

The Sword AND Staff

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

• *"Feed the Flock."* (I Peter 5:2)

FAITHFULNESS *in Obeying the Lord's Commands*

By JAMES E. GIBBONS — 1535 Fairfield Drive
Mount Airy, North Carolina 27030

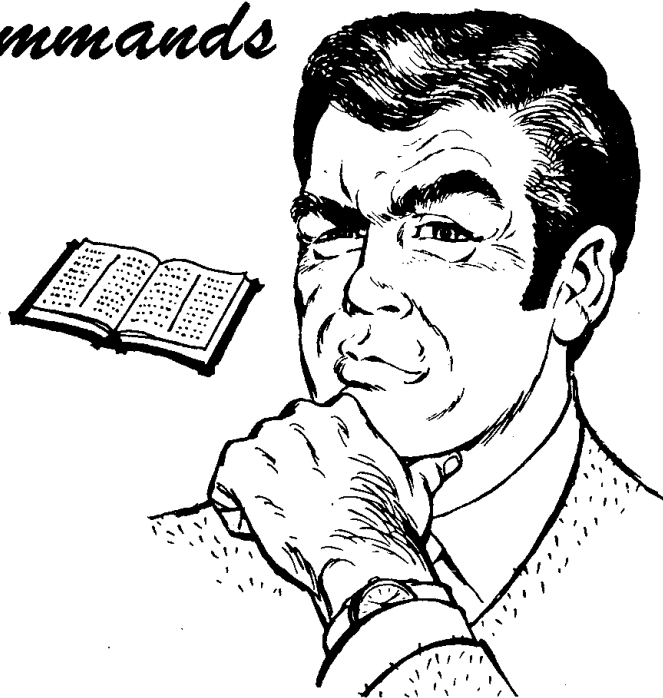
It would be good for new Christians to read this article and others who may be having trouble living the Christian life. After all, the faithful Christian life is the more abundant life. After all, the crown of eternal life is only promised to those who remain faithful in obeying the Lord's commands (Revelation 2:10; 22:14).

I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING FAITHFUL IN OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS.

This is the testimony of the Scriptures. Revelation 22:14 reads, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." As we know, this word "BLESSED" in the original language means to be happy or fortunate—even to the point of being envied by others. Certainly such is to be found in obeying the Lord's commands. Have you ever thought why a hypocrite plays the part of a hypocrite? The answer is rather simple. He is a hypocrite because he knows that that which he is pretending to be like, and is not, is better than what he is. The good way of life is better than his way of life. Proverbs 11:19 should be remembered as a principle that always holds true. Note: "As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death."

And, truly, being faithful in keeping the Lord's commands brings a blessedness that is not to be found anywhere else. This is the testimony of the "beatitudes" in the first part of the "Sermon on the Mount" spoken by our Lord (Matthew 5:1-12). If you notice the word "BLESSED" is found time and time again here. We have already given its definition.

He starts out by saying, "BLESSED are the poor in



spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven," then continues, "BLESSED are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. BLESSED are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Please keep in mind these "beatitudes" are given, it seems, in progressive, graduated steps. He starts out at the starting place, being "poor in spirit." By this he means that we must get to the place where we see our own spiritual bankruptcy and unworthiness before God before we can proceed any further before God. The person who comes face to face with himself (and God) is a good candidate to find true happiness. "BLESSED are they that mourn" follows logically. When we see and recognize our spiritual bankruptcy, it should produce godly sorrow. We will bemoan our condition and situation. The next "beatitude" is a natural off-shot from this one—"BLESSED are the meek." Recognizing our unworthiness, and bemoaning it, will change our attitude toward others.

(Continued on Page 3)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

Post Office Box 147
Mount Airy, N. C. 27030 U. S. A.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Introductory—\$1.00 for the first year; Regular—\$1.50 for renewals thereafter (a year); Bulk—.80¢ per copy a year when sent in bundles of at least five to one address. Other arrangements. Send a list of names and addresses, and they will be sent free samples for inspection.

THE SWORD AND STAFF is published bi-monthly sponsored by the Locust Grove church, Iron Ridge Rd., Galax, Virginia. James E. Gibbons is the editor. Second class postage paid at Mount Airy, N. C.

RENEW your subscription when it is due—no notice will be sent.

Proverbs of Today

One is made to wonder if the disconcerted noise called music today does not reflect the disconcerted lives of the musicians and those who like to listen to it.

"Hell is for two classes of people: those who will do anything, and those who won't do anything."

We won't get accepted by others until we learn to accept ourselves.

"Making marriage work is like running a farm—you have to start all over again each morning."

In our zeal to be righteous let us not become self-righteous.

"Courtesy is said to be contagious, and what we need is a good epidemic."

Yesterday is gone; tomorrow is uncertain; today is here—use it!

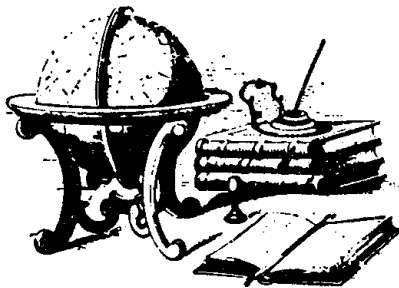
"A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them."

Faithful church attendance is one of the marks of a faithful Christian.

"You cannot kindle a fire in any other heart until it is burning within your own."

No day is so long and unsatisfying as that day that accomplishes nothing specific.

"God rewards not according to the amount of work done, but according to the faithfulness in doing it."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

NEW BI-MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES and RENEWAL DATES

SINCE WE HAVE now been approved for bi-monthly mailing of THE SWORD AND STAFF, the regular subscription rate will be \$1.50 a year instead of \$2.00. Introductory (first time) subscriptions are \$1.00. The subscription rate is merely a formality of a suggested sum as an offering to help defray the cost of publication.

Some have questioned as to when they should renew their subscriptions, since we don't send out a notice. We don't send out notices because of a lack of time. We are happy if we get the money to operate on and are not strict about renewal dates. However to help you remember when you subscribed (or someone subscribed for you), on the new address masters we are making for our addressing machine, we are printing the date your subscription was entered in our records. You can take it from there. Thanks.

EDITORIAL

By-Ways

AN UNEXPECTED TRIP TO BIBLE LANDS—NO. II

THE PLACES TOURED

IT MIGHT be of interest for me to summarize the main places visited in the Bible lands tour that I unexpectedly took this early spring.

Our tour of Rome was short, which included stopping at the Coliseum and St. Peter's Basilica (at the Vatican), besides seeing many noteworthy things in passing.

We came in contact with so much in Israel that it would be hard to tell you about it all, for about every foot of that land is packed full of Bible-related happenings. I will list some of the places visited (but not all of them): Jerusalem, Sychar, Samaria, Megiddo, Nazareth, Tiberias, Caesarea Philippi, Capernaum, Sea of Galilee, Bethshan, Acre, Mt. Carmel, Caesarea, Joppa, Ashkelon, Bethany, Jericho, Dead Sea, Qumran, Massada, Hebron, Bethlehem, Mt. of Olives, etc., etc.

In the days spent in Greece we visited Athens (the acropolis), Delphi, and Corinth. All of this proved very interesting, informative, and worthwhile.

We did not visit Egypt on this tour, which I very much regret. There are plans in the making to go on a similar

(Continued on Page 4)

FAITHFULNESS IN OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS

(Continued from Page 1)

We will not be arrogant—we will be meek.

In the midst of these "BLESSED" this "beatitude" now appears. "BLESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." May we, may the whole world, realize this truth! Happiness is not attained by seeking after happiness. It comes as a by-product of seeking after righteousness; being right with God, keeping His commands. True happiness will be forever a fleeting, elusive thing to the world (both now and hereafter).

Next we read, "BLESSED are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. BLESSED are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. BLESSED are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." These are logical and appropriate statements to follow what has already been said. We have found mercy in turning to God, and we will show it in our dealing with others. We have become pure in heart, and singleness of heart characterizes our life. Being at peace with God, it is natural that we will be a peacemaker among our fellowmen. All of these things make for happiness.

Finally we read, "BLESSED are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. BLESSED are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. REJOICE, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." When we have attained the righteousness the Lord is talking about in this Sermon on the Mount, we will be persecuted. The key verse to this Sermon is Matthew 5:20, saying that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees before we can enter the kingdom. When we attain this righteousness, the world will hate us, but we will be happy people. This righteousness is found in Jesus and in keeping his commands.

There are many other Scriptures we could point out that show the blessedness in keeping the Lord's commands. Paul testified that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8). We get a double-barrel shot at this blessed state to be found in our religion. Such Scriptures as Romans 14:17, Philipians, and Romans 8:28 are very impressive.

But there is another side to this: *The blessedness of being faithful in obeying the Lord's commands is seen by taking a look at those who do not obey these commands.* Remember Proverbs 11:19. "As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death."

This writer could tell you of multiplied cases from real life, from personal experience and observation, but it would be much too personal. These people who have disregarded the unchanging principles of right and wrong have done so to their own hurt and sorrow (even now and surely hereafter). We could tell you of the heartaches of broken homes, of bruised and battered lives, all because people have carelessly disregarded what the Bible teaches concerning fidelity in marriage. We could tell you of people who would like to do right, but seemingly can't because they have so destroyed themselves with strong

drink and drugs they have lost control of themselves. We could tell you of people behind bars in prison because they have broken the laws of man and of God.

Even in this life many times the consequences of sin are reaped. Hebrews 11:25 tells us that Moses forsook Egypt rather "than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." And that is the story of sin. For a while there is pleasure in sin, but it usually is short-lived. Sooner or later we will find that sin has the sting of death in it. Even in this life we can discover that "the way of the transgressors is hard." Regardless, "the wages of sin is death." And "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We may think that our sins haven't caught up with us, as we are so busy living a "fast" life. But in death and the judgment we will come to a grinding halt, and every sin that we have ever committed will come sliding in an ugly heap upon top of us to testify against us. Hell is the only place we can go if our sins have never been forgiven.

Yes, in summing it up, let us say that Jesus and Satan typify the blessedness (either way you look at it) in keeping God's commands. The angel told Joseph, having reference to Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The name "Jesus" means saviour, and the message about Jesus is called the gospel, meaning the good news. But in sharp contrast with this, the name "Satan" means enemy, and "Devil" denotes a slanderer—one who speaks against us. So, on the one hand we have the good news of the one who wants to save us, and on the other we have one who is our enemy and slanders us. He wishes to destroy us. To serve Jesus is a blessed state because of the relationship we have entered and because of that which we have left and avoided. Either way you look at it, the blessedness of being found faithful is emphatically emphasized.

II. THE SECRET OF BEING FAITHFUL IN OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS.

The Secret of being found faithful in obeying the Lord's commands is to realize we can't be faithful. (Please read on and take what is said in its context).

This is the story of the Bible—the unfaithfulness of man. We classify Bible history under three main periods: namely, the Patriarchal, the Mosaical, and the Christian ages. What characterized each period? During the Patriarchal age, when God dealt with the heads of the tribe or family, they had no written law. With the coming of the Mosaical age God gave an involved set of laws and commandments to Moses for the Israelite people. Now we are living in the Christian age, an age not without law, but characterized by grace. God's revelation has been in progressive stages (periods or ages), and each one got a point across to mankind in retrospect. Whether with or without law, man still missed the mark in pleasing God. The bringing in of the Christian age was designed to solve man's problem.

Anyway you look at it, all have sinned and come short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). Paul called the O.T. system (Mosaical) the law of sin and death. It seems it was calculated to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin—just how awful

(Continued on Page 6)

MY BIBLE AND I
(John 3:31-33 and Psalms 119)

We've traveled together,
My Bible and I,
Through all kinds of weather,
With smile or with sigh!
In sorrow or in sunshine,
In tempest or calm!
Thy friendship unchanging,
My lamp and my psalm.

We've traveled together,
My Bible and I,
When life had grown weary,
And death e'en was nigh!
But all through the darkness
Of mist or of wrong,
I found there a solace,
A prayer, and a song.

So now who shall part us,
My Bible and I?
Shall "isms" or schisms,
Or "new lights" who try?
Shall shadow for substance,
Or stone for good bread,
Supplant thy sound wisdom,
Give folly instead?

Ah, no, my dear Bible,
Exponent of light!
Thou sword of the Spirit,
Put error to flight!
And still through life's journey,
Until my last sigh,
We'll travel together,
My Bible and I.

By CHARLES SANDFORD

HOW GOD SOMETIMES ANSWERS PRAYERS

I asked God for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for but everything I had hoped for. And despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am among all men most richly blessed. —Selected—

EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

(Continued from Page 2)



(Picture taken by editor of Olive trees in Israel said to be 2,000 years old)

tour in the spring of 1977, which will include Egypt. Remember that. Perhaps you would like to go on this "tour of a lifetime." More will be said about that later.

SMALL, RUGGED, AND ROCKY

The land of Palestine proved to be just like I thought it would be—*only more so* (if that makes sense). I knew that Israel was a small country. I was well aware that it was rugged, rocky, and mountainous (I thought). But there is something about being there that impresses these facts upon you in an unforgettable way that never could be experienced by just reading a book.

The extent at one time of the ancient kingdom of Israel was from "Dan to Beer-sheba." I would think that in these modern times a person could drive this distance in one day, then have several hours to spare (even with the terrain being rugged). Really, this land comprises an area no larger than two or three counties in the state (N. C.) and part of the country (U. S. A.) in which this writer lives.

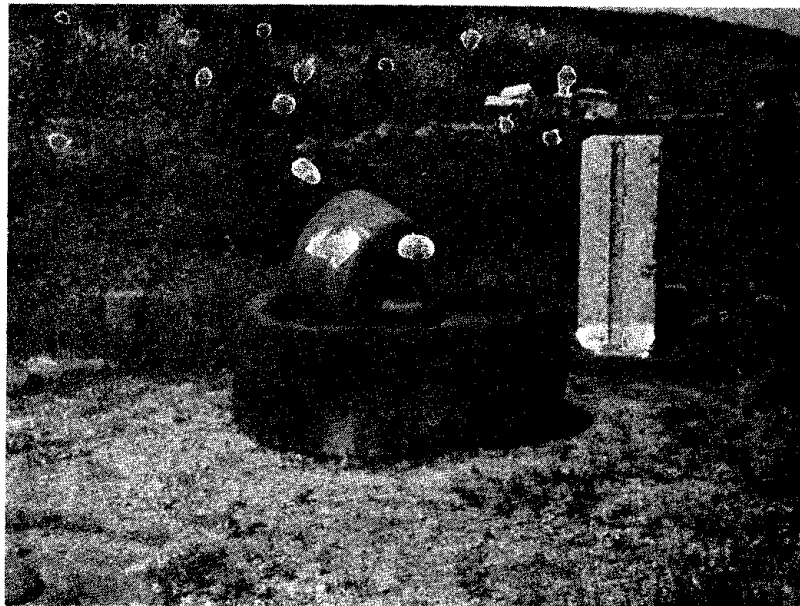
Around Jerusalem the land seemed to be especially rugged as well as being arid. Rocks, small and great, protruded from the ground like the bleached bones of a dead man's dehydrated body. Much of the plumbing could be seen on top of the ground (around the city of Jerusalem) because there was not enough soil to bury it. Walking across the endless heaps of rocks in the Judean wilderness near the Dead Sea made me very sympathetic toward the children of Israel wandering for about forty years in such a setting. It is a good thing God made it

(Continued on Next Page)

so their shoes wouldn't wear out, for, it would appear to me, the rocks would soon "chew" them out. Also, I can see why "stoning to death" was the means of capital punishment used in ancient Israel.

THOUGHTS ON THIS

One cannot help but wonder why God chose such a little, seemingly, insignificant nation situated in such a place to bring His Son into the world and to relate His message to mankind. Why not the grandeur of Rome or Greece? Why not in a more spectacular way? No doubt there are many factors involved and many lessons for us.



(Picture taken by the editor of oil-press in the ruins of ancient Capernaum)

The first thought that came to my mind was I Corinthians 1:27-29, which reads, "For God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; And base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." The All-Mighty God of Heaven has an uncanny way of communicating with man, and behind it all is the design to discourage pride in His fallen off-spring — "*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" Whether it be the little nation of Israel, or the old rugged cross, the purpose would seem to be the same.

Then other thoughts come to mind. The eastern shores of the Mediterranean have been the crossroads of the civilized world from the most ancient of times. The way things developed it would seem that God was setting the stage. Perhaps this is implied when Paul wrote, "But when the **FULNESS OF THE TIME** was come, God sent

(Continued on Page 6)

"You Knew I Was A Snake"

THERE IS an old tale about a peasant who, while hoeing in his field during the spring thaw, came across a snake. He raised his hoe to kill it, but the snake begged for mercy. "I'm too frozen to do you any harm," it cried.

The farmer, full of compassion, picked up the half-dead serpent and put it into his tunic, against his chest. As he began to work, the snake got warmer and warmer. Suddenly the snake bit the peasant, who frantically reached in and pulled it out, throwing it to the ground. "Why?" asked the man. "I befriended you. I trusted you."

"True," hissed the snake as it slithered away. "But don't blame me. You knew I was a snake when you picked me up."

Like Moses of old, many people know that sin's pleasures are but for a season (Hebrews 11:25), that the world will pass away and the lusts thereof (I John 2:16, 17). Yet they continue to indulge in the pleasures of sin. They take sin into their bosom and go about their business. Some day when these things have passed away and they are faced with eternity, they will cry out against sin and accuse it. But it will be too late. Sin will reply, "You knew I was but for a season. Don't blame me." And, truly, one cannot blame sin with the warning of God being what it is.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This death is eternal separation from God throughout eternity. Hear it expressed in II Thessalonians 1:9, "WHO SHALL BE PUNISHED with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Imagine what it is going to be like in hell: people blaming sin for the death which is their wages for having served sin. Can't you hear them saying, "How could you do this to me?"

But sin will reply, "YOU KNEW I WAS SIN!" —Jimmy Tuten □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE OCEAN IN THE SHIP

IT IS ALL RIGHT for the ship to be in the ocean, but not for the ocean to be in the ship; it is all right for the Christian to be in the world, but not for the world to be in the Christian. —Selected □

FAITHFULNESS IN OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS *(Continued from Page 3)*

sin really is in the sight of God. When they broke this law, the immediate penalty was usually death. If a person reviled his father or mother, he was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). A person guilty of adultery was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). For blasphemy, or cursing, the penalty was death (Leviticus 24:10-16). And so on we could reiterate. Writing about this Law of Moses, Paul said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). In other words, to be justified by the Law a person would have to keep in perfectly. Just one sin would undo all our supposed righteousness attained by Law-keeping. Even in the Garden of Eden, one sin made the human race a dying race. Paul argues that no man has ever been justified by the Law (Galatians 3:11). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The truth of the matter is that man cannot be faithful enough (total, complete) to be saved in keeping God's commands by himself! Jesus even said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants..." (Luke 17:10).

Thus it was proved to man that he needed a solution to his predicament, and that solution was soon to come in the form of the Saviour. In the early history of mankind God instituted animal sacrifice. Man committed sin and should have died right there on the spot, "for the wages of sin is death." However, in a symbolic way God let man kill an animal, and the animal took the place of man in death. The "life of the flesh" is in the blood, and when the animal's blood was shed, the life of the animal took the place of man's life in death (Leviticus 17:11). But, really, the animal sacrifice could never take away sin. Each sacrifice in the Patriarchal and Mosaic age was merely a symbolic prophecy pointing to the sinless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. During the Old Testament, the animal sacrifice was more of a symbol of guilt than of forgiveness. Hebrews 10:1-4 reads, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." If the sins were forgiven during the year, and in times past, why was another sacrifice made for them at the Passover? But, now, since Jesus has come and made that supreme and final sacrifice in his sinless self, we read, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17). "For He (God, the Father) hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). How wonderful! We could not keep the commands of the Lord perfectly, but there has been ONE who has! Through him all past sins are absolved, never to be held against us again. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might

be saved" (John 3:17). We were already under condemnation (all of us—lost!), but he has brought salvation. Praise the Lord! "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Also, *the secret of being faithful in obeying the Lord's commands is found in the very nature of the New Testament itself.* Remember, Jesus came to save us not to condemn us.

The New Testament starts with the new birth and a new person. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5). The writer of Hebrews, quoting from Jeremiah, hinted about this new covenant and new relationship to God (Hebrews 8:7-12). He wrote, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people... and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The Old Testament law engraved on stones was handed to a man externally, and he was commanded to keep it—he failed. The New Testament works just the opposite: it starts on the inside of man and works out to accomplish its purpose. The inside of man is cleaned up first. New Testament commands are to be obeyed by people who have experienced the new birth and are now new creatures in

(Continued on Page 10)

The Bible

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the ways of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the redemption of man its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be open in the Judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibilities, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

Author Unknown.

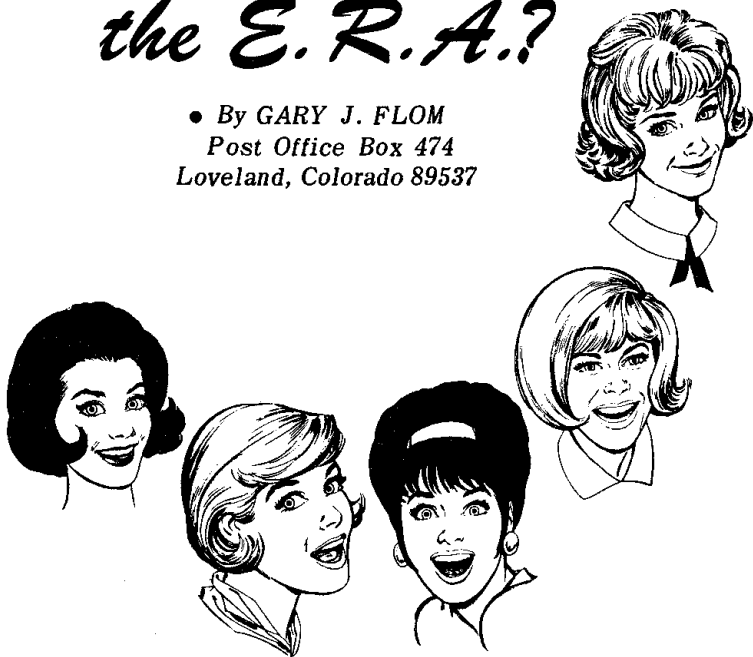
EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

(Continued from Page 5)

forth his Son..." (Galatians 4:4). When Jesus came into the world, the Mediterranean world, and much of the rest, was under Roman rule. Roman roads traversed this world. Wars were at a minimum. One language was almost universally understood. All made for the rapid spread of the gospel. (Also, mankind had demonstrated by hard experience that man could not save himself by philosophy, by law, or natural religion—the times were full; man was in need of something better). All of this gives us some hint as to why God chose the land of Israel for the point of contact with this world. □

WHO IS BEHIND *the E. R. A.?*

• By GARY J. FLOM
Post Office Box 474
Loveland, Colorado 89537



HAS THERE BEEN any same sex marriages in your community yet? Don't say it can't happen because if your state has passed the Equal Rights Amendment then there will be. As of this writing, one county in Colorado has issued six licenses to homosexuals and lesbians. A local judge ruled that these were legal under the E. R. A.

Most of us voted in ignorance on this bill, never dreaming that it would bring this. But, let's not remain in the dark! This bill is dangerous. It is "anti-God" and "anti-Bible" in its applications.

One of Colorado's Legislators who is seeking to change our state marriage laws so as to make it illegal for people of the same sex to marry, said he never thought such a law would be necessary. He was surprised that our morals had slipped so low. But, we need to remember, if the E. R. A. is passed, it will become a federal law, and it will strike down all state laws that are contrary to it. This means that if a state has a law forbidding same sex marriages, that law will become unconstitutional.

Some of those so married in Colorado are seeking to adopt children. They are challenging our adoption laws which discriminate against same sex marriages. If the E. R. A. is passed there will be many such laws declared unconstitutional. You see the Equal Rights Amendment is a Constitutional Amendment!

Every law that speaks in terms of "men" and "women," "husbands" and "wives," or "male" and "female" will have to be rewritten to read "persons." It will then be legal for "persons" to get married, to adopt children, to be drafted into the military, etc.

I get the impression that some people don't believe that the Feminist really wants total equality. Think again! Here is a little history of the movement. Betty Fredan in 1966 formed and became the first president of N.O.W. (National Organization for Women). Soon the organization was divided into 45 feminist organizations in the United States. Some of the more militant groups are "The Red

Stockings," "Bread and Roses," "SCUM" (A Society for Cutting Up Men), and "The Witch Women." These militant groups are trained in guerrilla warfare. They believe in the violent overthrow of our society.

N.O.W., though not as militant, is the largest and most influential of all the feminist organizations. Recently, the local chapter of N.O.W. met in our area. To announce their meeting they sent the following letter to the editor of our town paper: "Dear Ms. _____, I would like to submit the following announcement of our general meeting. The next meeting of the Ft. Collins chapter of the National Organization of Women will be held Wednesday, April 2, at the Methodist Church, 1005 Stover Street, beginning at 7:30 p. m. Following the general business meeting, this month's program will be presented by the Sexuality and Lesbianism Task Force and will consist of skits, slides, and dialogue on the topic 'Perceptions and Experiences of Gay Women.' Everyone is encouraged to attend." The letter was signed by the local secretary.

At this meeting the following Resolution from the national organization was read and discussed. Keep in mind two things as you read this: (1) The Bible condemns Lesbianism, Romans 2:26, 27, and (2) This is the organization promoting E. R. A.

N. O. W. RESOLUTION 128 - PASSED, 5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 1971

"Whereas, the first wave of feminist anger in this country recognized the fundamental issue of women's liberation as 'the most sacred right of all, a woman's right to her own person.' This is the right that N.O.W. reaffirmed a century later when it took up the banner and dedicated itself to changing those contradictions in society, the laws, the practices, the attitudes, that prevented women from realizing their full human potential. Recognizing that a woman cannot control her own body, N.O.W. has demanded the dissemination of birth control information and contraceptives and repeal of all laws against abortion. It has stopped short, however, of clarifying its position on every woman's right to define, and express, her own sexuality, to choose her own life style. Specifically, N.O.W. has been silent on the issue of lesbianism. Yet no other woman suffers more abuse and discrimination for the right to be her own person than does the lesbian, and

"Whereas, the lesbian is doubly oppressed, both as a woman and as a homosexual, she must face the injustices and degradation common to all women, plus endure additional social, economic, legal, and psychological abuse as well. In education and employment, the lesbian confronts more than discrimination or tokenism. She can be arbitrarily rejected or dismissed from many professions, even those, such as teaching, traditionally relegated to women. Married women are denied equality under laws that decree men as head of the household, but a wife is nonetheless allowed some legal protection. A lesbian, however, who shares her home with another woman, regardless of her income or responsibilities, foregoes all the economic and legal compensations granted to the married woman, including tax deductions, insurance, benefits, inheritance rights, etc., and

"Whereas, most divorced women are conceded the

(Continued on Page 8)

WHO IS BEHIND THE E.R.A.?

(Continued from Page 7)

right to their children, a lesbian is automatically presumed unfit for motherhood, and can have her children taken from her, and

"Whereas, these are but a few of the laws and practices in our society that reflect irrational assumptions about lesbians. Just as the false and demeaning image of all women provides the rationale to keep them subjugated, so does the distorted stereotype of the lesbian sanction her persecution. Not only is she assumed to be unstable or sick or immoral; but because she defines herself independently of men, the lesbian is considered unnatural, incomplete, not quite woman, as though the essence of womanhood were to be identified with men. Obviously, this Playboy image of the lesbian reduces her to an abject sexual object, deprived of the most basic civil and human rights due every person, and

"Whereas, because she is so oppressed and so exploited... Lesbians became active in N.O.W. and in other groups, fighting for all the feminist goals, including child care centers and abortion repeal. As a result of their activism in the movement, lesbians, as did all feminists, reached a new consciousness, a new sense of their worth and dignity as women and human beings.

"...Whereas, lesbians were never excluded from N.O.W. but we have been evasive or apologetic about their presence within the organization. Afraid of alienating public support, we have often treated lesbians as step-sisters of the movement, allowed to work with us, but then expected to hide in the upstairs closet when company comes... this discrimination is inconsistent with N.O.W.'s stated goal to 'recognize our sisterhood' and to help women 'overcome self-degradation.' If this pledge is to be anything more than idle rhetoric, N.O.W. must reassess the priorities that sacrifice principles to 'image'... If lesbians are women, and if lesbians suffer discrimination and deprivation, then the conclusion is inescapable: their oppression is not only relevant, but an integral part of the women's liberation movement.

"Whereas, the resolution... is an action, the first step towards breaking down the barriers between women that have kept them weak and suppressed. We are giving notice that we recognize our sisterhood with all women and that we are fighting for every woman's 'sacred right to her own person.' As feminists, we can do no less;

"Therefore be it resolved: That N.O.W. recognize the oppression of women who are lesbians, and

"Be it further resolved: That a woman's right to her own person includes the right to define and express her own sexuality and to choose her own lifestyle, and

"Be it further resolved: That N.O.W. acknowledge the oppression of lesbians as a legitimate concern of feminism."

The feminists seem to stand for everything that is contrary to God and the Bible. If all the laws are passed that this group is striving for, no one would have the right to live as the Bible dictates. The E.R.A. will open the door for every lesbian, every homosexual, and every pervert to walk through. Several years ago the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from God be-

cause they were wholly given over to these unnatural lusts. Can we sit back and not do anything about this amendment?

The homosexual is one sinner the Bible says that God gives up on (Romans 1:26,27). Should we not fight to get rid of this amendment that will promote homosexuality? These people need to come out of their sin, instead of enacting laws to encourage it.

The proponents of E.R.A. have some strange bedpartners. In March of this year, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches... in the USA (NCC) met in Chicago. Among other things, they discussed Women's Liberation, Lesbianism and the E.R.A. The Board adopted unanimously the E.R.A. resolution and they urged member churches to work for its ratification in the states.

Under the heading of Women's Liberation the Board set up a "Division of Education and Ministry." This "task force" was to study sexism in the Bible, and prepare materials for a Bible translation and the rewriting of some Bible stories from a woman's point of view.

The Board also adopted a resolution supporting the rights of members and pastors to freely express their sexual preferences. In other words, a homosexual was not to be discriminated against.

Both the NCC and NOW have completely ignored God and the Bible on this subject. But God will not be mocked, someday every knee will bow before Him.

There is a lot of talk about our "rights." But we never have the right to sin. The Bible doesn't speak about our "rights," it speaks about our "responsibilities" and "duties." Any nation that will follow the Bible will be exalted. God has promised (Proverbs 14:34).

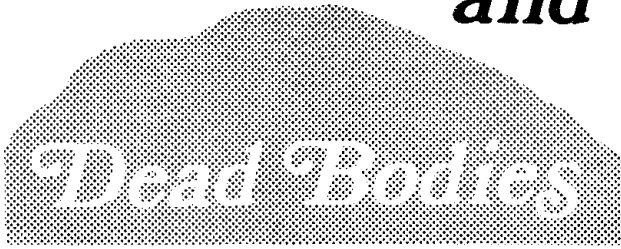
God has so created the woman that she is to find her completeness in the man. (ALSO THE MAN FINDS HIS COMPLETENESS IN THE WOMAN—Editor). She was made as a "help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Later (Genesis 3:16) God said to the woman: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This doesn't make man superior to the woman, but it does make him the head of the woman. God has designated the man as the head of the woman—I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:21-23. This doesn't downgrade the woman, it completes her life. □

WE NEED
MORE

GODLY
MOTHERS



Earth History and



Dead Bodies

by Norman Fox

DEAD BODIES provide much of the material that scholars interpret about earth's history.

These preserved bodies make up the fossil record, a history book without words, a collection of clues about living things from long ago, and conditions under which they lived and died.

But as fascinating and promising as the fossil record is, there is disagreement on how it should be interpreted. The two basic views of life's origin and development are Creation and Evolution. Supporters of each theory believe the fossil record provides them with evidence.

FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

Scientists have noticed a general tendency for smaller, less complex fossils to be found in lower layers of sedimentary rocks, and larger, complicated fossils to appear in higher layers (There are many exceptions to this rule, I understand—Editor). Since evolutionists believe the rock layers were formed over vast stretches of time, they conclude that fossils reflect a gradual process of change from simple to complex forms.

Of course, evolutionists have always recognized that if the fossils are supposed to retell the story of evolution, some large and important chapters are absent. Missing transitional forms, or "links," have puzzled some scientists for over a century. Darwin himself acknowledged this problem, but was sure that continued investigation would turn up these missing fossils. Unfortunately for his theory, the same basic gaps are still there, a hundred years later.

FOSSILS AND CREATION

Scientists who believe in special creation are convinced that fossils tell a two-part story of earth history. The first chapter is a sudden creation of distinct plant and animal kinds that reproduced further generations similar to themselves. The second chapter is a sudden global catastrophe, a flood accompanied by other powerful forces such as earthquakes.

How do the fossils speak of sudden creation? Primarily through the absence of real fossils from the lowest (Pre-Cambrian) rock layer, and the abrupt appearance of an abundant variety of life in the Cambrian layer. How do the fossils speak of reproduction of generations always similar to their ancestors? Primarily through the absence of linking forms that we would expect between one sort

of animal and another if they had evolved. For example, if flight evolved in some animals, where are the fossil forms of animals with half-developed wings?

Finally, what fossil evidence exists for a world-wide flood? First of all, the very presence of fossils means that something unusual, powerful, and sudden happened. Natural death and decay processes do not produce fossils, they only produce enriched soil. Only under circumstances of rapid burial, intense pressure, and other abnormal conditions will a body escape decay long enough to fossilize. Second, the rocks themselves are best accounted for in flood terms. The layers are sedimentary, formed from muds deposited by moving water. The ebbing and flowing of receding flood waters described in Genesis could lay down the whole geologic column in a short time. Water action and other flood factors would also tend to sort smaller, less complex organisms toward the bottom first.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE MEANS

The fossils, and many other lines of scientific evidence, point powerfully to a special supernatural creation, and should influence honest inquirers to reconsider, if necessary, the Bible's view of life's origins. But what does it matter, other than merely shedding some light on a long-standing debate among scientists?

It matters, because the fact of a Creator and the fact of a written message (the Bible) from Him add up to human responsibility. It is exactly this responsibility that men have sought to escape. The most attractive escape route has been rejection of the Creator, and insistence that the creation created itself. To abandon the myth of evolution, then, is to face the reality of God, and of every person's responsibility to serve and obey Him.

Most important, the Creator literally became a man about two thousand years ago. One of his biographers wrote, "All things were made by him... He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God..." (John 1:3, 11, 12). Since then, millions have found these claims so persuasive that they have followed Christ, their Creator, whole-heartedly. Millions more have found these claims so unsettling that they have worked overtime trying to prove that "all things were NOT made by him, or by anyone."

But dead bodies, fossilized historians, speak conclusively against this system of unbelief. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KNOWN BY THEIR "COMPANY"

*One evening in October when I was far from sober,
And carrying home a "jag" with devilish pride,
My feet began to stutter, so I lay down in the gutter,
And a pig came up and parked right by my side.*

*Then I warbled, "Izsh fehr wezzhur, wen gud fellers gizh
tugedder,"*

*Till a lady passing by was heard to say,
"You can tell a man who boozes*

*By the company that he chooses,"
So the pig got up and slowly walked away!*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Thank You, Teacher

THANK YOU for the hours spent in preparation and prayer.

Thank you for the added effort you continue to put forth each week which few even think about or recognize.

Thank you for giving many of our children and many of our parents and other adults most of the exposure to the Bible they ever receive.

Thank you for trying to teach many who are indifferent and unconcerned about God and His Word.

Thank you for administering discipline to many who seldom receive it otherwise.

Thank you for caring.

Thank you for sowing Christ in the hearts and lives of these you teach, thus enriching us all.

Thank you for continuing to grow spiritually and in knowledge of God's Word as only a teacher can.

Thank you for doing your job with few knowing or caring that you teach their children, until the day you have trouble with them and have to take action.

Thank you for doing your job well, without anyone ever saying "Thank you" except once in a blue moon.

THANK YOU, TEACHER! —D. DeLoach □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FAITHFULNESS IN OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS

(Continued from Page 6)

Christ Jesus. The New Testament is not the law of sin and death, but the perfect law of liberty; it is the law of the Spirit of life. Read Romans 8:1-4.

If we are lost, it will be in spite of what God has done and is doing. We are not perfect, but we have entered into a vital and living relationship with ONE who is perfect. Not only did Jesus die for us, he is now our great high priest in heaven, interceding on our behalf. Listen and heed this wonderful Scripture: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16). Many start out in the Christian life, and then because they slip and fall into a sin, throw up their hands in despair and quit. They think they can't live the Christian life. In our house we have two young boys. They went through the common experience of all babies in learning to walk. Eagerly they took their first few steps, only to fall on their faces. Did they just lie there for the rest of their lives, saying, "It's no use! I can't walk!"? You know the answer. But some professing Christians say that. They give up, and they remain where they fell. We have a Saviour who wants to forgive and forget. No, we are not to sin willfully, but "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8,9); however, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews

7:25). With Jesus to help and forgive we can be found faithful in obeying his commands. Let us stay near the old rugged cross.

God not only takes care of the past when we become Christians, He looks to the future too. Like those on Pentecost, in becoming Christians we are to "repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The past is forgiven when we are baptized and the Holy Spirit comes into our lives. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a reality. He comes with our initial obedience in baptism (Acts 2:38; 5:32), having convicted and brought us to surrender in baptism (John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13). He lives and works through us according to our faith, as Paul said, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith..." (Ephesians 3:16-20). As we live for the Lord faithfully day by day, we will feel a spiritual power within us that the world cannot know—it grows stronger the longer we serve him. And, as Paul wrote, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit definitely helps us be faithful in keeping the Lord's commands. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

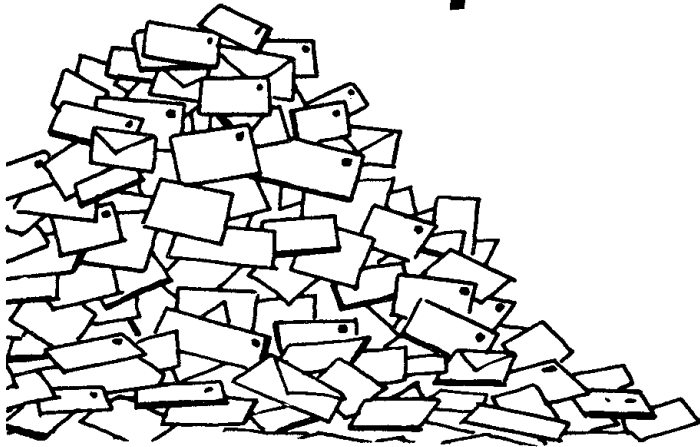
Zuickening "QUOTES"

I believe we have some modern day Balaam's at the present hour. I read the other day in a "REVIVAL FIRES" magazine where Cecil Todd was involved in a union crusade with such enemies of the Lord's church as: Mr. Humbard and the "Bourbon Street" preacher. He stated on his television programs that he considered it to be one of the highlights of his 1974 ministry. Both of these men espouse "Faith Only" doctrine. Mr. Humbard, of course, has had such personalities as Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman on his program along with many other compromisers of the truth.

To recap history, you would remember that Mr. Todd appeared on the Rex Humbard program and Mr. Todd was also a great promoter of "Key '73." Of course, "Key '73" was a conglomerate of many denominations who were presumably concerned with evangelizing the world, but one must ask, how can a Christian amalgamate with non-Christians to evangelize with those who need to be evangelized too. Romans 16:17 says, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them." Of course, the Standard Publishing Company strongly endorsed the so-called world-wide evangelical thrust of "Key '73" which incorporated the National Council of Churches, and according to Tom Anderson, newspaper columnist, the NCC adopted every resolution of the American Communist Party. As a result of the Lord's people fellowshiping with the denominational world, the devil has infiltrated the church and the great tragedy of tongue speaking has taken its toll along with many other problems.
—John B. Book □

READERS'

... Response



WASHINGTON:

■ "For one thing, I want to express my appreciation for your quality publication. Both the content and the printing are commendable, and the project is worthy to succeed."

MONTANA:

■ "Just finished reading your booklet, 'The Holy Spirit Made Simple' and I think it's great! Please send me — copies and I'll send you payment as soon as I find out how much they'll be. I can't find a price anywhere on the booklet."

"We are endeavoring to build a congregation . . . according to the N. T. pattern, but, find it most difficult because of transfer members from other so-called N. T. churches. The situation is indeed appalling!"

IOWA:

■ "Greetings to the Gibbons from southern Iowa. I enjoyed THE SWORD AND STAFF, especially your version of the first part of our trip (BIBLE LANDS TOUR).

"To me the trip was wonderful; so much more than I had anticipated. I have been going over it again and again from my rocking chair, sorting pictures and reading articles, etc. We went so fast and there was so much to see that it was hard for me to keep it all straight in my mind. I told someone I would like to go again and go real slow so you wouldn't miss anything, but that is not to be..."

"I am enclosing a check for a year's subscription for your paper."

SOUTH CAROLINA:

■ "Greetings in the Lord. How we do enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF and would like to pay up our subscription for the last two years... Our prayers are with you in your most undenominational ways. That's what we left the Baptist church for—not another denomination, be it the Church of Christ or otherwise."

WASHINGTON:

■ "Thank you for sending THE SWORD AND STAFF all these years. I can truly say its the best publication

for the Lord I've seen yet."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE FOUNDATION

"THE EXISTENCE of God is the First Truth on which all truth depends. He is the all-sufficient First Truth. Accept God's existence and the rest is not difficult. Deny it, and no foundation is left for life, law, faith, hope, love, truth, justice, freedom, beauty, goodness, holiness, or any other value."

To Become A Christian

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

(John 14:6)

Not seeking to please men but to please God, we herein present the steps required by God to become a Christian:

1. You must first hear His Word and believe it:
 - a. Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
2. You must repent of your sins:
 - a. Luke 13:3 "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
3. You must confess the name of Jesus Christ before men:
 - a. Matt. 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Rom. 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
4. You must be buried with Christ by baptism:
 - a. Rom. 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death . . ."
 - b. Acts 2:38 "... Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ."
 - c. 1 Peter 3:21 "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . ."
5. These steps add you to the church or body of Christ:
 - a. Acts 2:41, 47 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - b. 1 Cor. 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ."

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever."

—Heb. 13:8

BOUND VOLUMES *Ready*

SOME have asked about them. They are now ready to be ordered—all the issues published during 1973 and 1974 in one book. Here is a book full of vital material which will be a handy reference source to you (full of material for sermons, lessons, illustrations, and inspiration—all indexed). We are selling more and more of these bound volumes. Why don't you order your 1973-74 book today, containing volumes 11 and 12? The price is only \$2.95. Get the other back volumes of timeless material too, if you don't have them. Those available and price listed below.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM US

The materials, booklets, and tracts listed below may be ordered from us.

- ☐ *The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple*—25¢ each; 5 for \$1.00.
- ☐ *The Meaning of Suffering in the Life of the Christian*—10¢ each; 100 for \$8.00.
- ☐ *Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered*—8¢ each.
- ☐ *Salvation and Church Membership Chart*—8¢ each; 15 for \$1.00.
- ☐ *Are Visions, Dreams, and Religious Experiences Proof of Salvation?*—6¢

Gentlemen:
I wish to take advantage of your special introductory subscription offer of only \$1.00 for the first year.

Name.....

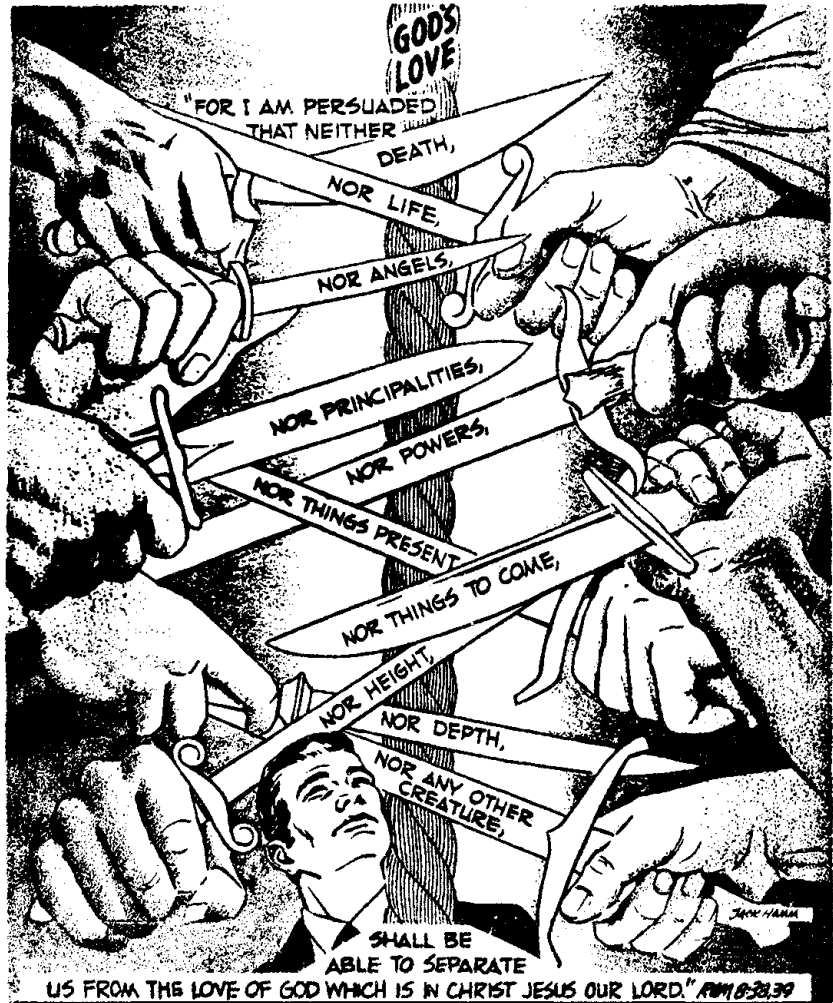
Address.....

Zip Code

Also I would like to have the following bound volumes of back issues (Check if wanted and enclose the extra money).

- ☐ 1967-68 bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff* (one book)—\$3.25.
- ☐ 1969-70 bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff* (one book)—\$3.25.
- ☐ 1971-72 bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff* (one book)—\$3.25.

BOND THAT CAN'T BE SEVERED



- ☐ *His Church is Marching On* (Song on sheet with glue on back to stick in back of your hymnbook)—5¢ each.
- ☐ *The Letter That Was Never Answered*—5¢ each.
- ☐ *The Origin of Religious Misunderstanding and False Teaching*—5¢ each; 100 for \$4.00.
- ☐ *Once in Grace, Always in Grace?*—5¢ each; 100 for \$4.00.
- ☐ *Every Sunday?* (Scriptural need for weekly observance of Lord's Supper)—3¢ each.
- ☐ *Lessons in Happiness from the Garden of Eden*—3¢ each.
- ☐ *A Question About the Sabbath*—2¢

FREE

- ☐ *Are You Sanctified?*
- ☐ *I Saw Him Standing There* (or *The Old Gospel Preacher*)
- ☐ *Dedication* (Poem Plaque)
- ☐ *A New Day* (Plaque)
- ☐ *Drinking* (leaflet with a punch about strong drink)

The SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, N. C. 27030
U. S. A.