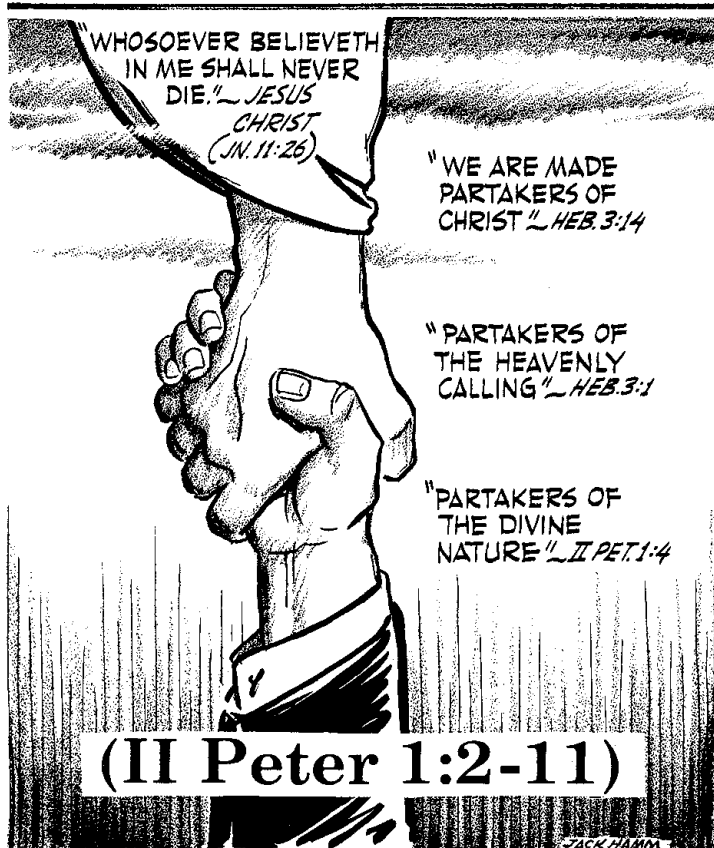


The Sword AND Staff

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

Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION *Sure*



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

IT IS GOD'S intention that our religion (our relationship to Him) be the primary source of joy and contentment in our lives. Jesus spoke of this in the parables of the kingdom. "And again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matthew 13:44). Paul wrote in Romans 5:1,2, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom

also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice* in hope of the glory of God." In this same book he continued: "For the kingdom of God is...righteousness, and *peace*, and *joy* in the Holy Ghost (Spirit)" (15:13).

This joy and contentment comes by knowing God and knowing that we are right with Him (that eternal life is ours). In II Peter 1:2, we read, "*Grace and peace* be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." John wrote, "And these things write we unto you, that your *joy may be full*" (I John 1:4). He further explains the reason for his writing, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe (trust) on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). These two verses coupled together show the overall purpose of his writing, that their joy would be full in knowing that they had eternal life (in the full assurance of their relationship to God). Therefore, John could strongly say, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19).

This kind of assurance does not come by a "hit and miss" type of religion, but by full surrender, commitment, and diligence on our part. This was the essence of what Barnabas told the new Gentile converts in Antioch (as he got them off to a good start). "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all with *purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*" (Acts 11:23). How fittingly the writer of Hebrews wrote, "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). Peter, in the Scripture given at the beginning of this article, summed it all up by saying, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10).

Therefore, that is what this article is all about. We
(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 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 to send an offering (perhaps annually). No notices are sent. Make your checks out to CHURCH IN MOUNT AIRY. Frequency and extent of publication is determined by support. James E. Gibbons is editor. (Money received for printed materials is all considered as an offering). —*Thank you!*

Proverbially SPEAKING...

RIGHT is right if nobody is right, and wrong is still wrong if everybody is wrong.

"Do not allow the pressures of life to crush you or break you, but rather let them be to broaden your spirit and shape you into the image of Christ."

The sin that God cannot forgive: the one that you will not forsake (it is unpardonable).

"God will forgive those who start late in life to serve Him, but He will not forgive those who quit early."

To get things accomplished, plan your work and then work your plan.

"Salvation is by atonement, not attainment; by believing, not achieving."

Since Christ and God have been banished from our public school systems, does it mean that the systems are anti-Christian and ungodly? (you know the answer!)

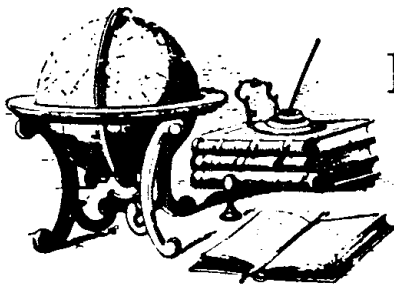
"Make your husband feel like a king, and you will automatically feel like a queen."

Never be afraid to trust the unknown future to the all-knowing God.

"God takes pleasure in honoring those who honor Him."

Beware: fast living will bring you to face God and the judgment considerably faster!

"When we reject the 'Light of the world' (Jesus Christ), we condemn ourselves to eternal darkness."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DAD GLAD (OR "NO GREATER JOY")

■ *"A wise son maketh a glad father (his father glad): but a foolish son is the heaviness (grief) of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth" (III John 4).*

A FATHER in the flesh loves his offspring in a sense that he loves no other human beings (that's natural). The sacredness of life has been passed on through him (and they are his own flesh and blood). A godly father has a special love for his children coupled with the feeling of an awesome responsibility. He loves God too. He believes that "children are an heritage of the LORD" (Psalms 127:3), that they are actually in the image of God (spiritual), and that they are to be brought "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6). The feelings of such a father are to be found throughout the book of Proverbs as time and time again the writer addresses, "My son," "My son," giving special counsel, wisdom, and instructions. His holy concern is seen at every turn. The arrival into adulthood of a good, decent, and solid person was the most desired thing. Therefore, he said, "A wise son maketh a glad father (his father glad): but a foolish son is the heaviness (grief) of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20). A wise son of whom he could be rightly and righteously proud—*what a great joy it would bring!* But, looking at it from the other side, we read, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy" (Proverbs 17:21). "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (Proverbs 17:25). King David experienced this. He had a son to do wrong and to die in that state. Although dishonored, and wronged, David cried out, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Samuel 18:33b). That position which brings the greatest joy has the potential of the greatest sorrow.

What we are considering here is true not only in reference to physical fathers, but to spiritual ones and the heavenly Father. Spiritual leaders are many times spiritual fathers as they have personally brought people to Christ and as they are put into a position to have such concern as a spiritual father over the people. If they are genuine leaders, it is that real. The apostle John wrote, "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth" (III John 3,4). In the early days of the church what joy was experienced at the birth of souls into the family of God. And today they who are soul winners have experienced the same joy—it is the greatest! And to see these dear people grow as babes in Christ—watching this, the deepest feelings of love and

joy are mingled! But that which produces the greatest joy has the potential of producing the greatest sorrow. The apostle Paul experienced both. One only has to read I and II Corinthians to see the great burden he experienced because of “children” who were doing wrong (even disowning him). In II Corinthians 2:4 he wrote, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” His concern



was almost unbearable as he made his way to Troas, hoping to meet Titus who was to bring him the latest word about the Corinthian situation. What love for these “children.” And today when so many, who claim to be children of God, choose not to heed earnest exhortations of love and truth—what grief, what a burden it brings to those spiritual leaders who really love them (and have their well-being at heart)!

And, rest assured, the same is true of our heavenly Father. Today through Christ we draw near and seek to please Him. God is pictured by Paul as being happy about the gospel (I Timothy 1:11, “blessed” is the translation of *makarios*, happy). There is “joy in the presence of the angels” when men return to their heavenly Father (Luke 15:10ff). He is made glad. He takes pleasure in those who take pleasure in Him. Proverbs 11:20 reads, “They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight” (also

notice Proverbs 12:22). Psalms 103:13 says, “Like a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.” Furthermore, in the New Testament, Peter wrote, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (I Peter 3:12). When men depart from God’s way, He is grieved. We read (back in the time of Noah), “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Genesis 6:5,6). How God must be grieved about His wayward children today! Oh, beloved, let us be “obedient children” (I Peter 1:14) and not “grieve” the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Let us give our heavenly Father every reason to be glad for what He has done through the gospel. Amen. □

★★★★★★

A Survey of the Psalms

THE BOOK of Psalms is in reality a compilation of 150 poems. The Hebrew title is “Book of Praises.” It served as a prayerbook and a hymnal to the Hebrews. Psalms 119 is the longest Psalm and also the longest chapter in the Bible. Psalm 117 is the shortest Psalm, and also the shortest and middle chapter of the Bible. Psalms 118:8 is the middle verse of the Bible.

Authorship

The Psalms were written over a period of about 1,000 years. In the titles, 73 psalms are ascribed to David; 12 to Asaph; 11 to the sons of Korah; 2 to Solomon (72 and 127); 1 to Moses (90); 1 to Ethan (89); 50 are anonymous.

Authenticity

The evidence for the authenticity of the book of Psalms is very strong. Out of 283 New Testament quotes from the Old Testament, 116 are from the Psalms. Jesus as well as the apostles, quoted from the Psalms (See Matthew 22:41-45; Acts 1:16).

Subject Matter

There are over 30 subjects set forth in the Psalms. Some are dealt with very briefly while others are referred to in dozens of Psalms. Some of the topics are the Messiah, Prayer, Praise, History of the Jews, Idolatry, Jehovah, Man, Sin, etc.—*Words of Life* □

★★★★★★

Spirit of Envy

HISTORY tells us of a statue that was erected to a celebrated victor in the public games of Greece named Theogenes. The erection of this statue so excited the envious hatred of one of his rivals that he went every night and strove to throw the statue over by repeated blows. Ultimately he succeeded, but alas, the statue fell on him, and he was crushed to death beneath it. Such generally is the end of men who allow themselves to be carried away by the spirit of envy.

—Selected

Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION Sure

(Continued from Page 1)

are concerned about “making our calling and election sure.” Contrary to what is commonly taught, there is a part that we must fill in our relationship to God (if we are to be right with Him and stay right with Him). How we need to take this seriously and follow the serious admonitions of the apostle Paul. To the Philippians: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). To the Corinthians: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (disqualified)” (II Corinthians 13:5). We can know where we stand with God. May the blessed assurance of salvation be ours. Then our joy will be “full.”

This article concerns “making our calling and election sure” (1) in becoming a Christian and (2) in remaining a Christian.

I. IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

“Purged” from Our Old Sins

It is of the utmost importance that we have been “purged” from our sins, that we know it, and that we stand in this wonderful knowledge. Peter urged and admonished his readers to be growing in their Christian lives (to be adding the different “graces”), then he said, “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (II Peter 1:9). God’s grace brought us into the initial “purging” of our sins by the blood of Christ. This purging and resultant good are assured by the writer of Hebrews. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14). The reality of this purging is brought out in I Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.” Obviously he is talking about believing, repenting, and being baptized for the remission of sins (and receiving the Holy Spirit)—Acts 2:38; 22:16. The apostle Peter had reference to this same purging in I Peter 3:21 as he wrote, “The like figure (verse 20) whereunto even baptism doeth 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.”

A Real Conversion to Christ

First, therefore, we make our “calling and election sure” by really being converted to Christ. We need to examine every aspect of our conversion to see if it measures up to the Scriptures (they will judge us in the last day). There is too much at stake to build our lives on a question mark. We forfeit the fullness of joy

and contentment to be found in the Lord when we really don’t know where we stand with him (as well as missing out on eternal life). And this matter of knowing is not just a matter of subjective feeling, but of fact, faith, and feeling (assurance) (and in that order: fact, faith, and feeling). What about our faith? What about our repentance? What about our baptism? What about our commitment? Were all of these things real and personal? Were we really “born again,” born of water and of the Spirit (an eternal *must*, John 3:5). Or, was everything just an empty, meaningless formality?

“If Thou Believeth With All Thine Heart”

In order for the remission of sins to be accomplished in baptism everything else must be in order. Otherwise a person goes into the water a dry sinner and comes up a wet one. Nothing can be right. In a very unusual circumstance, Philip personally preached Christ to an Ethiopian government official (eunuch) as they rode along in a chariot. “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doeth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believeth with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:36-39). This man was told to believe with all of his heart (no reservations). He was then baptized, and coming up out of the water, “he went on his way rejoicing.” Salvation, and the joy of salvation, had been accomplished. His initial “calling and election” had been made sure. Genuine faith preceded and accompanied his baptism. And going down into the water he was obviously immersed, according to the true meaning of the Greek word. All of

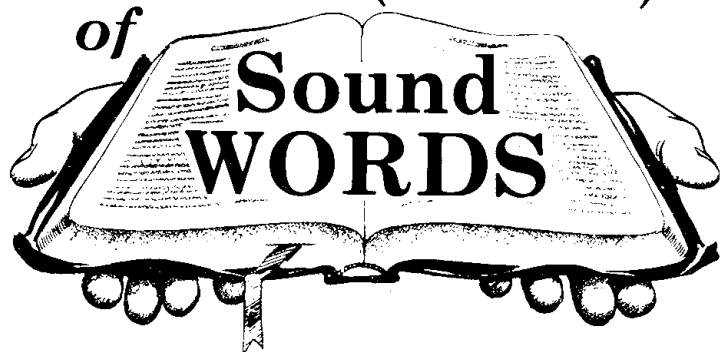
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BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

If you have a tender message,
Or a loving word to say,
Do not wait till you forget it,
But whisper it today;
The tender word unspoken,
The letter never sent,
The long forgotten messages,
The wealth of love unspent—
For these some hearts are breaking,
For these some loved ones wait;
So show them that you care for them
Before it is too late.

By Frank Herbert Sweet

The Form (Pattern) of



BIBLE WORDS WITHOUT BIBLE THOUGHT

IN TALKING about things of the Bible (in teaching and preaching) we should use the terminology and language of the Bible to convey Biblical truth and thought (especially relating to doctrine). We should "hold fast the form of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13; I Corinthians 2:13) and call Bible things by Bible names. This expedites understanding and the restoration of simple New Testament Christianity.

However, the use of Bible terminology does not always insure and assure that the truth will be presented. (We were made aware of this, especially, when two young Mormon fellows came knocking on the door. They said they were "elders," and they spoke of belonging to the priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek). There are a lot of good Biblical words (or "translated" representations of them) in use today which have in part or entirely lost their original meaning. In this list of misused and abused words we would include the following (and perhaps others): altar, baptism, saved, sanctify, church, bishop, evangelist and pastor.

Some speak of the front of the auditorium (or "sanctuary," as they would call it) of the church building as an altar and especially as it relates to kneeling and praying. However, in the Bible an altar always means a raised platform (made of stone, etc.) on which wood was placed and an animal was sacrificed to God. How did this come to be used in connection with a church building? Could this have come from the Catholics? We understand that they believe that in the Lord's supper (or to them, the "sacrament") that Christ is sacrificed all over again and that they actually eat his flesh and drink his blood (transubstantiation). Thus, where this takes place, in the front of the church building, would understandably be called an altar to them (why do Protestants call it an altar?).

"Baptism," the transliterated word that represents the Greek *baptisma*, means many things today (sprinkling, pouring, or immersion). However, in the Bible it has reference to dipping or immersion (Acts 8:38; Romans 6:4,5).

Among most Protestant denominations the word "saved" (in reference to salvation) is used incorrectly. A person is called "saved" by simply believing or praying, but the Bible says that a person is saved (enters the state of salvation) when he believes and is baptized (Mark 16:15,16). He is baptized to get his sins forgiven and to get into Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27).

Although a person has believed and repented, he cannot say that he is "saved" until he is baptized (I Peter 3:21), and then it is conditional.

"Sanctify" is a good Biblical word that has fallen upon hard times among certain Pentecostal type groups (and has lost its original meaning). This writer has been told that a person is sanctified from the inherited sin of Adam (?) in what is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the second work of grace, and thereafter he lives above sin. Obviously something is wrong here (I John 1:8-10). Although the church at Corinth was sanctified (I Corinthians 1:2; 6:11), these people made a first class mess out of things. They had to repent to regain their salvation (II Corinthians 7:9-11). The word that is translated "sanctify" comes from the same root that is rendered "holy." Both carry the idea of being set apart, being separate (hence, holy). This takes place when a person repents and is baptized into Christ (I Corinthians 6:11; Acts 2:38). And this matter of being holy is something that is to be worked on and continued throughout life (II Corinthians 7:1).

Our English word "church" is used to translate the Greek *ekklesia* (meaning the "called out"). It refers to people. It is used of the whole body of believers universally which Christ would establish (Matthew 16:18), it refers to a local body of believers in a given community (I Corinthians 1:2), and it is also used having reference to a local body of believers assembled together (I Corinthians 14:34; Colossians 4:16). But the Biblical term church suffers untold damage when we hear people calling a denomination a church (as if the Lord had many different universal churches—Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4). The word suffers unscriptural abuse when people call a building the church. Church has to do with people.

When one hears the word "bishop" in our everyday world, it usually carries a connotation far removed from the New Testament. To Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, and some others it refers to an exalted official over what is called a Diocese, over a certain district, or, more explicitly, over a plurality of churches. We find just the opposite in the New Testament. There were several bishops over one church (not one bishop over many churches). The elder and bishop are but two expressions having to do with one (the same) office (Titus 1:5-7ff). Notice the plurality of bishops (elders) with each local church (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28—the word translated "overseer" is the same Greek word that is elsewhere translated "bishop"; Philippians 1:1). So, in denominationalism today some things are strangely amiss.

We hear the word "evangelist" today. This is used of men in league with Billy Graham or of men on a lesser scale who go about preaching "revival" meetings. The located "minister" suddenly becomes an "evangelist" when he is invited to hold a week's meeting with the neighboring church down the road (as distinguished from the local "minister"). This word is reserved for this sort of situation. But is that how it was used in early New Testament times? If we have understood the word correctly, every preacher was an evangelist

(Continued on Next Page)

Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION Sure

(Continued from Page 4)

this automatically eliminates so-called infant “baptism” (both the practice and the mode). The Lord Jesus had said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16a). Any way you look at it, a person’s baptism is not valid if the element of real faith has not been present. It is belief and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation as the Son of God. Nor is “baptism” baptism unless he has been immersed.

“Repent and Be Baptized”

Faith is not the only prerequisite to be baptized into Christ. People in the second chapter of Acts, when “pricked in their hearts” (as they were convicted of the enormity of their sins by the preaching), cried out “unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)” (Acts 2:37b,38). Yes, they were to “repent” and “be baptized” (and in that order). We are told that “godly sorrow” brings about repentance (II Corinthians 7:10). Unless there is a change of heart and mind about sin, contrition, there can be no remission of sins when one is baptized (nor can there be newness of life following the immersion—Romans 6). Repentance is a change of heart that results in a change of life. It is from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 6:1; 9:14). We find that the people responded in a positive way to what Peter told them in Acts chapter 2. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...” (2:41a). In their newfound relationship, “gladness and singleness of heart” are mentioned, along with “praising God” (2:46b,47a). When one knows that his sins are really gone, and that he is right with the God who made him, there is every reason to rejoice.

Baptism, Remission of Sins, the Holy Spirit

The concluding element in becoming a Christian was/is baptism (“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”—Galatians 3:27). In the early church there was no such thing as someone claiming to be a Christian who had never been baptized. As a matter of fact, Luke in speaking of Lydia’s conversion, said, “And when she was baptized, and her household. . .” (Acts 16:15a). “And when she was baptized”—just like everybody else; this is what everyone did in responding to the gospel (in accepting Christ). And, as has been already established, baptism was/is immersion in water. Not only that, it is by the authority of Jesus Christ for the “remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Of the word “remission” the dictionary says, “Act of remitting; pardon, especially remission of sins.” Obviously, the blood of Christ accomplishes all of this (Revelation 1:5). Saul of Tarsus, although he had fasted and prayed for three days (Acts 9:9,11), was not able to “pray through” to salvation (contrary to what many tell us today). Ananias, finally coming to this contrite and praying

sinner, said, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). According to Romans 6, in becoming a Christian we are baptized into the death of Christ where spiritually we get the benefits



“FINALLY,
DEAR FRIENDS,
BE GLAD
IN THE LORD.
I NEVER GET
TIRED TELLING
YOU THIS AND
IT IS GOOD
FOR YOU TO
HEAR IT
AGAIN AND
AGAIN.”

—THE GREAT
APOSTLE PAUL
(PHIL. 3:1 TBT/TEX)

Sound WORDS

(Continued from Last Page)

(that’s what the great commission was/is all about) whether he was laboring locally or abroad. These men spearheaded this great work.

The last abused Scriptural word that we wish to notice is “pastor” (and perhaps this is where the rub comes in connection with our modern misconceptions of “evangelist”). The word “pastor” is another one of those words used to describe the work of an elder (I Peter 5; Acts 20:28). The work of the pastor (elder) is distinguished from that of the evangelist (preacher) in Ephesians 4:11. The problem today is that we have men in the local church who are called “elders” as distinguished from others who are called “pastors” (or, sometimes, “the pastor”). The one who is called “pastor” is also called “preacher.” The denominational pastor system has been adopted, and, for the most part, the local elders (who Scripturally are supposed to be the pastors) have been put on the shelf. And “the preacher” and the people love to have it so!

Yes, we need to call Bible things by Bible names, but at the same time we need to be sure that what we are calling a Bible name is actually a Bible thing. Too many times today Scriptural language is used in an unscriptural way. Let us “hold fast the form of sound words” (II Timothy 1:13) as we actually engage in the restoration of simple (undenominational) New Testament Christianity.—James E. Gibbons □

of his death and arise to walk in newness of life. Colossians 2:11,12 tells us that in baptism we are “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.” With the removal of our sins the Holy Spirit comes into our lives (Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5,6; John 3:5; Galatians 4:6,7). How wonderful!

Only New Testament Baptism

In “making our calling and election sure,” the baptism we submit to must be the one we read about in the New Testament Scriptures (a burial in water by the authority of Jesus Christ into Christ for the remission of sins whereby we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—Acts 2:38ff). It is indeed regrettable today in the denominational world that (even among the minority who do immerse) there is a blatant denial by many of the New Testament purpose of baptism. To them it is something that follows salvation rather than being tied in with salvation. Even though an immersion has taken place, that does not necessarily mean that it is New Testament baptism. Paul makes this clear in Acts 19:1-7. Here about a dozen disciples of John the Baptist (evidently who had been baptized this side of Calvary unto John’s baptism) had to be immersed all over again. New Testament baptism was necessary as an antecedent to them receiving the Holy Spirit (whether personally or his charismatic manifestations). John’s baptism had been a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Luke 3:3). One basic difference (among others) between John’s baptism and New Testament baptism had to do with the subjects of baptism. John’s baptism was of the Jewish people who were already the Old Testament people of God as they cleaned up their lives in anticipation of the coming Christ (and the New Testament). Whereas New Testament baptism is a baptism of people who are not the people of God until they have been baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Galatians 3:26-29). New Testament baptism is possible because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (and New Testament baptism is parallel to all of this spiritually—Romans 6). It involves remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39; Titus 3:5,6). Denominational churches muddle the stream on the question of baptism. They put themselves in a position very much like that of John’s baptism (regarding their subjects of baptism already as God’s people before they are baptized). And, although people have many times been immersed in water, they have been taught that it was not necessary (and that remission of sins preceded baptism). But baptism is a most spiritual experience. If we don’t believe that baptism is of any significance, do you think God will impose its meaning upon us (and count it as a spiritual reality)? Remember the Lord’s supper is of no spiritual value unless we “discern” the Lord’s death, examine ourselves, etc. (I Corinthians 11:29). What about baptism then? It is so simple to make “our calling and election sure” in this matter. Let us be baptized into Christ. Thereby we can know that we “have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine” (Romans 6:17), that we have really been baptized for the right reasons, and that we are right with God!

II. IN REMAINING A CHRISTIAN

II Peter 1:5-11

Having accepted God’s grace in becoming a Christian, we must now make “our calling and election sure” in remaining a Christian. Peter tells us that there “are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4). Then he continues by saying, “And besides this (for this very reason), giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:5-11). By growing in “grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18), we make our “calling and election sure.” “Grace and peace” are multiplied in our lives “through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (II Peter 1:2).

The vitality of our faith is what brought us into Christ, but that is only the beginning. All of these other great things are to be added to our lives. In fact, he says that we are to be “giving all diligence” to add these things (nothing halfhearted here!). Someone has said that being a Christian is like riding a bicycle, you have to keep going or get off. If you are not moving ahead you will fall. Let us notice briefly each of these “graces” individually that are to be added when we grow whereby we make our “calling and election sure.”

That Which Is to Be Added to Our Faith

Eight things are named here in connection with “making our calling and election sure.” Starting out with faith, we are finally brought to love. To our initial faith we are to add *virtue*. Faith is not enough (James 2:14-26). Virtue involves moral goodness and excellence (and sometimes the word is used referring to valor, moral courage). Having initially through faith taken our stand for the Lord, it now takes real moral courage (backbone) to stick in there and be different from the world. If we are not different from the world, we are of the world. As we take our stand for the right (and courageously remain standing), to our virtue we are to add *knowledge*. We are to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord (II Peter 3:18; I Peter 2:2). To continue in the right direction we must know where and how to go. To grow in grace and not grow in knowledge is to become an imbalanced person (devout religious energies may be expended dangerously and

(Continued on Next Page)

Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION Sure (Continued from Last Page)

uselessly). But to grow in knowledge without growing in grace likewise is to create a spiritual imbalance where it is easy to become like the Pharisees. May we know better, and being spiritually prompted, may we put what we know into practice.

Next we are to add "to knowledge *temperance*; and to temperance *patience*; and to patience *godliness*." Temperance means self-control, and it comes from a word signifying strong. It is "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites." (Truly this is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—Galatians 5:22,23). Coupled with "temperance," *patience* is to be added. How this is needed! The word "patience" (the Greek word) literally means under to stay. It is that steadfastness, constancy, and endurance that is so essential. Of this quality someone has said, "In the New Testament the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." To exercise self-control ("temperance") so necessary in becoming a real Christian (and remaining one), one must have a lot of patience. When we become a Christian, usually there is a lot of living yet to be done before we leave this old world. Our Lord said, "He that endureth (from the same word "patience") to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22; 24:11-13). And to these "graces" is to be added *godliness*. How natural for godliness to accompany these acquisitions. Herein is to be found the ennobling influence of this good fear, reverence, and respect (toward God) and its resultant devotion and personal piety. In "making our calling and election sure," we become genuinely devout (before God).

The last two things (as listed by the apostle Peter) to be added are "*brotherly kindness*" and "*charity*" (*love*)—"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love)." Without these gracious ingredients our relation to God and to one another would be pretty barren, empty, and meaningless. In fact, love is what brought it all about (John 3:16). More exactly "brotherly kindness" (*philadelphia*) really is brotherly love or love of the brethren. It is that love which Christians cherish for each other.

(Continued on Page 10)

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I Had a Most Horrible Dream

I HAD a most horrible dream. I dreamed that the Lord took my contribution to the church, multiplied it by ten, and this became my weekly income. In no time flat I lost my color TV, had to give up all my vehicles (this included by car and truck, as well as my motorcycle), had to give up my cottage at the beach (as well as the nice modern brick house in which I lived). I couldn't even make the payments. What can a person do on \$10.00 a week?

Dear reader, suppose the LORD took your offering, then multiplied it by ten, and made that your weekly income. COULD YOU LIVE ON IT?—Adapted □

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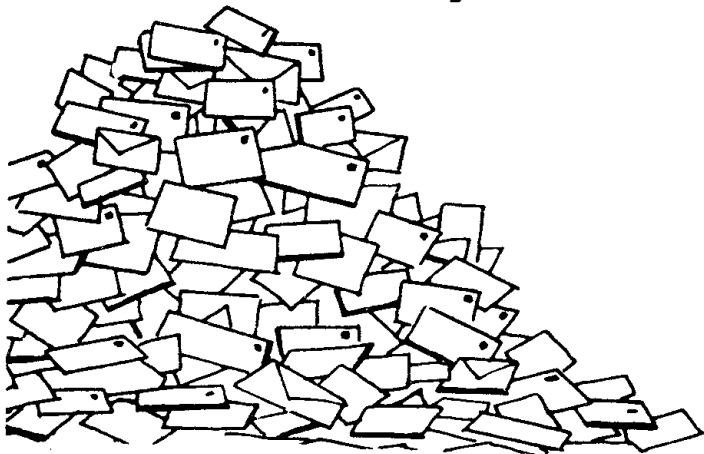
BIBLE QUESTIONS
(involving Gentiles in the Bible)

1. The word "Gentile" (translation of Hebrew **goi** and Greek **ethnos**) is also rendered by what two other outstanding words in the Bible?
2. Of what descendants of what son of Noah does it say, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided (separated) in their lands"?
3. Generally the word "Gentile" came to have the opposite meaning (or reference) to what other word or name in the Bible?
4. What Gentile served in the army of David and was killed in the line of duty at Rabbah by the Ammonites?
5. What captain of a Gentile army in Old Testament times had leprosy and was instructed by the prophet of God to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed?
6. What ancient Gentile king because of his arrogance became as an animal, was driven from among men, ate grass like oxen, lived in the open, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven?
7. What conquering Gentile king in the prophecies of Daniel is pictured as a rough "he goat"?
8. What are the names of four women (the only women) listed in the genealogies of Jesus who were probably all Gentiles?
9. Of what Gentile did Jesus marvel and say, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"?
10. What national background was the Gentile woman who so impressed Jesus with her humble pleadings that he cast the demon out of her little daughter?
11. Who was the first outright Gentile converted to Christianity?
12. In the book of Acts what were Gentile converts to the Jewish religion called, and what were the ones called who had not fully made this step yet (but were on the verge of doing so)?
13. What preacher and associate worker of the apostle Paul had a Jewish mother and a Gentile father?
14. At what Gentile church were the disciples first called Christians?
15. What question perplexed the early Gentile Christians which was settled in Jerusalem?
16. According to Paul, how has the barrier between Jew and Gentile been broken down (thus bring peace), and where is this distinction completely dissolved (and they are regarded as one)?
17. In reference to the closeness (or lack of it) to God, Peter and Paul speak of the unconverted Gentiles in what way?
18. In reference to being the people of God, Paul describes the Gentiles as what kind of branch that has been grafted into the olive tree by faith?
19. How did Jesus say an unrepentant offender in the church was to be treated as a last resort in trying to get him to mend his ways?
20. What promise did God make to Abraham which shows from ancient times that Gentiles were included in God's overall plan?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue).

READERS'

... Response



NORTH CAROLINA:

- "Please cancel my subscription. Thank you."

VIRGINIA:

- "Your last *SWORD AND STAFF* issue was the first one I took time to read and I found it interesting and enlightening. I especially found your article and Readers' Response column on Deacons, Elders, and Evangelists very thoughtful. You are beginning to answer some questions I have had concerning these offices throughout my own studies. I hope you may find time to write more articles on the same subjects. I will share your articles with other Christian workers in the future. . ."

PENNSYLVANIA:

- "Thank you for putting out a fine non-compromising magazine that speaks for non-denominational, New Testament Christianity. May you abound even more in the work of the Lord, and may God bless you."
- "I recently sent for all the back issues from 1977 on, and I find it difficult to express how good it is to read some nonsense preaching. Keep on abounding in the work of the Lord."
- "The evangelist at my congregation gave to me a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. . .and I have found it to be an excellent, and much needed, publication. . ."

KENTUCKY:

- "Thank you for the work you do. We appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* very much. . ."
- "We enjoy your publication very much and thank God there are writers who print the whole truth! . . ."

INDIANA:

- "Please remove from mailing list!"
- "Here is an offering to keep me on your mailing list. I thank you for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I teach 6th grade girls and find helps and information in your articles to share."

IOWA:

- "Please send me the volumes 21 and 22 of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. . .My husband and I have enjoyed the volume we received a couple of weeks ago. It is so full of excellent reading and knowledge of the church. We can hardly put it down, once we start to read it."
- ". . .I do the bulletin for...church of Christ, and I have used

quite a few of your articles; especially the small sermonettes. I appreciate them very much and agree with you wholeheartedly on what you are teaching. Keep up the good work. I'm preaching through my bulletin. I send it to many people and neighbors. I make one up every week. It takes lots of time but it is a good work, and I benefit from it too."

MISSOURI:

- "I enjoy your publication. It gives me an excellent source of accurate thinking on important issues. Our congregation receives a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I would like all of the past issues. I am sending a check for 1977-1986. . ."

KANSAS:

- "I have been riding free for quite a long time, so I am sending you this small contribution. Continue my *SWORD AND STAFF*. This is the best paper that I receive in my estimation. I would not want to stop receiving it. The Lord bless you for your labor."

OKLAHOMA:

- "Thank you for the latest issue of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I've just read it from 'kiver to kiver' and parts of it again. May God bless you and keep you 'telling it like it is.' My conviction is that the 'truth never hurts unless it ought to'. . ."

UTAH:

- "In *THE SWORD AND STAFF* (volume 26, number 3, 1988) is an article called 'Christ the AMEN'. This article points out that the word 'Amen' is a universal word. In the second paragraph of the article is found the following quote: 'All of these languages have kept the spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of 'amen'.

"One thing that we would like to point out at this time is that since the time Edward Horowitz, in his book *How the Hebrew Language Grew* (New York: Jewish Education Press) that was published in 1960, other translations have been published. One of these translations is the *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE*, printed by the American Bible Society in 1985.

Point:

"While it is reasonable to believe that anyone who loves our Lord enough to study the Bible, the Word of God, to search for the truth, the truth can be found in just about any translation. However, it is also reasonable to believe that many translations require more study than others.

Example:

"In the *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE* the word 'amen' is not always translated 'amen'. Revelation 3:14, the word 'amen' is translated 'So-Be-It'. It is also spelled and pronounced different from 'amen'. However, being used in the context that it is used, the meaning is the same as 'amen'.

"In the following verses (Matthew 28:20; Luke 24:53; John 21:55; Ephesians 6:24; I Timothy 6:21) the word 'amen' does not appear in the *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE*, and furthermore no other word appears to take its place in meaning.

"The word 'amen' has much more in meaning than Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, or the First and the Last. One can read (Isaiah 65:15) and see that the true meaning of the word 'amen' is 'God of Truth'. Depending upon several of the translations before 1960, one will gain the true meaning of 'amen' to be 'Jesus is faithful and true'. To call Jesus the 'amen' is to imply that he not only speaks truth, but that he is also the truth. He not only says amen, He is the Amen.

Point:

"What we are trying to show here is that the word 'amen'
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READERS' RESPONSE. . .

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being left out of the *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE* can weaken the true meaning and purpose of Jesus where teaching is concerned for the people who read and write Navajo. Also, if these words are left out or used in a different context, cannot other words be left out or misused? Most certainly they could.

Special Notice:

"The question may be asked: Are other translations dependable? To answer that question is to say YES. However, the Living-Way is extremely weak because it was meant to be more of a family commentary for a denomination. The King James, American Standard, Revised Standard, New King James, New International, and many more versions are dependable (in reference to 'amen'). The *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE* is dependable just as long as we remember to use other translations along with it. But, 'PLEASE' use caution when you study the *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE*. The Navajo language is considered by most language scholars to be one of the three hardest languages in the world to speak, read, or write. **STUDY THE *THE HOLY NAVAJO BIBLE* WITH CAUTION!** Not all words that are found in English can be found in the Navajo language.

"(This is not meant to be a rebuke at any part. We felt that you needed to know what is happening out here in Navajo land. We agree with everything in your *SWORD AND STAFF* except for the Navajo translation.)"

CALIFORNIA:

■ "I'm enclosing a check to you for a subscription to *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I really enjoyed reading it. . ." □

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Soar on Wings Like Eagles

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:30,31, NIV).

AN EAGLE knows the storm is approaching long before it breaks. It will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, it is soaring above it.

The eagle does not escape the storm; it simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rides on the winds that bring the storm.

Isaiah compares people to eagles. He says, in the Word of God, that we are blessed with that gift from God that enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure and disappointment in our lives. We can soar above the storm. Remember, it is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them.

When the storms of life come upon us, and all of us will experience them, we can rise above them by setting our mind and belief toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them. Isaiah said that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." Jesus put it another way when he encourages us to build our faith and strength on a solid foundation—His Word (Mat-

thew 7:24-27).

It is not that we would not be affected by the storm. We will not only be affected, we will be in it. It is just that we will use the storm to grow spiritually. Job did, Joseph did and so can we.

So let us be encouraged by Isaiah's words. Let us never allow our hope to fade, our faith to weaken. Let us use God's power to "soar on wings like eagles."

—Bill Thrasher

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Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION Sure (Continued from Page 8)



This deep love and appreciation of God, our heavenly Father, prompts a special love and regard for his children (our brothers and sisters in Christ). Paul appropriately admonished, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 13:1). And this "charity" (love) to be added to "brotherly kindness" is not just a duplication of what has already been said. It is a capping off of all that has been said with the esteem (*agape*) and good will we have for all of mankind. It is even as Paul wrote, "And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfection (completeness)" (Colossians 3:14). Love holds everything else together and makes us regard everything else with the proper perspective. Without it we are nothing (I Corinthians 13).

Yes, Peter in this great section of Scripture assures his readers (including us) that "if these things be in you and abound. . . ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (this "knowledge," knowing, through which "grace

and peace” are multiplied in our lives—II Peter 1:2). Then, having warned about lacking these things that should be added to our lives, he admonishes (as we have noticed), “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Not only will our “calling and election” be made sure, Peter says that as we “abound” in these things, “An entrance shall be ministered unto us *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Therefore, believing, we can “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8) !

Sin and Questionable Things

We might add a few comments about sin and questionable things. This must be seriously dealt with if we are to make “our calling and election sure.” Sin is an awful thing, and the Lord Jesus came (and died) to save us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins (Matthew 1:21; Titus 2:14). The apostle Paul wrote, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20b). Having said this, and some other wonderful things, he was afraid of being misunderstood. Therefore, he continued, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (6:1,2). And further on in this chapter he writes, “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (6:15,16). Then further on in this same book, we read, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (8:6). James verifies this same truth when he tells how sin comes about (James 1:13-16). He says that “sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This was spoken to Christians, then he warned the Christians to whom he was writing, “Do not err, my beloved brethren.” That there is a possibility of a Christian entering into spiritual death, he further confirms in James 5:19 and 20, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him: Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Therefore, we must live close to the Lord (Hebrews 4:15,16). We must remove from our lives sin and questionable things. Considering the Christian life a race, the writer of the book of Hebrews admonishes, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1b). II Corinthians 7:1 fits right in with this: “Having therefore these promises (of God dwelling in us, of being His sons and daughters, 6:16,18), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (Remember Revelation 21:27, speaking of that heavenly city, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. . .”). Hebrews 12:14 reads, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see

the Lord.” In a world of moral pollution, how we need to be on our toes!

There are things that are outright sin, there are things that lead into sin, and there are questionable things. The things that lead into sin, and even the questionable things, should be avoided. Of the things that are stumbling blocks (which lead into sin), the Lord said to get rid of them. He likens it to plucking out your eye or cutting off your right hand (even if it is that dear to you), but he said it would be better to do this than to have your whole body cast into hell (Matthew 5:29,30). It takes a real Christian to face up to a potential stumbling block and get rid of it (although within itself it may not be an outright sin). And of the questionable things, Paul said, “And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). A safe rule: if you doubt, don’t!

What about drinking and drugs? What about smoking? What about dancing? What about the movies? What about television? What about our adornment, the way we dress? What about our music? What about our friends? What about dating? What about divorce? What about the lottery? What about our reading? What about our religion? And, what about . . . ? Etc. Etc. Etc. All of this in the midst of a society that seemingly has severed its moral moorings and is adrift in an abyss of moral pollution, and our questions and problems are multiplied and compounded. Many regard just basic human decency as old-fashioned and outdated. In the face of the subtle brainwashing that is all about us, it really takes an independent thinker (real Christian) to sort everything out and not get away from the Bible. (Remember the days of Noah—Genesis 6:5). So many have forsaken the ancient landmarks in the midst of a humanistic society.

But we are talking about “making our calling and election sure.” We are talking about being right with God, knowing it, and staying right with God. That is the only way to have peace in our hearts and our joy “full.” Remember that Paul said, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is *life and peace*” (Romans 8:6). Also, in Colossians 3:15, he said, “And *let the peace of God rule in your hearts*, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” (Also, let us take heed to Colossians 3:17). What does he mean, “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts”? Let the “peace of God rule” in the sense of being the judge or umpire in our lives. In all that we do, may the “peace of God” determine our actions. We want to do what is right so that we can live with it: “let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” As a conscientious Christian, by avoiding sin and the questionable things (as well as doing the right in a positive sense), this is possible.

IN CONCLUSION, we would like to say that we are saved by grace (how wonderful!), but there is such a thing as falling from grace. If we fail to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord, we will pretty soon fall from grace (it is that simple). Too many people today have just enough religion to make them miserable (but

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Making OUR CALLING AND ELECTION Sure (Continued from Last Page)

not enough to make them happy). God would have it otherwise. The key to all of it is to make "our calling and election sure" (in becoming a Christian, and in remaining one). Our relationship to God can be exciting and joyful; it can afford the greatest peace of mind (all coming as a by-product of being right with God, and knowing it). It is up to us. □

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What about the state lottery, office betting, bingo games, etc.?

GAMBLING

TODAY in the United States, almost every state has some form of legalized gambling, whereas a decade or two ago, the very idea would have been turned down on moral grounds. One of the latest gambling crazes is the state lottery, which is now legal in 28 states. Only two states, Alabama and Arkansas, do not have the idea of a state lottery under consideration and it is estimated that all fifty states will have lotteries by 1990. Never mind that a person's chances of being struck by lightning are higher than winning a lottery, many are not deterred. One poll has shown that perhaps 70% of the adult population in California has purchased at least one lottery ticket. One preacher told of being shocked when he saw lottery tickets fall out of an older, respected church member's purse. Gambling has been called "the nation's largest industry."

What is Gambling?

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines gambling as "the betting or staking of something of value with consciousness of risk and hope of gain, on the outcome of a game, a contest, or an uncertain event whose result may be determined by chance or accident or which may have an unexpected result by reason of the bettor's miscalculation. All elements of the definition are essential." In view of this definition, I say that gambling has four essential elements:

(1) Gambling creates an artificial risk. One "deep thinking" woman said that life is a risk. Others say that buying a home, getting an education, falling in love, crossing the street, and flying in an airplane are risks. However, we must travel, work, and pursue daily affairs to survive and these are not connected with creating an artificial risk, motivated by covetousness.

(2) Gambling has a selfish goal. The gambler is taking an artificial risk in the hope of getting something for nothing. He wins at someone else's expense.

(3) Gambling has no productive by-product—no social betterment. As evidence abundantly shows, even state-operated lotteries do not improve society. They sell illusions, since more than 99.9% of the players lose, and the small revenue generated is overshadowed by the climate of immorality they create.

(4) Gambling brings gain at someone else's expense. In an investment, everyone may gain, but in gambling and betting, the odds are carefully stacked so that there will be more losers than winners.

What is Wrong with Gambling?

People ask: "Does the Bible say not to gamble?" No, the Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not gamble," but the same is true of many other things which are wrong. The Bible is not big enough to name every sin by its specific name, so it deals with principles. I believe that gambling is a violation of some of the most basic principles taught in the Word of God. Let us review some of those principles.

(1) Gambling is a violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:7). To covet means "to desire earnestly to possess." Take covetousness out, and gambling would die overnight. It is covetousness that causes men and women to take hard-earned money which rightfully belongs to their families, and cram it into a poker machine because they want another's money for which they have not labored.

(2) Gambling is wrong because it violates God's commandment which says, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him" (Leviticus 19:13). Paul said, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth (well-being)" (I Corinthians 10:24). Gambling would not survive if the Golden Rule of Jesus were followed (Matthew 7:12).

(3) Gambling is wrong because it is the antithesis of industry and honest work. God set the tone for the whole human race when He said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). Paul said to the loafers of his day, "We command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread," and he further decreed "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10-12).

(4) Gambling is wrong because it is addictive. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Gambling tends to become not just a recreation, but the very center of life. It is estimated that there are some 6 million compulsive gamblers in the country today. Paul said, "I will not be brought under the power of any" (I Corinthians 6:12). The best way to avoid that is to never begin gambling.

(5) Gambling is wrong because of the evil example it sets. Someone weaker and without knowledge is following you example, and Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:21).

(6) Gambling is wrong because it is an enemy of the home. Paul said, "But if any provide not for his own,

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Heathen and nations; 2. Genesis 10:5; 3. Jew; 4. II Samuel 11; 5. II Kings 5; 6. Daniel 4; 7. Daniel 8; 8. Matthew 1; 9. Matthew 8; Luke 7; 10. Mark 7; 11. Acts 10; 12. Proselytes, and those that fear God; 13. Acts 16; 14. Acts 11:26; 15. Acts 15; 16. Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:27-29; 17. Acts 2:39; Ephesians 2:13,17; 18. Romans 11; 19. Matthew 18:17; 20. Genesis 12.

and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). Gambling often robs the homes of those who can least afford it of money needed for food and clothing, making the gambler worse than an infidel, and leaving women and children in poverty.

(7) Gambling is wrong because it is detrimental to mental peace and tranquility. It is accompanied by fear, frustration, and anxiety. The suicide rate in Nevada is about twice of the national average.

(8) Gambling is wrong because its fruits are evil. Jesus said that "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17). Thomas E. Dewey, former governor of New York, said: "The entire history of legalized gambling in this country and abroad shows that it has brought nothing but poverty, crime and corruption, demoralization of moral and ethical standards, and ultimately a lower living standard and misery for all people."

Remember the gamblers at the foot of the cross. Christians should oppose gambling, large or small, public or private. Do not participate in office betting, cake walks, raffles, bingo games, or playing cards for small stakes. These differ only in degree, not in kind. Do not trust in the false goddess, Lady Luck, or you are destined to be deceived and misled. Put your faith in God.—*Johnny Elmore (Selected)* □

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“THEY KNEW HIM NOT”

SOMETIMES old farm buildings reach a point that they are no longer worth the necessary time and expense required to repair them and it is best to tear them down.

The year was 1881, 107 years ago now. The old barn on the Worthy Taylor farm over in Ohio was being torn down, and it was discovered that the young hired man who had worked for Mr. Taylor many years before had carved his name on one of the supporting timbers in the mow.

But let me go back to the beginning of the story. It was springtime some years before the great war between the states. A young man in search of employment came to the farm of Worthy Taylor, who was a prosperous Ohio farmer. Mr. Taylor knew nothing about the young man except that his name was Jim, but he gave him a job. Jim spent that summer on the farm helping with the farm work. He ate in the kitchen, and slept in the haymow of the barn.

With the passing of time Jim fell in love with Mr. Taylor's daughter, but when Mr. Taylor refused to let them marry, bluntly telling Jim he had no money and very poor prospects, Jim put his belonging in his bag and disappeared from the community.

Thirty-five years passed. The war between the states was fought, and America moved forward. More and more people migrated westward. Alaska was purchased. The East and the West were linked together by the transcontinental railroad. Mr. Taylor was an aged man now, and the old barn was being torn down in which the young hired man had slept those many years before. Plainly carved into one of the support-

ing timbers in the mow was discovered the full name of the young laborer: "James A. Garfield." He was then President of the United States.

Sometimes our hindsight, our vision in retrospect, gives a much different view of things and improves our vision and understanding.

I think of how Jesus Christ the Son of God came and dwelt among men, but men failed to realize what He could do for them. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). He came to His own and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11).

You and I know now that He came from heaven to seek and to save, but while He was here He was despised and rejected, mocked and misunderstood, ridiculed and blasphemed, disrespected and unappreciated. He was falsely accused and lied about, spit upon, bound, and slapped; whipped, crowned with thorns, and crucified.

While He was suspended on the cross darkness covered the land for three hours in mid-day. When He died there was an earthquake, rocks were split open. Then it was acknowledged, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

You may remember that while He was dying He prayed, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

And many yet today do not know. Many do not understand. Oh, if only they knew! If only they understood! If they knew and understood, do you think they would dare to use His holy name in profanity? Would they make light of the Christian faith, the church, and the Bible? Would they be so negligent about their souls?

When He comes in all His glory, men will believe. They will then know that truly He is the Son of God, and "every knee shall bow. . . and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10,11). But then it will be too late for salvation! Then they can only face the wrath of God!

"Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). Those of us who know the Lord and who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ earnestly plead for souls to take heed and consider their eternal destiny. Salvation from sin and the hope of eternal life can be found only in Christ. He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life." No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

To the unsaved, we implore, believe in Christ, obey His word, and know the joy of salvation and the peace and confidence that comes in the hope of life everlasting. Do not neglect your soul.

Someday you will believe. Someday you will understand His power and authority. Someday you will bow to Him. Why not now? Believe, repent, be baptized, and follow Jesus.—*The Gospel Message* □

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“UNLESS and until a man has found God and been found of God, he begins at no beginning and works to no end.”

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THE COMMISSION AND CHARTER OF THE CHURCH

■ By James E. Gibbons

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:16-20

THIS Scripture has been commonly called the great commission. It just as easily could have been called the charter of the church. A charter is a grant or permission from the proper authorities for starting an organization or order of a certain society. This is the personal charter from the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in order that the world might be brought under the influence of the gospel.

The preamble to the charter or commission can be seen when Christ said in Matthew 28:18, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Christ, now standing on the peak of his resurrection glory, can make the claim that he has all divine authority in heaven and in earth. On the basis of this "all authority" he can make the commission that is to follow. Let us notice that commission.

"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. . ." Notice all of the different things involved.

The apostles were to go first. Until Christians make the first move the world will be forever lost in sin. God nowhere in the Bible speaks directly from heaven and tells man what to do to be saved. This privilege of going and preaching the gospel is even denied the angels of heaven. Man must go. As Paul said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The world will never be converted unless Christians go—go to their neighbors, go to their friends, go to their city, go into all parts of the world! To pray, "Thy kingdom come," and not put forth an effort to win the lost is mockery! Oh, the apostles and early Christians were faithful to this matter of going! They had preached the gospel so zealously that we finally read in Colossians 1:23, "... And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." The great commission, as Mark records it, had been, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Now we have just read here where it had been preached to every creature under heaven. They were not slack concerning their commission—they went! How about Christians today?

Next Christ says, "teach all nations," or as Mark records, "preach the gospel." God has ordained that through the foolishness of preaching, not foolish preaching, that the world may be saved. Let us notice the 10th chapter of Romans, verses 13 through 17, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias (Isaiah) saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The purpose of preaching is to get across the facts of the gospel and thus create faith because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Paul in Romans 1:16 states that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but that it must be believed first. Of course the gospel hinges around the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (and those related teachings) (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The Scripture we just noticed, and especially Romans 10:16,



goes, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." There is something about the gospel that must be obeyed. The case of the conversion of the Ethiopian and Philip brings this out. The 8th chapter of Acts, verse 35 and 36: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" This man had never heard the gospel before. Philip preached unto him Jesus and he wanted to be baptized. When we preach Jesus it involves preaching baptism too. As one repents and is baptized he obeys the gospel—the death, burial and resurrection. He dies to sin, he is buried in the waters of baptism, and he arises to walk in the newness of life. This is what is meant by obeying the gospel. Preaching brings this about.

The part of the commission that comes next is, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Spirit). . ." This preaching results in baptism. It has the divine authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The apostles carried out this part of the commission as well as the other parts. In the commission as Mark relates it, Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The apostles were faithful in baptizing those who turned to Christ. The first time the full gospel message was preached and men wanted to know what to do to be saved, it was included in the answer. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The inspired apostle Peter said that they had to be baptized and for the remission of their sins! The book of Acts reveals how gospel preachers were faithful in carrying out Christ's command. In Acts 8:38,39 we find what baptism is, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up

(Continued on Page 16)

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES WERE FULFILLED

(as seen in the
second chapter of Matthew)

MANY TIMES in reading the New Testament Scriptures a quotation is found from the Old Testament, and the writer speaks of the quotation fulfilling the Scriptures. Sometimes it can readily be seen that it is a direct fulfillment of prophecy. At other times we are made to wonder just exactly what is meant (how is it fulfilled?). This little article is not intended to be a full treatment of this subject (just an introduction), but by studying the references where it says that Scriptures are fulfilled we can learn a lot. Matthew chapter 2 presents good illustrations of at least four different ways that Scripture is said to be fulfilled.

Direct Predictions (Verse 6)

■ “And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel” (Matthew 2:5,6).

The chief priests and scribes made a loose quotation from Micah 5:2 and told Herod this was the place where the coming Christ was to be born. It is strictly a prediction, a direct prophecy of that event. Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah, and this direct prediction was accordingly fulfilled. These are the most explicit types of fulfillment (very literal).

Types or Illustrations (Verse 15)

■ “When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:14,15).

In the Old Testament Scriptures God calling His son out of Egypt had reference to Israel being brought out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Exodus 4:22). Although this originally did not have to do with Jesus, the writer uses this as a type, or illustration, of Jesus coming out of Egypt. A double reference is made. The primary reference is expanded in a typical way to illustrate the secondary fulfillment. There are many types that can be found as fulfillment in the New Testament, and they get the point across in a nice way.

Event Fulfills Meaning of Words (Verse 18)

■ “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy (Jeremiah) the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they are not” (Matthew 2:17,18).

The Scripture here spoken of being fulfilled is found in Jeremiah 31:15. “Jeremiah referred to the deportation of the Jews to Babylon; Rachel, the ancestress of Benjamin, was buried near Bethlehem; she is represented as bewailing from the grave the captivity of her children: the sound of her lamentations reaches northward beyond Jerusalem, and is heard at Ramah, a fortress of Israel on the frontier toward Judah where the captives were collected. It means that the grief caused by the carrying away of the kingdom of Judah into Babylonian captivity caused such lamentation of the female captives that it was heard even by Rachel in her tomb. Jeremiah used figurative language to express the deep sorrow of the exiled mothers of the kingdom of Judah. In the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem (by Herod in connection with the birth of Jesus in Matthew 2) the calamity of the mothers of Judah was not only renewed, but its description verified in the fullest and most tragic manner. Rachel represents the mothers of Bethlehem lamenting over the children. . . this is an example in which the event fulfills the meaning of the words used by the prophet, though the words had originally no reference at all to the event; it is a verbal fulfillment, and not a real fulfillment, as found in the other two classes” (Boles). “In this use of the word fulfilled, it means, not that the passage was first intended to apply to this particular thing, but that the words aptly or appropriately express the thing spoken of, and may be applied to it” (Barnes). The writers of the New Testament occasionally use the word “fulfilled” in this sense.

Spirit and Essence of Prophecy (Verse 23)

■ “And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23).

The words “Nazareth” and “Nazarene” are nowhere found in the Old Testament. We look in vain and cannot find them. However, as we consider everything, the overall spirit and essence of prophecy is fulfilled (collectively), but no particular reference. Nazareth seems to suggest lowliness and humbleness (John 1:46). We are told that the word “Nazareth” indicates a sprout or a shoot (something quite insignificant). Isaiah 53:2 says, “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Notice Isaiah 11:1.

So, this is rather interesting and quite informative. Here in one chapter, Matthew 2, we have found that Scriptures can be fulfilled in at least four different ways: (1) by direct predictions coming to pass; (2) by way of types or illustrations; (3) by the event fulfilling the meaning of words; and (4) by considering the overall spirit and essence of prophecy. Keep these thoughts in mind when you come across the word “fulfilled” in other places, and it should prove to be helpful. The Bible is a much variegated book.—J.E.G. □

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—GOD IS *Love*—GOD IS *Love*—

THE COMMISSION AND CHARTER
OF THE CHURCH (Continued from Page 14)

out of the water. . .” This clearly depicts immersion. Paul says in the 6th chapter of Romans that we are buried in baptism. No one should rebel against God’s plain teachings. The lost sinners in the 2nd chapter of Acts didn’t. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (verse 41).

That is not all of the commission. Christ continues by saying, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . .” This statement takes in the whole New Testament. The gospel preacher must teach men to observe ALL THINGS that Christ has taught. He has no choice if he is to be faithful to his commission. Paul recalls how he taught the people at Ephesus as he speaks to the elders there. “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26,27). If Paul had not preached the whole counsel of God he could not have made this statement. He would not have been “pure from the blood of all men.” The apostle further declares in Galatians 1:8, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” That was very plainly spoken. God, give men courage to preach all things Christ commanded and leave nothing out!

That concludes the commission, and the Lord sums it up by giving a promise. “And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” What a wonderful promise to have Christ with us! But get the full force of this. This promise is conditional. The “if” is implied. If you are going into all the world, if you are preaching the gospel, if you are practicing New Testament baptism, and if you are teaching them to observe all things, I am with you. If you are not concerned about going, if you are not preaching the true gospel, if you are not baptizing (which is a burial in water for the remission of sins), and if you are not teaching them to observe all things, I am not with you, and you have the curse of heaven upon you.

There may be some who doubt that this is the charter of the church. They would say that this was given to the apostles and the church was not established until the day of Pentecost in the 2nd chapter of Acts. But notice the scope of this commission, “Even unto the end of the world.” That goes beyond the death of the apostles until the time in the future that Christ will come back. The commission has a broader application than to the apostles. It is that of the church. Revelation 22:17 states, “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come...” Ephesians 3:10 reads, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” So it is by the church the wisdom of God is to be made known. Reading the

book of Acts, history of the early church, will certainly convince one that the early church firmly believed the responsibility of the lost world was upon their shoulders. The great commission was theirs. Every Christian was a soul winner in the original church. Acts 8:4 shows what happened following the first outright persecution of the church. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” Oh how we need fervent activity to save the lost today! How we need churches that will realize their God-given responsibility! How we need preachers who will abide within the limits of this charter. We need people who will be true to the teaching of that good old Book which has been once and for all given unto us. God, open our eyes to divine responsibility! A lost world cries in our ears!

—first printed in 1959

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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.

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