

The Sword AND Staff

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

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

"What Must I Do To Be Saved?"

● By James E. Gibbons

INTRODUCTION:

1. This is a question of vital concern to all of us.

- (1) All have sinned (Romans 3:10, 23).
- (2) All must die (Hebrews 9:27; Romans 5:12).
- (3) All must stand before the judgment seat (II Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:11-15).
- (4) We cannot be good enough to save ourselves (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8, 9).

2. The answer to this question must come from the New Testament.

- (1) When the N. T. came in force (Hebrews 9:15-17).
- (2) During the ministry of Christ the promise was only to Jews (Matthew 10:5, 6; 15:24).
- (3) After his death and resurrection salvation is offered to all (Mark 16:15; I Timothy 2:4-6).
- (4) God's dealings with man before the coming of the New Testament were preparatory (Galatians 3:24; 4:4; John 1:17).

3. We can do something toward saving ourselves.

- (1) God has done, and is doing, His part (John 3:16; II Timothy 3:15-17; Ephesians 2:8, 9; II Peter 3:9).
- (2) Man must do his part (Matthew 7:21; Revelation 22:14; Hebrews 5:8, 9; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 2:8, 9; Acts 2:40, 41; Romans 14:12).
- (3) NOTE: Man's works are works of faith and obedience, not works of human merit (righteousness).

4. It is recommended that the seeker of truth study the book of Acts, a history of the early church and the "book of conversions."

- (1) You will notice that answers given to different people under different circumstances vary a little (Acts 2:38; 8:35-37; 16:29-33; 22:16; etc.).
- (2) No single verse of Scripture can mean any less than what it says, but it can mean more in the light of other Scripture—all of the New Testament must be taken into consideration.
- (3) In the book of Acts these different people were at different stages in their conversion—FOR EXAMPLE: if a person already believed and confessed, it was not necessary to tell him to believe, but they told him to repent and be baptized; etc.



I. I MUST BELIEVE.

A. This is important.

1. I cannot please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6).
2. I am condemned already if I do not believe (John 3:18).
3. All things in Christianity hinge on faith.
 - (1) We are justified by faith (Romans 5:1).
 - (2) We walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:7).
 - (3) We are kept by faith (I Peter 1:5; Hebrews 10:35-39).

B. What is faith?

1. It is not knowledge (sight) (II Corinthians 5:7).
2. Faith and believing are the same thing (Hebrews 11:6).
3. The Scriptural definition of faith (Hebrews 11:1).

C. How does faith come?

1. Initial faith does not come by praying for it (James 1:6-8).
2. It comes from the written Word of testimony (John 20:30, 31).
3. It comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

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THE SWORD AND STAFF

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Proverbs of Today

Husbands or wives, to have a good mate you must be one.

"Those who are grounded in Christ are not uprooted."

Two rights don't make a wrong.

"Seven days without prayer make one weak."

People will overlook you being poor, but they will never forgive you for being poor and dirty.

"Yesterday's home run won't win today's ball game."

The secret of getting things done is to do them.

"The devil does not tempt people whom he finds suitably employed."

A good preacher is a good man preaching the good Book.

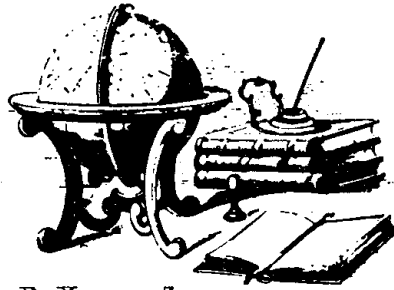
"It's strange how we never get too old to learn some new way to be stupid."

He, or she, who will not or can not forgive, can not receive forgiveness from God.

"No man has any more right to originate a religion and call it a church than you have a right to write a book and call it the Bible."

Road sign to heaven: Turn right and go straight.

"The modern Pharisee is likely to say: 'Oh, Lord, I thank Thee that I am just like everybody else'."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

Note! BIBLE LANDS TOUR PLANNED Note!

PLANS are for the editor of THE SWORD AND STAFF to be one of the "tour host" in a 11-day Bible lands tour in March of 1977. The tour will take in Israel, Egypt, and the region of ancient Moab and Edom. Such a tour is a spiritual and educational experience of a life time. We were so impressed by the tour earlier this year that we wanted to go again. This is an invitation for you to go along too. Write us in care of this paper for more details involving the tour, expenses, etc. This tour will be one that you will remember and profit from the rest of your life. Write today. □

EDITORIAL

By-Ways

FROM A LETTER CONCERNING "REBAPTISM"

(*FOLLOWING is my correspondence with a brother recently concerning the question of "REBAPTISM" (so-called). It involves how I finally resolved a question, unknown to others, that kept coming to the surface in my own life. I present the following words taken from the letter, hoping they will be of help to others—maybe even you:*)

SOMETIME AGO you sent a question concerning baptism, which I never did get answered. I herewith give my personal experience in the light of my humble understanding.

As a teenager, I first professed religion in the Methodist denomination. We had the altar, so-called, where we prayed through, so-called. I was very much under conviction of my personal need of the Saviour, so I went to the altar, along with many others that night, and really prayed to God. My soul was relieved, and I really felt good. It was what one might call a religious experience. I therewith got on my feet before the assembly, and said, "I thank God for saving my soul, and I want to grow in the work of the Lord." Several days later I was immersed, but the preacher publicly denied, as we stood on the banks of the creek, that baptism had anything to do with ones salvation. About three years later I began to study the New Testament in earnest. I discovered that the Methodist denomination was not Scriptural and that baptism was for the remission of sins (to get our sins washed away) (Acts 2:38; 22:16). I resolved to be baptized again, but, looking back, I had many confused ideas (somewhat Pentecostal, so-called, in nature), and when I was bap-

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● "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" (From Page I)

D. Will faith alone save?

1. The devils believe and tremble, and yet they are lost (James 2:19).
2. Faith without works is dead, being alone (James 2:17, 20, 22, 24, 26).
3. We are merely coming to God as we believe (Hebrews 11:6).

II. I MUST REPENT.

A. This is important.

1. John the baptizer, forerunner of Christ, preached repentance (Matthew 3:2).
2. The Lord Jesus preached it (Luke 13:3, 5).
3. It was included in the great commission (Luke 24:47).
4. The apostles preached repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30).

B. What is repentance?

1. Prayer and repentance are not necessarily the same thing (Acts 8:22; Genesis 6:6; Exodus 13:17—even used in a non-religious sense).
2. It is a change of mind that results in a change of action (Matthew 21:28-30).
3. It is a change of heart about sin and God: the spiritual heart includes the intellect, the emotions and the will.

C. What causes repentance?

1. The Holy Spirit helps bring this about (John 16:8-11).
2. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).
3. The goodness of God leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).
4. Godly sorrow for sins works repentance to salvation (II Corinthians 7:10).

III. I MUST CONFESS.

A. This is important.

1. Generally speaking, Christ will not confess to God the Father unless we confess before men (Matthew 10:32).
2. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
3. We were disobedient and unbelieving publicly, and now it is fitting that we confess our faith publicly.

B. What must I confess?

1. The Scriptures do not say for an alien sinner to confess his individual sins before the public.
2. It is a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9, 10).
3. It is a confession of Christ (Matthew 10:32).
4. An example of the good confession and what followed (Acts 8:35-39).

C. How and where must I confess?

1. I must confess with my mouth (Romans 10:9, 10).
2. I must confess before men (Romans 10:32).
3. This confession is not just once, but throughout the remainder of our lives.

IV. I MUST BE BAPTIZED.

A. This is important.

1. Christ commanded it (Mark 16:15, 16; Matthew 28:18-20).
 - (1) If we love him we will keep his commandments (John 14:15; Acts 2:41).
 - (2) Those who do his commandments have a right to

tree of life (Revelation 22:14).

2. The inspired apostles preached it (Acts 2:38; Romans 6; etc.).

- (1) There is a curse placed on anyone who would preach other than the apostles' doctrine (Galatians 1:8).
- (2) The apostle Peter said that baptism saved us (I Peter 3:21).

B. What is baptism?

1. There is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).

- (1) The one given in the great commission would continue to the end of the world (Matthew 28:19, 20).
- (2) The baptism of John, the special baptism of the Holy Spirit, etc., served their purposes—now there is only one baptism peculiar to the Christian religion.

2. In the light of the Bible it could only be immersion.

- (1) The way that Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:16).
- (2) The way the Ethiopian was baptized (Acts 8:38, 39).
- (3) Paul makes it clear that we are buried in baptism (Romans 6:4, 5; Colossians 2:12).

C. What is the purpose of baptism?

1. Our sins are forgiven when we are baptized.

- (1) We are baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38).
- (2) Our sins are washed away, put away, in baptism (Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11, 12).
- (3) The blood of Christ washes away our sins (Revelation 1:5).
- (4) We are baptized into his death, where the blood spiritually speaking is applied in washing away our sins (Romans 6:2-4).

2. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- (1) This gift comes with baptism and obedience (Acts 2:38; 5:32).
- (2) We are none of Christ's without the Spirit (Romans 8:9).
- (3) Because of the Spirit dwelling in us there will be a glorious resurrection (Romans 8:11).

3. The way to enter the kingdom of Christ.

- (1) By being born of the water and the Spirit (John 3:5; Colossians 1:13).
- (2) Christ will present the kingdom up to the Father in the end (I Corinthians 15:24).

4. It puts us into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

- (1) Thus, we are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- (2) We are new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).

5. It puts us into the body of Christ, the church.

- (1) We are baptized into one body (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).
- (2) Christ is the saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23-25).

6. We obey the gospel when we are baptized.

- (1) The core of the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4).
- (2) By dying to sin, being buried and resurrected in baptism, we OBEY the gospel (Romans 6:4, 17; 10:16; II Thessalonians 1:8).

7. By baptism we are saved.

- (1) He who believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16).
- (2) By baptism we are saved (I Peter 3:21).
- (3) If we have sincerely met the pre-requisites of faith, repentance and confession, baptism is the time and place where we enter into salvation—where we become humble recipients of God's amazing grace.

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A Word From The Wise

There are many lessons that we could learn from history. Here are some quotations taken from some great men in the past about the social menace of "drinking." We certainly could learn some invaluable lessons from these men.

Shakespeare said, "Alcohol is a poison men take into the mouth to steal away the brain."

Gladstone said that strong drink was "more destructive than war, pestilence, and famine."

Abraham Lincoln said that alcohol was "a cancer in human society, eating out its vitals and threatening its destruction."

General Pershing said, "Drunkenness has killed more men than all the wars of history."

Robert Hall said that alcohol is "distilled damnation."

Sir Wilfred Lawson said that strong drink was "the devil in solution."

Lord Chesterfield said that beverage alcohol was "an artist in human slaughter."

Thomas Edison said, "To put alcohol in the body is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine, it doesn't belong."

General Robert E. Lee said, "My experience through life has convinced me that abstinence from spirituous liquors is the best safeguard to morals and health."

President William McKinley said that the alcohol business was "the most ruinous and degrading of all human pursuits."

The Apostle Paul said, "Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21.)

Jesus Christ said, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at anytime your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." (Luke 21:34.)

The wise man said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1.)

I think if we, too, are wise we will take heed to these words of wisdom for "the foolish despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov. 1:7)

Charles L. Sattenfield,
Winston-Salem, N.C.

EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

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tized, I felt disappointed. Through the years I have had questions in my mind about my baptism, and through the years as I have gotten a clear concept of things, I have prayed to God for wisdom to know whether I should be baptized again or not—to be assured that I have done what the Lord wants me to do and for the reason the Lord wants me to do it. Sunday night a week ago (October 26) the moment of truth came. My older son, very much under conviction, asked to be baptized. On the way to baptize him, I therewith determined to be baptized and resolve all questions. According to Peter, baptism is the answer of a good conscience to God (I Peter 3:21). My baptism before had not brought a good conscience. Now I know assuredly that I have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), and I am so very happy about it. I have no more questions, and I feel solid in Christ all the way to the ends of my toes. Denominations have a person getting a good conscience before he is baptized. Their baptisms can only leave your mind confused and in doubt as you begin to understand just exactly what the New Testament teaches. If a person really searches the Scriptures and his heart, he can't have a good conscience about his denominational baptism. It took me a long time to do it, but I wanted to be sure that I didn't make another mistake.

God does not want us to have a religion full of questions and doubts. That is no way to face life, death and the judgment. "I think I'm saved; I hope I'm saved." "I think I'm married; I hope I'm married." NO, that is not the way it should be. We can know; we can have assurance when we do things the way God wants them done. And I praise the Lord for the full assurance I have, although it took me all these years



to get my mind straight (although I understood the Scriptures).

Another thought: if the Lord's supper is not taken correctly, if we do not discern the Lord's body and blood, it is of no spiritual value to us who participate (I Cor. 11:23-29). In fact, we become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Likewise, baptism is something more than just a form we go through, to be valid. If we don't count our baptism to be of value, how can we expect God to regard it of value to us? It is a highly spiritual thing.

I hope these thoughts will be of value to your research on the said question, although a little late. I can speak with assurance and authority on it now. A person can't "knock" experience when it harmonizes with the fact. □

Passion for Lost Souls!

• By DARYL LANE, 711 N. MAPLE STREET, EATON, OHIO 45320



• *“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire: hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22 & 23).*

THESE VERSES teach us, as we keep ourselves right with the Lord, we are to look to others. We are to have compassion for the lost; we are to have a passion for lost souls.

The definition of the word passion, as found in the dictionary, is as follows: 1. Enduring pain and tortures (the suffering of Christ); 2. One of the gospel narratives of the passion of Christ; 3. State or capacity of being affected by external agents; 4. Feeling, emotion, one of the feelings natural to all men; 5. Violent or intense emotion; 6. Rage or wrath, ardent affection for one of the opposite sex, desire, lust; 7. An object of love, deep interest or zeal. Passion, fervor, ardor, enthusiasm, zeal mean intense emotion compelling action. Passion often implies an emotion that stirs one to the depths, as love or hate, but it also may be used more abstractly. Fervor implies an emotion that burns with aglow and shows itself in prayer, preaching, etc. Ardor, an emotion like leaping flames, intense, but not always persistent. Enthusiasm comes close to ardor but always implies an objective or cause that is pursued with devotion. Zeal even more than enthusiasm implies energetic and unflagging activity that manifests ones devotion to a cause or an end.

All that is from the dictionary!

It is recorded that over a dozen times Jesus either had compassion or used the term compassion. He showed His great interest and concern for the lost, the multitudes, the sick and needy. In this message we are going to use three things that should make us have a real passion, zeal, ardor, enthusiasm and fervor for souls.

I. OH HOW CAN WE NOT HAVE A PASSION AND CONCERN FOR SOULS WHEN WE SEE IN THE BIBLE THE WONDERFUL PLACE AND JOYS JESUS HAD PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO SEEK HIM, LOVE HIM, AND DO HIS BLESSED WILL.

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted by him” (II Corinthians 5:6-9).

The apostle is here giving a reason why he went on with such unmovable boldness and steadfastness, through such labors, sufferings, dangers in the service of the Lord. The false teachers and some of the Corinthians said he was crazy for doing it, but he knew in whom he believed and he lived accordingly.

We should strive, agonize, weep, pray, plead, sow, cultivate, water and reap souls because only those reached will be having heaven as their eternal home. Only the saved shall go to be with Jesus and see Him as He is. Only the saved shall be like Him and live with Him for ever.

Friend, let us realize that men and women, regardless of looks, size, and position, can be saved and have these blessed enjoyments. The time is coming, and we know not when, that our earthly laborers will be over. Our work will have been completed and our day of rescuing souls will be through. Oh, how joyously we can look forward to being with the Lord. Earthly cares, toils, tribulations, and trials all behind us; no more suffering, no more tears, no more pain, no more separation from Christ — what glorious thoughts!

*What is heaven? I asked a little child,
All joy, and in her innocence she smiled.
I asked the aged, with her care oppressed,
All suffering o’er, heaven at last is rest.
I asked the artist who adored his art,
Heaven is all beauty, he spoke from his heart.
I asked the poet with his soul of fire,
T’is glory and struck his lyre.
I asked the Christian waiting his release,
With a contented look, he answered Peace.
So all may look with hopeful eyes above,
T’is beauty, glory, joy, rest, peace and love.*

What more can we look forward to? Let us work to take others with us to this wonderful place called heaven!

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PASSION FOR LOST SOULS!

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II. WE NEED TO HAVE A PASSION FOR LOST SOULS WHEN WE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE TERROR OF THE LORD.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (II Corinthians 5:10, 11).

The WRATH of God is not something to sneer at. We all must appear before the judgment seat. We will all receive according as we have lived. What will it be for you? Jesus said in Matthew 25:41, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” I have heard it said that “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people,” and I’ll have you know “Hell is a prepared place for an unprepared people!”

It is good that Jesus spoke more on the subject of hell than any other person in the Bible. He knew what He was talking about. John 1:3 says all things were made by Him. As Jesus scathed, rebuked, threatened, warned, labeled and denounced the hypocrites of His day, He did it to help them. He said, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33). He also spoke, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37). Christ knew what awaited the people of His day for their rejection of Him, and He knows what awaits the people of our day, for those that reject Him, and we shall know also.

Hell is a place of punishment. No one will enjoy it. Jesus said, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46). Hell is a place of parting. Jesus said, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire” (Matthew 25:41). Hell is a populated place. Many will go down the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).

Because hell is such a place as the Bible describes it, let us labor now working to save souls—pointing men and women to the ONE who can save them.

III. BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR US WE SHOULD ALL HAVE A PASSION FOR THOSE THAT ARE LOST IN SIN.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14, 15).

When we consider the great love that Jesus had for us, where do we begin? In leaving heaven, He came to make us rich. In living on earth, He set the perfect example for us. As He headed for Jerusalem to suffer and die for us, He showed His great love for us. In the Garden He sweat as it were great drops of blood for us. He was betrayed and arrested and showed His willingness to suffer for us. The unfair and cruel trial, and the things that surround it, teach us that He loves us. All the events of the cross teach us plainly that He cares for us and suffered, bled and died for us. He took our place. He suffered for us and we deserve what he went through.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14). Let us be busy serving the Master because He has done and is doing so much for us. Let us get the message of truth to all that we can. Let us live the life He wants from us. Let us be faithful in all things to carry out His great plan.

If you are a Christian I have given you three good reasons why you should be working for the Master. If you are not a Christian I have given you three good reasons why you should become one right away.

Please, dear friend, consider the claims of Christ. He is the Son of God. Trust Him with all your heart. He is the Lord of Life. Turn from your sins unto righteousness. Confess His wonderful Name. Obey His command of being baptized. Keep your eyes upon Him. Seek in earnest and truth those things that are above. Live for Jesus, your Saviour and King. □

—Let Us Count...

**No COST too great
No SACRIFICE too extensive
No TOIL too arduous
No TASK too exacting
to accomplish the
WINNING OF SOULS!**

“Never Again!”

AN IRATE HUSBAND arrived at his home about 1:00 p. m. from church and raved at his wife. “Don’t ever ask me again! I will never go back to that church.”

The wife very calmly said, “Oh, you’ll go back next Sunday.” “No, I won’t!” he shouted.

Cool and collected his wife reasoned, “Give me two good reasons why you should not go back.”

“I could give you a hundred,” he shouted, “but here’s a couple. First, no one in that church likes me, and second, I don’t like anyone in the church.”

Very confidently his wife said, “You’ll go back—fact is, you will be there next Sunday.”

“Give me two good reasons why I should go back,” he snapped.

“Well, my dear, I could give you a hundred but here’s a couple—first, you are a mature person and you know that it is right to go to church; and second, you are the preacher.”

—From THE ENSIGN FAIR □



No Room For Jesus

BY JAMES E. GIBBONS

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7.

It seems from the beginning men had very little room for Jesus, the heavenly guest. When Mary and Joseph made their trip to Bethlehem, they tried to find quarters at the inn, but it was filled. So it was that Jesus was born and laid in a manger because of no room elsewhere. Not long after this when the wise men came to see Jesus, Herod that evil king learned of Him and the many prophecies connected with Him. He was determined to kill Jesus for fear of his kingdom. The slaughter of the innocent infants follows, but Mary and Joseph fled into Egypt with Jesus, having been warned by an angel. Herod had no room for Jesus.

The same story seems to continue to a great extent throughout the life of Jesus on earth—NO ROOM FOR JESUS! Certainly there were moments of popularity when He fed them or healed them, but when He got down to "business" about His great spiritual teachings, His listeners were few. Although He was a king, He was never officially recognized. The sorrows of Jesus must have been many. Well prophesied Isaiah concerning Him, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ." (Isaiah 53:3). The Lord Himself said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath no where to lay His head." (Matthew 8:20). John said, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:10,11). This further brings out the sad story of men's lack of room for Jesus, the Son of God. Humanly speaking, His very own rejected Him—the Jewish race. He had especially come to them at first. He said to the disciples early in His ministry, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5,6). The "lost sheep" turned on Him and

cried, "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Even the nation of Israel had no room for Jesus!

The world had no room for Jesus. He was pure. He demanded too much—they thought. They killed Him, but the grave would not hold Him. He conquered death and went back to heaven. The world had no room for Him, but in the ivory palaces of heaven there was plenty of room with the sinless angels.

Under this theme "No Room for Jesus" let us notice some ways even today how men have no room for the Christ.

I. NO ROOM FOR JESUS IN CHRISTMAS

This professedly is a time of the year when men think about the birthday of Jesus. The 25th day of December has been set aside as the birthday of Christ and a holiday (holy day). However, this writer is convinced there is very little room for Jesus in "Christmas." There was little room for Jesus in the origin of "Christmas," and there is very little room for Him in the manner many celebrate this time of the year.

Since we are sincerely concerned about restoring apostolic Christianity, let us ask a few questions in reference to "Christmas" and then endeavor to answer them. (1) Did the early church observe the birthday of Jesus? (2) What is the origin of "Christmas?" (3) Why is the 25th of December looked upon as "Christmas?"

Now, the first question: **Did the early church observe the birthday of Jesus?** The answer is simple, No. The great commission had included, "Teaching them to OBTAIN ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 28:20). No where in the New Testament do we find that the apostles taught the early church to observe the birthday of Christ in a special way, and the Bible contains "all truth" in the realm of Christianity, and it will make us "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17). However, the Bible does teach us to observe some other things. The great truths in Christianity hinge around the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Before the death of Jesus on the Cross He instituted the Lord's Supper, saying, "This do in remembrance of me," (I Corinthians 11:23-25), and the early church did this on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7). Many today observe the birthday of Christ, which has not been commanded, in an extreme and elaborate kind of way, but seldom or never observe the death of Christ in the Lord's Supper, which

NOTE: This article appeared in the December, 1957 issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF, at the end of the first year of publication. We are running the article as a reprint as the truths contained in it are still just as timely today.

has been commanded. Also, many "religious" people do not observe the burial of Christ, as it has been commanded, in becoming a Christian. By baptism we observe the burial of Christ and bury our old man of sin in the water, then arise to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:4; Acts 2:38). As far as observing days are concerned, the only day that the early church observed was the first day of every week, which apparently was in memory of the resurrection of Christ since He came from the grave on this day. But, the New Testament church did not observe the birthday of Christ. Can anyone prove

(Continued on Next Page)

NO ROOM FOR JESUS

(Continued from Last Page)

they did?

Secondly, **what is the origin of "Christmas?"** That question is not going to be hard to answer either. The word itself, **"Christmas,"** gives its origin away. This is a combination of two words, CHRIST-MASS. Now where did "Christmas" come from? You are right! The Roman Catholic Church. The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. It was true to the teachings of Christ then, but inspired men prophesied a falling away which was to come (II Thessalonians 2: I Timothy 4; etc.). False teaching was gradually introduced into the church, and by the 4th and 5th centuries the Roman Catholic Church was well under way. This falling away crystalized into the Roman Catholic Church. According to the Bible and the information before me, the early church observed no certain day as the birthday of Christ. But in the falling away from the truth holy days were set aside to be kept. In the 4th century "Christ Mass" was introduced to be kept in connection with the birthday of Jesus. Our modern word "holiday" is the same as holy day. The Jews observed religious holy days and the Catholic Church "calendar" is based around a holy year with a multitude of holy days. However, the apostolic church did not observe holy days. The Galatians were trying to do this and they received the sharp rebuke of the apostle Paul. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Galatians 4:10,11). The Old Testament was characterized by its many holy days, but we are not under the Old Testament. Thus, Paul says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Colossians 2:16). The nearest thing to a holy day in Christianity is the Lord's day, but it is not to be regarded in the same light as the Jewish Sabbath. Also, "Santa Claus" originates in connection with Catholicism (Cf. Saint Nicholas). Does it sound like there is much room for Jesus here?

Finally, our third question: **Why is the 25th of December looked upon as "Christmas?"** Here is a copied quotation from an encyclopedia that should help us understand this. "In the first few centuries of Christianity, there was no uniform celebration of the birth of Christ . . . the exact date was unknown. The adoption of December 25th was decreed by Bishop Liberius of Rome in 354 A. D. This date was probably chosen because it coincided with the pagan festival of the winter solstice. The Romans observed Saturnalia, the feast of their god Saturn, between December 17 and December 24. The Germans, Gauls, and Britons celebrated Brumalia on December 25. The Norsemen held Yule feasts between December 25 and January 6. Many of these customs of these festivals became a part of Christmas." This makes it clear why this date was used for "Christmas." The truth is we do not know what time of the year Jesus was born. The exact time cannot be ascertained from the Scriptures. If the time of the birth of Jesus had been important the Holy Spirit would have left the exact time recorded in the pages of the Bible. But He did not. Thus, He does not especially want this time of the year emphasized above any other time of the year. Most likely Christ was born during one of the warmer seasons of the year. We are glad that people think of Jesus and His birth, but to be most pleasing to Him we should

remember and serve Him in the way He has ordained, not neglecting His vital teachings. After the world has had its little "religious" fling in December, faithful Christians will continue to be at the Lord's table every Lord's day.

There are many ways we could point out how Jesus has no room in "Christmas." This season of the year is highly commercialized. Spending is extravagant and many sigh when "Christmas" is over. Going into Baltimore, Maryland, one "Christmas," this writer saw a huge billboard, with the picture of the wise men and the Bethlehem star on it. The wording on the board went, "Peace on earth and good will toward men." At the bottom of the sign there was the name of some **brewing company**. That is an extreme example of the abuse of religious things. There was no room for Christ here!

To many the spirit of "Christmas" comes in bottles. Pardon the personal reference again, but at another "Christmas" this writer was driving through Covington, Kentucky, and had just stopped at a red light. Three young boys in their middle teens asked for a ride up town, then practically forced their way into the car. When they got out, upon arriving "up town," I noticed the smell of strong drink, then one of them yelled, "Merry Christmas, and a happy hangover!" Does this time of the year just mean a time of boisterous celebration to you?

Perhaps I am looking at this from a negative viewpoint, but this has been my experience in many churches as a time of the year when the church is not spiritual (that is, in traditional churches). You have fewer people at mid-week services then than at any other time of the year. Is there room for Jesus here? Is there much room for Jesus in "Christmas?"

II. NO ROOM FOR JESUS IN OUR LIVING

One of the most common excuses given to me by people as to why they don't come to church and serve the Lord is, "I don't have time." They don't have any room for Jesus in their living. Some would say, "My job hinders me from living off Christ." Others devote more time to clubs and organizations than they do the church of the living God. Some live like animals, the beast of the field, as they go day in and day out without a thought of God or eternity. They are just concerned about their selfish, gay, merry, old time in the here and now. They have no room for Jesus in their living. He is not welcomed; they are sinful.

Then some "Christians" have Sunday "religion." They live like the devil through the week, as the saying goes, then come to church on Sunday and sing, "Oh, How I Love Jesus." What a lie; what a pretense! On their jobs they curse, swear, and use profanity, never once mentioning the name of Jesus except in a curse word. Christ is not in their heart! O foolish people who think that they can make a pretense of religion for sake of influence in community or vain reasons known to them!

Some would try to have room for Jesus on Sunday at church but never take Him into their homes. This religion is vain too. Parents never talk to and teach their children about Christ. This is extremely important in this ungodly age in which we are living. There is no daily Bible reading! There is no thanks for food! There is no family prayer! Unless Christianity works in the home, it will work nowhere else. With TV and modern movies tearing away at home life, it behooves

a family to be knit together in love and spirituality. Psalms 127:1 states, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it . . ."

Some so-called Christians even neglect the Lord's day services. They are near unto being cursed children. They have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins. Listen to the epistle of Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation . . . ?" (2:3). Also: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (10:25). It has been said that the average American spends 6 hours before the Television set a day. Think of all that time wasted! Then they have the audacity to say, "I've not got time to go to church." Then who comes first in many people's lives? Is it Christ, then others, then self? I am afraid that Christ takes the back seat too many times! Young people, if they don't have a date, will come to church. Who gets first place here? Not Christ! "Church members" will go visiting on Sunday where there is no church of Christ, miss the Lord's supper, and think nothing about it. Is that right? No! It's the Lord's day! Christ must be Lord of all or else He is not Lord at all! Christ must take first place or no place in your life! You must give Jesus room in your living!

The following words were spoken by Jesus concerning a church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Indeed this is a sad picture, a church that has no room for Jesus. He is standing on the outside knocking, wanting in the church for which He died. Christian, are you letting Him dwell in your heart as He wants to and should? You are supposed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of the living God, "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (II Corinthians 6:16).

If you are a sinner outside of Christ would you let Jesus come into your heart? Make room for Jesus. Sin must be gotten rid of because Christ is sinless and cannot dwell in the same body with unforgiven sin. He died for you and wants to save you. You must believe (Hebrews 11:6), repent (Acts 17:30), confess your faith (Romans 10:9,10), be immersed for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38), and then be a faithful member of the church of Christ until death (Revelation 2:10). When you make room for Jesus this way, He will make room for you, and you can receive these words as your very own: Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3). □

Professional Preachers

THESE ARE DAYS of seemingly endless and sometimes mindless professional specialization. If our cars cough and sputter we hire professionals who are specialized in repairing engines to solve our problems, and if our morning toast gets burned we turn to electric appliance specialists to mend our toasters. In a complex world it is impossible for everyone to know how to do everything that needs to be done, so it is inevitable that professional speciali-

zation takes place. We simply grow up learning that when something needs to be done, one hires an "expert" who is specially trained to do the work. Sadly, the church leans heavily upon hired professionals too.

Someone has aptly said that the church is like a football game, where there are twenty-two men down on the field, desperately needing rest, while there are thousands of cheering spectators in the stands, desperately needing exercise. Some Christians seem to have adopted the idea the work of the church is to be done by professionals hired especially for that work: preachers. In some places men who have given themselves fulltime to the work of evangelism are really considered specialists employed by the church to do the work that rightfully belongs to many other individuals. Among the fruits of this thinking have been the creation of a host of "cheering spectators" in the church, the loss of a sense of personal responsibility on the part of individual Christians, and the rise of the "clergy" concept. Clearly what needs to be done is to get some of the fans out of the stands and onto the "playing field."

In commenting on the "ministry" in Ephesians chapter 4, the apostle Paul said the ultimate goal of those who serve as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers was the "equipping of the saints for the work of service." The "ministry," or the work of service is quite apparently a thing meant for ALL the saints, not just a select few. The whole purpose of having certain individuals to serve in special way as elders, preachers, teachers, etc. is to prepare the rest of the church to serve as well. All too often the situation is reversed, so that individual Christians look on the leaders as specialists hired to LESSEN their load, not increase it. The end result is the entrenchment of a class of specialists in the church, which includes professional preachers who are expected to perform certain official duties on behalf of the congregation as the "minister."

Much is said about the "preacher shortage" nowadays which actually ignores the real need of the hour. The kingdom needs all the men it can get who are willing to give their abilities unreservedly to the preaching of the gospel. But the shortage of fulltime evangelists would not be felt nearly so keenly if there were not such a critical shortage of individual Christians who would get involved in their own private way to help the Cause. It is no exaggeration to say that many congregations "in need of a preacher" are simply shopping about for a professional specialist to do their work for them! —*Highland Street Messenger* □

STOP! DON'T LOSE YOUR FAITH!

A SMALL BOY, new to the Bible classes, was greatly pleased with the picture card he was given and its text, "Have faith in God." On the way home, however, the precious possession slipped from his fingers and fluttered from the street car. Immediately his cry of distress arose: "Oh, I've lost my faith in God! Stop the car! Please stop the car."

The good-natured conductor signaled, and the card was recovered. One of the smiling passengers said something about the "blessed innocence of childhood." But a more thoughtful voice said, "Many of us older folk would have happier and better lives if only we were wise enough to call a halt when we find we are in danger of leaving our faith in God behind." —*Al Bryant* □

FOUR BILLION Believers



By VICTOR KNOWLES

JUST SUPPOSE I could unveil an absurdly simple plan by which over four billion souls could be converted to Christ in less than your lifetime. Would you be interested in such a proposal? Of course you would! Especially after you learned that the system was not only sensible but scriptural. And that it could be pulled off without any staggering amounts of money or professional personnel involved. Well, hang onto your well-worn Bibles because there is such a plan, amazing as it may sound.

To make it even more interesting, let us assume that you are the only Christian in the world—an assumption that you may have made before—right? This time, for the sake of supposition, it is true. You make an acquaintance and become their good friend. To show how good a friend you are, you teach your friend about Christ. It takes you all of a year to bring him (or her) to the point of conversion. At last you immerse your friend into Christ. Now there are two Christians in the world. In the ensuing year, both of you teach and convert one person. If this pattern which has been set could be maintained by every person who became a Christian for only 33 years (incidentally, the number of years that Jesus spent on this earth) the en-

One Thing I Know John 9:25

*I may not know what lies ahead
Around tomorrow's bend;
One thing I know within my heart,
Christ is my constant friend.*

*I may not know when sorrows come
How much the heart can bear;
But this I know, whate'er the pain,
God hears and answers prayer.*

*I may not know what labor lies
Along life's busy way;
One thing I know, His strength will be
Sufficient for each day.*

*I may not know when friendships fail
How one can right the wrong;
But this I know, He'll show the way
And lead one into song!*

*I may not know when death will come
And I walk the valley dim;
One thing I know, He'll lead me on
Through Heaven's gate with Him.*

—AGNES WELLS
Route 1, Box 220
Myrtle Creek, Oreg. 97457

tire world—theoretically speaking—would be won to Christ. Impossible? Not at all. Take a look at the astounding mathematical possibilities someone has taken the time to come up with. Working with this spiritual hypothesis, they figured:

YEAR	CONVERTS
1	You
2	2
3	4
4	8
5	16
6	32
7	64
8	128
9	256
10	512
11	1,024
12	2,048
13	4,096
14	8,192
15	16,384
16	32,768
17	65,536
18	131,072
19	262,144
20	524,288
21	1,048,576
22	2,097,152
23	4,194,304
24	8,388,608
25	16,777,216
26	33,554,432
27	67,108,864
28	134,217,728
29	268,435,456
30	536,870,912
31	1,073,741,824
32	2,147,483,648
33	4,294,967,296

Boggles the mind, doesn't it? With each one winning one each year, it could become a reality. But already I can hear the objections:

OBJECTION: "Isn't that growing too fast?"

ANSWER: "Much better than the present rate."

OBJECTION: "But you aren't taking into consideration the awful power of Satan."

ANSWER: "Take into consideration I John 4:4."

OBJECTION: "Could the church remain pure?"

ANSWER: "I don't know. Let's try it and see. Then make the necessary adjustments."

OBJECTION: "They wouldn't all stick."

ANSWER: "True. But if even half of them left, wouldn't two billion Christians be better than a few thousand?"

OBJECTION: "It can't be done."

ANSWER: "Figures don't lie."

OBJECTION: "But, I've never won even one!"

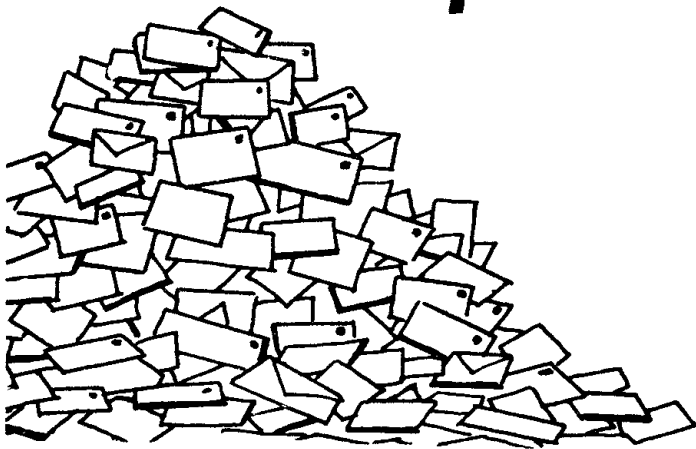
ANSWER: "True. And you won't until you give it a try."

Why won't it work? Because of the failure of just one to win one soul each year. That scatters the statistics. Even then, some zealous worker might win two a year and make up the difference. Really, is it asking too much? Not a hundred. Not fifty. Not a dozen. Not even two or three. Just one. For the next 32 years. Is that too much to ask? Let it begin with me. Let it begin with you!—V. Knowles

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READERS'

... Response



CALIFORNIA:

- *"Please take my name off of your mailing list. I don't want to receive any more THE SWORD AND STAFF."*
- *"First, thank you for your dedication to our Lord. I appreciate your Bible knowledge and the wisdom to teach it, you make it so impeccably clear. Please continue to teach and serve God, He will use you. I pray that you may continue to stop the mouths of them that teach error (Titus 1:10, 11) and to edify Christians while teaching the lost..."*

NEW MEXICO:

- *"I have just finished reading the sample copy of your publication that you sent to me. It is one of the best periodicals to come across my desk. Please enter my subscription for one year."*

NEBRASKA:

- *"I truly appreciate each and every copy of THE SWORD AND STAFF; it is an excellent paper and even though there are those that want their names removed from the mailing list, don't let it discourage you. You are doing a good work for Him! And may God bless you for it."*

OHIO:

- *"Please send me the bound volumes of the 1967-68 SWORD AND STAFF. I have never found a paper so full of good sound doctrine as yours."*

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- *"A brother in Christ, I know, sent my name in to you, and I've been receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF for about a year. I really enjoy reading it. My thoughts and prayers are that more men like you would speak out more about the truth... May God bless you..."*

VIRGINIA:

- *"I don't know when I have ever read a paper more truthful than THE SWORD AND STAFF. Pray that you will always be able to print it."*

MICHIGAN:

- *"I enjoy your paper very much. I know I am late a few times with my check. I'm very neglectful sometimes."*

Thank you for sending THE SWORD AND STAFF to me even if I was neglectful. I'll try not to let it happen again. You have a wonderful paper... keep up the good work."

LOVE KEEPS NO ACCOUNT

AMONG the 14 characteristics of love discussed in I Corinthians 13 is the truth that "love thinketh no evil" (vs. 5). Obviously this does not suggest that the child of God should blind himself to evil's existence in the world. Love, in fact, demands that one recognize sin in the life of a brother and help him overcome it (Galatians 6:1, 2).

Actually, the apostle is talking about grudge bearing in I Corinthians 13:5. A literal translation would be "love keeps no account of evil." You can make yourself pretty miserable by trying to keep books on all the real and imagined wrongs that have been committed against you. There will be some, who either through poor judgment or malicious intent, will hurt you deeply. Even so, love will prevent your holding a long standing grudge against the offender.

The cost for harboring a grudge is exceedingly high. For yourself, it can produce high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, and an unsettled mind. In terms of human relations, grudge bearing greatly hampers your ability to work harmoniously with the offender in the future. The offense is an available club that can be used to bludgeon your adversary at the slightest provocation. Truly love keeps no account of evil. —Norman Bales □

"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" (Continued from Page 3)

THE PURPOSE of this study is to show what you must do to be saved from your past sins so that you may enter into the joy of salvation. When you have accepted God's grace (unmerited favor) through Jesus Christ, as we have outlined, forgiveness of sins is yours. You will never have to face those sins again. You have the promise of everlasting life and the hope of heaven is yours.

HOWEVER, you must be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:12-14). The purpose of this present study is not to show what all is involved here. Read the epistles to find out what is involved (Romans through Jude, especially). It will suffice for our present purposes to say you are not to forsake the assembly of the Lord's church (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-26). You must grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (II Peter 1:2-11), be filled with love (I Corinthians 13), and keep yourself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). We simply point you to God's Word (Acts 20:32). Never get side-tracked from it.

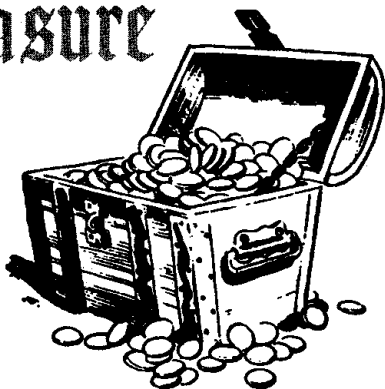
What a wonderful Saviour! What a wonderful salvation is ours! □

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OPPORTUNISTS FOLLOW IN BANDITS' FOOTSTEPS

CHICAGO (UPI)—It was easy come and easy go at the E-Z Go gasoline station Friday.

Shortly after 3:30 a.m. a customer came wandering in calling, "Hey, anybody here?"

Attendants Michael Fry and Kenneth Harris, both 20, were there tied up hand and foot by three bandits who had left a short time before.

"Call the police," one of them yelled. "We're tied up back here."

"That's all right, man," the customer said, "Help is on the way."

He then helped himself to a free tank of gas and two cartons of cigarettes and drove off.

Robbery Investigator David Olsen said the process was repeated in one form or another by nearly 100 drivers in the next two hours.

While \$5,000 from the station safe and \$390 worth of cigarettes were being stolen, one of the bandits worked the pumps, selling gasoline and pocketing the money.

After they left, Olsen said, "There was a steady stream of customers. They looked in, saw them (Fry and Harris) tied up, and helped themselves to gas and cigarettes and just drove away."

"It was approximately two hours (before) one of the customers finally used the pay phone to call the police. But he didn't give a name—*Winston-Salem Journal*, Dec. 13

FREE

- ☐ *Are You Sanctified?*
- ☐ *I Saw Him Standing There (or The Old Gospel Preacher)*
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