

The Sword AND Staff

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

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

Freedom of Speech & Freedom of Religion

• By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 FAIRFIELD DRIVE—MT. AIRY, N. C. 27030

WE ARE THANKFUL (very thankful) to the God of Heaven that we live in a country where freedom of speech and freedom of religion are recognized as inherent rights of its citizens. This is not exactly true in much of the world. The extreme of this can be seen in the plight experienced by our brethren in Communist countries. The state is militantly atheistic and dedicated to the proposition of destroying all religion in one way or another. Then, in many Moslem countries other religions are technically tolerated, but usually in a very restricted sense. And, there are supposed "Christian" countries, such as Greece, where evangelization by other "churches" besides the one officially recognized by the government is against the law (others may worship, but are not granted the freedom to advance their cause openly). Then on the other side of the spectrum, certain European countries definitely have freedom of speech and religion, but the significance of it is somewhat offset by the fact that the salaries of the clergy of the state church (such as England) are paid from money taken from the general taxation of the people. Again, we are thankful for our situation in America.

But, we are afraid that freedom of speech and freedom of religion have little meaning to most people. For all practical purposes in too many cases, freedom of religion could be more aptly called freedom from religion. Exercising freedom of speech in connection with freedom of religion is a right fewer and fewer people are using. If you want to kill a conversation in many circles, just bring up the theme of religion. Materialism, pursuit of worldly pleasures, and trivia occupy the modern mind—and crowd out everything else. If you believe anything at all strongly and wish to share your faith with others, it is not unusual to be thought of as a fanatic. Then there are those who say that there are two things they just don't talk about: religion and politics. Too often the only time religious

words are used is when they are used in an irreligious way as curse words.

We are living in a day and time when freedom of speech in the secular world hardly knows any bounds. People say about what they want to on television—vulgar, profane, or otherwise. This is shockingly more and more evident in the kind of movies that are produced and the kind of books and magazines that come off the press. The human mind has become the receptacle of every foul thought, and as the Bible teaches, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Depraved appetites have been "cultivated" to enjoy such trash. Many of the movies, books, and magazines presented to the public today as art and literature in the name of freedom of speech would make the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah blush. Those who live under freedom of speech need to accept the responsibility of freedom of speech.

Thank the Lord that we have the constitutional right in this country to exercise freedom of speech in the realm of religion. In the context of our society all men are free to speak out as they believe, and that is the way it should be (although some may be wrong). God made man in His Own image a free moral agent, and God does not force His way upon any person. Man is free to make his choice in the light of his understanding or lack of it. Ultimately the Day of Judgment will determine if his choice was right or wrong. But in the meantime man is free to study, pursue, or change his chosen course if he should come to the conclusion that he needs to. He is also free to try to convince others. We are exercising our freedom of speech and religion in publishing this paper.

The very nature of our religion demands that we be diligent to use our freedom of speech in spreading the gospel. The Great Commission charged us to go

(Continued on Page 3)

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

• Introductory—\$1.50 for the first year; • Regular—\$2.00 for renewals; • Bulk—\$1.25 per subscription a year when sent in bundles of five or more.

NOTE: The subscription is regarded as the minimum offering needed to help with the expense of printing and mailing this paper, the "payment" for booklets, tracts, and other material is regarded as an offering. Subsidizing gifts are also needed above this and welcomed. We are tax deductible. Make your check out to "Church in Mount Airy."

THE SWORD AND STAFF is supposed to be published at least bi-monthly (this is determined by subscription renewals and support) or more frequently if the finances allow it. The paper is sponsored by the CHURCH IN MOUNT AIRY, 1006 N. South St., Mt. Airy, N. C. Office of publication is at 1535 Fairfield Dr., Mt. Airy, N. C. Telephone (919) 789-1044. James E. Gibbons edits the paper.

NO RENEWAL NOTICE will be sent—renew when you think it is due. Thank you.

Proverbially SPEAKING...

THE LORD gave us the BIBLE and a brain, and He expects us to use both.

"Sin and unbelief are so wrapped up together that usually the best way to deal with unbelief is to his sin."

Discouragement is a situation that develops when people have lost their COURAGE.

"If you feel dog-tired at night, it may be due to growling through the day."

Too many people today want to "belong" to some church without even being religious.

"A pessimist is a person who sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty."

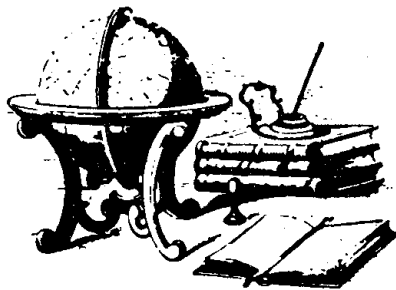
The people who succeed in life are people who know what they want out of life.

"Wise men know more than they tell; fools tell more than they know."

A smile is a curve that helps keep your day straight.

"Always do unto others as though you were the others."

It is never right to do wrong.



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

HOW THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS STARTED IN ROME

THE APOSTLE PAUL wrote a most profound letter to Christians at Rome, dealing with the theme of justification by faith (not the works of the law). The church was there. Since Paul had never been to Rome (Romans 1:13), the question arises as to how the church came into being in this teeming metropolis of Roman life. We do not have an emphatic answer, but we have a good guess.

The Roman Catholic version of things has the apostle Peter establishing the church in this city, whereupon he becomes its first "bishop" and serves as such for twenty-five years. And consequently

(Continued on Next Page)

EDITORIAL

By-Ways

FOLLOW-UP ON LETTER TO MORMON CHURCH

IN THE LAST ISSUE of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* I printed a letter that I had written to the MORMON CHURCH in Salt Lake City, Utah, in response to an 8-page advertisement that had been featured in the October issue of *READER'S DIGEST*. In view of what I knew about the Bible, their ad prompted me to ask several questions. Certainly no one should be offended by this (or even a public examination of their religion) since the advertisement is appealing to the general public. If they have truth that I don't have, I want it. A letter has been received from Salt Lake City, but my questions were not directly dealt with or answered in the letter. On the other hand, some pamphlets and material more of a nature to orient me with the Mormon Church were enclosed. However, what Salt Lake City had not done, two fine looking young Mormon "elders" living in Mt. Airy came by to do.

I was in my print shop, press inked, and working away. I was interrupted by my son, who said there were two men from the Mormon Church to see me. I told him that if they wanted to talk with me to come on down. The two men turned out to be two young fellows.

With smiling faces and hand shakes warm and friendly, projecting every bit of the image of the "elders" portrayed in the *READER'S DIGEST* ad, they introduced themselves. They said they had come to answer my questions that were in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I told them I had ink on the press, but if we could talk while I was printing that would be fine. However, there would be only one condition. We

(Continued on Page 4)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH & FREEDOM OF RELIGION
(Continued from Page 1)

“into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The good news of eternal salvation in Jesus and the truth of His church are to be shared with every man. This is to be done whether the government grants us freedom of speech or not. This is to be done even if the society proves to be unfriendly or overtly hostile. The governmental authorities were antagonistic to Christianity in the beginning. We read where they said, “Let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:17b-20).

In the light of the abuse of freedom of speech in the secular world (shameful abuse), as well as in the realm of religion (largely abuse by disuse), the true Christian needs to be unashamed to speak up for Jesus. Let no man disrespect or disparagingly regard us...even if you disagree with what we say (OR WRITE). Not only are we doing what we believe our Lord wants us to do, we are doing what the constitution of this country guarantees us the right to do. If you do not want to exercise your constitutional right, which your forefathers wisely saw fit to arrange for you, that is your business—but do not lightly esteem those who do. Not everybody in the world has this right.

BEWARE. THAT WHICH WE FAIL TO USE WE LOSE. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EDITORIAL COMMENTS (Continued from Last Page)

they call him the first pope. We know that he wasn't the first pope for such is not taught in the Word of God—there is no such office. And it is highly unlikely that he started the church in Rome. It certainly would be an unthinkable slight and insult on the part of the apostle Paul to write the Roman letter, greet many people by name, and not once mention the apostle Peter. The obvious reason that he did not greet Peter was that he was not there. Also, it seems these people in Rome had not had the benefit of apostolic gifts of the Holy Spirit (Romans 1:11). This would eliminate the apostle Peter as having been in Rome.

Others suggest that the church was founded by the “sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes” who returned following the great events of the Day of Pentecost when the church was initially started on earth (Acts 2:10).

But there is a better possibility. Various Christians from different parts of the Mediteranean world had taken their residence in Rome, many of them being Paul's converts. Paul greets about twenty-four people by name in Romans 16:3-15. Even as we have people drawn to the larger cities today, seeking employment, that was no doubt the case in ancient times. This was not an occasion of them forsaking Christ or His church, but an opportunity for its advance-

ment. A lack of a formal place to meet did not deter them. We find mention of the “church that is in their house” (Romans 16:5).

Would today that professed Christians have the same love for their Lord. Would today that people have more than a meeting-house mentality in reference to their religion. Our allegiance is to Christ, not to a building (nor to a big crowd that happens to be meeting in a fine building). Too many times today the scattering of the church means its death, but in the early days of real Christianity, it meant more churches springing into being in unevangelized areas. (Acts 8:4). If a family should move to a city where there is no New Testament church, they are the New Testament church (and should proceed from there). It is that simple. Let us be faithful to Christ. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AN ORPHAN NAMED GEORGE

GEORGE WAS BORN in Baltimore, Maryland, on February 6, 1895. Being an orphan child, he was raised at St. Mary's Industrial School there in Baltimore.

By the time George was 19, one of his teachers recognized his skill and helped him into a career of baseball. He became a successful pitcher. But George did not want to be a pitcher; he wanted to be a “hitter.” He was finally sold to another ball club, where he served as an outfielder. He worked hard at trying to bat. But after striking out 1300 times, his life finally ended in cancer!

We think about the many struggles, defeats and disappointments poor George experienced in his life time; all because he had his heart set upon being a successful “hitter.” After several years of such agony, you would think he would have thrown in the towel and surrendered. But, no, not this George! In fact, there was something unusual about that man. After 21 years of such frustration and tribulation, this man went down in Baseball history, not as a failure, but as one of Baseball's greatest “hitters.”

No, he is not remembered as “George the failure,” but that man was “Babe” Ruth! Yes, that's right! Babe Ruth is remembered as the baseball player who made 714 home-runs in his career, not for 1330 strike-outs.

What is the lesson to be learned from George Herman? Paul said, “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). We must *try*, and keep *trying*! Our eternal home of the soul is promised “TO THEM WHO BY PATIENT CONTINUANCE IN WELL DOING SEEK FOR GLORY AND IMMORTALITY” (Romans 2:7).

Brethren, let's stay in the fight for right. Don't let a few strike-outs get the best of you!—Truman Smith □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YOU WILL NEVER BE SORRY...

For telling the truth, for living a pure life, for your faith in Christ, for doing your very best, for thinking before acting, for hearing before judging, for forgiving your enemies, for helping a fallen brother, for being honest in business, for thinking before speaking, for being loyal to God and man, for stopping your ears to gossip, for bridling a slanderous tongue, for harboring only pure thoughts, for being courteous and kind to all, for money given to the Lord's cause, for faithfulness in keeping your promises, for asking pardon when you have done wrong.—Selected □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KNOCKING ON DOORS...

A BROTHER tells this story: As a religious neighbor called at a house, he was told, "We don't want to talk to you. We have the truth." To this the neighbor responded, "Then why aren't YOU knocking at MY door?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A TIMELY PARABLE

A WOMAN was hired as a domestic servant. Being a good cook, she prepared excellent meals; but none of the family she served showed up to eat. Naturally, she asked why her meals were untouched. This was the reply she received. "We furnish you the kitchen and the food; we pay you a salary; now it's up to you to get us to the table to eat."

A school system employed a teacher, paid him a salary, furnished him a good building and equipment. He came to school prepared to teach, and the first morning no students came. Naturally he wondered about it. Upon inquiring, he was told: "We pay you a salary, furnish you a nice building and equipment. It is up to you to get the pupils here for the school."

A church secured a preacher, paid him a salary, erected a nice building. He prepared his sermons, delivered them effectively, but many of the congregation did not come. Naturally he was concerned about the situation. Upon inquiry, he was informed by some of the congregation: "We pay you a salary and furnish a building for the meetings. It is up to you to come around and beg us to come, and don't ever criticize us when we're negligent."

Which of these stories do you regard as the most foolish?—*Selected*

(In the last paragraph maybe there is something wrong with the set-up from both ends—Editor). □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**If God be
for us,
who can be
against
us?**

Romans 8:31

EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

(Continued from Page 2)

would use only the Bible in our discussions. They consented (although, I felt, for tactical reasons).

I got my Bible. I reviewed the letter I had written, pointing out the questions the *READER'S DIGEST* ad had prompted. There were basically four questions (I said): (1) concerning why these young men were called "elders"; (2) concerning "eternal marriage," which they teach; (3) concerning baptism by proxy (in the place of someone who is dead); (4) and the fourth question boiled down to the matter of modern day revelations.

"First, this matter of you fellows being called **ELDERS**," I confronted them with friendly force, "If you are an elder, I am a teenager." I emphasized that the very word for elder in the New Testament (*presbuteros*) meant an older person; that it was used applied to an older person who was an officer in the church, and that one of the qualifications for the office was to be a married family man (Titus 1:5-7; I Timothy 3:1-7).

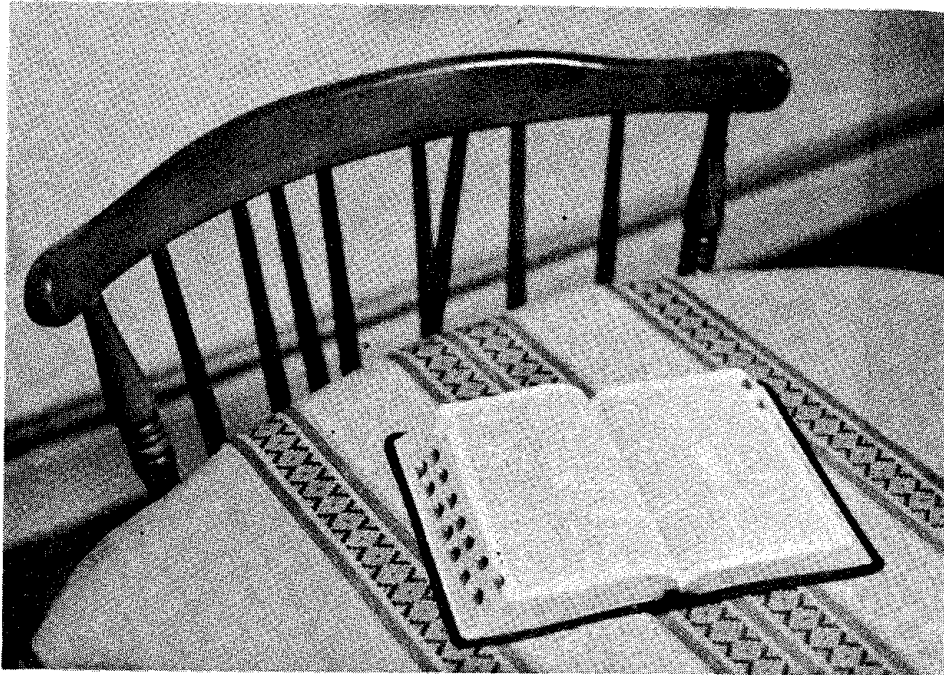
With an assured and knowing smile, one of my young visitors who was more aggressive than the other (in a friendly way) informed me that I had misapplied one of the Scriptures (Titus 1:5-7), that an elder and a bishop were two different things—that Paul was talking about two different offices. My Mormon visitors were elders and not bishops—and that there were elders in two different orders of priesthoods, the Aaronic and that of Melchisedec.

I said, "Wait a minute. Let's open the Bible and nail this thing down as we go along." Whereupon I turned to Titus 1:5-7 and read aloud, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **ELDERS** in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a **BISHOP** must be blameless..." Here I pointed out that the words **ELDER** and **BISHOP** were used interchangeably, referring to the one and same office or person. (This is further verified in Acts 20:17,18, where Paul is talking to the elders of the church at Ephesus. They are called **ELDERS** in verse 17 and in verse 28 they are called **OVERSEERS**. The word **OVERSEER** is *episkopos* in the original Greek New Testament, being the identical word that is translated **BISHOP** in Titus 1:7, King James Version).

As I stressed the truth and clarity of these Scriptures to my listeners, I was told that it was a matter of interpretation and that I was now arguing (obviously saying this serves as good answers when none others are readily available). I was told that they did not argue, that they testified. That they could not convince or convert anyone, only God could do this. That if we wanted to know the truth, we should pray to know it. I quoted to them where we are told to "search the Scriptures," that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into **ALL TRUTH** (John 16:13), and that we have it in the Scriptures. Paul plainly told Timothy that the Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine; for reproof (proving over again), for correction, for instruction in right-

(Continued on Page 6)

Interesting Facts



ABOUT THE BIBLE

ABOUT FORTY MEN were engaged in writing the Bible, during a period of about 1,600 years—that is, from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 100.

These men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21). They wrote not in words of human wisdom, but in words divinely taught. (1 Corinthians 2:13).

The Bible contains 3,566,480 letters, 773,746 words, 31,102 verses, 1,189 chapters and 66 books. The Old Testament contains 39 books; the New Testament, 27 books. In point of length, the average word of the Bible contains fewer than five letters. What a lesson for the fellow who has a mania for big words!

The word "Jehovah" occurs 6,855 times.

The word "Lord" occurs 1,853 times.

The word "and" occurs 46,277 times, and the word "reverend" but once. (Ps. 111:9).

The book of Esther contains ten chapters, but neither the word "Lord" nor "God" is to be found in it.

The middle chapter and the shortest is Psalm 117. It contains only two verses.

The middle verse in the Bible is Psalm 118:8.

The middle book of the Old Testament is Proverbs.

The middle chapter of the Old Tes-

tament is Job 29.

The middle verse of the Old Testament is 2 Chronicles 20:13.

The shortest verse in the Old Testament is 1 Chronicles 1:25; the longest, Esther 8:9.

The middle book of the New Testament is Second Thessalonians.

The middle chapter in the New Testament is between Romans 13 and 14.

The middle verse in the New Testament is Acts 17:17.

The shortest verse in the New Testament in English, is John 11:35; in Greek, 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

The longest verse in the Bible is Esther 8:9; it contains ninety words.

The longest word in the Bible is found in Isaiah 8:1.

All the letters of the Alphabet, except j, are in Ezra 7:21.

The nineteenth chapter of 2 Kings and the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah are nearly identical.

The Old Testament was translated Greek in Alexandria, Egypt, about 270 B.C.

The Bible holds the distinction of being the first printed book; it was first reprinted in 1450.

The first Bible printed in this country was in the Indian language in 1663. This translation was made and published by John Eliot, the so-called

"Apostle to the Indians." This is the earliest example of the whole Bible translated and printed in a new language for the purpose of evangelization.

The first English Bible printed in this country was in 1782.

The first translation of the Bible made in America was printed in 1808. It was the work of Charles Thomson.

The first translation of the New Testament published in America was in 1826 by Alexander Campbell. It first appeared under the title, "Sacred Writings"; later, "Living Oracles." It was largely a compilation of the works of Doddridge, Macknight, and George Campbell.

It is not generally known that Noah Webster, author of the famous "Webster's Dictionary" and the "Blue-Back Speller," made a translation of the Bible, which was published in 1833.

The King James Version of the Bible was first published in 1611.

The Revised Version of the whole Bible was issued in 1885.

The American Standard edition was published in 1901.

The Bible was divided into chapters by Cardinal Hugo in 1250.

The New Testament was divided into verses by Sir Robert Stephens in 1551.

The whole Bible, divided into chapters, first appeared in 1560 in what is known as the "Geneva Bible." It was so called because it was prepared by the Reformers in Geneva. It is also called the "Breeches Bible," because Genesis 3:7 is translated: "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches."

The Bible is the most translated book in the world. It has been translated into more different languages and dialects than any other book that has been written.

The Bible continues to be the best seller in the world.

The Bible is the best book in the world.

It is the only book that reveals the origin, mission, and destiny of man.

It is the textbook on salvation.

There is no conflict between the Bible and the facts of science. There may be many conflicts between the Bible and the theories of so-called scientists, and between the facts of science and the theories of so-called "Bible scholars."

Above all things, the Bible should be studied and obeyed and taught. □

—GOODPASTURE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

(Continued from Page 4)

eousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17). We are commanded to study to show ourselves approved (II Timothy 2:15). If we want the truth, we have it in the Bible.

This matter of thinking that there are really such orders as the priesthood of Aaron and Melchisedec for us in the church today was really mind-boggling to me. In all kindness, I just couldn't see how anyone could believe that (on the basis of the Bible). I was told that it was taught in the book of Hebrews, whereupon I suggested we turn there and read (but we never got around to it). The 7th chapter of Hebrews mentions the priesthood of Melchisedec (one man). This man was a priest way back in the time of Abraham. We have no record of the beginning of his priesthood or the end of it. There is a lesson drawn here applied to the priesthood of Christ. Christ is our high priest in heaven who lives for ever to make intercession for us. Christ is the only high priest; there is no other today (I Timothy 2:5). As far as the priesthood of Aaron is concerned, that was part of the Old Testament Jewish system which terminated when Jesus died on the cross and the New Testament began (Hebrews 9:11, 12; Galatians 3:24, 25; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:15-17). We have no separate priesthood from the people today. Christ is the great high priest in heaven (Hebrews 7:24-26; Hebrews 10:19-21) and every Christian is a priest before God (I Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 10:21, 22). This is what has been called the priesthood of believers.

For some reason during the course of the conversation with my friendly visitors we failed to get involved with the second and third questions I had asked. The second question concerned their teaching that there is eternal marriage beyond this life, whereas Jesus said that we would be as the angels in heaven—neither married or given in marriage (Matthew 22:23-30). And the third question had to do with their practice of being baptized in the place of someone who has died never accepting Christ.

However, we did touch somewhat upon the fourth question before they left. It concerns modern day revelations. As is commonly known, they believe that Joseph Smith received the *BOOK OF MORMONS* as a revelation from heaven in the last century. Also, our discussion uncovered their beliefs in continued revelations today to the "apostles" in their church. They believe that we still have the spiritual gifts witnessed in the early church.

In response to this, let me say again that we have "ALL TRUTH" (God's completed revelation) in the form of the Bible, the New Testament. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into "ALL TRUTH" (John 16:13). The revelation was made to the apostles and prophets in the early church (Ephesians 3:5), and is now recorded in the Holy Scriptures. We have already pointed out II Timothy 3:16 and 17 that the Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS." Peter tells us that "His (God's) divine power hath given unto us ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). According to Jude 3 the faith has once and for all been delivered to the saints. The New Testament is called an "everlasting covenant" (Hebrews 13:20). In other words, Christianity

is a completed religion, God's final revelation to man, and the Bible is a closed book (no more is to be added). Consider Galatians 1:8 and Revelation 22:18 and 19.

And that brings us to this matter of apostles and the other inspired men, prophets. As Ephesians 4:5 said, the revelation of the New Testament had been made to them. The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 3:20). In other words, the church is built upon the truth of the deity of Christ, and the truth revealed to the apostles and prophets. There are no more apostles and prophets in the church today than there is another Christ. Foundations are laid only once, and ours is sure and steadfast. The truth has been established, confirmed. It is ours. It is here to build on.

I asked one of my young visitors what an apostle was, since it is claimed they are in the Mormon Church today (and since it is claimed that they get revelations in addition to that of Joseph Smith). I kept asking what an apostle was. I finally got the answer that they were Christ's representatives and witnesses. The last word was the one I wanted. Pressing further, I asked, "Witnesses of What?" He didn't get the point, so I turned to Acts 1:22 and read. As Matthias replaced the fallen Judas as an apostle, this condition or qualification was laid down, "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a WITNESS WITH US OF HIS RESURRECTION." That the apostles were the personal and official eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ is stressed throughout the book of Acts (Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 4:20, 33; etc.). (A person can not be a witness in court unless he has seen something with his own eyes). In this capacity they confirmed the truthfulness of the message and got the church started. Their work was singular and unique. Obviously no living person today could qualify to be an apostle, nor is the work of an apostle needed. The church has been started and their inspired teachings endure in the form of the New Testament Scriptures. (Likewise, the gift of prophecy, along with the other supernatural gifts of the Spirit, ceased in time, I Corinthians 13:8-10; etc.).

When I said that to be an apostle one would have had to have been upon this earth when Jesus was here and to have seen him in his resurrection with one's own eyes

(Continued on Page 8)

TO OUR MORMON FRIENDS

THE PRESENTING of this material in reference to Mormons is not given to antagonize, nor to show disrespect for any man's religious sincerity. In humility and love, we are simply concerned about the truth. By our public inquiry we are exercising the same rights that are sacred and common to all Americans, that of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. These same rights were used in placing the advertisement in *READER'S DIGEST* and are used to propagate the Mormon faith. So, we feel that no one should feel offended. Our inquiry is simply from one familiar with the Bible (but not the Mormon religion), wanting to have some question adequately answered. In kindness, please accept this as such. —Editor □



HEALING THE WOUNDS

Of Religious Division

MORE AND MORE RELIGIOUS FOLK are recognizing that religious division is a wound in what should be the Lord's ONE BODY, his church. Good people who would rather be thought of as just "Christians" have found that they are squeezed into denominational factions, and they are looking for solutions.

Jesus prayed for his followers "that they may be one" (John 17:20), speaking of followers at his time, and those of us centuries later (See verses 20,21).

Paul severely criticized the Christians at Corinth for even *beginning* to divide into separate and competing groups. He insisted "that there be no divisions among you" (I Corinthians 1:10).

Men and women who love the Lord but are caught in division are growing more concerned about their predicament. We want to briefly evaluate five of the solutions being tried today.

I. FLICKING IT IN

Otherwise known as "giving it up." Many good people have looked over the fragmented field of Christendom and finally resigned from the faith. They can see that the church is Jesus' body (Ephesians 1:22,23). They see there is only one such body. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into ONE BODY" (I Corinthians 12:13). Yet the Yellow Pages are full of different bodies when we look under the "Churches" heading. Discouraged, some drop out entirely.

II. PRETENDING EVERYTHING'S OK

Others pacify their minds with the fiction that "Maybe God planned it this way. Maybe all the competing faiths really come under the heading of One Church. Maybe different denominations are good, allowing us to find the system that suits our personality." This sounds attractive, but it can't pass the test of careful Bible reading. Is Christ, the one Head of the one church giving opposite instructions

to different parts of his own body? Is there a single scrap of Biblical evidence that God intended his one household to break up into pieces wearing different names and teaching different things? No, not one.

III. GOING ANONYMOUS

Perhaps if we just drop the historic denominational names, and use neutral words like "chapel," "Christian center," "fellowship," etc. the problem will go away. No, it hasn't, and it won't. If religious bodies cling to man-made doctrines that have distinguished their groups for decades or centuries, nothing is gained by name changing. Doctrines, not just names, divide people.

IV. MIXING AND MERGING

Beyond mere switching of names is the solution of actually breaking down walls between groups, combining them, either on the local level or on a wider scope. But this still falls short of being a good solution. Why? Well, start with two competing denominations. Let them both admit that they are not The Church in the full and true sense as Jesus intended when he said he would build his church (singular). Then let them merge, working out compromises of their doctrines and practices. What results? A blend of two systems that admittedly were imperfect in the first place. A mixture of two impure ingredients will never produce a pure result.

V. TURNING OLD FASHIONED

What solution remains? A simple one indeed. So simple that many people have ignored it.

Jesus said he would build his church (Matthew 16:18). What if he built it in the best possible condition, according to perfect divine plans? What if he designed it to stay that way, perfectly equipped for man's needs throughout the rest of time? Then every change that men made in the church from that day to this was a new flaw, not a new improvement. Then we would need to discard everything man has "learned" about the church from Century Two till Century Twenty, return to the pure, unpolluted headwaters of truth about the church, and live today as New Testament Christians.

Those who prepare this paper have chosen this solution believing that it is God's specific will for all his people.

Investigate this, if you are interested in Christianity without denominationalism. And be sure to investigate God's written Word. It describes the only church that Jesus ever built.—BY NORMAN FOX □

**Christianity Is
Udenominational**

EDITORIAL BY-WAYS

(Continued from Page 6)

(among other things), I was told this was just a matter of interpretation. (But read Acts 1:22 again, and see for yourself what it says).

As we continued talking, as a matter of conversation, I asked, "If there is such a thing as modern day revelations, who should we listen to?" The Mormons are not the only ones making this claim, and different groups are teaching different things. I was told that we should pray that God would show us the truth. My visitors said they couldn't convince anyone, only God could do this.

Whereupon I reminded them that the Bible claims to be the truth, and if we followed the Bible alone we wouldn't have to worry about the various contradictory modern day "revelations" being true or false. We know the Bible is God's Word. It is the truth.

This led me to suggest that their *BOOK OF MORMONS* should be in harmony with the Bible, if it is a revelation from God as they claim. God does not contradict Himself.

And this brought us back to where we had started. When I had written the letter in response to the advertisement in *READER'S DIGEST*, I said that I didn't know anything about the Mormon religion, but I had spent considerable time with the Bible. Therefore, my knowledge of the Bible prompted the questions I wrote. Several things I read in the advertisement didn't level with what I knew about the Bible. There had to be an explanation.

Time had slipped by in a hurry. With a few mess-ups, I had continued printing while talking. The young Mormon "elders," deciding the time had come to end their visit, left the way they had come—very friendly and undaunted. They certainly were gentlemen, but it didn't seem to bother them that they hadn't answered my questions to my satisfaction. They promised to drop by if they were ever in that neighborhood. Good naturedly, I said, "You fellows haven't answered any of my questions. But if at any time you want to write the answers from *THE BIBLE* on a piece of paper and hand them to me, that will be fine." With that they smilingly left. □

THAT GOOD MAY COME

IF THERE were only some way that during the dark days of trial and suffering one could see that good may come from it! But how difficult that is! While Joseph was confined to an Egyptian dungeon he had years to ponder the question "why?" Surely there was no answer then evident. Just as these experiences worked out for his good and the saving of his people, blessings often come in disguise today. Consider the testimony of those who learned by experience.

- DAVID: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalms 119:71).
- JOB: "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).
- PAUL: "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17).
- JAMES: "The trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2).
- PETER: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of

Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:13).

THE HEBREWS WRITER: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11).

While the clouds are the darkest and the storms the heaviest, remember these golden words from God. Think of the good that might come as a result of today's sufferings. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17, 18)—W.T. Hamilton □

MARTIN LUTHER ON THE NAME "LUTHERAN"

"WHO IS LUTHER?" This is not my doctrine. I have not been crucified for anybody...How did a poor, stinking bag of worms like me come to have the children of Christ called by his wretched name? Do not do it, dear friends. Let us wipe out the partisan name and call ourselves Christians after him whose teachings we follow."

—D. Martin Luther Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe □

FEW IN NUMBER

- How many souls were safe in Noah's ark
When the waters began to fall?
I think you know the answer as we start;
They numbered only eight in all.
- How many of them reached the promised land
When the Israelites were set free?
The multitudes were buried in the sand;
And there were only two, not three.
- How many were the faithful ones of God
When Israel settled in the land?
They went a-whoring after heathen gods;
The prophet only was God's man.
- How many stood by Jesus Christ the Lord
When he was tried in days of old?
There His disciples fled before the sword;
Another one his Lord he sold.
- How many constitute the church today
When men in sin for wrong contend?
The gate is strait and narrow is the way,
And few the faith they will defend.
- The Lord Himself said many would be called,
But few of them would be chosen;
Of many would the fate of sin befall;
Others, heresies' confusion.

By A. BROTHER

"A Time to Laugh"



SOLOMON SAYS there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to weep, and a time to laugh. If you want to look this up, you will find it in Ecclesiastes, chapter three, and verses one and four.

Most of us would prefer to laugh rather than weep. We usually associate laughter with happiness because laughing people generally are happy people. Christians certainly should have cause for joy and happiness.

Someone once said, "Show me the things a person laughs at, and I will show you what kind of a person he is." There is much truth in that. Sometimes a very serious point can be illustrated with a humorous statement.

We might add a little to the foregoing statement and say, show me WHEN you laugh and I will show what kind of a person you are. Remember, Solomon said there is a TIME to laugh.

Humor surely has its place, but if a person is *constantly* laughing, we feel something is wrong with him. I once knew a person who walked around with a perpetual grin on his face. He laughed aloud at the slightest provocation, and many times without the provocation. If he was spoken to he would go off into a spasm of tittering and giggling. We have institutions to care for people in that condition. There should be a proper balance of humor and seriousness in an individual's makeup.

Have you ever diagnosed the meaning of "practical" joke?

The word "practical" comes from "practice," or to put into action. So practical joke means a joke acted out. But practical also means to put to good use. Many so-called practical jokes we have seen had absolutely no good use.

Your writer has a scar on his back that he has carried for many years as an illustration of how impractical many practical jokes are. Some "joker" pulled a chair back as I was being seated one time. My back struck the edge of the chair and sustained a painful abrasion. But I was blessed. I have heard of people breaking their back as a result of this "joke."

Once I threw a rock half the size of a baseball at a cow, using a sling such as David used on Goliath. The idea was to have the rock drop near the unsuspecting cow and startle her half out of her wits, then I would laugh.

But the joke back-fired. As the rock arched through the air I could see it would be close. It should really surprise the grazing bossy. But it was a little too close. It struck her squarely between the eyes. She dropped in her tracks.

I didn't laugh. I was terrified. How could I, a boy of twelve, pay for a fat Hereford cow. It was no joke.

Fortunately, the cow revived and staggered off. I saw her several days later apparently as well as ever, but I didn't try to startle any more cows that way.

It seems some folks can only laugh when it is at someone else's expense. If a drunk staggers through a plate-glass door, or if some old lady falls off the curb and spills her bag of groceries, it is a hilarious spectacle for some people.

There is a time to laugh, but the time isn't when some-

one tells an off-color story or shady joke. We should feel sorry for anyone who has to feed his funnybone on garbage.

There is a wealth of clean humor from which to draw laughs without stooping to dirt. Your writer has been writing a humorous newspaper column for the past several years, but it has always been clean. We might add that meeting a deadline on a humor column is no laughing matter.

Laughter and singing go together. See Psalms 126:2,3. James says, "Is any merry? Let him sing." Surely much good can come from a merry heart.

In a world full of tears and sorrow, it is a fine thing for an individual to uplift and inspire others with a merry heart. Laughter at the proper time and place may be an antidote for many ills. "A merry heart doeth good like medicine." (Proverbs 17:22). It may help someone over a rough spot, or ease the tension in a sticky situation.

The preacher was illustrating the fact that most everybody has a desire to go to Heaven. "Everybody who wants to go to heaven, stand up!" Everyone stood. Everyone, that is, except a gentleman who had fallen asleep. "Thank you, you may be seated. Now everyone who wants to go to hell, stand up."

The bustle of everyone rising and being seated again had roused the sleeper. He had hazily heard the preacher shout, stand up, so he rose to his feet. It was deadly quiet. He gazed sleepily around at the smiling people, then he looked at the preacher standing behind the pulpit.

"I'm not sure what you're voting on preacher, but it looks like you and me are the only ones for it."

It's time to laugh. —By ED HENRY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JESUS ATTENDED THE EVENING SERVICES— DID YOU?

"The same day AT EVENING, being the first day of the week...the disciples were assembled." Were you there? Impossible, you say, for this text (John 20:19) is telling something that happened long ago.

True. But the same thing happened this past Sunday. It was the first day of the week at evening, and the disciples were assembled...and you should have been there. Could you have been present if you had wanted to? Why were you not present?

The remainder of the text tells us that the disciples were behind closed doors for fear of persecution. Yet all were there...except one. One was absent, and he missed something great. For suddenly Jesus stood in the midst and blessed them.

Be faithful to the Sunday evening services.
Remember Hebrews 10:25 and Matthew 18:20.—Adapted

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HAVE YOU QUIT THE CHURCH?

ONE MEMBER of the church said to another, "John, we are sorry that you quit the church."

"I have not quit," was the quick reply. "I just haven't been coming."

His friend then said, "Well, in that case, John, what would you do if you were going to quit?"

Remember what God said in reference to the assembly in Hebrews 10:25?

Have you quit? —Selected

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

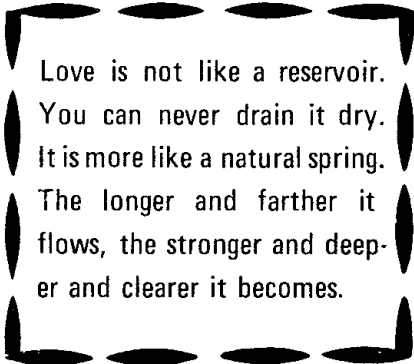
THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

THE APOSTLE PAUL said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in THE CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). To the Corinthians, he wrote, "For the preaching of THE CROSS is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

Today the cross is a respectable symbol sometimes seen on church buildings. We talk about, and we sing about the cross. "I will cling to the old rugged cross..." "Jesus, keep me near the cross..."

Perhaps we have not gotten the full force of Paul's words in the above verses, or in what we are singing. But with Paul they were no empty (and dignified) cliches. In the Roman Empire crucifixion had long been the means of capital punishment. It was reserved for traitors, slaves, and the worse kind of criminals. The cruelty and inhumanness of being nailed to an old rugged cross is bad enough within itself, but to be left to languor and to anguish in unspeakable pain for days as the horrors of blood poisoning and death set in are hard for us to image today. But such was the Roman world. And such was the awfulness of the death our Lord experienced...as he died for us.

To get more of the impact of what the cross meant to the first century Christians, replace the word "cross" with electric chair or hangman's noose. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the ELECTRIC CHAIR." "The preaching of the ELECTRIC CHAIR is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" "I will cling to the old ELECTRIC CHAIR (or hangman's noose)..." "Jesus, keep me near the ELECTRIC CHAIR..."



Now you see a little more of what they were up against. It is no wonder the preaching of the cross was called foolishness. Paul said, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:23). It was a stumbling block to the Jews, and this word literally means to scandalize. To the worldly wise Greek, with his great systems of philosophy, to think of Deity in the terms of an old rugged cross was to be on the lunatic fringe; it was crazy.

But Paul declared that he would glory in that which appeared foolish, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of

God is stronger than men" (I Cor. 1:25). God chose that which seemed foolish in bringing our salvation that no flesh should glory in His presence (I Cor. 1:27-31), and may we never forget this. —By JAMES E. GIBBONS □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



BOOK OF MORMON AND THE BIBLE

By the late Gilbert W. Holt

(FOLLOWING IS some reprinted material in reference to the BOOK OF MORMONS and the BIBLE. It is printed here to stimulate thought, and it must be explained as we are seeking to know the truth—Editor).

BOOK OF MORMONS TEACHES:

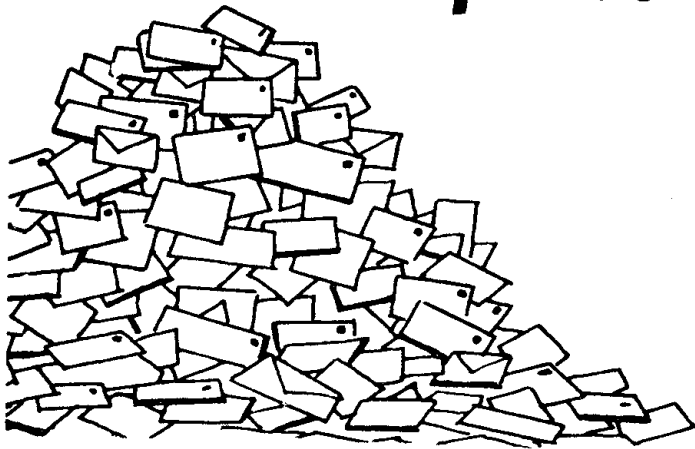
WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES:

1. "He did not confound the language of Jared" (Ether 1:35, page 478).
2. "And behold, He shall be born to Mary at Jerusalem" (Alma 7:10, page 212).
3. "There was darkness 'for the space of three days' following the crucifixion of Christ" (Helaman 14:20; page 394).
4. "...For behold, blood cometh from every pore" (Mosiah 3:7, page 140).
5. That believers were called Christians in 73 B.C. (Alma 46:14-15), page 310).
6. That the church of Christ was built in 73 B.C. (Mosiah 18:17, page 169).
7. Salvation was in and through the Blood of Christ in 124 B.C. (Mosiah 3:18, page 141).
8. That the Nephites received the Holy Spirit before Christ was born, B.C. 29, (Helaman 5:45, page 372).
9. Adam and Eve could have born no children if they had not sinned (2 Nephi 2:22-23, page 54).
10. That Christ was on this continent after His ascension, showing His body, and ministering (3 Nephi 10:18-19, page 420).
11. That a seer is greater than a prophet (Mosiah 8:5, page 151).
12. "Behold I am Jesus Christ, I am the Father and the Son" (Ether 3:14, page 484).

1. "The Lord did there confound the language of all the earth" (Gen. 11:9).
2. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1).
3. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matthew 27:45).
4. "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:14).
5. "Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26... about 42 A.D.).
6. "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18, about 30 A.D.).
7. "And without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).
8. That the Holy Spirit was not given until Pentecost (John 7:39; Acts 2).
9. "...and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).
10. That He will remain in heaven at God's right hand until God makes His enemies the footstool of Christ's feet (Acts 2:34-35).
11. "For he that is now called a Prophet was before called a Seer (Isam. 9:9)
12. "I came forth from the Father... I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28).

READERS'

... Response



IDAHO:

■ “We would like to receive your perodical on a regular basis for our (College) library. The articles found in it are the kind we want our students to read.”

MISSOURI:

■ “You have a true to the Bible publication and America needs more reading material like it.”

KENTUCKY:

■ “You’ll never know how much good I’ve received from THE SWORD AND STAFF. It’s been a great help in teaching my Sunday School class and in my private Bible study. Sometimes I have trouble getting the real meaning of a Scripture will read—dig—and pray for enlightenment, only to have it leap out at me in one of your issues...”

■ “I have been receiving THE SWORD and STAFF for over ten years now, and I certainly appreciate the honest and firm stand you take on what the Bible teaches . . . Young preachers today are coming out of Bible college all too often so weak and bending over backward to keep from saying something that might upset people that they could preach in any man-made denominational church without revealing to them in any way the errors that are being preached and taught there...”

TENNESSEE:

■ “It is time for me to order the best little booklet that I use. Please send me 200 ‘What Must I Do to Be Saved?’ . . . My work increases daily. Now I have many more than 1500 Bible students. The work in Ghana is better organized with good follow-up on the Bible correspondence. My records show that 170 have been baptized into Christ...”

OHIO:

■ “We continue to appreciate THE SWORD AND STAFF for I feel it is one of the best papers in the brotherhood.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEEK NOT WEAK IN GREEK

IF YOU WERE going to illustrate the word MEEK by using one of God’s animal creatures, which one would you choose? A mouse? A chicken? The lowly turtle? Perhaps

you would choose the dodo bird—stupidly waiting to be clubbed into extinction!

It may surprise you to know that the Greeks used this word to describe the well-trained horse and the loyal watchdog. Neither of these animals is weak. To the contrary, their very usefulness depends on their strength! Meekness is strength that is obedient to the reins and submissive to the trainer. Just as wild dogs are of no value to men, raw strength is useless until it is controlled.

Only two men were ever called MEEK in the Scriptures—Moses and Jesus. They were strong, but their lives were yielded... Their strength was under control. When Moses faced the Pharaoh, or when Jesus faced the Pharisees, they were still obedient to God’s reins. Even the seeming violence at the cleansing of the Temple might be understood as a loyal watchdog chasing intruders out of the yard.

Meekness is a virtue in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:5). It is part of Christ-likeness that is produced in us by His Spirit (Galatians 5:23). It should be our constant attitude as we represent God’s kingdom to outsiders (1 Peter 3:15).

Remember that meekness does not grow out of weakness, but from power held under control. MEEK is not WEAK in the GREEK!—Kenny Boles □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THIS IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

If you can see a work which you have begun taken from you and given to another without feeling bitterness—this is maturity.

If you can listen to someone criticize you even unkindly, and receive instruction from it without hard feelings—this is maturity.

If you can see another chosen for a job which you yourself are better qualified to do, without feeling hurt—this is maturity.

If you can feel an inward peace from God in an age of frustration—this is maturity.

If you can suffer nagging pain or ache still singing and praising God, hiding your feelings for the sake of others—this is maturity.

If you can crawl out of bed at an early hour to pray when you would like to sleep, because you realize that here lies power with God—this is maturity.

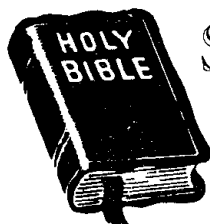
If you can give yourself to help someone else who needs you without having the idea you are a “pretty good fellow”—this is maturity.—HARLAN BULLETIN □



JESUS DIED
on the cross

because

man’s best
was not good enough.



SOLID BIBLE-RELATED MATERIAL:

BELOW IS a listing of booklets, tracts, and materials published by and currently available from THE SWORD and STAFF. If something is not listed, that means it is now out of print. This literature has been widely used. We believe that you will be pleased with the Scriptural soundness and helpfulness of each item. Place an order today. And while you are at it, order the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. You have the timeless material of back issues in more of a permanent form this way. More and more people are seeing the value of doing this.

- ☐ The Meaning of Suffering in the Life of the Christian—10¢ each.
- ☐ Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered—8¢.
- ☐ Are Visions, Dreams and Religious Experiences Proof of Salvation?—7¢ each.
- ☐ The Letter That Was Never Answered—6¢ each.
- ☐ Are You Sanctified?—3¢ each.
- ☐ The Origin of Religious Misunderstanding and False Teaching—5¢ each; 100 for \$4.00.
- ☐ Once in Grace, Always in Grace?—5¢ each; 100 for \$4.
- ☐ Every Sunday? (Shows the Scripturalness of having the Lord's Supper every Lord's day)—3¢ each.
- ☐ Sequel to the Lord's Supper "Every Sunday" (Answers objections to the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper)—3¢ each.
- ☐ The Last Broadcast—3¢ each (HALF PRICE).
- ☐ Lessons in Happiness from the Garden of Eden—3¢.
- ☐ His Church is Marching On (Song on sheet with glue on back to stick in back of hymnbooks)—5¢ each.
- ☐ Too Busy!—3¢ each.
- ☐ A Question About the Sabbath—2¢ each.
- ☐ I Saw Him Standing There (or The Old Gospel Preacher)—FREE.
- ☐ How to Be Saved From Sin—FREE LEAFLETS.
- ☐ Christianity Without Denominations—FREE.

(NOTE: Since postage is so high, any help along that line will be appreciated).

NEW: Is It Wrong for A Christian to Use Tobacco?
This folder/leaflet needs wide distribution in our day of looseness on the part of many professed Christians. Order a good supply at 3¢ each.

- ☐ 1977-78-79 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$4.25

• SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER •

Gentlemen:

I wish to take advantage of your special introductory subscription offer of only \$1.50 for the first year.

Name.....

Address.....

.....Zip.....

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE SWORD AND STAFF (Check for bound volumes order)

- ☐ 1969-70 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$3.95
- ☐ 1971-72 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$3.95
- ☐ 1973-74 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$3.75
- ☐ 1975-76 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$3.95



EXPLANATION

BI-MONTHLY FOR A YEAR or SIX ISSUES: Our aim has been to put this publication out bi-monthly, but it has not always worked out that way. In the event you do not receive it bi-monthly, your subscription will be up for renewal after you have received six issues.

DATE OF SUBSCRIPTION: No renewal notices are sent, but you will notice with your address there a month and year. This signifies the month and year you originally subscribed (or when you were re-entered). Use this date each year as a clue and cue to know when to renew your subscription.

THANK YOU—The Editor.

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER"



The Sword and Staff
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, N. C. 27030
U. S. A.

Non-Profit Organ.
U. S. POSTAGE
3.5¢ PAID
Mt. Airy, N. C.
Permit No. 25