

The Sword AND Staff

“Preach the Word” (II Timothy 4:2) • “Feed the Flock” (I Peter 5:2)

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

BEFORE WE GET into this needed message about delusion let us establish some truths, or make some observations, which will serve as a point of reference.

God is eternal truth, Jesus was the embodiment of it, and the Word of God is the written form of it. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He is the reality of things as they are in the state of supreme purity and righteousness (the way they should be). Jesus is the Word that was with God, and that was (and is) God (John 1:1). “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus earlier had said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31,32). He later prayed, “Sanctify them through the truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). He had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, of whom he said, “...when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...” (John 16:13). Paul later wrote, “For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and (all) righteousness and in (all) truth” (Ephesians 5:9).

Just as God is the truth and stands only for the truth, the devil is a lie and the father of it (John 8:44). The only reason the devil will tell you the truth (especially half-truths) is to get you to believe a lie. He accomplishes his purpose by deception. In Revelation 12:9 we read of “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan,

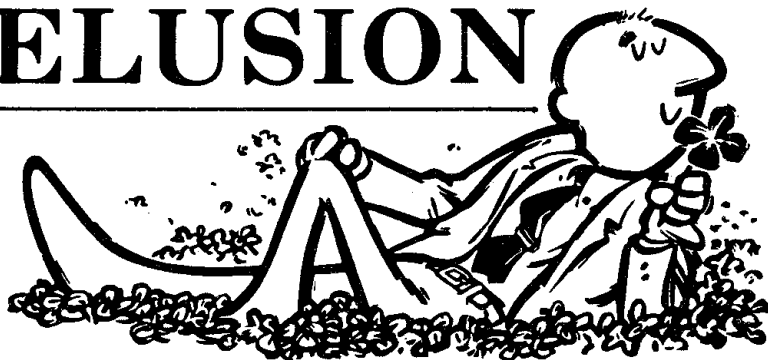
naivety and inexperience (and in a wonderland of constant discovery) it evidently was not thought a thing incredible that a serpent could communicate with her. She and Adam had been uniquely blessed in the most fortunate situation in which they found themselves (above any human beings who have ever lived). They were created in God’s own image, and everything was ready for them when they arrived on the scene (paradise on earth). But in order for them to exercise their prerogative as human beings, not just being animals, God gave them one very simple law to obey. It was so plain that we are amazed at its simplicity: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16,17). There was no way to misunderstand this law, and consequently there could be no excuse for disobedience. Only deception could cause a person not to see this (and that was the field of the devil’s operation). Eve believed the devil’s lie that God had unduly restrained them (and was holding back on them). Sin and death enter the world. And all ensuing generations of humanity have swallowed the devil’s line, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). It is a fact that he is “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation 12:9).

In this article we are talking about delusion. It has been said that delusion implies belief in something that is contrary to fact or reality, resulting from deception, a misconception, or a mental disorder. Normally speaking, delusion must be preceded by deception in one way or another. Delusion is the stronger word,

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A World of DELUSION

which deceiveth the whole world.” We read about his initial deception of mankind in Genesis 3. He appeared to the first woman in the form of a serpent and tried to get her to believe a lie about God. We know that snakes as such don’t talk. This situation was singular and involved sleight and craftiness on the part of the devil. Eve had been newly created, and everything was new and wonderful to her. In such a state of innocence,



THE SWORD AND STAFF

Post Office Box 147

Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

Life is like money: we can spend it any way we want to, but only once.

"A preacher should so love the truth of God's Word that he will not sacrifice any of it, nor pervert it, and he should so love the people that he will not withhold from them any portion of truth as revealed through the Holy Scriptures, however unpleasant it may be."

Extremism in the long run is not a true friend to the truth it embraces.

"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and not tried."

Fight fire with fire and you end up with ashes.

"The family that has fun together will be one together."

I believe the Lord can use me and make of me something for His name's sake for didn't He make the world out of nothing?

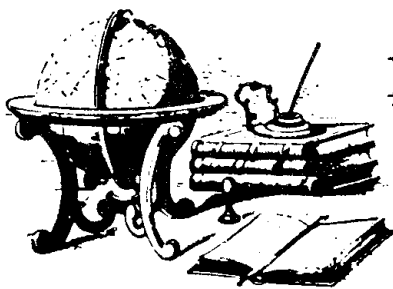
"An expert is a man who knows more and more about less and less."

The church that is wed to the spirit of this world will find itself a widow in the next generation.

"The devil has no happy old men."

The person who is least loveable needs love the most.

"Maturity is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasures in order to accomplish long-range goals."



EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

GOOD PEOPLE IN A BAD WORLD

NO GREATER COMPLIMENT can be paid a person than to have someone say, "He was a good man," or, "She is a good woman." It was said of Barnabas in the early church, "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Of Darcus we read, "This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did" (Acts 9:36). Evidently these people had learned what Micah of old had said, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). And these things should be easily said of the whole community of believers, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

However, we know that in the final sense there is no one good but God, as Jesus asked the rich young ruler, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is God" (Matthew 19:17). Jesus is not disclaiming this goodness. The rich young ruler had carelessly and unwittingly attributed deity to Jesus, calling him "Good Master." Now he is prodded into thinking on the truth he has uttered. He will have to believe in the deity of Christ to carry out what the Lord is about to require of him. But in the relative sense there are good people (relative in relation to the world). Standing before the world with its dark shadows and gray half-tones, the *real Christian* is decidedly highlighted as being good (but standing before God it's another picture).

And the world at its worse needs the church at its best. How we need to let our lights shine. Like Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). *Note:* we are not to shine our lights, but let them shine. There is a difference. By shining our lights we would be ostentatiously flaunting ourselves (very much like a child playing with a flashlight, on again, off again, and flashing it into someone's face). But by letting our light shine, we are just simply being our own genuine self (the real thing). We do not shine a mustered up artificial light, but simply keep on being ourselves. The world will see that it is the real thing. We will not draw attention to ourselves (as self-righteous hypocrites, Matthew 6), but furnish light to a world lost in the darkness of sin. How one small light (if it

is actually lit) can be seen in the darkest night.

We cry out with the Psalmist of old, "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men" (Psalms 12:1). In a world that knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing, we need good men and women. (Yes, good and solidly good through and through). Is there a difference between you and the ungodly world? Can the world actually see the difference, actually see the goodness of God in you? Or, are you (a professed believer) just a replica of that which is about you (a part of the darkness as a confirmed and practicing sinner)? What a shame! The world needs to see the real thing and that the name Christian really means something. Let us aspire to what the Lord has in store for us. Then in time it will naturally be said, "He was a good man ...She was a good woman." □

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EDITORIAL

By-Ways

MOHAMMED'S NOCTURNAL TRIP TO PARADISE, AND THE MOHAMMEDAN CONCEPT OF HEAVEN

RECENTLY, while teaching the book of Genesis (the account of Abraham and Ishmael was before me) and teaching the book of Revelation (sections thought to apply to Mohammed, Mohammedanism, and Mohammedan conquests), and with the fact that the Arabs are continually in the news (one way or another), I was sufficiently provoked to do additional research and study involving Mohammed and the religion that came into being through him (in the seventh century this side of Christ). Several trips to Moslem countries, Jerusalem, and the Mosque of Omar were behind me. A copy of the *Koran* had been on my library shelf for many years untouched except by dust.

In spite of how some writers like to speak of the dignity of the Moslem religion, and their lofty monotheistic concept of God, I was not impressed. Could a religion that had to depend on the ravaging sword for its expansion have much going for it? To read the Bible, and then to try to read the *Koran*, one is strikingly and refreshingly impressed by the Bible. There is no question mark about which one is from God. (O what a Lord and Saviour! and the purity of His religion!). The *Koran*, to me in many ways, thrusts us back to the Old Testament and to *pre* and *sub* Old Testament levels. Some concepts may sound good, but then these are contradicted by others. Regardless how they may talk about the one God, Allah, we are back in the dingy shadows. Books written in the last century

picture the extreme poverty and backwardness of the Moslem nations with the expectant demise of their religion (the contributing factor). However, because of the oil-wealth now flowing into some of these Moslem countries it appears that somewhat of a renaissance is being experienced (and the religion is becoming more attractive in the eyes of some uninformed westerners).

Mohammed's Nocturnal Trip to Paradise

Those who have visited Jerusalem and the Mosque of Omar (located on the temple mount) learn that Mohammed was supposed to have ascended to heaven from Jerusalem. If we think it like unto the Lord Jesus Christ, we are away off base (there is no similarity). Following is what I found from my study and is said to



MOHAMMED

be believed by followers of Mohammed.

This is supposed to have happened in the twelfth year of the acclaimed mission of the prophet Mohammed. He was in Mecca in bed with his most beloved wife Ayesha (she was one of thirteen wives he had—some say 21 wives besides concubines). He was

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EDITORIAL *By-Ways*

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espoused to Ayesha when she was six years old, but did not consummate his marriage until she was eight. Although Mohammed's law as found in the *Koran* allowed his followers to have only four wives, he had many, many more. He has God saying in the *Koran* chapter 3, "This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers."). The angel Gabriel, who was said to have seventy sets of wings, politely knocked on Mohammed's door. Having gained admittance, he informs the prophet that he had been sent to conduct him into the very presence of God to receive finishing touches involving his mission. A glorious milk-white horse called Al Borak (like prophets were supposed to have ridden in more ancient times) was waiting to carry him on his way. For some reason while Gabriel held the bridle for Mohammed to mount, the animal became very desperate and wild. He was brought under control by Mohammed promising him (the horse) a seat in paradise. This accomplished its purpose, Mohammed mounted, and they were off like lightning on the first leg of their journey to Jerusalem. Here the horse was left fastened at the foot of a rock, and Mohammed is said to have ascended to Heaven. All of this (the trip to Jerusalem, to Heaven, and then back to Jerusalem and Mecca) was supposed to have happened in one night.

In ascending to paradise Mohammed found it to be divided into seven heavens. The *first heaven* was composed entirely of solid silver. Here he found a decrepit old man who turned out to be Adam. Adam was very pleased with him and thanked God for such a person. It was from the first heaven that Mohammed was supposed to have seen the stars hanging by golden chains suspended from the roof. When he reached the *second heaven* (it was 500 years journey, normally speaking, between the heavens), we are told that it was all of pure gold. Here he meets Noah, who seems to feel very inferior and wants the prayers of the prophet. The *third heaven* was of precious stone, and this was the residence of Abraham. But here his attention seems to be more directed toward an angel which he saw. It is said that the distance between the angel's eyes was a 70,000 days' journey, and "consequently his whole height was five million forty thousand days' journey, or four times as high as all his heavens put together, since each was distant from the other five hundred years' journey." The *fourth heaven* was of emerald; here Joseph lived. The *fifth heaven* was of adamant. Moses was here, and with him Mohammed had a conference. The *sixth heaven* was of carbuncle. Here was the abode of John the Baptist. The *seventh heaven* was of divine light, and none other than Jesus Christ was here. It is said that in each of the other heavens all whom he saw wanted the prayers of the prophet, but here he says that he requested the prayers of Jesus.

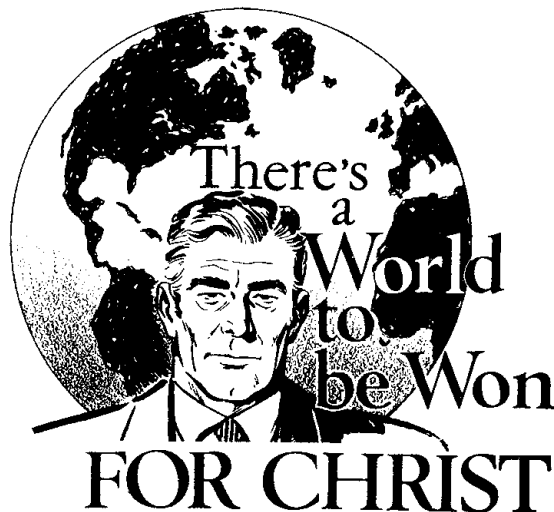
It is said that in the highest heaven, "There was also a very remarkable angel...for he had no fewer than seventy thousand heads, in each head seventy thousand tongues, and each tongue uttered seventy thousand distinct voices at once. That is, he spoke

audibly three hundred forty three millions of words in an instant." Here it is said that Mohammed finally arrived within two bow-shots of the very throne of God. The face of God was covered with 70,000 veils. As he came near through water and snow, and the hand of God was placed on his back, it was so cold it penetrated to his very marrow. He got important secrets from God, was informed that he would be the greatest man upon the earth, then he was conducted back to earth by the angel Gabriel. His horse was waiting just where he left him, and he was back in Mecca in no time (all in one night). (Note: another source has Mohammed riding the white horse to heaven and back).

To say the least, this is different from the Christian's belief in Christ ascending to heaven after his glorious resurrection. Everything about Mohammed's story sounds a little *way out*. (!!!) Truth and error stand in sharp contrast.

The Mohammedan Concept of Heaven

The Christian is set somewhat aback by Mohammed's *Koran* on this matter of Heaven and Hell in the hereafter. Hell is no less a place of punishment like taught in the Christian Scriptures, but therewith is added such things as the drinking of stinking and boiling water, and the eating of briars and thorns, etc. What really is radically different is the sensual paradise promised to the faithful Moslem. Here a great number of youthful and beautiful dark-eyed women have been *especially created* for the sensual pleasure of each man; they will continually attend unto him with no detraction. (When I read this I wondered where the faithful Moslem women of earth were supposed to fit into the picture of such a paradise; also, men like the



IT IS unbelievable, but if all the unsaved people in the world were to line up single file at your front door, the line would reach around the world 30 times. And horror of horrors! This line would grow by twenty miles each day! If you were to drive 50 miles an hour for 10 hours a day, it would take you 4 years and 40 days to get to the end of this line of lost souls. And by then it would have grown by 30,000 miles! Look out your front door! See lost souls!—Selected □

apostle Paul who chose not to be married). And they will drink delicious liquors and wines and not become drunk (although Moslems are forbidden to drink such on earth).

Let us notice some direct quotations from the *Koran* to show that what I am saying is not misrepresentation.

The *Koran* chapter 55, "...This is hell, which the wicked deny as falsehood: they shall pass to and fro between the same and hot boiling water. Which, therefore, of the Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny? But for him who dreadeth the tribunal of his Lord are prepared two gardens: (Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny?) (*Editor's Note:* This question is found between every statement throughout this section, so we will supply three dots rather than repeat it each time) planted with shady trees. (...) In each of them shall be two fountains flowing. (...) In each of them shall there be of every fruit two kinds. (...) They shall repose on couches, the finings whereof shall be of thick silk interwoven with gold: and the fruit of the two gardens shall be near at hand together. (...) Therein shall receive them beauteous damsels, refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their spouses: whom no man shall have deflowered before them, neither any genius. (...) Having complexions like rubies and pearls. (...) Shall the reward of good works be any other good? (...) And besides these there shall be two other gardens: (...) Of a dark green. (...) In each of them shall be two fountains pouring forth plenty of water. (...) In each of them shall be fruits, and palm-trees, and pomegranates. (...) Therein shall be agreeable and beauteous damsels: (...) Having fine black eyes, and kept in pavilions from public view: (...) Whom no man shall have deflowered before their destined spouses, nor any genius. (...) Therein shall they delight themselves, lying on green cushion and beautiful carpets. (...) Blessed be the name of the Lord, possessed of glory and honor!"

The *Koran* chapter 56, "When the inevitable day of judgment shall suddenly come, no soul shall charge the prediction of its coming with falsehood: it will abase some, and exalt others. When the earth shall be shaken with a violent shock; and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad and ye shall be separated into three distinct classes: the companions on the right hand; (how happy shall the companions on the right hand be!) and the companions of the left hand: (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!) and those who have preceded others in the faith shall precede them to paradise. These are they who shall approach near unto God: they shall dwell in gardens of delight: (There shall be many of the former religions; and few of the last). Reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths which shall continue in their bloom forever, shall go around about to attend them, with goblets, and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed: and with fruits of the sorts which they shall desire. And there shall

accompany them fair damsels having large black eyes; resembling pearls hidden in their shells: as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! Peace! And the companions of the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be!) shall have their abode among lote-trees free from thorns, and trees of mauz loaded regularly with their produce from top to bottom; under an extended shade, near a flowing water, and amidst fruits in abundance, which shall not fail, nor shall be forbidden to be gathered: and they shall repose themselves on lofty beds. Verily we have created the damsels of paradise by a peculiar creation: and we have made them virgins, beloved by their husbands, of equal age with them; for the delight of the companions of the right hand. There shall be many of the former religions, and many of the latter. And the companions on the left hand (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!) shall dwell amidst burning winds, and scalding water, under the shade of a black smoke, neither cool nor agreeable...Then ye, O men, who have erred, and denied the resurrection as a falsehood, shall surely eat of the fruit of the tree of al Zakkum, and shall fill your bellies therewith: and ye shall drink thereon boiling water; and ye shall drink as a thirsty camel drinketh..."

So much for this little excursion on an intriguing, but alien, byway from my regular study pattern. It proved disturbingly interesting (and there are a lot of other things we could have related). How much better to get back on the main highway (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Matthew 24:11-13). We have no doubt about where it will take us.

I am so very thankful (and that by God's grace) to be a Christian. Aren't you? □

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OVERHEARD IN AN ORCHARD

Said the Robin to the Sparrow:

**"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."**

Said the Sparrow to the Robin:

**"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."**

—By ELIZABETH CHENEY

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RESTORING THE CHURCH

TOO MANY TIMES our efforts at restoring the church are very much like an embalmer, and the church is like a "funeral home." We dress the external body up and apply make-up so it will look alive—but it really isn't. It is dead. □

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A WORLD OF DELUSION



(Continued from Page 1)

suggesting a settled course of error (and contentment in it). One believes a lie, gets on the wrong road, and stays on it (thinking all is well).

This is what happens when men don't love the truth. They throw themselves open to that which is not true, become deluded, and live in a phony world of delusion. In view of the then coming apostasy, Paul wrote, "...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:11,12). In Romans chapter 1 Paul tells of the Gentile world that once knew God, but were unthankful and "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." We read that they "changed the truth of God into a lie," and that "God gave them up." Verse 28 nails it down well: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (proper)." And what a motley list of things follow, all done by man in his state of delusion. Well did Jeremiah write (even many centuries before), "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). And furthermore: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

I. THE SINNER IS IN A WORLD OF DELUSION.

A World of Delusion

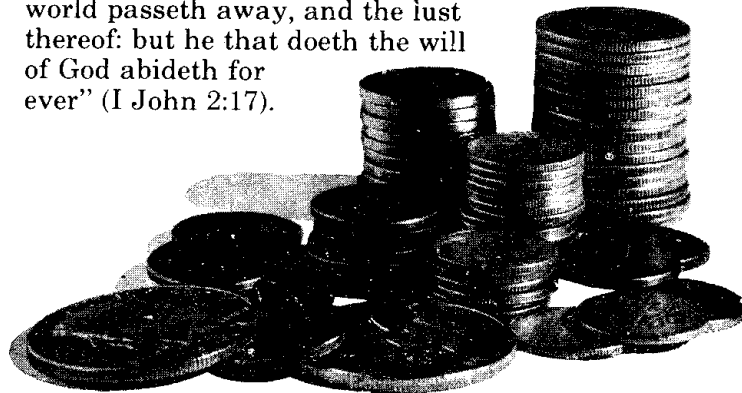
The sinner out in the world is in a world of delusion. He is deluded about life, sin, and death; about life's true values and life's brevity. It is a world of sin and death (make no mistake about it). One must be deluded to continue in it. The sinner is deluded about the essence of true pleasure. He is like Alice in wonderland. Only it is a wonderland of deception, delusion, and death; a world that will soon pass away with the "lust thereof." It is not a matter of "if I die," but of when.

Paul wrote, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). Yes, people do many foolish things being in a state of deception and delusion. Paul admonished the Ephesians, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation (manner of living, lifestyle) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22). Sin is deceitful for it promises pleasure, but in the long run it delivers heartache and death. Moses forsook Egypt, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). And that is the picture of sin; its pleasures are

shortlived.

Delusion About Material Things

The material world is a world of delusion. Jesus in the parable of the sower said, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). It seems that in many cases the more that people have the less they think of God. Material possessions can bring a false sense of security, and they can throw you open to a whole world of temptation you never had before. To those who aspire to be rich Paul said, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all (kinds of) evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:9,10). And to those who already possessed wealth, Timothy was to "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Timothy 6:17). The rich farmer that Jesus told about certainly was deluded about material things (Luke 12:15-21). His abundance gave him a false sense of security. He would tear down his barns and build greater ones. Within himself he said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Yes, "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).



Delusion About Sin and Its Consequence

Today many are in a state of delusion about sin and its consequence. They have swallowed the devil's line hook, line, and sinker. Time and again Paul warns, and says, "Be not deceived." Specifically listen to him in I Corinthians 6:9,10, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? *Be not deceived*: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." He started his statement by saying the unrighteous would not inherit the kingdom of God,

he warns about deception in reference to these sins, he lists the sin (sinners), and then concludes again by saying they would not inherit the kingdom of God. There is no question mark about it. Be not deceived.

The world today makes light of sin, but rest assured, God's way is the right way. It is the way of happiness. God's way in reference to sex involves heterosexual marriage for the lifetime of the partners. Those that Paul classified as "fornicators," "adulterers," "effeminate," and "abusers of themselves with mankind" are pitifully and shamefully deluded. God made us male and female and knows what is proper and best. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). The devil and modern television (and movies) would have you believe that marriage is not exciting and that the love affair is the ultimate experience. The homosexual is of all sinners the most deluded. And these other sins listed in I Corinthians 6 mark paths of delusion. What if everyone was a thief? What if everyone was an extortioner? What kind of society would our society be?

Again, because of the dreadful delusion in our society today, we call your attention now to Ephesians 5:3-6, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as cometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient (comely, proper): but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. *Let no man deceive you with vain words:* for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

Delusion in Strong Drink

Now notice Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is *deceived* thereby is not wise." People are deceived, and act very foolishly, to even take their first drink of any alcoholic beverage. Today perhaps peer influence, a belief that this is the way to have fun, and deluded feelings of attaining manliness and dignity are initially involved. Then to continue a lifestyle of drinking one must wholly enter into a world of delusion (for no good can come from it). Recently we ran across this interesting bit of information: "In churches where drinking is approached very conservatively (as a sin), half as many people drink as in those that hold a more liberal view (a matter of personal choice). Yet in conservative churches, of those who choose to drink anyway, twice as many develop alcohol-related problems. That means that the number of problem drinkers is the same in both kinds of churches." Reading this, we wondered why this would be true. Then we personally came to this conclusion: The person who pushed aside what he had been taught and drank anyway would drink more to drown out his feelings of guilt. He initially had no delusions about alcohol. His proding conscience would have to be put to rest. He would drink more to accomplish this, and his becoming an alcoholic would be accelerated.

Delusion in Drugs

The drug world is a world of delusion. It is a phony

world from start to finish. The drug users and abusers cop-out for the artificial light and high emotions brought on by mind-altering drugs—*all false*. How unhealthy to face life not experiencing the bad in a manly sort of way (and depriving oneself of normal, healthy, and good emotions). The drug world is a world of lies because the everyday world is still there (and it is so easy for the drug-user to lie). Users do not face reality. They live in a make-believe world. It is hard for them to grow up and face the world in a normal, healthy, realistic way. How pitiful (and there are so many in this category today).



Delusion in Rock Music

Then put drugs, humanism and the philosophy of rock and roll music being espoused together, and it really puts our young people in a world of delusion. So many rock and roll singers are the pied pipers of Hell, and young people are dupped into listening and following their ungodly lifestyle. In reference to our children, Spencer Dryden of the Jefferson Starship rock group was reported to have said, "Get them when they're young and bend their minds." David Crosby of another group is said to have said, "I figured that the only thing to do was steal their kids. I still think it's the only thing to do. By saying that, I'm not talking about kidnapping. I'm just talking about changing young peoples' value systems which removes them from their parents' world very effectively." And how effectively these things have been accomplished is evident in our society. Those who are speaking out against rock music are a little late.

The writer of Proverbs wrote a long time ago, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). How startling that these ways have proliferated in great numbers today. How sad that so many are deceived. They have believed the devil's lie and entered into a state of delusion. The sinner is in a world of delusion. It is as the apostle Paul said, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded them minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:3,4).

II. FALSE TEACHING IS A WORLD OF DELUSION.

False Teaching Is Delusion

Contrary to what the modern mind has been led to believe in our humanistic (and pluralistic) society,
(Continued on Next Page)

A WORLD OF DELUSION

(Continued from Last Page)

there is such a thing as false religious teaching (and what a world of delusion it is!). We have already called your attention to II Thessalonians 2:10-12. Here it is said that because people would not love religious truth "for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Then listen to I Timothy 4:1,2, "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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." What delusion is seen here! They are pictured as having yielded to "seducing spirits." They speak lies on religious matters. This doesn't bother them because their consciences have been "seared with a hot iron" (complete delusion). Next II Timothy 4:13-4:4 is an interesting section of Scripture. The apostle Paul would soon be removed from the churches as a martyr. Timothy is to be ready for the problems ahead. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (The trouble with deceivers is that they themselves are deceived, deluded; that makes them even the more dangerous). "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 turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." It is the same old story. Truth is no longer loved and appreciated. Such people are "sitting ducks" for the devil, and throw themselves open to error. They "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." More than once Jesus warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

Delusion of Subjectivism in Religion

People are pitifully deceived and deluded about religion today. All seems to be made a matter of subjectivism. It is just a matter of what one thinks, each becoming a law unto himself. We are told that it doesn't make any difference what you believe just so you are sincere. If you point to the Bible for authority, the rejoinder is, "That's just a matter of interpretation." Sometime ago a Methodist minister's wife told this writer (in trying to puncture my appeal to the Bible), "Paul was a good theologian, but I don't agree with him on everything" (the idea of final authority and inspiration are removed!). We are told: "Go to the church of your choice; one church is just as good as another" (and this may be true if they are unbelieving man-made churches following man-made doctrine, but what about the Lord's church?). We are told that all religions lead to God be it that of Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, or Jesus Christ. We are afraid that people who say this don't know what it means to be lead to God, nor have they read the books of other religions (or the Bible to any great extent). How inferior to the Bible are the pagan books of philosophy and religion! Why did Jesus die that awful death on the cross if we can be saved in just any old way? (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Jesus said that if we did not

believe that he was the Christ we would die in our sins (John 8:24). Other religions do not address the sin problem. What delusion! How awful the prospects of dying in our sins without a Saviour!

Delusion in Reference to Salvation

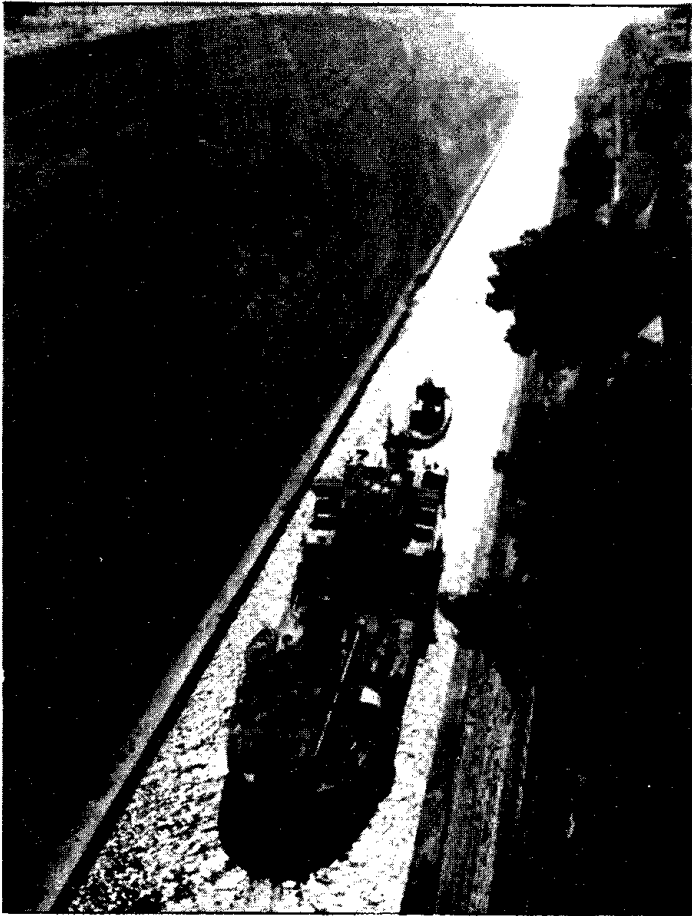
Many are living in a state of delusion in reference to their salvation from sin. That is true of many who classify themselves as fundamentalists. Just because they have had some religious "experience," they base their eternal destiny on this. Just because they feel all right they think they are all right. As alien sinners they were told to "pray through" to salvation. Having been strongly convicted of their sins and their need of a Saviour, when they prayed their burdens "went rolling away." They believe what they have been dogmatically told. They feel great, and they thereby declare to all that they have been "saved." But is that the case? The experience of one man in the book of Acts will answer that. He prayed three days and nights and still had his sins (Acts 9:1-18; 22:5-16). Many say that Saul of Tarsus (who became the apostle Paul) was saved on the Road to Damascus (but is that the case?). The Lord appeared unto him in a great light. He was stricken down in blindness, lead into the city, and there prayed for three days and nights. If any sinner could have been saved by prayer, it looks like Saul would have made it. He actually saw Christ and did all that praying. But he still had his sins when Ananias came to him at the end of the three days and nights, and said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Yes, one must believe and repent, but it must be consummated in baptism (immersion) before his sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:11,12; Romans 6; I Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27; Mark 16:16; John 3:5). Certainly when we repent, it brings a sense of sweet relief. But, if we believe that we are saved without being baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins we are badly deluded. Fact, faith, and feeling must be in that order to be authentic. Feelings aside from fact are delusion. Jacob believed that his son Joseph had been killed by a wild beast, but he was alive and well in the land of Egypt. His feelings were just as real to him as if he had been dead. Feelings alone prove nothing. Our salvation must be based upon fact. (Note: the particular reason Christ appeared to Saul was to qualify him to be an apostle—Acts 22:14,15; 26:16; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:5-8).

Delusion of the "Charismatic" Movement

What a world of delusion is seen today in the (pseudo) charismatic religious movement (really the old Pentecostalism)! It is claimed that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (as experienced by the early church) are for us today. In this day of unbelief many yearn for some religious experience to shore up their faith (beyond the Word) and take that "leap into the dark." What is called "speaking in tongues" is singled out as a mark of arrival in the world of experimental religion. The "speaking in tongues" usually comes initially with the excited utterance of some incoherent (and unintelligible) sounds at the peak of some

emotional high. But is this what the Bible means by “speaking in tongues”? Are the supernatural spiritual gifts for us today?

The answer is **NO**. The “speaking in tongues” in the early church was not unintelligible sounds of babblings and gibberish. It was the supernaturally God-given ability to speak in another human language which theretofore was unlearned by the speaker. Notice Acts chapter 2. “And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all



The canal near Corinth, Greece

THE CITY of Corinth was located below a narrow isthmus which joined central Greece with the southern island-like peninsula. Corinth had two primary seaports, Lechaëum (on the west side of the peninsula), and Cenchraea on the east (mentioned twice in the New Testament—Acts 18:18; Romans 16:1). Unlike today, in ancient times there was no canal cutting through the few miles between them. In order to avoid the dangerous 200-mile voyage around the cape at the southern extremity of the peninsula, larger ships were unloaded; then their cargo was hauled the few miles across and reloaded on other ships. Smaller ships were dragged out of the sea and pulled intact across the “great slippery way” to the other side to again be put into the water. As early as the 6th century B.C. (we are told) the digging of a canal was considered. In the year 66 A.D. Nero actually attempted such an undertaking, but it was left to more modern technology to accomplish the feat. Begun in 1882 as a French project, it was completed by the Greeks in 1893. Because of modern navigation it is not as important as it was in times past. —J. E. G.

these (the apostles) which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:7,8). The apostles were the initial recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (beyond the common indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38; Galatians 4:6; John 3:5; Romans 8:9), and were able to do “many signs and wonders” (Acts 2:43; 5:12). Yes, “with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). They were able to do many miraculous things. The apostles (the especially selected eyewitnesses of Christ) also were able to lay their hands on select people and transfer a limited measure of this power (Hebrews 2:3,4; Acts 19:6; etc.), God alone determining which individual gift (or gifts) the individual Christian would receive. Not everyone had the gift of speaking in other languages (I Corinthians 12:4-11). The time would come when these miraculous gifts would “cease” (I Corinthians 13:8-13), being no longer needed (the truth being confirmed in the complete communication of the New Testament, and the apostles being no longer around to give the gifts by the laying on of their hands). We have God’s completed revelation in the Scriptures today, and the gifts are no longer needed. If we claim to have the gift of “speaking in tongues” today, we must also believe the other gifts are likewise available. Among the other gifts was “prophecy” (I Corinthians 12:10). Prophecy primarily involved communicating God’s message to man by Divine inspiration and revelation (I Corinthians 13:9,10; Ephesians 3:3-5). Men who wrote Scripture had the gift of prophecy. If we claim to have these spiritual gifts today, it means that we not only can speak in tongues, but we have men who can write Scripture. It means the Bible is not a completed revelation, that men can add to the Scriptures, add to the Bible (and we are obligated to accept their writings).

Are we ready for such a conclusion (and delusion)? New sects and cults do claim that their leaders have the gift of prophecy (are prophets). Look what divergency of doctrine! Look at the contradiction and confusion! What a mess we have on our hands! Beloved, if you are in this trap, you better snap out of your delusion before it is too late. The faith has once and for all been delivered unto us (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18,19). The apostle Paul declared, “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 1:8).

Delusion of Denominationalism

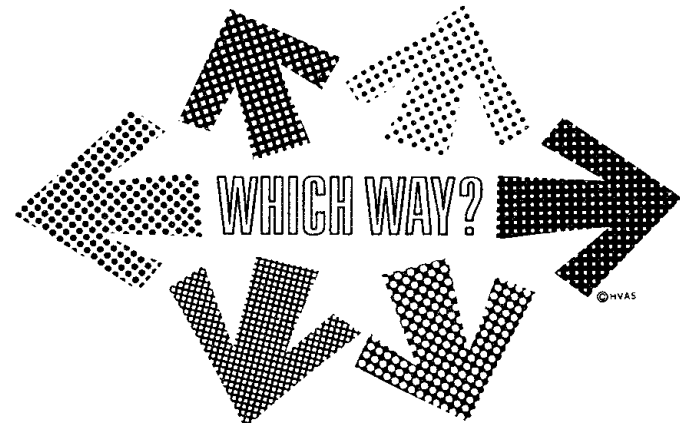
Another great delusion of our day has to do with denominationalism. We are told that it matters not about ones church affiliation, that one is just as good as another, and that division is a good thing (it makes everyone do a better job). In our liberal and pluralistic society it is unthinkable that anyone could be in the wrong. However, we have already pointed out (and that by God’s Word) that truth in religion really does matter. The truth is that Jesus said, “I will build *my* church” (Matthew 16:18). That church is called one body, not many denominations. “There is one body,

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A WORLD OF DELUSION

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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). "God is not the author of



confusion..." (I Corinthians 14:33). "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13; Cf. 15:1-14). Jesus had prayed in John 17, "Neither pray I for these (the apostles) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (John 17:20,21). Division is condemned as sinful and contrary to God's will (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-5). How dare we be a part of that which the Lord condemns (and even be proud of it)! How we need to divest ourselves of denominationalism, return to the Scriptures in every sense of the word, and be the undenominational church of Christ. All else is delusion.

IT IS NEEDLESS TO SAY MORE. Whether you look at it from the viewpoint of sin, or even from the perspective of that which is supposed to be religion (in many cases), we are living in a deluded world (and a world of delusion). It is hoped that we are not personally a part of it, but we know that is just so much wishing. (All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and it just doesn't stop here). Delusion is preceded by deception, and deception is preceded by that which is not true in one way or another. But truth is from God. The lie is of the devil (and there are no half-truths between). As human beings we have been created in the image of God with exalted possibilities. We have the capacity to believe and know the truth (and to transcend the false). The problem is that many are not doing this. The world is in a mess. The devil has made his assault upon that which distinguishes man from the lower creation, his mind. Modern man finds himself so busy with his work and just plain trivia that he has little time for anything else. His ability to respond mentally is largely nullified by the narcotics of television (which in itself is mind-altering with all of its garbage and humanistic delusion). It is hard for him to sort out life's true values. It is so easy to stay locked in to delusion.

We challenge you to assert yourself above the thoughtless and aimless crowds who are on the broad way. Decidedly say "NO" to the devil and "YES" to

God. Reach out to God in more than just a superficial way. Remember, God is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Know what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Know what it is to search out the Bible on your own. May your convictions be your own (not just second hand). We are told that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). Jesus himself said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31b,32). What a great adventure awaits! What a great reward is in store for you! And finally eternal life!

O for good and honest hearts (Luke 8:15)! □

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"BROADMINDEDNESS?"

THERE IS NO ROOM for broadmindedness in the chemical laboratory. Water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. The slightest deviation from that formula is forbidden.

There is no room for broadmindedness in music. The skilled director will not permit his first violin to play even so much as one-half note off the written note, chord, and key.

There is no room for broadmindedness in the mathematics classroom. Neither geometry, calculus, nor trigonometry allows any variation from exact accuracy even for old time's sake. The solution of the problem is either right or it is wrong (no tolerance there).

There is no room for broadmindedness in biology.

One varying result of a thousand experiments will invalidate an entire theory.

There is no room for broadmindedness on the athletic field. The game is to be played according to the rules with no favors shown for "charity's sake."

There is no room for broadmindedness in the garage. The mechanic there says the piston rings must fit the cylinder walls within one-thousandth part of an inch. Even between friends there cannot be any variation if "the motor is to run smoothly."

HOW THEN shall we expect that broadmindedness shall rule in the realm of Christianity and morals?

—*The Builder*

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THE LONE EMBER

ONE COLD WINTER'S day a caller went out on behalf of Christ and the church to the home of a man who had not been faithful in his church attendance. As the two men talked they sat in front of the glowing embers of the fireplace.

The man who had been negligent regarding his faith said, "Well, I don't see what difference it makes whether I go to church or not. After all I can still be a Christian without going to church, can't I?"

The caller said not a word but took the poker from beside the fireplace and pushed one of the glowing embers out away from the other coals. That ember, being separated from the heat of the other coals, soon lost its glow and went out.

As the two sat there watching the lesson the host said thoughtfully, "Mmmm. Yes, I see what you mean. I'll be in the assembly next Sunday."

—*from The No Greater Love*

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JUSTIFIABLE OUTRAGE

THE CENTER of Disease Control downplays the AIDS plague, reporting some 14,000 cases when there have been several times that many cases in America. *TIME* magazine said that over the next 12 months *one million* Americans may die from this hideous disease.

Instead of taking strong measures to curtail the spread of the disease, some officials and even religious leaders are trying to give it a helping hand by supporting so-called "gay rights."

On November 11 NBC, with the promotion of the U.S. Public Health Service, featured the movie, "An Early Frost", in which the attempt was made to arouse sympathy for the homosexual carrier of AIDS. The obvious purpose of the film is to remove any responsibility from the Gay community for this epidemic. One of the doctors in the movie says, "It's not a gay disease and it never was. A virus doesn't know or care what your sexual preference is. . ."

Obviously innocent people may contract the disease, especially if the person is deficient in minerals and other nutrients and is unsanitary. But it is equally obvious that the epidemic has been started and is chiefly spread by the homosexual community.

It is a sad commentary upon our nation that so little concern was given to the epidemic of sexual perversion

until it resulted in an epidemic that threatens our physical lives.

GOD'S WORD. The most severe condemnation of God was aimed, not at murder, theft and crimes against property, for which our courts levy the heaviest penalties, but against the sin of homosexual relations. "And if a man lie with mankind as with woman-kind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13). This is clear enough. To Moses God declared, "There shall be no sodomites of the sons of Israel" (Deuteronomy 23:17). Concerning the men of Sodom, Genesis says that they "were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Genesis 13:13).

Under the New Covenant, capital punishment is left to the state, but homosexuality is no less sinful. Notice Romans 1:26,27: "God has given them up to shameful passions. Their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and their men in turn, given up natural relations with women, burn with lust for one another; males behave indecently with males, and are paid in their own persons the fitting wage of such perversion."

While the media, including famous newspaper columnists, defend homosexuality, the Bible says, "Don't you know that the wicked shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?...Neither the sexually immoral...nor homosexual offenders...will inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9,10 NIV).

Contrary to the very basic purpose for man—to be conformed to the image of God—the homosexual person despises the order of creation and rejects God as his judge. Homosexuality is the basest, the most corrupt and filthiest of all contra-culture practices. Even in primitive people it has always been considered sub-human.

ALL HAVE SINNED. It is true that we all have sinned, and I among the chief of sinners. But it is one thing to sin, to acknowledge it is shame and repent of it, while it is quite another to sin, then shamelessly boast of it, and seek to legitimize it by disguising it as "an alternative lifestyle" and, even worse, to try to normalize it by persuading all the rest of society to engage in it.

How successful the sodomites have been in whitewashing their deadly practice can be seen in a study done by professors Stanley Rothman and Robert Lichter under the auspices of the Research Institute on International Changes at Columbia University. In interviewing representatives of the 10 top prestige media outlets—Newspaper and Television—they found that 85% of media staff favored homosexuals teaching in public schools. *TIME* magazine called Rock Hudson "courageous" when, in fact, he cowardly shared his disease in gay baths and bars and everywhere he could in the past two years.

A gay spokesman was heard on public radio recently saying that, "in 1981 we drew back and became more sexually conservative because of fear of the AIDS epidemic. Now we have decided that certain death is preferable to dull sex lives."

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JUSTIFIABLE OUTRAGE

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The Lord has said, "All they that hate me love death." This hatred of God is personified in the sodomist. He hates the fact that God created man and woman to function in prescribed ways for the procreation of the race. He hates the plain commands of God and prefers death to life as God intended. He loves death for himself and wants to share it with all the rest!

SELF DEFENSE. The continued perversion of sexuality with its attendant deadly disease of AIDS is destined to doom our generation unless there is a national uprising of moral outrage against it.

Then why don't our legislators, lawyers, judges, doctors and religious leaders rise up against this common enemy? I can think of three reasons. (1) They do not want to oppose the popular religion of humanism by coming out on the side of God and His moral laws; (2) To take a stand now would be to admit responsibility for ever having allowed such conditions to thrive; (3) They are afraid of the political clout of pro-sodomites in high places, such as those in Washington, D.C. (estimated to number 250,000), those in feminist movements and the power of lobbies such as the National Education Association which has defended homosexuals teaching in public schools.

Only the most irresponsible refuse to accept the Biblical evaluation of homosexuality and the peril in which they have placed our society. If we do not take a stand and resist this evil in our midst, then we would be hypocrites to claim to stand for morality.

HOPE FOR THE HOMO. The terrible plague of AIDS (first called GRID, Gay Related Immune Deficiency) is only the harvest of the evil that grows when man relaxes his firm resistance to it. By nature man is sinful and when sin is allowed to run its course it produces all manner of horrors, misery and finally death.

We do the homosexual **NO FAVOR** when we waiver in our judgment against the practice, and thus encourage that which the Bible says is "worthy of death." Rather, we must show him that there is a way out.

While the disease of AIDS is not reversible, so far as is now known, the sin of homosexuality is! It is not an "unforgivable sin" but an unnatural affection and can be changed. Doctors have affirmed that "there is no genetic or hormonal cause for homosexuality." It is a "socially learned process," and while it is difficult to change the pattern, thousands have done so.

Paul names homosexuality as a sin of which some Corinthians were guilty (I Corinthians 6:9), then he writes, "but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." (v.11).

God hates the practice of homosexuality, and will punish those who practice it or tolerate it, as He did Sodom. But God loves those who repent of sin and turn to Him in faith.

The only hope for the homosexual or any one else practicing sin is to repent, cease from sin and seek forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

The only hope for America is for all of us to stop con-

doning sexual perversion and get into the warfare against secular humanism and for the truth of God. □

—C. Dickinson (Selected)

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Blaming Those Who Should Be Praised

THERE IS a thing going around among some young people which is not only inhuman and grossly unkind, but it is just not true. A person decides to quit the church and launch out into the world of sin and shame. When approached by some interested person, he says, "I have had religion rammed down my throat all my life." Thus his parents, whose hearts are already breaking for him, are made to take the blame for what he is. How inhuman and cruel can one be?

I had food "rammed down my throat" all my life, and I still love to eat. I was made to comb my hair and take a bath all my life, and I still bathe and comb my hair. My mother tried to teach me right from wrong; it has never crossed my mind to blame my mother for the wrong things I have done.

My wife and I never "rammed religion down our children's throats" unless that is what you call trying to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We do admit that the first place we took our babies was to church. We gladly admit that we tried to teach them right. If that is "ramming religion down our children's throats," we plead guilty.

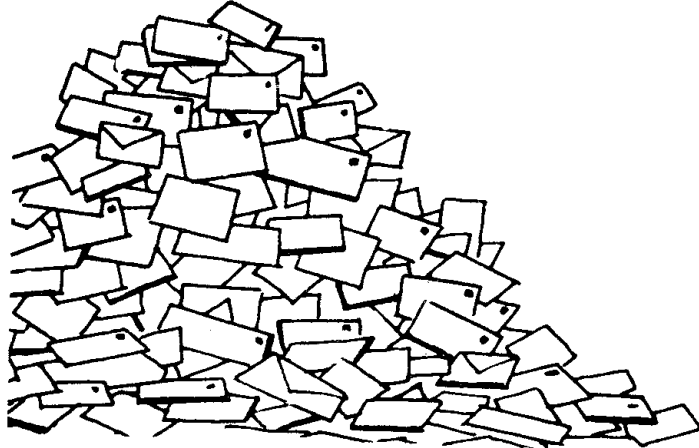
Young people, if you must be ungodly, don't blame godly parents. Be a man, face your own mistakes. You will give account.—Donald Hunt □

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READERS'

... Response



FLORIDA:

—“Please remove my name from your mailing list.”
—“*THE SWORD AND STAFF* is the best magazine I have ever read. It strengthens my faith. I was afraid you had stopped printing it...”

NORTH CAROLINA:

—“Please remove our name from your mailing list.”

VIRGINIA:

—“May the Lord be with you and continue to bless the work you are doing (and you). As the years roll on, we need all the light and comfort that messages like those in your magazine bring us...”
—“I have been blessed by *THE SWORD AND STAFF* ever since it was first published... Please keep *THE SWORD AND STAFF* coming. I hope I shall not wait so long to send a donation in the future...P.S. I think the quotation on the front of the last edition was really great. It would make a beautiful plaque. If you could have some made up, I'm sure they would sell well.”

(Editor's Note: We plan to print them and make them available for “free” when we get the time.)

KENTUCKY:

—“Please discontinue sending *THE SWORD AND STAFF*.”
—“Enclosed is check...which is long overdue. Thanks for sending the inspiring *SWORD AND STAFF*. Keep up the good work. May God bless you. I am blessed by every article.”

OHIO:

—“I continue to enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thank you for publishing the truth like you have in the past.”
—“Just a note to let you know how much we appreciate your work. It is very refreshing to read something that is not watered down or apologized for. Please find enclosed a check to help you in your work and to, I hope, bring my subscription close to being paid up...”

INDIANA:

FREEMASONRY?
By S.P. Finnell

THE RELATIONSHIP that “Freemasonry” and “Christianity” share dictates an accountability of the accepted union. It would seem that two organizations with such divergent objectives and adversative doctrines would create a conflicting confederacy. The real question is can “Freemasonry”

and “Christianity” harmoniously co-exist and “remain pleasing to God”?

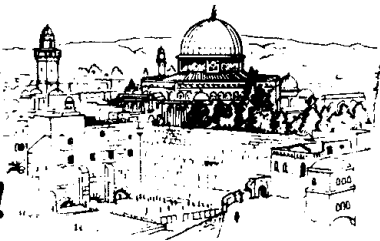
Considering the affinity of some Christians for Masonry, perhaps the most disconcerting Masonic doctrine is that of the “mystic tie.” Eminent Masonic scholar, Dr. Albert G. Mackey, explains the “mystic tie”: “That sacred and inviolable bond which unites men of the most discordant opinions into one band of brothers, which gives but one language to men of all nations and one altar to men of all religions, is properly, from the mysterious influence it exerts, denominated the mystic tie; and Freemasons, because they alone are under its influence, or enjoy its benefits, are called Brethren of the mystic tie.” (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* by Albert G. Mackey, M.D., “mystic tie” pp. 588, McClure Publishing Co., Philadelphia). In light of Dr. Mackey’s explanation, I thought it prudent to present a Christian perspective on the subject. The following selection is from the renowned theologian, Alexander Campbell. Mr. Campbell’s thoughts are quoted from the *Millennial Harbinger*.

“Time was when it might have appeared highly expedient to Jews, Mahometans, Sceptics, and various Religionists, to form new leagues, offensive and defensive, for their own safety and aggrandizement: or to enter into pre-existent, secret, symbolic, and benevolent associations, for the promotion of their individual interest, honor or happiness; but why Christians in the 19th century should, after they had tasted the sweet influences and blessings of the kingdom of heaven, seek admission, through all the pledges, oaths, and obligations of secrecy, into the societies of “Free Masons” and “Odd Fellows,” is rather a difficult and perplexing problem. Unable to comprehend the reason or the motives predisposing to such an initiation to clubs and associations of men of the world—men of all religions and of no religion, I feel strongly inclined to request some of the professors of our faith to disclose to us, not the secrets which they are sworn to keep, but the reasons and experiences which induced them to seek admission into the fraternal equalities of such a motley

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READERS' RESPONSE...
(Continued from Last Page)

brotherhood. It would be important to the cause of reformation to be fully inducted into those reasons, inasmuch as they are so occult and ambiguous as not to preclude a sort of mis-giving in the minds of many conscientious persons, that there is a species of apostacy from the church lurking in the motives which impel to such an association with men so heterogenous, and so repulsive under every other view of them, than the single attitude of the "mystic tie" (*Millennial Harbinger* by Alexander Campbell, Vol. 1842, pp. 557).

The contemporary Mason may deny the existence of the "mystic tie," and many Christian-Masons may, in all honesty, be unaware of it. The question is not the denial or ignorance of the mystic tie, but what action is to be taken after one is enlightened. Can a Christian continue in a relationship with an organization that would relegate Jesus Christ to a position of equality with Krishna, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Hiram, Horus, or a redeemer under any other name? If we accept the Bible as God's Word revealed to man, then we must believe the words of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Will involvement in the Lodge ultimately bring glory to Christ? Will Masonic membership enhance, or deter, evangelistic efforts in your area? Will you, as a Freemason, serve as a catalyst in the spiritual growth of your Christian brothers, or present a "stumbling block"?

—*"I received THE SWORD AND STAFF as a gift, and read it through when it arrives. I use much of the resource material in teaching and witnessing. I appreciate so much a publication that holds to the truth of the Word without compromise. It seems there are very few, even in a brotherhood that claims to be fundamental and of the restoration movement..."*

—*"We sure do enjoy reading THE SWORD AND STAFF. We would like to send a check on behalf of it. It is so hard to find good material to read. Praise God for your work and we thank you for your time that you spend on the 'SWORD'..."*

MICHIGAN:


—*"We appreciate your labors! I'm confident your printed articles can deliver much stronger sermons to more people than they will ever hear from their entrenched clergy who carefully select sermon topics that will not jeopardize their own 'social security'...I especially liked the article about Free Masonry a few months ago. I can relate to that. When I was converted to Christ (1960) I was the immediate past master of the local Masonic Lodge. I heartily agree with the conclusion. I could only add 'I count it all but loss for the EXCELLENCY of the knowledge of Christ.' It's just another interdenominational denomination, offering hope and salvation apart from the gospel of Christ."*

"Thanks again for keeping THE SWORD AND STAFF coming."

MASSACHUSETTS:

—*"Your article in Vol. 20 No. 3 page 9 on Deacons was very simple and convicting. As one converted out of denominationalism I had never give thought to the use of the term 'MINISTER.' I plan to re-read your article, study further and in all probability from now on the term 'minister' shall be removed from all church stationery, etc. and replaced with a more Biblical choice of words such as 'Evangelist.' Thank you, and I've been enjoying looking through the back issues you sent. Whenever you get Vol. 21-22-23 bound please send me a set."*

DIAKONOS - Deacon

"deacon" (TECHNICAL USE)	"servant" (NON-TECHNICAL USE)	"minister"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OFFICE in the church (I Timothy 3:8, 12; Philippians 1:1). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• King's SERVANTS (deacons) in parable (Matthew 22:13).• Household SERVANTS (deacons) at wedding feast (John 2:5, 9).• Any man SERVANT (deacon) of Christ (John 12:26).• Greatest to be SERVANT (deacon) of all (Matthew 23:11).• Phoebe SERVANT (feminine of deacon) (Romans 16:1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Great" among disciples to be MINISTER (deacon) (Matthew 20:26).• Officers of government called MINISTERS (deacons) (Romans 13:4).• Jesus himself called MINISTER (deacon) (Romans 15:8; Galatians 2:17).• Apostle called MINISTER (deacon) (Ephesians 3:7).• Preachers called MINISTERS (deacons) (I Corinthians 3:5; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 1:7, 4:7; I Thessalonians 3:2; I Timothy 4:6).• False teachers called Satan's MINISTERS (deacons) (II Corinthians 11:15).
<p>● By James E. Gibbons</p>		
<p>THE WORD <i>diakonos</i> is rendered "deacon" in the King James Version of the Bible, having reference to an office in the church. What a lot of people don't know is that the same word is also translated "servant" and "minister." It is apparent that the translators used the word "deacon" to represent the Greek <i>diakonos</i> when the word was used in a technical sense, referring to an office in the church. In the other references when <i>diakonos</i> is used in a general sense, they simply represent it with "servant" or "minister." This little chart or diagram will illustrate this (a sampling).</p> <p>Today in the religious world the term "MINISTER" is used in a special or technical sense. It is used as the name for an office (position) in the church. In particular, the person who is usually thought of as preacher is called "THE MINISTER" of the church. This practice is almost universal and is even common among those who claim to speak where the Bible speaks and who claim to call Bible things by Bible names. Recently we saw certificates advertised which were to be given when men were ordained to the office of "MINISTER" (that's what they called it).</p> <p>In the light of what we know about the Bible (notice chart), this is confusing, and it brings several questions to mind. Using the term in a technical or official sense is inappropriate, unless it has reference to the "deacon" in the local church. To compound the confusion many churches who have "MINISTERS" also have deacons. Then if we profess to be using the term "minister" in a general sense when we speak of a preacher as "THE MINISTER" of the church, it is still inappropriate. The New Testament teaches the priesthood of believers, and every Christian is a minister in the general, non-technical sense. No one is "THE MINISTER."</p> <p>Therefore, we conclude that the modern office of "THE MINISTER" is an unscriptural position not taught in the Word of God. In view of what we read in God's Word, the modern MINISTER is an EVANGELIST-ELDER-MEMBER hybrid (and some more). Too many times he is doing the job of a defunct eldership and an inactive membership (and he and they love to have it so). He is "paid" to do the job God intended others to do. If he is a preacher, he is supposed to be a New Testament evangelist—and that's another story.</p> <p>These thoughts may be totally new to some of our readers, but they are the truth. Think on them.</p>		

IOWA:

—*"I'm sending some money to help with the publication of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I'm sorry I haven't sent some before but just neglected doing it. I really appreciate you keeping me on your mailing list. We get so much good reading THE SWORD AND STAFF..."*

MISSOURI:

—*"We have been getting THE SWORD AND STAFF for many years. Somebody sent our name in for which we are thankful. We appreciate THE SWORD AND STAFF very much. It truly gives us spiritual strength. It helps to make us stronger in the faith. May God bless you. Keep up the good work..."*

CALIFORNIA:

—*"I pray you will continue getting this very, very wonderful magazine out, as I don't know of any other magazine that brings so much wonderful teachings of God's will in our lives. Praise His Holy Name. Would you be so kind as to introduce THE SWORD AND STAFF to..."*

OREGON:

Editor's Note: A letter (which we do not have in hand at this writing) was received sometime ago from the state of Oregon wherein the correspondent was critical of the use of certain words in an article in *The Sword and Staff*. It was said that one of the articles was "too churchy," and criticism was made for using the word baptism. We can see the writer's point, but I think the problem was mostly in his mind (not ours, as in all of our years of living we have had no problem in understanding what the word church and baptism mean). It was pointed out that the word for church in the Greek New Testament was *ekklesia*, having reference to the called

out ones or the assembly. At the time of its entrance into English usage, "church" did not have that full meaning (the thought being more toward the building). Also, the word baptize is a transliteration (a carry over of the Greek word with an English ending) of the Greek *baptizo* and really is not an English representation of the original word.

These statements are true, but these words have been part of the English language for many centuries. They are definitely part of our vocabulary. The student reading the older English translations of the Scriptures has no problem understanding their meaning. The creeds and traditions of men in addition to the Scriptures cause the problem. Nowhere in the New Testament does the context indicate that church means a building. Nowhere in the New Testament does baptize intimate anything other than immersion. In all the days of life, this writer has had no problem understanding this. When teaching, we simply (besides the context) fill in these words with the Greek definitions behind them in the original. All is well. There is (or has been) no misunderstanding.

We definitely are committed to weeding out of our religious terminology all words that mislead. We should call Bible things by Bible names (terms) inasmuch as possible (and needful) □

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BAHA'ISM, AN ANTIBIBLICAL CULT

ONE OF the rapidly growing religious cults in America today is the Baha'i movement. Born in Iran in 1844, this cult has been established in more than 60,000 places around the world. The founder of the movement was Mirza 'Muhammad, who claimed to be the forerunner of the great World Teacher. This Teacher, it is alleged, would be a divine prophet who would usher in the latest revelation from the Divine Source; he would unite mankind into a syncretic conglomeration and inaugurate an era of peace.

In 1863, Mirza Husayn, 'Ali announced that *he was that Great Teacher*; he adopted the name Baha'u'llah (The Glory of God), from whence the term Baha'i is derived. After Baha'u'llah's death in 1892, the organization was led by his eldest son for the next twenty-nine years. He, in turn, was succeeded by a grandson who led the movement until 1957. Since then, the Baha'is have been governed by a group called "Hands of the Cause," with world headquarters being in Haifa, Israel.

The Baha'i cult is antibiblical from numerous viewpoints. Please consider the following:

1. Baha'ism denies the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Jesus was the Father's "only begotten" Son. The Greek term is *monogenes*, a word used with reference to Christ to indicate that "He was the sole representative of the Being and character of the One who sent Him" (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, III, p. 140). Baha'u'llah, however, claimed that Christ was *but one manifestation of God*! He contended that he himself was "a later manifestation."

2. Christ declared: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). The Lord shed His blood for the church (Acts 20:28)—the one church (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22,23)—and salvation is to be found only in it (Ephesians 5:23).

Yet devotees of Baha'ism seek to unify all religions upon the basis of doctrinal compromise and at the expense of the plain teaching of Christ. Baha'is reverence the teaching of Christ, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah, and other great "prophets," it is claimed! The movement thus totally rejects the mission of Jesus Christ and the New Testament revelation of the same. It is antichrist!

3. The Son of God taught that responsible people must know the truth if they are to be set free from sin (John 8:32). That truth was embodied in the words that came from God to Christ, and which the Lord Himself imparted to disciples (John 17:8,17; Luke 10:16). The New Testament, sealed by the Savior's blood (Matthew 26:28), is the record of that holy truth; it is inspired of God, therefore, infallible and authoritative (cf. II Timothy 3:16,17), and it is final (Jude 3). In glaring contrast, Baha'ism, with a sickening subjectivism, asserts that "truth is continuous and relative, not final and absolute." This system is one of confusion and contradiction, and cannot be from God (I Corinthians 14:33).

4. Baha'ism repudiates the New Testament doctrine of a visible, audible return of Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9) to judge the world (Matthew 25:31ff), and thus bring an end to this present world (I Corinthians 15:23,24). Baha'ism asserts that the prophecies pointing to the second coming of Christ were fulfilled by the arrival of Baha'u'llah. What a blasphemous notion! This system of error must be opposed, and its sincere advocates should be taught the truth of Christ Jesus the Lord.—**Wayne Jackson, 3906 E. Main Street, Stockton, Calif. 95205** □

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HE'S ALIVE!

THE COMMEMORATION of the greatest event in human history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Lord's Supper draws our attention to the Cross and the Empty Tomb.

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SECOND: "Come see" (vs. 6). The angel of the Lord invited the women to examine the empty tomb. We can do the same by seeing for ourselves the tomb is empty. But a better evidence is a full heart. As the hymn says, "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart."

THIRD: "Go tell" (vs. 10). The command is not to go to church, but to go tell all others what the resurrection means. It means that we who trust Him must take part in the same. So, go tell everyone you know: He's alive! He's alive!—**Pulpit Helps** □

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TO FORCE OPEN

TO FORCE OPEN the rosebud of God's purpose is to soil and distort its beauty (wait upon the Lord).

DISPROVING GOD

“TO PROVE that there is no God anywhere in the universe or at any time in the universe, would require omniscience and probably omnipresence as well, which are themselves attributes of deity” (so empirically there is no way the existence of God can be disproved; one would have to be God to prove there is no God! What an amazing and perplexing thought!). □

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MATERIALS AVAILABLE:

BELOW is a listing of booklets, tracts, and materials published by *The Sword and Staff* and currently available from us. The “price” is a suggested offering to submit when making an order to help us continue this endeavor. Thanks.

- *Our Great and Glorious God*—25¢ each.
- *The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple*—1 copy, 35¢; 1 to 99 copies, 25¢ each; 100 or more, 20¢ each.
- *Ojections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered*—8¢ each.
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