

The Sword AND Staff

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

•

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

ONE WORLD, ONE PEOPLE—"One in Christ Jesus"

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

• "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all **ONE IN CHRIST JESUS**" — Galatians 3:26-28.

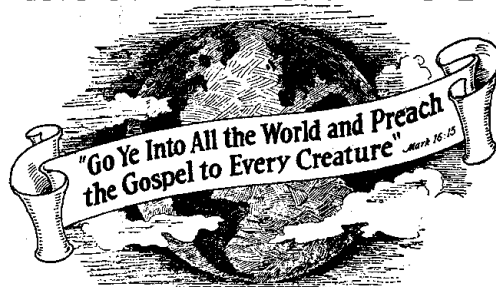
THE HUMAN FAMILY is one. All of us are the children of the same parents, Adam and Eve. Paul told the ancient Athenians that God had "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). The closeness of early man can be seen in that all spoke the same language. They sought to assure their continued unity and closeness in building a great city and tower on a plain in the land of Shinar, oneness for self-idolatrous purposes. So God saw fit to confuse their language and scatter them upon the face of all the earth (Genesis 11:1-9). The human race had been somewhat fragmented earlier because of sin. The idea involved in sin and death is breaking God's law and being separated from God, spiritually and physically. Sin fragmented the human race as men were alienated from God and one another in spiritual death (separation). And with the confusion of languages the oneness of the human family was shattered.

The human race continued to be fragmented by sin into idolatrous societies until Abraham almost stood alone when God called him. He was told to separate himself and go into a land that God would show him. God promised to make a great nation out of his posterity, and finally "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). His descendants became the Jews, and all others were called Gentiles (the nations). God kept alive monotheism through the Jewish nation while He got the world ready for the Saviour, who came through this nation. We are

told, "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). Although God for a time had dealt primarily with the Jews, Jesus said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Later the apostle Paul wrote that Christ had "broken down the middle wall of partition between" Jew and Gentile "that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:14, 16). The imperative great commission charges that the gospel is to be preached to "all nations" (Matthew 28:19), or as Mark records it, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

The great day of Pentecost came in Jerusalem after Jesus had ascended back to heaven, and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-11). The church was being formally established among men. Men were gathered there from many nations, and, although their native languages varied, they heard the apostles by the power of God preach the gospel in

CHRIST COMMANDS-



(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.

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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.

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

SOME PEOPLE say to "live and let live," but the only trouble with this philosophy is that by the same token it teaches "die and let die" (which is not Christianity).

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

Be clothed in righteousness—half clothed, half righteous.

"We would worry less about what others think of us if we realized how seldom they do."

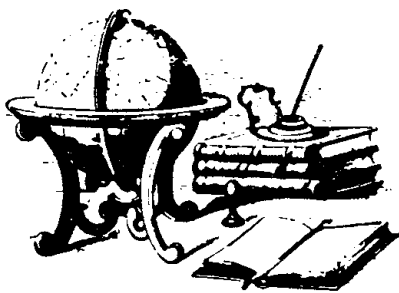
Being half-committed to Christ will not even begin to take you half way to heaven.

"To succeed bite off more than you can chew, then chew it."

The reason many people backslide so easily is that they didn't "front-slide" to start with.

"If you meet trouble promptly and without flinching you reduce the problem by half."

The person who flatters you really wants to "use" you (he has some selfish motive in mind).



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

CHARACTERIZING A PEOPLE

• "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (lazy gluttons). This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (TITUS 1:12, 13).

IT IS USUALLY unwise to generalize, and make wide sweeping statements, because so many times there are exceptions to the rule. This is especially true when we would try to characterize a race of people in just a few words. But there comes a time and there is a place where this is justifiable, and it will serve a useful end. Paul, to prepare the preacher Titus for the task ahead of him, did just that. He quotes a Cretian authority, gives his own words, and speaks by divine guidance. His words are truth and faithful.

He characterized the inhabitants of Crete as "liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons" (not very complimentary to say the least). In the ancient world, to speak of Corinth was to strike a mental image of moral degeneracy, and, at the same time, to refer to Crete was proverbial for the lie. Lying was a way of life with them. And, along with that, they were called "evil beasts" and "lazy gluttons." Crete, being an island country without wild beasts, supplied its own—its human inhabitants. Evidently their unpredictable behavior was like that of wild animals—"rude, savage, cunning, greedy." So, in characterizing a people, Paul leaves us with a picture of a people who were lazy and gluttonous liars, who were at the same time capable of being vicious (Titus had his work cut out for him).

If Paul were here today advising preachers on how to get their job done, we are made to wonder how he would characterize the American people (or any other people for that matter). Americans have a great heritage behind them. People who were an embodiment of the work ethic, a free society under law, and a land with great natural resources came together to supply the necessary invigorating ingredients to make a great nation. Freedom and individualism stand out as characterizing Americans. Since the United States is perhaps the most pluralistic society on earth today, religiously and otherwise, tolerance has come to be the most practical way of life (in a melting pot the "rough" edge, distinctiveness, is taken off of one's convictions). The work ethic has been strong among American people, and is still strong, but it is losing ground. Presently a dualism has emerged, the work ethic and the play (pleasure) ethic (if ethic is the right word to use). In fact, with many, devotion to the play ethic has taken the drive out of the work ethic. The dominance of television (ever vying to entertain) in the lives of most people is but a symptom of the disease. American people are lovers of pleasure (even sinful pleasure). Americans are paradoxical. Individualism is decidedly American, but at the same time tolerance of almost anything, and conformity, are American.

Perhaps our problem is a little more complex than that faced by the preacher Titus on Crete. We have a more diversified problem, yet a characterization that is common generally to all Americans (the American paradox again). We have to deal with a pleasure loving people, dominated by materialism, and many times insensitive

(Continued on Page 4)

ONE WORLD, ONE PEOPLE—"ONE in Christ Jesus"

(Continued from Page 1)



their native tongues. God had confused the languages at Babel and scattered man. On the day of Pentecost he made them to understand alike by miracle, showing that all men were to be brought together as one again.

The apostle Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, preached on that day, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off..." (Acts 2:39). According to Paul, the "AFAR OFF" means Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-13). In keeping with the great commission, Peter preached the truth, but it took him several years to realize the import of it. Many years later, under much prodding by God, Peter went to the house of the Gentile Cornelius. Before this, the typical Jewish bias and disdain for non-Jews had kept him away from the Gentiles. But once in Cornelius' house, Peter relates, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." We later read: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:28,34,35). And, with the miraculous demonstration of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius, the truth had finally gotten through to him. Jesus died for all, and all people become one in Christ.

And, thus we read such Scriptures as the one given at the beginning of this article. When we through faith accept Jesus as Saviour, and are baptized into him, we not only are united with Christ, we are united with every other person who has done this too. We are one with them. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**" We are members of his one spiritual body, the church, and members one of another (Romans 12:5). How we should "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). How we should "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," and, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:15,16). We are not only members one of another, but are brothers and sisters in Christ, and should mean something special to one another.

It is a shame that denominationalism has failed in its representation of Christianity (and people don't know the difference). Among partisans, the whole plan of Christ (which calls for unity and oneness) seems to have been brought to nought (Matthew 16:18; John 17:20-22). Not only is denominationalism a shame,

churches that exist along the lines of class and race are a disgrace. These barriers are supposed to be non-existent to Christians. Listen to James: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then become judges of evil thoughts?"

Today, whether it is planned that way or not (or whether it is intended or not), we have whole "churches" that cater to certain classes of people or to just one racial group. Others may feel unwelcome, and they, in some cases, may actually not be welcome. People as a whole who attend some churches dress in such a way (I Timothy 2:8-10; I Peter 3:3,4) as to make the very poor feel ill at ease. It appears they really are not wanted. (Then some high-minded people won't attend unless there is a prestigious building). Christianity is not put into practice, nor the great cosmopolitan nature of our religion realized or exemplified when race bias would exclude anyone. We



are deprived of the love, joy, and pleasure of true brotherhood in Christ of all men.

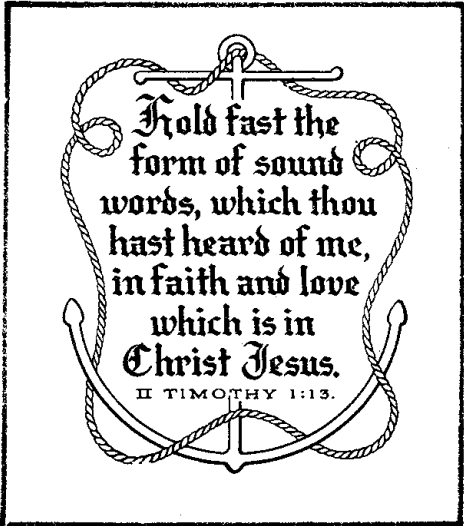
Furthermore, there is another thing that must be said before closing out this article. The kingdom of Christ is universal; it is not enclosed by the borders of any nation. We are made sad when people wrap the church in the flag of any nation and think of Christianity in the terms of patriotism. Although the Christian should be among the most law-abiding citizens in any country, he has an allegiance which transcends that of any earthly government. As a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, the one church, he is at one with with every other Christian in the world. His higher

(Continued on Next Page)

ONE YEAR TO LIVE

If I had but one year to live;
One year to help; one year to give;
One year to love; one year to bless;
One year of better things to stress;
One year to sing; one year to smile;
To brighten earth a little while;
I think that I would spend each day,
In just the very self-same way
That I do now. For from afar
The call may come to cross the bar
At any time, and I must be
Prepared to meet eternity.
So if I have a year to live,
Or just a day in which to give
A pleasant smile, a helping hand,
A mind that tries to understand
A fellow-creature when in need,
'Tis one with me, I take no heed;
But try to live each day He sends
To serve my gracious Master's ends.

—Mary Davis Reed



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THE GOOD SHEPHERD

DR. FORSYTH has told how a friend of his was on a sheep farm in Australia and saw the owner take a little lamb and place it in a huge enclosure where there were several thousand sheep whose bleating, together with the shouting of the sheep-shearers, was deafening. Then the lamb uttered its feeble cry, and the mother heard it at the other end of the enclosure, heard it and started to find her lamb. "Do not imagine that you are beyond reach of the Good Shepherd," he said. "He sees you, He hears you, every desire of of yours is known to Him, and every secret longing for better things. He sees you as if there were no other child in the whole world."—Light □

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

to spiritual things. We have a mixed up people. Although individualistic, people have subconsciously come to terms with their pluralistic society—thus, we commonly hear people say that it doesn't make any difference what a person believes just so he is sincere in it. People don't realize it, but this is an empty-headed conclusion. It is a "cop-out." Ultimate truth is put in the back seat, and whatever a person "thinks" (?) is all right—if he can live with it (and is comfortable with himself). A people characterized as pleasure-seeking, materialistic, and who are repelled by the thought of absolutes to which all alike must conform, present a special problem to gospel preachers. Special wisdom, dedication, and prayer are needed so as not to grow weary in well-doing. To define our problem is to make it easier for us to understand what we are up against and thus to face it.

Paul characterizing the people of Crete is not the only time such is done in the Scriptures. There is a characterization that takes in all of us in the third chapter of Romans. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (3:10). "For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). All of the human family are characterized as a fallen race of people, all sinners, all under the condemnation of sin. No one can be good enough to save himself. All of us need a Saviour.

THUS, pin-pointing the problem in the characterization of the people of this world, Paul proceeds to give the answer to the problem. It is resolved in accepting God's grace (unmerited favor) through Jesus Christ by means of his blood. This is done by faith. □

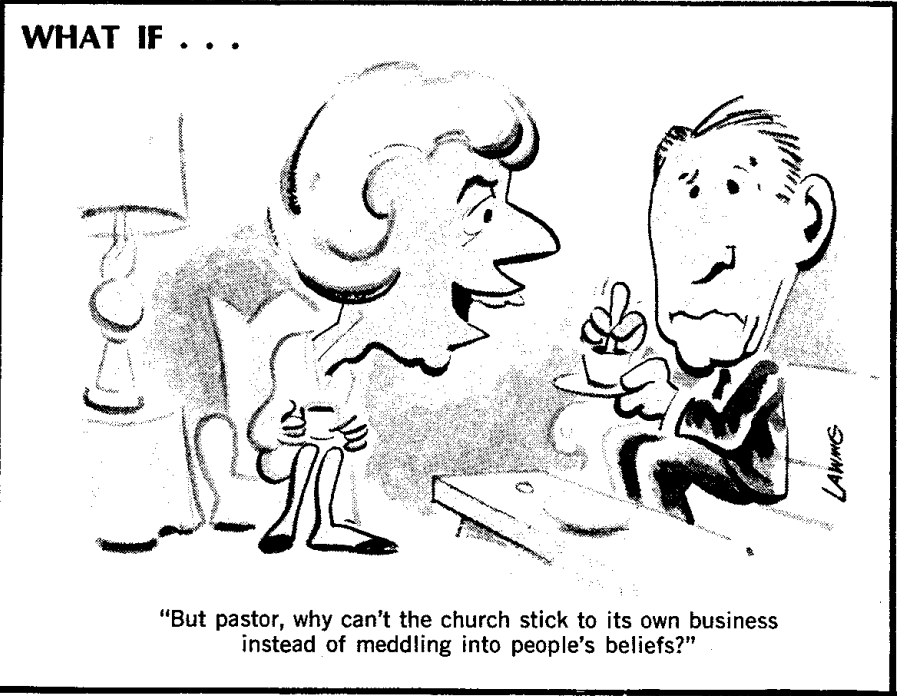
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ONE WORLD, ONE PEOPLE—"ONE IN CHRIST JESUS"

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allegiance must always put him in the position of being an independent entity in society.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, as Christians we are ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. □



Blind Man Now Can See, Says It's 'A Constant High'

COLUMBIA, S. C. (UPI)—Bob Edens—who was blind all his life until a recent operation—is thrilled by bluejays, amazed by yellows, adores billboards and is learning to read like a first-grader at age 51.

"But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red," said Edens, who had a complicated eye operation 15 weeks ago that included work on a detached retina and a corneal transplant.

"Grass is something I had to get used to," he said. "I always thought it was just fuzz. But I see each individual green stalk, and I see the hair on my arm growing like trees, and birds flying through the air, and everything.

"It's like starting a whole new life. It's the most amazing thing in the world to see things you never thought you'd see," he said.

"I never would have dreamed that yellow was so...so yellow. I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow.

"I saw the purple and orange recently in the face of a tiger. I could see the individual hairs and the colors and his eyes.

"I can see the shape of the moon—and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And, of course sunrises and sunsets.

"I can't wait to get up each day to see what I can see. I am still seeing most of it for the first time.

"And at night I look at the stars in the sky and flashing light. And I am learning to read and write—like a first-grader. Everything is like a constant high. You could never know how wonderful everything is.

It began about a year and a half ago when doctors at Emory University in Atlanta told Edens that there was a good chance that new surgical techniques could provide sight in one eye.

He had been blind since birth but graduated from Furman University, learned braille, married and had a daughter. He even coached a Little League baseball team while working as a masseur.

"The first thing I ever saw," he recalled, "is an eye-dropper coming down toward my eye. I told the nurse, "Don't pooch up your mouth. You're going to hit my eye with that drop."

Edens said that he is learning to read one letter at a time. He said that he is a very slow reader but is learning rapidly. He also said that he is learning to write with a pen.

The first time that he looked out a window and saw a busy street scene awash with a myriad of colors and sensations "was like a fairy tale that suddenly becomes real life.

"I was astounded. I saw the golden arches of a McDonald's sign. I saw some trucks going by carrying heavy equipment. I saw billboards. I was even dazzled by black and white. There just aren't words that can tell what that

was like. I wish there were."

It had been made possible by the donation of a cornea, but Edens had to wait months for the right skin, blood and cornea type to become available. If all factors were positive, there would be an 85 percent chance of success, doctors told him. It finally happened 15 weeks ago.

"I saw some bees the other day," said Edens almost as if telling a secret, "and they were magnificent. And I jumped a covey of quail. I had heard quail before, but to see them flying—Ah..."

Edens said that women are a separate experience. He said that he loves looking at them, especially Dolly Parton because he met her when he was blind.

He said that women look pretty much the way he had envisioned them. He said that the women in his life are "so thrilled about the success of the operation you wouldn't believe it." (March 6, 1981)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Lord Jesus Christ healed many blind men while he was upon this earth, even men who were blind from birth. We read about these wonderful things, and think it was great, but really don't fathom the fulness of what took place. We read of the confused cry of one blind man being healed, "I see men as trees, walking." We have reprinted this news item as it gives depth to such an experience from the perspective of the healed, filling our hearts with warm emotion and excitement.*

Also, it fills our hearts with appreciation for the common and ordinary things which are not so common after all. Having never been deprived of such a basic thing as seeing, most of us don't know how to be thankful. But our body, which houses the soul, with all its members is a matter of unceasing amazement. With the Psalmist of old, all of us should exclaim, "I will praise THEE; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" Psalms 139:14). □

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INFANT BAPTISM

1. The Bible does not mention it.
2. The person must depend upon the testimony of others in after years.
3. It is done in the name of the Father; the heavenly does not require it.
4. It is done in the name of the Son; the Son never taught it.
5. It is done in the name of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit never authorized it.
6. It is practiced not only without the will of the child, but often against it.
7. Men say it comes in the room of circumcision; only male children could be circumcised.
8. Teaching must precede baptism (Matthew 28:18,19).
9. Preaching must precede baptism (Mark 16:15,16).
10. Faith must precede baptism (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 8:37).
11. Conviction of sins precedes baptism (Acts 2:37).
12. Repentance must precede baptism (Acts 2:38).
13. Baptism follows a confession of faith in Christ (Acts 8:37).
14. Only those who received his word were baptized (Acts 2:42).
15. Those who were baptized continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). —Selected □

AUTOMATED RELIGION

A MAN WALKED up to a vending machine, put in a coin, pressed buttons labeled "coffee, double cream, sugar." No cup appeared, but the nozzles went into action sending forth coffee, cream and sugar. After the proper amounts had gone down the drain, the machine turned off. "Now that's real automation!" said the man. "This thing even drinks it for you."

That is just how some people want their religion. They want to make a deposit, put in some money and let the rest be taken care of automatically. But, there is no such thing as automated prayers, devotion, worship in song or service in benevolence. The religion of Jesus requires personal engagement. Beware of automated religion.—Selected □

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IF YOU LACK IT, ASK IT (James 1:5-8)

TO KNOW TRUTH is not enough, there must also be a complimentary act or a "doing" of what we know to be right. To know about God, to be a walking Bible, crammed with facts, figures, places, names, and verses might enthrall some, but to divorce what one knows from what one does, is to deal a death blow to really being a Christian. Bible study as an end within itself is of little value, just as faith by itself, is dead, obedience alone separated faith and love is "pharisaical." Even so, knowledge of truth, to be of value, must be incorporated into life and be the determining rule in every circumstance.

Not everything goes the way we want it, and many times, the circumstances we find ourselves in are harsh and difficult. For this we need wisdom, to develop the proper attitude toward life.

The wisdom we need comes from God (verse 5), and is "first pure (undefiled, unmixed, clean), then peaceable (not given to fighting), gentle (not quick tempered, but reasonable), and is easy to be entreated (open-minded), full of mercy (compassionate), and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (not two-faced, prejudiced or always changing with the situation)" (James 3:17). This wisdom is shown in one's life and not simply talked about.

Thus, if you lack it, then ask God for it, because God will give to all His children, liberally.

But, let our asking be motivated by our "being fully persuaded that what He (has) promised, He (is) able also to perform" (Romans 4:21).—*Jack Exum, Jr.* □

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THE DOCTOR AND THE PREACHER

A SKEPTICAL PHYSICIAN urged upon his preacher friend that the evidence of a soul was inconclusive. "Did you ever see a soul?" he asked.

"Of course not; souls are not seen," responded the evangelist.

"Did you ever hear a soul?" "No." "Or ever taste one?" "I never did." "Ever smell a soul?" "I never smelled a soul." "Did you ever feel a soul?" "Most certainly."

"Well, there are four senses out of five that testify no soul."

The minister replied, "You are a healer of aches and pains. Did you ever see a pain?" "Oh, no, sir." "Or ever hear an ache?" "That's not the way they are perceived."

"Have you ever smelled a pain?" "No," replied the doctor. "Or ever tasted one?" "No." "Have you ever felt the sensitive nerve of pain?" "Yes, the rigor of pain has racked my body." "Well," said the minister, "four senses out of five testify that you have no pain." The physician replied, "Nonsense!"

The preacher smiled and winked and replied: "That's what I thought when you asked me the same questions." □

—WORDS OF LIFE

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WINNING AGAINST THE ODDS

CRIPPLE HIM, and you have a Sir Walter Scott.
Lock him in a prison, and you have a John Bunyan.
Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington.
Raise him in abject poverty, and you have an Abraham Lincoln.

Subject him to bitter religious prejudice, and you have a Disraeli.

Afflict him with asthma as a child, and you have a Theodore Roosevelt.

Stab him with rheumatic pains until he can't sleep without an opiate, and you have a Steinmetz.

Put him in a grease pit of a locomotive roundhouse, and you have a Walter P. Chrysler.

Make him a second fiddle in an obscure South American orchestra, and you have a Toscanini."—*Via VANGUARD*—

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IF I WERE A RICH MAN

ONCE A MAN said, "If I had some extra money, I'd give it to God, but I have just enough to support myself and my family."

And the same man said, "If I had some extra time, I'd give it to God but every minute is taken up with my job, my family, my clubs, and what have you—every single minute."

And the same man said, "If I had a talent, I'd give it to God, but I have no lovely voice; I have no special skill; I've never been able to lead a group; I can't think cleverly or quickly, the way I would like to."

And God was touched,
And although it was a risk,
God gave that man money, time and
a glorious talent.
And then He waited, and waited and
waited...

Then after a while, He shrugged His shoulders
And he took all those things right
back from the man,
The money, the time, and the glorious talent.

After a while, the man sighed and said, "If I only had some of that money back, I'd give it to God. If I only had some of that time, I'd give it to God. If I could only rediscover that glorious talent, I'd give it to God."

And God said,
"Oh, shut up!"

And the man told some of his friends, "You know, I'm not so sure that I believe in God anymore."—*S. Lockhart* □

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THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT



● By James E. Gibbons

SEVERAL YEARS AGO when I lived in a different place, and was in a different circumstance, I was repeatedly approached about joining the local Ministerial Association. Finally I told my denominational friend that if he really wanted us to come together, let us drop all denominational names, rid ourselves of all human creeds and traditions, and take the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice. Let us be just Christians (nothing more or nothing less); that is what they were in the beginning. True unity is more than a non-aggression pact entered into by divergent sects. It is being in the same army of the Lord, rallying to the same battle cry, and trying to win the same victories. After all, this is what the Lord wants. The immediate reaction and reply that I got was, "Oh, no, no! I think denominationalism is a good thing. It makes everybody do a better job!"

Nevertheless, there is talk of unity and union in the religious world, and there are moves in that direction. The expression "Ecumenical Movement" encompasses one facet of this idea. There is the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches (where it seems that unity is more on the basis of association than conviction). What one believes or disbelieves does not seem to matter much, evident from the fact that some in that associ-

ation do not accept the inspiration of the Scriptures nor the actual virgin birth or deity of Christ. Then there is the Roman Catholic Church which claims that unity can be reached by submitting to the pope and recognizing so-called apostolic succession. And there are those that believe true unity can only be attained through restoration of the "New Testament" church on the earth today. The church in early New Testament times was under the direction of Spirit-inspired men who knew just exactly what God wanted (and wrote about it). It is argued that a step backward is a step forward when we go back to the New Testament church. However, even with this noble position some have become weary and are seeking fellowship outside the context of restoration.

But, let us say, all effort toward unity and fellowship must be the "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT" (Ephesians 4:3), and hence the "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13), or all such effort completely meets God's disapproval and is not "Christian unity." It becomes an unholy thing in the sight of God.

Therefore, since the "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT" is what God wants, let us seek to know what all this involves.

I. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS ATTAINED IN THE BODY WHERE THE SPIRIT DWELLS.

When the gospel of Christ is preached, the Holy Spirit brings about conviction in the sinner (John 16:7-11; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12, 13). According to I Peter 1:22, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Acts 2:38 shows the details of this operation where the same apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)." Thus, as a person repents and is baptized (from Greek BAPTIZO, meaning to be immersed) into Christ, he is "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). Then to sum this up, Paul says it is by the agency or influence of the ONE Spirit that we have all been brought to be baptized into ONE body (I Corinthians 12:13).

The ONE Spirit has brought us into the ONE body; this ONE body is the church (Colossians 1:18; 3:15), which is also referred to as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit in two different ways. The individual member of the body (the Christian) has the Spirit and is a personal temple of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; I Corinthians 6:15-20). The second way is that the church in a collective unit, as the church at Corinth, is the temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:21, 22; I Corinthians 3:16, 17). Therefore, anyway you look at it, the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit dwells in the body.

Why all this talk? Our subject is "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT"—the kind of unity God wants. The unity of the Spirit must be attained where the Spirit is—in the ONE BODY, in the one church. Denominationalism creates a problem here for the Scriptural conditions of entering the ONE body have been largely neglected and replaced by the traditions of men. The gospel in its fulness must be preached to all men, and this involves preaching baptism too (Acts 8:35-39), which is a burial in water for the REMISSION OF SINS and to receive the GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38)—the way we get into the one church. We must tell all men to accept Christ Scripturally, and "Christian" unity will be realized when they are united with Christ (Galatians 3:27, 28) by being baptized into the ONE body through the influence of the ONE Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13) and where the Spirit

(Continued on Next Page)

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

(Continued from Last Page)

thereafter dwells. "Christian" unity is determined by whether I am united with Christ and am consequently following HIS WORD and not by whether I support any man's organization of any kind.

II. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS ATTAINED BY THE TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

Jesus promised His apostles, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost (Spirit), whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Notice also John 16:13. Paul reminded Timothy that all Scripture has been given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17), and Peter pointed out that holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20, 21). In speaking of the words of the Old Testament, they are called words of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16). The New Testament is the Spirit speaking to the churches (Revelation 2:7, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22, etc.).

Therefore, if we are to have "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT," it must be on the basis of what the Spirit teaches, His very doctrine, which is the Word of God (THE BIBLE). That is the reason Jesus prayed in John 17:20-22, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me THROUGH THEIR WORD: that they all may one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Notice it says, "THROUGH THEIR WORD" (the apostles' word, which was inspired by the Spirit). Paul charged in Romans 16:17 that division was caused by teaching doctrines contrary to what they had learned—contrary to the apostles' doctrine and hence the teaching of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to this, the Spirit-inspired doctrine of the apostles was the basis for unity.

John, the beloved and inspired, says to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1). The only way we can accurately do this is by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Then as a follow-up of this verse: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). When one departs from the doctrine of Christ and will not repent, he is to be avoided (Romans 16:17). If we bid him "Godspeed" we are partakers of his "evil deeds" (II John 9-11). True unity (or fellowship—the expression of it) is a triangular experience. Our fellowship with one another is determined by our fellowship with God (I John 1:6, 7). If one of us breaks this fellowship with God, we "automatically" break it with one another. To have fellowship with apostasy is not "Christian" nor is it "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT," but it is an unholy thing in the sight of God.

The platform for unity as taught by the Holy Spirit is outlined in Ephesians 4:4-6. Seven things are laid down here. Seven in the Bible many times suggests completeness. We read, "There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

III. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS BASED ON THE WORDS OF THE SPIRIT.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which

There Is:

1

- Body
- Spirit
- Hope
- Lord
- Faith
- Baptism
- God

— Ephesians 4:4-6

the Holy Ghost (Spirit) teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual (words)" (I Corinthians 2:13). Furthermore, "Hold fast the form of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13), and Titus was likewise exhorted to use "sound speech" in his teaching (Titus 2:8). The word translated "sound" in II Timothy 1:13 means wholesome in contrast with that which is sickly and diseased (like we say sound body). They were to use healthy words and doctrine which the Holy Spirit revealed. Paul does not use the high sounding philosophical terms of the Greeks, nor did he use any other diseased terminology which would distort the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Beloved, if we are going to have real unity, if we are going to return to apostolic Christianity in all its purity, we must call Bible things by Bible names. This is a language all of us can understand, and all who accept the Bible can accept it without question. This language conveys just exactly what the Holy Spirit meant. I don't mean that all of us will have to learn Greek and to conduct our worship in an "unknown" tongue. No, just the Bible language as it can be most literally translated into the language of our day, language which gets across what the Holy Spirit meant. Let us weed out of our vocabulary the diseased terminology which suggests apostate religion.

The religious world is flooded with all kinds of artificial, philosophical, theological, denominational words which, in the language of the Holy Spirit, are not wholesome. They do not convey the doctrine revealed in the Bible. Denominational names stand opposed to the glory of God, promote division, and must be gotten rid of (I Corinthians 1:12, 13; 3:3-5; Colossians 1:18; Acts 4:12). Religious titles such as "Reverend," "Holy Father," and "Doctor" are completely out of harmony with the religion of Christ (Matthew 23:1-12; Psalms 111:9). As another example, the "clergy" and "laity" concept is not found in the New Testament. People talk about the "sacrament" or "eucharist"—words which furnish the wrong ideas. In ref-

erence to salvation, people speak of "joining the church" and some of "praying through." You cannot join the Lord's church; you are "born again" into it (John 3:5) or added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47). Salvation is not gained by "praying through." Then there are certain Bible terms which are used incorrectly in current religion. Among these are to be found such words as "brotherhood," "disciples," "baptism," "pastor," "bishop," "evangelist," "altar," and "sanctify" (to mention a few).

Correcting our religious vocabulary comes very hard, but it is imperative to attaining "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT." Our Lord said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The depth of our concern to return to the pattern of unity set forth in the Scriptures will be reflected in our language because that reveals our innermost selves. The Bible is my textbook of religion. I know what you are talking about when you use the language of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise I am confused.

IV. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IS REALIZED BY THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

Beloved, we may be orthodox in our convictions, but at the same time be heterodox in our lives. If we do not manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit, I am afraid there will not be unity for long. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Listen to the apostle Paul: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). Hear Paul again: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). All of these characteristics emanate from a soul that has surrendered to Christ. The good and gentle Spirit of the Saviour has clothed the convert with a pure, gentle, and refined nature. Where there is no fruit of the Holy Spirit there is no Holy Spirit.

It is of interest to notice that Paul prefixed his seven "ones" in the platform for unity with these words: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). Such words as these stand out: "all lowliness and meekness," "longsuffering," "forbearing...in love," and "in the bond of peace." It took much of the influence of the Holy Spirit to help the Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-17) live together in harmony in the one body. No doubt their different backgrounds would tend toward trouble without the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But, of course, "goodness," "righteousness," and "truth," are mentioned as fruit of the Spirit. One may have been baptized, but if he does not produce these things in his life, there can be no "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT." It is futile to talk of having fellowship on the basis of baptism alone as the sole criterion. There must be a birth of the water AND the Spirit, and there must be faithfulness and fruitfulness thereafter. To put baptism as the only basis of fellowship is to deny the possibility of apostasy, and to disregard what the Bible teaches on disfellowshipping the unrepentant erring "brother." These qualities of character must be possessed to maintain "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT."

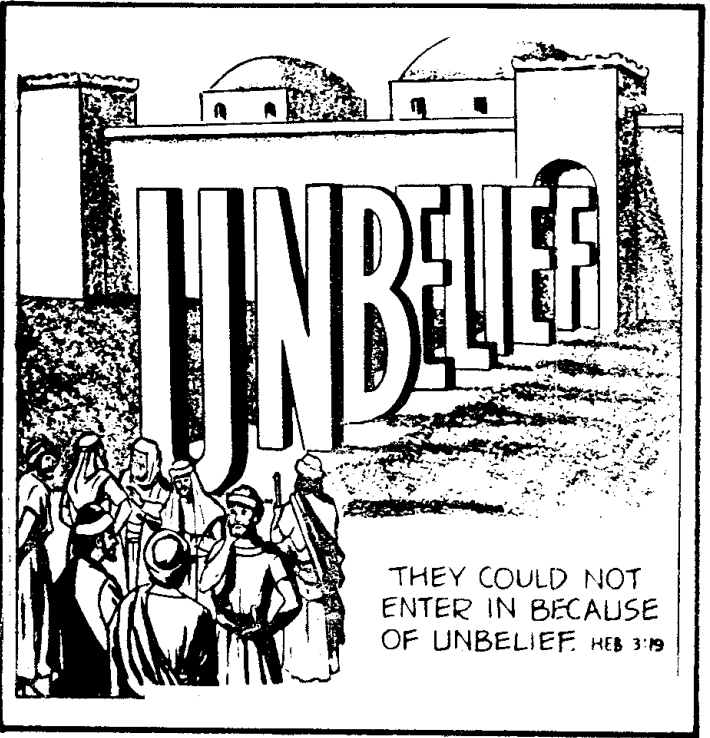
THEREFORE, in the light of our examination of this subject of unity, we conclude that the kind of unity God wants and recognizes is "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT," which is manifested in a very practical way. It is realized and made manifest in at least four ways: (1) the unity of

the Spirit is attained in the ONE body where the Spirit dwells, which is the church; (2) the unity of the Spirit is attained by the teachings of the Spirit, which is the Word; (3) the unity of the Spirit is based on the words of the Spirit, Bible terminology for Bible things; and (4) the unity of the Spirit is realized by the fruits of the Spirit, which is essential in our relationships.

"Christian" unity is determined by whether I am united with Christ, and consequently following His Word, and not by whether I take part in pseudo-unity movements (nor by whether I support any man-made organizations of any kind). In fact, the said organizations are a detriment to "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT" and are prolonging denominationalism. The organization of the church found in the New Testament is only local and autonomous (functioning only from the local base). With no organization except the local church, with no rule of faith except the Bible, with no name except that divinely given, and with no headquarters save that in heaven (where the head is—Christ), denominationalism is almost an impossibility. The merging of denominations is not "Christian" unity. The divesting ourselves of denominationalism to become one with the church of the New Testament, however, is the unity that God wants.

Let us practice the "UNITY OF THE SPIRIT." □

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DON'T LET YOURSELF...

- WORRY when you are doing your best.
- HURRY when success depends on your accuracy.
- THINK EVIL of a friend until you have all the facts.
- BELIEVE a thing impossible without trying.
- TRUST an elastic conscience.
- WASTE TIME on peevish and peevish matters.
- IMAGINE that good intentions are a satisfying excuse.
- HARBOR bitterness in your heart toward God or man.

—Selected

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MY JUBLIEE

O God, let me discern your simple Truth,
Which Jesus said would set me free;
Help me to cast aside the human myth;
Let Him declare my jubilee.

By A. BROTHER

HOW TO HAVE A POOR BIBLE CLASS

I THINK, as a general rule, most teachers want to have good Bible classes. In many cases, however, the want never becomes a reality. Hence, "poor" best describes many classes within the church.

The following points are presented in a negative manner. Obviously no one would follow them, because, hopefully, no one wants to conduct a poor Bible class. But in case you may be the exception, follow these suggestions and you will be a failure with a giant "F." Do the opposite of what is suggested, and you will have an outstanding Bible class. Let's notice how to have a poor Bible class.

1. Lecture non-stop for the entire class period.
2. Don't ask for or encourage class participation.
3. If someone does ask a question, cut him off quickly.
4. Above all, don't have a clear lesson aim.
5. Avoid specific objectives for your teaching.
6. Never take time to let the class make personal application or discuss certain points in class.
7. String your study of a subject out as long as possible.
8. Never use testing or other means to encourage study.
9. Shun illustrations that help clarify points and truths.
10. Always ramble and keep the class guessing about where you are going.
11. Be sure to make only obvious comments; never get "deep" or bring out new thoughts.
12. Preach the lesson in class like you would in the pulpit: never stopping for feedback.
13. Strive to be very calm and unexcited in your delivery.
14. Be careful to speak in a monotone; so lowly that persons in the class can't hear what you are trying to say.
15. Never challenge the students to think or study on their own.
16. Prepare for the class at the last minute.
17. Try to teach what you don't know.
18. Always teach what you want; not what the class wants to study.
19. Don't live consistently with what you teach.
20. Always use "crutches": never study the Bible text.
21. Be dogmatic and unyielding on every point you make.
22. Remain a stranger to your class; don't get to know them.
23. Never adapt or make relevant application to a need or a situation.
24. Demonstrate a "know-it-all" attitude.
25. Have questionable habits in your life.
26. Teach your opinions and "hobbies" constantly.
27. Never try a new approach to teaching.
28. Insult the class members when they make a "ridiculous" statement or ask a "dumb" question.
29. Always let the class leave feeling guilty and down in spirit.
30. Never say, "I don't know."

There you have it. Thirty sure-fire ways to produce and maintain a poor Bible class. Why not take each one of these and ask yourself, "Does this describe my class or me?" If it does, make the correction needed and put forth your best effort to be a better Bible class teacher. With determination and God's help, you can have a great Bible class.

By J. J. Turner

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BIBLE AVAILABLE IN 275 LANGUAGES

LONDON (AP)—The Bible already the world's most widely distributed book, is now available in 275 languages, the Bible Society in London reported Monday (2/2/1981).

It said parts of the Bible appeared in 27 new languages last year, making a total of 1,710 languages in which at least one book of the Bible is available.

The works of Lenin, in second place, appear in 222 languages, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, which says an estimated 2.5 billion copies of the Bible have been printed.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THEY MISSED SEEING THE PRESIDENT

WHEN HERBERT HOOVER was President, he, Mrs. Hoover, and an official group stopped one beautiful Lord's day morning at a little church building in the mountains of Pennsylvania. Most of the members were out for a drive that day and didn't even give passing thought to the importance of assembling for worship. Only 13 were present when the President's party came in.

Afterwards, the absent members said, "If we had known that the *President* would be there, we would have gone to church." This is so typical of people who do not realize the importance of the assemblies of the saints! True, Christians usually do not miss a *President* when they fail to attend services—they miss the KING OF KINGS!—Selected □

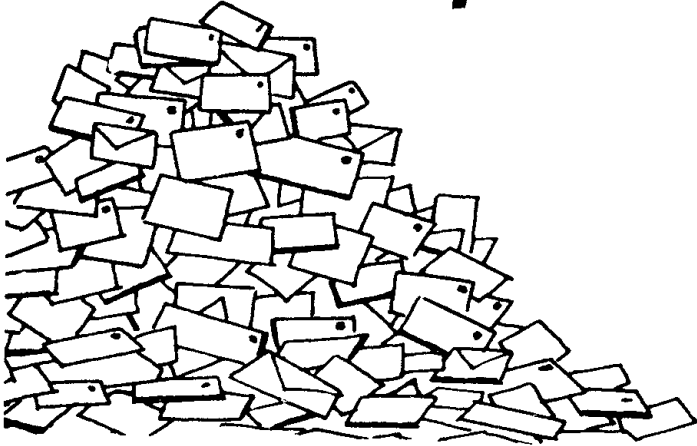
Everything Brings Forth After Its Kind



"There is Death in the Pot!"

READERS'

... Response



TO OUR ANONYMOUS MT. AIRY WRITER:

Yes, as a matter of concerted policy entered into by many, it would be good to boycott all grocery stores that sell beer and wine (if it would do any good in getting our point across). But why just pick out beer and wine, what about the ones that sell tobacco products? What about the drug stores (and grocery stores) that sell pornography and dirty paperbacks? And many of the "regular" magazines are objectionable to Christians. We could multiply other illustrations.

To further illustrate the complexity of the problem, would it be wrong (according to your way of thinking) to patronize a local store that is part of a chain, which locally has nothing objectionable but does in stores at other locations? Would it be wrong to order from one of the big mail-order houses (you know what is meant) if there was some item objectionable in the catalogue? Would it be wrong to buy a ticket to fly on an airline that serves strong drink to passengers who want it (which is commonly done)? Etc., etc.

The truth is that we would be hardput to find a store where we could buy our basic necessities if we boycotted all of them. This writer goes to a store to buy groceries, not beer and wine (nor cigarettes or unwholesome magazines). It is our conviction that we do not have to give account for what a store sells, but *for what we buy and use*.

However, if we thought we could do some good in specific cases, it would be good to enter into boycott as a matter of tactical expediency.—EDITOR

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Please keep up your *SWORD AND STAFF*. I enjoy each issue and would not want to miss one issue. Renew my subscription and use the balance for needs."

FLORIDA:

■ "I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I don't want to miss a copy... Thank you for such a wonderful paper."

OHIO:

■ "I would like to renew my subscription. I enjoy your paper so much. We used some of your articles at church

for different occasions. We introduced your paper to the elders. Now the church is receiving your paper for everybody. May God bless you and your staff, and family."

MICHIGAN:

■ "We have received your paper for several years now and always look forward to each edition. We pray for all the writers. There are so few Christians that speak out in boldness, and yet with sincere and caring motives. Thanks everyone at *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. God bless you all in your efforts to strengthen the body and convert the lost."

IOWA:

■ "Today is a miserable day. The worst blizzard of the past several years is upon us. The hogs, cattle and horses are cold. The kids are playing wildly. The wife is taking a nap. And I am enjoying *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. As an elder in the church of Christ, I thoroughly enjoy and appreciate it from cover to cover.

"One thing that I have never seen touched upon is the author of much of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I would like to know more about you and your family..."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you for an interesting letter and your comments, which are very kind. As to the editor and author of a lot of the materials presented, it is sufficient to say that he is one of God's N.B.'s (NOBODIES, I Corinthians 1:26-31) that the Lord Jesus Christ might be everything. May the attention all be focused on the message, and not any on the messenger. Amen).

KANSAS:

■ "Here is a little help with the publication expenses of *THE SWORD and STAFF*. I appreciate your fine work. This is one publication I always read *ALL* the way through."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "Please take me off your mailing list. □



JESUS DIED
on the cross

because

man's best
was not good enough.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

WE ARE RESOLVED to get *THE SWORD AND STAFF* out regularly (the number of times it is supposed to go into the mail) this year. You have convinced us that what we are doing is greatly needed. However, what we will be able to do will be determined by your financial backing. Your offerings are needed and greatly appreciated. In fact, all money received from subscriptions and orders is regarded as offerings to defray the high cost of printing. Thank you.—Editor □



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.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- ☐ What Must I Do To Be Saved?—6¢ 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.
- ☐ Once in Grace, Always in Grace?—4¢ each.
- ☐ Are You Sanctified?—3¢ each.
- ☐ Every Sunday? (shows the scripturalness of having the Lord's Supper every Lord's day)—3¢ each.
- ☐ Sequel to Lord's Supper "Every Sunday" (answers objections to the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper)—3¢ each.
- ☐ The Meaning of Suffering in the Life of the Christian—10¢ each.
- ☐ Lessons in Happiness from the Garden of Eden—3¢.
- ☐ Is It Wrong for a Christian to Use Tobacco?—3¢ each.
- ☐ A Question About the Sabbath?—2¢ each.
- ☐ His Church is Marching On (song to tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" on sheet with glue on the back to stick in back of hymnbooks)—6¢ each.
- ☐ I Saw Him Standing There (or The Old Gospel Preacher)—No charge
- ☐ Christianity Without Denominations—No charge.
- ☐ How to Be Saved From Sin—No charge.

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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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- ☐ 77-78-79 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$4.50

NEW BIBLE LANDS TOUR FOR 1983
(Start Making Your Plans Now)

PLANS ARE now in the making for another great Bible lands tour for the middle of JUNE, 1983. Tentative plans call for us to visit ROME, GREECE (Athens, Corinth, etc.), JORDAN (Amman, Petra, etc.) and ISRAEL (many, many places). This will involve 11 days.

Also, 4 extra days are planned for those who would like to visit Europe (an optional feature at extra cost). This would include SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, BELGUIM and back to Amsterdam to board our flight back across the Atlantic. Details will be available later.

If you have been thinking about such an exciting tour, this early notice will give you plenty of time to get ready for it. You will be glad that you went. Send us your name and address, and as detailed information becomes available, we will send it on to you.

(NOTE: since the tour is planned for June, perhaps others will be able to go who weren't able to go on some of the other tours...like school teachers, etc.).

Correspondence should be addressed to: THE SWORD AND STAFF, P.O. Box 147, Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030

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.

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