

The Sword AND Staff

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

THE BODY OF CHRIST

GOD DESCRIBES HIS SON



CHRIST IS THE
VISIBLE EXPRESSION
OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.

HE EXISTED BEFORE
CREATION BEGAN,
FOR IT WAS THROUGH
HIM THAT EVERY-
THING WAS MADE,
WHETHER
SPIRITUAL OR
MATERIAL, SEEN OR UNSEEN.

THROUGH HIM,
AND FOR HIM, ALSO
WERE CREATED
POWER AND DOMINION,
OWNERSHIP AND AUTHORITY.

IN FACT, EVERY
SINGLE THING
WAS CREATED
THROUGH, AND FOR, HIM.

HE IS BOTH THE FIRST
PRINCIPLE AND THE UP-
HOLDING PRINCIPLE
OF THE WHOLE SCHEME
OF CREATION.

AND NOW HE IS THE HEAD
OF THE BODY WHICH IS THE
CHURCH.

LIFE FROM NOTHING BEGAN THROUGH HIM, AND LIFE FROM THE DEAD BEGAN THROUGH HIM. HE IS, THEREFORE, JUSTLY CALLED *THE LORD OF ALL.*" ~ COL. 1:15-18 (PHILS. TFS.)

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

THE MOST amazing truth is that God took the body of a man and in that body walked upon the face of the earth, fully identifying Himself with His special creation, man. It is as simple, and at the same time as profound, as the prologue of the gospel of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,)

full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14).

Think of that! "Emmanuel"—God with us (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23). The virgin birth of Christ had been anticipated all the way from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). Isaiah's declaration stirred the imagination, and looked forward to it as if it had already happened, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Conception, embryo, fetus, birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and death: the Son of God went through it all in identifying himself with man and in accomplishing his purpose in reference to man. In this body of human feeling and suffering he moved and had his being. He was truly man (as well as being divine). In this body he was tempted (yet without sin). In this body he went about doing good, and in this body he died on the old rugged cross for the sins of the world. Truly Paul wrote: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles (nations), believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Timothy 3:16).

Yes, the human body of Jesus was gloriously raised from the dead, and in it he ascended back to heaven (his body at that time perhaps being of the same nature as that of Christians when they rise to meet him in the air at his second coming). But Christ still has a body upon this earth today and is working through that body to accomplish his purpose. In the epistle to the Ephesians we are told that Christ is "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22b,23). Also in Colossians, written at the same time as Ephesians, Paul said, "And he is the head of the body, the church. . ." (Colossians 1:18a).

In this article we wish to point out some lessons in connection with the church being the body of Christ.

(Continued on Page 4)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

INFORMATION:

■ We are totally dependent upon your financial backing in the publication of this religious paper. To get on the mailing list, send a contribution. Subsidizing gifts are definitely needed along in order for us to continue this unselfish labor of love for God and truth. You may use the date affixed beside your address as a reminder in sending an offering (perhaps annually). No notices are sent. Make your checks out to CHURCH IN MT. AIRY. Frequency of publication is determined by support. James E. Gibbons is editor. (Money received for printed materials is all considered as an offering.—*Thanks!*)

Proverbially SPEAKING...

DARKNESS is the absence of light.

"Pity the man who has cursed Christ all his life, or used his name in vain; then must stand before him to be judged."

Successful Christians are ordinary people living extraordinary lives.

"A *fugitive* is one who is running from home; a *vagabond* is one who has no home; a *stranger* is one away from home; and a *pilgrim* is one who is on his way home."

If you have received the grace of God into your heart, it will overflow in your relation to others (both spiritually and physically) in good works.

"It is infinitely better to rock the boat contending for truth, than to wreck the boat through compromise with error."

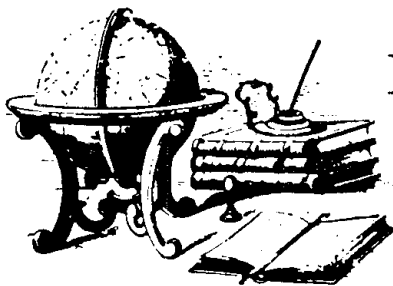
The church of Christ is not a forum for different ideas, but it is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15).

"Someone said if the talebearer should be hung by his tongue, the listener should be hung by his ears!"

Initially people are not as impressed by what you believe as they are that you enthusiastically believe it; getting their attention by this, then you can teach them the what about believing (the problem: are we enthusiastic?).

"When thou prayest rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart."

Man did not come from the monkey, but sometimes acts like a donkey and seems to be going to the dogs.



EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

WOULD THEY REALLY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN?

■ *"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved his appearing" (II TIMOTHY 4:6-8, NKJV).*

THE APOSTLE Paul's life was nearing the end. He would be executed soon. He knew it, and he accordingly writes to Timothy. Hard times were in store for the churches (persecution and apostasy were ahead). Therefore, he especially urges Timothy to fulfill his important work as an evangelist. The churches needed him as never before.

Paul considers his situation at the moment, looks back over his life as a Christian up to that point, and triumphantly anticipates the end. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." As he has many times used the figure of the various Grecian games in his writings, he does now again. His life had exemplified the good fight of faith in the cause of Christ. Also, from another viewpoint, he had been running a race, and it was now successfully finished. He has played the game by the "rules" (kept the faith). Now he can joyfully and assuredly say, "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day. . ." The word for crown here is *stephanos*, the victory crown (or more exactly, wreath) given to the athlete who won the race. For Paul it was the victory crown given in connection with righteousness (not worldly things) by the righteous Judge. The Lord is cast in the role of game official (or Judge) who determines the winner. Paul was completing his life in victory. The Lord said in Revelation 2:10, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown (*stephanos*) of life." Eternal life would be Paul's. Heaven would be his home.

Paul appends what he has said with some words that bring all of us under the scope of what he has just said. This victory in heaven assuredly would be his, but it was not limited to Paul (it was/is open to all). Let us notice what he said again. "Finally, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Yes, the victory crown is for all who will successfully run the race like Paul. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (those who are ready for it). It is for people who really want to go there, who yearn for the coming of the Lord (love his appearing). In addition to II Timothy 4:8, Hebrews 9:28 reads, "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." Paul writes in Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship

is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Then Paul wrote in Colossians 3:1,2, “If then you were raised with Christ (Colossians 2:12), seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Consequently we are commanded not to love this present world (I John 2:15-17). In order to experience these feelings and aspirations we must undergo a radical change. We must become disenchanted with this world and see how utterly empty and vain it is—how awful sin really is! We must become “new” creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) wherein “all things have become new.” Then we can yearn for heaven.

Really we believe that most people today would have reservations about wanting to be in heaven (especially forever). Yes, they would like to escape hell, but heaven is another question. There is so much that we do not know about heaven, but we do know there will be a lot of worship. Revelation 7:15 reads, “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.” Whatever else may be involved in this

monition in Hebrews 10:25, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you *see the Day approaching*.” All of this was in anticipation of the second coming of Christ and the Judgment. If a person does not like going to church and worshipping God now, he would not like going to heaven. In heaven there will be worship in such extensive and expanded capacity the likes as has never been experienced before by human beings. To those who love the Lord with all of their heart it will be the most consummating experience. Needless to say, if a person doesn’t love the Lord enough to go to church, he doesn’t love Him enough to go to heaven. He wouldn’t fit in there.

Furthermore, only the good, the pure, and the holy will be in heaven (Revelation 21:27; 22:14,15; Hebrews 12:14). They have been made that way by the blood of Christ and are conscientiously striving to remain that way through the grace of God (in the here and now). Those who love sinning, and make a practice of it, will not be found in heaven. Really the unconverted sinner would be cramped to live in such a place. He wouldn’t enjoy it (nor could he). On earth practicing sinners usually do not seek out the company of the saints (nor do they enjoy such company).

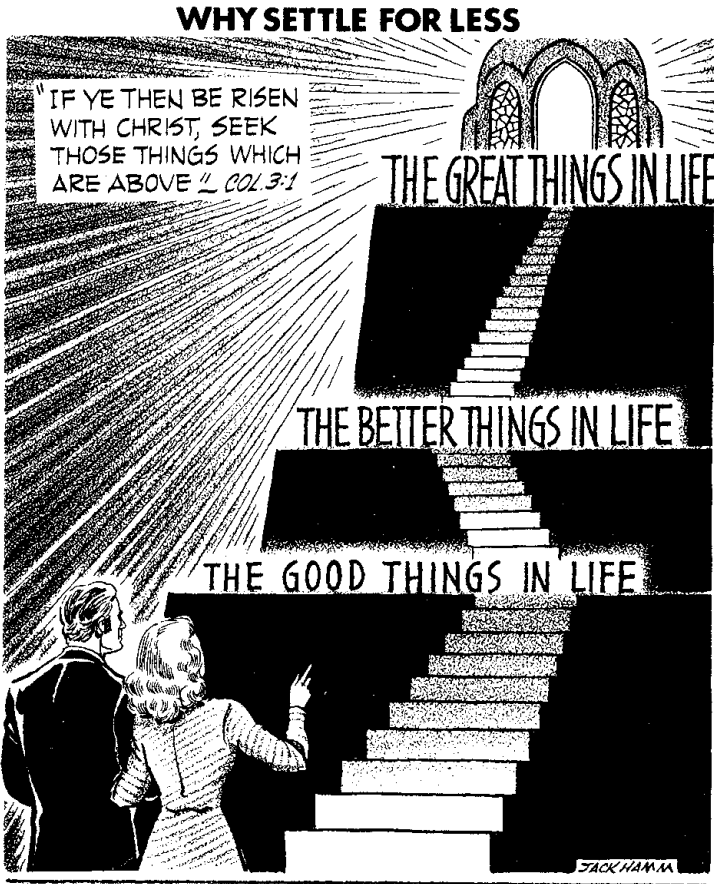
Let us illustrate (imperfect and unworthy as we are). At different times this writer and his wife have had different people stay in our home for extended periods as we have tried to help them in one way or another. Some of these have been non-Christians. Our lifestyle turned out to be considerably different from what some of them were used to. We lived a simple life and enjoyed simple things. We didn’t drink; we didn’t smoke. Profanity and cursing were not heard in our house. Movies and television were not part of our lives. Much religious music was heard, and our lives continually revolved around religious activities (the church). Our delight was in the things of God. One person after staying with us for an extended period told someone that it was worse than being in jail.

Yes, in this day of widespread illiteracy of the Bible when false teachers would give false hope in making it appear that almost everyone is going to heaven, maybe they are forcing something upon the people that they really wouldn’t want. They might not want to go to hell, but from all indications they would not be happy in heaven. It is not the kind of place they are ready for. □

★★★★★★

GOD is LOVE

★★★★★★



verse of this symbolic book, one thing stands out—continuous worship. Paul had mentioned the assurance of receiving the victory crown, “which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on *that Day* and not to me only but also to all who have loved *His appearing*.” Then we have the ad-

THE BODY OF CHRIST

(Continued from Page 1)

There Is:

1

- Body
- Spirit
- Hope
- Lord
- Faith
- Baptism
- God

— Ephesians 4:4-6

I. THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

When Christ was upon this earth he had only one body as he went about doing good. Likewise, the church of Christ as the body of Christ is one. As there is only one head (Colossians 1:18), there can be only one body. One head with several bodies is a biological freak of nature that we have yet to see (regardless how men may seek to justify denominationalism). In the final sense, men cannot divide the body of Christ—they divide themselves from it.

Not only is it logical to think in terms of the body of Christ being one, it is Scriptural. Jesus taught that there would be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16). As there is one king, there is one kingdom (a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand). As there is one husband, there is one bride (II Corinthians 11:2; this was God's plan from the beginning in reference to mankind, Matthew 19:4,5; this was His plan from the beginning in reference to the church). And, as we have by logic pointed out, as there is one head, there is one body—this is Scripture also (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15). Ephesians 4:4-6 sums it all up: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (And, yes, as there is only one heavenly Father, He has only one family—the church of God).

Division is pictured in the New Testament as sinful and absolutely contrary to the will of God. Christ prayed for unity and oneness among his followers in John 17:20-22. We cannot get around the strong con-

demnation of division and partyism by the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-5; 3:16,17). It is called a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). There is no way that we can make a good thing out of it.

However, the unity that we advocate must be the kind that is taught in the New Testament. Paul admonished the Ephesians to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), then he summarized the oneness of the plan of God. This unity was something they had and were to "keep." It had originally been brought about by Christ dying on the cross (Ephesians 2:14-18); it was personally accomplished when they were converted to Christ as they were "baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13) and "called in one body" (Colossians 3:15). "Christian unity" involved salvation. It involved being united with Christ and staying united with Christ as they were seeking to be faithful to him. It involved being united with him and consequently thereby being united with everyone else who was united with him and striving faithfully to do the same thing.

Our Christian lives are to be lived in connection with the local church (and organizationally speaking, that is all there is to the church as far as the New Testament is concerned). It is what we are to be a part of and not to forsake the assembly of (Hebrews 10:25; etc.). Thus, "Christian unity" is to be realized within the bounds and context of the local church (not by whether we support any man-made religious organization or convention of any kind—in fact, these have the flavor of denominationalism all over them).

Let us beware lest we fall into a denominational pattern of thought and action. Let us beware lest we be dealing as one denomination (bloc of churches) with another (in essence, accepting the denominational status and making denominational attempts at denominational unity)—yes, instead of divesting ourselves of all denominational trappings and in the local undenominational church practicing the unity and oneness taught in the New Testament.

II. SALVATION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

As a human being life is in our bodies. In our bodies we live, and move, and have our being. There is no life outside the body. The same was true in reference to Jesus as he became truly human. His life was in his body as he moved from place to place doing the will of God. If a part of our body is removed or amputated it becomes dead. It is no longer a part of us.

Likewise, salvation is in the body of Christ (his church). Not only is this logical, it is Scriptural. As much as people would like to deny the importance of the church, the Scriptures teach that salvation is in the body of Christ. The church as such is not the saviour, but it constitutes the saved. Ephesians 5:23-27 is very plain. Notice: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and *he is the saviour of the body.* . . ." Ephesians 1:3 reads, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ.*" Acts 20:28 tells us that the Lord "purchased with his own blood" the church. That

means our sins are not forgiven if we are not part of the church because the church was "purchased with his own blood." Then in I Corinthians 15:24 we read, "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. . ." This implies that if we are not in the kingdom, the church, we will not be delivered up to the Father in heaven.

Salvation being in the body of Christ, it is of utmost importance that we are sure that we are in this body.

This being true, how do we become a member of the body of Christ? Galatians 3:27,28 is very helpful in understanding this. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are *all one in Christ Jesus*." Likewise, I Corinthians 12:12,13a informs us, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we *all baptized into one body*. . ." Then in just plain language in Acts 2:38-41,47, when people repented and were baptized for the remission of their sins, *the Lord added them to the church* (in other words, being saved and becoming a member of the church mean the same thing in the true sense). And the Lord had told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). According to the Lord Jesus, the kingdom and the church are the same thing (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 16:18,19; 18:3; Colossians 1:13).

All of these Scriptures are talking about the same thing: being a part of the body of Christ (his church), salvation, being born again, being in his kingdom. How about it? Are you part of the body of Christ?

III. RELATIONSHIP OF THE MEMBERS TO THE HEAD

Obviously the head is the center of intelligence and control of the entire body. From here the nervous system relays messages and commands to all parts of the body which brings about movement and motion. For any part of the body not to respond to the thought coming from the head is to imply that it is diseased or perhaps even severed from the body.

As these things are true in reference to the physical body, they are equally true in connection with the spiritual body of Christ, the church. As members of his body we respond to his thoughts and commands. We are to have the mind of Christ; we are to carry out his thinking. In fact, Paul wrote in II Corinthians 10:5, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This is all-inclusive whether it be any, all, or specific doctrines of Christ; the good and holy life; or the life of love and service.

We know that the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . ." (John 14:6a). We know that he was pure and good (knew no sin). The apostle John wrote, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word,

in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (John 2:3-6). Dealing with the sin of immorality in I Corinthians 6:15, Paul wrote, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." And inasmuch as Christ is the "truth," John wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

The danger of following false teaching is pictured in the light of the head and body relationship in Colossians 2:18,19. By heeding false doctrine they would be "not holding (fast to) the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." In following the false message it shows that a person has been disconnected from the head. It was even as John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

Some other thoughts on the head and body relationship besides this matter of commands can be seen in love. Paul mentioned that, then he said, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:28,29). So, from this human line of thinking, we know that Christ loves and is concerned about his own body (the church). He reacts sympathetically to our temptations (Hebrews 4:15,16). He reacts sympathetically toward our trials. Although he was in heaven, it is interesting that the Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4b). We know, as Paul said, he "persecuted the church of God" (I Corinthians 15:9). The church is the body of Christ; therefore, to persecute the church was to persecute Christ (thus, his deep concern). And rest assured today, as we go through our trials and sufferings, the Lord is personally concerned about us as Christians.

As members of the body of Christ who call ourselves Christians, let us bring honor to his name as we carry out his imperative thoughts. And, at the same time, let us remember that he "nourisheth and cherisheth" his own body (he cares for us).

IV. RELATIONSHIP OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY TO ONE ANOTHER

It is very obvious that all parts of the human body are part of one another. As one unit of life the different parts are tied in together and function as a whole, yet each accomplishing its particular individualized (yet synchronized) purpose. And the apostle Paul seizes upon these natural truths to teach about the church: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body: also is Christ" (I Corinthians 12:12); "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5).

These things being true, relationships in Christ are of utmost importance. In confronting the problems
(Continued on Next Page)

THE BODY OF CHRIST

(Continued from Last Page)

in the church at Corinth, Paul asked, "Is Christ divided?" (I Corinthians 1:13a). The members of a healthy human body are not divided. They do not work against one another. They work in harmony. Further using the figure for motivating purposes, Paul wrote the Ephesian Christians, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: *for we are members one of another*" (Ephesians 4:25). Then we ask, kind reader, would a person in a fit of ill will (or rage) take a hammer and come down upon his own finger with a heavy blow? How ridiculous! Then think how silly such attitudes and behavior are made to appear among the professed members of the body of Christ.

The 12th chapter of I Corinthians, which develops this theme of the body of Christ and its members, has many good lessons on this subject. No member is to be thought of more highly than another because of their particular function in the body (all are essential). Paul said "the members should have the same care one for another." Then he continued, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Corinthians 12:25b,26). If one part of the body is in pain, the rest is not having a "picnic." All are sympathetically and empathetically involved. And what joy should be ours in the particular good fortune of another Christian. Let us rejoice in the victories of others.

V. RELATIONSHIP OF THE BODY TO THE WORLD

We know that Christ in a human body was in the world but not of the world. The Bible is very plain in saying he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:22). Jesus prayed for his disciples, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:15,16). The apostle John wrote, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (I John 2:6). John continued (I John 3:5,6), "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth (willfully makes a practice of sin) hath not seen him, neither know him."

Also we know as Christ took a human body and walked upon this earth he had one end result in mind: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). His whole life was one of compassion and concern (Matthew 9:36-38). His very body was given as a spotless sacrifice for sin (and sinners) on the old rugged cross (Hebrews 10:1-20). Now the church is the body of Christ in the world, and as such its mission likewise is "to seek and to save that which was lost." Each local autonomous church and each member has the weight of the Great Commission upon their shoulders. Paul, using the figure of the body in Ephesians 4:15 (16), said, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly

joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Beloved Christian, as the body of Christ in a world of sin, let us not bring reproach upon his name by unholy living. And, as the corporate representation of Christ in the world today, let us reach out with the same compassion as our Lord to a world that is lost and dying in sin.

Amen! □

★★★★★★

TO THIS END WAS HE BORN



★★★★★★

Don't Ignore the Barometer

ON SEPTEMBER 21, 1938, a storm of monstrous proportions hit New York and New England. Ordinary hurricanes are bad enough. A fully developed one, with winds blowing 75 mph, is as powerful as 500 Nagasaki-type atomic bombs and contains more electricity than the entire United States uses in six months, but this cyclone was churning at over 200 mph. When it came inland it smashed Long Island with a forty foot tidal wave, the impact of which was registered on a seismograph in Sitka, Alaska. At Providence, Rhode Island the entire downtown area was submerged under thirteen feet of water after a one hundred foot wave roared up Narragansett Bay. When the skies finally cleared, 700 people had been killed, 1,754 injured, 63,000 left homeless.

Among the striking stories which later came to light was an incident involving a Long Islander. On the morning of the disaster he had received a barometer

which he had purchased a few days earlier in a New York store. While unpacking it, he was irritated to see that the needle pointed to the place on the dial which read "Hurricanes and Tornadoes." (The U.S. Weather Bureau was in its infancy then; no warning of the storm had been issued.) First he shook it and then he banged it against the wall, but the needle wouldn't budge. Annoyed, he repacked it and drove to the post office to mail it back. While he was gone his house blew away. Folks, you can ignore the barometer, but you can't stop the storm.

In unmistakable language our New Testament warns us that a day is coming when a storm of Divine judgment shall break out upon those who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Matthew 25:41; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). It is with a view to this day that Peter pinpoints the most crucial question, "Since everything will be destroyed...what kind of people ought you to be?" (II Peter 3:11, NIV). Depending upon our answer, the last day will either result in our deliverance (I Peter 1:4,5), or our damnation (II Peter 3:7).

If you're serious about averting the storm and attaining salvation, start—and start today—committing yourself to the pursuit of holy and godly

living (II Peter 3:11). For, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Remember, you can ignore the barometer, but you can't stop the storm.

—*Words of Life*

★★★★★★

Our Clergy-Laity System

HEINZ advertises the "57 varieties" of their food products. We are reaching toward that figure in the increasing variety and number of "ministers" that we boast. These are all borrowed from the great enemy of truth, Satan, through the man-made institutions—denominational churches. The New Testament shows that in the first-century church certain men who were doing various aspects of God's work were called by definitive names. We read of apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, elders and deacons. The first two, apostles and prophets, are no longer with us. The others remain, but today "ministers" are just about as profuse as small stones in a gravel pit.

Some of the so-called Christian colleges are turning out assorted varieties, professionalized to perform in their specialty field with amazing precision. They do not know a great deal about the Scriptures, but they certainly do know how to "minister" in their chosen field. The field is also quite extensive. There are junior-high ministers, youth ministers, singles ministers, and then the field becomes somewhat blurred as the other special interest groups begin to line up demanding attention for *their* "felt needs."

This great galaxy of ministers is always headed by THE minister. This is the one who is generally in charge and the one to whom, in some cases, the elders report. Following then, in rapid succession, is the associate minister, the outreach minister, the one who provides for "the 39'ers," the young marrieds, those in need of "counseling"—and the list goes on. This type of activity results in a group of weak, self-centered souls who are turned "INWARD," seeking their own gratification, and in most instances completely unaware of the fact! The highly skilled "ministers" keep them busy doing things. However, these "things" are, for the most part, what they *like* to do, yet with a sheen of spiritual worth skillfully veneered into place that enables one to feel good about it.

We all need to read and mediate upon the plight of the deceived, pitiful, lukewarm Christians in Laodicea. They felt good about themselves also. Their true condition, however, is defined as being, "wretched and miserable and poor and blind" (Revelation 3:17).

—*Selected and adapted from
Contending for the Faith*

★★★★★★

Destroying the Enemies

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was once taken to task for his attitude toward his enemies.

"Why do you try to make friends of them?" asked an associate. "You should try to destroy them."

"Am I not destroying my enemies," Lincoln gently replied, "when I make them my friends?"—*Selected*

★★★★★★

HIS BOAT

He built himself a little boat;
This lad who was quite shy,
And every day he watched it float,
Upon a stream nearby.

The wind was strong, one blustery day,
And much to his surprise,
The little boat was swept away,
And tears flowed from his eyes.

The days passed by and then, behold!
He spied his little gem,
Inside a store where he was told,
It didn't belong to him.

He knew the job would be real tough,
But he decided then,
To save until he had enough,
To own that boat again.

When he went back into the store,
He had a tidy sum,
And as he walked out through the door,
The boat was 'neath his arm.

So softly he was heard to say,
"Not once, but twice you're mine,
I gave you up, but then today,
I bought you back, we're fine."

Isn't that the way it is with God?
He lost us back to sin,
Then through His son, with his own blood,
He purchased us again.

By *Johnnie Lee*

The Wrong Statue

OVER a century ago, the citizens of Cuzco, Peru decided to erect a statue honoring the last king of the Incas. Atahulpa had been executed by the Spanish in 1533.

They determined it would be made of bronze. A Philadelphia foundry was contacted and they agreed to make the statue.

The long awaited finished product arrived in Cuzco. However, their celebration turned to sadness when they discovered that their statue bore little resemblance to their Inca king. He was wearing buckskins, something South American Indians never wore.

They soon discovered the problem. The Philadelphia foundry had made a mistake. At the time they received the order from Peru, they had also been working on a statue of Powhattan, father of Pocahontas. Somehow the statues had been mixed up and Peru received the wrong one.

The answer to this dilemma seems simple enough. But, the inhabitants of Cuzco did not want to pay the price of returning the statue of Powhattan. They just erected it in the town square where it still stands. The statue of Powhattan stands on top of a high marble column in memory of King Atahulpa.

It is not unusual to find persons who have erected monuments in their lives that represent Christ and his church. Through the study of God's Word they discover they have the wrong one. However, they are not willing to pay the price to solve the dilemma. So, they just live with their error pretending that it's truth.

When we encounter persons who have the "wrong statue" in their spiritual lives, what can we do? We can teach them in a loving, kind, gentle way. But, if they refuse to pull down the statue they have learned is not correct in order to erect the true one, we have done all we can do.

Honesty with one's self is always a key to correcting one's mistakes, and then a resolve to do something about it.—*Adapted* □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Grateful He Had an Ox

A STORY is told of two wealthy Christians—a lawyer and a merchant. These two joined a party that was going around the world. In Korea one day they saw a boy pulling a crude plow, while an old man held the handle and directed it. The lawyer was amused and took a picture of the scene. "That's a curious picture. I suppose they are very poor, he said. A preacher who was interpreter and guide, replied, "Yes! That's Chi Noui."

"When the church building was being built, they were eager to give what they could to it, but they had no money, so they sold the only ox they had and gave the money to the church."

The lawyer and merchant were silent for some time. Then the businessman said, "That must have been a real sacrifice." "They did not call it that," the preacher replied. "They thought it fortunate that they had an ox to sell!"—*Selected* □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BIBLE QUESTIONS Over Various Kings Mentioned in the Bible

1. What king was also a priest of the most High God? (Hebrews 7:1; Genesis 14:17-20)
2. What seems to have been a name used in speaking of Philistine kings? (Genesis 26:1; 20:1; I Samuel 21:10-15; Psalms 34)
3. The Egyptian kings in ancient times were commonly known by what name? (Genesis 41:46; Exodus 1:8-22)
4. What king hired a false prophet to curse the Israelites as they were coming into the Promised Land? (Numbers 22:1-7)
5. What king of the remnant of the giants did Joshua slay in the conquest of Canaan (whose bed was nine cubits long and four cubits wide)? (Deuteronomy 3:1-3, 11)
6. What were the names of the first three kings of Israel (during the united kingdom)?
7. What king of Israel "from his shoulders and upward... was higher than any of the people"? (I Samuel 9:1, 2; 11:15)
8. What did God tell David as to why He did not allow him to build the temple? (I Chronicles 28:3)
9. What king in a dream prayed for wisdom (and not for riches, long life, etc.) but God was so pleased with his prayer that He gave him all of the other things too? (I Kings 3:5-15)
10. When the Israelite nation was divided after the death of Solomon, who became the first ruler of the southern kingdom of Judah and who the first of the northern kingdom of Israel? (I Kings 12)
11. What king of Israel (northern kingdom) had the wicked Jezebel as his wife and queen? (I Kings 16:30-33)
12. What king of Judah was sick unto death, but because he humbled himself and prayed, God added to his life fifteen years? (II Kings 20:1-7)
13. What Babylonian king finally carried Judah and Jerusalem away into captivity? (I Chronicles 6:15)
14. What king of Judah was carried away into this captivity, first having his sons slaughtered before his eyes, and then his eyes put out? (II Kings 25:7)
15. From the line of what king of Israel was the Lord Jesus Christ born? (Romans 1:5)
16. In New Testament times what were Roman kings called (& what was a line of kings in Palestine called)?
17. What king had the babies in Bethlehem killed following the birth of Jesus? (Matthew 2:16)
18. The governor of what king in Damascus tried to apprehend Paul, but he escaped down the wall in a basket? (II Corinthians 11:32, 33; Acts 9:23-25)
19. What king replied to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"? (Acts 26:27, 28)
20. In the book of Revelation who is called, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"? (Rev. 19:11-16)

(NOTE: Check the Scriptural references that are given with each question to verify the answer).

A North Carolina Reader Writes. . .

A QUESTION ABOUT ADORNMENT

*Is Wearing Jewelry and Make-up Wrong?
Is It a Sin for Women to Wear Pants?*

ANSWER:

The question involves two parts; so we will deal with them accordingly.

(1) Is wearing jewelry and make-up wrong?

The New Testament writers taught that there was certain adornment which was becoming to women professing godliness and certain which was not. We take these writers at their word and respect the underlying principle behind what they said. As conscientious Christians we cannot do otherwise (if we claim to follow the Scriptures).

The apostle Paul wrote, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety (with a sense of shame and restraint in their appearance—i.e., "sobriety"); **not with** broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (clothing); But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9,10). The apostle Peter wrote, "Whose adorning **let it not be** that outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel (costly clothing, i.e., I Timothy 2:9); But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3,4).

Women in ancient times used make-up to aggrandize their appearance and to make themselves look more sexually alluring and enticing. Read Ezekiel 23:40-44. God's wayward people are pictured as "lewd women" who "playeth the harlot." This Scripture reads, "And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, **paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,** And

satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil ..." Jeremiah had the same thing in mind when he wrote in Jeremiah 4:30, "And when thou are spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." Likewise we read in II Kings 9:30, "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face and tired her head, and looked out at a window." Keeping these Scriptures in mind, the warning of Proverbs 6:25 stands out more clearly: "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (exaggerated with make-up).

God has limited sexual fulfillment to the holy bounds of marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Unfaithfulness to this relationship is called adultery, but Jesus went a step further. "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). This sin unrepented of will cause a person to be eternally lost (Matthew 5:28-30; I Corinthians 6:9; Revelation 21:8). The practice of women trying to make themselves appear more sexually alluring runs against the grain of what Christ taught, making them become a potential stumbling block to others. The Lord taught the seriousness of being a stumbling block to others (Mark 9:42-48). The apostle Paul said that if a certain thing he did was a stumbling block or an occasion of offense to his brother, he would not do it as long as the world stood (I Corinthians 8:13).

Women professing godliness are to be different from the women of this world (and are to dress accordingly). The practice of women being

painted jewel-bedecked objects of vanity and sexual enticement/allurement is completely out of harmony with the Bible. Too many professed Christian women today, having been made to feel insecure and intimidated by the world, have conformed rather than following the Bible. They are brainwashed into thinking that they do not look nice (that they are not well-groomed) unless they look like the sexy glamor girls of Hollywood on television. Cosmetic companies pry on their insecurities to sell their increasing line of products. Perhaps many do not even know the Bible has anything to say about the way they are to adorn themselves. We share this information with you in kindness and patience.

(2) Is it a sin for women to wear pants?

No, we do not believe it is necessarily wrong for women to wear pants as such.

Evidently this question is asked in the light of Deuteronomy 22:5, which reads, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do are abomination unto the LORD thy God."

In trying to reach the proper understanding of this, first, let us realize this was one of the many laws of the Old Testament given to the children of Israel and was not part of the New Testament under which Christians live today. This command was in the same category of similar commands that follow in this chapter. Notice: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers (different kinds of) seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou has sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together" (Deuteronomy 22:9-11).

Furthermore, let us remember that in Bible times a robe type of garment was worn by both men and women, being quite similar (pants are more of a modern vintage). It would seem that Deuteronomy 22:5 had reference to a particular individual garment belonging to a

(Continued on Next Page)

A QUESTION ABOUT ADORNMENT

(Continued from Last Page)

woman or to a man. By putting the garment on, which happened to belong to the opposite sex (not necessarily being all that different in the way it looked), it became an abomination. (Even aside from this line of thinking, the slacks and pantsuits sometimes worn by women today were made for women, not men. They are not men's clothing from that viewpoint).

However, a strong case can be made for making a clear distinction in the appearance of the male and female from another perspective. God made opposite sexes, and He wants men to be men and women to be women. In this day of strong homosexual influence in our society and the unisex emphasis, a word along this line would be in order. It is sad to see men who are truly male duped by homosexual influence (we believe) with their long hair (I Corinthians 11:14) and jewelry normally associated with women in the world.

"Footnote"

Needless to say, Christians should also wear modest apparel in the sense of having their bodies properly (decently) covered too (Genesis 3:21; Matthew 5:28; I Timothy 2:9). Obviously shorts, mini-skirts, and such skimpy clothing are unbecoming to Christians.

—James E. Gibbons

★★★★★★

"Do Like He Done"

A MAJOR business concern, according to a newspaper columnist, received the following letter from one of its salesmen. Apparently the salesman was almost illiterate, but his letter does rather well. It read:

"Dear Boss, I seen this outfit which ain't never bought a dime's worth of nuthin from us and I sole them a couple hundred thousand dollars worth of guds. I am now going to Chawago."

Two days later a second letter arrived: "I cum here and sole them half a milyon."

Both letters were posted on the bulletin board with a note appended by the company's president.

"We ben spendin too much time tryin to spel instead of trying to sel. I want evrybody should reed these letters from Gooch—he is on the rode doin a grate job for us. You should go out and do like he done."

The lesson for us is rather obvious. We constantly try to think of new methods and ways of saving souls. Gimmicks are tried and great, ballyhooed programs are launched in the name of Christ. We organize and organize, establish a few institutions for the purpose of facilitating the work we want to do (and should have been doing ourselves), and then fall in love with the machinery we have created. We sometimes forget our very purpose. Many spend their waking hours greasing and trying to enlarge the machinery. A few Gooches are worth more to the cause of Christ than all the organizations of human genius and pride. None of the "world in a day" for Christ promotions are as valuable as a single Gooch. "Go out and do like he done."

Jesus made it very simple, "Go ye therefore, and

teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19,20).

The apostle Paul wrote, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel. . ." (Romans 1:14,15).—Adapted □

★★★★★★

Urgent Needs in Church Today

1. More open hearts and fewer open mouths. All conduct proceeds from the heart. Prejudice closes the heart to a true consideration of the facts.

2. More knocking on doors and less knocking on each other. The great commission demands that we busy ourselves in taking the gospel to others.

3. More sound heads and fewer soreheads. Perhaps there has never been a time when we had a greater need for men sound in the faith and wise in judgment.

4. More seed slinging and less mud slinging. The task of sowing the seed of the kingdom is so great that it should leave no time for the slinging of mud at a brother.

5. More sacrifice of self and less sacrifice of others. There are plenty of members of the church who are willing for the other fellow to sacrifice.

6. More standing for the faith and less falling for the fanciful. The church has always been hurt by those who had a desire for that which is new and fanciful and different. They have been blinded by the glamour of such newness.

7. More concern for the "what" of the teaching and less concern for the "who" of the teacher. Many determine what they believe by who is teaching, rather than by the Scripturalness of what is taught.

8. More concern over direction than speed. This is the jet and missile age. Speed is being enthroned and multitudes bow before it. However, all speed is not progress.

9. More profit from the problems of yesterday and less blindness to the pitfalls of tomorrow. The wise profit from the past. The foolish never do.

10. More desire to promote restoration and less desire to promote personal recognition. Personal ambition should never interfere with the principles of restoration. If we fail to teach these principles the church will go astray.—Selected □

★★★★★★

Stranger Than Fiction

It's very strange that rain on Sunday
Seems so much wetter than on Monday;
And our weekday pains that we ignore
On Sundays seem to hurt much more,
Till we decide to stay in bed
When we should go to church instead.

—Selected

★★★★★★

Is There REINCARNATION After Death?



■ By **DAVID VAUGHN ELLIOTT**
Apartado 1209
01901 Guatemala — Centro America

AT THE OUTSET, it would be helpful to distinguish between two words that are similar but have different meanings: “incarnation” and “reincarnation.” “Incarnation” expresses the idea that a soul or spirit assumes a bodily form. “Reincarnation” expresses the idea of a soul or spirit being reborn in successive human and animal bodies. Thus, the first word indicates a single act, while the second indicates something that is repeated many times.

Although the Bible does not use the word “incarnation,” it clearly teaches this idea when it refers to Jesus Christ as the Word. John 1:1,14 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The eternal Son of God left the glory that He had with his Father since before the creation of the world (see John 17:5). He left that glory to be incarnated: “the Word became flesh.”

But, has the Word come to the world many times through numerous reincarnations? Did he come at one time in Buddha, at another time in Krishna, etc., etc.? The Bible says, “No!” See Hebrews 9:23-28. Verses 25 and 26 reject the idea that Christ should “offer Himself” and “suffer” “often.” Quite to the contrary, verses 26 and 28 proclaim that “once at the end of the ages, He has appeared,” and “Christ was offered once.” That is to say, the Word came to this world only one time in order to die only one time. Romans 6:9 agrees that “Christ, having been raised from the dead, *dies no more*.” Therefore, Jesus Christ was incarnated only one time. Hebrews 9:28 informs us that Christ “will appear a second time”; but this time He will come in all his glory, in order to judge the world. See II Thessalonians 1:7-10.

The same text in Hebrews that speaks of the one and only death of Christ, says the same thing in regard to all humanity. Hebrews 9:27 declares that “it is appointed for *men to die once*, but after this the judgment.” Man has only one life here on this planet earth. He dies only once. He does not reincarnate. Rather, he waits for the final judgment.

It must be understood that the doctrine of reincarnation is totally pagan. Nowadays there are many who are not satisfied with the Bible and want to mix it up with the pagan doctrines of the Orient. The great problem of hunger in India is very much related to the belief in reincarnation. Believing that animals possess the souls of ancestors, the people of India will neither kill their cattle to eat the meat, nor will they destroy the rats that consume so much of their grain.

What is at the same time both attractive and diabolical about the doctrine of reincarnation is that it teaches that there is no final judgment. Rather, according to this belief, a person is gradually purified by reincarnating in this world in as many lives as may be necessary. However, as we have seen, the Bible clearly proclaims the coming judgment and warns us that we have only one life in which to prepare ourselves. Paul’s declaration before the pagan philosophers of Athens (Acts 17:30,31) is just as valid and just as vital today as it was then: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Beat a Charge, Then!”

SCHOOL boys and girls have heard the story of Napoleon. Apparently defeated after one of his great battles, he called a drummer boy to him and commanded him to beat a retreat. The boy looking for a moment at the retreating army, answered, “Sire, marshal never taught me to do a retreat, but I can beat a charge gloriously.” “Beat a charge, then,” was Napoleon’s stern command. When the battle was over, defeat had been turned into victory all because the drummer boy did not know how to beat a retreat.

Far better for us if we never learn how to beat a retreat from the battles of life. Many people are defeated only because they have contemplated defeat—they have planned nothing else. Let us plan an aggressive warfare and enter the battle expecting nothing but victory. Learn to beat a retreat, and you will beat a retreat. Learn only to beat a charge, and you will beat a charge that ends in triumph. We do those things in life which we have learned to do.—**Selected** □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHO STEALS MY PURSE

Who steals my purse steals trash,

‘Tis something. . . nothing. . .

‘Twas mine. . . ‘tis his. . . and has been slave
to thousands.

But he who filches from me by good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed!

—**Selected**

“IN THE BEGINNING GOD...”

BRIEFLY today, let us consider a most profound verse of Scripture. It is the first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1. Listen: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

“In the beginning God...” Behind every cause is the uncaused first Cause, the Almighty Eternal God. It might come as a surprise to some, but the Bible nowhere tries to prove the existence of God. It simply states it as a fact. Everything points to the reality of God. The Bible was written for intelligent beings, and it is assumed that such being of intelligence can readily recognize the overwhelming evidence of Higher Intelligence.

Aside from the revelation of God’s Word, the Bible (which we unreservedly accept and believe), other things point to the reality of God. Psalms 19:1 states, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” Someone has said that the universe is just a big advertizing poster saying God. It is hard to get around this billboard that reaches across the expanse of the heavens. God is.

Psalms 14:1 reads, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Why does he say there is no God? Is it because of intellectual reasons? No. The remainder of this verse tells us why: “They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.” It is an unbelief of convenience—their works are evil. To confess the existence of God would result in self-condemnation. Someone has said that an atheist doesn’t seek to find God for the same reason a thief doesn’t try to find a policeman. (And in reference to the 14th Psalm which tells us that the fool has said in his heart that there is no God—God has put this Psalm in the Bible twice, Psalms 14 and Psalms 53 are alike. He must be trying to tell us something.)

The apostle Paul says that men are inexcusable in leaving out the reality of the true God (Romans 1:19, 20), “Because that which may be known of God is manifest to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead (Godhood); so that they are without excuse.”

And as the writer of Hebrews says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). And getting back to Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” How appropriately the first verse in the Bible tells about God. And if we are serious about God, God will be first in our lives too. The Lord Jesus taught, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33a).—J.Gibbons

★★★★★★

“Example” or “Substitute”?

AT THE CLOSE of a service in Germantown, Pa., some time ago, a stranger accosted the late D.M. Stearns as follows: “I don’t like your preaching. I do not care for the cross. I think that instead of preaching

the death of Christ on the cross, it would be far better to preach Jesus, the teacher and example.” “Would you then be willing to follow him if I preach Christ, the Example?” replied Stearns. “I would,” said the stranger, “I will follow in his steps.” “Then,” said Stearns, “let us take the first step, ‘Who did no sin.’ Can you take this step?” The stranger looked confused. “No,” he said, “I do sin, and I acknowledge it.” “Well, then,” said Stearns, “your first need of Christ is not as an example, but as a SAVIOUR.” And this is every man’s need. (See Romans 3:23-26).—Selected □

★★★★★★

NOTE: The feature “SOUND WORDS” will be resumed in future issues of THE SWORD AND STAFF.

★★★★★★



NO HANDS BUT OUR HANDS

*Christ has no hands but our hands
To do his work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in his way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how he died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to his side.*

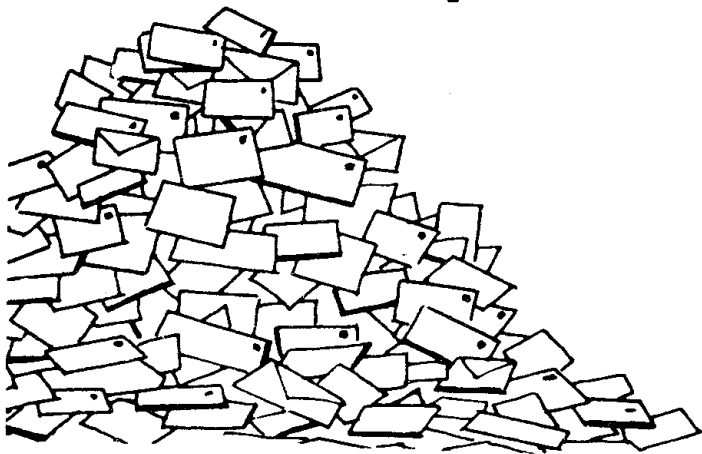
*We are the only Bible
The careless world will read;
We are the sinner’s gospel,
We are the scoffer’s creed;
We are the Lord’s last message
Given in deed and word—
What if the line is crooked?
What if the type is blurred?*

*What if our hands are busy
With other work than his?
What if our feet are walking
Where sin’s allurements is?
What if our tongues are speaking
Of things his lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help him
Unless from him we learn?*

By ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

READERS'

... Response



FLORIDA:

■ *"I want you to know how much I really like your magazine THE SWORD AND STAFF. And I would like for you to continue sending it to me and want you to send it to. . ."*

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"I recently had the opportunity to read a copy of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I can't tell you how it blessed me to know that there are those who are not afraid to teach the whole truth. Please add me to your mailing list. May God bless you richly. . ."*

VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please use the enclosed in whatever way you deem best. The Lord blesses us daily and we ask His blessings on you and your work... Please keep THE SWORD AND STAFF coming our way. We like the way you 'tell it as it is'. . ."*

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please send THE SWORD AND STAFF. I enjoy your 'tell it like it is' approach."*

KENTUCKY:

■ *"Please remove our name from your mailing list."*

■ *"I cannot find the words to tell you how much enlightenment I receive from your publication. It's a constant source of encouragement to me. Even the older issues I've read before will renew my strength. It's a fierce struggle to serve the Lord today in the way He would have us. But I've always found that anything worth having is worth working for. . ."*

■ *"THE SWORD AND STAFF is a great paper. Praise God! for servants who still believe our Holy Bible, and tell the truth like our Bible says it. Until people get back to the Bible and believe it, live by the Word, this is a lost and dying generation. Keep up the good work."*

OHIO:

■ *"I thoroughly enjoy your publication and look forward to each copy. Keep up the good work!"*

■ *"I thank you, the church thanks you, the Lord thanks you, and God will reward you for your work in spreading the gospel truth. . ."*

MICHIGAN:

■ Reader Jeffrey Whitson, 227 E. College St., Olivet, Mich. 49076 has a holy concern upon his heart concerning the perverted practice of oral sex (of which he has written us) and

has done some research on this subject. He informs us that this material is available to those who would write him requesting it.

In this kind of world in which we live today, not only is this repulsive thing done by the homosexuals, but it seems that some heterosexual people have brought this practice of Sodom and Gomorrah over into the bounds of what is supposed to be holy matrimony. It is beyond this writer why anyone cannot see the depravity of such a practice. This is not the way God made us to function. The apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 11:14, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" There are certain things that are self-evident in nature. According to Paul in Romans 1:26 and 27, the homosexual relationship is "against nature." In legal terminology today oral sex is called "crime against nature." In legal terminology it is called "sodomy" (whether done homosexually or heterosexually). Recently in a robbery near here, the newspaper reports that "rape and forcible sodomy" were involved. We do not feel comfortable writing about these unseemly matters for Paul said, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12) (but such perverted practices evidently are common today). Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines sodomy as follows: "Carnal copulation with a member of the same sex or with an animal or unnatural carnal copulation with a member of the opposite sex; specifically: the penetration of the male organ into the mouth or anus of another." We apologize for writing these things, but it may well be that the pagan world has invaded the church. How unthinkable! How unacceptable!

ILLINOIS:

■ *"Please find my order—your paper provides such a source of soul searching for me—coupled with my own Bible study it is so rich in food for thought for us who belong to Jesus' church. . ."*

■ *"Great reading. THE SWORD AND STAFF is a real Christian standard!"*

IOWA:

■ *"I receive several excellent religious publications, but THE SWORD AND STAFF is one of the very best. Everytime I receive it in the mail my heart 'leaps' for joy, and I can hardly lay it down until I've read it through and through. . ."*

■ *"I appreciate THE SWORD AND STAFF so much. Please keep sending it to me."*

MISSOURI:

■ *"I do hope you realize the good that you've done in getting out the truth because there're still some people out here that want to hear and to know the truth. And pray God will grant you many more years of printing the truth. . ."*

"I also want to tell you I really do like the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I have learned a lot from them that I never could have learned from church meetings. I also copy some of the articles from them to send to friends and relatives. I have just a few more articles and I will be through reading them all. . ."

ARIZONA:

■ *"My name is _____ and I was given your vol. 25, no. 4, 1987 issue. . . I want to let you know that I did enjoy reading your paper's articles as they provided some thought-provoking insights and challenges. I also appreciate all the illustrations and short articles which will add to our bulletin (with your permission) and my sermons. I would like to be placed on your mailing list and would also like to receive the bound*

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS' RESPONSE . . .

(Continued from Last Page)

volumes of 1985-86 editions—a check will be enclosed for both.

"I would also like to take some time to make a couple of comments regarding your 'Response' columns. As Christians we, each of us individually, have a responsibility to God. This is our own personal responsibility and it cannot be abrogated or handed off to anyone else. We would all agree with that statement of 'Christian Freedom and Responsibility' and yet it distresses me to see it ignored. I say that in reading some of the negative responses people seem to be 'put off' by your expressing a differing view from theirs. I might disagree with a position, I might not understand your presentation, I might not see the validity of your proofs, etc., but why should I be offended? Or feel like you're invading my 'personal space.' I shall always read your publication just as I do any work other than the Bible. I will read it sincerely and carefully, trying to discover exactly what you are trying to say and what you are not saying. I shall accept insights and truths that are valid and endeavor to change my life when challenges are presented. However when I invite a person over for a chicken dinner I expect him to throw away the bones and not try to eat them. In much the same way, whenever I read any work (other than the Bible again) I will discard the 'bones.' They don't offend me and it would be a waste to discard all the nourishing 'meat' for their sake.

"This second paragraph deals specifically with the 'Response' which reads, '...Is there any doctrinal position of which you are not the sole repository of proper understanding?... (sarcasm understood).' It strikes me that while this person probably has the problems spoken of above, that this also might contain a 'germ' of truth. That is, a couple of factors arise from my reading, that might help the situation. Firstly you are writing articles which challenge me and make me read them several times at least to get a firm handle on just what you are saying versus what you are not saying. This means two things. One, you are writing on a level that is 'above' most people's abilities to read comfortably. The very thing that makes you 'fun' for me makes you hard to understand for the majority. Two, most people do not like challenges of any sort in regard to their learning or religion. The latter can be ignored because we must challenge people in order to grow spiritually. The former can be aided by conscious writing to the universal 7th grade level. What I am NOT saying is to allow scholarship itself to suffer but maybe allow vocabulary and sentences to become simpler. Sometimes it's hard, but complex thoughts and ideas can be presented in common terms rather than in 'scholarly' language.

"The second factor is what I shall call the 'Paternal' factor. There is a feeling, one reads, of someone from 'above' speaking 'down' to his children. Some of this involves language used like the word 'Beloved.' Granted in its purist context it states a feeling of relationship. But in practice this term comes across as paternal a father to his children. Terms such as this should be avoided. Some of this also involves negativism. When one is constantly correcting people it come across again as paternal rather than sharing. Yes, we need to help and correct our brothers and sisters, but we also need to exhort, bless, and encourage them. Blending the two together, I feel, would make for a much more effective publication and dare I say it—acceptable.

"Let me add here by way of closing that I have had only the opportunity to read one issue so far and that I could be mistaken about these things. If I am then please forgive me as I am writing this only in an attempt to help—not hinder or discourage. I did enjoy what I have had a chance to read and

look forward to getting the back issues and your future ones as well."

Editor's comment: The wisdom of this letter is certainly appreciated, but we have never thought of our writings as being particularly scholarly (although we believe that much of the material used by churches today is pabulum). However, we have been of the impression that our reading audience is above average.

In reference to the "Paternal" our motives are pure. For the very purpose of avoiding the strictly academic and scholarly treatise, such words as "beloved" are used (putting matters more on a personal basis). And as a Bible student we subconsciously adopt the style of the writers of Scripture.

CALIFORNIA:

■ **Editor's note:** A letter from a California reader says that he is not able to pigeonhole our publication. We are pleased to hear that. We are interested in truth for the sake of truth, not to build up some sect, party, or faction.

OREGON:

■ "I would like your latest bound volume of THE SWORD AND STAFF. Also, put me on your regular mailing list. This is the best that I have read. God bless you in your work."

PHILIPPINES:

■ "Greetings in the most precious name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

"I have been reading THE SWORD AND STAFF for years now and I have been blessed by the articles you are writing. I praise God for people like you who are sharing God's words through such publication. . .

"Thank you and may God bless you in your ministry."

★★★★★★

Surpassing the Sun's Solar Energy



"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. NO FOLLOWER OF MINE SHALL WANDER IN THE DARK." — THE SON OF GOD (JOHN 8:12 — N.E.B.)

★★★★★★

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

HIS CHURCH IS MARCHING ON

James E. Gibbons

(Battle Hymn of the Republic)

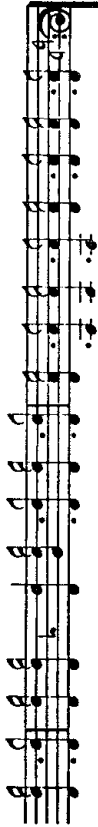
William Steffe



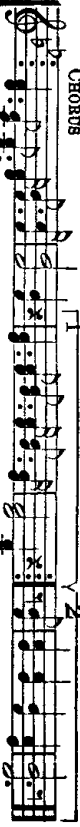
1. My ears have heard the sto-ry of the Christ up-on the cross, How he
2. I have read it on the pag-es of the Ho-ly Word of God that the
3. The church that Je-sus start-ed has en-dured the test of time; For the



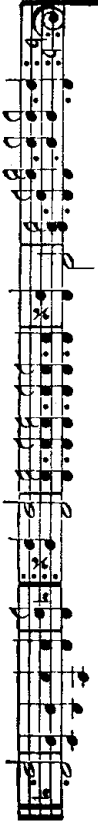
gave him-self so free-ly for the church at such a cost; How with power the church that Je-sus pur-chased un-der foot of man was trod; For the one-ness gates of hell can-not pre-vail a-gainst this church di-vine, And the child-ren



church was start-ed on the day of Pen-te-cost; His church is march-ing on, of the pat-tern in the eyes of men is odd; His church is march-ing on, of this king-dom will some day the sun out-shine; His church is march-ing on.



Praise the Lord, O hal-le-lu-jah! Praise the Lord, O hal-le-lu-jah! His church is march-ing on.



Copyright, James E. Gibbons, 1988

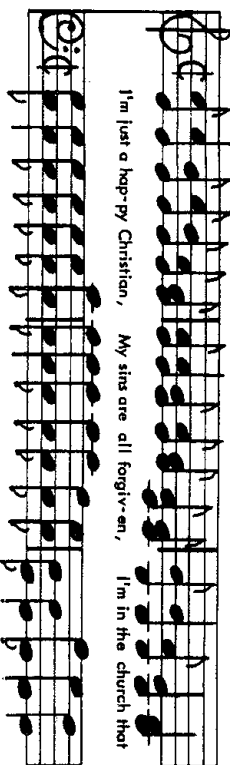
NOTE: Song at left by editor, *His Church is Marching On* (tune: *Battle Hymn of Republic*), now back in print. Glue on back; dampen, stick in hymnbooks. Still 6¢ each—order a supply today.

A HAPPY CHRISTIAN

Lafe Culver

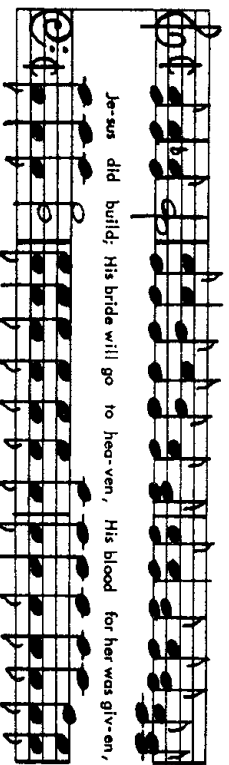
Anita Culver

I'm just a hap-py Christian, My sins are all forgiv-en, I'm in the church that



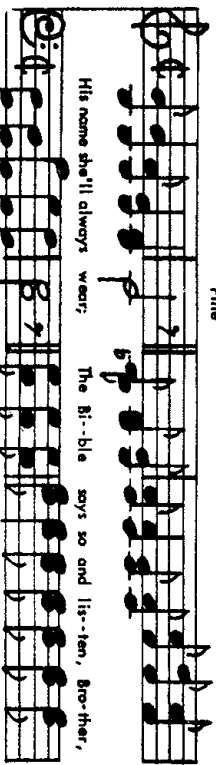
:S:

Je-sus did build; His bride will go to hea-ven, His blood for her was giv-en,



Fine

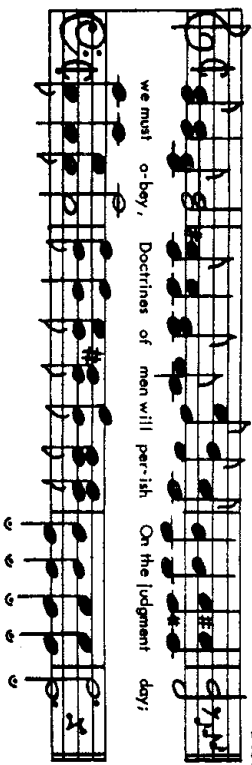
His name she'll always wear; The Bi-ble says so and lis-ten, Bro-ther,



I'm in the church of Christ.

D.S.

we must a-bey, Doctrines of men will per-ish On the judgment day;



Confused
About
Which
Way
to
Go
?



GO BACK to the BIBLE and the LOCAL undenominational New Testament church and you will be right on course.

TRUTH-PACKED BOOKLETS, LEAF-
LETS, AND TRACTS (AND PLAQUES):

BELOW is a listing of materials printed by *The Sword and Staff* and currently available from us. The "price" is merely a suggested amount to help pay the cost of printing. Some are listed as "free."

- ☐ *Our Great and Glorious God*—25¢ each.
- ☐ *The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple*—1 copy, 35¢; 1 to 99 copies, 25¢ each; 100 or more 20¢ each (miscut ones, stapled on the side—10¢ each).
- ☐ *Meaning of Suffering in Life of a Christian*—10¢ each.
- ☐ *Obedying the Gospel Chart*—8¢ each (11 by 17 size); 3¢ (small size).
- ☐ *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*—6¢ each.

Three Cent (3¢) Ones:

- Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered.*
- Lessons in Happiness from the Garden of Eden.*
- Origin of Religious Misunderstanding & False Teaching.*
- Are Visions, Dreams & Rel. Experiences Proof Salvation?*
- The Letter That Was Never Answered.*
- "Easter" Every Sunday.*
- Getting Informed About Rock Music.*
- Is It Wrong for a Christian to Use Tobacco?*
- Are You Sanctified?*
- Every Sunday? (Weekly Observance of Lord's Supper).*
- Sequel to "Every Sunday."*
- Obedying the Gospel Chart (small).*

No "Charge" (Free):

- God's Organization for the Church*
- Christianity Without Denominations*
- Back to the Original Church*
- A variety of simple truth-packed plaques.*

(Clip and Mail)

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find my contribution. Please put me on the mailing list of *The Sword and Staff*. ☐ New; ☐ Renew.

Name:

Address (with zip):

(Check for bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff*)

- ☐ 77-78-79 bound volumes of *The Sword & Staff*—\$4.50
- ☐ 80-81-82 bound volumes of *The Sword & Staff*—\$4.75
- ☐ 1983-84 bound volumes of *The Sword & Staff*—\$4.95
- ☐ 1985-86 bound volumes of *The Sword & Staff*—\$5.95

Notice to All Readers
in All Countries

ALL "subscriptions" and "renewals" to *The Sword and Staff* should be addressed directly to our Mt. Airy, N.C. (U.S.A.) address. This is now our policy in all countries (including the Philippines) as well as in the United States. Our address is below.—*J. Gibbons*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Treasure: Many have discovered treasure much to their liking when they ordered the back issues of the bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff*. Notice those available.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

—HELP US REACH OUT TO MORE PEOPLE AND
CHURCHES WITH THIS PUBLICATION—Thanks!

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

Non-Profit Organ.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 25