

The Sword AND Staff

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

A STORY

—By JAMES E. GIBBONS; 1535 Fairfield Drive; Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030—

IT WAS a temptation to call this article "a portrait of a compromiser," but perhaps that would not exactly be fair (nor do we wish to slander a good man's name; all of us have made our mistakes). In retrospect by many hundreds and thousands of years, Peter called Lot a "righteous man" (II Peter 2:8). He was indeed a righteous man. But like so many today, Lot through whatever motives they may have been put himself and his family into a compromising position which resulted in the loss of his convictions (as well as his family).

As we begin this story of compromise we are first introduced to Lot in Genesis 11:27 under the "generations of Terah." At first this seems almost incidental as his story is one of the backdrops of the larger scene of the story of his uncle, Abraham, one of the most outstanding men mentioned in the entire Bible. Terah was the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran (Lot's father). Haran died in their homeland of Ur of the Chaldees. Of a world that had fast fallen into idolatry after the flood, this remnant of the line of Shem seemed to be holding to the true God (or at least Abraham was, although others were not—Joshua 24:2,14,15). This man Abraham was singled out (of all the people in a sin-benighted world) for the call of Jehovah God (Genesis 12:1-3), and the rest of the Bible unfolds from his response to this call. As he migrated under the divine impulse, journeying almost 1,000 miles to Canaan (with an intermediate stay in Haran), Lot accompanied him. Lot was in good company, and no doubt uncle Abraham meant a lot to him (especially since his father had been dead for a long time).

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of COMPROMISE

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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INFORMATION:

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**Proverbially
SPEAKING...**

IF YOU are in the wrong there is no way you can make it right by criticizing people for talking about you being in the wrong.

"Sin will keep you from God's Word, and God's Word will keep you from sin."

There is no room for arrogance and worldly pride in accepting Christ, getting our sins forgiven, and living the Christian life.

"Affluence without social concern is self-destructive."

Denominationalism would fuss about WHO is right and try to put the treasure of truth into sectarian coffers and molds, but the New Testament Christian (the only kind) is primarily concerned about WHAT is right (and the WHO will "automatically" take care of itself).

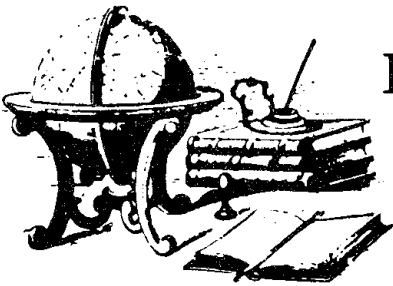
"Truth is always consistent with itself, but falsehood is so disjointed and incoherent in all its parts, that eagle-eyed investigation must discover its cloven foot."

The fruit derived from honest labor has the sweetest taste.

"A man who has himself received mercy seeks to secure mercy for others."

Many times it is a problem of insecurity, as well as vanity, when a woman thinks that she must be bedecked in jewelry, cosmetics, and expensive clothing.

"Everything in the modern home is controlled by switches except the children."



**EDITORIAL
COMMENTS...**

**CORRECTIVE FOOTNOTE:
*The Second Law of Thermodynamics***

IN THIS PUBLICATION a few issues ago (Volume 23, Number 3, page 4) the following words appeared in the article on "THE PURPOSE OF GOD" under the immediate heading of "Creation in Disarray."

"Now that man had sinned and rebelled against his God and Benevolent Creator, it was not fitting and proper for imperfect man to have a perfect dwelling place. He was driven from the beautiful Garden Home, *the first law of thermodynamics* seems to have come into being, and the creation itself began the process of deterioration. Paul would later declare, 'For we know the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now' (Romans 8:22)."

Perhaps some corrective comments are in order here. In the setting of this type some "wires got crossed." Instead of reading, "the first law of thermodynamics seems to have come into being, and the creation itself began the process of deterioration," it should have been "*the second law of thermodynamics*" (in more of an aggravated stage and form) "seems to have come into being."

The first two laws of thermodynamics (we understand) have to do with conservation and disintegration. Our universe seems to be a closed system. Nothing new is being created. Everything is here, but everything tends to disintegrate. Nothing is being destroyed but tends to take a less complex and more disorderly arrangement. Before the fall of man evidently the relationship between conservation and disintegration was more balanced and stable, but since then things seem to be "falling apart." Things left to themselves in our world do not improve but become inferior. (Some have effectively used the fact of these two principles of thermodynamics as an argument against the theory of evolution). □

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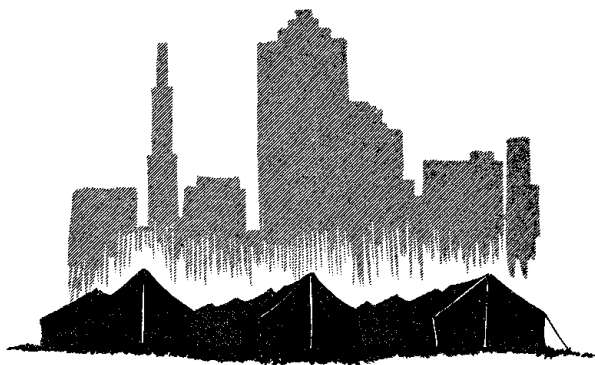
BIBLE LANDS TOUR CANCELED

BECAUSE of the extreme acts of international terrorism that have recently occurred, we have esteemed it wise not to have the Bible lands tour scheduled for 1987 (two were planned). However, if the situation appears better in the future, perhaps such tours will be considered again.



All on the Same Shelf and in the Same Category
(Remember, Christian, you are the temple of God)

A STORY of COMPROMISE



(Continued from Page 1)

God in His providence directed Abraham to the very heart of the land of Canaan. Here in some way He appeared to Abraham and firmly stated, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (it was the promised land) (Genesis 12:7). Thereupon Abraham built an altar to God and worshipped Him. Shortly thereafter they moved on toward the Negeb (the south) in this promised land. But a famine was in the land. This prompted Abraham and all of his to move on into the land of Egypt for a brief interlude. Here Abraham acquired more wealth. The record says that he was "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2). We also read, "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents" (13:5). After resettlement in Canaan in their loose nomadic style, we further read, "And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle...And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; of if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (13:6-9).

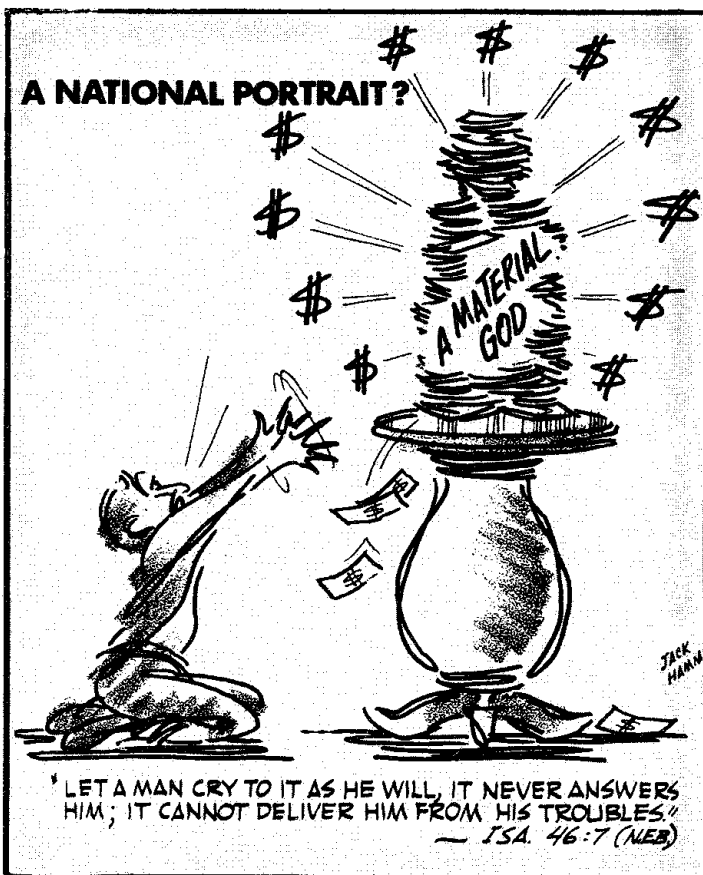
The first forebodings of coming ill are foreshadowed in the next few statements. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan...and dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (13:10-13).

Nephew Lot selfishly took advantage of his uncle's magnanimity. Materialism and a disregard for the spiritual dominated his decision. Uncle Abraham could rough it in the less productive mountains. To him the well-watered circuit of the Jordan looked like the garden of Eden and like unto the land of Egypt from which they had recently returned. A life which offered more material advantages, comforts, and

conveniences was to be desired (even at the expense of his uncle's generosity and the spiritual well-being of his family). His value system had suddenly undergone a change (perhaps being in Egypt had contaminated him). Yes, he would have all of these things in spite of the dangers involved (even though "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly"). He would have the best of two worlds. So, the first step of compromise involved materialism.

It is interesting to notice how things developed. He first looked upon the plain where Sodom and Gomorrah were located; he made his decision, he dwelled among the cities of the plain, and then he "pitched his tent toward Sodom." The next thing we know it mentions that Lot "dwelt in Sodom" (Genesis 14:12). He should have gotten the message that he was in the wrong place when he and other citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah were carried off as hostages of war by the plundering kings from the east (chapter 14). Uncle Abraham with some of the Canaanite princes had to come to the rescue. But back to Sodom he went (it was home to him now). Before it was over he was one of the men who "sat in the gate of Sodom" (19:1), possibly implying a prominent position in the city. That is how the whirlpool and cesspool of compromise and sin work. One step of compromise conditions us for the next. Beware!

The polluted cup of iniquity of the cities of the plain was full. And their cry and distraction were very great and grievous to God. Finally God could take no more. Three angels visited Abraham in the plains (oaks) of Mamre, and one of the visitors turned out to be a direct representation of Jehovah Himself. God's promises to Abraham and his wife Sarah would be fulfilled, but in



the meantime something else was crying for attention. Judgment could be held back no longer because of the depravity and perversion of these cities. Abraham got the picture. His nephew Lot and family lived there. A time of fervent (but discreet) pleading took place with God, but as it turned out there were not enough righteous people in the cities to warrant them being spared.

The shameful episode that followed involving the visit of the two angels to Sodom (and its destruction) shows the split personality of Lot and the extent of his compromise with the ungodly world. Certainly admirable traits of character are seen in his inviting and insisting that the two strangers spend the night in his house rather than on the street. He knew what kind of people lived in Sodom, and as the episode further unfolds we see his fears were not unfounded. Certainly admirable traits are seen in his preparing a meal for his visitors (19:3). (Does this mean that he actually prepared the food and his wife had no part in it? If so, this tells us more about his wife). But that night when the men of Sodom began to show themselves for what their name (SODOMITES) implies to us, we are perplexed by Lot's suggestion (and after calling these lewd men "brethren"). "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known men; let me, I pray you, bring them out to you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof" (19:8). Does he have an unbalanced regard for the sacredness of the code of hospitality over against the sacredness of the virginity of his daughters? (And you cannot correct one evil with another evil). Had the loose attitudes toward sex "rubbed off" on him by living day in and day out with the men of Sodom? And, yet, his two daughters were still virgins. This speaks well for Lot. But he is mixed up. Compromise will do that to you.

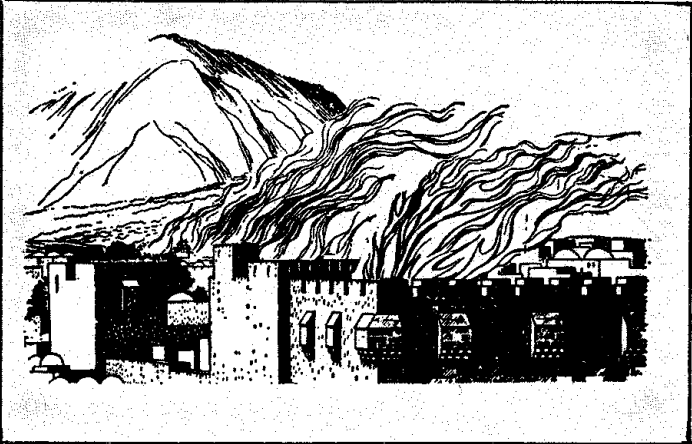
As the degenerate Sodomites are smitten with blindness, we read, "And the men (angels) said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it" (19:12,13). When Lot urged his sons in law, "Up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city," we read, "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law" (19:14). Did Lot's newfound religious fervor now seem out of place to these men who had married his daughters? (And, yes, the daughters of "righteous" Lot had intermarried with the world). Yet, Peter in the New Testament tells us that Lot was "vexed" by the filthy life-style of the Sodomites (even that his righteous soul was "vexed," or tormented, from day to day in what he saw and heard) (II Peter 2:7,8).

The dreadful night was now ended. As the morning dawned and the "count down" for the fire and brimstone began, "the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of the two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him:

and they brought him forth, and set him without the city" (19:15,16). Sodom represented everything to Lot and his wife. Choices involving "compromise" of principle had put them in a position hard to deal with now. Part of his family, his earthly wealth, no doubt a beautiful home, and what they had considered was the "good" life, were all in this wicked and condemned city. "For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also" (Matthew 6:21). He had to leave it all. His reluctance to leave is seen in the angels almost dragging him, his wife, and his daughters out of the city. Compromise can do awful things to you.

"And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he (the angel) said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou has shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live...Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar" (19:17-20,22).

The insipid picture of compromise continues before us. The awfulness and gravity of the situation was not realized. A lack of faith in the God who was looking out for his well-being in getting him out of the condemned city now prompted Lot presumptuously to ask to stay in the little city of Zoar instead of fleeing to the mountain (as he had been told). Lot spoke of God's grace and mercy (but he would presumptuously push it to the limit—how thankless!). Truly God's grace is amazing (as we sing in the favorite old hymn), but just as amazing is the audacity of compromisers in their concept of cheap grace. They want grace to cover their sins



without repenting and fleeing from them (without doing what God says). They want to live in Zoar. Zoar means little (and how characteristic of compromisers). They want to dabble in the world a "little" (usually more than a little) and at the same time be a little religious. They want to keep their "little" sins and habits ("Behold...is it not a little one?"). Beloved, a salvation that cost Christ his all demands more than a little on our part.

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A STORY of COMPROMISE

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The reluctant refugees had been commanded and admonished, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee..." (19:17). There was no time for delay. The catastrophic event was upon them. "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind them, and she became a pillar of salt" (19:24-26). How awful, how tragic (how needless)! Centuries later the Lord Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife" (a very short statement, but very provocative), and then he continued, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:32,33). Compromisers seem to be always looking back. Their hearts are still in the world. They love this present world. The apostle John admonished (and may we listen), "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him...And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15,17).

The cities of the plain are now destroyed (four in all, to be exact—Deuteronomy 29:23), but our story of compromise has not ended. To fill in the details, the angels did let Lot stay in the little city of Zoar. But after he saw what happened to the other cities, Lot didn't want to stay there any longer. He headed for the mountains of Moab where he originally was told to go. A lack of faith prompted Lot to want to stay in Zoar to start with, and now a lack of faith prompts him to leave. (Couldn't God be trusted?). Initially he was fearful of what might happen to him in the wilds of the mountains. Now he is fearful of what might happen to him if he stayed in Zoar. In both cases he failed to take God at His Word. Compromisers have a hard time really nailing things down as to what God says (and means) and then sticking with it. Of one thing we can be sure (of all others). God *can* be relied upon in what He says.

With his wife now dead (encrusted in salt in the environs of the plain) and his left-behind children destroyed in the overthrow of the cities, Lot started a new life (such as it was) as a cave dweller with his two daughters in the mountains. But, as someone has said, you can get your daughters out of Sodom but that doesn't mean you will get Sodom out of your daughters. The far-reaching influence of his initial and ill-advised decision to move to Sodom lived on. (Compromise is far-reaching in its consequence). To us what would be unthinkable thoughts and actions are now entered into by his daughters. They were vixens, so we cannot think of their motives as lust. Yes, the influence of Sodom and Gomorrah was seen in what Lot would have done with his two daughters back in Sodom that night (19:8) and now in what these daughters actually did with him (19:30-38). To start with, they got their father drunk. (They knew that his conscious morals would not fit in with their scheme). (And we ask, could anyone get you drunk like this? With this writer per-

sonally, I think not!). The first night the older daughter had sexual relations with her father; the second night the younger. Their motive, they said, was to "preserve seed" unto their father (making sure his family line didn't die out). And two sons were born from their shameful undertaking. But think of this! Incest (and fornication) of the rankest sort! It would seem that only people who had lived in Sodom and had their minds continually conditioned by such moral corruption would have thought of and done a thing so repulsive. Beloved, living in compromise gets your values and concepts all twisted (and so many have twisted concepts on this subject of sex today). Beware! Don't be brainwashed by the world.

Genesis 19 is the last we hear of this man called Lot in the Old Testament Scriptures except for two casual and indirect references (Deuteronomy 2:9,19; Psalms 83:8). We do not even know when or how he died. We do know that he ignobly fathered two sons (as observed) by means of his daughters. The names of these sons were Moab (who became the father of the Moabite people) and Benammi (father of the Ammonites) (19:37,38). The descendants of these sons (and consequentially Lot) were around as a thorn in the side of the people of God (Israel) when they occupied and settled the promised land years later. The sad thing about (compromising and) compromisers is that they beget other compromisers. Their descendants live on to work havoc among the people of God. They are a stumbling block to others.

YES, Lot was a "righteous man." Peter said that he was. But the record speaks for itself in reference to the other things we have written. And Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." The circumstances in which Lot placed himself found the edges being knocked off his convictions (and his spiritual life eroding). His stand for right was largely neutralized (and even nullified). Compromise always works havoc in one's life and that of his family in one way or another.

Kind reader, what about you (and what about this writer)? Is your life (and your wife) a story of compromise? Our world, both secular and religious, is in a mess today. To go with the flow, to conform to this



world, is to compromise. Are you a compromiser?

Let us remember Lot. Let us "remember Lot's wife" (as our Lord said). Also let us remember what Paul wrote for the good of us all. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:14-18). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1,2). □

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"ALL THINGS" Are Involved in Being a Real Christian



FOLLOWING IS a listing of some very impressive verses of Scripture (KJV). They are grouped only under the simple heading of "**ALL THINGS**." Each verse is a sermon within itself. They are presented by sequence as they appear in the New Testament. Read all of them, consider their context, and let the all-inclusive implications "sink in." We are definitely made to realize the necessity of what our Lord said. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Only by doing this, and only by full surrender and the grace of God can we begin to comply with what is said.

1. "Therefore **ALL THINGS** whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

2. "Teaching them to observe **ALL THINGS** whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

3. "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear **ALL THINGS** that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33).

4. "And by him all that believe are justified from **ALL THINGS**, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

5. "And we know that **ALL THINGS** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

6. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For **ALL THINGS** are yours" (I Corinthians 3:21).

7. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are **ALL THINGS**, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are **ALL THINGS**, and we by

him" (I Corinthians 8:6).

8. "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in **ALL THINGS**. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (I Corinthians 9:25).

9. "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let **ALL THINGS** be done unto edifying" (I Corinthians 14:26).

10. "Let **ALL THINGS** be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

11. "Let **ALL YOUR THINGS** be done with charity (love)" (I Corinthians 16:14).

12. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, **ALL THINGS** are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

13. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in **ALL THINGS**, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

14. "Giving thanks always for **ALL THINGS** unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20).

15. "Do **ALL THINGS** without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14).

16. "Yea doubtless, and I count **ALL THINGS** but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of **ALL THINGS**, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

17. "I can do **ALL THINGS** through Christ which strengthenth me" (Philippians 4:13).

18. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in **ALL THINGS** he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1:18).

19. "Prove **ALL THINGS**; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

20. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto **ALL THINGS**, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8).

21. "In **ALL THINGS** shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus 2:7).

22. "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in **ALL THINGS**" (Titus 2:10).

23. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but **ALL THINGS** are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

24. "But above **ALL THINGS**, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12).

25. "And above **ALL THINGS** have fervent charity (love) among yourselves; for charity (love) shall cover a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8).

26. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in **ALL THINGS** may be

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“ALL THINGS” Are Involved in Being a Real Christian *(Continued from Last Page)*

glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (I Peter 4:11).

27. “According as his divine power hath given unto us **ALL THINGS** that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Peter 1:3).

28. “Beloved, I wish above **ALL THINGS** that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (III John 2).

BELOVED, think on these things (Philippians 4: 8). When “all things” are considered, we have seen that “all things” are involved in being a real Christian. Christ must be Lord of all in our lives or He is not Lord at all. There is not a thing that we do, say, or think that does not have a religious implication.

—James E. Gibbons

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Where is Life?

Not in unbelief—

Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: “I wish I had never been born.”

Not in pleasure—

Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure, if anyone did. He wrote: “The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone.”

Not in money—

Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying he said: “I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.”

Not in position and fame—

Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: “Youth is a mistake; manhood, a struggle; old age, a regret.”

Not in military glory—

Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, because he said, “There are no more worlds to conquer.”

Where, then, is happiness found?

The answer is simple: In Christ alone. He said, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

“Life with Christ is an endless hope; without Him it is a hopeless end.”

—from *THE EAST WILLO EVANGELIST*

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FEAR IS WHOLESOME

IN A SPEECH during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “All we have to fear is fear itself.” There are times when that is largely true. But not all fear is destructive; there are times when it can be most constructive.

The Bible teaches that we should fear God. To Ancient Israel He said, “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes” (Deuteronomy

10:12,13). Jesus taught us not to fear those who can “kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Paul teaches us to perfect holiness “in the fear of God” (II Corinthians 7:1).

Fear—in the sense of a holy awe before God—is a wholesome thing. It is “the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 1:7; Job 28:28). It is an essential element in worship: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around Him” (Psalms 89:7). We cannot serve God acceptably unless we serve Him with “reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28; cf. also Philippians 2:12).

—Words of Life

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Too Content to Fly

A **VIVID STORY** by Soren Kierkegaard tells of a wild duck that came down in a barnyard and stayed with the tame ducks. After months of tame living and heavy eating, he tried to rejoin his old flock of wild birds when they flew over. But he was too heavy and soft. Each time they flew over, he was stirred to make an effort to join them, but finally as he was not able to fly with them, he lost his desire to fly. So is the insidious effect of being content with low living, until one no longer thrills to higher things.—*Christian Herald* □

IF HE SHOULD COME

If He should come today
And find my hands so full
Of future plans however fair
In which my Saviour has not share,
What would He say?

If He should come today
And find my love so cold,
My faith so very weak and dim
I had not even looked for Him,
What would He say?

If He should come today
And find I had not told
One soul about my Heavenly Friend,
Whose blessings all my way attend,
What would He say?

If He should come today
Would I be glad or sad?
Remembering He had died for the lost,
And none, through me, had heard His call,
What would I say?

If I really trust Him shall I ever fret?
If I do expect Him, can I ever forget?
If by faith I see Him, shall I doubt His aid?
If I really love Him, can I be afraid?

—Selected

Athletic Allusions in Paul's Illustrations

Picture at right is of Olympic runners in a long-distance race in 333 B.C. (from a Grecian Vase).

By James E. Gibbons

THE APOSTLE PAUL in his writings used illustrations from urban society (Paul was largely a city preacher), rural society, the military, and the Old Testament. Perhaps, as much as any other (if not more so), he also used illustrations with an athletic flavor.

Sports were big in the ancient Greek world, and those who excelled in them were regarded as national heroes. Among the Greeks were various games that drew great crowds. (1) There were the Isthmian games which met every three years at Corinth. (2) The Olympian games were held every five years. Then there were (3) the Pythian and (4) the Nemean games. Winners were acclaimed as heroes when they returned to their home cities. We are told that a special hole was knocked in the city walls for them to enter, implying that a city with such people living in it need not worry about defense.

Paul was a special friend of the athletic officials in Ephesus. When he would have spoken before the unruly crowds who were gathered in the theatre (under the disruptive influence of Demetrius the silversmith), they restrained him from entering. "And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre" (Acts 19:31). The word translated "the chief of Asia" is *Asiarches*. The Asiarchs were officials (involved with the public games and other functions) chosen from all over the province of Asia. It is interesting that prominent men of this nature were friends of Paul.

In I Corinthians 9:24-27, among other places, Paul effectively makes use of illustrations with an athletic allusion (Corinth hosted the Isthmian games).

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Here Paul draws upon his knowledge of race running, boxing, and the preparatory discipline that was necessary in entering such competitive events to get across some great spiritual truths. Everything he says is not necessarily parallel in every detail but suggestive.

He first reminds them that many enter the race at the stadium but only one receives the "prize" or



"crown." He is not implying that only one Christian (in competition with others) is going to be a winner, but that all Christians must enter the race with the determination and discipline that produces winners to receive the prize.

Then everyone who strives for the "mastery" (who intends to be a winner) is "temperate," or exercises self-control, in "all things." Before the Grecian games there were ten months of rigorous training and discipline. In anticipation the participant would forego the normal luxuries and indulgences to condition himself for the games. And that is true in many ways today of those who would take part in sports. Consider the rigor that young people will subject themselves to in order to play high school football. And the night before the game the team captains check to see if everyone is "in" at decent hours. If an athlete really wants to excel he will eliminate all bad habits from his life. Consequently Paul urged the Hebrew Christians, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doeth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Paul said in I Corinthians 9:25 that they do this (are "temperate in all things") to "obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The Lord Jesus had taught, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:23,24). From another perspective Paul admonished the Roman Christians to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:1,2). Admittedly it is not in vogue today to talk about sacrificing or

(Continued on Next Page)

ATHLETIC ALLUSIONS IN PAUL'S ILLUSTRATIONS *(Continued from Last Page)*

denying yourself of anything. We are a soft, self-indulgent people who live in a society that idolizes luxury. Such preaching is against the "grain" and is not popular. But this is a "must" if we are going to be *real Christians*; if we expect to receive the "prize."

And while we are talking about it, notice that Paul uses the same illustration with a slightly different emphasis in II Timothy 2:5. "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." Not only must the one who expects to win exercise self-control and discipline in *all things*, he is not "crowned" a winner if he does not "strive lawfully." In other words, he must play the game by the rules. No hedging, cheating, or dirty playing is allowed. And the "game" of being the Lord's church and living the Christian life must be played by God's rules. Our own self-righteousness, and the traditions and doctrines of men, will not do.

The "crown" received by the winner in the Grecian games is different from our regular concept of a crown. In the New Testament writings there are two words for crown, *stephanos* and *diadema*. The basic difference in these crowns was that the *diadema* (diadem) was the crown worn by kings (royalty) and the *stephanos* was the victory "crown" proudly received by the athlete (and the military for valor). Yes, the prize for winning the race was the *stephanos*. It was not a crown as we usually think of a crown, but was more like a wreath. They were made variously of leaves from different trees (ivy, oak, pine, etc.). (A carry-over of the idea is evident in the stylized cluster of leaves seen on the hats of military officers). Although it was a "corruptible" crown (in withering it soon perished), great honor was attached to receiving it. It was the victory crown.

And that seems to be the basic idea in the word when Paul (and other New Testament writers) speak of Christians receiving a crown—*VICTORY*. Listen as Paul combines several ideas of the Grecian games. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown (*stephanos*) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:7,8). Consider James 1:12 and I Peter 5:4. The Lord said in Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown (*stephanos*) of life." Victory, everlasting life, the "incorruptible" crown is ours! What a reassuring thought!

Let us get back to the rest of what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 9. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly (with uncertainty); so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Running the Christian race, fighting the good fight of faith, and living the Christian life is not a haphazard hit and miss proposition. It is like Barnabas exhorted the new Christians at Antioch "that with *purpose of heart* they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). And as the writer of Hebrews admonished, "Let

us *run with patience* the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). We are in this for the long pull, so get your mind set and conditioned for it. Make everything count. And (in using another figure) you just don't beat the air in boxing, but make sure your blows will land where they will be the most effective.

As we said, many of Paul's words are suggestive rather than being exactly parallel. In boxing Paul has himself being the object of his own blows. It is translated (KJV), "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." This literally means to strike under the eye, to give a black eye. And Paul says why he does this to himself: "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." There was danger that Paul could be disqualified and rejected from being a winner. The *stephanos* would not be his. He had to live what he preached.

How interesting such a study as this is. How vivid are Paul's illustrations and profitable in our consideration. Let us press on. As Paul in another place enlarges upon this illustration, let us be admonished with him, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13,14). Amen! □

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WHAT IF . . .

WHAT IF a husband was only faithful to his wife "most of the time"?

What if a man just showed up for work "most of the time"?

What if your car only started "most of the time"?

What if a clerk in a store was only honest "most of the time"?

What if your heart only beat "most of the time"?

WHY DO MEN think they can please God by being faithful "most of the time"?—*SELECTED* □

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AT THE END OF THE DAY

Is anybody happier because you passed his way?

Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today?

The day is almost over, and its toiling time is through;

Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word of you?

Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping fast,

That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said;

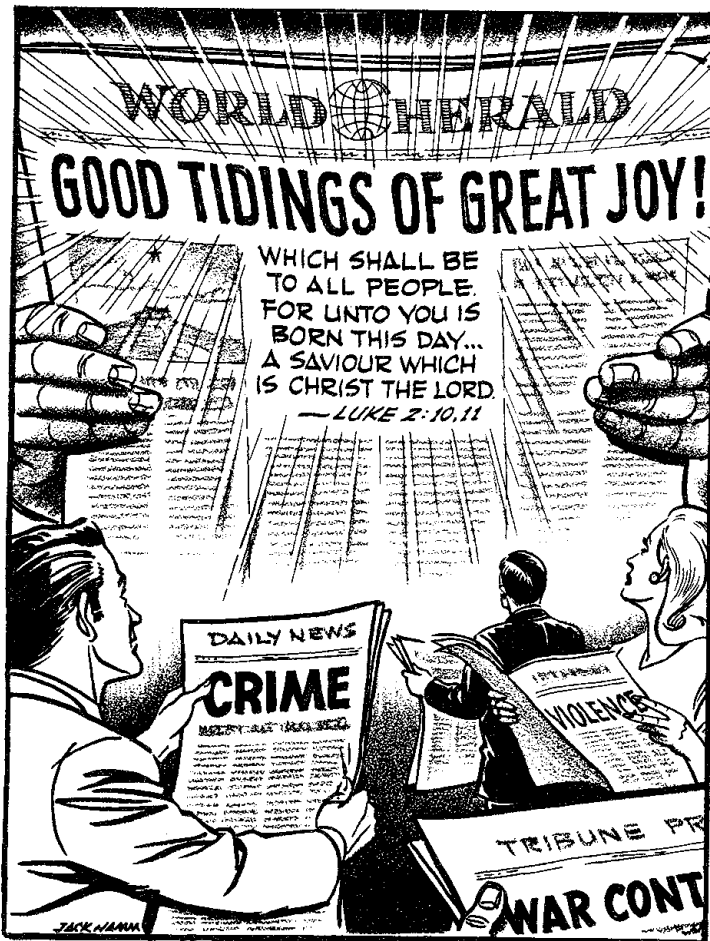
Does the man whose hopes were fading, now with courage look ahead?

Did you waste the day, or lose it? Was it well or sorely spent?

Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say,

"You have earned one more tomorrow by the work did today?" —JOHN HALL



IT IS NO SECRET!

"IT IS NO SECRET what God can do. What He has done for others, He will do for you." These are the words of a song that was popular a few years ago. They are very striking and true. God can take the chief of sinners and make the purest saint. God can take a quarreling, fighting family and make it a heaven on earth. God can put the spirit of a martyr within a man. God can put hearts of love and compassion where once lived hatred and envy. God created the heavens and the earth and He can create a new man in Christ Jesus. We must let God have His way with us. When we speak of "letting God" have His way with us, it sounds as if we were stronger than God. No, this is not the case. God is Almighty. He is all powerful. But He will not force himself on anyone. God can do great things with us if we will let Him. He can so enable us through His strength to conquer the world for Him. What God did for Paul in his life, He can do for us today. We can have the same faith, zeal and love that lived in Paul. Why are we not strong like Paul? It is because we will not let God help us. We have not yet fully surrendered to Him. The inspired writer said, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." The reason some Christians are hot one minute and lukewarm the next might be attributed to the same reason that the little boy fell out of bed. When the mother asked her little son why he fell out of bed his reply was, "I don't know, unless I went to sleep too near where I got in." Are we asleep? Have we grown as we should? Have we let God have His way with us?

If we fail, it is not God's fault. An infidel who was a soap manufacturer once said to a preacher, "That Bible you preach is a failure in the world, because look at all the sinful people." Just at that time a little boy with a dirty face crossed the sidewalk in front of them and the preacher said, "That soap you make is a failure; look at all the dirty people in the world." The manufacturer said, "That is not the fault of the soap; the trouble is they haven't used it." The preacher replied, "Now you have the point. There are many sinful people in the world, but it is not the fault of the Bible; they haven't used it."

"It is no secret what God can do!" Let us not try to hide or keep secret the wonderful power of God. If we are a true child of God this will be impossible. Jeremiah said, "Because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (contain ASV)." Jeremiah 20:8,9.

If you are thinking about becoming a Christian, if you have a willing heart, "what He has done for others He will do for you!"—*Perry Hall* □

★★★★★★

To Soar as Eagles

THE EAGLE is the national emblem of the United States. It is a big bird with broad wings and strong feet. The eagle flies very high, and even its nest is high off the ground in inaccessible places. Isaiah compared the righteous person to the flight of an eagle. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles..." (Isaiah 40:31).

We learn from this beautiful word picture. Man was not meant to live a low life of sin and to set his sights on the ground. Christianity gives a loftiness to life. The height of sight seems to characterize the followers of Jesus. "Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2). "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal" (Matthew 6:20). "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Soaring high allows us to see things in perspective, to get a feel for the larger picture and to understand the really important issues of life. Let's concentrate on the higher things. Do we look for the stars or the dirt? Let us "mount up with wings as eagles."—*Larry Holmes* □

★★★★★★

Is This Being Religious?

Belief in the existence of a god is not necessarily belief in God. Believing in God is religious, but believing that there is one is not necessarily religious. Believing there is such a system as communism does not make you a Communist. Believing in and accepting the system (and joining the Communist party) makes you a Communist.

Group Organizes to Fight Ads That Demean Women

BIRMINGHAM, Mich.—Forty-two women seated in a darkened room intently watched a slide screen.

Before them was the image of a nude young woman about to slip into a pair of blue jeans. The red lettering at the bottom of the picture said, "Now everybody can get into Studio 54."

A voice from the front of the room asked if they knew what was being sold in the fashion advertisement—blue jeans or a woman's body?

Because that kind of advertising has become commonplace, women have begun to fight it. A Canadian group, Women Against Violence and Exploitation, is addressing these concerns.

Members said they think that ads portraying the powerful against the powerless are anti-women and that pornography reinforces male dominance.

According to Selma McGorman, a WAVE representative, advertising is filled with anti-women themes and symbols:

- Age distortion: Women portrayed as childlike but sexually suggestive or girls portrayed provocatively as adult women. This image sends a message of encouragement to pedophiles and other child sexual abusers.
- Animalization: Women are beasts, with wild-looking hair, down on all fours or head thrown back exposing bared neck and breast areas.
- Depersonalization or photographic dismemberment: Focus is entirely on part of a woman's anatomy such as torso, buttocks and thighs.
- Excessive nudity: Unnecessary invasion of privacy and poses that are inappropriately sexually provocative.
- Symbolic imagery: Footwear advertisements are laden with women portrayed as silly or stupid, or as hunted prey or accident victims.
- Provocatively posed exhibitionists: Pantyhose and undergarment ads feature women as mindless, often in the presence of fully clothed men. These themes generally mock women's equality and career aspirations.
- Voyeuristic exploration: Physical fitness ads examining the female anatomy.
- Simulated sexual ecstasy: Includes facial expressions that combine closed eyes and open mouth, sometimes with tongue sticking out or finger positioned at or in mouth.
- Violence: By far the most troublesome category. From suntan lotion ads to high fashion, women are portrayed as being physically abused or in situations harmful to themselves... —Scripps Howard News Service □

★★★★★★

Lessons From a Flock of Geese

SCIENTISTS have discovered the secret of the great strength of the Canadian geese in their long flights. Some flocks fly from the Hudson Bay to the Midwest at a powerful 70 miles per hour, nonstop. Together, cooperating as a flock in a V-shape formation, wingtip to wingtip, none misses a stroke. They are able

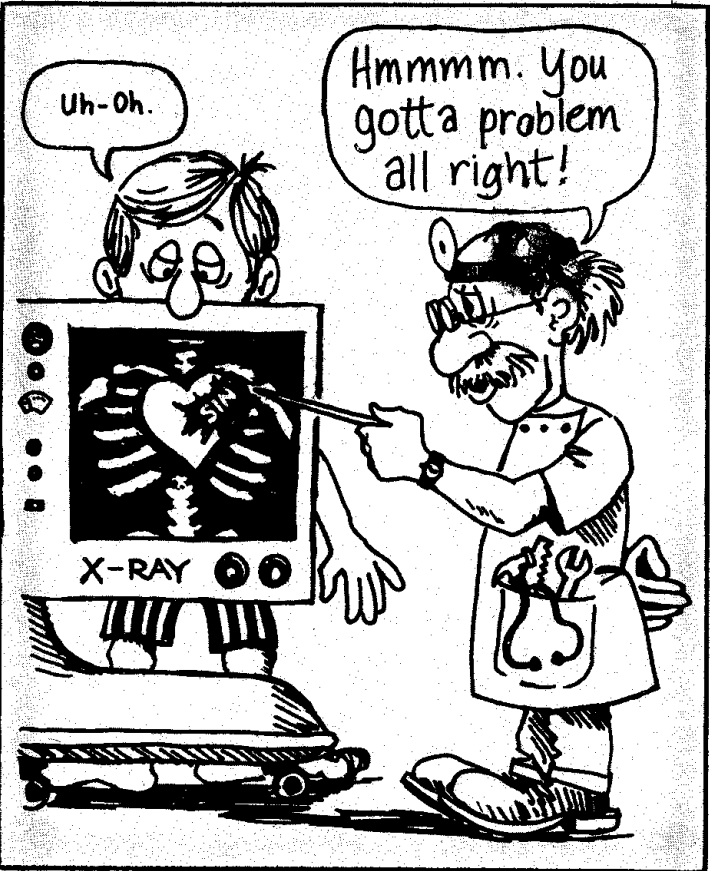
to fly a 71 percent longer range than when a solitary goose tries to make it. The lead goose cuts a swath through the air resistance, and creates a helping uplift for the two birds behind him, and in turn they make it easier on the birds behind them. It is much like a drag of a car sucked in behind another vehicle. Each bird rotates as the lead. In this manner the tired ones fan out to the edges of the "V" for a rest and the rested ones go toward the point of the "V" to lead the flock.

Scientists think the incessant honking is a way the stronger ones lend encouragement to the weaker ones. If a goose becomes exhausted or ill and has to drop out of the flight a stronger member of the flock will follow the weak one to his resting place and stay with him until he is well enough to fly again. This is a valuable lesson to Christians. Just as geese can go farther and accomplish more by flying "in a family," we can, with the support of fellow Christians and friends who care for us, go farther in the Lord's work than we could go alone.

If I "fly" in the "family" (the church), I will never fly alone, neither feel rejected or ignored. Another will support me and my efforts will help other members of the church.

This lesson of the geese adds strength to the conclusion that "if we help others, we are helping ourselves." In serving and giving of ourselves, we ourselves are lifted up and helped along. On one occasion Jesus' disciples were arguing over which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus' reply was short and sure. He indicated that one's care for others is the measure of one's greatness (Luke 9:48).—*The Light* □

★★★★★★



Who Put Him There?

WE AS CHRISTIANS often meditate on the great love that Jesus had for us in that He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. As the prophet Isaiah foretold, Jesus would be pierced for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. As we wonder at this mystery of Godliness we tell ourselves what a cruel act it was to crucify our Lord. We self-righteously point the finger to Judas and condemn him for selling out our Lord for a few pieces of silver. And then the weak-willed Pilate who would rather please the people than to see an innocent man justified. The Roman soldiers also had their part, they nailed our Savior to the cross of Calvary. While the treacherous Jews who were the cause of His death, sneered and mocked our King asking that the killer Barabbas be released and the innocent man Jesus executed. Yes, it was all their fault, or so we convince ourselves.

The truth is that Jesus was pierced for OUR transgressions, he was crushed for OUR iniquities. We cannot escape the reality that it was because of us that He was mocked and murdered. Certainly Judas and the others were guilty, but let us not shift the burden of the responsibility, we're as guilty as those same people who put Jesus on the cross.

Jesus died for all men and all the sins of the world. The punishment that was put upon Him brought us peace. That is, it brought us into the right relationship with our Father. Jesus in His death provided purifications for our sins.

It is by his wounds that we are healed. The stripes and wounds that were inflicted upon Jesus were of the cruelist sort. He was continually beaten, slapped about the head and spit upon. He was given the most humiliating of punishments in being flogged. Criminals are often thought of as heros when given fines and assessments and they brag with the acts they get away with. But when a man is publicly beaten he loses all his pride and self-esteem and is looked down upon as a bad child being spanked for wrong doing. The chagrin is almost worse than the actual beating. Jesus suffered in this way. He was beaten, flogged, and brought down to humiliation before the people.

Christ was wounded that we might be healed. We were sick unto death, but He the sinless One, took upon Himself a suffering unto death, for OUR transgressions and OUR iniquities. Christ became the source of our healing.—*Toney Mulhollan* □

★★★★★★

A Worm for Us

A MOST INTRIGUING illustration... is found in Psalms 22, that marvelous prophetic description of the suffering and death of Christ on the cross, written a thousand years before its fulfillment. In the midst of His suffering, the Lord Jesus cries in His heart: "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (v. 6). In the parallel prophecy of Isaiah, it was said that "his visage was... marred (in fact, according to literal rendering, "Corruption," per-

sonfied) more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14), so that truly He seemed like "no man." And Isaiah also said that He was "despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). But in what sense could He have been said actually to be a "worm"?

In ancient Israel, as in the modern world, there were many types of worms, and several different kinds are mentioned in the Bible. But the worm referred to in Psalms 22:6 was a particular worm known as the "scarlet worm." It was from this worm that a valuable secretion was obtained with which to make scarlet dyes. The same word is sometimes translated as "scarlet" or "crimson" (cf. Isaiah 1:18).

When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she could never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larve were hatched and able to leave and enter her own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted.

What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding His precious blood that He might "bring many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10)! He died for us, that we might live through Him!—*Henry M. Morris* □

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Read the Context

IT SEEMS an elderly mountain farmer in a mule-drawn wagon had been involved in an accident with an automobile. Now, he was suing the driver, claiming personal injuries.

"But isn't it true that after the accident," the defendant's attorney asked, "you said you never felt better in your life?"

"Well," the claimant began, "that morning I got up, hitched up my mule, and put my hound dog in the wagon and..."

"Give us a yes or no answer to my question," the lawyer interrupted.

At this point the judge stepped in and directed the lawyer to let the farmer answer in his own way.

"Well," the claimant began again, "that morning I got up, hitched up my mule, put my hound dog in the back of the wagon, and jest got over the rise of the road when this big car barreled into my rear end. My mule was knocked to one side of the road, my dog to the other and I was pinned under the seat. Directly a policeman came along, seen my mule had its leg broke, pulled out his pistol and shot him dead. He went over to my dog, seen it was hurt bad, and shot it in the head.

"Then," the farmer continued, "he come over to me and asked, 'Well, how are you feelin'?' and, shore nuff, I said, 'I never felt better in my life!'"—*Joe Creason* □

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Learning from Others

PEOPLE who cannot (or will not) learn from the accumulated wisdom and experience of others are in for a long, hard life. □

Blessed Is the Mother. . .

- Who can hold onto her children while letting them go.
- Who puts a tranquil home ahead of an immaculate house.
- Who knows a kind acts will be remembered longer than an easy word.
- Who really believes that prayer changes things.
- Whose faith in the future sweetens the present.
- Whose Bible never needs dusting.
- Whose sense of humor is alive and well.

—The Promoter

★★★★★★

**ABIDING
IN**

“He that said he abideth
in him ought himself also to
walk, even as he walked”
—I John 2:6

HIS WORD

**A Concern for Women Profess-
ing Godliness**

THE FACT that the Christian woman is to dress modestly is clear to all who know and respect the will of God. Some, however, will concede that Paul in I Timothy 2:9,10 requests the women to wear “modest apparel,” but deny the wearing of shorts, bathing suits and other such apparel in public is immodest. But notice the woman is to wear modest apparel in “shamedfacedness. . .”

The word “shamedfacedness” is defined: “a sense of shame, modesty.” Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon says this word “is prominently objective in its reference, having regard to others.” He further says this word, shamedfacedness, is what “proceeds and prevents the shameful act.” In other words, one that feels no shame in being seen in immodest apparel lacks “shamefacedness.”

A woman that can parade herself in public in apparel that is too short, too tight, or too thin lacks the very thing Paul admonishes her to have. Shamefacedness will prevent the Christian woman from appearing in public in apparel that is immodest.

A woman dressed in shorts and other abbreviated type clothing is advertizing her lack of shame. A Christian woman will not do this. She dresses in a way that is becoming to a follower of Jesus Christ.

Think it over. . .prayerfully, dear sister.—Selected □

★★★★★★

Blame Somebody Else!

BLAME GOD for all the problems in your life. He does still control the universe and rule in the affairs of men. He has the “whole world in His hands” as the song says. Don’t spend your time searching for your own responsibilities and accepting the blame for your failures; blame God.

Blame your parents for your unfaithfulness to the Lord. Remember how they “made” you attend the worship services when you didn’t want to go? Now that you are grown up and can make your own decisions and you have chosen not to be faithful, blame your parents. Don’t let it bother you that their hair has turned gray and their wrinkled cheeks are bathed in tears over your spiritual condition. Blame somebody else.

Blame the Bible class teacher for your child’s indifference toward the Bible and worship. Sure, they are responsible for presenting an interesting lesson. It doesn’t matter that they only have your child for one or two hours a week and that he or she never prepares their lessons at home or participates in a class discussion. Blame someone else.

Blame the preacher for leaving the Lord out of your life. He just shouldn’t preach so hard and expect so much. He could find plenty of sermon material to tickle your ears and make you feel comfortable anyway. Just wait until someone else is preaching and then you can go back and renew your allegiance to the Lord—if it is not another preacher just like this one.

Blame other members of the church for the weaknesses of the congregation. If you were running things it would be different. But aren’t you glad that you aren’t like them? If the church doesn’t make the progress it should, it is certainly not your fault because you haven’t done anything—it is theirs!

YES, blame someone else. That is what the devil wants us to do. He does not want us to take an honest look at ourselves. The easiest course is to place all the blame on someone else. But you know, it doesn’t take much of a person to blame someone else for his failures. It does take a big person to acknowledge his own mistakes and ask the Lord to help him with his problems.—Ted Knight □

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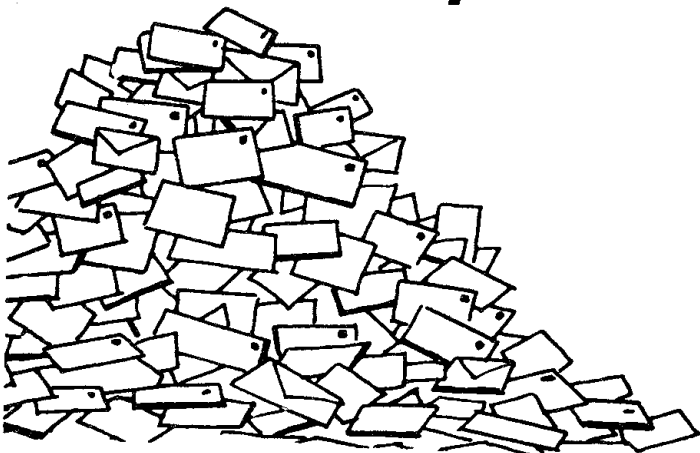
Smoking Costs \$65 Billion a Year

Disease and lost productivity due to smoking are costing the U.S. about \$65 billion a year—more than \$2 for every pack of cigarettes bought, a congressional study says. Studies published in a 1984 AMA Journal say that cigarette smoking causes more than 350,000 deaths each year. This is more than all other drug and alcohol abuse deaths combined.—Christian News □

★★★★★★

READERS'

... Response



VIRGINIA:

—“I’m sending a very belated contribution on *THE SWORD AND STAFF* I’ve been receiving. I enjoy the publication very much. The message, ‘A World of Delusion,’ is great...”

MICHIGAN:

—“May the Lord bless you with strength and health you need to continue your good works.”

INDIANA:

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

—“You are doing a fine job! Keep it up!”

—“Keep up the fine work you are doing. May the Lord Jesus richly bless your efforts. Every issue I receive challenges my thinking and makes me examine the Word more closely. Your issues on the Masons have been very enlightening...”

IOWA:

—“Please discontinue the enclosed subscriptions to your publication.”

MISSOURI:

—“We really enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We have taken several (papers) but this is the best. May the Lord always be with you. It is the best and really strengthens our faith.”

KANSAS:

—“I would like my name to be removed from your mailing list.”

NEBRASKA:

—“...We find *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to be the best publication of its type. We also believe it would be beneficial if all ‘Restoration’ churches received it.”

DIEGO GARCIA, INDIAN OCEAN:

—“I am a civilian employee of the U.S. Navy assigned at Diego Garcia, Indian Ocean. I got hold of an old issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* during my vacation in the Philippines earlier this month and I cannot help but write you and request that I be included in your distribution list...”

★★★★★★

PUT GOD FIRST

★★★★★★

A Hymn of Marriage

THE QUESTION is asked, “Is there anything more beautiful in life than a boy and girl clasping clean hands and pure hearts in the path of marriage?” And the answer is given, “Yes, there is a more beautiful thing; it is the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled but still clasped; their faces are seamed but still radiant; their hearts are tired and bowed down but still strong. They have proved the happiness of marriage and have vindicated it from the jeers of the critics.—*Lamplighter* □

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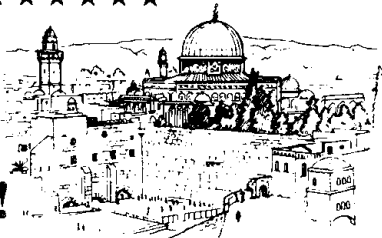
One Door: “Enter Here”

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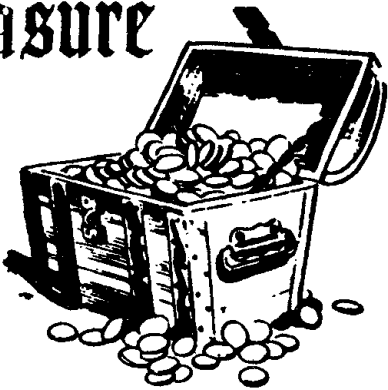
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