

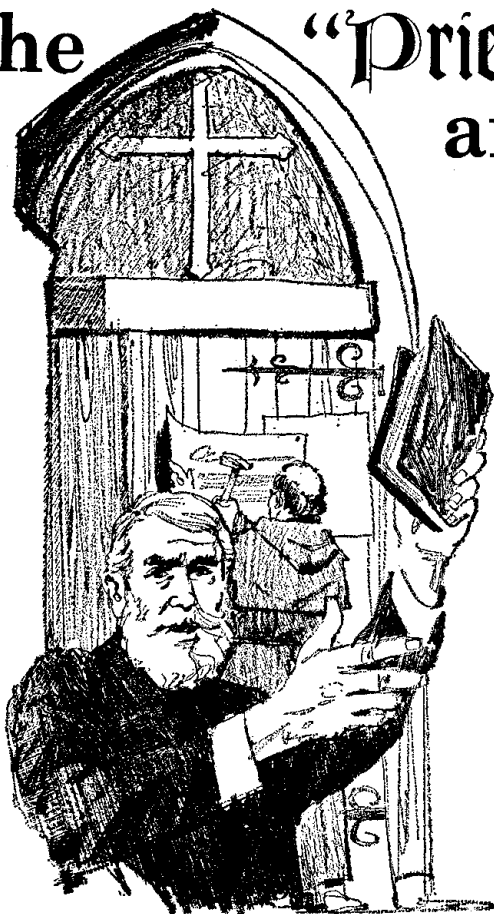
The AND Staff

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

•

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

The "Priesthood of Believers" and Mutual Ministry



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

THE "PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS" was an expression that surfaced during the heated polemics of the Protestant Reformation. The fiery Reformers used these words as a weapon against the apostate religion of the Dark Ages. It was argued that every person was his own priest before God, and no one needed human go-betweens that were so pronounced in the Roman Catholic priesthood.

Certainly the whole Catholic system was arrogant and pretentious with the pope and priests attempting to stand in the place of God in the eyes of the people,

the pope even claiming to be the head of the church and successor to Christ and the apostles. Such awe-inspiring appellations as "HOLY FATHER" and "REVEREND" prefixed their names (unheard of in early New Testament times except by way of prohibition—Matthew 23:1-12; Psalms 111:9). (And it is a strange mystery **how** and **why** Protestants have adopted this alien terminology even unto our day, being so foreign to what they were pleading for).

Although the Protestants did not fully implement their profession of a "priesthood of believers," the New Testament certainly does teach this. I Peter 2:5 says that we are a "**holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Then verse 9 which follows continues this thought: "But ye are a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Revelation 1:6 asserts that we have been made "**kings and priests** unto God."

Certainly a priest represented himself before God, but he served more in the capacity of representing others before God—sacrificing, interceding on their behalf. Read the Old Testament Scriptures and you will also find that the priests were the primary religious teachers of the people. It was only when they departed from God's ways that the prophet appeared on the scene to call everyone back to God. So the priest was an important personage in the plan of God in the ongoing of His cause, whether in interceding for the people or in teaching God's Word.

And, so, God wants every Christian to be regarded in this light today. Although God has certain ones who are leaders with definite responsibilities and authority, the clergy and laity are artificial distinctions the New Testament does not recognize. God wants every Christian to get to work. There are no

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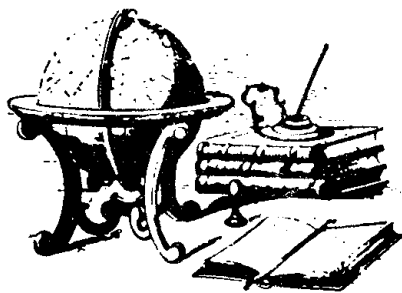
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EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

"EASTER" EVERY SUNDAY

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER were not days observed by the church of the New Testament. Search your New Testament Scriptures from cover to cover. You cannot find just once where these days were observed (and the Lord in the Great Commission instructed the apostles to teach men "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matthew 28:20). Hence, if the Lord had wanted us to observe such days in the church, we would have a record of them in the writings of the apostles or other inspired men (John 14:26; 16:13). (But we are suspicious that, like the secular world, religious publishing houses promote these days to sell their products).

A hint as to the origin of the observance of Christmas can easily be seen by the observant person in the etymology of the word itself. Notice "Christmas" = CHRIST-MASS (you figure this one out for yourself). And for those who think they have found Scriptural authority for Easter in Acts 12:4 of the King James Version of the Bible, a second thought is in order. For those who have made the King James Version an idol, we are sorry to say, but this is a mistranslation (check your other versions). The Greek word in the original is **pascha**, PASSOVER, even as the writer Luke says, "Then were the days of unleavened bread" (Acts 12:3). It is weird to have the word "Easter" associated with the resurrection of Christ, as it had reference to a pagan festival in the springtime observed in connection with the heathen goddess Eastre. Yes, it is strange how many things get started and "intelligent" men keep hanging on to them.

However, for practical purposes we understand what people mean when they use the word "Easter" today. They have reference to the day they remember the resurrection of Christ from the grave, which brings us to our following line of thought.

A marvelous prophecy is found in Psalms 118:22-24. It reads, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

USUALLY the person who excuses himself accuses himself.

"A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't."

If we have stopped preaching a certain doctrine, chances are that we have stopped believing it.

"Sometimes the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence because the people over there take better care of it."

Little preachers with giant-size egos cause big problems.

"If you get to the end of the rope, tie a knot and hang on."

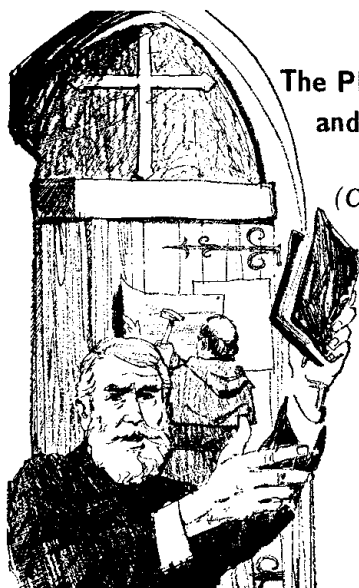
What any verse of the Bible means, it means it in the light of the rest of the Bible (in other words, the Bible does not contradict itself, and other verses clarify and illuminate).

"If God seems far away, guess who moved?"

Are you as patient with others as God is with us?

"Happiness is a direction, not a place."





The PRIESTHOOD of BELIEVERS and MUTUAL MINISTRY.

(Continued from Page 1)

inactive members in the Lord's church (only those who by reason of death have passed from this life can qualify for this classification).

Ephesians 4:11 and 12 are very revealing verses that tie in directly with the priesthood of believers, and the teachings of these verses are generally neglected today (even by those who claim to be the New Testament people of God). Here it mentions that Christ has given the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor/teacher (elder) to the church. Does Ephesians 4:11 and 12 say Christ gave these men to minister to the church? If you say "yes" perhaps you haven't studied these verses as closely as you should have. The idea in these verses is that the leaders of the church work toward equipping all the "saints" so they can do the work of the "ministry." Examining the various translations on this makes an even more enlightening study. The New International Version reads, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." (Verse 16 of this chapter is also very revealing. The church is represented as the body of Christ which is to grow, then we read, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which **every joint** supplieth, according to the **effectual working in the measure of every part**, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love").

If you think that you come to church to be the object of attention, pampering, and ministering by "your minister" (as most people think), obviously you have the wrong concept. And if "your minister" dominates the scene, does all the preaching, does all the ministering, and never attempts to train the church to get to work for God, he also has the wrong concept. Too many "theological" institutions are preoccupied with turning out clergymen to fit into the denominational mold of the one-man pastor system to "minister" to the churches rather than being evangelists of the gospel.

Perhaps it would be good for us to read Hebrews

5:11-14 now. As the Hebrew writer advances into material of deeper thought, realizing the immaturity of his readers, he takes time out to rebuke them. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." He said they had been Christians long enough to know God's Word, to be teachers, but they weren't. In other words, God expects every Christian to be a teacher (in one way or another, according to his ability). We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and to share our faith and knowledge with others.

Christians are to teach and admonish one another, publicly and privately, and they are to teach the New Testament gospel to outsiders.

Paul said to the Roman Christians, "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to **admonish one another**" (Romans 15:14). Colossians 3:16 reads, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; **teaching and admonishing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Hebrews 3:13 reads, "But **exhort one another** daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Then Hebrews 10:24 and 25 read, "And let us **consider one another** to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but **exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (And, an additional line of thought is introduced by James: "Confess your faults **one to another**, and pray **one for another**..." James 5:16).

We know the early church was blessed with supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, which came by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Hebrews 2:3,4; Acts 8:18; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 13:8), and, consequently, these gifts are not available to us today. With this in mind, 1 Corinthians 14:26 is to be understood as people were exercising some of these gifts in connection with the public worship—"when ye come together, **every one of you** hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." We read further how the prophets were to speak by two or three, and those who could speak in another language were to speak by two or three at the most (then someone would translate it).

What we are getting at is that not one person dominated the picture. There was a general participation of the membership of the church in the worship, in the teaching and preaching. Different members made their contribution to the edification of the saints. How un-

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS AND MUTUAL MINISTRY (Continued from Last Page)

like today when we have a professional clergyman who is "THE Minister" on all occasions. He is hired to be our priest. The people do not develop their abilities, are treated as "babes," and dry up on the vine. Like the little boy said, the preacher is paid for being good and the rest of the church is good for nothing (at least their potential is not realized for good).

The early church didn't consider it was just the work of the preacher alone to be a soul-winner. Saving the lost was the business of the whole church. In Acts 8 a great persecution was directed against the church, and "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles" (verse 1). The rank-and-file membership of the church was scattered, leaving only the apostles intact in Jerusalem. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (verse 4). As Paul later taught in Ephesians 6:15 every Christian had his "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." It was their special spontaneous privilege to carry the good news of salvation...a privilege denied the angels of heaven. We have this "treasure in earthen vessels." Every Christian got into the act of evangelism. It is no wonder that we read that before the close of the first century the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23).

We have by-passed the great potential of the church for evangelism today. We have our professional clergy system, and the job still doesn't get done. Yes, there are exceptions to the rule when some "minister" endowed with special charisma is able by the sheer power of his personality to attract multitudes (not every preacher has this charisma). Others use techniques, schemes and gimmicks to draw a crowd. At their best, these results are all one-sided. All of this is about like military officers, with their various strategies, trying to win a war without using the army. The supposed victories are indecisive. Filling church pews without enlisting people into the army of the Lord is not what God had in mind. New Testament Christianity demands that every Christian be on the firing line for the Lord. When we restore the "priesthood of believers" our victories will not be superficial. □

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS...
(Continued from Page 2)

the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This Scripture is quoted more than once in the New Testament. Among the references is Acts 4:11, with the verse right before it throwing light upon its meaning: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Yes,

obviously he is referring to the prophecy in Psalms. The stone being rejected (set at nought) ties in with the crucifixion of Christ, and it being made the head of the corner ties in with the resurrection of Christ.

The last part of the passage in Psalms 118, although it is not quoted in Acts, applies to the glorious event spoken of there: "Whom God raised from the dead." The Psalms reference reads, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). What a day that was!

Really, what day was it when Jesus came forth from the grave? "Now **upon the first day of the week**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus..." (Read Luke 24:1-3; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-9; John 20:1). Mark 16:9 very plainly states, "Now **when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week...**" So, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ occurred on what we call Sunday, the first day of the week, which followed Saturday (the sabbath, the seventh day of the week).

The first day of the week is emphasized in reference to the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Notice John 20. (1) "The **first day of the week** cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre" (verse 1). (2) "Then **the same day at evening, being the first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" (verse 19). (3) "And **after eight days** (being the first day of the week) again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (verse 26). It seems the writer makes a special point of mentioning the first day of the week.



It is interesting to notice that the early church met on the first day of the week, instead of the sabbath. Acts 20:7 reads, "And **upon the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Paul instructed the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). Christians no longer observed the sabbath because that "hand-writing of ordinances" (the O. T. law) had been taken out

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True Bible Eldership



• By MILLARD ROOT — Route 5 — Charlotte, Mich. 48813

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”
—I TIMOTHY 4:15, 16

TO FULLY APPLY this portion of Scripture is of the utmost necessity. Meditate upon “these things” (what the inspired writers gave us by the Holy Ghost—I Peter 1:10; Acts 2:4; I Corinthians 2:12, 13; 14:37), then believe them with all your heart, then teach and practice them “wholly,” and only then will a servant of the Lord profit. The profiting has only been to those who “do” what it says (Philippians 4:9).

First, the Lord prophesied He would give pastors who would feed with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15; 23:4), which is fulfilled in application in Acts 20:28.

The first that we begin to see this taught was after the cross by Jesus the Chief Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23; I Peter 5:4; John 21:15, 16). Then Peter makes it very clear in I Peter 5:1-3 that this order from Jesus was to be passed from Peter to the elders. Paul makes this point clear in II Timothy 2:2. Faithful men were to be taught who were to pass this teaching on to others.

The key is *faithful men*. This is required of all the servants of the Lord (Revelation 2:10; I Corinthians 4:2; II Timothy 2:24-26).

The first the elders are mentioned in the New Testament is Acts 11:30. In Acts 14:23 Paul is putting into practice what Peter said was being practiced in I Peter 5:1-3. The New Testament churches were started. Then after qualified men had *proved* themselves (I Timothy 3:10) and *desired* to work (I Timothy 3:1), they were ordained pastors as God had promised in Jeremiah.

Step by step we can see that Peter is establishing the eldership to take the place of the work that the apostles had started. The authority of the elders and their work is first seen as co-decision makers with the apostles in Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23. Also, Paul is establishing the authority of the elders and their work in Acts 20:28.

It is very important for us to understand that the New

Testament church was set up right and that the pattern was for more than one elder in each local congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:19; Titus 1:5). But we also must clearly see that they are to be Scripturally qualified first (Titus 1:5-7; I Timothy 3:1-6). Then they served (Acts 14:23).

Here is a warning. When this pattern is not followed, first, we reject the Word of the Lord on the qualifications of the elders. Second, we place individuals in unscripturally where Satan can use them (I Timothy 3:6). Third, by agreeing to a one-man rule we establish evil deeds of men like Diotrophes (III John 9-11). The Words of our Lord have been brought to each of us with a warning that has not been heeded (I Timothy 6:3, 4; John 17:20, 21).

Here is this writer's observation of what happened to the early New Testament eldership. The departure of some of the Bible elders was first warned by Paul in Acts 20:29, 30. Paul's sincere concern in the 31st verse of Acts 20 was not carefully considered. A one-man rule eventually came into existence (III John 9-11).

Right here let's identify Bible names for the eldership. *ELDER* or *BISHOP* refers to the same person (Titus 1:5, 7). Peter also said *ELDERS* were *SHEPHERDS* (*PASTORS*) (I Peter 5:4). Pastor suggests feeding. This was their commission (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). And these (the elders) are the pastors of Ephesians 4:11.

How did the church react to the creeping in of a one-man rule by one elder? They threw out the baby with the dirty bath water and set up an unscriptural clergy system that we clearly have today. What should the church have done when Paul's prophecy in Acts 20:29, 30 came about? They should have left the true pattern alone and got the evil men out of the eldership.

What men have said, and are saying, is that God's pattern is not good enough; we know a better way—and they substituted a professional ministry for God's true pattern, which involves elders (plural) feeding the flock.

Now let's come to the qualifications of the New Testament eldership.

First, we cannot deny that a congregation needs authority and a sense of spiritual direction by those who have proved first they are faithful to God's New Testament plan (II Timothy 2:2; I Timothy 3:10). There is a *lack* until men are qualified to do the work (Titus 1:5; I Timothy 3:1; I Thessalonians 5:13).

But we must also note clearly men were doing the work, proving themselves, before they were ordained. A man must prove himself before he is ordained. The churches should have all the men proving themselves all of the time. This way qualifying should be no problem, and it becomes a joy for the congregation to set their very best aside for this work. And if a Diotrophes arises, or a death occurs, another well qualified man can move in with no spiritual loss for qualified leadership.

All, including those who are trying to prove themselves, need to clearly see that the qualifications for the elders in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are the same general instructions that all Christians should be abounding in. How foolish to have an elder who must be qualified to teach and then delegate his responsibility to an unscriptural *hireling* (the one man pastor, the modern day “Minister”—EDITOR). The fact is they were qualified to teach and they were the number one teachers (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:7, 17). They were making co-equal decisions before the

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TRUE BIBLE ELDERSHIP

(Continued from Last Page)

apostles went off the scene (Acts 15). Paul, Peter, and James (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4; James 5:14) make it clear that the elders were God's choice to take the leadership to rule, guide, teach and encourage. And their daily living was to be an example for all the flock to follow until the CHIEF SHEPHERD appears (I Peter 5:4). □

THAT OLD MAN
YOU ARE BECOMING

YOU'RE GOING TO MEET an old man someday! Down the road ahead—ten, twenty, thirty years—waiting there for you. You'll be catching up with him.

What kind of old man are you going to meet? That's a significant query. He may be a seasoned, soft, gracious fellow—a gentlemen that has grown old gracefully, surrounded by hosts of friends, friends who call him blessed because of what his life has meant to them.

He may be a bitter, disillusioned, dried-up, cynical old fellow without a good word for anybody—sour, friendless, and alone.

That old man will be you. He'll be the composite of everything you do, say, think—today, tomorrow. His mind will be set in a mold you have made by your attitudes. His heart will be turning out what you've been putting in.

Every little thought, every deed, goes into this old man.

Every day in every way you are becoming more and more like yourself. Amazing, but true! You're getting to look more like yourself, think more like yourself, talk more like yourself. You're becoming yourself more and more.

Live only in terms of what you're getting out of life, and the old man gets smaller, drier, harder, crabbier, more self-centered.

Open your life to others, think in terms of what you can give, your contribution to life, and the old man grows larger, softer, kindlier, greater. —*The Beacon Light* □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

(Continued from Page 4)

of the way, God "nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). Consequently Paul said, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of **the sabbath days**" (Colossians 2:16). Some Christians in Galatia were trying to hold to the law of Moses, and were observing the sabbath and other days. Paul solemnly wrote to them, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:10, 11).

(It is a matter of special interest that it was upon the first day of the week the church was started. As we know, the church came into being with power on the first Jewish Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (Matthew 16:18, 19; Mark 9:1; Acts 2). Leviticus 23:15 and 16, having to do with the day of Pentecost, read, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new

wave offering unto the Lord." A week of sabbaths was to follow the Passover sabbath, then the next day (fiftieth day) was the day of Pentecost (which means fifty). Of course the day that follows the sabbath is the first day of the week. Therefore, not only was Christ resurrected from the grave on the first day of the week, the church was established on this day too).

What we are trying to say in this article is that the first day of every week (SUNDAY) is "Easter" to the New Testament Christians. The evidence points to the fact that the early church met on this day, instead of the sabbath, in honor of the resurrection of Christ. "This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). Let us not detract from the Scriptures by emphasizing special days other than what the Lord has emphasized.

New Testament Christians observe the Lord's supper the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) in remembrance of the death of Christ, and how appropriate to remember his death on the day of his resurrection. Both are great cardinal doctrines of Christianity, neither being meaningful without the other.

REMEMBER: Every Sunday is "Easter" (resurrection day) to the New Testament Christian. In the light of this, we admonish you with the Hebrew writer, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). What exciting and glorious truths we celebrate as we gather together with those of like precious faith! AMEN! □

A PREACHER'S PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Dear Lord,

Pray, Thy Name and precious salvation
be lifted up and proclaimed to all creation
Revive Your Church from Satan's stagnation,
that Your saints be quickened, a Holy Nation,
prepared to serve you amid tribulation,
conquering victorious in Thy jubilation!

That souls in bondage be set free,
washed white as snow to worship Thee.
Pray, never may it be said against us
that ever a soul was lost thus
that we cared too little, neglecting Thy trust.

Let the message be simple and true,
not of men's ideas and creeds, but from You.
And may we take You at Your Word,
believing, obeying all we've heard.

And if we just but pass the buck,
hoping by chance for a little luck
to get the job done without doing much...
Please, dear Lord, convict us all the more
of Thy wondrous task and our great chore.

May this Revival last more than a day,
commencing, continuing right now and aye.
O Lord, may we have true revival again;
This is my prayer, believing... Amen!

— By BOB WICKLINE (Hillsboro, Ohio 45133)

Elevating The HUMAN Above The Divine

● By WILLIAM E. PAUL—Box 30526—Seattle, Wash. 98103

THE RELIGION of Jesus Christ is divine. It is of God. Jesus once said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). It is not of human origin nor will it merely have a human destiny. The plan for God's kingdom was originated in Heaven inasmuch as Jesus the King, was sent from above to establish his church (John 8:34; Matthew 16:16) and will someday come again to take it back to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24). Actually the only human element about Christianity is that human beings are the objects for which it was established. Unlike Democracy, Christianity is *for* the people, but *not by* the people nor *of* the people.

In an effort to make Christianity popular or appealing to the masses men have taken it upon themselves to divide it of all its divine aspects and replaced them with purely human ones. The world cannot appreciate the true nature of the religion of Christ, for it possesses the spirit of the flesh and not the Holy Spirit of God. So in order for the world to comprehend and embrace Christianity men have lowered it to a human religion. How dare mere creatures lay their hands upon the work of God; to fashion it and form it to suit their tastes. How long will God allow this before He manifest His righteous wrath upon the sons of men?

In this message we will examine of those human elements that are being represented to the world by the world as the religion of Christ.

I. HUMAN DOCTRINES ARE ELEVATED ABOVE THE DIVINE.

Jesus said that for one to replace the doctrine of God with the commandments of men was to worship God in vain. (Matthew 15:8,9). Now those to whom Jesus spoke were religious men and they were keeping some of God's commands, but the fact that they taught the "precepts of men from a heart that was far from God" nullified their worship.

It is surprising how many prevailing religious practices of so-called Christianity are nothing more than the traditions of men. The apostles said not a word about flicking droplets of water upon the forehead of any person, yet today men are doing just that to both infants and adults and calling it baptism. What the apostles taught were the commandments of God (I Corinthians 14:37). Sprinkling and pouring for baptism are the commandments of men, pure and simple. Who gave any human being the right to change one single particle of God's revealed will? Human ingenuity has replaced divine inspiration in the organization of the church also. In 1780 a man by the name of Robert Raikes of Gloucester, England, began a school for underprivileged and wayward children. Besides teaching them the regular school subjects he gave them instruction in the Bible. The classes met on Sunday because that day did not interfere with the normal industry of the day. Later on adults began to attend and somehow this school became attached to the

church services that were held on that day. While it was in conjunction with the church services it was organized independent of the church. Someone said, "Let's make the Bible selections for study the same all over the world." And so was born the "International" element of the organization known today as SUNDAY SCHOOL. Countless other organizations have sprung up through the years to replace or to compete with the church, God's ordained organization through which He makes known unto the lost world the gospel. (Read Ephesians 3:1-12; I Timothy 3:15).

Religious festivals and holidays, such as Christmas and Easter are the concoctions of men who have elevated human schemes above divine Scriptures. You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years just like Jews did under the law. I am afraid of you, lest by any means the preaching of God's gospel to you is all in vain. Paul spoke like this to the churches of Galatia (Galatians 4:10, 11).

II. HUMAN OPINIONS ARE ELEVATED ABOVE THE DIVINE ORACLES.

Mere human opinion—many persons do not hesitate to admit that this is their only authority for their religious practices. How presumptuous. The thought of having Scriptural authority for their practices never enters their minds. How thoughtless. God wants every man to speak the oracles of God when a discussion of the religion of Christ is entered into. I Peter 4:11. The same God who told Moses to make all things according to the pattern that he had been shown (Hebrews 8:1-5) is the same God who has granted to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him (II Peter 1:3). When it pertains to how you live and act, God's Word has the answer. Your right of opinion in these matters does not exist. In the realm of things which God has not provided inspired teaching upon you may exercise opinion, but be sure the matter is within your jurisdiction to decide and not God's. Anything that would defile your body or your spirit is not a matter of opinion (II Corinthians 7:1). It is a matter of divine revelation which every Christian humbly and lovingly abides by. Be ever so cautious that you do not allow your opinion to prevail instead of God's.

III. HUMAN EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS ARE ALSO ELEVATED ABOVE PLAIN COMMANDMENTS OF THE BIBLE.

Some persons actually regard their religious "experience" with more importance than they do a plain passage of the Bible. One of the most difficult persons that a preacher has to deal with is that person who "got something" or "felt something" which he interprets as a direct intervention of God in his life. The satisfaction he has received from his "experience" is all that he needs or wants. Plain Scriptures are violently distorted to conform with his personal feelings. Any verse that clearly contradicts this experience is rejected as legalistic quenching of the Spirit. But don't misunderstand this. There is certainly a happy experience in finding the Saviour. The eunuch of Acts 8 had the experience of "rejoicing" upon becoming a child of God. The jailor of Acts 16 experienced peace and tranquility for his troubled soul when he obeyed the gospel. But notice the difference between the Bible experience and many religious persons today. In the Scriptures men and women were happy when they had complied with divine conditions upon which God assured them of salvation. For anyone to trust in an experience as assurance for salvation

(Continued on Next Page)

ELEVATING THE HUMAN ABOVE THE DIVINE

(Continued from Last Page)

without having done what the Bible requires for salvation is trusting in a false hope. What it amounts to is trusting in self rather than in God. We feel good because we have God's assurance that we are saved, by obedience to the faith (Acts 6:7). We are not saved merely because we feel good inside as the result of a religious experience.

IV. HUMAN PHILOSOPHY IS REGARDED ABOVE THE WISDOM OF GOD.

"Philosophy" means "love of wisdom." Today men love to "think through" the perplexities of life and with their human reasoning arrive at what they regard as the solution to all human ills. Many are the books and sermons written which deal with life's problems from this purely human standpoint, but not Paul's. He said his preaching was not in "persuasive words of wisdom," that is not in "man's wisdom" but in "the power of God." I Corinthians 2:4,5. Human philosophy has come along and applied some Bible principles without dealing with the matter of how a man can have his sins forgiven and have Christ living within. Even if one does find the solution to some earthly problem he is still faced with the problem of eternity. Philosophy doesn't have a remedy for man's past sins nor for his future welfare beyond this life. The one who looks to psychology books for peace and happiness is placing his confidence in men and snubbing God altogether. The Bible says that men are making spoil of others through philosophy and vain deceit because they are applying the traditions of men and the rudiments of the world to man's needs and not giving him Christ in whom we can be made full. Colossians 2:8-10. Philosophy says, "Look to your better self," while God says to "cast all your cares on Him for He careth for you." I Peter 5:7. Do you have problems? See it...know it...believe it...Christ is the only way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:18).

V. HUMAN NATURE DOMINATES MAN INSTEAD OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

Man's most popular excuse for doing wrong is, "I guess we are all just human." Now it is truth of God that man never attains absolute perfection (I John 1:8-2:1). But the Bible teaches that the one who becomes a Christian is no longer dominated by what his human nature wants. Instead the child of God now becomes directed by the divine nature as Peter says in II Peter 1:4, "Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature..." This nature governs the Christian in accordance with the will of God as revealed in the Bible. He is led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14) and walks by the Spirit and so does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

CONCLUSION:

What is it that is taking the precedence in your life? Human teaching, or the apostles' doctrine? Human opinions or the oracles of God? Human feelings and experiences or the plain and simple commandments of God's Word? Human philosophy or the wisdom of God? Human nature or the divine nature of the new creature in Christ?

O friend, realize the truth of Jeremiah's statement in which he said, "O, Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Won't you dethrone the human

element in your life and let the divine prevail in all matters? Only by doing this can you be certain of God's eternal blessings. □

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THE ONE WHO COUNTS

IT IS NOT THE CRITIC WHO COUNTS, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust, and sweat, and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and short comings; but who actually strives to do the deed, who know the great devotion; who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the high achievement of triumph and who at worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who know neither victory nor defeat. —Theodore Roosevelt □

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COULD THIS BE YOU, MOM OR DAD?

A MINISTER was calling on a man about his soul, and was concerned about his salvation. The minister pleaded with the man to come to Christ, but he wouldn't budge.

The next Lord's day when the invitation was given and the invitation hymn was sung, this man came down the aisle and said, "Preacher, I want to get right with God." He confessed his faith in Christ and was buried with Him in baptism. After the service he told the preacher what made him come to realize the great importance of accepting Christ as Savior.

He said, "Preacher, after you left my home the other evening, my little boy climbed on my lap; he said he heard what you said to me. He reached out his chubby arms, hugged me real tight, put his little mouth up to my ear, and whispered, 'Daddy, we don't want to be a Christian, do we?' Preacher, I went upstairs that night to bed, and then said, 'Oh, God, I never realized THE EXAMPLE I WAS SETTING FOR MY SON.' I want to get right with God; get myself right with God so I can help my family to know Him."

If this applies to you, don't wait but get right with God today. —Selected □

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TAKE TIME FOR GOD

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

RESOLUTION

WE ARE RESOLVED to get THE SWORD AND STAFF out on time and the number of times it is supposed to go into the mail this year. The message that we are publishing is what the world needs (starting with the church) More than you realize your financial backing is needed as we have no endowment or such resources on our own. Please back us financially and in your prayers so that this work can go forward. Thank you!—EDITOR □

Men Needed Today, Worse Than



We Need Apostles

• By ARCHIE WORD—Box 192—Gering, Nebraska 69341

APOSTLES WERE of tremendous importance in the beginning of the Christian era. They had a work cut out for them, but it was for their day only. Ephesians 2:19, 20; Acts 1:21, 22. They were the foundation stones, and we are building now the superstructure of the temple they began; foundation stones would be out of place now!

Peter the apostle with a special mention ("and Peter") had also a special resurrection appearance. He stands out, always. He is often spoken of in a special manner, and deserves usually an additional word. He is the most vividly portrayed personality in the New Testament Scriptures, excepting the Lord himself.

Why is this? All we know is that the Holy Spirit has seen fit to record the words spoken to Peter and about Peter, with the promises given him, the predictions concerning him, the rebukes administered to him, and the warnings he received, as well as the encouragements given him, blessings and high commission, more fully than of any other man in the New Testament. That makes Peter stand out in the sacred record in the church's beginning.

The second reason Peter the apostle stands out so vividly is because of Peter himself. Each of the gospel writers tell fully of him, and it is always Peter right in there ACTING. There was never a dull moment when Peter was present. We have what Peter said to Jesus, his memorable confession. Then there is his rash remonstrances: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." The short prayer of Peter sinking in the sea is recorded as it took place. His limiting or trying to limit forgiveness to seven times shows he never missed an opportunity to ask and receive. We have his boast in regard to how faithful he thought he would be under trial followed soon by his cowardly denial, which soon gave way to his meeting with Jesus and being questioned about his love for the Lord, plus his answer, "Thou knowest I love thee."

Peter's actions speak louder than his words; sometimes so nobly and sometimes so base. Isn't he just like most of us? He is always impulsive. The trigger is always cocked and the safety is off when Peter is around. Always he is a sincere man. See him as he falls at the feet of Jesus in the fishing boat after he has tried to walk on the sea. Quickly

glance his way just as he cuts off the High Priest's servant's ear. He is the same in the latter hours of his relationship to Christ as he runs to the tomb with John. He was a man of action! What faith and what doubts; what strength and what weakness; what courage and what fears coupled with impetuosity and steadfastness.

Peter was called twice, once to be a disciple and once to be an apostle. He is always first among the apostles' catalog, but he was not the first of the disciples, and here is where we have an inkling of what we mean by "men more important than the apostles."

How was Peter called? Remember "John the baptizer" was baptizing in the Jordan. That day Andrew, Simon, John and James had left off fishing to listen to the preacher. That was one time when fishing had to take second place to preaching. John was the outstanding preacher of his day, true to God and men. Andrew and John became disciples of the baptizer and we assume Peter and James did too. Two days after the baptism of Jesus by John, Andrew and John were listening to John the baptizer when Jesus passed by. History was certainly changed by this "chance" meeting.

We never know how many people may be saved for ever by your "chance" meeting, or of some "summer time gospel meeting." Just suppose John the baptizer had not been preaching. Just suppose Andrew and John had not been listening, like many church members do Sunday after Sunday. Suppose Jesus had not passed by. (The unexpected often changes our lives.) Just suppose John had not said, "Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world?" This one statement attracted twelve of the greatest men the world has ever seen or heard. They were attracted to Christ's sacrifice. They were not MODERNISTS. That was the first Christian sermon exalting the cross of Christ. It will be the last Christian sermon according to Revelation 5:12.

What was so great about this sermon? IT MADE ANDREW GO OUT AND FIND HIS BROTHER PETER, saying, "We have found the Christ." Andrew, by his call, caused the mighty Peter to know the Lord and to become known to us. It is men like Andrew that we need today more than we need apostles. We need men who are busy saying, "Come, we have found the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." They are of more, far more, importance NOW than foundation stones. The foundation has been laid and now we need men with the gospel message to built on the solid foundation. Andrews, personal workers, are needed. Every Christian can do it. Personal work can be done any where, and at any place. Personal work reaches all classes and it never fails to hit the mark. Personal workers meet a definite need, and they can meet EVERY need the person has, to be dealt with. Personal work can get things accomplished where every other method fails, and it produces larger and larger results with the passing of the years. We need ANDREWS (personal workers) more than we need apostles today. The personal worker's work goes on as long as the day of grace is extended.

Back of every great man, and every saved man for that matter, stands another man, often unseen—in the shadows, who brought him to know the Lord, an ANDREW! The Christian who called these men; who helped them; who counseled them; who encouraged them, and who loved them, is the man we need today. Very few people know anything of the Monk of Erfurt who instructed Martin Luther, yet had it not been for him, there would have been no mighty Reformation

(Continued on Next Page)

MEN NEEDED TODAY, WORSE THAN WE NEED APOSTLES (Continued from Last Page)

leader. Who knows the name of the person who called Spurgeon to Christ? No one! But without that Andrew there would have been no Spurgeon. Who remembers Kimball a Sunday School teacher who was burdened for a young man in his class? He was so timid. He went to the shoe store to see him but was too timid to say a word. Finally he placed his hand on his shoulder and said some faltering words to D. L. Moody. By an Andrew, these outstanding men came to know as much of the Lord as they could from their teachers. I am not saying that these men became true Bible Christians, but I am saying they did the work of an Andrew far better than a host of so-called New Testament Christians do.

The great cathedral in Rome is man's greatest effort in stone, to honor Peter. Standing under that vast dome one can read, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it!" But I would like to remind you, there is another, "Thou art Andrew" who called Peter to Christ, and without the CALLER there would never have been a Simon Peter. We need Andrews in the church TODAY more than we need apostles.

What makes Andrews? It is love in our hearts for the LOST! Nothing else will continually and successfully send a Christian out to speak to others but love and care for the one who is still in his sin. Some years ago a well-known Christian was stopped on the street by a friend with the following question:

"Mr. Richards, how long have we known each other?"

"Oh, I think about fifteen years."

"You claim to be a Christian, I believe?"

"Why, yes, I do."

Then his friend asked, "Do you really believe that I must accept Christ as my Saviour if I am to be saved?"

"Yes, I do believe that."

Then came the more significant question, "Do you CARE whether I am saved or not?"

"Why certainly I do."

"Well," said the long time friend, "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I do not believe you do. As you say, we have been good friends for fifteen years; yet in all these years you have never mentioned Jesus Christ to me. You are a leading business man of this city, and if you had ever told me that Christ was precious to you, and that I needed him as my Saviour, I would have listened to you with respect. But you never did it. We have talked about everything else, but never once have you mentioned Christ to me. Of course, when I asked if you care whether I am saved or not, you say you do; but don't you see if you really cared one least little bit, you would have said something to me about it fifteen years ago?"

Let us each one be real ANDREWS and let the Lord make out of our efforts what he chooses. We are everyone of us under the great commission. Let each one of us be ALIVE and useful to the Lord. We have too many members in the local congregations who have no love, no concern, and no life that is manifest to sinners. It could be well said of as it was by one funeral orator, over such a member. He said, "This CORPSE has been a member of this church for twenty years." In many instances, as far as usefulness to the kingdom of God; as far as trying to save a soul from death, the member might just as well be a corpse.

The same Holy Spirit that said to Philip, "Go near, and

join thyself to this chariot," Acts 8:29, is saying to every professed follower of Christ, "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." The only way the lost are to be saved is in Holy Spirit directed Christians preaching the Word of God to them, for "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

Many so-called churches today claim to have apostles. No doubt they are false apostles, because there is not a man alive who has the Scriptural qualifications to become an apostle according to God's specifications, but even if there were twelve today who could qualify they would not be as important to the cause of Christ as the faithful witnessing of the millions upon millions of Christians if they did the work of an Andrew. Therefore I say, "We need Andrews, personal workers, more than we need apostles." □

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PERMANENCE OF A SOUL



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

THE FAMOUS BATTLE of New Orleans, sometimes called "The Needless Battle," was fought fifteen days after the signing of the peace treaty in Ghent, Belgium in 1813. But the message could not be delivered in time to save hundreds of British lives, as well as American lives.

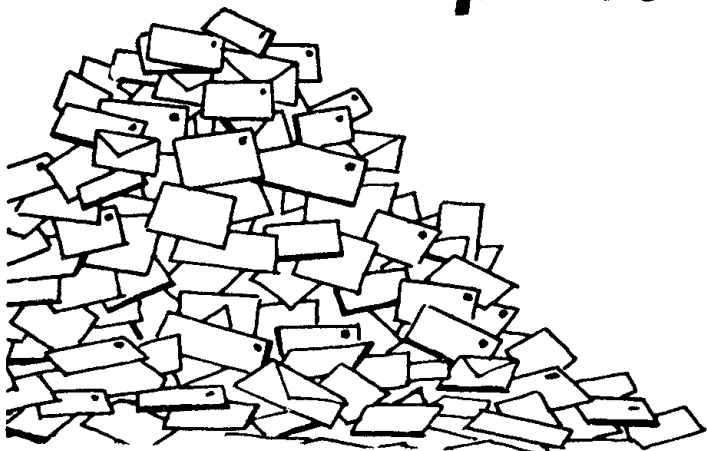
Likewise, untold millions are needlessly dying in sin, lost! God has accomplished peace by means of the cross, but a wayward world must accept the terms of the peace. All must know that the "war" is over and lay down their "arms" in surrender to the Prince of peace.

It is our job to tell them. □

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READERS'

... Response



FLORIDA:

■ "Volume 19, Number 1 of *SWORD AND STAFF* is at hand. It is a tremendous issue! Though I believe you have put me on the 'Exchange' mailing list, I would like to help a little with your printing and mailing expenses. Perhaps the small enclosure will be of some aid.

"May God continue to bless you in your ministry of publishing, writing, and preaching. We need more such courageous men of God to stand in the breach in these trying days of apostasy."

■ "...Please send us the tracts on 'Is It Wrong for A Christian to Use Tobacco?' We wish to use these on our television program which is seen in different states.

"Keep up the good work."

■ "We give a copy of your booklet 'The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple' to each of our new members. May we have you send us an additional 25 copies. Please bill us before or after mailing. Thank you for your time and attention. God bless you."

(**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This booklet is out of print at this time. We hope soon to have it back in print. When an item is not listed on the back of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* that means that currently it is not available).

VIRGINIA:

■ "We really appreciate your paper. Praise God for his wonderful people."

■ "I don't remember how long it has been since I renewed my subscription to *SWORD AND STAFF*, but will send a donation to pay for renewing and please use any that's over for expenses as you see fit.

"The magazine means much to me."

"My the Lord bless and prosper your labor of love."

OHIO:

■ "I am ashamed to have accepted your magazine so long, so am catching up on all back subscription plus money for the next year; and also for a new subscription.

"We have thoroughly enjoyed your magazine and your staunch and godly stand you take on the Scriptures, telling it as it is, true to the Word. Keep up the good work."

■ "As a word of encouragement in these troubled times, keep up the good work!!! *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is the truth and nothing but the truth, and every copy is read and reread. Thank God for you."

■ "...Sometimes I'm sure you are not fully aware of the strength and encouragement you give when it is needed. Many God bless your ministry and its influence."

MISSOURI:

■ "In your recent *SWORD AND STAFF* you attribute an article entitled 'IF I WERE A RICH MAN' to a S. Lockhart. That article should rightfully be attributed to Lois Cheney from her book *GOD IS NO FOOL* published by Abingdon Press. It is the 87th devotional in that book...

"I appreciate your fine magazine and the good articles in it. Keep up the good work."

(**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Thanks for pointing this out. We certainly wish to give proper credit. Sometimes when we don't know who the author is of a short article we put "selected" after the article.)

LOUISIANA:

■ "Sure appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and your sacrifice to keep it going out to the readers. Keep up the good work and may the Lord help and bless you in this great work."

TEXAS:

■ "I am sorry to have overlooked my renewal date. Thank you for continuing to send *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Any other publication would probably have dropped my name from the list..."

"Your articles are timely, well written, and truthful! Keep up the good work, and may your purpose to proclaim His Word not be dimmed."

NEW MEXICO:

■ "I truly enjoy your paper, the true stand you take of God's Word is refreshing to one's soul. May God bless you in your work and writing for Him. I appreciate the time and effort you put into writing and publishing the paper..."

MONTANA:

■ "I truly appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Keep up the good work in printing the truth. Your publication is answering the question, 'What is truth?' Keep it going forth."

IDAHO:

■ "I greet each and all in and through our Lord Jesus Christ who it is that God with His loving kindness sees His children.

"Just finished reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in which I find it very worth while in reading and finding words of truth.

"I'm a prisoner at Idaho State and am seeking a way in which to receive your paper. Funds here are such that very few get paid for their work. And I am one of the few not allowed to work so I find it very hard to send for papers and the sort.

"I came to Christ a little over a year ago and I have come to know the Lord is my only way of life. Praise God.

"I wish to thank you for the time in which you have given.

"May the blessings of God be upon the ministry there and upon all that work with you and their families."

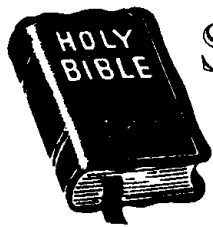
OREGON:

■ "*THE SWORD AND STAFF* is about the best Christian publication around. We enjoy it and pass it on."

■ "Just to let you know that I read your magazine from cover to cover, and get so much spiritual food from it..."

CANADA:

■ "...I look forward to receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF* —just wish there were more of them." □



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).

• SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER •

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

Name.....
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(Check for bound volumes order)

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- ☐ 1973-74 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$4.00
- ☐ 1975-76 bound vol. of The Sword and Staff—\$4.25
- ☐ 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.

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER"

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