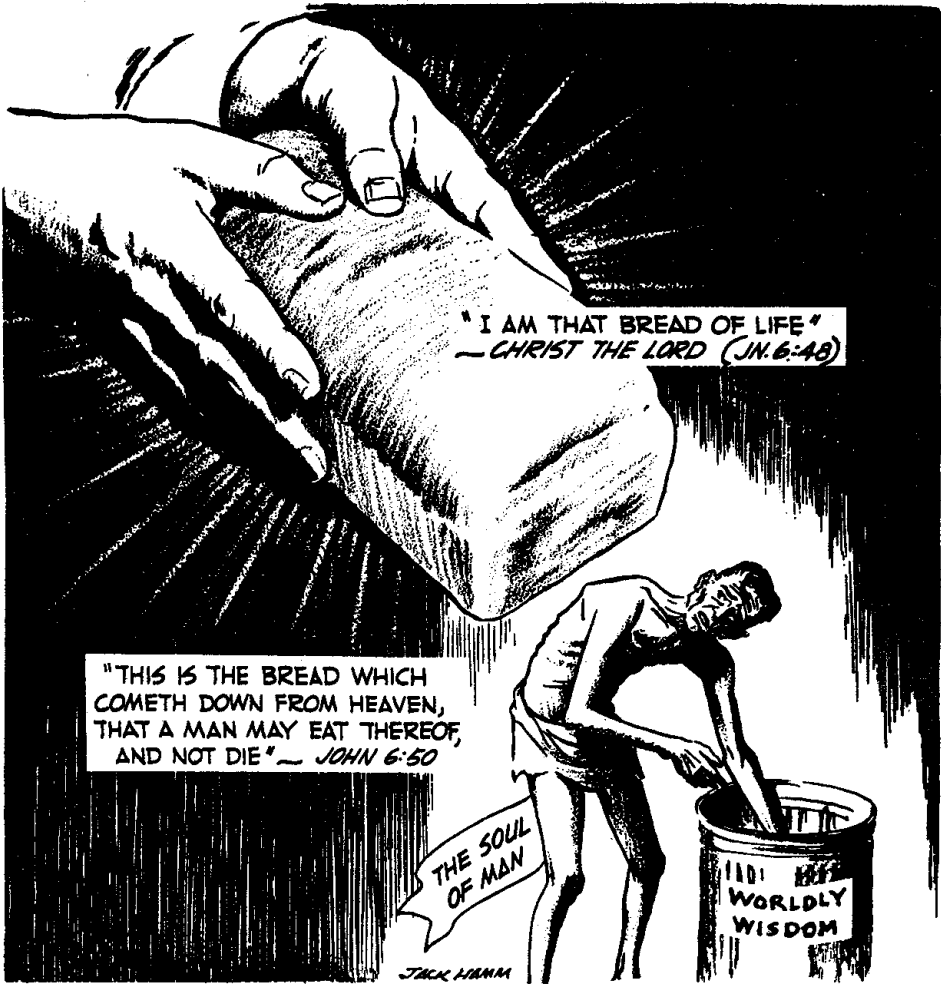
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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umes are wanted. ☐



NEW TOOLS OF TRUTH READY
We have recently printed some
new tracts and materials which we
believe you will find very usable in
the cause of Truth. The titles and
price listings follow.

- ARE VISIONS, DREAMS, AND
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES PROOF
OF SALVATION? (12 pages) - 5¢ a
copy (in certain areas of this country
this tract needs wide distribution; per-
haps it is just what you need).
- ARE YOU SANCTIFIED? - 2¢ a
copy.
- I SAW HIM STANDING THERE
(Or, The Old Gospel Preacher) - 1¢
a copy.

CLIP AND MAIL
Please send copies of
the song HIS CHURCH IS MARCH-
ING ON at 5¢ a copy.

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