

# The Sword AND Staff

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

**"THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."**

**—(PSALMS 51:13)—**

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



**THE MOST** extensive version of the Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20. The apostles and early church really had a job laid out before them. From a mere handful of humble followers of Christ the gospel was carried to the farthest extent of the Roman Empire and beyond. Yes, until we read that the gospel

had been preached to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23; i.e., the civilized world as they knew it). Soon Christianity was accepted and was the predominate religion in Europe. A lost world could now rejoice.

But we believe the Great Commission, which involved going into all the world and to every creature, is greater today than when it was first given. We are told that it took the world to almost the year 1900 to reach the population of 1 billion. Now something like 90 years later, we read these headlines in the newspaper (May 16, 1987), "World's Population Will Reach 5 Billion Soon." The news article began, "Sometime in the next few months, the world's population will reach 5 billion..." The thing has really "snowballed," and they expect the world's population to hit 6 billion by 1999. And it seems the population is exploding more in countries less influenced by Christian thought (so-called Third World nations). The church is put in the position of becoming a smaller and smaller minority group in the world. Increased efforts at evangelism (in relation to the world's population) about amount to spinning our wheels. We have to run to stand still!

It can be seen that the Great Commission was intended to be a self-perpetuating and ever expanding cycle in its impact in that all converts were to be taught to observe all things that Christ had commanded. Among other things, he had just commanded them to go. New converts were told to go with the gospel, and they in turn instructed their neophytes to do the same. This assured success in the gospel being taken to the whole world. Preachers led out and spearheaded this work, and every Christian was actively engaged in it

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## THE SWORD AND STAFF

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## Proverbially SPEAKING...

*PEOPLE WHO plan for the future don't have to live in the past.*

"The highest reward for a person's toil is not what he gets for it but what he becomes by it."

*To get the most out of life stay alive as long as you live.*

"The man who does only what is required of him is a slave; the moment he does more, he's a free man."

*If the church belongs to Christ, and you don't belong to the church, where do you stand with the Lord?*

"Life's greatest tragedy is to lose God and never miss Him."

*A person is young only once, but one can stay immature indefinitely (some have a hard time growing up).*

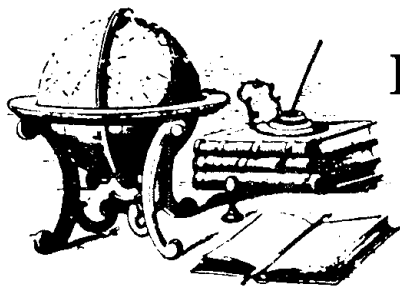
"LORD, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I together can't handle."

*It is great to stand up and be counted, but it is even more important to remain standing after you have been counted (to really take your stand for what is right and stick in there).*

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

*Some "take offense" at many things, but we should never "give offense" (be a stumbling block).*

"One reason why some people don't talk much about their religion is because they don't have much religion to talk about."



## EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

### HOW THE EARLY CHURCH TOLD OF ITS GROWTH (*"But the word of God grew and multiplied," Acts 12:24*)

IN THE EARLY DAYS of the church when people were converted to Christ, and victories were won, different words were used to express the event (and all of them were most meaningful and expressive). But of the most outstanding way that such a happening was recorded was simply by saying that ***"the word of God grew and multiplied"*** (Acts 12:24). On the day of Pentecost when the church of Christ initially "got off the ground," the apostles preached (and among them Peter). Acts 2:41 (42) reads, "Then ***they that gladly received his word*** were baptized; and the same day there was added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The high priest and Sanhedrin were much disturbed because the apostles "filled Jerusalem" with their doctrine (Acts 5:28). Then we read in Acts 6:7 these exciting words: ***"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."*** Acts 19:20, recording victories in Ephesus, said, ***"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."***

True victories (and church growth), as far as the true church is concerned, are accomplished and understood only in relationship to the Word of God. As we noticed, the Word of God grows and is multiplied. This is not to be taken in a crudely naive and literal sense as if the Bible became a bigger and bigger Book. No, the meaning is that the impact and influence of the Word grows. As Jesus many times taught in his simple (but not simplistic) parables, the word is the seed of the kingdom. Growth and harvest in the kingdom are understood in relationship to the Word, the seed that produces the kingdom. The good and honest heart enter into how the Word is received. In Acts 2, they that gladly received the Word were baptized. The Word was received and assimilated into their lives as they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine. The Word of God continued to grow as evil forces were defeated, and the cause of truth and right prevailed. The Word of God is what produced and produces all of this.

In the light of all of this we can only urge the most extensive use and study of the Word of God by the church (and at the same time we have the utmost disgust for anything which detracts from the Word of God). May the Bible increasingly be the text that we study in the church (be done with weak, watered-down, anemic literature!). It is not enough to study about the Bible with our little prefabricated lessons on telling us how nice it is to be nice. Let us actually study the Bible. Let us preach the Bible. Although others may belittle it as being old fashioned, don't be

afraid to give chapter and verse. Convert them on a healthy diet of the Word of God, and they will still be around after you have gone. How disrespectful and utterly disgusting is the use of “gimmicks, goodies, and gumdrops.” Men are wiser than God it seems (and want to take some shortcuts). While the use of the Word of God is reduced to a minimum, slick promotional gimmicks are used to expedite church growth. It would appear that some are so skilled in this that they can swell the church rolls, and slide them on in without even converting them. But, can it be said of their conversion, indoctrination (?), loyalty, and spirituality that “the word of God grew and multiplied”? If you “convert” them on gimmicks and entertainment, you will have to have the same to keep them coming.

The kind of church growth that God wants is accomplished by His Word and in connection with His Word. Oh, could that we hear more of the Word of God increasing, growing, and multiplying!

(Thank you, Almighty God, for your Word and those who still love it!). □

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# EDITORIAL

## Byways

JIM BAKKER, JERRY FALWELL, ET AL.  
(Ad Nauseam)

ALL OF THIS media coverage (almost daily) of this Jim and Tammy Bakker/PTL mess is wearisome and downright disgusting. If you are a serious student of the Bible (who has rightly divided the Word of Truth, II Timothy 2:15), you know there is not much Christianity in any of this (aside from the unseemly moral questions involved). It would appear that some are controlled by greed and their god of materialism. And what has a glorified amusement park (paid for by religious contributions) got to do with Christianity? The very first premise of Jim Bakker’s religion (that espoused by the denomination to which he belonged) is utterly false, that the supernatural spiritual gifts of the early apostolic church are for the followers of Christ today. Then, as far as being Scriptural is concerned, the religious convictions of the supposed reformer of the PTL are not much better.

The so-called charismatics believe we have the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit which were exercised in the early church, especially singling out what is called “tongues.” But tongues in the New Testament was not some incoherent emotional jibberish, but actually the God-given ability to speak in other languages theretofore unknown by the speaker (Acts 2:4-11). And why just single out “tongues”? Prophecy was another of these supernatural gifts (I Corinthians 12:10; 13:9,10; Ephesians 3:3-5). To have the gift of prophecy was to be able to speak the word of God directly from

heaven by divine inspiration. What one said, while exercising this gift, would have the same weight as Scripture or would be Scripture. If we have one of the spiritual gifts (as, supposedly, tongues) in the church today, all of them would be available to us (including prophecy). And, therefore, we could not regard the Bible as a closed and completed book. It could be added to. (I can’t “buy” that, can you? I don’t believe that, do you?).

Also, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was discernment (I Corinthians 12:10). The apostle Peter had no problem discerning the actual thoughts and intent of the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. Without hesitation, he said, “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost (Spirit)?” Then three hours later when this man’s wife came in, Peter again said, “How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.” No one had to tell him. He knew. He had the gift of discernment. I ask then, why couldn’t these people surrounding Jim Bakker and professing these spiritual gifts, yes, why couldn’t they discern the moral indiscretion and other alleged irregularities of this man? And the same thing could be asked of the late A. A. Allen (who died an alcoholic) and others? They experience all of this “religious” excitement (supposedly caused by the Holy Spirit), they speak in jibber-jabber, but no one has the spirit of discernment. As Shakespeare said, “There is something rotten in the state of Denmark.” How amazing that millions of dollars have been willingly and enthusiastically funneled into the PTL rat hole!

In passing, because of all the maze needlessly surrounding this subject, perhaps a word of explanation is in order about the spiritual gifts. Hebrews 2:3,4 is a good place to start. Notice: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers gifts (footnote: *distributions*) of the Holy Ghost (Spirit), according to his own will?” The Christian religion (“so great salvation”) originated with Christ. It was “confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (i.e., the apostles, his especially selected eyewitnesses for this very purpose). The confirmation took the form of supernatural manifestations: signs and wonders, different kinds of miracles (even raising people from the dead), and various gifts (or distributions) of the Holy Spirit as God so willed. The message of the apostles was

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“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”—JESUS

# EDITORIAL *Byways*

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authenticated by their miracles (this proved that the new religion, the New Testament, was from God). Also the apostles confirmed their message by gifts or distributions of the spiritual gifts to others. This was accomplished by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:17-19; Acts 19:6; II Corinthians 12:12). Apostles of Christ were the official eyewitnesses of Christ and his resurrection (Acts 1:21,22; 2:32; 4:20,33; 5:32; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:7-9; Acts 26:16). There are no living apostles of Christ in the church upon earth today. Paul says in Ephesians 2:20 that we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." The foundation of the church once and for all has been laid. Here we see that foundation is made up of the apostles and prophets (their inspired teachings), and Jesus Christ himself (the chief corner stone). There are no more apostles and prophets in the church today (nor indeed can there be) than there is another Christ (the foundation has already been laid). And, applying this truth to the matter of spiritual gifts, when the last apostles died, the gifts and their availability ceased as God used this means (the apostles, their hands) to bestow various gifts on various people. Really, the gifts are no longer needed. The truth has been confirmed. We have the New Testament Scriptures and they are accepted as authoritative (from God). Consequently, the apostle Paul wrote: "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," etc. (I Corinthians 13:8). (Study the rest of this 13th chapter of I Corinthians).

In concluding these remarks, I would like to say that we do get a better impression of the moral fiber of Jerry Falwell, but the overall doctrinal picture is not much better (and why salvage the PTL?). We find the Jerry Falwell religious station WRVL (Lynchburg, Virginia) very refreshing with its quality religious music (in contrast with the world). However, just recently when I tuned in to this station Mr. Falwell was preaching. I got in the middle of what he had to say about baptism. How he handled the subject was completely out of harmony with the New Testament. In reference to baptism, he said that some denominations dry cleaned them (practiced sprinkling or perhaps no type of "baptism" at all), but that he as a Baptist laundered them (immersed them). However, he said, it really made no difference—just so they believed in Jesus. But we know this is not what the New Testament teaches. Baptize (*baptizo*) literally means to dip or immerse. The Bible is plain enough on this (Acts 8:38,39; Romans 6:4,5; Colossians 2:12). At the same time the Bible is plain in showing that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:11,12) and has to do with salvation (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21).

So, if you are depending on these television evangelists to lead you in the ways of the New Testament, I am afraid you are going to be disappointed.

The whole thing is very disgusting.—*J. Gibbons* □

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## The Terms Seem Specific Enough



**"THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"** (Continued from Page 1)

(Acts 8:4; Ephesians 4:16). This is how we are to understand the tremendous success of the early church in this endeavor.

But between them and us is the great gulf of the Dark Ages (the great falling away that Paul said would come). That which the early church gained through evangelism was lost to religious apostasy. From the Reformation and Renaissance that followed has come denominationalism and humanism (both decided hindrances to New Testament evangelism). In the meantime the world population is exploding. We are not getting the job of world evangelism done.

No doubt there are many reasons why. Although we have many advantages the early church did not have (rapid transportation, mass media, etc.), at the same time we have disadvantages that they did not have. Along with the humanistic unbelief, we are in the midst of the denominational debris left by the Dark Ages. In the immediate times in which we live materialism has paralyzed the church, and many times we are in traditional ruts (with our clergy/laity concept of things). But perhaps our greatest problem is that we are not properly motivated. Before we can carry out the Great Commission there are certain things which must be personally and unquestionably realized. These prerequisites are necessary before one can be a soul-winner.

### I. PERSONAL CLEANSING FROM SIN.

The 51st Psalm is understood to be David's prayer

of repentance in connection with the sin of adultery with Bathsheba (also murder) after he was brought to a strong conviction of his guilt by the prophet Nathan. David, the man after God's own heart, wants to be in that relationship again. Listen to his plaintive plea. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. . .*" (Psalms 51:1-4,9-13).

The last statement gets our attention: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." After he had experienced personal cleansing of sins and restoration to God, he again would be in a position to teach sinners the ways of God (to be a soul-winner). Isaiah likewise experienced personal cleansing before entering into his great work (Isaiah 6:5-9). Jesus clearly taught, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

Beloved, if we are going to be a soul-winner (and it is Christ's intention that every Christian be), then we must be sure that we are right with God first. If we are unsure of our salvation, we certainly won't talk to others on such a touchy subject (and if we do, we will be ineffective). (It is not a matter of saying, I hope that I am a Christian; I hope that I am saved. This is no way to face eternity—we can KNOW about these all-important matters). And if we have unforgiven sins in our lives, people will usually know about it (as well as we). It is like trying to tell someone about some place where you have never been (Lot had a hard time getting his sons in law to take him seriously, "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law," Genesis 19:14). A compromising position will make us ineffective in God's use (ineffective to get what God wants done). However, like the writer of Proverbs said, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are as bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1).

Let us be sure that we are right with God, know the joy of salvation, and then go out and win the world for Christ. Christianity is contagious. The real thing is very impressive.

**II. THE WORLD IS REALLY LOST.**

A subtle neo-universalism exists today (do we really believe that the world is lost?). In our soft and pluralistic society permeated by humanism and relativism, it is almost unthinkable to think in terms of people being lost. We may not have totally accepted such a position, but subconsciously we have been brought

under its spell and the vigor and drive has been taken out of our evangelism. However, Christians will be motivated and moved to be soul-winners when they realize that the world is actually lost in sin and what it really means to be lost.

Why did Jesus Christ say in the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations*" (Matthew 28:19)? Why did he command, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*" (Mark 16:15)? The "why" is evident in the next verse: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The answer is clear. To speak in terms of being saved is to imply that men are lost. Mankind is lost. It is just like Paul later wrote: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). John wrote that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). John 3:16 has as its focus the whole world. Make no mistake about it. This old world is lost in sin, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope of its salvation (Acts 4:12).

With a full realization that all men are lost in their sins (and if they should die that way they will be eternally separated from God), let us proceed with our thoughts. A scene of what is beyond death comes before us in the case of the rich man and Lazarus. Seeing there was no hope for him, the rich man plead with Father Abraham, "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27,28). Then we read II Corinthians 5:10,11b, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. . ."

These verses bring out the great driving concern for the lost which comes from fully realizing what it means to be lost (ultimately). The rich man in hell suddenly became very evangelistic (unselfishly evangelistic) in his outlook. He knew that he had five ungodly brothers who would end up in torment—and that hell was a reality (it couldn't be any more real; he was there!). And the apostle Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." What he wrote before spoke of the judgment. Hell could be awaiting. When the Judge of the Universe speaks the final word about man's eternal destiny, what a terrorizing experience that could be. Like the stoic criminal who finally goes to pieces with the judge's pronouncement of his death sentence, seizures of terror overcome the lost soul.

Beloved, this old world really is lost in sin, and if men die that way eternal hell awaits (that's how awful sin is in God's sight). Don't be afraid that you are judging in the wrong way to think this. That is the whole point of Jesus Christ dying on that old rugged cross and the giving of the Great Commission. Look upon all outside of Christ as lost, without hope. You will never do anything to try to save them and they will never be saved until you and they realize this. Just

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**“THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee”** *(Continued from Last Page)*

because people are “nice,” relatives, or friends never back away in talking to them. Everyone needs salvation.

Beloved, suppose you are going down the street. Suddenly you notice the flames leaping out of your neighbor’s roof—his house is on fire! Totally unaware of what is happening, there your neighbor is sitting in his living room reading a newspaper. What should you do? You reply, “What should I do? I can’t tell him; I am not eloquent!” And you further rejoin, “I can’t tell him; it might offend him.”

**III. CHRIST IS RISEN LORD AND SAVIOUR.**

If we could somehow revisit the empty tomb and experience what those early followers of Christ experienced that original first day of the week, *then* we would have no trouble being a soul-winner for Christ. Unfulfilled dreams and expectations, as well as the awful ordeal of the crucifixion, were behind the silent women who came early that Sunday morning to the tomb of Jesus. The otherwise overall picture of quietness had been earlier disturbed by the rolling away of the stone, and now a heavenly angelic being sat upon the stone. He addressed the startled women, “Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead...” (Matthew 28: 5-7). Then we read, “And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word” (verse 8). Beginning with this, and then multiplied appearances of the resurrected Christ to various disciples, the feeling of defeat was turned into vibrant optimism, joy, and unmuzzled boldness. Jesus was really who he said that he was. Peter boldly declared on the day of Pentecost to an international audience of Jews, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Thus the gospel (the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—I Corinthians 15:1-4) began to spread in a fantastic way. Men could not be silenced (Acts 4:18-20). One had broken the chain of sin and death. Jesus indeed was the Christ (risen Lord and Saviour).

One of those who tried to silence the message of the gospel was Saul of Tarsus. However, he met the resurrected Christ of history and eternity on the road to Damascus. We read about it in the 9th chapter of Acts. In a most dramatic way, Christ revealed himself to this persecuter of the church. In the midst of a brilliant light, exceeding the brightness of the noonday sun, Christ suddenly appeared to Saul. We read, “And he (Saul) fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord

said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. . . And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.”

As this was read, this writer thought about another man who was blinded and what was impressed on his mind before he was blinded. This is found in II Kings 25:7. King Zedekiah rebelled against the rule of Babylon. In the process of Babylon subduing him, Jerusalem was besieged until famine set in. Eventually, under cover of night, King Zedekiah and his men of war fled. They were overtaken and captured in the plains of Jericho. Then we read, “And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.” Think of that! The last thing he saw was his sons killed in cold blood (cut down before his very eyes), then they put his eyes out. That would be the last thing he remembered seeing as he was left in his world of darkness, and it would be there as a disturbing mental picture to haunt him the rest of his life. How awful! How dreadful! How depressing!

For a moment Saul of Tarsus had a picture of the resurrected Christ in all of his glory branded upon his brain for time and eternity. For three days and nights this would be indelibly impressed on his mind as that would be all that he saw in his blindness. Then when his sight was restored, no man could take this picture away. It would serve as an impetus to inspire, compel, and tirelessly drive him to the uttermost parts of the Roman Empire (and even the world) to preach the

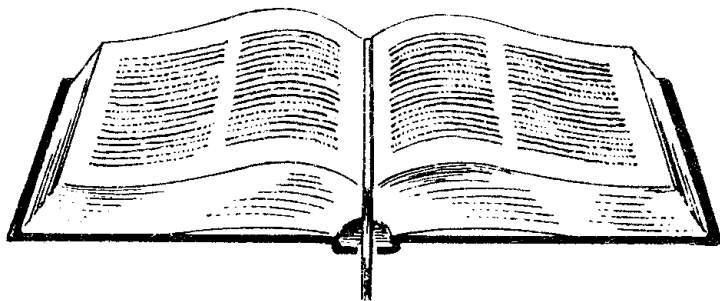
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**ANSWERS TO  
Quiz Over Other Names of Bible  
People, Places, and Things**

1. Abram (Genesis 17:5).
2. Israel (Genesis 32:28).
3. Benjamin (Genesis 35:18).
4. Simon, Cephas (Matthew 10:2; John 1:42).
5. Bartholomew (John 1:45-51).
6. Levi (Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14).
7. Thomas (John 20:24).
8. Lebbaeus, Judas (Matthew 10:3; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
9. Saul (Acts 13:9).
10. Joses or Joseph (Acts 4:36).
11. John (Acts 12:12).
12. Bethel (Genesis 28:19; 35:6).
13. Esau, land of Seir, Mount Seir (Genesis 25:30; 32:3; 36:1, 8,9).
14. Ephrath (Genesis 35:19).
15. Hebron (Genesis 23:2; 35:27).
16. Sea of Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11), Sea of Chinneroth (Joshua 12:3), Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), and Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1).
17. Mount Horeb (Exodus 34:29,32; Leviticus 26:46; Deuteronomy 4:15; 5:2).
18. Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:11-17; Luke 22:1).
19. Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:10; Acts 2:1).
20. Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:34,42, 43).



# Christianity WITHOUT Denominations



**TO WHAT DENOMINATION** did Peter, James, John, the 3000 on Pentecost, Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, Paul, Lydia, the Corinthians, and the jailer belong? They were members of the body of Christ, which is the Lord's church (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18,24; 3:15), yet they were not members of any denomination. All who were saved became members of this body, the church, by virtue of the fact that God added them to it—Acts 2:47. Yet they belonged to no denomination. They had been called out of the "power of darkness" or the world, and translated into the "kingdom of God's dear Son," which is the church (Colossians 1:13,14,18), but still they were not members of any denominational church.

Just so, today, if a sinner believes in Christ, repents, and is baptized, just as the 3000, the eunuch, Lydia, Cornelius, the jailer, etc., such would make him a Christian, but nothing more (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-41; 8:35-39; 16:14,15; 16:30-34; Galatians 3:26,27). This would not make him a member of any denomination.

If a great number should do this, would they not be Christians? Should this number come together on the first day of the week to worship, Acts 20:7, call themselves by the same name as did the apostles and early Christians, accept and teach the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, select such servants as the Bible authorizes, and observe the same commands in the same way as the apostles and early Christians did, and as are set forth in the Bible—they would be simply New Testament Christians, members of the body of Christ, or the New Testament church, assembling for worship without being members of any denomination on earth.

This is what we are humbly trying to do as a professed church of Christ. If you want to be simply a New Testament Christian—no more and no less—then study your Scriptures and be a member of the church you read about there (and that alone). May we forget denominationalism and divest ourselves from it to be one in Christ. Let us humbly and carefully search out the Scriptures.

You are welcome to attend with us as we seek to do this.

## "GOD IS LOVE"

**"THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"** (Continued from Last Page)

gospel. He would never forget this. Jesus Christ was real and no impostor. He would say, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). This Saul (PAUL) became a soul-winner of unequalled motivation and zeal.

Just think! Jesus really did come forth from the grave. He is the divine Son of the Living God. As the first-fruits of those who slept, he assures our resurrection and eternal body. He has broken the chain of sin and death. With fear and great joy, let us hurry from the empty tomb to share the good news with a dying world.

#### IV. TIME IS SHORT.

As a final motivating factor in being soul-winners, let us simply say that time is short. The Lord has promised us that in carrying out the Great Commission he would be with us "unto the end of the world (age)" (Matthew 28:20). Sooner or later the end is coming. The fact that it has not come yet only substantiates what we read in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is giving lost humanity more time to get their lives right (and giving us more time to take the gospel to them). Are we doing it?

And time is short in another way, that in reference to our individual lives in relation to the great work to be done. In the introduction to this article, we mentioned the statistics on the exploding population of the world. How awesome is this information. It took until about 1900 (we are told) for the world's population to reach about 1 billion people. Now, 90 years later, we have 5 billion people on our hands. By 1999 we are told the number will be 6 billion. We know it is appointed unto all men once to die and after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). And to think that in death most of these people are going out into a Christless eternity! Is there no concern for this? What are we doing about it in relation to the time God has allotted us to live?

Psalms 90 speaks of the frailty and brevity of human life (and what it should teach us). It says, "The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and

(Continued on Next Page)

## RELATIVISM: A Modern Day "Cop-Out"?

UNIVERSITY of Chicago professor and philosopher Allan Bloom says that malignant relativism is destroying the ideas of moral truth, wisdom and greatness. He argues the openness is "not a means to exploring different answers to the great questions, but an excuse not to try to answer them at all."

—Via The Witness

**“THEN will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee”** *(Continued from Last Page)*

we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalms 90:10-12). Our time upon earth is short, and how this should teach us to live soberly and to apply our hearts to wisdom.

According to Proverbs 11:30, “He that winneth souls is wise.” Winning souls is one of the wisest things we can do when we consider the eternal results (for the soul won and for us). Daniel, looking to the end, said, “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise (teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:2,3).

**BELOVED**, these are prerequisites which should and must be personally realized if we want to be soul-winners (and it is Christ’s intention that all Christians be soul-winners). What an inspiring example the early church has left us. This world is lost in sin. The task is unbelievably great, but we have the only message of hope and salvation. Let us get into the reality and vitality of our religion (how wonderful it is!). “We have heard the joyful sound, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! Spread the tidings all around, Jesus saves! Jesus saves!” May the church of the Lord of Glory again have the ascendancy in this old world. It can. Yes, let us meet these prerequisites. “Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” AMEN! □

★★★★★★

**WORK UPON IMMORTAL SOULS**

*If we work upon marble, it will perish.  
If we work upon brass, time will efface it.  
If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust.  
But if we work upon immortal souls, and embue them with just principles, the fear of God, and the love of their fellow men, we engrave on those tablets that which will brighten all eternity. —Daniel Webster*

★★★★★★

**PROCRASTINATION**

**PROCRASTINATION**—The word is derived from “pro,” meaning forward, and “crastinus,” belonging to tomorrow. Thus, “to put off doing something until the future” (Webster).

Many things are wrong with procrastination:  
**It is a thief.** It steals from you the joy that comes from serving God today. It steals from God the influence for good you could have upon others. Indeed, it steals from you—it steals your soul! It steals your life, for one day there will be no tomorrow.  
**It is a liar.** It never says never, it says tomorrow and means never! For procrastination, tomorrow never comes.

**It is dishonorable.** It makes promises without the slightest assurance that it can fulfill them. He who

**QUIZ OVER**  
**Other Names of Bible People, Places, and Things**

1. What was Abraham’s original name?
2. What new name was given to Jacob after he wrestled all night with the angel?
3. Benoni was the name at first of which one of Jacob’s sons given to him by his mother?
4. The apostle Peter was known by what other name or names?
5. Nathanael is thought to be another name for which apostle?
6. What was Matthew’s other name?
7. Didymus is the same as which apostle?
8. Thaddaeus was known by what two other names?
9. What was the Jewish name of the apostle Paul?
10. What was the original name of the man we know as Barnabas?
11. What was Mark’s other name?
12. Luz was the ancient name of what place?
13. Edom was another name of what person and the country of Edom was known by what other name?
14. What was the ancient name of the town of Bethlehem?
15. The city of Arbah was replaced by what Hebrew name?
16. What are four other Bible names for the Sea of Galilee?
17. Mount Sinai was also known by what other name?
18. The feast of the Passover was also called what?
19. The feast of Pentecost was also called what?
20. The feast of Tabernacles was also identified in what other way?

**NOTE:** Answers to these questions are found elsewhere in this issue of **THE SWORD AND STAFF**. In checking the answers, study the Scriptures that are given (as this will be very worthwhile in increasing your knowledge of the Bible) □

promises God his service and obedience **TOMORROW**, promises something that is not his, and indeed never can be his!

**It is a deceiver.** It promises to one that which does not belong to it. All time, present and future, belongs to God (James 4:13,17). God holds the future in His hand, you cannot add or subtract one second.  
— Words of Life

★★★★★★

**WE ARE NOT HERE TO PLAY. . .**

*We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;  
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;  
Shun not the struggle, face it; 'tis God’s gift,  
Be strong!!!  
It matter not how deep entrenched the wrong,  
How hard the battle goes, the day how long,  
Faint not, fight on, tomorrow comes the song,  
Be strong!!!*

—Selected

★★★★★★



# OBJECTIONS TO THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM ANSWERED



**THE NEW TESTAMENT** is plain enough in teaching and showing that baptism (immersion) is part of the "plan of salvation." Such Scriptures as Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:5; Galatians 3:27; Titus 3:5; and I Peter 3:20,21 make this very evident. If a person truly believes in Christ and is in a state of repentance, the blood of Christ, spiritually speaking, is applied in the submissive act of baptism to wash away his sins (Acts 2:38-40; 22:16; Colossians 2:11-13; Revelation 1:5), and he is promised the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Romans 8:9).

But not everyone believes that baptism is essential to salvation. "Faith only" is the outstanding doctrine of Protestantism, and some say that baptism is essential for obedience, but not for salvation. To maintain such a position there are many Scriptures a person must "get around." Consequently there are many arguments forthcoming.

In this article we wish to examine some of the chief objections to baptism being essential to salvation (consider them in the light of the Word of God). We trust the following will be helpful.

## The Thief on the Cross

People who deny that baptism is necessary are always calling our attention to the thief on the cross (one of the two who were also crucified at the time Jesus was put to death). They correctly point out that Jesus said to one of these thieves, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Then they point out that the thief was not baptized. Evidently they think they have found a loophole, and this proves that baptism is not essential.

First, let us notice, there is a very basic (even elementary) misunderstanding

involved here. The matter of distinguishing between the Old and the New Testament is overlooked. The Old Testament was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24-27), and it lasted (was binding) until the death of Christ on the cross (Colossians 2:14). With that in mind, listen to Hebrews 9:15-17, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the *new testament*, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*"

Beloved, do you get the picture? The New Testament (or covenant) is just exactly like a man making out his last will and testament. He draws up his will, but it cannot be enforced until he dies. As long as he is living he can change the will as he pleases and do as he likes with that which he has to bequest. But once he dies, the will legally is in force. This is true with the Lord Jesus Christ. Before his death, the New Testament was not in force (and the Old Testament was still binding). He could do as he pleased pertaining to that which he had to give, in this case forgiveness and eternal life. Thus, he promised the repentant thief that he would be with him in paradise. But once the New Testament was sealed by his death, it had to be executed as he planned it and as his apostles declared it, they being his "official" witnesses (Acts 1:8,22; John 14:26). After the New Testament came in force (with his death and resurrection), the Lord Jesus Christ gave the great commission to his apostles, and said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*" (Mark 16:16). The answer to the question of salvation must come from this side of the cross.

Also, please examine Luke 5:23,24. Some were accusing Jesus of blasphemy because in healing he forgave sins, only God having such authority. Our Lord answered them, "What reason ye in your hearts? Whether it is easier to say, Thy

sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that *the Son of man hath power (authority) upon earth to forgive sins.*" The Son of God (God in human form) had authority to forgive sins in any manner he chose while on earth (but, as we have pointed out, once his testament was sealed by his death, it had to be carried out as he left it, "even unto the end of the world").

Finally, let us add, it would have been impossible at that time for the thief (even if he had had the opportunity) to have submitted to the baptism of the New Testament. Not only because of the fact that the New Testament was not in force, but listen to this. "Know ye not, that so many of us as are *buried with him by baptism* into death; that *like as Christ was raised up from the dead* by the glory of the Father, *even so* we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3,4). Now, we ask, how could the thief have been buried with Christ by baptism into his death (and resurrected with him) when Christ was still alive and had not been buried yet (let alone risen)? The baptism of the New Testament did not and could not yet apply.

As extended thought on the thief on the cross, let us consider what some call the "sinner's prayer" found in the context of Luke 18:10-14. This involved the Pharisee and publican who went up into the temple to pray. After the Pharisee had self-righteously prayed, "the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*" This publican's prayer is commonly called the sinner's prayer and is used as a model in telling sinners what to do to be saved (at the same time excluding the necessity of baptism). But, remember, this was during the time of the Old Testament (notice the mention of the temple). Pharisee and publican alike were Jews (and thus God's Old Testament people, no one else being allowed in the temple). Therefore, the publican's prayer would not be parallel to an alien sinner praying for salvation, but rather like a backslidden Christian seeking forgiveness. (Likewise, the thief on the cross, being in the land of the Jews, was very likely a renegade Jew—thus, his situation in no way being parallel to an alien sinner).

## Baptism Is a Work

Others quote Ephesians 2:8,9, trying to sidetrack baptism by calling it a work, and salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast." Here is the full quotation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works,

(Continued on Next Page)

lest any man should boast.”

Here we see the two “sides” of salvation—“For by *grace* are ye saved through *faith*.” The word *grace* means unmerited favor; here especially on the part of God toward man. We don’t deserve salvation, but God has made it available. So, everything associated with God may be summed up under *grace* (everything is in the context of *grace*). Then there is man’s side—“through *faith*.” Man’s whole relationship to God is based on faith. Faith is the mainspring of every action. The inspired writer didn’t say “faith only,” but he did say faith. This correctly sums up man’s side of his dealings with God.

Now the “rub” supposedly comes when it says, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is applied by those who deny baptism as they try to pinpoint it as a work.

Well, what is the answer to this objection to baptism?

The answer is rather simple (as truth usually is). There are two kinds of works mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures, (1) works of human merit and (2) works of faith. Works of human merit greatly characterized the Law of Moses. By this means no man had really been justified, according to the apostle Paul (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:23). The Law of Moses was very much like a firing squad. The wages of sin is death; all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; and the soul that sinneth, it shall die. There was no escape. Death awaited. But the kind of works taught as part of the New Testament are works of faith. We are justified by faith as the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins, and we find it is an obedient faith. The New Testament knows nothing of the common denominational doctrine of “faith only.” James in chapter 2 of his very practical epistle, having reference to works of faith, says that faith without works is dead. The only time the expression “faith only” is found in the New Testament is to deny the doctrine of *faith only*. Listen to James 2:24. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and *not by faith only*.”

Good works of human merit can never take away sin or undo the past (although works of faith are essential in being a real Christian). It is conceivable that a person could reform and live a good moral life above reproach, approaching above sin, then die and go to hell. His theretofore unforgiven sins would still be upon him. Good works of human merit cannot take away past sins. Only the blood of Christ can do this, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Kind reader, how in the world can people who object to the necessity of baptism apply the “works” argument

belief in this by a personal death to sin, a burial and a resurrection in baptism. Listen to Colossians 2:12. “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the *faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead.” Study Romans chapter 6. Also, the apostle Peter wrote, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (I Peter 3:21). And, what about Titus 3:5? “*Not by works of righteousness* which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Spirit).” Acts 2:38 is a parallel Scripture to this. He tells us that baptism is not a work of righteousness.

In fact baptism is anything but a work of human righteousness, lest any man should boast. According to Acts 2:38 (22:16; Colossians 2:11,12), we are baptized for the remission of sins—to get our sins washed away. Does human works do this? No, only the blood of Jesus. So, baptism is not a work of man (human righteousness), but it is God at work as the merits of the blood of Christ are spiritually applied to the sinner then.

Praise be to His Name!

**Believe and Be Saved**

A pagan Philippian jailer cried out in Acts 16 to Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (verse 31). People have told this writer this proved that “faith only” was all that is necessary to salvation, and that this verse excluded baptism. It really is strange how such people attempt to throw the Bible against itself.

We hereby point out that repentance is not included in the answer given the Philippian jailer either. Do these people who reject baptism believe that repentance is essential to salvation? Yes, for the most part they do, and this writer surely does! But repentance is not mentioned in this verse. If we used this verse to exclude baptism, it would also exclude repentance. One must be consistent.

The truth of the matter is that no verse of Scripture can mean any less than what it says, but there can be more truth in the light of other Scriptures. Also, we must get the whole picture (as here). They were talking to an outright pagan, a heathen. He had to be first introduced to this person the Lord Jesus Christ; then they would take things up from there. The verses that follow Acts 16:31 are very revealing in this matter. Listen:

“And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. and he took them *the same hour of the night*, and washed their stripes, and *was baptized*, he and all his, *straightway*.” Repentance is self-evident. And, yes, they got around to baptism. He was baptized the “same hour of the night” and “straightway.” Baptism must have been important.

As you study the book of Acts you will find that some people were told to “believe,” others to “repent and be baptized,” while still another was told simply to be “baptized.” What is the explanation of this? It is quite simple. They were at different “stages” in their conversion. It was needless to tell the man who already believed to believe. He was told to repent and be baptized. For the one who had repented, the command was not to repent, but to be baptized. It is very simple, isn’t it?

Kind reader, the Bible is plain enough in presenting baptism as part of the Lord’s “plan of salvation.” There is not a single objection to the necessity of baptism which cannot be answered in the light of God’s Word. The only thing left for the humble believer to do is to accept what the Bible says on the subject. After everything has been said, Acts 2:38 is still in the Bible (in the New Testament). Please; for your eternal well-being, listen. “Then Peter said unto them, *Repent and be baptized* everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the remission of sins*, and ye shall *receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)*.” He continued, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to *all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*” (verse 39). This is for everyone who will ever become a Christian (and all become Christians in the same way). Then verse 40 reads, “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, *Save yourselves from this untoward (wicked) generation*.” How could they save themselves? Not by works of human merit, but by simply responding to what Peter said, **BY REPENTING AND BEING BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS!** Notice the exciting verse that follows: “Then they that *gladly received his word were baptized*...” (verse 41b).

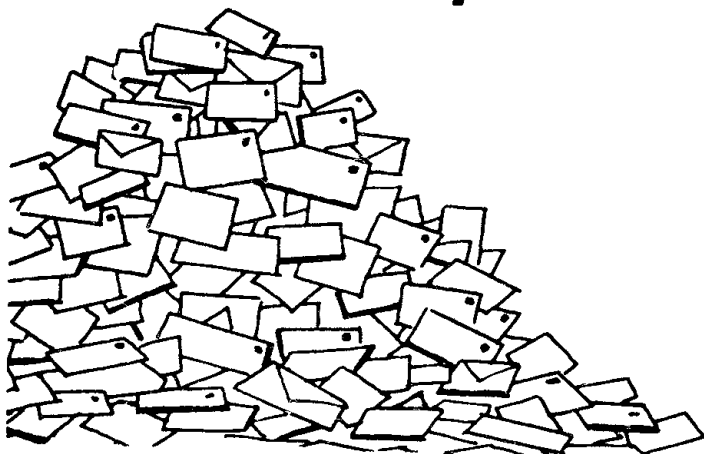
Beloved, would you no longer object to what the Bible teaches on baptism, and likewise gladly receive the Word and be baptized like in the early New Testament times? You will be eternally glad that you did!

—By **JAMES E. GIBBONS**

**NOTE:** This article, “Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered,” is available from us in tract/leaflet form.

# READERS'

## ... Response



### MASSACHUSETTS:

■ *"The real reason why I am writing is to tell you how much I felt blessed by the last issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I felt this was one of the finest issues of the paper to come off your press. I not only felt encouraged but challenged by each article to continue serving God with a more holy life. Truly we seem to miss the privilege God has bestowed on us of being part of His family. If only Christians could grasp the awesome, everlasting, almighty, everpowerful God we serve and put that knowledge into practice, how much greater we could serve Him. . ."*

### VIRGINIA:

■ *"I thank you in advance for your time and energy, and for your outstanding material. May the LORD bless you always for your hard work; it does pay off!"*

### ARKANSAS:

■ *"Your article 'When Faith Takes Hold in Evangelism' in Volume 25, Number 1 of THE SWORD AND STAFF is one of the best I've ever read! And how such teaching is needed in the church today. . ."*

### KENTUCKY:

■ *"I have been receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF since 1970. I would like to thank you for sending it so faithfully. I would like to say to you that it is one of the most conservative papers that I receive. . ."*

*"I am sending a gift and I hope it will be a help to you in continuing the printing of this paper and preaching the true Word of God.*

*"May God richly bless you in your stand for the truth."*

### OHIO:

■ *"Please put me on the mailing list for THE SWORD AND STAFF.*

*"I appreciate your solidness in God's Word (I'm sure HE does, too).*

*"God bless you as you've been a blessing to others."*

### INDIANA:

■ *"I noticed a response on page 13, of Volume 25, Number 1, 1987, from the director of the North American Christian Convention. I thought you might be interested in a letter that I directed to the executive committee of the N.A.C.C. in regard to the 1986 convention in Indianapolis. I have enclosed a copy of the letter.*

*"My wife and I were appalled with some of the workshops*

*at the 1986 convention that dealt with the leadership of women in the church and marriage, divorce and remarriage. We decided that we can no longer support the N.A.C.C. or have any association with it.*

*"You are to be commended for taking a stand on the Word of God and exposing false teaching and the doctrines of men. THE SWORD AND STAFF is an excellent publication that points out the apostasy of the Christian Church as well as the various denominations."*

(Editor's Note: The said letter to the Executive Committee of the North American Christian Convention follows. I do not personally know this gentleman who has written, but obviously both of his letters have a profound bearing on questions involving the N.A.C.C.—about which others have also written in the last few months.)

### THE LETTER:

June 5, 1987

North American Christian Convention Office  
Executive Committee  
3533 Epley Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247

Gentlemen:

My wife and I have been enthusiastic supporters of the N.A.C.C. since 1970. The N.A.C.C. has served many needs, and has addressed things that needed to be addressed. We have appreciated this and have actively helped to underwrite the expense, supported it by attending and have also assisted with various jobs when we could.

Throughout these years, we have been the beneficiary of workshops, classes and sermons. We have been instructed in the word and have experienced growth and challenge from many of the sessions. For this we are grateful, and wish to thank the Executive Committee for their effort to make available sound Bible teaching and instruction.

There were times when we didn't understand why a denominational preacher or teacher was included in the teaching staff, because they taught their dogma somewhat by precept and certainly by inference. This was very subtle at first, and we were told that they were there to share in an area of which they had expertise.

This they did very effectively, isolated instances for a while, then becoming more frequent until denominationalism and Calvinism are now espoused by inference, as well as their publications, and actual teaching.

Both men and women of denominational persuasion have been involved in workshops, etc., and the Calvinistic tulip has been effectively taught. These folk have been invited carte blanche; their books and publications have been promoted at the convention, which for the most part teach Calvinism, denominational dogma, and confuse the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

People attending the N.A.C.C., and those who are informed by publications are well aware of many of these well known folk that are in error, and conclude that since they are at the N.A.C.C., that the convention, and the Christian Church believes as they do.

When questioned, we seemed to hear answers that this would be addressed, that it was not the intention of the N.A.C.C. to promote these folk and their work. However, this has not been the case through the recent years. Simple observation reveals that just the antithesis has occurred.

This is very disturbing, and brings two questions to mind; 1) Why is this allowed? and, 2) Who is responsible? The answers are rather simple and obvious. 1) Apostasy and, 2) The Executive Committees. Why has this not been addressed and corrected?

(Continued on Next Page)

## READERS' RESPONSE. . .

(Continued from Last Page)

We have grave concern for the direction that the N.A.C.C. has taken through the years. The Christian churches once looked to the word to determine their rule of Faith and Practice, but now it appears that neither the N.A.C.C. nor the churches seek Bible authority for what they do.

There have been a legion of workshops on Church Growth. Some of them have been informative and have offered ideas worthy of consideration. However, for the most part the common denominator is always the same. Construct the worship service, and Bible school classes, and the outreach program to entertain and attract all people. In order to do this, you have to abandon the teaching of Bible doctrine and thus sayeth the Lord. The idea is to make people feel good, but not convict them of sin through the word. You don't dare expose Calvinism as the damnable doctrine, that is, you might upset someone and turn them away. It is better to allow them to believe the lie, and stay than to teach them the truth.

You don't address the social and moral problem of marriage, divorce and remarriage from a Biblical perspective. That isn't popular and people don't want to hear it or obey it, nor do they want to identify that which is sin in this regard. Feelings and, "I think," prevails instead of what the Bible has to say.

The Bible school classes are to be tailored to be social clubs that do not teach and convict people with the word of God. Much of the material is a book or a paper written by Chuck Swindall, or some other well known Calvinist. The material teaches faith only salvation as a starter, and goes from there. I might be so brash, as to remind you, that if these men believe what they say they do, they are not Christians, and are not in a saved condition according to God's revelation through His Word.

Another idea in the church growth syndrome is to abandon such terms as preacher or evangelist, and have the preacher call himself a "pastor." This appeals to denominational folk with a Calvinistic background. Once they attend the Christian church they find no difference from the Baptist church for example.

The so-called pastor must preach a positive sermon that makes people feel good. Never, never, preach a sermon that might make people feel bad about their sinful practices. To experience church growth, you don't preach on "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" Ezekiel 18:4. Don't preach what the Holy Spirit moved Luke to write: "I tell you, Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" Luke 13:3.

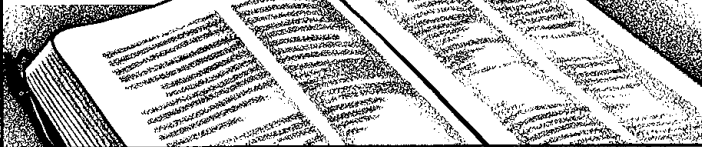
People like to do what they want and have the preacher and elders wish them Godspeed. You just can't preach on the theme "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" Proverbs 14:12.

Above all, you don't want to teach, "If (condition), ye love me, ye will keep (no option) my commandments" John 14:15. That might give someone a guilt complex to learn that God has absolutes, and without exception, we are obligated to obey His commands. Any thing short of this, is not love for Him, and for the Christ.

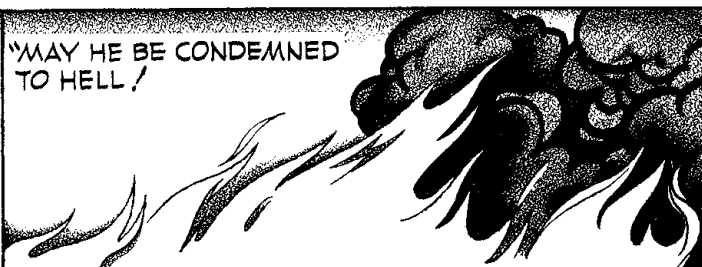
Many, or perhaps some, have been concerned the last few years about the material that is used in Bible School, and the source material for sermons and lessons that the preacher uses. In most cases someones book is used in Bible School, and sermons for the most part skirt the rudiments of the word of the Reverent and Holy God. What ever happened to the Bible? Shouldn't it be used? If I want to know something about a pearl and understand a pearl, I must examine the pearl, instead of reading what someone writes about the pearl. It's interesting to observe what people carry to church

## THE BIBLE CONTAINS STRONG LANGUAGE

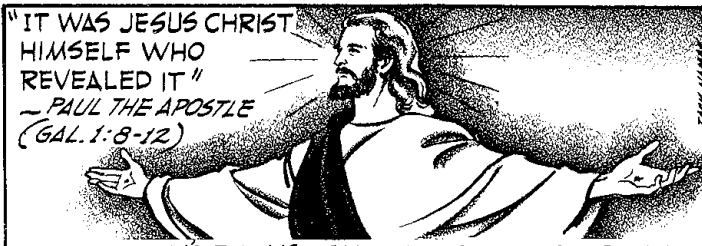
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE ANYTHING, BUT  
"IF ANYONE PREACHES A  
GOSPEL THAT IS  
DIFFERENT..."



"MAY HE BE CONDEMNED  
TO HELL!"



"IT WAS JESUS CHRIST  
HIMSELF WHO  
REVEALED IT"  
- PAUL THE APOSTLE  
(GAL. 1:8-12)



FROM TODAY'S ENG. VS. : GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN

and Bible school, and also to the N.A.C.C.! If any thing is carried, for the most part it's not the Bible. Best we pay attention to what Jesus told the Sadducees, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God" Matthew 22:29. If we really want to know the Christ, we need to read and study the Bible, not someone's book.

On the day of Judgment, we will be held responsible for knowing, practicing, and obeying the word of God. We will be without excuse. Why isn't this taught at the N.A.C.C.?

From workshops at the N.A.C.C., on "Church Growth," it appears that we believe church growth is by the cunning of man, instead of thus saith the Lord, and compromise instead of obedience and steadfastness. Best we study the book of Acts to learn how the church came into being and experienced the tremendous growth that it did, and then emulate what the early church did.

From workshops and classes at the N.A.C.C.'s, there have come ideas, that alcoholism is a sickness, not necessarily sin, that you can't teach that social drinking is sin; that there are sins of ignorance and passion of the moment that we are not held accountable for, negating the necessity of repentance. I would understand Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30, and I John 1:9, to teach the antithesis. How would you gentlemen teach me? Would you teach me that I have erred in the assimilation of God's word, and arrived at the wrong conclusion where I understand that I *must repent of all of my sins*? I can only surmise that this is what you would teach me, as it has been taught in workshops that the Executive Committees have approved.

The sessions through the last several years in regard to divorce and remarriage have made a mockery of God's word, that deals with that very subject.

A few years ago, a man conducted a workshop, and taught that if someone was divorced for a reason other than what God permits, namely an act of fornication by the opposite marriage partner, and then that person would marry again, that adultery was committed only on, the first sexual union,

and thereafter there was no adultery involved. According to his teaching, this would then be a valid marriage, and this would not be a sinful relationship from that point on! Search as you may, this is not found in the New Testament. Jesus taught that anyone who divorces for a reason other than fornication, and marries again, commits adultery, (continual action). Matthew 19:9, First Corinthians 6:9, and Revelation 21:8, are just a few of the many Scriptures that teach us that the adulterers and the sexually immoral will find their place in the fiery lake of fire.

At the sake of being presumptuous, might I ask why the gentlemen who were on the Executive Committee at that time permitted such a workshop at the N.A.C.C.?

The honest question comes to mind, are the N.A.C.C. Executive Committees influenced more by a man's credentials than what he teaches? It appears that the Bible is no longer the standard by which N.A.C.C. material is examined, to determine if it should be allowed.

The man who conducted this workshop was a Bible College professor, and is now the President of a Bible College. The colleges are for lack of a better word, of the Christian Church brotherhood.

The 1986 N.A.C.C. convention in Indianapolis convinced my wife and me that we can no longer support the N.A.C.C. or have any association with it. We were appalled with some of the workshops, sessions, etc. that dealt with the leadership of women, and with marriage, divorce and remarriage.

Women preachers were there, and led workshops. The idea that this is acceptable to the Lord was taught both by precept and inference, as was women serving as deacons. There were scattered conversations dealing with the acceptance of women serving as elders. Official or not, this eldership problem for women grew out of the erroneous teaching of the woman's leadership roll in the Lord's church.

One of the workshops, "Women as Leaders Today, Hospital Chaplaincy" was lead by Sherry L. Miller, who presents her credentials as an ordained minister and chaplain.

The workshop, "Women as Leaders in the New Testament," led by Dorothy Keister, was most interesting. She did two things worthy of note, that would be most interesting to publish and make known to the brotherhood. The first, was that she put the responsibility for the promotion of women preachers, and church leaders at the N.A.C.C. where it belongs. She thanked the Executive Committee for this. Now we know what went on behind closed doors.

The second, was that she managed to glean out women apostles in the New Testament. Perhaps the Holy Spirit errored in not mentioning them, and including their names with the 12!!

Debbie Brunzman led a workshop, "Women as Leaders Today." Debbie said she was a preacher. She is a cross cultural evangelist who thinks the church is in gross error in as much as it is not developing a strong female leadership.

This is just to mention a few instances of the female leadership workshops that the Executive Committee so graciously provided for us.

Some of the workshops at the 1986 Indianapolis convention dealt with divorce and remarriage, which is rampant in our promiscuous society. Much of what was said is true, and the legion of problems accompanying divorce were aptly stated. However, the idea was taught that you can disobey God's command in this regard and still be in a saved condition. It's a terrible thing to tamper with God's word and to give folk a false sense of security who are living in an adulterous relationship. I fear that many who pay heed to this teaching will go to their eternal destiny feeling good about themselves, but will not enter the Kingdom of God.

One such example of this teaching, was in Mr. Thomas W.

McGee's workshop, "The Church Faces Divorce." Mr. McGee presented the idea, that God's intention is that a man and a woman marry, and remain in that relationship until separated by death. However, Mr. McGee taught that on the basis of the Corinthians who had been forgiven of such sins, and also other sins, (I Corinthians 6:9-11), that a person may be divorced for a reason other than the fornication of their marriage partner, and marry again, without this being an adulterous relationship. The folk in First Corinthians 6:11 that he mentioned were washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. They had repented of their sins, which is to change your mind, and to stop sinful practices. If they were living in an adulterous relationship, to repent, they would have had to separate themselves from that sinful relationship. Another example is found in Ephesians 4. The Ephesians are commanded to no longer live in the sinful manner of the Gentiles. They were reminded that they didn't come to know the Christ in that way. "He who has been stealing must steal no longer" (Ephesians 4:28). What ever sin they were committing, they had to stop it. If they were living in an adulterous relationship due to divorce and remarriage, they had to stop it.

Mr. McGee said he didn't believe that millions of persons who have been divorced and remarried have been placed in a position where they are utterly without hope. May I suggest that our salvation is dependent upon God's commands and our response to them, not what someone may think.

Mr. McGee also said that he thought remission of sins is available to all upon the basis of faith and repentance. I'm sure all would agree with this statement, however repentance requires that one change their mind about their sinful practices, and to stop them. Living in an adulterous relationship is not repentance.

I can only presume that Mr. McGee's views are taught at St. Louis Christian College. I wonder if the brotherhood and the good people who send their kids there to learn, are aware of this?

Jim and Elanie Hutchinson led the workshop, "Adjusting to a Second Marriage." The very title of the workshop would lead one to believe that divorce and remarriage is permissible. Couple that with the statement that, "The second marriage is therefore a second opportunity no matter what terminated the first." Their workshop certainly presented the idea that one could be divorced for a reason other than the only one that God allows, and then to remarry, without this being an adulterous relationship in God's eyes.

The Bible still says, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, *except* for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery" Matthew 19:9.

When studied in context, the Bible is not that difficult to understand, in regard to God's teaching concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage. It appears that the church has been influenced by the world, instead of church influencing the world.

In the past, the brotherhood was known as men and women of the word, who accepted the Bible as their rule of practice and faith. They looked for Bible authority for what they did individually, and as congregations in the Lord's Church. There have been many committed men who have given themselves to study, and to the teaching of God's word. Bible colleges took their stand on the word of God, and prepared young men and women to respect and accept God's roll in life, for both men and women. They learned that by the wisdom of God, each was created and equipped to function in the particular roll that God set out for them. Men and women were intended to compliment each other, not to compete for each others roll in life, and also in the Lord's Church.

(Continued on Next Page)



READERS' RESPONSE. . .

(Continued from Last Page)

Why have the Bible colleges, the teachers, the churches, and the N.A.C.C. abandoned that practice and teaching?

I noticed in your N.A.C.C. update that the preacher at Kingsway Christian Church in Indianapolis is preaching at the convention in July.

It's interesting that the Kingsway preacher and the elders led the congregation in ordaining a woman. The lady was ordained into the ministry of pastoral care and counseling. Another interesting observation, is that she attended Cincinnati Christian Seminary. Dr. Jack Cottrell professor of theology at the Seminary was the speaker at the ordination, and Dr. Willard Winter of the Seminary also participated in the ordination. Obviously, all concerned, the Seminary and the church believe in ordaining women.

You would be hard pressed to glean out an ordination service for preachers in the New Testament, let alone the ordination of women.

Why not be honest and forthright and inform folk through the N.A.C.C. Update that the N.A.C.C. has endorsed women preachers, teachers and leadership in the Lord's Church? I'm sure the Brotherhood would like to know this before support is pledged to the N.A.C.C. for next July!

Perhaps the N.A.C.C. Executive Committee, some of the Bible College professors, some of the preachers and maybe even some of the brethren have been enlightened by a neo-hermeneutical study to arrive at such conclusions! Why not share with the rest of us where in the Bible do you find authority for much of what has been taught at the N.A.C.C.? Many of us would appreciate being informed as to book, chapter and verse(s), where to find authority for divorce for any reason, and then to marry again, women preachers, and leaders and accepting denominational teaching and fellowship!

Most likely, a publication other than the *N.A.C.C. Update*, *Christian Standard*, or the *Lookout*, will be needed to inform the Brotherhood of what has been going on. It would be most interesting and also beneficial to see such a publication come into being, or some other existing publication to inform the brotherhood of what is going on. The facts are available; one need do no more than examine the tapes and manuscripts from the previous North American Christian Conventions.

It is my sincere desire that this letter might provoke you gentlemen to examine what you are doing, and stop leading people down the pathway of apostasy. The nation Israel chose the pathway of sin and disobedience against God. They thought they could sin with impunity, but God dealt with their sin as they were held responsible for their actions. With this before us as a example, it defies reason why men follow the same pathway of destruction, seemingly, with the same idea of impunity.

We are obligated to seek Bible authority for that which we practice and teach, and understand that when the Bible is silent, this does not grant consent.

It was well said by Solomon in his conclusion. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

Respectfully yours,  
Richard E. Lambert

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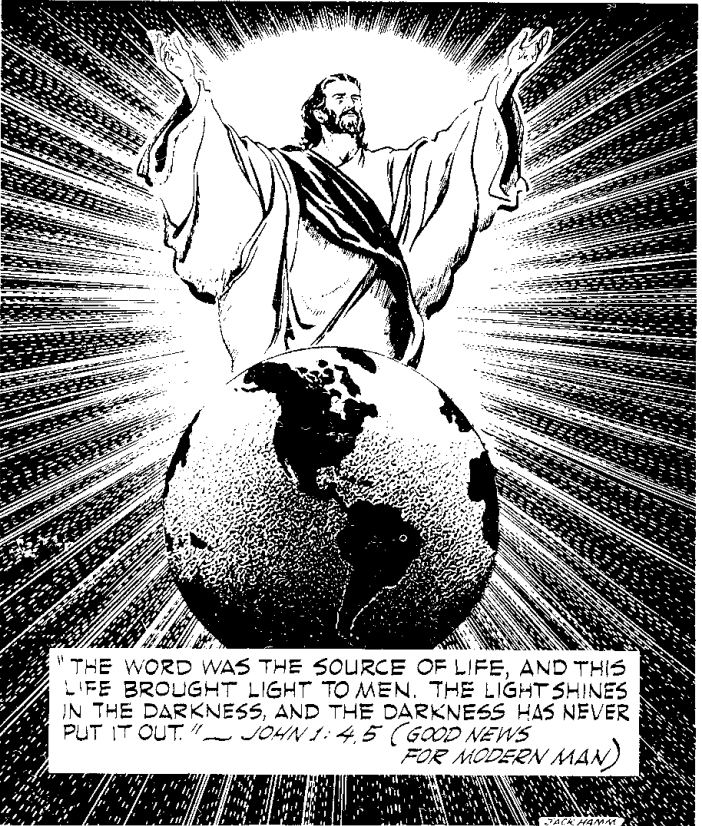
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"His Name is called The Word of God"



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Some serious considerations for the sensitive and conscientious Christian sister. . .

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S  
CLOTHING

■ By Mrs. Vaughn (Margaret) Elliott  
Apdo. 1209  
Guatemala, Guatemala

ALTHOUGH the Bible does not tell us Christian women exactly how to dress, it does give us principles to apply to our clothing (I Timothy 2:9,10; I Peter 3:1-6). Along with these principles it is of utmost importance to understand how God has made the woman and the man. Each sex is made very special but each one is made different from the other. Also each one has its own temptations and weaknesses.

The man was made by God in the matter of sex to be attracted easily to the woman through the eyes. He was made to have strong sexual desires and to be easily excited through his sight, by what he sees of the woman. It is for this reason that the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:27-30 are written in order to help the man



who wants to follow God to avoid sin with his eyes and in order that the woman should know the special temptations of the man.

Some women say, "Well, it's that men have dirty minds." Of course, there are some men of the world who are going to think dirty things when they look at any woman, no matter what she is wearing. But for the woman to say, "Because there are men like that, I can wear whatever style I want to and it is the responsibility of men to watch their eyes and mind," is unjust. To talk like that is leaving the total responsibility of sexual sin with the man.

The Bible teaches that all Christians, female and male, have the responsibility to not cause a brother to stumble or to fall (Romans 14:13). For this reason the woman carries a heavy responsibility in the matter of sexual sins of the man. If a woman is dressed in a way that calls attention to her body, she carries the burden of causing men to sin. At the same time she is participating in the sin of the man.

Knowing this, we have to realize that what we Christian women wear has great possibilities of danger. The more of our body that is revealed the more attention is being called to our sexual parts.

Being very concerned for my Christian sisters, I have made a list of questions in order to help us fulfill God's commandment to dress "in modest apparel with shamefastness and sobriety." Read with prayer I Timothy 2:9,10 and I Peter 3:1-6. Look the words up in a dictionary in order to understand what they mean. Ask yourself, as a Christian woman, the following questions about your clothing that you already have and about what you are going to buy or sew. Ask the help of your husband or another Christian woman to look at you. It is not possible to see everything necessary yourself in order to make a decision if something is good to wear or not.

**Does it call attention to my body?**  
(I John 2:15-17)

- Is it too tight?
- Does the cloth cling to my body?
- Does this clothing show my figure, my hips, my buttocks, my breasts?
- Examples: sweaters, knitted dresses, knit and stretch material, pants.
- Does this clothing show my body movements when I walk?
- Does this piece of clothing show the outline of my underwear?
- Does this skirt demand or have a slit to make walking easier?
- What does this slit reveal of my body? A slit says to a man, "Look! and try to see more."
- What happens when I sit down?
- Does the skirt go above my knees?
- Does it show my knees and my legs above my knees?
- What can a person across from me see? Revealing the knees and upper legs calls attention to the sexual parts of the body that is above them (Exodus 20:26).
- Does it make me appear to be something I am not?**
- Does it make me look like a man?

- Does it make me look like a harlot?
- Does it make me look like a neon sign or a clown?
- Does it make me look like a Christian?

**Am I afraid to be different from the world?**

- How important is it to be dressed in the latest style? (Romans 12:1,2; James 4:4)
- The changing styles in clothes is a business of the world with the purpose of making as much money as possible. Don't fall into their trap. The best style for you is the one that suits you as an individual Christian.
- What do the clothing designers say about this style?
- Notice that their emphasis is not the emphasis of God's word. Examples: sexy, elegant, brings out your figure.

**Why am I buying this clothing?**

- Will it serve a useful purpose? (I Timothy 6:6-8)
- Do I really need this?
- Although it has a low price, would it be wise to buy it? (rummage sales)
- Am I putting too much emphasis on clothing? (Matthew 6:31-33)
- Am I buying it because someone else has it? (I Timothy 6:9,10)
- Have I remembered the needs of the poor? (Matthew 19:21; Galatians 2:10)
- Should I use this money to buy other more important things for my family?
- Does this style fit into my style of life?
- When would I wear it?
- Will I be getting out of subjection to my husband (or father) if I buy this knowing that he disapproves? (I Peter 3:5)

May God bless you and help you to be the kind of woman that is dressed and who lives according to what the Bible teaches! □

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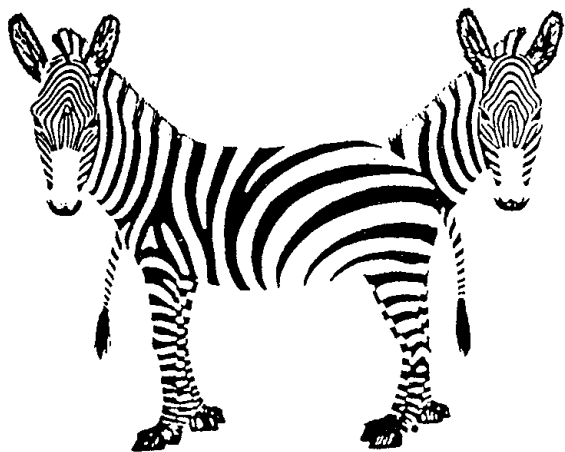
**The One Who Counts**

**IT IS NOT** the critic who counts, nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena: whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows great enthusiasms, great devotion, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.—*Theodore Roosevelt* □

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

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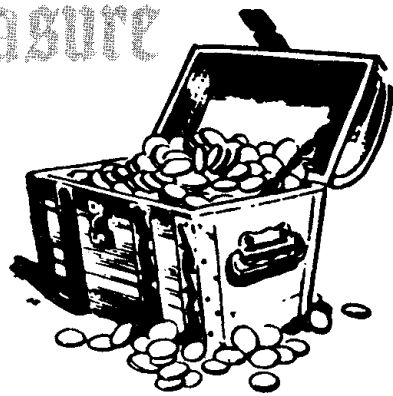
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