

The Sword AND Staff

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

•

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

RESTORING THE "RESTORED"

• By LEO SENEVEY

891 Fielding Road — Sidney, Ohio 45365

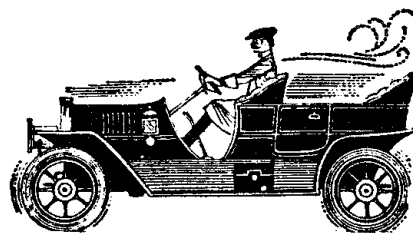
PICTURE WITH ME the person whose interest is antique cars. He has a particular year and model in mind, and after a lengthy search he finds it and buys it. Now comes another long period of restoring it to its original condition. There may be more searching for parts that are missing or those that are corroded and rusted beyond use. Next comes the cleaning, assembling, upholstering and painting. Finally it is finished. What a beauty it is! But it is worth every bit of the effort, time and money involved. Now that the car is restored, he faces another problem—that of keeping it in a restored condition.

II Chronicles 34 and 35 record some restoring that Josiah King of Judah did. He set about to purge Judah and Jerusalem. He destroyed the worship of Baal, and the high places, groves, carved and molten images. II Chronicles 34:3 says he began to seek after the God of David his father. Verse 2 sums up his life as "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left." In the 18th year of his reign, he began to repair the temple of the Lord. It was at this time that a copy of the law of Moses was found. The law was read to Josiah, he tore his clothing because his fathers had not kept the law. He gathered the elders, the priests, the Levites and the people, read the law to them and restored the practice and kept the passover with his people.

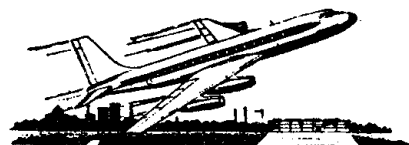
Following the death of Josiah, Jehoahaz, his son was made king, but he only reigned 3 months before being deposed by the king of Egypt. His reign was marked by evil and a departure from that which his father had restored.

We are all well aware of the fact that because something has been restored, it does not guarantee it will remain restored. It is true with the antique car, with the law of Moses under Josiah. Likewise it is true concerning the the New Testament church of today.

Near the end of the dark ages, men began to long for a return to the Bible, hence its translation into the languages of the people and its printing so that it could be put into their hands. Men soon saw that they had departed from



TIMES HAVE CHANGED!



**THE NEED
FOR GOSPEL
PREACHING
NEVER
CHANGES!**

God's law, this sparked the reformation. Later in our country men again saw much the same conditions, their interest

(Continued on Page 3)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

All sunshine and no rain in life makes a spiritual desert.

"The man who lives by himself and for himself is very apt to be corrupted by the company he keeps."

Those who use all kinds of gimmicks and sensationalism to get peoples attention many times don't have anything to say after they have gotten their attention.

"Get on fire for God and you will get so hot the devil can't handle you."

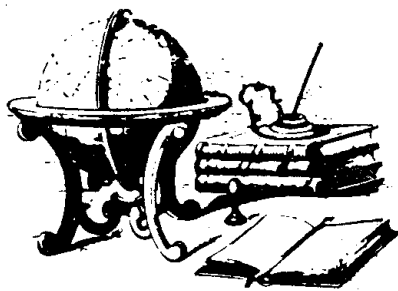
When "REFORMERS" become CONFORMERS all their noble efforts become DEFORMED and are nullified.

"We are not really mature until we cease acting like our lawyers and begin behaving more like our judges."

We need to exercise some flexibility in dealing with sinners, but not in dealing with sin.

"As sunlight strengthens the healthy plant, but withers the sickly, ill-rooted one, so tribulation establishes real faith, but destroys its counterfeit."

Fast living will only bring you to the Day of Judgment a little faster.



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

NEEDED: POVERTY OF SPIRIT

THE LORD JESUS taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). To be "poor in spirit" is to recognize humbly one's spiritual need, to declare openly one's spiritual bankruptcy. If any one thing is clear from reading the Scriptures, or is self-evident from human experience (personal or otherwise), it is the need for this. "For all (ALL!) have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Mankind must ever occupy the role of seeking sinner, whether in entering the kingdom or remaining in the kingdom (I John 1:8-10). "God resisteth the proud, and (but) giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5b).

This poverty of spirit, being humble and sincerely confessing our need, is the individual's key to the kingdom (initially and thereafter). This is quite evident because Jesus said, "Blessed (happy, fortunate)" were such for the kingdom of heaven was their's. Jesus declared the practical aspects of this truth in Matthew 18:3,4, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Whether it be for salvation, the abilities with which we are endowed, or the manifold blessings that are our's everyday in so many uncountable ways, we have nothing to glory of. The amazing grace of God is omnipresent. What do we have that we didn't receive? (I Corinthians 4:7). "For he hath made him (JESUS) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Corinthians 1:30,31). And, as God proclaimed through the prophet Jeremiah centuries ago, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23,24).

Fleshly pride is too much in evidence all about us today. This can be seen in the world and, too many times, in the church (which is our immediate concern). Whether it is seen in the self-righteous "saint" who vaunts himself before his brethren, and is a stumbling block to the world, or one of our "great" preachers (in love with himself) who uses the church as a show case to display his "great" learning (in contrast with the simple message of Christ, I Corinthians 2:1-5), it is there. It is the underlying factor in most church problems and it is that which hinders resolving them. It is the sustainer of sectarianism and denominational walls. Regardless where and how we see it, it is too much with us, and it is not of God.

We need to remind ourselves of the truth of the Scriptures we have given in this article plus the many others on the subject. We need to be poor in spirit. We must be humble to enter the kingdom, to advance in the kingdom, and to stay in the kingdom. We need to prayerfully consider I Corinthians 1:18-31ff. Here we see the very heart of Christianity is divinely calculated to make us humble, "That no flesh should glory in his presence" (verse 29).

MAY WE EARNESTLY take these things to heart, be poor in spirit, and let that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (verse 31).



RESTORING THE "RESTORED"

(Continued from Page 1)

however was restoration rather than reformation.

Thus began a return to the simple truths of the Bible. These included Bible names for Bible things, the New Testament plan for the church with qualified Scriptural leaders, the New Testament plan of salvation and immersion for the forgiveness of sins, the New Testament teaching on worship with weekly communion, and a return to a personal commitment to Christ with a life that is separated from sin.

Perhaps all was not restored to its original condition. But because of a lack of vigilance, there soon began a departure from that which had been restored, to that of the previous deterioration. The thrust of this article is to call attention to the departure in our times.

1. The church of Christ is unique. Christ is the head of the church which is His body (Colossians 1:18). There is one body, church (Ephesians 4:5). We enter the church by baptism (I Corinthians 12:13).

While few among us would dispute the above, the practice of many does not agree with what they teach. Recently I was handed a tract used by a church of "the restoration movement," which is well written and Scriptural. It states: "We are not another denomination. Denominationalism hinders the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17, and violates what is a clear command in I Corinthians 1:10." These people violate their own teaching, for they take a very active part in the ecumenical movement in their town. The services are rotated from one "church" to another and the preachers and leaders participate in these services, even in the Catholic church. In another nearby town the preacher goes to the monthly preachers get-togethers for "fellowship" (See Romans 16:17,18 and II Corinthians 6:14). Several years ago these preachers could have written the above paragraph, but not today.

2. Another departure from the "restored" is the structure of the local congregation. The previously mentioned tract says: "We do not support any ecclesiastical body that usurps the authority vested in the local congregation." Right on! But again the practice violates the teaching. This writer grew up in a congregation that supported the U.C.M.S. We felt its power and authority and after a good bit of teaching and battle, we withdrew. The "missionary society" was avoided in name and practice. It may have only played dead and come to life in other forms, such as "fellowships, Christian conventions, Missionary conventions and Evangelizing Associations" and perhaps others.

It is common for preachers to be referred to as "Pastor." The Greek language of Acts 20:28 clearly shows that pastor refers to the elders, and not the preacher.

All are familiar with Titus 1:5, "ordain elders in every city," but must not realize that verses 6-9 are there. (Also

I Timothy 3:1-7). Little if any attention is paid to the qualifications that must be met before a man can be ordained to the eldership. Perhaps this is where the trouble lies. Acts 20:28,29 show that the elder is the spiritual overseer and is to keep the wolves from devouring the flock.

3. What the Bible teaches about the Lord's supper is so clear yet some find it easy to depart from it. The early disciples observed it on the first day of the week (Lord's day or Sunday), Acts 20:7, because it was on that day that our Lord arose. Another day has no significance. I have known of it being observed at a "Christmas" service (?—Editor) not on Sunday. I personally know of a preacher (now deceased) that took the Lord's supper to a man on Saturday. This preacher had married into the family of a well known "restoration" preacher and Bible college founder. A few months ago a preacher brother told me of having to contend with Friday night observance of the Lord's supper at some of the camps he had taught in. It appears that the proper observance of the Lord's supper must again be restored among some people.

4. Those who first began to restore the New Testament church in our country had to contend with those whose lives were far from being godly. They spoke out against the theater, the dance, drunkenness and immodesty. There is a need today to restore the teaching and preaching that gives instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16). A preacher that was to preach in a Bible seminary chapel was requested by some of the students to preach on the movies. When he asked why, he was told "because we need it, many of the students attend them, even some that are X rated." Another Bible college had a problem among its student body with drinking and drugs. Here is the future leadership of the church, that will be responsible for the leading, teaching, training and counseling. The die is cast. The "restored" needs to be restored.

Just this past week as this article is being written, the mail brought a newsletter from a Bible college in the Midwest. The front page pictures a singing group that has "represented" the college for 5 years. The group has appeared at conventions, rallies, etc. in several states. One of the young ladies in the group is wearing a sun dress which by no stretching of the imagination can be called modest. The top goes no higher than a bit below the armpits and is held up by "strings" over her shoulders. It is ironic that the inside of the newsletter has a brief but fine article on II Peter 1:3,4, which points out that we are "redeemed from the corruption that is in the world through lust." The writer goes on to point out that this is a corrupted world. Indeed it is!

God's people are different, I Peter 2:9,10. Not only must we believe it, but also teach and preach it—and practice it. It is not enough to say it and write about it, it must be lived.

Many who wear the name of Christ patronize the movies and dances, drink socially and attempt to justify it Scripturally. There is little to distinguish them from the world.

LET US BE VIGILANT! LET US AGAIN RESTORE THE "RESTORED!" □

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"YOU CAN NEVER BREAK GOD'S PROMISES BY LEANING ON THEM."

LESSON FROM THE COLOSSEUM FOR TODAY

AUGUSTINE TELLS of a disturbing experience involving the Colosseum which should serve as a valuable lesson to every Christian. He describes how his friend and countryman Alypius succumbed to the wild excitement of a gladiatorial show on his first visit to Rome. Alypius was already a Christian convert. He had come to Rome to study law, and some of his fellow law students, while they were on their way home from a dinner party, had "dragged him with friendly force" into the amphitheater despite his "strong objections and resistance."

Once there, Alypius decided to shut his eyes. "Would that he had been able to stop his ears, too!" For when a gladiator fell and an immense roar from the whole audience rolled around the amphitheater, he was overcome by curiosity. Convinced that he had sufficient strength of mind to resist temptation, he then opened his eyes, "and was wounded more seriously in his soul than the gladiator, whom he lusted to observe, had been wounded in the body." Gazing at the bloodshed beneath him, the young Christian was infected by the spectator's furious passions. He could no longer avert his gaze and began to experience a fierce enjoyment. "He himself watched; he shouted; he arose to fever heat." And when he left the amphitheater, Alypius "took away with him a mad passion which prodded him not only to return with those by whom he had first been forced in, but even ahead of them and dragging in others." Christ, nevertheless, "with a most powerful hand," eventually drew him out again. "But that was long afterward"; and meanwhile the poor Alypius had plunged into the depths of vice and squalor.

Many Christians in our day sample the world by attending movies and exposing themselves to an unwholesome diet on television. In their Christian innocence at first what they see may be a shock to them. But through the fallen nature of Adam in them, a morbid enjoyment and taste may be quickened. They may learn to enjoy it so much that they will come back again and again—and, like Augustine's friend Alypius, be really ensnared. They make shipwreck of their tender Christian feelings and values.

As Paul told the Thessalonians, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). And, as he said to the Ephesians, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephesians 5:11,12). Then, as Paul catalogued the sins of the pagan Gentiles, he concluded by saying, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:32).

Let us do that which is right, having no pleasure in sin (rejoicing not in iniquity, I Corinthians 13:6), and we will never regret it. Amen. —Adapted □

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THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BUMBLE BEE

ACCORDING TO THE THEORY OF AERODYNAMICS the butterfly should be able to fly as fast as the bumble bee, and the bumble bee should not be able to fly at all. The butterfly has a small, light body and a large wingspread, while the bumble bee has a stubby, short body, heavy and awkward in design, with practically no wingspread at all. Yet the bumble bee is not acquainted with the laws of the theory of aerodynamics, so in his ignorance he goes and flies anyway—and fast!

There are bumble bee saints. They seemingly do not have the ability or training, and they don't know much about the Bible. They don't know what they are trying to do is "impossible," so they go ahead and do it.

There are butterfly saints, too. They have the wingspread, the beauty and the talent and the ability. They even have the know-how to do the job. They are trained and capable. They have the opportunity and the backing. They don't get the results. They just flit around and look lovely and make splendid impressions—but nothing happens.

Why the difference in results? It is not the training, but the aiming. Ever been hit by a butterfly? If you have, it was an accident on the part of the insect. And maybe you didn't know it, but if you have ever been hit by a bumble bee, it was NO ACCIDENT. He aimed at you. He put some energy behind his aim, and got results. So can we, if we'll aim for bigger things in the Lord's work.—ADAPTED □

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PREACHER'S COMPLAINT BOOK

ONE TIME there was a preacher who had an unusual number of complainers in the church for which he preached. Every time someone would call him to gripe about another brother in the congregation, the preacher would say, "Wait till I get my complaint book. I want to make a notation of your complaint about your brother and then you can sign your name by the complaint." When the critics learned that the preacher was keeping records of all complaints made by the members, they usually changed the subject. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all preachers kept such a record and let the members know of it?—Steven C. Goad □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



"Cut it out Bill! This is neither the place nor the season to talk about CHRIST!"



P. O. Box 147
Mt. Airy, N. C. 27030

MORMON CHURCH
P. O. Box 30700
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

Gentlemen:

I read with much interest your attractive 8-page advertisement in the October issue of the *READER'S DIGEST*. Some of the things I read in your advertisement immediately brought some questions to mind on my part. I am no authority on the Mormon religion. However, I have spent considerable time with the Bible. This is what prompts the questions, and especially since you mentioned that the Bible was one of the "Mormon's sacred books" and since you stated that the Mormon's were committed to spreading "the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people, everywhere."

First, my attention is drawn to what you call these young men who are sent out, as you religiously call them "elders." As one familiar with the Bible this is confusing to me. The word "elder" means an older man (not a young man), and to qualify to be an elder in the Biblical sense in the Lord's church (among other things), one must be married and the father of children (1 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:5-7).

Then, I read on the fourth page of your advertisement: "The Mormon doctrine of Eternal Marriage holds that Mormon marriages are forever. Men and women, married in a Mormon Temple, form a holy relationship that will endure beyond the grave, in reunion with each other, and in life everlasting with God and the Savior."

This brings another question. Have you never read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:23-30? Your teaching is just the opposite of what He taught in the Bible (and you claim the Bible as one of your "sacred books"). Notice in detail: "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven..."

Furthermore, you continued in your advertisement by speaking about "baptism by proxy" which the Mormon

church practiced and saying that the deceased wife of this man could join him in his conversion and in Eternal Marriage.

If I read the Bible correctly, it seems to me that the nature and guilt of sin is personal (Romans 3:23, etc.) and consequently salvation must be on a personal basis. The great commission instructed that the gospel be preached to every person, and "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:15, 16). "EVERYONE" was to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). They were further admonished: "Save YOURSELVES from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that YOUR SINS may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19). Acts 17:30ff states that "ALL MEN EVERYWHERE" are commanded to repent because "ALL MEN" must personally face God in judgment. Paul says that in the Day of Judgment "EVERY KNEE shall bow" and "EVERY TONGUE shall confess to God. So then EVERYONE of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:11, 12). No one can accept Christ for us, be baptized for us, nor live our lives for us. It is a personal matter. And when death comes, no one can die for us, for each of us must "walk that lonesome valley."

Your advertisement in more ways than one leaves me confused. You quote the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," and speak of the "commitment to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people, everywhere" by the Mormon church. You call the Bible a "sacred book." BUT THEN you speak of "the divine revelations that led him (Joseph Smith) to establish the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (in the last century).

This seems like a great contradiction to me since you claim to be working under the great commission and to be spreading the gospel commissioned by Christ. The preaching orders involved preaching what was revealed to them in the first century and it involved "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I HAVE COMMANDED you" (what Christ commanded, Matthew 28:18-20). They were to preach the message that was commissioned then (at that time) "unto the end of the world (age)." That commission was not to preach a "revelation" that came along hundreds of years later. Jesus had told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into ALL TRUTH (John 16:13; 14:26). This the Holy Spirit did, and it has been written down in the New Testament Scriptures. Jude wrote that the faith had once and for all been delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). We are warned that if we add to or take from the book of the Holy Scriptures the plagues mentioned therein will be added to us and our names taken from the book of life (Revelation 22:18, 19). The inspired apostle Paul declared, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). It looks to me like all these Scriptures should tell us something.

Then to add to the confusion it is said that Joseph Smith established the "Church of Jesus Christ" in the last century about 1900 years removed from Christ. I humbly say this doesn't make sense to me for Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ established His church in the first century. From Acts 2:47 onward it is spoken of as a reality, something in existence then (Acts 2:47; 8:1;

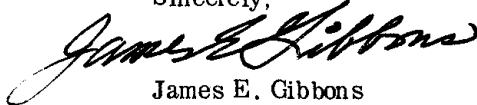
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SPEAKING OUT. . .

Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2; etc.). The "gates of hell" would not prevail against His church.

These are some things that caught my attention in your ad in the October issue of the *READER'S DIGEST*. Like I said, I don't know much about the Mormon religion, but I have studied the Bible. My knowledge of the Bible has prompted me to ask these questions. If you folks believe the Bible to be the Word of God, perhaps it would be good for you to clear up the confusion. The *READER'S DIGEST* is read by millions of people and the relationship of the Mormon religion to the Christianity of the New Testament is not clear...especially to me.

Sincerely,


James E. Gibbons

Baptized For The Dead?

WHAT DOES I Corinthians 15:29 mean when it says some "are baptized for the dead"?

The Mormon church uses this verse to justify their practice of living persons being "substitutes" in baptism for others who have died, "for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel," so wrote Joseph Smith in *Doctrines and Covenants*, 128:5. While a casual reading of I Corinthians 15:29 could lead to a misunderstanding (if a person had preconceived notions), a careful student of the Bible knows what the Bible teaches.

First, salvation cannot be attained by "proxy," i.e. another human obeying for us (Romans 14:12). Remission of sins is based on the choice and obedience of each person (Acts 17:30; Revelation 22:17).

Second, such a practice contradicts all else the Bible teaches on baptism. (Those who practice infant baptism make some of the same mistakes).

(1) The dead do not hear: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41; Romans 10:17).

(2) The dead do not believe: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:12).

(3) The dead do not repent: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).

(4) The dead do not confess Christ: "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:38).

(5) The dead do not obey from the heart: "...ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (compare Romans 6:17 with Romans 6:3, 4; I Peter 3:21).

(6) The dead are not baptized: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Another popular view is to substitute "Christ" for the words "the dead." Paul's question would then mean, If Christ (the dead) were not raised from the grave, then why are people baptized in order to get into Christ (the dead)? This view is at least in accord with the context and all the Bible teaches on the subject. Our faith, expressed in obedient baptism into Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans

6:3) is predicated on the fact our Lord died, was buried, and arose from the grave (I Corinthians 15:1-4). If this resurrection did not occur, why would one be baptized? Although this view is plausible, its real difficulty is that it says something the original text does not. "The dead" is in the plural form in the Greek, literally saying, "the dead ones." The problem is in reconciling why Paul would use a plural expression if he meant the singular, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the expression, "the dead," is found eleven other times in this same chapter, and not once can it mean "Christ." This position is therefore untenable.

THE MOST PLAUSIBLE ANSWER involves a careful consideration of the word "for" as used in this verse. The Greek word "hyper" may be used to denote the moving cause or the reason because of, for the sake of (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, Arndt and Gingrich, page 847). Compare its use in II Corinthians 12:8, 10; Philippians 1:29; Acts 5:4). Paul is chiding those who deny the resurrection by asking why they were baptized. The answer: "For (the motivating cause) the dead": i.e., being prompted by the fact others have died and persuaded that they will die also, the living are baptized to prepare for death themselves (Hebrews 9:27). In context with the line of thought beginning in I Corinthians 15:12 the apostle is drawing a logical argument convincing them that in Christ we have hope of the resurrection (cf. v. 19 and v. 32). The thought of death should motivate us to be serious about life and to obey Christ by being baptized for salvation.—R. Harkrider—

IF YOU, A PROFESSED CHRISTIAN...

do not seek to exalt Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, in your daily life...

do not honor His authority by deliberate study and sharing of His revealed Word...

do not obey His ordinances just as He ordained them...

do not manifest His compassion by doing all you can to minister to those in physical, emotional and spiritual need, on a regular basis...

do not endeavor to find your place in the work and order of the local congregation...

do not renounce worldliness and materialism...

do not take a strong stand against falsehood and hypocrisy...

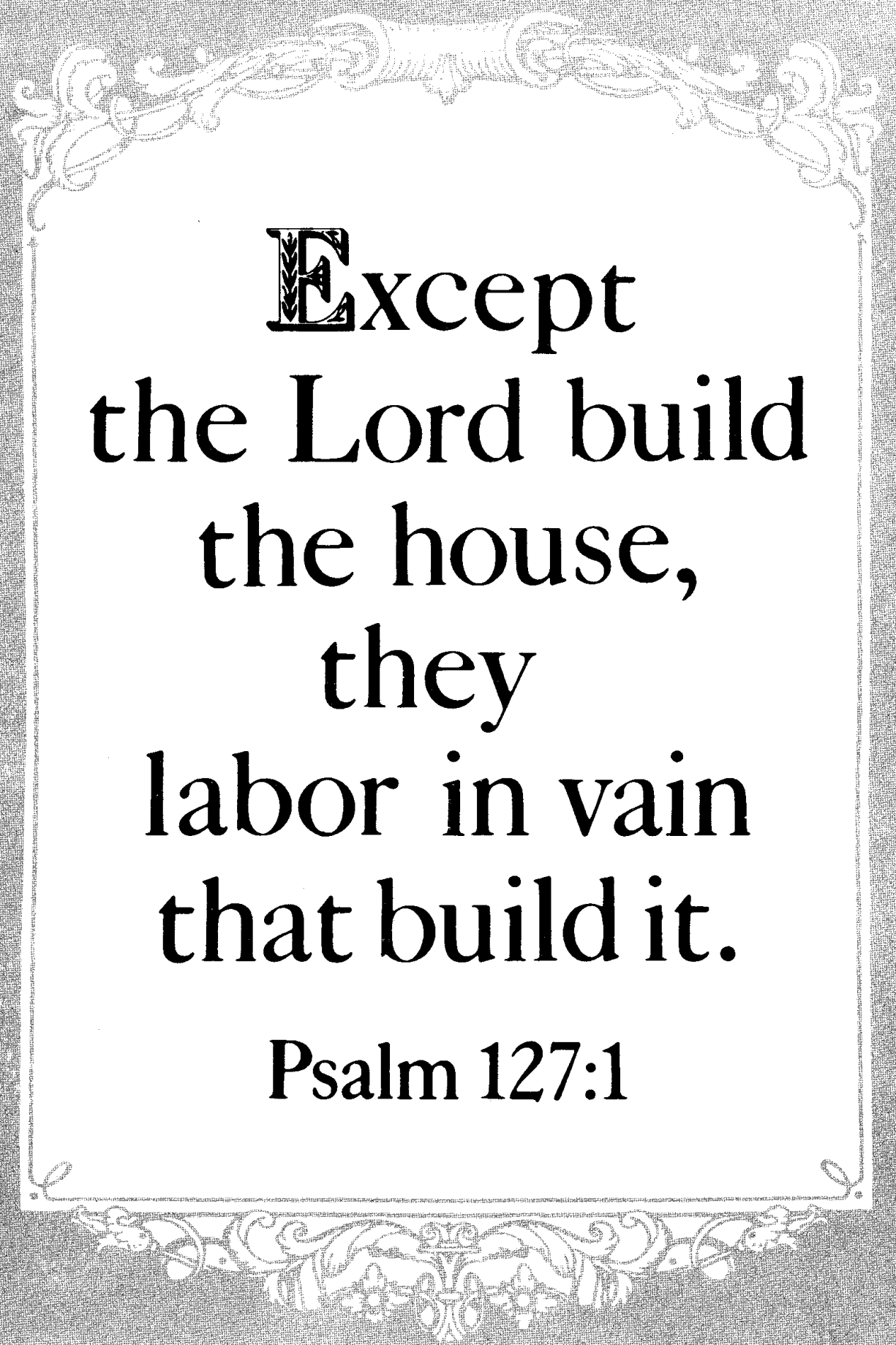
THEN YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN, no matter what you may call yourself. —*Lamplighter* □

XX

A PRAYER

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is death, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; in pardoning that we are pardoned; and in dying that we are born to eternal life."

XX



**Except
the Lord build
the house,
they
labor in vain
that build it.**

Psalm 127:1

THE DREAMER

YES, Joseph had his dreams (Genesis 37:19). He also had many obstacles in the way of their fulfilment. But never hold in contempt the man whom the world labels a dreamer. Will we never learn? The dreamer is the one who changes surroundings rather than allowing surroundings to slump him into medieval darkness. He reaches for what could be. Never ridicule the one who dreams the impossible dream. Neither scorn the man who talks of things the world supposes foolish, nor yet laugh at the man, woman or child who dreams the preposterous dream. Those preposterous dreams are what build jet planes to hurl us across spacious skies in record time. Those impossible dreams invent wireless communications reaching to the outer planets and back. Those dreams have computerized our months into minutes, flung dams across wild waters, harnessed their powers and transformed wastelands into gardens of God. Yes, and are responsible for rocketing man to the bowing foreign planet. The planets bow to the dreamer.

Dreams prompted pioneers to leave the familiar to cross oceans to a strange unknown to capture the dream of freedom and liberty. Dreams gave courage to face uncertainty and conquer a continent. Those dreams made it possible for us to be free to dream the even greater dream today. Dreams motivate men to inherit the earth below, the sea beneath, and the heavens above. Thank God for the dreamer. Thank God for the parent who encourages the child to dream, and to hitch his wagon to a star.

The dream obliterates discouragement, stimulates goals, and prevents inward death. The dream lifts the sagging spirit, produces purpose and kindles the fire of hope. Pity the person who knows not how to dream. The time is NOW for the Christian to roll up his sleeves and declare that the past is over; that there are great dreams to be fulfilled, and let us be on with the business of accomplishing them. Dare to proceed; dare to move that mountain, to challenge that giant, or that seven-headed dragon.

Dream a church where all offices function dynamically; where the program is a joyfully exciting experience neglected by none, shared by all. Dream a church where teaching and training is an ecstasy, not an agony. Dream a church that allows for human error; that understands forgiveness, and where love permeates all. Dream a church that boldly thrusts forward, achieving gigantic goals, and where spectators become willing participators. Dream to become different and dare to be different.

There shall always be those who will attempt to slay your dreams, rain on your parade, pour cold water on your eagerness; who ridicule, who shatter, who stifle, and who laugh at creative thought and action. There shall always be those who attempt to justify their own lack of vision in the name of reasonableness and realism. But the world has yet to erect a monument to a critic (as such). All the critics in the world put into one pile cannot stop the man of vision. Dream your dreams and "nothing shall be impossible to you!" That is the dream of faith. —Edwin DeVries □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE "LET US" ADMONITIONS IN HEBREWS

By JAMES E. GIBBONS

Introduction:

1. The book of Hebrews was written to show the superiority of Christ over the Old Testament religion.

- (1) It shows that Christ is superior to ANGELS.
- (2) It shows that Christ is superior to MOSES.

- (3) It shows that Christ is superior to JOSHUA.
- (4) It shows that the priesthood of Christ is superior to the LEVITICAL priesthood.
- (5) It shows that the blood and sacrifice of Christ are superior to the ANIMAL SACRIFICE of the O. T.

2. The writer admonishes by way of practical application.

- (1) He gives a doctrine then applies it to their lives as he goes along.
- (2) However, chapter 10 (2nd part) through the 13th chapter is almost continuous application.

3. Approaching the Admonitions.

- (1) He usually says, "Let us..." etc.
- (2) Because of this some have said that Paul never wrote the book of Hebrews (note: 2:3,4)—HOWEVER, he may be using "we" and "us" in an editorial sense here.
- (3) We wish to examine the admonitions that start out by saying, "Let us..."

4. Ones to be examined:

- (1) Chapter 4:1, 11, 14, 16.
- (2) Chapter 6:1.
- (3) Chapter 10:22, 23, 24.
- (4) Chapter 12:1, 2, 28.
- (5) Chapter 13:13, 15.

I. "LET US" ADMONITIONS in CONNECTION WITH THE FAILURE OF MOSES AND JOSHUA TO GIVE THE ISRAELITES REST IN THE PROMISED LAND.

- A. Let us fear... (4:1).
- B. Let us labor to enter into that rest... (4:11).
- C. Let us hold fast our profession... (4:14).
- D. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace... (4:16).

II. "LET US" ADMONITION PRECEEDING the DISCOURSE ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST (6:1).

III. "LET US" ADMONITIONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MAIN ARGUMENTS ON THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST OVER THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION.

- A. Let us draw near with a true heart... (10:22).
- B. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith (10:23).
- C. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works... (10:24, 25).

IV. "LET US" ADMONITIONS FOLLOWING THE LISTING OF THE GREAT MEN OF FAITH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

- A. Let us lay aside every weight and sin... (12:1).
- B. Let us run with patience... (12:1, 2).

V. THE REMAINING "LET US" ADMONITIONS IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

- A. Let us have grace... (12:28, 29).
- B. Let us go forth unto him without the camp... (13:13).
- C. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise... (13:15). □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

I went out to seek a friend,
But couldn't find one there;
Then I went out to be a friend,
And friends were everywhere.

—Read PROVERBS 18:24.
(Selected)

THE CINCINNATI REDS, THE DODGERS, AND THE CHURCH



AGAIN THIS YEAR, as we have done the two previous years, a group of Christians drove to Cincinnati to see the Reds play the Dodgers. During the game and on the way home, several things came to my mind that disturbed me, things that may be deciding factors as to whether or not I will go see the Reds play again.

First, the game was too long. After driving for two hours to get there it was just too much to sit for nearly three hours more to see the game. Also the game at times was dull. There was no spectacular pitching or hitting as I thought there should be. The players routinely took their place at the plate, but showed little enthusiasm for hitting the ball; in fact the game was scoreless for several innings.

The second thing that disturbed me was that they were always asking for money! They were not satisfied with the price of the ticket, but expected me to pay to park my car as well! I began to wonder if I would have to pay again to get my car back! Then to top it all off, during the game they were always asking me to buy something. And they were not ashamed to do it, they each sold a different item and put the price they expected on their hats in plain view.

Third, they were not very friendly. Not once did the manager, coaches or players greet me and say they were glad I came. The Reds' well known catcher was on the disabled list and was in uniform sitting on the bench. He could have at least come to shake hands with us. Also those sitting in the row in front of us were not friendly, they acted as if we did not exist.

Fourth, there were hypocrites there. It was obvious they were not sincere as they were moving around during the time the National anthem was being sung. Not all participated in the singing, and most of those that did, sang very softly, no enthusiasm. They told us when to clap and cheer. It was "canned" and not warm and spontaneous.

Fifth, it was too emotional. There were times of standing, yelling and clapping. I thought such a display of emotions in public was improper. No doubt young people were present that were influenced by it all.

Sixth, I don't think those in charge were really interested in my comfort. It was too hot and part of the time the sun was in my eyes. Some of the fans came in late and were escorted to their seats and the ushers thoroughly dusted the seats before allowing them to sit down. Here was partiality, they never treated me that way!

Seventh, toward the end of the game they tried to influence my thinking. The Reds were in deep trouble in the ninth. A Dodger player on third faked a break for the plate

and the Reds' pitcher committed a balk which forced in the winning run for the Dodgers. It was clear that it was all over and that there was no hope, yet the scoreboard began flashing a sign, saying, "Think Positive."

This reasoning seems to work for church and looks to me like it should be valid for the ball game.

—By LEO SENEVEY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CHILD OF A KING...

THE JEWISH PEOPLE have a way of expressing their sense of distinctiveness—they are Jews; all others are Gentiles, which just means non-Jewish. If you are not a Jew, then no matter what your nationality, you are a Gentile.

The Greeks too understood their cultural and intellectual distinctiveness. They called themselves Greeks and all others were barbarians which simply meant non-Greek; it applied to all who did not speak Greek and had not come under the influence of Greek culture and learning. A barbarian may be quite civilized; but he was not Greek. This language grew out of the Greek consciousness of themselves as a distinctive people, separated culturally and intellectually from all others.

Christians are likewise a distinctive people—"an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people peculiarly belonging to God...the people of God" (I Peter 2:9, 10). They belong to a class chosen by God before the world was (Ephesians 1:3-5). They are saints—the called saints (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; where called is an adjective in Greek, not a verb), "the called ones belonging to Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6; same construction). They were made saints by divine call (II Thessalonians 2:13, 14).

I believe it is important for Christians to have a sense of their distinctiveness—to understand that they are not like all other people of the world. No doubt such a sense can be abused and perverted, and so it was by the Jews, who often came to feel contempt for others in the consciousness of their own superiority, forgetting that they were a people of mission, chosen for a purpose. In fact, for the sake of others (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Isaiah 43:7, 10, 12, 21; Book of Jonah; Mark 2:16); judgment being something for the nations, from which they would certainly be exempt (Amos 5:18; Romans 2:1-3; and Amos 3:1, 2 for how mistaken they were). But we can take warning from them and understand that what we are, we are by divine grace and divine call, and therefore have no ground for any pride in ourselves.

This understanding of who we are can have a positive influence, first in its demands upon our lives to walk worthily of our calling (Ephesians 4:1); to live "as becometh saints" (5:4); being "light in the Lord," to "walk as children of light" (5:8). Listen to a king's appeal to his son: "You are no peasant. You are the son of a king. So act like one."

Finally, we are a people of mission. In the world but not of the world, yet we have a mission to the world. We are saved to save others; blessed to be a blessing. And if we are a special people, we have a special responsibility, for what we have we must share. (Read especially I Peter 2:9 as compared with Isaiah 43:21 in its context from verse 1). And so the consciousness of who we are demands that we live with a spirit of urgency. We are not animals, simply to live till we die. We are a people of purpose and mission.

—L. A. Mott, Jr.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ADVICE TO THE AGED

SO MUCH ADVICE is given to young people, it seems fair that a little might be given to the older folk—in view of the fact that people are old longer than they are young:

1. Guard against sensitiveness. It is mostly an affliction of age. Refuse to consider yourself slighted.
2. Do not bewail the fact that you are old. If you were not old you would be dead!
3. Do as much for your appearance as you can (with-in Scriptural bounds). Well-kept antiques are considered beautiful!
4. Morals never change, but customs and habits do...Cheerfully scrap a bushel of your old customs to conform to the present, so long as it does not affect morals.
5. Remember you were once young.
6. No one is ever useless so long as he retains his mental vigor, though he may be physically handicapped. Try not to complain of physical ailments.
7. Learn to be self-sufficient. There may come a time when you will be left all alone.
8. Don't live in the past. Memories are precious to you, but unless solicited, keep them largely to yourself. Laugh at your mistakes.
9. Believe and live your faith in Christ. There is no situation you and God cannot handle.
10. Be as cheerful as sunshine, and as willing to change as the weather, when convinced that such change will add to human happiness. —AIM

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ONE NIGHT I HAD A DREAM...

I DREAMED I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to me, the other to the Lord. When the last scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of life, there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. I questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, You said that once I decided to follow You, You would walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why in times when I needed You most, You would leave." The Lord replied, "My precious child, I would never leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you." —Selected

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE PASSING OF THE BLUSH

JEREMIAH HAD the goods on Israel. They deserved doomsday because: (1) They had stuffed cotton in their ears, refusing to hear God; (2) They were "greedy for unjust gain;" (3) They glossed over the nation's real condition, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace;" and (4) When they sinned they "were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush" (Jeremiah 6:10-15).

Hey! That sounds like a page out of the last quarter of the twentieth century. Sin is having a heyday. We can hold hands with it without the slightest blush.

When just one curse word was used in the movie, "Gone with the Wind," people gasped—the nation's face turned red. Some were up in arms. But that's gone with the wind—

mild stuff now—bland as a brand new colorbook. Most "family movies" are now generously salted with profanity. Gutter language spews into the family room via TV, books, and magazines. Even the educational value of the daily newspaper is greatly offset by the filth of the movie advertisement page.

Whatever happened to good old fashioned guys and gals who could blush? We've really arrived ("come a long way, baby")—nothing is dirty enough to make us blush. A real mark of intellectual sophistication, wouldn't you say?

Ezra was embarrassed by the people's sins. He fell to his knees, saying, "I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens" (Ezra 9:6).

The iniquities of our age are stacked higher than that. But not high enough to make us blush, it seems!—Adapted

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JUST CHECKING UP

A YOUNG BOY walked into a drugstore and asked to use the phone. He dialed a certain number.

"Hello, Dr. Brown? Do you want to hire a boy to cut the grass and run errands for you? Oh, you already have a boy? Are you completely satisfied with the boy? Okay, then, good bye, doctor."

The druggist said, "Son, if you're looking for work, I could use a boy like you." "Thank you, sir, but I have a job." "Didn't I just hear you trying to get a job from Dr. Brown?"

"No sir," said the boy, "you see I am the boy who is working for Dr. Brown. I was just checking up on myself."

It might do us all good to check up on ourselves once in a while to see if God is pleased with our attendance, our giving, our worship and our work in His vineyard.

—Selected

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE MOTIVATED TOAD

HAVE YOU ever heard the story of the toad that fell into a deep rut? All of his friends and relatives were convinced that he would never get out of there alive. And the toad was equally convinced. The next morning, however, he was jumping around in the fields like the others. When asked what happened, he replied, "Yes, I thought I would never escape from that deep rut. But when I heard that big truck coming and knew it would run over me, I just had to get out!"

It is wonderful what any creature can do when given sufficient motivation—people included. Most of us are not overworked; we are undermotivated.

Allow yourself to be strongly motivated and see what amazing things you can do. —Selected

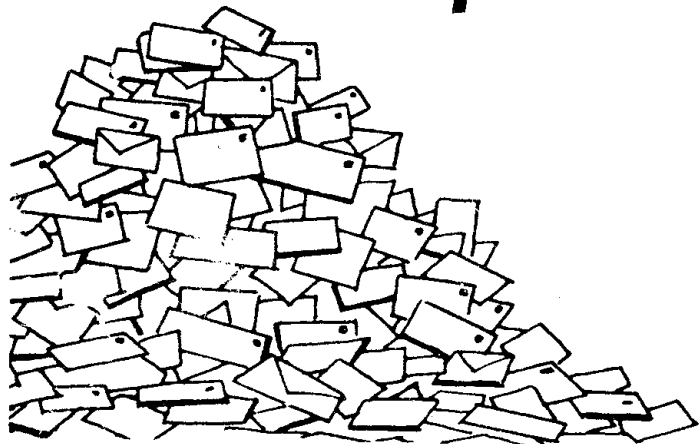
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ESTEEMING ELDERLY WOMANHOOD

FEW THINGS offend my own esteem for elderly womanhood than to see it self-lowered in the pathetic pretense of a sham youth plastered on by cosmetics, and the wearing of garments which, if they were ever really suitable for youth, are quite unbecoming for elderly ladies. Oh, why must the grown and gracious tree ape the less-lovely sapling? The best of all cosmetics is the dear Saviour Himself so filling the heart that the very face of the elderly saint radiates the indwelling Shekinah!—J. Sidlow Baxter.

READERS'

... Response



MAINE:

■ “Forgive me for being slow in renewing my subscription. I appreciate this paper. We need so much to be reminded of our Christian responsibilities. In this area, especially, people tend to be lenient because of society. But I thank the Lord for the church that is here, that it is strong and concerned about teaching the gospel...”

MICHIGAN:

■ “I am tired of magazine vegetarianism; please send me a year of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...”

OHIO:

■ “I do not know who subscribed to *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in my name—probably my mother or aunt... In any case, I never read it. Please discontinue and remove my name from your files.”

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ “Thank you for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, the blade of righteousness and the bracer of those who may be weary in well-doing.”

■ “My address says RE: SEP-1976. It’s hard for me to believe I’m in arrears that far, but if you say so, I’ll believe it—I wouldn’t be without *THE SWORD AND STAFF* at twice the price. God bless you...”

(**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Dear brother, we do not make a new address plate everytime a person “renews” his subscription—just when he initially subscribes or moves. That date is then put with his address and left on there. We leave it up to the person to “renew” every year at that time (or when he has received the equivalent of the year’s subscription). It costs over .15¢ to get set up with an address plate, etc. I hope this explains the situation).

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ “I do not know just who sent my name in to you for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, but I sure would love to thank them for I really enjoy it. I’ve been aiming to write you so many times to let you know how much enjoyment it is to read *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Please keep sending it to us... May God bless you in this work.”

ILLINOIS:

■ “I would like to let you know that I am a faithful reader of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, and I praise God for your fine work, and I pray that your excellent work will continue.”

IOWA:

■ “We like your paper so well that we have decided to send subscriptions to friends and relatives as birthday gifts as the birthdays roll around...”

NEBRASKA:

■ “Our wish and prayer is for you to have many more years of successfully publishing *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Continue your stand for proclaiming the pattern of the Lord’s church.”

■ “I do enjoy reading your paper. I am very much encouraged to read it and see that you have the conviction and courage to print the articles that are so vital to today’s issues... would like to meet you personally someday, Lord willing.”

TEXAS:

■ “Brother Gibbons, you have some real good material. My only desire is that all churches of Christ would return to the New Testament pattern we preach to our denominational friends. Thank you very much.”

CALIFORNIA:

■ “We surely do enjoy every article in it (*THE SWORD AND STAFF*). I save each paper and read it over and over. Wish many more people were interested in this kind of reading instead of so much of the filth available. May God bless you for your efforts in spreading the gospel.

■ “I would just like to send a donation because I enjoy everything you write in your tracts and in your publication. They enhance my witnessing, especially to the “faith only” folks, but also to all I come in contact with. I plan to send for a new supply at a later time, now I just want to congratulate you on preaching ‘sound words’ and not ‘idle words.’ Amen.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

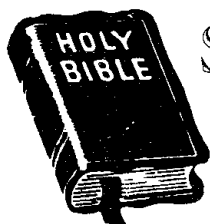
The GREATEST Gift

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(John 3:16)

GODThe Greatest Lover
SO LOVEDThe Greatest Degree
THE WORLDThe Greatest Company
THAT HE GAVEThe Greatest Act
HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.....The Greatest Gift
THAT WHOSOEVERThe Greatest Opportunity
BELIEVETHThe Greatest Simplicity
IN HIMThe Greatest Attraction
SHOULD NOT PERISHThe Greatest Promise
BUT.....The Greatest Difference
HAVEThe Greatest Certainty
EVERLASTING LIFEThe Greatest Possession

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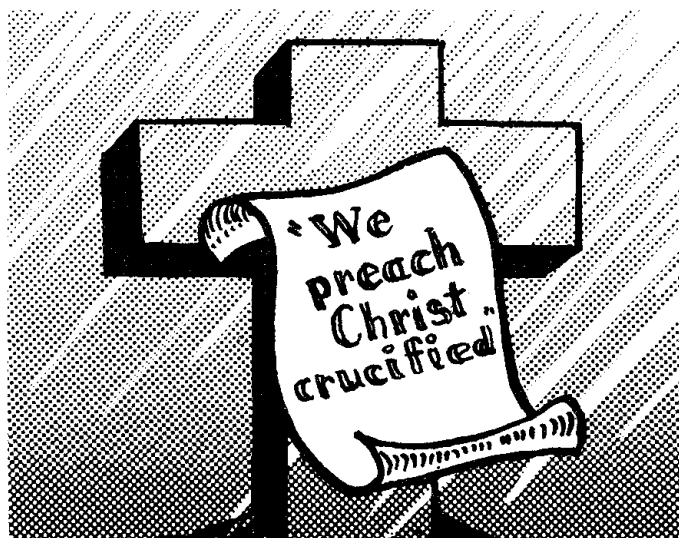
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THANK YOU—*The Editor.*

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