

The Sword AND Staff

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

•

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

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH...



• By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 FAIRFIELD DRIVE—Mt. Airy,
North Carolina 27030—U. S. A.

AN ACCURATE TREATMENT of this subject is badly needed today. But before we really get into it, the definition of a few words needs to be "nailed down." One of these words is "TRADITION." The Greek word (*paradosis*) represented by our word "tradition" means a "giving over, a handing down," and consequently that which has been handed down (being about equal to our English word in meaning).

We find the word used in a bad sense and in a good sense in the New Testament Scriptures.

Jesus and His disciples were criticized for not keeping the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees (the elders). He responded by asking, "Why do you also transgress the commandments of God by your TRADITION?" He went on to call the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites," and then declared, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:1-9). Along the same line of thought, the apostle Paul warns, "Beware lest

any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the TRADITIONS OF MEN, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

However, the word "tradition" is used in a good sense

(Continued on Page 3)



Against

THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

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;

NOTE: The subscription is regarded as the minimum offering needed to help with the expense of printing and mailing this paper; the "payments" for booklets, tracts, and other material is regarded as offerings. Subsidizing gifts are also needed above this. Make your check out to **CHURCH IN MOUNT AIRY.**

This paper is supposed to be published bi-monthly, but the frequency is determined by financial backing.

James E. Gibbons is editor.

RENEW your subscription when it is due—no notice will be sent.

NOTE: This paper is sponsored by church of Christ, meeting now on U.S. 601 across from Northwestern Bank, Mt. Airy, N. C.

Proverbially SPEAKING...

THE HOUSE of God can't be built with stumbling blocks.

"There are two kinds of men who never amount to anything: one cannot do what he is told, the other cannot do anything unless he is told."

If we wish to become bigger and better than we are we must relate to something bigger and better than we are.

"He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself."

If God has called you, don't spend time looking back to see who is following you (or if anyone is following you, or ever will be following you).

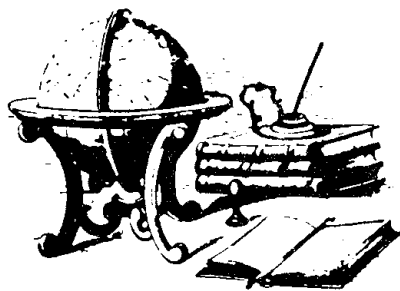
"Freedom of speech in public is meaningless unless you have permitted yourself freedom of thought in private."

Instead of finding fault with Christianity because of hypocrites, give praise to Christianity that it is so superior that men would seek to imitate it.

"The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.

Beware of that time in life when the idealism of youth gives way to compromise, conformity, and complacency of latter years.

"Reaching high keeps a person on his toes."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

MORE ON THE UNSPEAKABLE NAME OF GOD

REFERENCE WAS made in the last issue of this paper to the unspeakable name of God in the article, "Our Great and Glorious God." This is indeed an interesting study. The name became unspeakable because of the deep respect the Jews had for God. The unspeakable name is represented in our English translation by LORD (all capital letters) and sometimes by Jehovah.

The way we worded it in the article made it sound like this practice began abruptly with the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity, whereas it didn't happen all at once (or at least that suddenly). However, by the time the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Scriptures was made about 285 B. C., the practice of not saying the personal name of God seems to have been universal.

The vowel markings on the name of God were probably never taken off simply because they were never written in ancient times. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are all consonants. The speaker of the language simply remembered what vowel sounds went with the word. Because the use of the vowel markings (points) was probably never used before the second century A.D., they were never written with the name of God (as they had long before stopped saying His name, using rather the replacement word, **Adonai**). Because familiarity with the Hebrew language was fading, the written vowel system was developed and applied to the Old Testament Scriptures beginning probably in the second century A.D. (That way oncoming generations would know how to read the Hebrew, which was becoming a dead language). The work of these Jewish scribes and scholars is called the Masoretic text.

In view of the reverence and deep respect the Jews had for the name of God, it makes us cringe when we hear people lightly throw the name of God around today. □

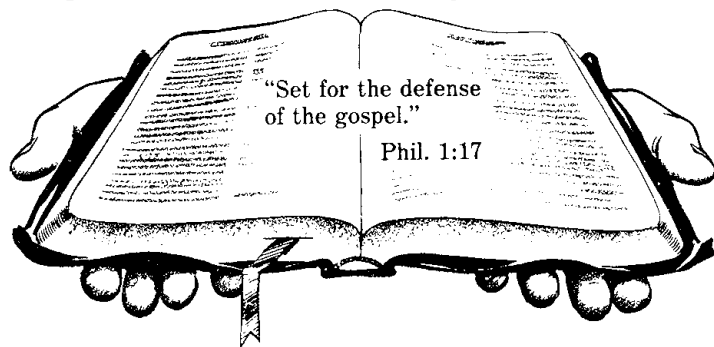
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" TO YOU

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" to those of you who have responded in a special way in order that our humble printing efforts might continue. Thanks to you we are still afloat and press on. With your prayers and backing, we will continue this effort (but it is still a very close walk of faith). We will do what we can as we can. Let us glorify HIS NAME.

James E. Gibbons

Maintaining the Purity of the Church Against the Traditions of Men *(Continued from Page 1)*



in the following references. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the TRADITIONS which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistles" (II Thessalonians 2:15). "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).

What makes a tradition good or bad has to do with its source of origin. If it comes from uninspired men, and "not after Christ," we are to beware. However, that tradition which has been "handed down" by Christ and His Spirit-inspired apostles is the very Word of God. It is good and is none other than the apostles' doctrine. It is embodied in the New Testament Scriptures.

And "DOCTRINE" is another word that deserves our attention in passing. People tend to classify certain things as doctrine, and other things not doctrine (like distinguishing teaching on Christian living from what they call "doctrine"). But doctrine simply means teaching. We cannot open our mouths and make a religious statement without it being doctrine. Calling some things doctrine found in the Bible and others not doctrine is an artificial distinction. It is all doctrine. Paul even called morality and Christian living doctrine (I Timothy 1:4-10; Titus 1:16-2:1ff).

So, we are talking about maintaining the purity of the church in every facet of its life and teaching as opposed to the traditions of men.

II. GOD WANTS A DOCTRINALLY PURE CHURCH.

The world says many things today that are at variance with the Word of God. Following will illustrate several of these sayings. "It doesn't make any difference what you believe...just so you are sincere." "Doctrine really doesn't matter...just so you love your neighbor and are decent." "It doesn't make any difference which church you attend...they all worship the same God." "Go to the church of your choice...one church is just as good as another." Etc.

If anyone knows anything about the Bible at all, he knows that these empty-headed statements simply are not true, and they could only be made by someone not familiar with the Bible.

One Church With One Message

The truth of the matter is that Christ established ONE CHURCH (no denominations) with ONE MESSAGE. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus declared, "I will build MY CHURCH"

(not churches). Listen to this Scripture which many people don't know is even in the Bible: "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" (Ephesians 4:4-6). Religious parties and calling ourselves denominational names are condemned in I Corinthians 1:10-13 (also notice 3:4; Colossians 1:18; etc.). The Great Commission commanded us to go, preach, baptize, and then to teach men to observe all things Christ commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). The promise that follows this ("and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world") is conditional. If we are going, if we are faithfully preaching the gospel, if we are baptizing like the Bible teaches, and if we are teaching men to OBSERVE ALL THINGS then (and only then) do we have the promise of Christ being with us. Otherwise He is not. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26,27). Acts 2:42 tells us that the early church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The importance of this is urged upon the young preacher Timothy, "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 4:16). (Yes, the preacher must live the right kind of life and preach the right message to save himself as well as those who hear him—that's what it says!).

Acts and the Epistles

Although the book of Acts is primarily preoccupied with the rapid spread of Christianity in the early days of the church, it does mention a few problems the church faced. In all of them it is evident that God wants a pure church, and a willful and prolonged state of wrong is not right. The first sin recorded in the midst of the early followers of Christ has to do with Ananias and Sapphira. They lied concerning their giving. For time and eternity God has let us know what He thinks about such hypocrisy. They were stricken dead on the spot (Acts 5). The second sin is recorded in Acts 6. Murmuring arose among God's people (Philippians 2:14). Some thought certain ones were being neglected in the distribution to the needy. Did the apostles just leave the problem suspended in the air? No, they sought to correct the problem (and did). When the disrupting issue of circumcision arose among the Gentile churches, was this left to run its course unabated? The Gentile Christians were being told by Judaizers, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The Jerusalem conference got this misrepresentation "nipped in the bud" (Acts 15). Yes, there were many ways in which the early church was being led step by step "into all truth" (John 16:13; I Corinthians 13:9,10), but when the truth was revealed they were expected to put it into practice. They could not willfully continue in error or false teaching. God wants a pure church.

Read the epistles of the New Testament. They were written largely in response to church problems. When problems involving morals, misunderstandings of New Testa-

(Continued on Next Page)

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

(Continued from Last Page)

ment teachings, Judaism, pagan philosophies, or other false teachings raised their ugly heads, Paul and the other leaders were quick in meeting the challenge and correcting the wrongs. Their aim was to correct the false teaching, keep the church pure, and to help it mature in Christ.

Let us briefly notice some of the epistles.

Paul's Earliest Epistles

Paul's earliest epistles, I and II Thessalonians, involve correcting misunderstandings about the second coming of Christ (among other things). God wants us to have the right understanding. It does matter. Peter later speaks of Paul's writings on this subject, "speaking in them of these things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15,16).

The Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Romans

God's message comes through strong and clear in Paul's second group of epistles (I and II Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans). God wants His church pure in deed and in truth.

The church at Corinth in Greece was really a problem church. I and II Corinthians deal with problems of morals, doctrine, and sectarianism. The whole point of Paul writing to this church was to get these wrongs "righted."

In I Corinthians Paul writes, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth..." It is very disturbing to us to see unthinking preachers naively (?) seize upon this statement in their compromising efforts to make the narrow way just a little broader (just a little more accommodating to the world). They point out that the church at Corinth is called a "church of God," and it had all kinds of shortcomings in it. Therefore, we should not be too critical; we should not be so restrictive in our concept of fellowship—after all, the church at Corinth was a "church of God."

But, evidently, they willfully are ignorant of the contents of I and II Corinthians. The whole purpose of Paul writing was to get the wrongs straightened out, and not to leave them in a state of limbo. One by one I Corinthians rebukingly deals with where they are off the tract. II Corinthians is a follow-up letter, and Paul is pleased that for the most part it seems they have repented (a Judaizing element seems to be holding out). Paul, having reference to the sobering effect of his first letter, says to the Corinthians, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance...For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (II Corinthians 7:9-11). (In other words, they were not in a state of salvation while willfully in their sins. It is spoken of "Christians" here when it says that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." They had regained their state of salvation by repenting of the wrongs Paul pointed out in I Corinthians.

Paul was pleased). Paul shows his continued concern in II Corinthians 11:2 and 3. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Then to those who seem to be holding out against his efforts at correction, he says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (II Corinthians 13:5).

Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Romans can easily be considered together as far as contents are concerned (and probably as far as the time of writing is concerned). Galatians hits the problem of the Judaizers from a negative viewpoint while Romans deals with this potential problem at Rome from a positive viewpoint. One epistle makes an effort to correct and the other to prevent. Whole churches in Asia Minor (and in particular, Galatia) had been brought under the sway of the Judaizers (circumcision et al.), but their captivating influence had not reached Rome yet (and Paul hoped that it never would).

Paul's letter is addressed to the Galatians with apostolic sternness. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-8). "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth..." (3:1). "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (4:11). "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (5:4). Clearly they were not right with God in returning to "the weak and beggarly elements." The law came by Moses. It served its purpose, "but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

(Continued on Page 8)

YOU TELL ON YOURSELF

*You tell what you are by the friends you seek;
By the very manner in which you speak;
By the way you employ your leisure time;
By the use you make of dollar and dime.*

*You tell what you are by the things you wear;
By the spirit in which you burdens bear;
By the kind of things in which you laugh;
By records you play on the phonograph.*

*You tell what you are by the way you walk;
By the things of which you delight to talk;
By the manner in which you bear defeat;
By so simple a thing as how you eat.*

*By the books you choose from the well-filled
shelf;
In these ways, and more, you tell on yourself.*

—Author Unknown

Matthew's and Luke's Genealogies of Jesus



THERE ARE many genealogies in the Bible (especially in the Old Testament). What these genealogies meant to the men who originally wrote them (and what they meant to those who read them in the day they were written) is what they should mean to us. We do not always know everything they had in mind. No doubt, many times they simply show the line of descent, not intending to reconstruct history, chronology, or to give every name (sometimes, it seems, the numbers are rounded off for convenience in remembering. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* states, "Frequently in the Scriptural lists (genealogies) names of nations, countries, cities, districts or clans are found mingled with the names of individuals" and "...son of,' 'father of,' 'begat,' have broader technical meanings, indicating adoptive or official connection or 'descent,' as well as actually consanguinity, nearer or remote. 'son' also meaning 'grandson,' 'great-grandson,' etc." Also, in keeping with the customs of the time, it will generally be found that the genealogies of women as such are not given. It is something unusual to have to name of a woman mentioned.

With all of this in mind, let us approach a consideration of the genealogies Matthew (1:1-17) and Luke (3:23-38) give in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Both attest to the fact of the virgin birth of Christ (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35), but Jesus had a human side that had to be dealt with. He was called in prophecy "Immanuel" ("God with us"), and "The mighty God," but he was also spoken of as being the offspring or son of David more times than one. He is pictured as the seed of David ruling on the throne of David (which when fulfilled turned out to be spiritual in the church). But legally and physically he had to fulfill the Scriptures in being the offspring of David.

The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are not alike. To some this is confusing. What is the explanation. H. H. Halley in his familiar *Pocket Bible Handbook* says, "The commonly accepted view is that Matthew gives Joseph's line, showing Jesus to be the Legal Heir to the promises given Abraham and David; and that Luke gives Mary's line, showing Jesus' blood descent, 'the son of David according to the flesh,' Romans 1:3. Mary's genealogy, in accord with Jewish usage, was in her husband's name. Joseph was the

'son of Heli,' Luke 3:23, that is, 'son-in-law' of Heli. Heli was Mary's father. Jacob was Joseph's father." The *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* states, "In this view, widely accepted, Matthew gives the legal descent of heirship to the throne of David, through Joseph, while Luke gives the physical descent of Jesus through Mary. Matthew is concerned with the kingship of Jesus. Luke with His humanity. Both make plain His Virgin Birth, and therefore His Deity. In the light of these salient facts, on which the agreement of Matthew and Luke is obvious, their differences only accentuate their value as independent witnesses, in whose testimony the Holy Spirit did not see fit to cause them to collaborate...Matthew's genealogy establishes the legal claim to the throne of David through his foster-father Joseph; Luke's establishes His actual descent from David through Mary. Luke 1:32 says that Mary's child 'shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David.' Romans 1:3, 4 agrees with this: Jesus 'was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,' which could only be through Mary; 'and declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead.' II Timothy 2:8 echoes this. Isaiah 11:1 indicates that Messiah is to be physically a descendant of David's father Jesse. The genealogies must be seen in the light of this fact."

All of this harmonizes with what we know about the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew was written for a Jewish reading audience. Therefore, Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. It also puts the accent on David to whom the Christ must be legally connected to be accepted as the Messiah. This legal tie would have to come through the male, the father, to be valid in their thinking. Although Jesus had no earthly father, his relationship to Joseph as his foster-father (and hence legal father) would qualify him in the eyes of the Jews to be heir to the throne of David (as Joseph was a descendant of the kingly line of David). Matthew's genealogy of Joseph serves this purpose very well.

And we know that Luke was written initially for Gentiles, and especially for one Theophilus (a Greek name). As we can see Luke puts the emphasis upon Jesus being the "Son of Man," and thus his humanity. He writes more than anyone else about Mary. His genealogy goes all the way back to Adam. Writing to Gentiles, he identifies Jesus with the human race generally and not just with the Jewish people as Matthew did. Therefore, this conclusion that the genealogy in Luke is that of Mary seems natural (as Jesus got his physical side through his mother Mary).

But that still leaves a lot of things to be explained to our modern mind in Luke 3:23-38.

This reads, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of..." etc. It says "the son of" until it traces the ancestors all the way back to Adam.

(Continued on Next Page)

MATTHEW'S AND LUKE'S GENEALOGIES of JESUS
(Continued from Last Page)

First, let us notice, "And Jesus...being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph..." Obviously and emphatically he was not the "son of Joseph" physically speaking. Luke has already told us about the virgin birth (1:35). "As was supposed" means that was what the people thought who didn't know any better. Outsiders looking in on the family of Joseph and Mary would naturally suppose Jesus was equally their flesh-and-blood son.

Next, "the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of..." etc. bears some explanation. Matthew told us that Joseph's father was named Jacob (Matthew 1:16). But here it reads in Luke, "Joseph, which was the son of Heli." Apparently Matthew's genealogy must be understood as being the actual genealogy of Joseph, foster-father of Jesus.

But how do we harmonize Luke's words with those of Matthew?

If you noticed in your Bible the words "the son" are in italic print. In making the translation from the Greek manuscripts the translators have supplied these extra words. As such they are not in the original New Testament. The translating scholars thought it necessary to supply these words so what we read would make sense. However, literally this reads, "Joseph, which was of Heli, which was of Matthat, which was of..." etc. Each name forms a very close and direct relationship to the one right before it. It is natural for us to think of this as being "son of" (and, no doubt, this is primarily what is implied). But, as we have already seen, the Jews could use this expression in a very broad sense. However, here it literally says, "Joseph which was of Heli..." So it could easily mean son-in-law of Heli. In other words, Luke seems to be tracing the genealogy of Mary, using her husband Joseph's name (son-in-law to Heli, her father). It would have been improper to give the genealogy of a woman as such. It was never done in the Bible, being contrary to the customs of the times. And thus we have the flesh-and-blood ancestry of Jesus going all the way back to the father of the human race, Adam. And physically Jesus was also of the lineage of David through his son Nathan.

When we consider the Jewish mentality of Bible times, this over-all explanation does not seem forced or unreasonable. In fact, this is the best explanation we have found. There is variance between the genealogies, but not contradiction. Everything seems to have been planned that way. Matthew gives the legal claim to the throne of David. Luke gives the flesh-and-blood lineage of the one who is the Saviour of the human race. It all makes sense.

—By JAMES E. GIBBONS

RULES FOR GOOD LIVING

● "He that would love life and see good days..." (II Peter 3:10-12).

EVERYONE SEEKS the good life. But only a few find it. We listen attentively to the rich, the powerful, the intelligent for the answer only to discover that they, too, are searching.

The inspired apostle Peter has a few rules for those who are willing to listen. Will you give him a hearing?

1. Be careful in the use of your tongue. You will never

learn to tame it, but with effort you can control it. Shakespeare rightly observes, "Many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing." In a more personal vein, how many times has your tongue broken its chain to your hurt? Peter knew what he was talking about. He had denied his Lord with an oath and had shed bitter tears of regret because of this unruly member of his body. "He that would love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile."

2. *Avoid the evil and do the right.* There are times when wrong seems so strong. And other times when it is so easy. The pressure of crowd carries you with the current until you are dashed headlong into doing what you never dreamed of. Then comes the sorrow, the regret, the injuries inflicted right and left. But doing the right, that's a different matter. It's something you never regret. As F.W. Faber has said:

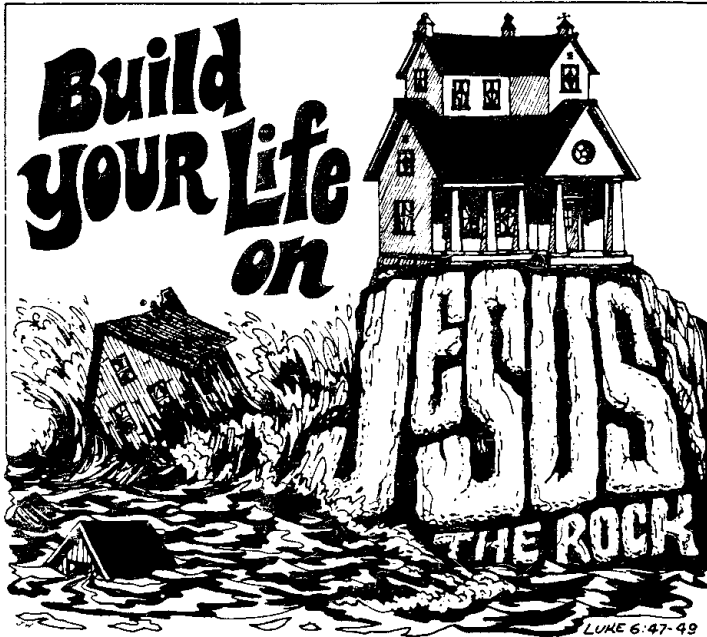
For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

3. *Seek diligently after peace.* You can drift into discord, but peace will have to be made. Maybe that's why Jesus pronounced a special blessing upon the peacemakers. There is no good life to be found in division and turmoil. "Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind." And centuries ago Juvenal pointed out that even "savage bears keep at peace with one another."

After stating these three rules, Peter reminds all of us of two great facts: (1) God keeps his eye upon the righteous, and his ear open to his prayer; but, (2) God is against those that do evil. With these reminders, all of us should be able to find the good life. —John Gipson □

IT WILL BE HARD TO KEEP YOU FROM GOING

IF YOU don't want to go to church, you will come up with any and every conceivable excuse not to go; if you really want to go to church, you will think of every possible reason why you should, can, and must go; in fact, it will be hard to keep you from going—IT IS THAT SIMPLE! (Simply stated, it is just a matter of whether you love the Lord or not and of where your priorities are). □



LUKE 6:47-49

Questions

INTRODUCING THE FOUR GOSPELS



1. Which of the four gospels are called **SYNOPTIC** gospels?
2. What does **SYNOPTIC** mean?
3. Which of the four gospels was written late in the first century?
4. Which of the four gospels is said to have been first written in the Aramaic language for Jewish readers and was later put into the Greek?
5. Which of the four gospels was supposed to have been influenced by the apostle Peter in its writing?
6. Which of the four gospels was written for Greek-thinking people?
7. Obviously why would the **SYNOPTIC** gospels have had to be written sometime before 70 A.D.?
8. Which of the four gospels is the only one that calls the church the "kingdom of heaven"?
9. Which of the four gospels presents Jesus as being very active, making much use of words like "straightway," "forthwith," and "immediately"?
10. Which of the four gospels is the most literary in its style and form?
11. Which of the **SYNOPTIC** gospels is supposed to be the only one written completely chronologically (in the order or sequence it happened)?
12. Which of the four gospel writers traces the genealogy (ancestors) of Jesus from Abraham?
13. Which of the four gospel writers goes all the way back to Adam with the genealogy of Jesus?
14. Which of the four gospel writers starts his book with the ministry of John the Baptist (and gives no genealogy)?
15. Which of the four gospel writers speaks much of Jesus being the "Son of Man," thus stressing his humanity (human side)?
16. Which of the four gospel writers presents Christ pre-eminently as deity, first introducing Him to us as the

Word in eternity?

17. Which of the four gospels is more of an inspired spiritual interpretation or enlargement upon the teachings and work of Christ?
18. Which of the four gospels covers only about 20 days of Christ's ministry, with about one-third of the gospel account covering one day?
19. Which of the four gospels is the longest book in the New Testament?
20. Which of the four gospel writers wrote another book (or books) in the New Testament?
21. Which of the gospel writers is said to have used 732 words (in the Greek) in his New Testament writings not found elsewhere in the New Testament?
22. Which of the four gospel writers gives what we might call (especially so) supplementary material to the other gospel writers?
23. Which of the four gospel writers were apostles?
24. Which of the four gospel writers seems to be a convert of the apostle Peter?

(Answers found elsewhere in this issue)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

THE CHURCH of the first century as established by Christ through His apostles was not a denomination—but simply and purely the church and spiritual body of Christ. On this most all will agree. But on the necessity of returning to that status, and on the means of returning to it, few will agree. Divesting ourselves of denominationalism does not come easy. But, if we really want to be acceptable with the Lord, it is a necessity (John 17:20-22; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4, 17; Ephesians 4:1-6; Galatians 1:6-8). Let us stop trying to justify our denominational organizations and traditions not found in the New Testament. God does not give us the right to believe one thing and our neighbors to believe another. In that Great Day all of us are going to be judged by the same Book, and we know what that Book is. We have no authority from God to invite anyone to join any denomination (no one has such authority, for it has not been given). In fact, when we truly obey God, we are made one, not a part of any or many denominations (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 12:13). Let us search out the old "landmarks." Let us humbly return to that one church which has already been established in the first century. There is much divesting and returning that needs to be done. AMEN?!!! ☐

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Answers to:

"QUESTIONS INTRODUCING THE FOUR GOSPELS"

1. *Matthew, Mark and Luke*; 2. *"Seen together" (Matthew, Mark and Luke approach and present the life of Christ in a similar way)*; 3. *John*; 4. *Matthew*; 5. *Mark*; 6. *Luke*; 7. *They present Christ foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass 70 A.D., and do not say it had happened yet*; 8. *Matthew*; 9. *Mark*; 10. *Luke*; 11. *Mark*; 12. *Matthew*; 13. *Luke*; 14. *Mark*; 15. *Luke*; 16. *John*; 17. *John*; 18. *John*; 19. *Luke*; 20. *Luke and John*; 21. *Luke in the gospel of Luke and Acts*; 22. *John*; 23. *Matthew and John*; 24. *Mark (I Peter 5:13)*. ☐

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

(Continued from Page 4)

The letter to the Romans takes more of a positive note. There is not the heat of polemic battle, but the potential problem of Judaism serves as a contrasting backdrop in properly understanding this letter. Justification is by the gospel (and not by the law of Moses). Whole churches in Galatia had gone back under the law of Moses. This was not so in Rome, but there were Jewish Christians there who definitely had hang-ups about things Jewish. Paul calls them "weak in the faith," but recognized the fact that they needed time to grow. As long as these Jewish scruples (like making distinctions in eating meats and observing days) were held as private views and not imposed on the church, they were tolerated. But "everyone" was to "please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Romans 15:2). It was no longer for "his good to edification" if the whole church gave over to Jewish hang-ups, and the hang-ups became the "official" doctrine of the church. Men would be confirmed in error. Therein is the difference between the situation in Rome and the churches in Galatia. In Galatia whole churches were accepting the Jewish position as the doctrine of the church. Paul declared: "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). Here it was no longer certain individuals with Jewish consciences being privately left to themselves (and the grace of God) while they were given time to come to the larger Christian concept of things. The Jewish concepts and hang-ups become the doctrine of the church. This cannot be tolerated. (For additional thoughts read "Two Important and Related Bible Studies," volume 19, number 4 of *The Sword and Staff*).

We do not cease to be amazed and weary of how some would try to use the 14th chapter of Romans as a front in their efforts to justify themselves in leaving the erring, the unindoctrinated and the immature in a state of spiritual limbo indefinitely. It is a catch-all for anything they wish to tolerate. Remember Romans 14 is not dealing with a permanent situation, but with something temporary as the people were maturing and even, at this time, as the church was being led step by step into all truth by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; I Corinthians 13:9,10).

To those who would be "generous" and try to justify questionable things (and even wrong) by the 14th chapter of Romans, are you willing to take your application of this Scripture to its conclusion? If churches practicing wrong (or questionable things) are to be unquestionably accepted, what about this? In Romans 14 they were not to judge their brother in reference to meats and days, etc. (we have pointed out the individual nature of this). But suppose we take it the way some apply it today. Here is a church. Following are some of the tenets of its "official" doctrine. (1) To be a member of this church, you (the males) must be circumcised. (2) Public worship involves keeping the sabbath (Saturday), and even observing the Passover, Pentecost and other holy days during the year (three times during the year all able-bodied males presenting themselves at the temple in Jerusalem). (3) You are prohibited from eating certain kinds of meat, especially pork. Etc. Etc. You are not likely to accept this application in practice, are you?

Now you can better understand the nature of Romans 14, can't you?

The Remaining New Testaments Books

If you would further take the time to examine Paul's first prison epistles (Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians), or looked at his remaining epistles (including I and II Timothy, and Titus), the same message is very clear: GOD WANTS A PURE CHURCH (in what is taught and in what is lived). To Timothy Paul wrote, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3). The church was to be "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The message comes through in the book of Hebrews and in the books that follow. In Jude, the last of the general epistles, this brother very much wanted to write of the salvation enjoyed in common by the early Christians. However, because of the rise of false teachers (who were false in life as well as doctrine), he was prompted to say "it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). And in the book of Revelation the seven churches in Asia are commanded of the Lord to get themselves "set in order" (Revelation 2:1-3:22), the book ending with the solemn warning that to add to the book would result in having the plagues written therein added to us, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

Some may be even now reacting adversely to these things we have written (if this article has been read this far), thinking that we are belaboring the point that God wants a doctrinally pure church; that to go further would be "over-kill." But the modern mind does not respond favorably to the idea of absolutes and especially in the realm of religion. Our aim has simply been to establish our point. The Word of God has been extensively presented (but not exhausted), and if we believe the Word of God there should be no problem accepting what has been said.

False Teachers and Apostasy

Before we close out this section, remember that our Lord said there would be false Christs and false prophets (Matthew 24:4,5, 11-13; etc.). Paul warned the Ephesian elders that even of their own number false teachers would arise (Acts 20:29-31), then with emotion he said, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." With dark forebodings Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, telling them of a dark age of apostasy that would come upon the "church" before the second coming of Christ (II Thessalonians 2:3-12). In the midst of it a man would exalt himself as God over the supposed church. To Timothy Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Then he goes on to tell some of the tenets of the apostate religion: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" (I Timothy 4:1-3). The same burden is upon Paul's heart as he writes his final letter to Timothy. This



Pied Piper, 1982

prompts him to say, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:1-5).

THEREFORE, we say again with renewed emphasis: **GOD WANTS A DOCTRINALLY PURE CHURCH** (whether in preaching the doctrine, believing the doctrine, or in living the doctrine). Let us not take these Scriptures lightly. Let us want and be satisfied with nothing less than what God wants.

II. LET US MAINTAIN THE DOCTRINAL PURITY OF THE CHURCH.

There are certain prerequisites that must be in our lives or we won't put forth any effort to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church (we could care less). But if these qualities are there (these conditions, these prerequisites), then maintaining the purity of the church against the traditions

of men comes natural and will be uppermost in our lives.

First, we must love, respect, and appreciate the truth to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church. To begin with, we must have good and honest hearts (Luke 8:15). If we have good and honest hearts we will love the truth and realize that it is the "pearl of great price." Paul spoke of some who brought damnation to themselves in believing a lie because they didn't "love the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thessalonians 2:10). But if we love the truth we will want the truth at any cost, be satisfied with nothing but the truth, and then be zealous with a godly jealousy in standing for the truth. And, with John the beloved, it will be the source of greatest joy. "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 3, 4). And, realizing that we have everything in Christ that our souls need or ever could desire, we will be thankful — WE'VE GOT IT ALL! Some false teachers were trying to make the Colossian Christians feel inferior, claiming superior knowledge and spirituality in their philosophy and traditions of men. Paul reminded them that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" were to be found in Christ (Colossians 2:3). Nor did they need circumcision, which was vaunted by these

(Continued on Next Page)

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

(Continued from Last Page)

hybrid Judaizers as being so necessary, because in Christ Jesus they were “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (2:11, 12). In every way they were “complete in him which is the head of all principality and power” (2:10). Therefore, he admonished, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, ABOUNDING THEREIN WITH THANKSGIVING” (2:6, 7). Then, with this, remember what is said in Hebrews 13:8 and 9. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines...” With all of these conditions in our hearts we will maintain the purity of the church against the traditions of men.

Second, we must know, believe, preach, and teach the Word of God to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church (as opposed to the traditions of men). There is no substitute for this. This was Paul’s answer to apostasy (and the prospects of it). After warning the Ephesian elders of such, he said, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:29-32). After Paul told Timothy “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,” he pointed him to the Word of God (II Timothy 3:13-17). Then in view of the solemn nature of this matter, he called heaven to witness, and charged Timothy to “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...” (4:1-5). It is simply a matter of doing what the Great Commission said, which included “teaching them to observe all things” (Matthew 28:20). Sometimes the best defense is a good offense. People who really know the Word of God are not likely to be led away into error, and they will stand up for truth against the doctrines and traditions of men.

When people are fed some other diet besides the Word of God, the Word becomes unattractive to them. We are living in a society that is entertainment oriented. This is evident from TV and the average person’s preoccupation with pleasure today. The various TV networks, channels, and programs are in competition to entertain people. It’s too bad that this is spilling over into the church. Too much of that which passes off as worship, preaching and teaching today is entertainment. Everything is man-centered rather than being God-centered. The over-riding factor is attracting men (and many that men “attract” God will subtract), pleasing men—entertainment. Parties, entertainment, sensationalism, and gimmicks of every stripe are used to get the unregenerate coming and to keep them coming. Take away these, or have some other “church” offer them in a greater capacity, and you will lose your crowd. Take away the pampered, fleshly, man-centered approach, and the preaching of the unadulterated Word of God by itself be-

comes very boring to such people. And thus it will ever be when the emphasis is put on the method to attract people rather than the message to attract people.

Third, we must know God and the Lord Jesus Christ to maintain the doctrinal purity of the church. Paul made this wonderful declaration: “...I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Timothy 1:12). The epistle of II Peter was written to Christians facing false teachers (II Peter 2:1ff), and here Peter stresses knowing God. “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (1:2, 3). He concludes the epistle by saying, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (3:18). Our religion can be just an empty form. There is such a thing as knowing the Bible (its contents), but not knowing God. If we don’t know God, if our religion is not personal and real to us, then we are just a “sitting duck” for false teachers. We justly feel inadequate and insecure because things aren’t right between us and our God. But if we know God (as well as know His Word), if we are right with Him and He is real to us in a personal sort of way, we know that no one else has anything to offer us—WE HAVE IT ALL! We will have boldness and be unashamed to speak up for Christ and His church.

III. LET US BE AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.

(And let us put the emphasis on “AGAINST”!)

We are living in crazy, mixed-up times religiously speaking. We are living in times when truth is thought of as being relative (especially religious “truth”)—just whatever

(Continued on Page 12)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

What Would You Think?

SUPPOSE a preacher announced a new series of sermons to begin next Sunday on the theme, “THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY.” Just image some of the topics as follows:

- “The Uselessness of Prayer”
- “Spend Your Money on Your Pleasures—Don’t Give”
- “Sleeping Late is More Important than the Lord’s Supper”
- “Ignore the Elders and Do as You Please”
- “I Would Not Give Two Cents for the Opportunity to Attend Sunday Morning and Wednesday Evening Bible Classes.”
- “A Little Smoking, Drinking, and Cussing Never Hurt Anybody”
- “Better to be Rich and Wicked than Poor and Righteous”

We could hardly imagine such gall, such unmitigated brass, and such an unholy attitude coming from the pulpit. But, brethren, we preach by the way we live. And all the eloquence in the world becomes mere subterfuge when dedicated deeds are not present. You, my fellow Christian, are preaching by your manner of life. Do you subscribe to one code of conduct in word and quite another in deed?

—SELECTED

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

God's Man in This Place!

By Phillip Alan Lee
Chapmanville, W. Va. 25508

AS WE LOOK around what do we see? We see a sin-sick world in dire need of spiritual leadership. What we need is men and churches of Christ with great vision. We need a leadership that will live and walk by faith and not by sight. It is in this type of people that you will find accomplishment for Christ.

A valid example of this is found in Numbers chapter 13. God had promised the people of Israel the promised land, a land of milk and honey. A land so desirable that anyone would want to go and fight to obtain it (at God's command and with God's leadership). Yet, the people said, "We are too small and too few." Then one man said in verse 30, "LET US GO UP AT ONCE, AND POSSESS IT; FOR WE ARE ABLE TO OVERCOME IT." He was Caleb. God's man of vision and leadership. Oh, let us all remember that the Bible says: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

This was the attitude that filled the hearts of Caleb and Joshua upon their return in spying out the promised land. These two, along with the other ten, had seen the land, the fenced cities, and the giants. But the difference was in vision and spiritually minded leadership. By faith they knew God would be with them. By faith they knew they could overcome all odds and win. Yet, the ten looked at the land, the cities and the giants and said, "We can't do it!" The majority brought up an evil report and tried to kill the progress of Israel. They had what we might say was the "GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX." And such is true today in our churches as we look at the world.

Friends, Christianity is an "I CAN" religion—Philippians 4:13. We face great giants today. Some are: Drugs, Alcohol, Pornography, Divorce, Humanism, ERA, Gay Rights, Passiveness in the church, Evolution, Critical Intellectualism, Premillennialism, Television, Slanted Media, and much, much more. The Plea is "Men and Brethren, what shall we do?". But the spiritual leaders of our day are mute. They say, "We can't win." "The giants are all around us."

The "Grasshopper Complex" is everywhere. So many times people say, "We can't afford that," or "We've never done that before," or "That won't work here," or "Don't hurt anyone's feelings." Acts 2:38 is not proclaimed! I Corinthians 16:2 is not taught! I Corinthians 11 is not observed! We have given in and have allowed the church of Christ to become a spiritual mute.

Therefore, I challenge you; yes, you, open your eyes. You can be a David facing the Goliaths of our day. You can overcome if you will be bold enough to walk by faith and not by sight. Be not fearful as you face your giants, be strong in the Lord. Remember, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." □

WORSHIPPING ALL THE TIME

WORSHIP IS ONE of the greatest things man can offer to God. Through it he pays homage and with it shows his

love-depth for his Maker.

What makes this so important and valuable is that it comes from the heart of man, being channelled by the Word, expressing not only the obedience of a "servant" but the joy of service. Thus the greatest command begins with the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart..."

Notice John 4:24. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

God is not confined to a building where we go once, twice, maybe three times a week to worship, but rather is everywhere, and is the only object of our worship.

But what of the "act of worship"? You say, "We worship three times a week." If so, then are we not in trouble, and does that not show a misconception of "worship"? Paul said in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him." Surely "worship," which is the outpouring of one's love, can be shown in many more ways than through the avenues of what we call worship (i.e. singing, praying, giving, partaking the Lord's Supper, Bible study). Surely our spiritual "love light" shines all the time and not just two or three times a week. As one friend has said, "Wherever we go, and whatever we do, our love for Him must come shining through."

Perhaps this way we won't have to "get in the mood" for worship when we assemble together, because we are always worshipping God.

We are to "worship in spirit and in truth" and must never divorce these two, for they have been joined by God.

Worship is to be from the heart, the very throne room of the soul, where in the life of the Christian God rules. It is not enough to say, "I LOVE YOU," because love by its very nature must come out in action and shows in the eyes. Even so, worship is far from "lip service"—it is "heart service." Worship is me, poured out before God, my life, my very being, and anything else is substitutional and fails short.

But worship is to be in accordance with truth, for all the "heart" and "feeling" in the world cannot compensate for disobedience.

"This little Christian light of mine I'm going to let it shine,

"LET IT SHINE, ALL THE TIME, LET IT SHINE." □

—By JACK EXUM, JR.

"DIVERS DISEASES"

THE OLD PREACHER'S text was: "They brought Jesus to those that were taken with divers diseases." The old preacher said, "Now doctors can scrutinize you, analyse you and sometimes cure your ills, but when you have divers diseases, then only the good Lord can cure you. And brethren, there is a regular epidemic of divers diseases among us. Some dive for the door after Bible school is over. Some dive for the TV set during the evening services. Some dive into a bag of excuses about work that needs to be done for the Lord. Others dive for the car and take a trip over the weekend. Then a few dive into a fury of faultfinding every time the church takes on a new program. Yes, brethren, it takes the Lord to cure you of divers diseases. When you have divers diseases, brethren, you are in a bad way" (The word "divers" may have been misapplied, but the application is great!—Editor). —Selected □

**MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH
AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF MEN**

(Continued from Page 10)

a person thinks about it (this is the unthinking man's answer to our pluralistic society with the hundreds of different religious beliefs: It doesn't make any difference what you believe just so you are sincere). Existentialism and other foggy, empty-headed theories and philosophies have made bankrupt the modern mind as far as concepts of absolute truth is concerned. These philosophies have filtered down to the man on the street, and he has unconsciously imbibed them and knows not wherewith his strength has gone. (And the sad thing is that it has filtered into the church—no man is an island). Someone has said, "A liberal modernism is seeking to tell the people that a God without wrath brought man without sin into a kingdom without judgment through a Christ without a cross."

It's a NO-NO to be against anything today—just say and preach positive things. This is the age of the NICE SERMON. Someone has defined a NICE SERMON as one that is preached by a NICE PREACHER in a NICE CHURCH BUILDING on a NICE SUNDAY MORNING, telling NICE PEOPLE how NICE it is to be NICE. But, as someone has said, if we stand for nothing, and if we stand against nothing, we will pretty soon fall for anything. Beloved, if we have stopped preaching a doctrine, we have stopped believing it, and it will only be a matter of time until those who hear us stop believing it too. Yes, weak and anemic preaching makes weak and anemic Christians... IF it even makes Christians at all to start with. People cannot come into the kingdom of God without being converted. Nor by our slick methods of gimmickry and salesmanship can we sneak them in the back door—they must face up to their sins, be converted, be born again (Colossians 1:13).

Positive preaching and negative preaching are both part of God's plan. (Yes, we must be against as well as be for certain things, and we are against the traditions of men!) In everyday life the positive and the negative play a very important part. A battery that was all positive and no negative would not start your car. A picture (photograph) that was all highlight and no contrast could hardly be seen. The shadows and half-tones make it possible for us to see in the "round"; it makes it possible for us to see with dimension and perception. And any preaching that is all positive, leaving out the negative (not being against anything), will leave people without depth of spiritual understanding (and they will be left as babes in the woods to the wiles of the Devil). Take a good look at the preaching and teaching of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to John on the banks of the Jordan (Matthew 3). Hear the Lord in the immortal sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, 7). Most decidedly Jesus was against the traditions of men (Matthew 15:3, 8, 9, 13). The Bible itself is a combination of the positive and the negative. You will have a hard time appreciating the depths of the love of God (His grace) if you don't believe in the wrath of God (both are equally presented in the Scriptures).

In fact, listen to how Paul told Timothy he could be a "good minister of Jesus Christ." Hear him: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be

a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (I Timothy 4:6). Read right before this, and you will find where he foretold of the coming apostasy (and false doctrine). Timothy was to be on his toes, warning the people, and being against such. Then Paul further wrote, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." The elders on the island of Crete were to take their stand against the fables and traditions of men (Titus 1:9-14). Paul calls this being a "good minister of Jesus Christ." (Are YOU a "good minister of Jesus Christ"?).

Let us maintain the purity of the church against the traditions of men. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best Of Modern-day Armor



SECRET OF GROWTH

A CONGREGATION IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO GROW WHEN:

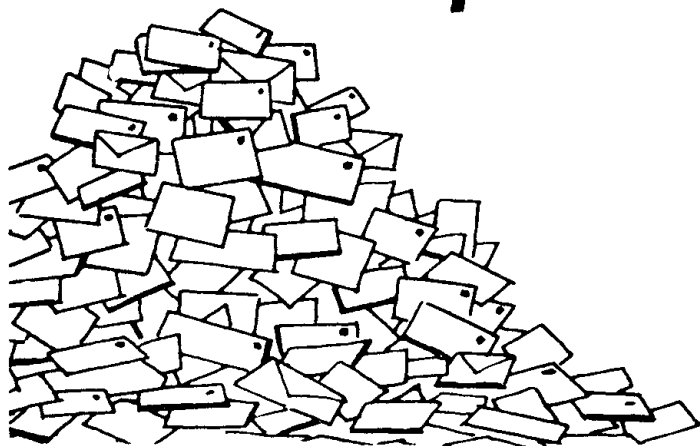
1. Each member has a deep concern for the lost.
2. Each member enters the worship service with enthusiasm.
3. Each member is interested in an aggressive Bible school.
4. Each member is interested in improving his or her teaching ability.
5. Each member tries to put more into the work than he is taking out.
6. The preacher preaches the Word with love.
7. Each member is personally involved in the work.
8. Each member lets love express itself to every other member.
9. Each member "in honor prefers one another."

Have you ever been a member of a congregation like this? If not, why not? —Selected □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

READERS'

... Response



WE PRESENT some of the letters received along, not to "pat ourselves on the back," but to show we have people in sympathy with what is written. We have our constant set of critics, and it is refreshing to know there are those who love and appreciate the Word of God in its fullness.

VIRGINIA:

■ "'Our Great and Glorious God' is a spiritual feast that is great, great, and great."

TENNESSEE:

■ "'I am so sorry to have slipped up on this. I enjoy your paper so much and would hate to see you have to discontinue it. Every article is excellent. May God bless you in your work for him.'"

KENTUCKY:

■ "'Please renew my subscription to THE SWORD AND STAFF. I enjoy your articles very much, but most of all your stand for God. There is a saying that if you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. I'm afraid that is what is happening to a lot of people who profess to be Christians. I pray that God will continue to bless you in your work for Him.'"

ALABAMA:

■ "'I'm thankful for all your efforts—and THE SWORD AND STAFF. Be of good courage and always remember, your work for the Lord will not return to you void.'"

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "'I received THE SWORD AND STAFF Volume 20, Number 1, 1982, and in the middle of the book there is a chart of the Gospel. I would like to know if it is possible to get this, The Gospel Chart, on a cloth such as the size of a bed sheet. If it is possible, please let me know, and the price of the chart. I like the outline of the chart and feel that it will help present the gospel that a child could understand it.'"

qualified (have the ability) to paint such a chart, and would be interested in doing this, please let us know the cost. We will put you in contact with this correspondent.

OHIO:

■ "'Our family appreciates the publication of THE SWORD AND STAFF. It really helps us to study God's Word and gives us great encouragement as Christians. We would like a subscription for our friends who are new Christians. Thanks again for your dedication in sending your paper and sharing your love for God.'"

■ "'Please renew my subscription to THE SWORD AND STAFF. I find it very interesting and enlightening paper and I use much of the information in my studies. You are doing a wonderful work of telling it like it is. We need more men who are willing to stand up and be counted for the Lord.'"

■ "'Thanks a million for the recent SWORD AND STAFF you sent us. Especially do we thank God for those two great messages: 'Our Great and Glorious God' and 'The Essence of the Real Thing.' I really am thankful to God and you for the effort and the time you take to work up these sermons, and especially for the courage you have to 'TELL IT LIKE IT IS' II Peter 1:20, 21. I also appreciate the two page chart on 'The Gospel'...'"

■ "'I am sending you a gift to help you with your expenses. Your paper has been a blessing to me for some time. My mother subscribes for your paper. When she is through with it, then she gives it to me. I guess I've robbed you for at least three years, so this gift I'm sending is long overdue. I wish I could send more but I just can't at this time. The papers we are getting at church are getting so liberal they scare me. It's good that we still have one with such courage in the brotherhood. God bless you. I'll be praying for you...'"

■ "'Please cancel my subscription to THE SWORD AND STAFF. I do not wish to receive any more issues.'"

MISSOURI:

■ "'I'm sending a small check to help out...The last copy was worth more to me than gold.'"

■ "'We have thoroughly enjoyed the paper for 12 years. We are glad someone subscribed for us, for it really helps our spiritual life. Please continue to send our copy each time it is published...'"

TEXAS:

■ "'Please cancel my subscription.'"

OKLAHOMA:

■ "'THE SWORD AND STAFF has meant a great deal to us through the years. Thank you for sending it—even though we've been negligent about sending our subscription money, if THE SWORD AND STAFF ceased to exist, it would mean a terrible loss to some of us who must live in areas where the whole truth is seldom heard. I trust that many will rally to the need of the hour, so we can continue to be fed.

"Thank you so much for excellent, timely and truthful reading material, at a time when truth is so rare..."

(Continued on Next Page)

EDITOR'S NOTE: If any of our readers out there are

READERS... Response

(Continued from Last Page)

NEBRASKA:

■ *"Just finished reading the latest copy of THE SWORD & STAFF...I really appreciated your article on 'Our Great and Glorious God.' Truly He is a Great and Glorious God! ...I really regret the increase in postage rates; already good publications have been forced to quit. No good can be behind it, for sure. But I pray that you will be able to continue in your publication, and may God bless you for doing it and for the stand you take against denominationalism, traditionalism and worldliness. I am with you all the way. Seems to me there is a letting down among our brethren on these issues, and I often think of the verse, 'Will the son of man find faith on earth when he comes?'"*

"I am glad that you wrote the personal letter and I pray that Christian people will answer the call to send money needed to continue your publication..."

MINNESOTA:

■ *"Though we do not know each other yet, you have helped me in my Christian life in shaping it more than words can tell. Thank you, and thanks to our God and Father for you and those fine souls who kept THE SWORD AND STAFF coming. For nigh on to 10 years it has been coming faithfully. I don't know who first sent it, but repeat that it has been a blessing to me..."*

CALIFORNIA:

■ *"I enclose ten dollars to help with the postage and to use any other way you need. You are filling a great need in the brotherhood. I surely hope that more people come to understand that."*

THE PHILIPPINES:

■ *"Some American preachers visited our country last year, repeated the visit last January '82 and made some lectures by the help of a local church in Manila. But their teachings have denominational set-up. I thank God for I learned from one who attended the past seminars that some Filipino preachers defended the New Testament position. I knew who were they—they were subscribers to The SWORD AND STAFF..."* □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE POETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BECAUSE the king James version of the Bible has traditionally been printed in prose form, many people do not realize that there are poetical sections in the Bible. There are some sections of poetry in the New Testament, but the Old Testament has much more. If you will examine the American Standard, Revised Standard, and even modern editions of the King James version, you will see that publishers are now printing Bibles so that the poetry is more visible. This is an improvement over earlier editions where only prose form was used, as poetry printed in poetic form is more easily understood.

There are occasional sections of poetry in the historical books and in the prophets, but five Old Testament books are entirely in poetic form: Psalms, Proverbs, Job (excepting the prologue and epilogue), Song of Solomon and Lamen-

tations. Ecclesiastes is similar in many parts to the poetry of Proverbs.

Most of these books were composed during the latter part of the United Kingdom, in the reigns of David (1010-970 B. C.) and Solomon (970-931 B. C.). The exception to this statement is Lamentations, which was written by Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B. C. Although Job himself may have lived in Patriarchal times (near the time of Abraham), it is thought that the book of Job was also composed in the Solomonic age. Because of the emphasis on wisdom in the poetical books, they are also referred to as "wisdom literature."

The principal characteristic of Hebrew poetry is not rhyme, but *parallelism*. The poetic emphasis is on the ideas being expressed, rather than the sounds at the ends of the lines. There are several different types of parallelism.

(1) When the thought of the first line is repeated, in different words, in the second line, it is called *synonymous parallelism*. This is the most common form in the book of Job. See also Psalms 11:4 and Psalms 24:1-3.

(2) When the truth expressed in the first line is strengthened by a contrasting statement in the second, it is called *antithetic parallelism*. Cf. Psalms 1:6; Proverbs 15:1. Most of the couplets in Proverbs 10:1 through 22:16 are antithetical.

(3) When the first and second lines bear some definite relation to each other, either as cause and effect...proposition or conclusion, etc., it is called *synthetic parallelism*. Each part is essential to provide the complete thought. Cf. Psalms 119:11; Proverbs 4:23; 1:10.

(4) *Progressive parallelism* appears in several varieties, the most common ones being the composite or stairlike and the climactic. The *composite* or stairlike is composed of several lines, each providing a complete element of the aggregate or composite thought (cf. Psalms 1:1). In *climactic progressive parallelism* the principal idea is the first line is repeated in the second and expanded to complete the thought. Cf. Psalms 29:1. In *introverted parallelism* the first line is closely related in thought to the fourth, the second to the third, etc. Cf. Psalms 91:14.

The balance of thought is more important in Hebrew poetry than the sounds of words or even in the cadence of the line. When this is remembered by the translator, Hebrew poetry suffers less than other poetry by translation. Edward J. Young cautioned: "The Hebrew text must never be emended, merely in order to fit it into a certain metrical scheme. In other words, metrical considerations are not sufficient to serve as criteria for textual criticism" (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 285).—By J. E. Cooper □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IS THE NARROW WAY TOO NARROW?

NO! BECAUSE JESUS SAID:

"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:14).

The way to heaven is narrow (difficult), not to discourage, but to lead men into a proper relationship with Christ. Many fail in following Christ because they have not given Him *first place* in their lives.

NARROW? If someone wants to ridicule the church he will say, "They are too narrow." That is not true of Christians who are honestly following Christ.

HONEST? EXACT? Honesty requires being precise or exact. Would you take your prescription to a druggist if you knew he would “alter” it and use just any drug which might be at hand? NO! You would want a “narrow” druggist who would fill the prescription EXACTLY.

A printer must be exact. Misplaced letters change meanings. “Tried” becomes “tired,” and “unite” becomes “untie” by merely rearranging the letters. Narrow? Yes, in every day matters men want to be exact. Then why not also be exact in spiritual or Biblical matters?

Honesty caused Christ to say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” “Enter ye in at the strait (difficult) gate.” (John 14:6 and Matthew 7:13).

In spite of all that Christ can do, many people will be lost eternally. They will enter and continue in the BROAD way that leads to destruction. Will that be you?

THE BROAD WAY is easily found. All that is necessary is to follow the crowd and reject Christ and refuse His Lordship. Those who are heedless of their final doom either think or say, “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em.”

Jesus said that FEW will find the NARROW way which leads to salvation and heaven. WHY? Because so few are looking for it! Have you looked for it? Have you found it? “And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” (Hebrews 5:9).

THE NARROW WAY IS WIDE ENOUGH FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT CROOKED! —By Harold Buckles □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE HIGH COST OF GETTING EVEN

TO SUFFER offense is mankind’s common experience. To forgive offense is the achievement of the relative few. The rest never forget an injury, and allow ill will, vindictiveness and resentment to overcome us. Outwardly we may exhibit either friendliness, or generosity, or tolerance, or love, as our circumstances may require, but we are acting, and deep in our hearts we have a strong desire to get even.

But the cost of getting even is too high. None of us can afford it. It becomes a moral boomerang that does more harm to us than to our enemies. The Chinese teach us that “the fire you kindle for your enemy burns yourself more than him” Let’s read the price tag on our refusal to forgive:

First, we pay in ill health. Someone has said that a “strong feeling of resentment is just as likely to cause disease as a germ.” And the director of a famous clinic has written, “It is not an over-statement to say that fifty percent of the problems of acute stages of illness, and seventy-five percent of the difficulties of convalescence

have their primary origin, not in the body, but in the mind of the patient.” It is a wonderful experience to be forgiven, but it is more wonderful to forgive. I am convinced that many people could improve their health by washing their hearts clean of ill-will and resentment.”

There is still a higher price we pay for refusing to forgive those who trespass against us. When we refuse to forgive our fellowman, we make it impossible for God to forgive us. An unforgiving man is an unforgiven man. You have heard the conditions of divine forgiveness: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us... For if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:12, 15).

The apostle Paul exhorts: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31, 32).

WE CONCLUDE, from what men who seem to know have said, that refusal to forgive is harmful to the physical body ... And from the words of Jesus we conclude that unless we forgive men their trespasses, our Heavenly Father will not forgive us our trespasses. —The Bible Speaks □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHY SOME FAIL

A NOTED psychologist was asked to give the reasons why so many people failed in their efforts to make life successful. These frank and valid reasons were penned. Try them and see if they fit your life.

1. *Finding fault* with the other fellow but never seeing your own fault.
2. *Doing as little as possible* and trying to get as much as possible for it.
3. *Spending much time* showing up the other fellow’s weak points, and too little correcting your own.
4. *Slandering* those whom you do not like.
5. *Procrastination*—putting off until tomorrow what we should have done day before yesterday.
6. *Deceit*—talking friendly to the other fellow’s face and stabbing him in the back as he turns.
7. *False belief* that we are smart enough to reap a harvest of pay before sowing a crop of service.
8. *Disloyalty* to those who have trusted us.
9. *Egotism*—the belief that we know it all, and no man can tell us anything.

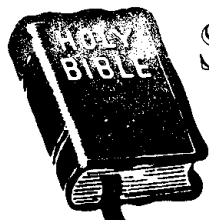
—Christian Herald

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NOTE: “OUR GREAT AND GLORIOUS GOD”

EVIDENTLY we struck a chord with the article, “OUR GREAT AND GLORIOUS GOD,” which appeared in the last issue of this paper. There has been more favorable response to this, perhaps, than to any article that we have ever written. Evidently it made the Almighty God more real and personal, and that is what is needed in everybody’s life. Therefore, we have decided to make this material available in booklet form so that it will be a blessing to others. It hasn’t been printed yet, nor do we know what the cost will be. This information will be in the next issue of this paper (the Lord willing). □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



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 the back issues in more of a permanent form this way. More and more people are seeing the value and wisdom of doing this.

- **What Must I Do to Be Saved?**—6¢ each.
- **The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple**—1 copy, 35¢; 1 to 99 copies, 25¢ each; 100 and above, 20¢ ea.
- **Obedying the Gospel Chart**—small size, 3¢ each; 11 by 17 size, 8¢ each.
- **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?** (on observing the Lord's supper every Sunday)—3¢ each.
- **Sequel to Lord's Supper "Every Sunday"** (answers objections)—3¢ each.
- **Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered**—8¢.
- **Origin of Religious Misunderstanding and False Teaching**—5¢ each.
- **The Meaning of Suffering in the Life of the Christian**—10¢ each.
- **Is It Wrong for a Christian to Use Tobacco?**—3¢ each.
- **Lessons in Happiness from the Garden of Eden**—3¢ ea.
- **A Question About the Sabbath?**—2¢ each.
- **His Church is Marching On** (song to tune of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" on sheet with glue on back to stick in back of hymnbooks)—6¢ each.
- **I Saw Him Standing There** (or the Old Gospel Preacher)—no charge when available.
- **Christianity Without Denominations**—no charge w. a.
- **How to Be Saved from Sin**—no charge when available.

• SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER •

Gentlemen:

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

Name.....

Address.....

.....Zip.....

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

- 1971-72 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$4.25
- 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

"SHE TOLD ME..."

- Mrs. Brown: "She told me that you told her the secret that I told you not to tell her!"
- Mrs. Blue: "That mean thing! I told her not to tell you that I told her."
- Mrs. Brown: "Well, don't tell her that I told you she told me." —Selected

HOLY SPIRIT BOOKLET BACK IN PRINT!

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKING about it (and for it) for a long time, and finally now we have the valuable study booklet *The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple* back in print. This booklet has proved its worth by use. Price: 1 copy, 35¢; 1 to 99 copies, 25¢ each; 100 and above, 20¢ each. Order a good supply today.

ALSO, back in print is the *Origin of Religious Misunderstanding and False Teaching*. Price: 5¢ a copy.



• BIBLE LANDS TOUR: 11 days to Israel, Jordan, and Greece in June, 1983; 4 extra days in Europe optional. Brochure available soon. Write for details.

THE SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030-0147
U.S.A.
Telephone: 1 (919) 789-1044

Non-Profit Organ.
U.S. POSTAGE
5.9¢ PAID
Mt. Airy, N.C.
Permit No. 25