

# The Sword AND Staff

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

•

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

## THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN



By James E. Gibbons—1535 Fairfield Dr.—Mt. Airy, N. C. 27030

THE LONGER this writer lives upon this earth, the more he believes in the depravity of man. We look into our own sinful hearts and about us; we read the daily newspapers; we acquaint ourselves with the history of mankind; we read our Bibles—and it all unquestionably varifies the same thing: THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN.

As Christians and God-fearing people, we are disturbed

by what we hear and what we read in the newspapers. What is the world coming to anyway? 'Is there no limit to the excesses sinful man will go? But think! If we could see like God sees (before Whom nothing is hid), and if we knew what God knows (Who knows everything), we really would be alarmed. What we see as finite human beings is but the tiny tip of the iceberg.

We are the degenerate survivors of a fallen race. We do not believe in the old Calvinistic concept of depravity. We do not inherit the actual guilt of Adam's sin, but the weakness of the flesh is passed on to us and we are disposed to sin. Although the flesh is weak, however, with each individual it is more of a matter of acquired (and accumulated) depravity than of inherited depravity (but the inherited weakness gets the degenerate process going). Evil men will "wax worse and worse."

In this article we wish to show you that (1) the Scriptures bear this out; (2) history bears this out; and (3) human experience bears this out.

### I. THE SCRIPTURES BEAR THIS OUT.

Just a random study of the Scriptures bears out the thought of the depravity of man. Romans 3:23 tells us that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Adam opened the floodgate of sin which has encompassed the world. Job declared that "man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). He talks about the brevity of the life of sinful humanity, then he asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Can the children of sinful parents be expected to do any better?

This reminds us of the statement made by David in Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." What is he saying here? Is he saying that the act of conception is sinful as his mother conceived him in her womb? No, for God made us male and female (saying it was good), and everything about marital relations is honorable (Hebrews 13:4; I Timothy 4:1-3). Is he saying that David was conceived out of wedlock? No, for the Scriptures show otherwise. He is simply saying that David's life was called into being in a world

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## Proverbially SPEAKING...

*WE BEST "keep" the Word of God when we give it away (share it with others—evangelize).*

*"The man who fails while trying to do good has more honor than the man who succeeds by accident."*

*"Christian unity" is a by-product of being united with Christ and following the Word of Christ.*

*"TRIALS? The brook would lose its song if it lost its rocks!"*

*When you live a lie the truth really hurts when it is made known.*

*"The eagle that soars near the sun is not concerned how it will cross the raging stream."*

*The interesting person is the one who is interested.*

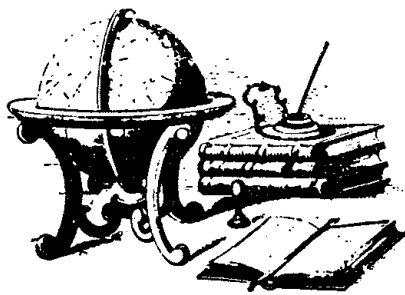
*"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read."*

*The church or Christian who is not trying to win the lost has lost the way.*

*"A person cannot teach what he does not know nor lead where he does not go."*

*"If you want to be original, be yourself; God never made two people exactly alike."*

*"Every man's work is always a portrait of himself."*



## EDITORIAL

## COMMENTS...

### AN EXCITING AND PLEASURABLE EXPERIENCE

—**"STUDY to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).**

THESE WORDS were originally penned to the preacher Timothy, and every such "workman" should study, know the Word of God, and be ashamed if he doesn't. This is absolutely necessary for we are to "give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). If we don't know our message, how can we be a messenger?

And every Christian should study to show himself/herself approved unto God, knowing the eternal truths of God. As a beginner approaching the Word of God, we realize there is so much that we do not know. Many despair, thinking it is a hopeless task. They think they will never learn. However, don't feel this way. Suppose you went prospecting for gold. You weren't able to discover a gold mine, but by panning you did come across some pretty nice nuggets. Would you consider your efforts a failure? Contrariwise, not at all! The price of gold is such that even to find a few nuggets is to really find something. Likewise with the Word of God. It is literally a gold mine of truth and wisdom. If we don't understand all of it at once (and there are things we will never understand), there is no reason to be alarmed. We have not failed. God's Word is so precious, that each little nugget of truth (which may not seem a lot at the time) is indeed really great. We have come into great riches. And with time (and patience) as we mine into the Word of God, we will know more and more just how rich we really are. We learn a truth here, and one there, and before we know it we will know quite a bit about the Bible. It is an exciting and pleasurable experience—one that Christians will be enjoying all of their lives.

THEREFORE, may all of us take heed to II Timothy 2:15. Let us not have reason to be ashamed. □

*If a Jew gave more under the law  
than a Christian gives under grace*

**IT'S A  
DISGRACE!**

# THE Depravity OF MAN



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that was engulfed in sin. He made his appearance upon such a scene, becoming a sinful part of it. And Psalms 58:3 further makes emphatic this thought: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

Proverbs 29:15 tells us, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Have you ever thought about this? We have to teach a child to do what is right, but he does not have to be taught to do wrong. He learns that on his own—"a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame." Left to himself he will not seek the high road, but the low. A child must be taught to do right. Jeremiah 10:23 amplifies this thought by saying, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." And he further says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (17:9).

Even the Christians are warned: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in *ANY* of you an *evil heart of unbelief*, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest *ANY* of you be *hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:12-14). Once the process gets going, the depravity of man accelerates. It is even as the apostle Paul said: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).

Yes, going the course of least resistance is what makes men and rivers crooked. The repetition of a sinful act never leaves man the way it found him. First there may be a sense of shame, but with continued practice this is lost. Sin is overtly practiced, and men may actually reach the place they glory in what they are doing. Yes, we sin; we do wrong—like drinking liquor, beer; using drugs or tobacco (or even perverted sexual practices). The first time these things are tried, they seem very repulsive. But with repetition the nature becomes depraved to tolerate them, and then to enjoy them. The unnatural becomes natural. Depravity closes in. And sin is like erosion. One sin persisted in will result in others; the rain and storms may cause one ditch, but with time as it gets deeper (now a big gulley), others will branch into it.

## II. HISTORY BEARS THIS OUT.

Whether we are making a study of secular history (which

involves one war right after another), or Biblical history, we are made to draw the same conclusion (and it fits right in with the theme of this message). According to Biblical history, man has not remained faithful to God very long. The history of man is a history of sin and depravity.

### The Beginning

It all started in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. With the forbidden fruit eaten, and the floodgate of sin open wide, with their very first two children one turns out to be a murderer. Shortly thereafter in early human society we read that "Lamech took unto him two wives..." (Genesis 4:19). Perhaps he thought if one was good, two would be better—but it was all a departure from God's original plan. With the passing of each generation things get worse.

### The Flood

By the time of Noah in the 6th chapter of Genesis we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth... But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:5-8). We further read, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (6:11). As man filled the earth (Genesis 1:28), the earth was filled with violence.

Although man prides himself in being civilized, in his depravity he has become the most savage of God's creation. We are told, "For the past 5,500 years, the world has known only some 300 years of peace. Since 3,600 B. C., there have been more than 14,000 large and small wars in which 3.5 billion people have been killed." (*War and Conscience*, Allen Isbell). Think of that! If all the people living on the earth today were suddenly killed, the number killed in all known wars would be almost equal to that. There is nothing more cruel, extreme, and final as killing another human being. Instincts which have been civilized (with all restraining influences) must be discarded and trodden under foot, man must put to death his God-given feelings, he must let depravity engulf him before doing such a thing.

After being the object of God's special grace, and surviving the sin-cursed world that was carried away with the flood, we have high expectations of Noah and his sons. But after making his exit from the ark, and getting back into the swing of living again, we find Noah became a "husbandman, and he planted a vineyard" (Genesis 9:18-23). What really surprises us is that he got drunk. We expected better things of him, but such is the nature of fallen humanity, depravity, and sin.

### Sodom and Gomorrah

As we hit the highlights of Biblical history, we next consider Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 and 19). Abraham's nephew Lot had chosen to live in the well watered plains of the Jordan, and finally after pitching his tent toward Sodom, actually made his home there. However, we read, "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (Genesis 13:13). They were given over to unnatural, perverted, and depraved sexual sins. Oral sex, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is subhuman and de-

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praved. That is not the way God made us to function. Their wickedness was so great that God decided to intervene from heaven with judgment before the Day of Judgment. It seems that modern man has a short memory and is trying to make such sin appear respectable, but in doing so he is only showing the depths of his own depravity.

Lot with his daughters escaped the fire and brimstone that was rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah. His wife was not as fortunate, looking back in disobedience she was turned into a pillar of salt. In the face of such catastrophic judgment it looks like the lesson would have been learned, but it wasn't. As Lot dwelt in the mountains alone with his two daughters, they schemed a plan whereby they got their father drunk, saying, "We will lie with him" (which they did). As someone has well said: "You can get your daughters out of Sodom, but you can't get Sodom out of your daughters." Such is human depravity!

## The Ways of Canaan

God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12), but the time was not ripe yet for this to come about. He tells Abraham that for a time his posterity will be in Egypt, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15:16). When the accumulated sin and depravity of the inhabitants of Canaan had reached a determined point, God would then give the land to the children of Israel (seed of Abraham). In taking the Promised Land they would be the instruments of God's judgment upon the Canaanites.

Israel took the Promised Land, but all the inhabitants were not destroyed. They did not remain faithful to God very long (at a time). Soon they were falling in line with all the different religions of the Canaanites, which included such way out groups as the fertility cults, the sodomites, etc. One heathen worship, the worship of Molech, is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament. This originated with the Phoenicians. There is mention of their firstborn, their children, passing through the fire. Molech was a furnace god. Babies, after tossing them about and getting them to laughing, were thrown into the laughing and flaming mouth of this idol as human sacrifice. It is hard for us to believe that people would do a thing like this, but even the Israelites at times took part in doing this.

In recent times Archaeologists have made some startling digs and finds in Carthage in North Africa across the Sea from Italy. The Phoenicians were great traders and moved out all around the Mediterranean, setting up colonies. They were among the early inhabitants of Carthage and expanded this city. They also brought with them their religion and human sacrifice. In 1925 Archaeologists started digging in this unusual cemetery in the ruins of ancient Carthage. They began to uncover urns which contained the ashes of babies who had been burned in sacrifice. Archaeologists at that time said, "This is a dreadful period of human degeneracy that we are now unearthing... but such is Archaeology!" The II World War (more degeneracy and depravity) halted the excavations, but since then they have been resumed and completed. It was discovered that 20,000 urns containing the ashes and remains of burned babies (with imposing mon-

ument stones above them) had been deposited here between 400 to 200 B.C. Think of that!

As this information was received into this writer's mind, other thoughts came. What will future generations of more enlightened people think about our generation? If Archaeologists called 400 to 200 B.C. in ancient Carthage "a dreadful period of human degeneracy" wherein 20,000 babies were humed to death, what about the period in modern history from 1973 to 1983 (10 years) when in the United States alone 15,000,000 (15 million) babies were burned by acid or cut from their mother's bodies in abortion! Think of that! Killed, murdered, and no imposing stone marks where their unwanted bodies have been thrown. Depravity? Yes! BARBARIC DEPRAVITY! God cannot look down with favor upon a people who practice and allow such awful things to go on. When will His judgment come?!

## Jews and Gentile

Whether we look at the concluding chapters of Old Testament and Biblical history, or secular history, we see the same thing. The depravity and sinfulness of Israel and Judah are seen as they are carried away into foreign captivity. It brought the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation (Matthew 23:34-39; chapter 24). Then Paul considers the depravity of Jew and Gentile alike in the book of Romans. First that of the Gentile world is brought up in Romans 1:21-32 (PLEASE READ THIS NOW). (We are also made aware of this in Ephesians 4:17-19, when Paul wrote, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to



work all uncleanness with greediness”— what a picture of depravity!) Then in Romans 2:1-24 he shows the sinfulness and depravity of the Jews (although they supposedly were champions of God’s law). In chapter 3 he brings these thoughts to a conclusion by asking, “What then? are we (the Jews) better than they (the Gentiles)? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”



**III. HUMAN EXPERIENCE BEARS THIS OUT.**

Mankind entered into the 20th century with great hope. Mesmerized by belief in evolution and the evolutionary process, the great educators and leaders of the world expected Utopia to arrive soon. They believed that man in his upward climb from the swamp in his person and all his relationships evolves to the more complex, complete, and perfect. The 20th century would bring in the crowning apex of this process with the Golden Age of Man. Humanism and “enlightenment” were in evidence everywhere. What great expectations!

Now as the 20th century draws toward its sunset that optimism seems to have been ill-founded and an illusive mirage. Two devastating, annihilating, and barbaric World Wars are now behind us (and the world still does not know peace). This century of “enlightenment” has produced two of the most repressive political systems (the Communist and Nazi). The great holocaust of the Jews has a 20th century tag on it. And in the midst of these years was developed and unleashed on other human beings the most dreadful and destructive device imaginable, capable of blotting out much of the earth’s population (nuclear explosion). Now the 20th century is drawing to a close with a note of pessimism. What does the future hold? Degeneration seems to be more in evidence than evolution.

Almost consistently year after year the crime rate goes up. Honesty and morality are on the decline. Sometime ago this writer visited Central Prison in Raleigh (the state penitentiary) and was given a guided tour through the prison by the warden. Men were doubled up in the cells, and even bunks were out in the halls. The prison was housing many times over the number the facilities had been built to accommodate. The warden turning to this writer, said, “You preachers aren’t getting the job done.” That was easy for him to say, and it was a simplistic answer. There is more involved. We are living in a time today when humanism, with man in the driver’s seat and God dethroned, seems to have a deathly grip on our society. This seems to be the truth, whether you are talking about the public schools, the

“churches,” or the public media (TV, etc.). Ungodly influences have been unleashed upon our society. The hands of religion are tied as far as the public schools are concerned (generally), and the forces of evil run wild. The public school experience is “death valley” from which few of our young people immerse uncorrupted. And the garbage we are fed on television is an insult to the morals and intelligence of a Christian (or any “decent” person).

Our land is sick. We are told by those who monitor TV that 80% of all reference to sex on the programs (which is frequent, suggestive, and explicit) has it disassociated from marriage. We are living in a time when 1 out of every 4 pregnancies ends in abortion, and 1 out of every 6 births is out of wedlock. We are told that 1 out of every 2 marriages ends in divorce. From those who are supposed to know, we are told that 1 out of every 10 men is a homosexual. The sexual abuse of children is commonly reported. Our nation is in trouble. Alcohol and the drug problem are out of control (many times reported even down in the grade schools). We are told that 30 million Americans are on pot (marijuana). About 4 or 5 million have graduated to cocaine. The younger generation has been called the “chemical” generation. Drug abuse that was once associated with minority groups in big cities like New York is now found in every hamlet and village in this country (and this is no over-statement). “Rock and roll” and much of the country music carry the message of drugs, degeneracy, and loseliving. All of this is evidence of the depravity of man. It is the common human experience.

At this point the prospects of reversing the downward trend (nose dive, avalanche) in our society is not good. In the name of freedom and freedom of speech restraining and containing influences have been removed. Humanism is in the driver’s seat. But, as we have already seen, man left to himself does not seek the high road. Evil men will wax worse and worse. Freedom, if it is not exercised within the context of responsibility, is like cancer. Cancer is a situation where the body cells do not remain within their appointed bounds. They become malignant, and freeing themselves from where they belong, move out into other areas of the body. If the cancer is not removed, or the process reversed, it will usually bring death to the body. And if man does not have the restraining influence of law and religion, he is doomed to become more depraved. There is no hope for improvement. Television will not get better. The depraved and animal nature of fallen man will prevail in our society. And this is largely what is happening now.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

We are more than alarmed at what is going on in our day! The momentum of sin and the depravity process has so accelerated that it is hard to believe it. We are living in a different world from just a few years ago. Is there no hope for our sin-sick and dying world? Must our young and old senselessly continue to make shipwreck of their lives, their bodies, their minds (and await the coming doom of judgment)? Must they, like dumb driven animals, continue in their head-on plunge into the bottomless abyss? Is there no hope that all of this can somehow be arrested, stopped, and reversed? Does our society have a future? Must God send another flood to carry sinful humanity away in destruction (the next

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time it will be fire!)? We know that the final judgment is coming, but what about in the meantime?

It has been said that the darkest hour comes right before the dawn. When the pendulum swings all the way in one direction, it is ready to go back the other way. Sometimes man must hit rock-bottom before he will look up—then there is no other way that he can look. He must make a total shipwreck before he realizes that he needs rescuing. Tasting the bitter dregs of sin will make some want something better, but most at that stage are so depraved by their sinning they could care less. They have made themselves an instrument fitted for wrath, judgment, and everlasting destruction. They are past feeling (or almost to that point). Hell awaits.

Our only hope is: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Our only hope is: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God used a crowning act of man's depravity to save man from his sin and depravity: JESUS DYING ON THE OLD RUGGED CROSS (Read I Corinthians 1:18-2:2). The cross was an unbelievably cruel means of execution devised by the Persians, used by the Phoenicians, and honed down to a brutal perfection by the heartless Romans. Only traitors, slaves, and criminals of the worse kind were crucified by the Romans. Jesus was crucified between two robbers (where Barabbas should have been), being made to appear the most wicked (although he was totally innocent and sinless). He died in our place (where we should have been because of our sin—Romans 6:23), and he became sin and a curse for us. Paul tells us in Galatians 3 about this. Quoting from the Old Testament, he says in verse 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And no one had kept God's law perfectly (all of it); therefore, all of humanity was (is) under the curse. But Paul continues, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (verse 13). This illustration fits for Jesus hanged on a man-made tree. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

By faith one accepts the benefits of the atoning death of the crucified one as he repents and is baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6). The power of the gospel breaks the back of sin and depravity in our lives. The sword of the Spirit severs the bonds of sin that bind us (Hebrews 4:12). We are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). When we repent and are baptized, God not only takes care of the past, but gives us assurance and help for the future. Our past sins are taken away, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Our natures are changed. As we walk in faith and obedience (surrender) (Ephesians 3:16-20; Acts 5:32), the Holy Spirit increasingly fills our lives, and not only do we find that we possess the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit possesses us. The fruits of the Spirit begin to show up instead of the

works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-24). We get victory over sin and depravity, and with Paul we declare, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). The power of the resurrected one is ours, and we too will one day experience the resurrection. □



"There they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A WONDERFUL BODY

IF YOU are a person of average size, you perform in each day of 24 hours, the following functions:

- 1. Your heart beats 103,689 times.
- 2. You breath 23,040 times.
- 3. You inhale 438 cubic feet of air.
- 4. You eat between 3 and 4 pounds of food and drink 3 quarts of liquid, and perspire about 2 pints through your skin.
- 5. Your body maintains a steady temperature of 98.6 degrees under all weather conditions.
- 6. You generate 450 ft. tons of energy.
- 7. You speak 4800 words, move and use over 700 muscles, use 7,000,000 grain cells, and walk 7 miles (women only) in the home.
- 8. And if you are a Christian this body belongs to God.

Romans 12:1-2. —Anchor □

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AMERICA, REPENT OR PERISH!  
(Proverbs 14:34; Psalms 9:17)

America, you are ripe for judgment;  
Your cup of sin is full and foaming over;  
You are at ease in Zion, pleasure bent;  
God's bitter vial of wrath you do bestir!

America, repent while you have time;  
The LORD is free with grace and will forgive;  
It must be real—not just a pantomine;  
If not, you shall pass through God's chastening sieve!

Beware, God's grinding grapes of wrath await;  
The land that's sick with sin will spue you out;  
Behold, your crooked ways must be made straight;  
Or by God's wrath you will be cast about!

—By A. BROTHER

(And the same is true of all the other sinful nations)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

## New Testament Organization

1. **EVANGELISTS** (Also, Scripturally called preachers, ministers of the gospel, and apostles of churches).
2. **ELDERS** (Also, Scripturally called pastors, shepherds, bishops, overseers, rulers, and the presbytery).
3. **DEACONS** (Meaning servants or assistants).
4. **MEMBERS** (Including all of the church, and those not holding any particular office; also Scripturally called Christians, saints, brethren, disciples, and children of God).

The early church functioned smoothly and successfully under the above plan, collectively known as:

## THE CHURCH

Qualified men knew their task and fulfilled their duty. The church was the missionary society, benevolence organization, and educational organization. No unscriptural, extrascriptural, or antiscritptural position or organization usurped the responsibility from those to whom it had been designated. The whole world heard the gospel in the first century.

The simplicity of the original plan amazes and challenges us.

(In the above outline apostles and prophets are omitted because there were not a continuing office in the church)

## Organization Practiced Today

1. **MISSIONARIES** (Men or women doing religious work in foreign countries or in remote places in this country).
2. **EVANGELISTS** (Men or women going from church to church, conducting revival meetings).
3. **PASTORS or MINISTERS** (A preacher settled and working with a local congregation).
4. **CHURCH BOARDS** (This usually has reference to the elders and deacons collectively, both having the same function, and the only difference being their name).
5. **MEMBERS** (Today we find many times the members organized into other religious organizations, aside from the perverted state of the above offices, which are not found in the Bible as such).
6. **LOCAL AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS** (Among these are organized Sunday Schools, (separate from the church organization), Ladies' Aid Societies, Missionary Societies, Christian Endeavor Societies (also interdenominational), etc.
7. **SUPER ORGANIZATIONS** (Among these may be included organizations man-made that bind local churches into districts, states, and even on a national scale; Certain missionary societies would fit into this category).
8. **INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS** (Among these may be added Bible colleges and the like, not necessarily directly tied in with the local church).

**NOTICE:** If we are claiming to stand on apostolic grounds in reference to the church, let us throw off traditionalism, focus our attention to the simple organization of the church (as such), and purify our speech regarding the Scriptural names for offices of the New Testament church.



NOT ENOUGH RELIGION

The man without enough religion to take him to church may be sure he does not have enough to take him to heaven.

—Copied.

I MAY BE OLD FASHIONED, BUT...

- I STILL LIKE to hear an audible “amen” by the men in the congregation after a public prayer.
- I still like to hear men use plenty of Scripture when they preach.
- I still like to hear a congregation of people lift their voices when they sing praises together.
- I still like to hear the terms “brother” and “sister” used when addressing members of the body of Christ...
- I still like to see people who are so obsessed with the Word of Christ in the community that they develop a sense of *loyalty to the home congregation*.
- I still like to see young people sit at the front of the building when they come to worship.
- I still like to see youngsters respect and be polite to their elders.
- I still like to see young people, even teenagers, say “yes sir” and “no sir” when addressing adults.
- I still like to hear people say, “If God wills” I will do this or that, suggesting a conscious realization of their dependence upon Him at all times.
- I still like to see people who are so much in love with Christ and His church that they are persistent in inviting others to share with them in the grace of God...And it still saddens me to see many who are miserable with their religion because of a lack of real commitment.—Adapted

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A SHORT COURSE IN HUMAN RELATIONS

- THE **six** most important words in the English language are: I WAS WRONG—PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
- The **five** most important words: YOU DID A GOOD JOB.
- The **four** most important words: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?
- The **three** most important words: CAN I HELP?
- The **two** most important words: THANK YOU.
- The **one** most important word: YOU.
- The least important word: I.—SELECTED

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WHAT ARE YOU REALLY WORTH?

SEVERAL YEARS ago when Biochemist Harold J. Morowitz of Yale University received a humorous birthday card that read: “According to biochemists, the materials that make up the human body are worth only 98 cents,” he reached for a catalogue of a supply company and began looking up prices.

It turns out the human body is actually a Six Million Dollar Man (at that time).

Hemoglobin is \$285 a gram; insulin, \$47.50 a gram; purified trypsin (an enzyme), \$36; bilirubin, the bile pigment, \$12; human DNA, \$76; collagen, \$15; human albumin, \$3.

A real shocker came when he got to follicle-stimulating

hormone—\$8 million a gram—a gift he suggests for people who have everything. For the really wealthy, there is prolactin, the hormone that stimulates the milk production in the breasts glands—\$17,500,000 a gram.

Calculating the percentage of each chemical in the composition of the human body, Morowitz arrived at \$254.54 as the average value per gram of human being.

He then weighed himself, 168 pounds or 79,354 grams. Since man is 68 per cent water, he estimated his dry weight was 24,435 grams. Multiplying that by \$254.54 came to \$6,000,015.44.

So man, just viewed as a body, is indeed a Six Million Dollar Man. But when you add to that the value of his soul (Matthew 16:26), there is no way to estimate his true worth. Jesus tells us the soul is worth more than all the world.

Paul prayed: “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:23).

(NOTE: What would the body be worth in view of today’s inflated prices?)—Adapted

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PLEASIN’ APPEASIN’ PREACHIN’

*Now Preacher, what you’ve been sayin’,  
Well, it ain’t all that wrong,  
But we think...Maybe, you’ve been  
Sayin’ it a mite too strong.*

*You know, folks like me,  
We truly do agree...  
But couldn’t ya kindly stress it  
To less a degree?*

*N-n-now, don’t take this criticism  
Too much to heart;  
We wouldn’t want you from  
His Holy Word to depart.*

*Just try to tone it down a bit,  
If you please—  
We got some people out there  
Ya just gotta appease.*

*Be sensible! We can’t afford  
To lose their support.  
After all, it’s your job  
Their favor to court.*

*Good preachin’ should be filled  
With plenty of jokes and such,  
So as not to step on too many toes  
Or offend anyone too much,*

*Besides, who wants to become  
A regular religious fanatic?  
For my tastes and temperament,  
That’d be just too traumatic!*

—BOB WICKLINE; 5204 US 50; Hillsbro, Ohio 45133



# A Do-Nothing Kind of Religion!

BY JAMES E. GIBBONS

**Scripture:** Luke 6:46-49.

For a background to this message consider the above Scripture. Jesus asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" He next follows this with the illustration of the man who builds his house upon a rock and the one who builds upon the sand. The rains descend and the floods come. The house with its foundation on the rock stands fast, while the one in the sand meets disaster. The person who keeps the sayings of Jesus is like the house securely founded on the rock. Those who give him lip service, yet not doing what he teaches, is like the house on the sand, eventually meeting destruction.

It seems that much of the religious thought circulating in today's world may be characterized as do-nothing. With one voice it seems the Protestant world says that man is saved by "faith only." We hear that it doesn't make any difference what one believes or practices in the name of religion so long as he is sincere. How often have we heard someone say, trying to excuse himself, "The Lord knows that my intentions are good, and that's all that matters."

Then many of us talk long and loud about New Testament Christianity and restoring the church of Christ. We are the teachers of babes and are the light in a dark world (we say), and when it comes to the faith, we must believe the right way. But, beloved, it takes more than talk and professed belief, it takes **doing** to please the Lord. We need to talk less about restoring the church and start being it. Mentally we may be orthodox, but what good is that if we are dead in deeds?!

Of course these opinions are in contradiction to the Word of God. James 2:14-24 reveals that faith apart from works is totally dead, availing us nothing. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews we read about all the great men of faith. There was some action or obedience that came with that faith. Romans 1:8 reads, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your **faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**" Paul had heard about the faith of the Roman Christians while in other remote parts of the Roman Empire, but was that all? Toward the end of this epistle (Romans 16:19a) he declares, "For your **obedience is come abroad unto all men.**" Isn't it plain? Faith and obedience, or works, go hand in hand and cannot be divorced from one another. "Faith only", good intentions, and an orthodox belief are not enough.

Many religious people point to Ephesians 2:8, 9 and try to say that works are excluded, and thus are not important. It reads, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." But what is Paul talking about? He has reference to the Jews and Gentiles in this epistle and in this chapter. We are not saved by the works of the Old Testament Law, nor are we saved by the devising of a scheme in effort to reach God, as the Gentile world without a revelation from heaven was doing. We need to notice the verse that follows Ephesians 2:8, 9—"For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto **good works**, which God **hath ordained** that we should walk in them." This verse has been neglected. We must do the **works of God**; hence, not our works. Also, notice Revelation 22:14, "Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (i.e., enter into the new Jerusalem, or heaven).

However, let us remember that works or good intentions expressed through ignorance will not necessarily aid a man

toward his salvation. To the pagan philosophers in ancient Athens, Paul said, "And in the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Of his own kinsmen, the Jews, Paul later said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:1, 2). Also, we read of a man named Cornelius, who is described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:2). Surely here is a man whose character is choice. But listen! The angel told Cornelius that the apostle Peter was the man "who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). What of this? Surely this proves that being a Christian involves more than being religious. It involves more than being sincere. It involves not only believing, but doing the will of God. However, not knowing the will of God may somewhat lessen the penalty, cf., Luke 12:47, 48; James 4:17; I Timothy 1:12-16.

Therefore, with these thoughts behind us, and realizing that God demands something of us, let us notice how the spirit of do-nothing has entered many realms of religious teaching, and making much of today's religion "a do-nothing kind of religion."

## I. A DO-NOTHING KIND OF REPENTANCE!

The do-nothing attitude can be seen when it comes to repentance many times, whether it be in the alien sinner or the erring Christian. Becoming a Christian is just an empty form that some submit to—there is really no change of heart! They still go on living their old ungodly lives. The Lord's supper is a form, there being no examination nor tears of repentance. I am afraid that a lack of dogmatic preaching pertaining to sin and salvation is to blame for this. Sin is a forgotten reality—just a mistake or social maladjustment. People doubt their salvation many times because they have not truly repented in the first place. A dark corner is reserved in their heart for sin.

The restitution part of repentance has been forgotten. Repentance involves an effort to undo the wrongs that one has done. Zacchaeus is a good example of one who endeavored to pay back those he had wronged (Luke 19:8-10). The do-nothing attitude would say to forget the past, for God will forgive it. But He can't forgive it until we strive to make things right, really show that we are sincere. He demands that we forgive before we can be forgiven.

The do-nothing attitude is manifested when people put salvation off, and think that they can repent any time they choose. They say, "Some day I'll make a change." Very likely that person may never come to repentance. Today is the day of salvation; that "some day" may never come. A person better repent before his heart becomes so hardened that it can't be reached. Whenever a sinner hears the gospel he is like a piece of metal placed into the fire. If his heart is warmed and he does not accept the message, he is as the metal which is heated and then allowed to get cold. Each time it is heated, then gets cold, it becomes more hardened and set. Hearts touched by the warmth of the gospel time and time again, then rejecting it, will become so hardened that they can't be reached.

My dear friends, repentance involves a radical change. As John the Baptist said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). Our repentance is from dead works (Hebrews 6:1), and it is a turning to serve the living

(Continued on Next Page)

## A DO-NOTHING KIND OF RELIGION

(Continued from Last Page)

God. There should be a change in the things we do, the things we say, the places we go, and in the things we love. It is contrary to the Christian nature to make a habitual practice of sin. And, inasmuch as repentance is a change of mind, we now have the "mind of Christ."

### II. A DO-NOTHING KIND OF BAPTISM!

"A do-nothing kind of religion" prevails in this mixed-up religious world surrounding baptism. Most denominations teach that a person first must be saved then baptized. In other words salvation comes upon believing and before being baptized. They do not connect forgiveness of sins with baptism. But what does the Bible say about it? Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16a). He put baptism before salvation, and salvation after baptism. According to Acts 2:38 we can not claim to have forgiveness of sin until we have been baptized. "Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized** everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If a person is interested in the eternal destiny of his soul he had better accept what God says without question, throwing aside the creeds and opinions of men.

Many practice sprinkling and pouring today in the place of Bible baptism. These methods are do-nothing simply because they are not baptism. The Bible calls baptism a burial (Colossians 2:12). Baptism means immersion, and immersion means baptism. Biblically speaking, they are synonymous terms. Baptism represents the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as we die to sin and are buried in the waters of baptism to arise and walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:3-6). Sprinkling and pouring do not depict a burial, and thus cannot be baptism and are Scripturally of no value to the one who submits to them.

We emphasize the importance of baptism because of man's tendency to disregard it as having any value in connection with salvation. We do not wish to underemphasize the other things having to do with man's salvation, but even as the waters of the flood lifted the ark, with Noah and the others aboard, carrying them safely over until they abated, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

### III. A DO-NOTHING KIND OF COMMUNION!

The Bible teaches that the early church observed the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, i.e., every Lord's day or Sunday (Acts 20:7). But do we find this to be a common practice today? Among certain churches endeavoring to follow the ancient order of things, yes. But the vast denominational world of today does not do that. Many have the do-nothing attitude toward communion. I have heard people say that if we partook of the Lord's supper every Sunday, it would become common, losing its sacredness. But that is not necessarily so. I speak to you from experience and from the Word of God. Does singing and giving lose their sacredness? No—especially the latter, many churches taking up collection every time they meet. Does prayer lose its sacredness when we pray frequently? Paul said, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer may lose its sacredness, but that is because there is something spiritually wrong in the life of the person when it takes place. Likewise with the Lord's supper. If you are a child of God you should partake of the Lord's supper every Lord's day.

Others remark, "I am unworthy, and the Bible says that if we eat and drink being unworthy, we eat and drink damnation to our souls." Now, my dear friend, the Bible does not say that. But it does read this way, "For he that

eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, **not discerning the Lord's body**" (I Corinthians 11:29). "Unworthy" and "unworthily" are two different words, having a different shade of meaning. Unworthy has reference to our spiritual state. I am unworthy, and I am not worthy in the complete sense of that word, as are all human beings. This is not the word used in the Scriptures. Unworthily, as used in **Corinthians**, pertains to the manner in which we partake of the Lord's supper, being an adverb. The Corinthians were "not discerning the Lord's body." If we talk and whisper, do not examine ourselves and think on the Lord's death, we will "eat and drink damnation to our souls."

Then many professing New Testament Christians have a do-nothing attitude toward the Lord's supper in thinking that by simply "taking" it every Lord's day their sins will be remitted for another week. There is no self-examination, repentance and prayer. They hold grudges and go on in their worldly living. The Lord's supper is a communion with Christ (I Corinthians 10:16), and when we lose this element, it is reduced to a mere form and of no spiritual value.

### IV. A DO-NOTHING KIND OF STEWARDSHIP!

Many grumble at the suggestion that every Christian should at least tithe of his income to the Lord. There are all kinds of excuses given for not tithing and even attempts at Scriptural arguments against it. Some say, "I don't make enough to tithe . . . I'm in debt now." Others exclaim, "I don't believe in tithing . . . The Bible says not to let your left hand know what the right is doing." First, may I say that you could be in debt the rest of your life, and never give a cent to the work of the Lord with that do-nothing attitude. Second, the Bible does say something about the left hand not knowing what the right one is doing (Matthew 6:3, 4), but that is not talking about tithing. Did you know that? Jesus refers to alms giving and the way the hypocrites were giving to be seen of men. Every Jew was expected to give his tithe. The alms giving was from above the tithe. There was no special vain glory in tithing, for all men were expected to do this. Alms giving served as an outlet to be seen of men. Nor does II Corinthians 9:7 eliminate tithing, which reads, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not **grudgingly**, or of **necessity**: for God loveth a cheerful giver." This also has reference to the benevolence offering that were being taken up in the churches, and the light of what we have considered would not necessarily fall into the category of the tithe—but alms giving. I'm afraid that the much concern over not letting the left hand know what the right one is doing could be better understood as a matter of not letting the left hand know what the right hand **is not doing**.

Before we consider tithing a little more, I pause to show you how the do-nothing attitude is even more evident regarding stewardship of money. It is rather sickening to notice churches which continually are having bazaars, auctions, and bake sales; enticing outsiders in to pay their "bills." This is wrong in itself and certainly has "do-nothing" written all over it. Lukewarm "churches" will never start giving as long as the "Ladies' Aid" meets the bills through their many schemes. Stewardship has little chance of developing under those circumstances.

The Jews tithed of their income to God under the Old Testament, having far less privileges and promises than we as Christians. The greater relationship to God we enjoy should make us want to open our hearts by giving at least the tithe. It should be the starting point. It is a shame and a reproach to Christ for us to give less. I can not imagine the converted Jews on the day of Pentecost exclaiming, "Now that we are no longer under the law, we will stop tithing." In fact, their greater love for God through Christ constrained many of them to sell both houses and land in

order to give their money for the cause of Christianity (Acts 2:45; 4:34-37). Also, a Jewish community, if it had ten families with an income, would have a synagogue. Ten tithes coming from ten families equaled one income, thus they could support a Rabbi to be their religious minister. It is something of this nature that Paul had in mind (I Corinthians 9:13, 14)? Listen: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? **EVEN SO** hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." If this is true, for every ten people with a definite income there should be a gospel worker on the field. In this way preachers could not be sent out, without anxiety concerning their support, to evangelize the world. The local church could accept it's God-given responsibility of evangelism. Man-made missionary societies and organizations would vanish, being unscriptural and unneeded. If we could eradicate this do-nothingness which mires the churches today, and put the church to doing its own work—O what a marvelous thought! And speaking more about the tithe, it was an institution in existence before the Old Testament was imposed upon men, and therefore how it could have been taken away, essentially not being characteristically Old Testament?

My dear friends, we could go on and on talking about do-nothing attitudes in religion; yea, a book could be written on it! It is hoped that some things have been proved to you, and that these thoughts will stimulate you to action. A do-nothing kind of religion will not take you to heaven. Remember the words of our Lord: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). God forgive us of our sins of omission! "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

(This article appeared in the May, 1958 issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF).

(NOTE: In reference to I Corinthians 9:13, 14, we asked if it referred to such a method of giving. It seems the primary emphasis here is to the principle of giving, supporting, rather than the method.

We might add that the "priesthood of all believers" assures that all Christians will be spreading the gospel, and that "preachers" will be preaching whether support is forthcoming or not. Whether it is taught in I Corinthians 9 or not, the giving of 10% for the preaching of the gospel is a good idea for starters.)

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TIME TO READ THE BIBLE

IN ACTS 17:11, the Bible says of the Jews of Berea, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." If first-century Christians were encouraged to check the teachings of the apostles, how careful we should be today to examine all that is being taught in religion.

Realizing the need to search the Scriptures daily, someone has come up with the following figures on how long it takes to read the entire Bible:

It takes 70 hours and 40 minutes to read the Bible at pulpit rate.

It takes 52 hours and 20 minutes to read the Old Testament.

It takes 18 hours and 20 minutes to read the New Testament.

It takes 4 hours and 28 minutes to read the longest section in the Old Testament, the Psalms.

It takes 2 hours and 43 minutes to read the longest book in the New Testament, the Gospel of Luke.

It takes 2 months and 10 days to read the entire Bible at a rate of one hour a day.

It takes one year to read the Bible 5 times and be one-third the way through the sixth time.

What better way can you find to spend your time than with the Word of God? But Bible knowledge is of little value unless it is actively put to use.—Bob Buchanon □

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CARVINGS ON A YOUNG TREE

A FARMER removed an old beech tree which grew on his land. The woodcutter noticed on the bark some curious marks which looked like the letters J. L., roughly cut and below them some ornamental design. After the tree was cut and was being divided into lengths, he was startled to find on the hard dry wood at the core of the tree, the clearly cut letters J. L. on a dark background, and below them an anchor. Upon inquiries, it was found that the letters were the initials of a sailor named John Leland. There were 37 rings between the letters and the bark of the tree. He inferred that the letters must have been cut in 1853, and his belief was confirmed when he learned that it was in that year that the sailor had spent some time in the area. The inscription had not only remained in the place where it was cut at the first, but as each year added to the growth of the tree, the letters still appeared on the surface, scarcely legible there, it is true, but perfectly clear at the core.

The same thing is true with human character. Many an old man, in spite of the rough usage of the world and the scar of time and trouble bears upon his walk and manner of life marks which were put there in childhood.

When you read the second chapter of Exodus, it is apparent that someone taught Moses to: have sympathy for the slave; despise injustice; know the folly of anger; and to defend the weak. I think I can see the loving influence of his mother behind all these acts.

When I look at Timothy, the companion of the apostle Paul, and see his faith and dedication, I am reminded of the teaching which has been done early in Timothy's life by his mother and grandmother.

The training we receive in early life we will carry with us to the grave. It's important, therefore, that our children are taught the right things now. We must not neglect our golden opportunities.—John Gipson via Words of Life □

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Don't just own  
a Bible; read it !

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I AM THE BIBLE

I AM THE BIBLE, God's wonderful library. I am always—and above all—the truth.  
To the weary pilgrim, I am a strong staff.  
To the one who sits in darkness, I am glorious light.  
To those who stumble beneath heavy burdens, I am sweet rest.  
To him who has lost his way, I am a safe guide.  
To those who are sick in sin, I am healing strength and forgiveness.  
To the discouraged, I am a glad message of hope.  
To those who are distressed and tossed about by the storms of life, I am an anchor, sure and steadfast.  
To those who search for salvation, I reveal the Saviour of the world.  
I am the Bible!—Selected

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WORKERS WANTED

GOD NEVER goes to the lazy or idle when He needs a worker. He calls a worker. History and Scripture attest this fact.  
Moses was busy with his flock at Horeb.  
Gideon was busy threshing wheat by the wine press.  
Saul was busy searching for his father's lost beasts.  
Elisha was busy plowing with twelve yoke of oxen.  
David was busy caring for his father's sheep.  
Amos was busy following the flock.  
Nehemiah was busy bearing the king's wine cup.  
Peter and Andrew were busy casting a net into the sea.  
James and John were busy mending their nets.  
Jesus was busy about His Father's business.  
—The Christian Connection

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TO ANN LANDERS ABOUT THE SOAPS

Dear Ann Landers:  
This is for that reader who said soap operas were a "great escape." I always have thought they catered to morons and after reading this column in the Las Vegas Sun, I'm sure I was right. Please print it, Ann. It says a great deal not only about the IQ but the taste of people in this country.—Nevada Philosopher.  
Dear Phil.:  
I will, indeed, with a well-deserved credit to the author, Paul Price. His column is called "Dateline—Las Vegas."  
For reasons that escape me, I have been reading the resumes of the dire events that dramatize life on TV soaps. Here are some samples:  
"EDGE OF NIGHT": Eric approaches Chris. She pushes him and he dies, impaled on a pitchfork. There are no witnesses.  
"ANOTHER WORLD": Realizing that his uncle plans name Sally as Kevin's trustee, Davis proposes to her, then suffocates the old man with a pillow.  
"DAYS OF OUR LIVES": Tony tries to give Marlena the poison capsule but fails.  
"SEARCH FOR TOMORROW": Sunny is raped by Jack who forced his way into her bedroom and escaped unnoticed.

"TEXAS": Ginny tells Barret she's pregnant and he is elated. He doesn't realize it's not his baby. Chris plans to release Paige's porno unless she gives him cash. Rikki knocks out Billy Joe.  
"ALL MY CHILDREN": Liza recovers from being beaten by Bud.  
"RYAN'S HOPE": Roger starts to attack Maggie and has to be stopped by Frank. Frank comforts Maggie and kisses her passionately. Jacqueline offers Laslow cash if he will impregnate her.  
"GUIDING LIGHT": Beth tells Lillian about Bradley raping her.  
"ANOTHER LIFE": Lance breaks into Russ' apartment and plans to kill him when he returns. Babs enters Russ' apartment. Lance shoots and she falls to the floor.  
"THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS": Victor is wounded but rescues Nikki from Rick, who swims off into the ocean never to be seen again.  
"AS THE WORLD TURNS": Richard agrees to burn The Throwaway Children's Home and leaves an unconscious Margo to die in the fire. Craig tries to rescue Margo but is waylaid by Richard.  
"ANOTHER LIFE": Lance escapes from prison and talks Paula into helping him find Russ. Felix spots Dave and shoots him.  
"SEARCH FOR TOMORROW": A wounded Brian shoots his attacker to death. A young girl races out the door. Warren congratulates himself for staying married to Suzy, who is now \$2 million richer.  
"GENERAL HOSPITAL": Grant leaps out of the bushes and strangles Campbell.  
Dear Readers: Before you conclude that the average American housewife is an airhead, I'd like you to know that a surprising number of men are daily viewers of the soaps, and they are just as hooked as the women.  
—From THE WASHINGTON POST—  
Submitted by Mrs. H. E. (Nancy) Leonard  
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HE MADE "ONE" (BIG) MISTAKE  
1. He brushed his teeth twice a day—with a nationally advertized toothpaste.  
2. The doctor examined him twice a year.  
3. He slept with a window open.  
4. He stuck to a diet with fresh vegetables.  
5. He golfed—but never more than 18 holes at a time.  
6. He got at least eight hours of sleep each night.  
7. He never smoked nor drank nor lost his temper.  
8. He was all set to live to be a hundred.  
The funeral was held last Wednesday. He is survived by 18 specialists, 4 health institutes, 6 gymnasiums, and numerous manufacturers of health foods and antiseptics.  
He made one mistake! "He forgot God!" And he lived as if this world were all there was to this life and now he is with those who say "the harvest is past; the summer is ended and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).  
IF YOU SHOULD DIE TONIGHT, WHERE WOULD YOU SPEND ETERNITY? THINK!—Selected

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# The *Spiritual* Heart

## INTRODUCTION:

**I. The use of the heart to express the inner-self is a common figure of speech.**

- (1) We talk of loving someone with all of our heart.
- (2) We talk of a person's heart being broken.
- (3) And we could go on.

**2. In the Bible the heart is used in at least three different ways.**

- (1) The physical organ that pumps the blood in the body.
- (2) The center of anything, like the heart of the earth.
- (3) Man's innermost self—the seat of his moral nature and spiritual life.

**3. Other figures of speech in the Bible.**

- (1) Not only is the HEART used as such as a figure of speech, but
- (2) In the Old Testament and once in the New Testament the KIDNEYS (reins) are used as such a figure of speech (Psalms 26:2; 73:21; etc; Revelation 2:23).
- (3) BOWELS (intestines) are used (Philippians 1:8; 2:1; I John 3:17; etc.—same word as in Acts 1:18).

**4. What is involved in the spiritual heart.**

- (1) The spiritual heart involves our EMOTIONS, our WILL and our INTELLECT (all of this being interwoven with conscience).
- (2) The heart can think and reason—INTELLECT (Matthew 9:4; Mark 2:6).
- (3) The heart can love and rejoice—EMOTION (Matthew 22:37; John 16:22).
- (4) The heart can purpose—WILL (Acts 11:23).
- (5) "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"—Proverbs

**I. THE GOOD KIND OF HEART (Luke 8:15).**

**A. Hearts that were GOOD and HONEST.**

- 1. Those at Pentecost—Acts 2:36-41.
- 2. The Ethiopian eunuch—Acts 8:30-39.
- 3. Cornelius—Acts 10:33.
- 4. Lydia and her household—Acts 16:14, 15.

**B. Summary of "Good and Honest" Heart in Becoming a Christian.**

- 1. Heart open, pricked in heart, belief with all the heart.
- 2. Believe IN your heart—Romans 10:9, 10.
- 3. Obey FROM your heart—Romans 6:17.
- 4. It is a TRUE heart—Hebrews 10:22.
- 5. A PURE heart—I Peter 1:22, 23.

**C. The Good and Honest Heart of a Christian.**

- 1. Pure in heart—Matthew 5:8.
- 2. Spirit comes into our hearts—Galatians 4:6; II Corinthians 1:22).
- 3. He dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17)—"dwells" *katoikeo* properly signifies to settle down in a dwelling (house), to dwell fixedly in a place.
- 4. Heart-felt worship—Ephesians 5:19.
- 5. Let the peace of God RULE (arbitrate, be the umpire) in our hearts—Colossians 3:15.

**II. THE BAD KIND OF HEART.**

**A. Some People Who had Bad Hearts.**

- 1. Seen in the Scribes and Pharisees all the way through

- Jesus' ministry (Mark 3:5, 6; Sermon on the Mount—Matthew 5:20-7:29; Context of Matthew 12:31-37).
- 2. Satan filled hearts of Ananias and Sapphira—Acts 5:3 (hypocrites).
- 3. Simon the Sorcerer—Acts 8:21, 22 ("Right" *euthus*—translated straight in Matthew 3:3).
- 4. The ancient Gentile world—Romans 1:21-28.

**B. Descriptions of Bad Heart Conditions.**

- 1. Note Sermon on the Mount, adultery in the heart, etc.—Matthew 5:27, 28.
- 2. Heart far from God—Matthew 15:1-9.
- 3. Hardened and impenitent heart—Romans 2:5.
- 4. Blindness, hardness of heart—Ephesians 4:18; Mark 3:5 (*porosis*: to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus).
- 5. Hearts become gross—Acts 28:26, 27 (heavy, thick, fat).

**III. BEWARE OF THE DANGER OF HAVING A BAD HEART.**

**A. Anyone Can Develop a Hardened Heart.**

- 1. Kings have had this problem—Pharaoh, Saul, etc.
- 2. The religious leaders of Jesus' day had that problem.
- 3. The sharpest rebuke of Jesus for his disciples—Mark 8:14-18.
- 4. Christians need to beware: They hear so much preaching that if they do not take it seriously, they can become immune to it.
- 5. Beware! We can lose our tender sensitivity about right and wrong in this sin polluted world.

**B. We Are Warned About This Danger.**

- 1. One can deceive his own heart—James 1:26.
- 2. An evil heart of unbelief in departing from God—Hebrews 3:12-14.
- 3. Conscience seared with a hot iron—I Timothy 4:1, 2 (burned with a branding iron).
- 4. Each unrepented, each willful sin brands the heart.

**C. The Hardened Heart Brings Death (Spiritual and otherwise).**

- 1. Firstborn in Egypt, Pharaoh's army, etc.
- 2. Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness and died. (Hebrews 3:15-4:1).
- 3. Proverbs 29:1.
- 4. Scribes and Pharisees (hypocrites)—sin against the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Ananias and Sapphira.
- 6. Romans 2:4, 5.

**Concluding Remarks:**

- 1. God knows your heart—Acts 1:24; Hebrews 4:12, 13.
- 2. Luke 6:45, 46. —By JAMES E. GIBBONS

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**NOW IS THE TIME TO:**

Mend a quarrel, forget an old grudge, forgive and forget, dismiss a suspicion, extend kindness, do a good deed, strengthen a brother, edify someone, encourage some soul, tell the lost about Jesus, show respect and love, praise God for His blessings, study your Bible, memorize a choice passage, visit the shut-ins, stand firm for good principles, break a bad habit, pray, walk with the Lord.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**MAKING A PERSON A PARTNER**

J. DONALD PHILLIPS, President of Hillsdale College, said, "When I tell a man what to do he is a slave; when I explain the reason for its doing, I have increased his stature; when I let him plan with me, I have made him a partner. Motivation will follow proportionately these actions."

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**MEMORIES IN A PIG PEN**

WHILE in the pig pen, the prodigal son began to think about his father's home. He knew from past experience that he would be received by the father. The prodigal child especially needs to know that the home is open and that he will be received in love. What if he had been from a bitter, bickering, or broken home? If your child becomes a prodigal son and destitution leads him to think of home will the memories call him back or drive him deeper into despair? —*Selected* □

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**REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING**

- SELFISHNESS is forgetting others in over-remembering self.
- WORRY is the inability to forget the troubles that may never happen.
- HONOR is remembering high standards made evident in acts.
- ANGER is the explosion of an overheated memory.
- FORGIVENESS is the heart's forgetfulness of an injury.
- INGRATITUDE is the heart's forgetfulness of a favor.
- HABIT is the memory of acts making repetition easier.
- MERCY is the memory of human weakness tempering justice.
- ENVY is forgetting one's own possessions in over-remembering those of others.
- INFLUENCE is the remembered acts of one inspiring the acts of others.
- PATIENCE is forgetting petty troubles along the way in concentrating thought on the goal.
- LOVE is the heart's sweetest memories shrined in another. —*James Hastings* □

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**"SINE CERA" (SINCERE)**

IN PHILIPPIANS 1:10, Paul admonishes Christians to be "sincere." Our English word sincere has very little meaning attached to it. But in the old days it was a word with deep significance. It is an Anglicized Latin word meaning literally, "without wax" and is used to translate a Greek word meaning "sun-tested." Now, who would have thought that our English word sincere came from a word which meant to be judged by light?

We are told that the ancients had a very fine porcelain which was greatly valued, and which brought a very high price. It was only with greatest difficulty that this porcelain could be fired without being cracked. When it did crack, dishonest dealers would fill the fine cracks with a pearly white wax which looked enough like true porcelain to pass without being readily detected in the shops. If held

up to the light, however, the wax was at once manifested as a dark seam. Honest dealers would mark the porcelain with the words "sine cera" (without wax).

The apostle Paul wanted Christians to be so true to the Spirit of Christ that they could be tested in any circumstance and be found unmovable in their moral and spiritual life.

Every religion is judged in connection with its followers. As Christians, our life-style will either defend us or defeat us. It's just that simple. Christians must be honest and honorable in all their dealings. Anything that savors of sham or hypocrisy is as wax used to hide the imperfections in porcelain.

Many religions are like a rocking chair, they give you something to do, but they don't take you anywhere. Christ was filled with the fullness of God, and His life demonstrated it. His followers must be nothing less. By the power of God, men are saved. Their lives are changed. And changed lives can be judged by any light without fear of finding some wax-covered flaw in their conduct and character.

Think it over. —*Paul Graham* □

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**LIVE UP TO YOUR BUMPER STICKER**

A CERTAIN WOMAN, driving along from Washington to Richmond, ran over a spike which punctured her tire and left her stranded. In distress, she raised the hood of her car and tied a scarf to the door handle; then she locked the doors and sat in the car praying for the Lord to help her.

By chance there came a limousine with a bumper sticker that read, "SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU." When the occupants saw the stranded woman, they passed by in the far lane without even smiling.

Also, there came a sports car with a CB radio and a bumper sticker saying, "HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS." The driver passed by in the far lane without even honking or using his CB to tell the highway patrol about the woman's problem.

A certain workman, when he saw the raised hood and scarf, came to the spot where the woman was, with compassion. He stopped his old pickup, which had no bumper stickers, crossed the four-lane highway and offered to change the tire.

The woman tried to pay the workman, but he refused the money saying, "If my wife were stranded on the highway, I'd want some good Samaritan to stop and help her out." And again he crossed the four-lane highway, got into his bumper-stickerless truck, smiled and honked at her, and went on his way to work. *Which now of these three was a neighbor unto her that had a flat tire?* —*Selected* □

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**YOU CANNOT BUILD CHARACTER...**

You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.

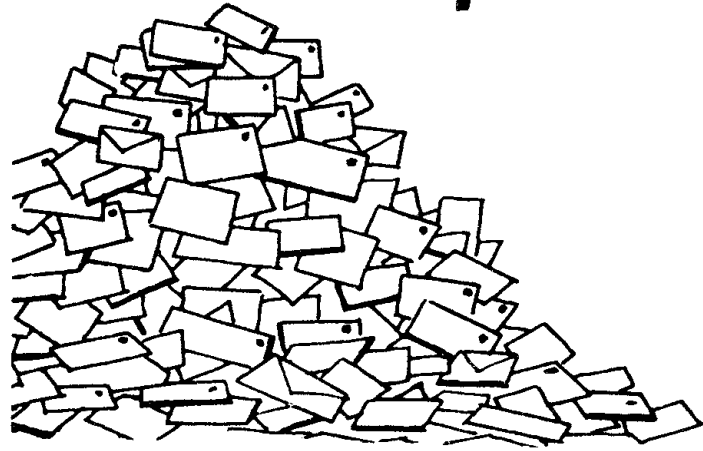
You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

... Abraham Lincoln



# READERS'

## ... Response



**PHILIPPINES:**

■ “After I had received the last issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, the chart concerning the GOSPEL arrived, and I found out as the days passed by preaching about salvation, how effective this chart is in my work—because many of the people whom I talked with accepted the Lord by being baptized in His name. Therefore, those charts, especially the smaller in size, were already gone and I taught every Christian, especially preachers who also received copy, to preach it strongly.

“If you still have some copies, send me again and also the requested tracts and booklets which titles always appear on *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...”

**TEXAS:**

■ “I am the one that has mailed out many of your little booklet, ‘*THE MEANING OF SUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN*.’ I am also the one that disagreed with the picture that you put on the front. I’m talking about the lady with the nervous breakdown. I love the booklet but have had to force myself to mail them out to people. I was rewarded greatly just this evening at church services when a man spoke to whom I had sent one of these. They have a little boy that developed leukemia, and they took him to St. Jude’s hospital in Memphis. They were touched greatly by the booklet, and he mentioned it in his talk and told how much it meant to him. I then announced to the audience that I had plenty more and will be passing out more in the next few days. I wanted you to know how much this family enjoyed and profited from this booklet, BUT he did remark about that terrible picture on the front.

“Now, if you have changed the picture on the front I would like very much to have some more. I probably have near 100 now. But if you have changed the picture, please send me 100 more and I will gladly send you a check for them.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Thank you. You are not alone in your estimation of the ill-chosen cover. My wife Freda told me the same thing. She has personally volunteered to remove all the covers from the several thousand booklets I had printed

—no little task. I hope to have a new cover printed soon.)

**MINNESOTA:**

■ “Enclosed you will find a check for ten dollars to let you know I do appreciate getting *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, so please keep my name on your mailing list, so I may continue to receive this very worthy publication. May God bless you richly as you continue to labor for Him.”

**NEBRASKA:**

■ “As always, appreciated your last copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. God has richly blessed you with the ability to publish a good, Bible-based paper.”

**MISSOURI:**

■ “I have every *SWORD AND STAFF* and use them and re-use them often, but it would be easier to have them in bound volumes. I really do appreciate your work and your stand for the Lord and Truth. God bless and continue to bless you.”

**INDIANA:**

■ “Thanks for telling it (the truth) like it is according to God’s Word. I enjoy every word of the paper.”

**OHIO:**

■ “Our Bible study teacher recommended *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to us. I would like very much to receive it. I am sure that it will benefit me spiritually, as I am sure that it has done others.”

**FLORIDA:**

■ “We really are thankful for the Biblical content and professional look of the printing of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Hope you can get the financial support you need to get it in the mail more often. Lord bless you in your work.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

—SEVENTY percent of choking victims are intoxicated; 70 percent of all drowning victims; 70 percent of all burn victims, and 50 percent of “freak accidents.” Makes you stop and think, doesn’t it? □

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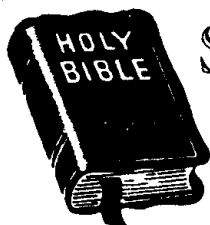
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