

The Sword AND Staff

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

GOD AND MAN CONTRASTED (Psalms 90)

Pause For Power



"THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD
SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH;
THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH
WINGS AS EAGLES, THEY SHALL
RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY, AND
THEY SHALL WALK, AND NOT
FAINT." — ISA. 40:31

JACK HAMM

By JAMES E. GIBBONS — 1535 Fairfield Drive
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PSALMS 90 is a choice section of Scripture, and it is one of the great psalms in the Bible. From antiquity the authorship of it has been attributed to Moses. Here we see the Almighty God and man in sharp contrast. We see the frailty and brevity of human life. If Moses indeed did write this psalm, this furnishes us a striking mental background that makes everything else come alive as we read it. We see God's repeated anger and harsh

dealings with the children of Israel. Their futile wanderings in the wilderness all flash before our eyes; yes, until their carcasses are left there, and a new generation arises to go into the promised land. But what is written here in a larger sense can be applied to all of mankind, and the admonitions are equally appropriate.

GOD

As this psalm is addressed to God, we read that "from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." In the first verse we find it is the "LORD" who is this God of whom the writer speaks. It is the "LORD" (or Jehovah), the name by which Deity had revealed Himself to Moses, speaking from the burning bush (Exodus 3). He said, "I AM THAT I AM," meaning that He was the eternal self-existent ONE, the ALMIGHTY GOD. He called Himself "LORD," His covenant name by which He would be recognized in relationship to His covenant people, and He went on to say, "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

It is not hard for us to believe in God; everything points to His reality. It is only hard for us to understand Him for He is Spirit (John 4:24) and "from everlasting to everlasting." To put it in human terms, the Psalmist said, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Having put a thousand years in terms of a day, he realizes this is not adequate, and he backs up as he says it would be just like a watch in the night (about three hours). And this is just a feeble human effort to get the idea across—time means nothing to God. Isaiah spoke of "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isaiah 57:15).

(Continued on Page 6)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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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...

THOSE who will not receive God's love will experience His wrath.

"The soul created for God, will not rest until it rests in God."

If you are born twice (born again) you will have to die only once; if you are only born once you will have to die twice.

"One who ignores the church is like a man who builds a house without windows and then blames God because he has to live in the dark."

Man must offer worship corresponding to the NATURE and the ATTRIBUTES of God (John 4:24).

"Men do not stumble over mountains, but over molehills."

Someone has said: If we talk Christianity by the yard and live it by the inch, we should be dealt with by the foot.

"Don't be afraid to go out on the limb for that is where the fruit is."

"There are many ways to be wrong, but only one way to be right."

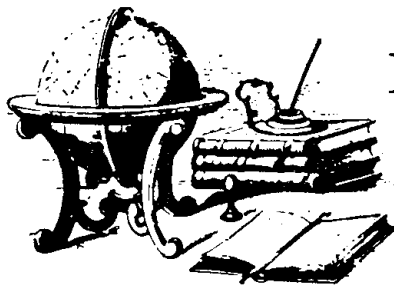
"When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing."

"Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing."

"The Bible fits man for life and prepares him for death."

"It is not wise to tell everything you know, but it is wise to know everything you tell."

"You always have time for the things you put first."



EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

WE ARE herewith reprinting a series of articles (slightly adapted) which appeared in *The Sword and Staff* in 1967 under the heading of "TOWARD A MORE SPIRITUAL CONCEPT." Since we were then mailing about 2,000 copies, and now our largest mailing to date has been around 25,000, most of our readers have never seen this material. We share it with you now.

Toward A More Spiritual Concept

(1)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPIRITUAL

WE WOULD encourage you to reach toward a more spiritual concept in your religious convictions. From this perspective we intend to examine many things relating to our religious views and practices in *The Sword and Staff*. Are we as spiritual as we should be?

First, what do we mean by spiritual? Better still, what does the Bible mean by spiritual?

We think of a person being spiritual if he is very sincere religiously; if he has a strong religious sensitivity about what is

"MISSIN' CHURCH"

Some folk just go to church when ther're feelin' sad,

And others won't go unless they're feelin' glad;

Some want to wait till all else is goin' well,

Whilst others only go for fear agoin' to Hell.

Regardless, Friend, of just how we might feel,

'Tis never right to forsake Christ's Memorial Meal.

We'll miss Church, but anywhere else we go, go, go. . .

Now, tell me Friend, if that just ain't so???

Bad moods and headaches don't keep us from work—

Why then is church goin' such an easy thing to shirk?

Maybe once in awhile—A GREAT WHILE—Maybe. . .

But more often than not your face we ought to see.

Mercy! When you think of our everlasting loss,

Had Jesus forsaken the way of the cross.

Shame! Shame! Shame! On that blood-ransomed soul,

Who now chooses to side-step our respective role.

So, should you be in the habit of missin' church,

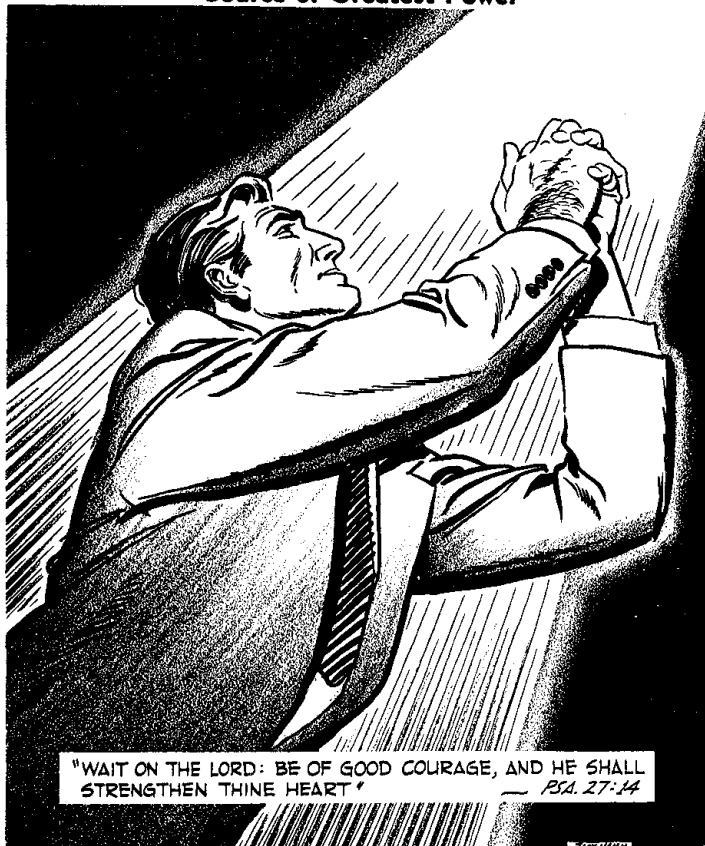
Remember, 'tis your salvation you put on the lurch.

Pray, before you forever seal your foolish fate,

Repent and get back before it's eternally too late.

—By **BOB WICKLINE**

Source of Greatest Power



"WAIT ON THE LORD: BE OF GOOD COURAGE, AND HE SHALL STRENGTHEN THINE HEART" — *PSA. 27:14*

right and wrong; if he is given much to prayer and has a loving disposition.

1. To be godly. In Romans, chapter 8, the spiritual is presented in contrast with the carnal as it relates to the flesh in reference to sin. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." A Spirit-filled life will manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are in direct contrast with the works of the flesh (Cf. Galatians 5:19-23). We initially receive the Spirit when we repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38), and as we continually surrender to God, the Spirit increasingly fills our lives. We become pure and holy, and produce the beautiful character of Christ. This is reaching toward a more spiritual concept.

2. To be Scriptural. Paul said if any man regarded himself to be spiritual he must acknowledge his apostolic words to be the commandments of the Lord (I Corinthians 14:37). In I Corinthians, chapter 2, Paul speaks of the spiritual in contrast with the natural, the spiritual having to do with divine truth being revealed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the natural referring to human philosophy (the wisdom of men). Therefore, in one sense to move toward a more spiritual concept is to move toward the Scriptures (the truth of God); to put what is taught there into practice; to be Scriptural. Beware of any spirituality (so-called) that is not Bible-based. Regardless of how much a person may talk about the Spirit, he does not have the Spirit if he denies the

words of the Spirit (the Holy Scriptures).

3. To be religious. Jesus said in John 6:63 that his teachings were spiritual and life-producing. He had fed the multitudes; they were greatly impressed. No doubt they thought that Jesus would take care of their every physical need. How great to have such a king (for the Jews thought of the Messiah in terms of an earthly kingdom). But he offended them when he preached that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Then he disclosed further in John 6:63 that the nature of his teachings was spiritual or religious, not political or worldly. Therefore, to be more spiritual is to be simply religious.

(And overlapping and underlying all of this, we point out that spiritual stands in contrast with material, materialism. Also, spiritual stands in contrast with the physical).

We plan to bring out some Scripture-searching and soul-searching thoughts as we press toward a more spiritual concept in forthcoming articles. We are not satisfied with the cobwebs of traditionalism (any human kind) that entangle us, nor are we happy about the worldliness that is destroying the witness of the church in the world. Follow us.

What Have You Done Today?

GOD'S WORD tells us what we should do day by day.

1. Study the Word daily. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

2. Pray daily. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

3. Teach daily. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). "I sat daily with you teaching in the temple. . ." (Matthew 26:55).

4. Exhort daily. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

5. Take up the cross daily. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).—**Selected** □

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:

(2)

THE NATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT is characterized as *the law*, whereas the New Testament is fittingly called *the faith* (Galatians 3:23, etc.). *The law* was not without faith, and *the faith* is not without law. In fact, the New Testament is called law more than once (James

(Continued on Next Page)

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:
(Continued from Last Page)

1:25; Hebrews 7:12; Galatians 6:2; Romans 3:27-31; etc.). The Old Testament was an external law written on tables of stone. Certainly the New Testament Scriptures are externally written, but the New Testament is characterized as *the faith* because of the living and divine personality of Jesus Christ. The power of the New Testament is derived from the resurrected Christ who lives in the hearts of real Christians—"for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

The whole approach to our religion is different from the Old Testament. We start from within and work out, rather than starting from without and working in. We do not give a set of rules to an alien sinner and demand that he keep them. The inside is straightened out first. Then the new creature in Christ Jesus keeps the New Testament, the law of the Spirit (II Corinthians 5:17; 3:3; Jeremiah 31:33). Christ is our compelling motive for obedience now rather than an external set of laws inscribed on stone (Colossians 3:17,23; I John 2:3-6; etc.). The sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) shows that it is not enough to be legal (to obey the letter of the law), we must be spiritual. The heart sins must be gotten rid of, the heart must be right, and we must follow the spirit of the teaching by principle, as well as keeping the direct command itself. To be spiritual does not remove the command of God, but gives it greater depth, dimension and inclusiveness. Much of the New Testament involves principle.

The religion of Christ, although it demands our all, is not a burden because of its great spiritual nature (and because of the great power that it affords). Hence, as we reach toward a more spiritual concept in our attitude toward the New Testament (if we haven't already), and began to put it into practice, we will find that true religion provides the greatest source of pleasure and joy to be found in this world (a foretaste of heaven itself).

EDITORIAL
Byways
ORDAINING WOMEN AS BISHOPS

THE FOLLOWING "Editorial" appeared in the Sunday edition of *The Mount Airy News* February the 12th. It concerns the ordaining of a woman the week before in the Episcopal Church. I thought this would be a good time to write a letter to the editor and perhaps stimulate thought about what the New Testament actually teaches. I enlarged my response to three reasons as to why I opposed such an ordination in the hope of getting across some additional truth. It was printed in *The Mount Airy News* slightly edited (editors do things like that sometimes for reasons known only to them). Along with the "Editorial" I herewith include my full letter. Perhaps it will prove to be of some value to you.

The Mount Airy News
"Dedicated To The Principles Of
Openness, Honesty and Integrity."

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Editorial

**Breaking
With Tradition**

There have been times throughout our nation's history when the breaking of tradition has been essential to the betterment of our society. Certainly no one could argue with the justifiable progressive measure of giving women the right to vote.

Nor is there any logic to women being paid lesser sums of money for doing the same jobs as men. Equal rights for women and minorities are a part of the U.S. Constitution, and that is as it should be.

But nowhere do we find justification for the official act of the Episcopal Church in the United States this weekend. The church has broken a 2,000-year-old tradition, dating back to the time of Christ, and consecrated a woman as Bishop.

Episcopalians have been numbered among the branches of Christianity that believe in apostolic succession. And as of this day, we have no knowledge of discovery that would warrant altering the tradition. There was no female among the chosen apostles of Jesus Christ. It has always been a mystery and a center of debate as to why this was so. But like so many other things, there is no obvious answer. So tradition was fol-

lowed for more than 2,000 years.

So why is 1989 different from any other year? That is the big question. One of the Episcopal priests involved in the Saturday ceremony of consecration stated, "This is something that people feel very right about, very convicted about" — an observation with which we strongly disagree. There are people who do not feel "very right about" it or "very convicted" about it. They have many reservations about the course that is being charted. They feel this is as big an upset for many worshipers as was the changing of the Prayer Book.

Not only are some Episcopalians concerned that a woman has been made a bishop, they are concerned that her "liberal views" will cause more divisiveness within the church.

Certainly this is a bold and daring move on the part of the Episcopal Church — the consequences of which will take years to determine. Conceivably, we are witnessing a transition of the long-held image of the leadership of the church, and quite possibly the altering of religion as we know it.

No, all of us do not feel "very right about it." Some of us are deeply concerned.

THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS
Renfro Street
Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030
Dear Editor:

I find myself very much in agreement with your opposition to a woman being made a "bishop" in the Boston diocese of the Episcopal Church (Editorial: "Breaking With Tradition," February 12, 1989). However, the reasons for my opposition may vary somewhat from

yours. As you have considered it a matter of good taste to write on such religious matters in a secular paper, I assume you will give me the same liberty.

1. According to the apostle Paul (if we want to be apostolic), in the context of the church a woman is not "to teach, nor to usurp authority *over the man*, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:11-14). Why? The verses that follow tell us. (1) "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." (2) Woman was the first one to sin ("And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"). Consequently the leadership role in matters of religion has been placed upon man (male) from the Garden of Eden (a very old "tradition," I would say, antedating denominational opinion).

2. Yes, the very idea of a woman being a "bishop" is contrary to the Word of God. Where the qualifications for such an office are given, it says, "If a MAN desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then **MUST** be blameless, the **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**. . ." etc. (I Timothy 3:1ff). Needless to say, a woman cannot meet these requirements.

But when we read of what the New Testament calls a bishop, and what denominational bodies call a bishop today, we are not talking about the same office. In denominational circles a person who is called a bishop is an official over 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 local church (not one bishop over many churches). Elder and bishop were but two expressions having to do with the same office. Titus 1:5 says that *elders* were to be ordained in every city, then as the qualifications are given, we read, "For a *bishop* must be" so and so. The words elder and bishop are used interchangeably. There was a plurality of elders (bishops) in each local church that had been set in order (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28). And, as a matter of note, there were several bishops in the local church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1).

Therefore, secondly, I am opposed to a woman being a bishop because the said office today does not represent anything we read about in the Word of God.

3. The whole underlying concept of "apostolic succession" (behind all the fanfare in Boston) I find to be at variance with the Word of God. The very nature of the office and work of an apostle nullifies the idea of them having successors. They were the official eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ and his resurrection (Acts 1:8,21,22). The apostle Paul said that the resurrected Christ was seen of "all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:7,8). The twelve were eyewitnesses, and so was Paul, who came along belatedly. He wrote, "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (I Corinthians 9:1). This matter of these men bearing witness is borne out throughout the book of Acts (Acts 1:8,21,22; 2:14,32,43; 4:33; 5:29-32; 10:39-42).

Obviously no man on earth can qualify for the apostolic office today, nor is there a need for living apostles today. Their work has been accomplished. The Holy Spirit guided them into all truth (John 16:13). We have a composite of it in the form of the New Testament Scriptures. And, consequently, we read in Ephe-

sians 2:20 that we "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." There are no more living apostles and prophets in the church today...not any more than there is another Christ. The foundation has been laid. They had no successors in their work. We reap the blessings of their accomplished work through the Scriptures. Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18), and it is seen expressed in the Word of Christ (the New Testament), not some man-made religious structure.

No, in the light of the New Testament I am not in favor of women bishops, nor can I Scripturally comprehend the ecclesiastical structure that would put them into such an "office."

Thank you for letting me express myself.

Sincerely,
James E. Gibbons

Resolutions

NO ONE will ever get out of this world alive. Resolve therefore to maintain a reasonable sense of values.

Take care of yourself. Good health is everyone's major source of wealth. Without it, happiness is almost impossible.

Resolve to be cheerful and helpful. People will repay you in kind.

Avoid angry, abrasive persons. They are generally vengeful.

Resolve to listen more and talk less. No one ever learns anything by talking.

Be careful in giving advice. Wise men don't need it and fools won't heed it.

Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the wrong (to a point). Sometime in life you will have been all of these.

Do not equate money with success. There are many successful money-makers who are miserable failures as human beings. What counts most about success is how a person achieves it.—*Lloyd Shearer* □

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:

(3)

ATTITUDE TOWARD RELIGIOUS TRUTH

IT IS a common saying in this religiously illiterate, shallow and "watered down" age that it doesn't make any difference what a person believes or practices in the name of religion; just so he is sincere—we are all headed toward the same place anyway, we are told (but is it heaven?). There is a new universalism which in essence seems to say that everyone will be saved because no one was really lost to start with. It is rather ironical that in an age which demands precise exactness in scientific truth, religious truth has become indefinite, vague and, for all practical purposes, *nil*. The preacher who would demand that it does make a difference is looked upon as an intolerant relic left over from a former generation, or with other terms less complimentary.

(Continued on Next Page)

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:
(Continued from Last Page)

But, beloved, is this the truth? Do the Scriptures teach that it really doesn't matter what we believe and practice in our religion?

We hereby say that this apparently is just wishful thinking (or lack of thinking) on the part of uninformed people whose spiritual concept is awfully shallow, to say the least. It is easier to say these things, and hold to human traditions, than to dig down deep into the Scriptures and find out for ourselves what they really teach. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord (*yes, to be religious and even to pray*), shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). In Acts 10:1,2, Cornelius is described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway"—but was he a saved man? No, not according to Acts 11:13,14 (Read it). Paul with a burdened heart recognized that his Jewish kinsmen were lost, for they had "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:1,2). From I Timothy we learn that this young evangelist had to live the right kind of life *AND* to preach the right kind of doctrine before he could be saved (I Timothy 4:16). The job of preaching is such a serious and solemn matter that the apostle Paul called heaven and the day of judgment to witness the charge he made to this preacher (II Timothy 4:1-5). Having reference to the great religious apostasy, the inspired apostle Paul declared: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, *that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (II Thessalonians 2:10b-12).

Kind and thoughtful reader, is this not conclusive? We care not if some long-haired "theologian" has a degree behind his name a mile long, the "Scriptures cannot be broken." If we haven't come the way Christ has laid down for us, we haven't come at all. Christ said that his Word would judge us in the last day, and that it will! (John 12:48). We may think that we are through with the Bible, but the Bible is not through with us.

In every field of life (except religion, it seems) men demand exactness. Recognized and established truths must be applied or otherwise our modern work-a-day world in one moment would turn into complete chaos (could it be this is the reason we have the chaos of denominationalism?). But in religion men tell us that it really doesn't matter, just so we are sincere. It's a strange world, isn't it?

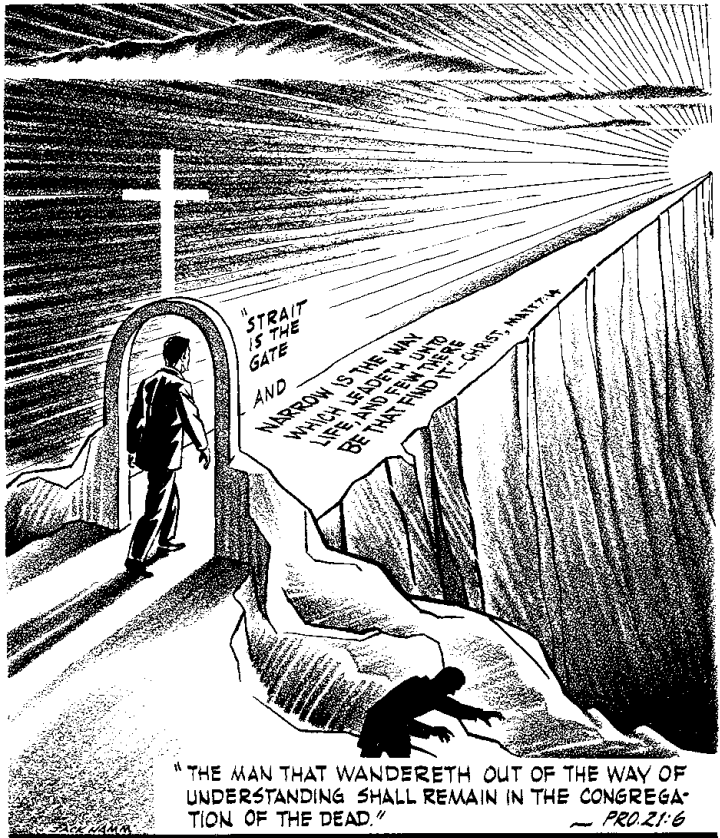
If we hold this false concept we are going to find it exceedingly difficult to come to a definite knowledge of religious truth. To start with, this outlook discourages the very investigation of religion for truth. Then if one does "dabble" in religion a little, he likely will be "every learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). But, if we realize that truth is important (eternally so) in the realm of religion, we will study with the most carefulness so that

we may be equally careful to believe and to put what the Bible teaches into practice "because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

Let us come in all humility and in simple faith. We have this assurance from the Lord: "If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31b,32).

Beloved, it does make a difference!

Saith The Lord



GOD AND MAN CONTRASTED

(Continued from Page 1)

MAN

In contrast with such a Being, the Psalmist places man. Because of his sins, many times he is the object of God's wrath. Like the grass, he is soon gone. Moses wrote, "For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Another Psalmist in Psalms 39:5,6, puts it this way: "Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand breadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew:

surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.”

In the New Testament James wrote: “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14).

TRUTH APPLIED

From this great psalm two vital lessons of truth can be learned by transient man.

(1) “LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” Yes, the Almighty God of eternity is from “everlasting to everlasting.” Man is not. In his frailty he is soon gone from here. Therefore, fragile man needs to look to this God for a “dwelling place,” a hiding place (a place of refuge). God is the source of real security and stability during man’s brief stay upon this earth. The writer declared in Deuteronomy 33:27, “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. . .” This Almighty One, as acclaimed by Moses, has “been our dwelling place in all generations.” One generation comes on the scene, and another goes, but the godly of each have found a refuge in the eternal God. God goes on forever. As the Scriptures say, He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (and the God of every generation that looks to Him). May we avail ourselves of this Rock of security and stability during the storms of life.

(2) “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” We are not going to be here very long at the most, and the smart person will be ever aware of this and make the most of the time that he does have. We will “number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.” The writer of Proverbs tells us that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. . .” (Proverbs 9:10). The wise person will serve the God who made him. He will not waste the precious years. In his quest for the meaning of life, the writer of Ecclesiastes summed it all up by saying, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14). Just one little heart beat divides us from eternity. Time to us is salvation (II Corinthians 6:2; II Peter 3:9), and let us make the most of it (II Corinthians 5:14,15). The person who does

not will be a fool forever.

What a great psalm and what great lessons! □

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:

(4)

THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

WE ARE living in an ungodly and Godless age wherein many “theological seminaries” have become theological cemeteries under the guise of “higher education.” The pure concept of Christ as taught in the New Testament is discarded. The virgin birth of Christ is denied, making him the illegitimate child of Mary. We are told that we must forget about his miracles, and the supernatural, if we would really find out what the historical Christ was like. Among many the blood-redemptive gospel of Christ has been replaced with another gospel, the social gospel, as men have gone about to bring social reform. That is their priority. You would be very much surprised by a listing of denominations whose leadership is controlled by such thinking (and whose denominational machinery is captive to such views and purposes). Yes, these views are very common in the circles of the so-called National Council of Churches.

But, what is the Scriptural and consequently spiritual concept of Christ? How does our only religious authority present its primary subject, Jesus Christ?

Beloved, let it be stated in no uncertain terms that the miracles and the supernatural circumstances surrounding Jesus actually tell us who he is. As the only begotten Son of God, they are his credentials. To say that we should forget about this to learn who he really was, is to strip him of the evidence of his divinity, and to be forever in the dark as to his identity. It matters not if the largest church-related college in the state should teach this—this proves nothing except their un-

(Continued on Next Page)

FRIENDLY OBSTACLES

For every hill I’ve had to climb,
For every stone that bruised my feet,
For all the blood and sweat and grime,
For blinding storm and burning heat,
My heart sings but a grateful song—

These were the things that made me strong.
For all the heartaches and the tears,
For all the anguish and the pain,
For gloomy days and fruitless years,
And for the hopes that lived in vain,
I do give thanks; for now I know

These were the things that helped me grow.
’Tis not the softer things of life,
Which stimulates man’s will to strive,
But bleak adversity and strife
Do most to keep man’s will alive.
O’er rose-strewn paths the weaklings creep,
But brave hearts dare to climb the steep!

—Author Unknown

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:
(Continued from Last Page)

belief. The Spirit-inspired apostle John made this statement: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30,31).

As ministers of the gospel the apostles did not take to the streets to demonstrate against the social ills of Rome and their cramped civil rights (and what a just cause they would have had), but they did preach the crucified and resurrected Christ publicly and from house to house as the only answer to mankind's ills. The hope of a better age was a better man which blood-redemption through Christ could bring. They declared that Christ had been approved "by miracles and wonders and signs" to be the divine Son of God (Acts 2:22). No, we cannot forget about these things and learn about Jesus.

Again John, that great apostle of love, plainly warned and charged: "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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

Therefore, in the light of John's Spirit-inspired words, the teaching concerning the exact nature of Christ is not a matter of "interpretation," but a matter of belief or unbelief. To depart from what the Bible says about Christ, as well as his teachings, is to be guilty of "evil deeds." It is apostasy of the rankest sort. Kind reader, you may not disbelieve what the Scriptures teach concerning Christ (and his teachings), but if you support denominational programs and colleges where the leadership is infested with such unbelief, you are a "partaker" of their "evil deeds." You are guilty with them before God.

Praise the God of Heaven for the Son of God who pre-existed from eternity, One with the Father (John 1:1-5, 14; 17:5; Hebrews 1:1-3). This Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:56-59; Exodus 3:13,14). Although he took the form of man and lived among men as man, he knew no sin (I Peter 2:21-23). As stated, he confirmed his identity by his miracles, signs, and wonders. On the cross of Calvary this sinless one shed his precious, sinless blood whereby we are made righteous—forgiven (Romans 5:6-9; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21). Death and the grave could not hold him (Acts 2:24). Now he has ascended in glory back to heaven (Acts 1:9,10), and he lives forever to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). One day the heavens will tear asunder, and the Lord of glory will appear to receive his own (I Corinthians 15:24ff). He will come as the Mighty Judge of the universe to execute wrath upon all evil doers (II Thessalonians 1:7-10), judging all by the righteous

standards of his Holy Word (John 12:48). Heaven awaits the redeemed.

The Scriptural and spiritual concept is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Amen.

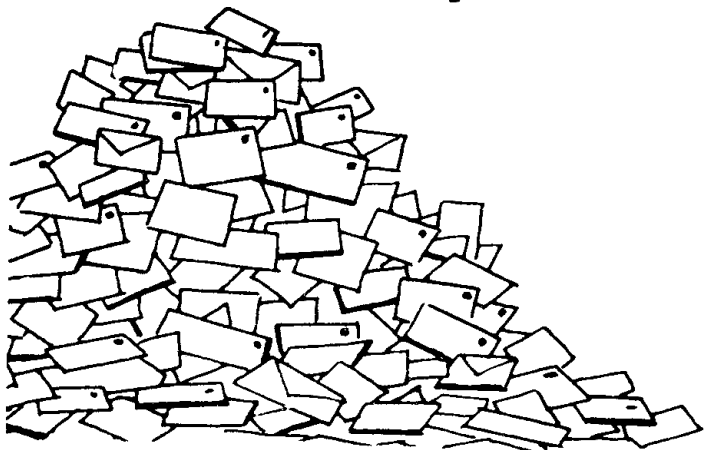
BIBLE QUESTIONS
(over miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ)

1. What was the first miracle performed by the Lord, and where did it take place?
2. What "ruler of the Jews" said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"?
3. What are two cases that involved miraculous circumstances in connection with the Lord and the disciples while they were fishing?
4. In connection with what healing did Jesus say, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick...Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk"?
5. Why did the Lord get into trouble with the Jewish authorities in connection with his healing and casting out demons?
6. In connection with what miracle did the Lord say, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"?
7. How many people did the Lord raise from the dead during his ministry, and who were they?
8. What great miracle was performed by the Lord one time when he said, "Peace, be still"?
9. What miracle did the Lord perform in the country of the Gadarenes that resulted in 2,000 swine running into the Sea?
10. What did the woman who was healed of the issue of blood and Jairus' daughter have in common?
11. What miracle performed by the Lord is the only one found in all four gospel accounts?
12. The night following the feeding of the 5,000, what miraculous thing did the Lord do involving the Sea of Galilee?
13. What miracle was performed by the Lord outside of the geographic land of Israel and where?
14. What miraculous way did the Lord go about getting the money to pay his temple tax (tribute money)?
15. Once in what unusual way did the Lord go about healing a man who had been born blind?
16. What other cases (two) are recorded of unusual ways used by the Lord in healing?
17. What gospel account tells us there were two demons in the country of the Gadarenes (and not one only), and that there were two blind men healed near Jericho (and not one only)?
18. What miracle was performed by the Lord in the area of Jerusalem the week leading up to his crucifixion?
19. What miracle was performed by the Lord the night he was betrayed?
20. What was the primary purpose involved in the Lord performing miracles?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper).

READERS'

... Response



NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Thank you so much for the good work you are doing. Please keep me on your mailing list."

■ "Please send me about 5 (or more) of the poem 'I Saw Him Standing There (Or, The Old Gospel Preacher)' by James E. Gibbons. I found this in a yard in my neighborhood. I picked it up on the way to the store and carried it with me so I might read it. So when I got back home, I read it—but I know it doesn't belong to me, so I thought I would return it to someone. . ."

VIRGINIA:

■ "I am enclosing a little something to keep those issues coming. Also, if you happen to have the last issue (which I missed), please send me a copy. Thanks to your undying commitment to the truth of the gospel and your willingness to proclaim the message of Acts 2:38. I do appreciate your work."

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list. . ."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "...Although each issue must represent a vast amount of work and finances, I would prefer a monthly issue of it. However, it is well that you publish every other month with the substance and quality the magazine has."

Editor's Note: What many do not realize is that *The Sword and Staff* is not a company, but that it is printed by the editor in the basement of his home as a labor of love for the Truth. As implied, finances (along with this matter of time) have been a problem in getting out the paper. So for the present, we feel that we can get more accomplished for our time and money by sending a larger mailing each time (rather than increasing the frequency of publishing, which we are not in a position to do). Our largest mailing to date has been around 25,000 copies. All help is deeply appreciated.

NEW YORK:

■ "...I really appreciate all the work that you do in God's kingdom. It makes me feel good to know that there is someone out there printing gospel literature that is sound in doctrine to combat all the trash that is being passed off as truth by the denominational world and the cults. Keep up the good work. Your labor is not in vain as God himself tells you in his blessed Word. . ."

"...By the way if you recall...our first meeting via mail. I had found a copy of your booklet on the Holy Spirit on top

of some trash in the streets (N.Y.). Since I was new in faith I was most confused on the subject of the Holy Spirit due to denominational infiltration and your booklet certainly helped me to get God's perspective on that topic. I praise the Lord for you, brother, and for many others who are proclaimers of the Gospel in Truth. . ."

OHIO:

■ "Keep up the good work. We enjoy reading your paper very much."

■ "I am sending check for...my renewal of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Keep up the good work of this publication. I don't understand why some people don't want to receive *THE SWORD AND STAFF* unless it is because they don't love the Truth."

Editor's Note: A letter has been received desiring comments on the King James Version of the Bible in relationship to or contrast with other translations. Although the older King James Version has many archaic expressions of speech in it, it is to be preferred (in this writer's opinion) to many of the modern day translations (especially the "free" translations and the private ones). Many of you, like this writer, started out years ago on the regular King James Version, and we are very much at home with its terminology. Difficult places we have long ago understood. It is the great monumental work of the English language (and the beauty of its style and expression is unsurpassed, in our opinion). While the pope was "sitting" on his supposedly select manuscript at Rome, the King James Version from the so-called "textus receptus" was encircling the globe. Only in such an age as ours, when men no longer spend much time with the Bible, have they lost touch with this prized possession and its meaning. Modern translations that are thrown along side of it can also have their deficiencies pointed out. Keeping a proper balance, we hesitate to be unduly critical of this revered old book. In teaching and preaching, when we run across archaic expressions or what is considered a less preferred rendering, we simply throw out a word of explanation and continue the lesson. But for those who would like to retain much of the style and charm of the King James Version (and have archaic wordings and expressions updated), perhaps use of the New King James Version would be in order. It is good.

KENTUCKY:

■ "We really do like reading and studying *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It has so many good articles. You are truly one of the true voices calling for the Truth as God has left it for us. May God be with you and your work."

■ "We want to apologize for being so slow in sending you a donation for your wonderful paper. We enjoy it so much. We refer to it so many times in our studies and a lot of your quotes we use in our bulletin. . .We hope the Lord will provide you many years to continue this wonderful service. Our love and prayers are with you."

■ "...I thoroughly enjoy your good paper. It contains many useful articles and illustrations. Continue to plead for undenominational Christianity!"

TENNESSEE:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list."

ALABAMA:

■ "...I do enjoy your paper and study it. I wish every Christian could realize we must do our best to enlighten the world. I'm sorry to say that it's hard to remember what most preachers present. One can't remember some until one gets home. I shed tears over it."

"Thank you so much for your work."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS' RESPONSE. . .

(Continued from Last Page)

FLORIDA:

■ "We are no longer interested in receiving your publication. Drop us from your mailing list."

■ "We are thankful for being on your mailing list. Praise God for THE SWORD AND STAFF. You have a difficult ministry in proclaiming God's Word through the printed word, after all if it is printed and not just spoken, you are on record with your stand."

"Keep up the good work and may God bless you with strong health and unbending convictions to feed the Restoration Movement."

TEXAS:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list. . ."

IOWA:

■ "... I just want you to know how very much my husband and I enjoy these volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. We read and study our Bible every day, then my husband reads aloud from the volumes so we both can enjoy it together. We get much knowledge from these volumes and enjoy every article. Thanking you. . ."

MONTANA:

■ "It is high time I sent my subscription money in again, and I really appreciate and enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF, and look forward to its arrival; and since I publish our church's Newsletter, I can really appreciate all the work you do with thousands on your mailing list, and all the daily update that involves, plus getting all your materials together!"

■ "... We appreciate THE SWORD AND STAFF very much. We have only received 3 issues but in every one there have been articles to help us in our witnessing to others. We just received back issues and haven't had time to read them, but just looking through them they are loaded with so much information. Thank you again and may God bless you for your ministry. Can't wait for the next issue!"

WASHINGTON:

■ "This is the best publication I know of. Keep up the good work."

■ "Would you please remove our name from your mailing list as we are no longer in need of receiving your publication. Thank you for your help in this matter."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "I picked up your tract at church today, 'The Origin of Religious Misunderstanding and False Teaching.' Also, I was in a motel last Monday and there was a tract there from THE SWORD AND STAFF. I don't know who the author was but it was an answer to a letter from a Baptist minister. I wonder if you supply these to individuals for placing in various places. If so, could you send me some for placement in different places?"

JAPAN:

■ "Greetings in His precious name. Thank you for your ministry through the paper."

"I want to call your attention to the fact that I have sent a check...last August 12th, 1988, but your mailing plate still bears June 1985. This has happened once before. I feel rather uncomfortable about this."

Editor's Note: I am very sorry for the misunderstanding. As others have had this problem, I will make a public comment on it.

Here is what the date on an address plate means: (1) It indicates the date when a person was put on the mailing list;

(2) It indicates when a person was re-entered on the mailing list (as when a person moves and changes addresses) (As in your case, this is on your address plate: "Re. JUNE, 1985," indicating a re-entry upon an address change). The date has nothing to do with when you sent in a renewal contribution, but when you were initially put on the mailing list (or when a re-entry was made upon an address change). As we said in the boxed information on page 2 of this paper, "You may use the date affixed beside of your address as a reminder to send an offering (perhaps annually). No notices are sent." We are not careful about "renewals." We are not a commercial endeavor with material ambitions in mind. All we are concerned about is paying our bills and keeping things going. Time is very much of a problem, and as this would also involve extra expenses in changing address plates every time a contribution was sent, the original date is left intact with the address. As contributions are sent along, perhaps using the original date as a reminder, they are deeply appreciated (as well as needed).

I hope this helps clear things. □

The Incomparable Christ

HE CAME from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman.

He became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God.

He put on humanity that we might put on divinity.

He came from Heaven to earth that we might go from earth to Heaven.

He left the region where the rivers never freeze, winds never blow, frost never bites, flowers never fade. In Heaven, no doctors are needed, because no one is ever sick; there are no undertakers, for death never comes.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, was reared in obscurity, and lived in poverty. Only once did he every cross the boundaries of his own small country, except immediately following his birth. He had no wealth or influence, training or education, and his parents knew nothing of the niceties of social tradition.

In infancy, he startled a king; in boyhood he puzzled the wise; in manhood, he ruled the course of nature.

He healed the multitudes without medicine, and made no charge for his services. He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the world could not contain all the books that could be written about him.

He never wrote a song, and yet has provided the themes for more songs than all earthly writers combined.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools of earth have not had the number of students that sit at his feet.

He never practiced medicine, yet he has healed more broken hearts than the world has every taken note of.

He never marshalled an army, never drafted a soldier, never fired a gun, yet no leader has ever had the volunteers, who, under his orders, made rebels stack arms and surrender to his command, never firing a shot.

He is the Star of astronomy, the Rock of geology, the Lamb and the Lion of zoology, the Harmonizer of all discords, and the Healer of all diseases.

Great men have come and gone; he lives on.

Herod could not kill him; Satan could not seduce him; death could not destroy him; and the grave could not hold him.

He laid aside his purple robe for a peasant's gown.

He was rich, but for our sakes became poor, that we might be rich.

How poor? Ask Mary! Ask the wise men!

He slept in another's manger; he rode another's ass; he was buried in another's tomb.

All others have failed; he never.

The ever perfect one, the chief among ten thousand; the one altogether lovely.—*Author Unknown* □

NO OTHER NAME



Power in the Bended Knee

HAVE YOU ever watched a bird sleeping on its perch and never falling off? How does it manage to do this?

The secret is the tendons of the birds legs. They are so constructed that when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are unbent again. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly.

Is this not the secret of the hold power of the Christian? Daniel found this to be true. Surrounded by a pagan environment, tempted to compromise with evil, urged to weaken his grip on God, he refused to let go. He held firm when others faltered because he was a man of prayer. He knew the power of the bended knee.

From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of holding things which are most precious to us—honesty,

purity, thoughtfulness, honor, character. That secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a firmer grip on those values which make life worth living. When we hold firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured He will hold tightly to us.—*Rollin S. Burhans* □

Children of Divorce Growing

In 1960, 463,000 children lived in homes where their parents divorced. By 1981, that had grown to 1.2 million. And the figure still climbs. More than half of all children will spend some time growing up in a single-parent household.—*AFA Journal* □

Preserving Old Bible Backs

THE PRESIDENT of the American Bible Society, Fred W. Cropp, recently received a letter asking a question: "What do you recommend for keeping the leather on the backs of Bibles from getting stiff, cracking and peeling?"

The reply was, "There is one oil that is especially good for treatment of leather on Bibles. In fact, it would insure your Bible to stay in good condition. It is not sold, but may be found in the palm of the human hand" (use!).—*Selected* □

The Paradox of the Cross

THE CROSS of Christ is the greatest of all paradoxes. It was the most tragic event in the history of the world, yet the most wonderful thing that ever happened. It was the saddest spectacle man ever beheld, yet it was the most stunning defeat Satan ever suffered and the most glorious victory Christ ever won. He won by losing. He conquered by surrendering.

The Cross was the greatest exhibition of divine justice in condemning sin, yet the most wonderful demonstration of divine mercy in pardoning sin. It was God's greatest manifestation of hatred for sin, yet His supreme proof of love for the sinner. The Cross was the means by which God's justice condemned sin, and His mercy forgave it.

The Cross was the darkest hour in history, yet it was the time of greatest light. Though the sun refused to shine and God hid His face from Christ, the Cross was the means by which Christ really became "the light of the world." In the Cross we see man's hatred for Christ, yet we see Christ's love for man. There we see human vengeance as men cry for His blood, yet we see divine forgiveness as Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The Cross portrays man's sinfulness and God's holiness; human weakness and divine strength. It demonstrates man's inability to save himself, and God's ability and power to do this for him. The Cross, from the human standpoint is foolishness; yet it is a revelation of the highest wisdom of God.

"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18).—*E. Britnell* □

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL

(And Paul Was Not Its Exclusive Custodian)

■ *"Praying. . . for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds" (Ephesians 6:18-20).*

THE ULTRADISPENSATIONALISTS (of the Premillennialists) seize upon Paul several references, especially in the Ephesian letter, to the gospel mystery. From them and his other like allusions, they fashion their utterly false theology of two gospels—one for the Gentiles: that preached by Paul; and the other for the Jews, the one proclaimed by Peter and the other Apostles. They then speak of the gospel of the kingdom, which is for the Jews; and the gospel of God's grace of salvation, which is for the Gentiles. Since this rank heresy is rather widely held and insistently proclaimed, it requires to be exposed and refuted.

The Expedient Ignorements

The claim is that Paul received an exclusive revelation from God of His saving grace in Christ. He alone of the Apostles was the custodian thereof, while the others preached another gospel, that of the kingdom, designed solely for the Jews. On that completely erroneous premise, the two-gospel proclaimers are able to rule out baptism as a condition for the remission of sins, as proclaimed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). That message was applicable only to Israel, it is maintained. Expediently ignored is Peter's declaration that the promise of that salvation, on the stipulated terms thereof, is "to all them that are afar off," clearly meaning the Gentiles (v. 39; cf. Joel 2:28-32).

The position of Paul in this connection, completely in accord with Peter's message, is also ignored by the errorists. In both Romans 6:4, 17-18 and Galatians 3:26-27, he clearly imposes baptism as a condition of salvation.

In Galatians 1:6-9, it is to be noted that he twice invokes the curse of God upon anyone who preaches "another gospel"—than that "of Christ" which he and the other Apostles proclaimed (v. 8). Implicit in that attitude, of course, is the fact there is but one gospel for all of humanity—that of Christ. It is for "every creature," as Jesus Himself declared, in His commission to the Apostles to preach it (Mark 16:15-16; cf. Luke 24:46-48).

The two-gospel exponents similarly disregard and reject the clear proclamation of Christ, made in anticipation of the post-Pentecostal era. It concerns the singularity of the one gospel's objective. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," He said, alluding to "the commonwealth of Israel" (Ephesians 2:12). "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd" (John 10:15-16; cf. chapter 11:47-52). The "other sheep," of course are the Gentiles.

Paul takes up and elaborates on that situation. In the Ephesian letter, which has the bulk of the claimed other-gospel references, some of that elaboration occurs. The Gentiles, who "sometimes were far off," says he, are now "made nigh by the blood of Christ." That is because He has "broken down the middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles (chapter 2:12-14). That was done "by the cross," by which both Jews and Gentiles were "reconciled to God" (vv. 15-17; cf. chapter 1:8-10; Colossians 1:20-23). So did Christ "create in Himself one new man in place of the two" (v. 15, RSV). Hence, Paul's declaration in chapter 4:4, "There is one

body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

The oneness of the benefit in Christ, including both Jews and Gentiles, is further accented by Paul in Romans. There, the Gentiles are said to, by the gospel, be grafted into the Jewish "olive tree," or the Abrahamic covenant of blessing, and made to partake of "the root and fatness" thereof (chapter 11:16-18).

The Misrepresentation of Paul

The claim that Paul exclusively was enlightened about the gospel mystery is patently false. It is based upon such expressions as "my gospel" (Romans 16:25), "my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:4), and the assertion that God made known unto Paul "the mystery of His will" (Ephesians 1:9). The assumption of exclusiveness in this case has no foundation at all in Scripture, depending solely on the imagination of the system-makers.

Hear the Apostle himself, as he speaks specifically to the point. Of his knowledge "in the mystery of Christ," he says: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5). Not the plural pronoun "we," as Paul treats of that revelation in First Corinthians 2:6-7, 10-13, by which usage inclusion of the other Apostles as recipients of the referenced revelation is required.

Paul's report of his conference in Jerusalem with the other Apostles confirms that it was but one gospel they all proclaimed—that of salvation from sin by Christ (Galatians 1:1-10). Upon comparison of doctrine, the other Apostles "added nothing," to Paul (v. 6), and evidently he presented nothing contradictive of what they preached. The other Apostles, thus, gave Paul "the right hand of fellowship," that he "should go to the heathen, and they to the circumcision" (v. 9).

The dispensationalists have grossly wrested the term, "the gospel of the uncircumcision" and that of "the circumcision" (v. 7). They do not denote two gospels, as is intended, but one. Peter was not confined in his ministry to the Jews, as was demonstrated by his being the first Apostle to preach the gospel of God's saving grace to the Gentiles (Acts 10). It was he, it should be remembered, that declared, with reference to both Jews and Gentiles, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved" (Acts 15:11). Thus, to believers, both Jews and Gentiles, he declared of the mercy which God has shown by His Son, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12; cf. Romans 5:1-2).

Neither was Paul restricted in his proclamation of the same gospel to the Gentiles. That is made abundantly clear by his going first to the Jews upon his entry into a city. It was he, it should be remembered, that declared the gospel which he preached "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). His "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel" was "that they might be saved" by the gospel which he proclaimed. And to that end he spent himself in his ministry, as well as for the salvation of the Gentiles (cf. I Corinthians 9:19-23).

The situation of reference in Galatians 2:7-10 is quite clear. It but reflects recognition by the Apostles of a general division of the field in which the one gospel was to be ministered. Paul was especially commissioned by Christ to carry it to the Gentiles, as recorded in Acts 26:16-18. So his acknowledgment in Ephesians 3:8. "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." While the other Apostles went first to the Jews, their preaching certainly was not confined to them. They were commissioned by Christ, it will be recalled, to be His

witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8).

The Mystery of Reference

The "mystery," concerning which Paul, with the other Apostles, had been illuminated by the Spirit, is clearly set forth by Paul. It, of course, is no longer such. In its broadest sense, the mystery is made known in Ephesians 3:6. It is simply "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs (with the Jews), and of the same body (with them), and partakers (with them) of His (God's) promise in Christ by the gospel."

In other words, the mystery involved the redemption for all humanity which Christ accomplished, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. This was that in him should "all nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Thus, did God Himself preach both Paul's and Peter's gospel to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). "So then," as Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, declares, "they which be of faith (Jew or Gentile) are blessed with faithful Abraham" (v. 9).

As to its application on the individual level, Paul spells out the mystery's nature in Colossians 1:25-28. Although it had "been hid from ages and from generations," it is "now made manifest to His (God's) saints," not exclusively to Paul. To those saints God would now "make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, *which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (vv. 26-27; cf. Ephesians 1:13-14).

The "mystery of Christ," of the gospel, and of the faith (Ephesians 3:4; 6:9; Colossians 2:1-2; I Timothy 3:9), thus, is that of the indwelling of His saints by Christ. That indwelling, of course, is by the Holy Spirit. So is possession of the Spirit, or the indwelling of Christ thereby, the fulfillment for the individual of the Abrahamic promise of blessing through Christ. That is exactly what Paul proclaims in Galatians 3:13-14.

Compare John 7:37-39, where Christ anticipated this fulfillment under the new covenant. It was not possible previous to the Day of Pentecost because Christ, being not thereto "glorified," the Spirit was not thitherto given (v. 39).

The Reason for the Mystery

The sense in which this outworking of God's eternal purpose in Christ was a mystery is apparent from the consideration of Scripture bearing upon the subject. It was not that the purpose had not been declared in the foregoing Scriptures. There was, indeed, abundant proclamation of the coming universality of God's saving grace, in its applicability. It was just that there seems to have been a "veil" over the hearts of the Jews concerning the proclamation (II Corinthians 3:14-16).

It will be recalled that it took a miracle to open Peter's eyes to it, although he, by the Spirit, proclaimed the comprehensive application of the gospel on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:39). That such veiling of the prophecies was not without Divine intent appears to be indicated.

Thus, Daniel was told that some of God's designs were "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9; cf. v. 4). To this seems to accord the declaration of Paul in Romans 16:25-26. He there speaks of "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began (cf. Genesis 3:15), but is now made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets (not by a private revelation to Paul alone), *according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*"

It is to be observed that the mystery is "now made manifest by the Scriptures of the Prophets" (v. 26). And that is pursuant to "the commandment of the everlasting God," which seems to imply the former restriction on illumination at this point (cf. Matthew 13:16-17). Paul declared, it should

be remembered, that in his preaching he proclaimed "none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). He certainly did not preach a new and different gospel from that which was announced in the Garden of Eden and to Abraham.

The Gravity of the Error

The ultragravity of the two-gospel falsehood proclaimed by the dispensationalists is not likely to be overstressed. Like so much of the premillennial system to which it is integral, it drives a wedge into Scripture that throws it into utter confusion. We know that confusion is not of God (I Corinthians 14:33); hence, the two-gospel doctrine bears in its nature and in the results which it produces the earmarks of its originator, which is not God. As there is only one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, one Holy Spirit, one baptism, one body, and one hope of our calling in Christ, so also there is only one gospel—that of "your salvation" through Christ (Ephesians 1:13). "No lie is of the truth," declares John (I John 2:21). And the claim that Paul preached another gospel than the one which Christ commissioned all the Apostles to proclaim is, to put it bluntly, a lie.

The extreme seriousness of the fallacy is shown by its utter disruption of the perfect unity and progression that is essential to Scripture as being inspired by God, and which is everywhere exhibited therein. From the proclamation of the protevangelium of Genesis 3:15 to the universal invitation of Revelation 22:17, there is perfect consistency and continuity.

The blood of Christ, which redeems us today, also propitiated "the transgressions that were under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15, ASV), as well as those of the Patriarchs. All who are "of faith," as Paul put it (Galatians 3:7,9) partake of the Abrahamic blessing, which is salvation through Christ, his Seed.

So recognized Jesus, in His anticipation of life in the heavenly kingdom. "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," He declared. The context makes clear that the universal gathering in the eternal kingdom will be with "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets" (Luke 13:28-30).

Away, then, with the falsehood that proclaims one gospel for the Jews and another for the Gentiles! "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Romans 10:12). And essentially that richness consists in His providing for them "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus," with its "eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10; cf. Romans 3:21-26). "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might (through His sacrificed Son) have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32; cf. chapter 3:9; Galatians 3:22).—***The Banner of Truth*** □

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS...

*Count your blessings instead of your crosses;
Count your gains instead of your losses;
Count your joys instead of your woes;
Count your friends instead of your foes;
Count your smiles instead of your tears;
Count your courage instead of your fears;
Count your full years instead of your lean;
Count your kind deeds instead of your mean;
Count your health instead of your wealth;
Count on God instead of yourself;
And be thankful!*

—Selected

IT IS HARD. . .

TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN that the church is the most important thing in the world when you are negligent about attending its services and supporting its work.

TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN that the church is the greatest institution in the world when you permit them to miss services to go elsewhere.

TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN that the church is to be held higher than anything when you insist that they do their homework but permit them to neglect their Bible study.

TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN that the church is the world's most important institution when you give little help to finance its work and encourage to do likewise.

TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN that they should respect the church when you continually criticize the leadership, belittle the teacher's work and are a habitual faultfinder.—**Selected** □

We Are World Christians

WE ARE world Christians. We put God's love for all people first. No race is superior to another. No government is perfect in God's sight. No nation is beyond God's concern and judgment. We don't put our nation's economy before God's economy. He tells us to seek first His kingdom. He will then meet our needs. We are driven to action daily with the knowledge that five billion people do not know our Savior. Our passion in life, our unquenchable desire, is to take God's love to them. No task is too small for us. All that limits us is our willingness to believe God can enable us to do it. We're sold out to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Nothing less. We understand following Him means absolute death to ourselves. It costs everything to be His disciple.

God, give us grace to be unquestionably obedient to your every command and desire. Don't give us status; give us a place to serve. Don't give us mansions to live in here; give us a spring board to take Christ's love to the whole world. Don't give us pleasure; give us perspective. Don't give us entertainment; enable us. Put us to work; command us. Teach us sacrifice. Give us strength to do Your will. Our great joy in life is pleasing our Lord. There is no other joy comparable. In our beloved Savior's Name.

We are tired of playing religion. Tired of seminaries and Bible colleges that pump out successful psychologists, perverted preachers, successful salesmen, and great golfers who have no inner reality and are not yielded to the authority of Jesus. Tired of a "church life" that consists of a few regular functions and sermons that sound good, as if they're being rated as speeches, but have no consequential value except complacency.

Life is not merely some seventy-year stretch that we endure until Christ returns to take us home, nor is it time to merely seek personal fulfillment. We don't seek simple self-actualization; rather we pursue the actualization of God's love in all hearts. We don't seek our

personal rights; we seek to see all people set free. We not only make plans; we take orders.

We have no complaints except our thankless hearts. We have no excuses; they limit God. We don't need all the reasons; we ask for responsibility. We don't give ten percent of our income to God; we give it all. We don't work for Him from 8:00 until 5:00; we are His twenty-four hours of each day. We are not stoics; we hurt and cry when loved ones leave us; but we hurt all the more for people who pass into eternity without acknowledging Christ as Lord. We're not dropouts because we don't aspire to be among the elite of society; we're sold-outs. We're not cynics; though there are unanswered questions, we know Christ has the answers. We're not bitter, although we've been hurt; Christ is our Healer. We're not disillusioned; although we've sinned, Christ forgives us and makes us strong in our weakness. We don't spend endless hours on inconsequential issues. We don't take pride in acquiring things; no, hoarding shames us. We say it's senseless to talk about availability or willingness; we would rather obey and do the job, not talk about it. We are world Christians? Will you take a stand with us?—*Adapted and Revised* □

Just An Average Day

On just an average day in America. . .

Twenty-eight mailmen are bitten by dogs; 1.6 billion cigarettes are smoked; 63,288 cars crash killing 129 people; 9,077 babies are born; 500 million cups of coffee are gulped; two billion one dollar bills are in circulation; 1.1 million people are in the hospital; 5200 people die, 1070 of them from cancer; 2,740 kids run away from home; the snack bars at O'Hare International sell 5,479 hot dogs covered with 12 gallons of relish and 9 gallons of mustard; 5,962 couples marry and 2,986 divorce; each citizen produces 6 pounds of garbage; 679 million phone conversations occur; 176,810,950 eggs are laid; and 41 million people are in school from kindergarten through grade school.

AND on an average day Jesus Christ is coming back!

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:36-39).—**Selected** □

"Nine Persons Lost at Sea"

A PREACHER included in his annual report the item "Nine persons lost at sea." When the congregation expressed shock and amazement, he said, "Well, eleven persons requested prayers for those going to sea, and only two asked me to give thanks for a safe return, so I assume that the other nine were lost at sea."

How many times do we ask, receive and then forget to give thanks?—**COPIED** □

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS —WEALTH—

INTRODUCTION:

1. The human spirit is clothed in a material body and the present world is largely a material world.
2. Consequently all of our earthly relationships have much to do with material things.
3. The Scriptures realize this and deal with it.
 - (1) It is estimated that 1 out of every 6 verses in the New Testament deals with man's relationship to material things.
 - (2) It has been said that one-third of the parables of Jesus deal with it.

I. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF WEALTH

A. Wealth Within Itself Is Not Sinful

1. The love of money is what is sinful (I Timothy 6:10)
2. The determining factors (James 4:17; 5:1-6)
 - (1) How wealth is gotten—fraud, dishonesty, etc.
 - (2) What is done with the wealth after it is gotten—hoarding and a life of self-indulgent pleasure insensitive to the needs of the poor, etc.
 - (3) What the wealth does with you—do you possess your wealth or does it possess you? Have you forgotten God?
3. There are many wealthy, but godly men mentioned in the Bible: Job, Abraham, etc.
4. The Bible condemns laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11).
5. We are to work with diligence (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Romans 12:11), but in the midst of it put God first (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; Matthew 6:33).
6. It is expected that such a diligent person will accumulate some of this world's goods.

B. Wealth As A Stumbling Block Is An Ever-present Possibility

1. Wealth can become our god (I Timothy 6:7; Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5).
2. Men trust and serve riches: it causes them to become highminded and snobbish.
3. Wealth may keep a man from accepting Christ (Matthew 19:21-26; I Corinthians 1:26).
4. It can bring on spiritual paralysis among supposed Christians (Revelation 3:17).
5. It can make an eternal fool out of a person (Luke 12:15-21).
6. It can send a person to hell (Luke 16:19-25).
7. "What is a man profited. . . ?" (Matthew 16:26).

C. Men Are Stewards of Material Things

1. God made all things (John 1:1-3; Genesis 1 & 2).
2. God possesses all things (Genesis 14:19; Psalms 24:1; 50:10).
3. We personally are not our own (I Corinthians 6:19,20).
4. The parable of the talents: ability plus opportunity equals responsibility (Matthew 25:14-30; James 4:17).
5. We are to lay up treasures in heaven, not on this earth (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:20,21).

II. THE CHRISTIAN USE OF WEALTH

A. To Take Care of His Family

1. I Timothy 5:8.
2. This does not necessarily include the luxuries of life (I Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5).
3. A Christian will have to give account to God of a lot of wasteful spending.

B. To Carry Out the Spread of The Gospel

1. The great commission (Matthew 21:19,20)
 - (1) Evangelizing
 - (2) Pastoring
2. God has ordained that preachers be financially supported in evangelizing, their work (I Corinthians 9:7-14).
3. Under ideal circumstances elders are likewise to be supported (I Timothy 5:17,18).

C. To Relieve the Needy

1. This is pure religion (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10).
2. This is one reason for working (Ephesians 4:28).
3. Notice Acts 20:35.
 - (1) These words are addressed to the elders.
 - (2) The word "labouring" in the original language means to work until you are ready to fall over from exhaustion.
 - (3) Here are words of Jesus not found elsewhere, 35b.

D. To Pay Taxes

1. What Jesus taught (Matthew 22:15-22)
2. What Paul wrote (Romans 13:6,7)
3. We have the responsibility to pay taxes, but what the government does with the money is not our responsibility as a Christian.

III. THE CHRISTIAN USE OF WEALTH FOR CHRIST

A. Legal Arguments for Tithing

1. Some say that tithing is a principle that God's children have always practiced—it was before the law of Moses was given (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:22), so how could it have been taken away?
2. The priesthood of Christ is like unto the priesthood of Melchisedec, and Abraham paid tithes into the priesthood of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:4-17).
3. The priesthood of the Old Testament was supported by the tithes of the people (Numbers 18:20-26)—Some say that "EVEN SO" in I Corinthians 9:13, 14, means that preachers are to be supported in like manner.
4. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).
 - (1) The sermon on the Mount is addressed to a Jewish audience, but is teaching principles concerning the kingdom of heaven (the church).
 - (2) When Christians take part in almsgiving, it is not to be as the scribes and Pharisees—to be seen of men (Matthew 6:1-4).
 - (3) The almsgiving was not the tithe for the tithe was to be brought by the Jew into the storehouse of the Lord (Malachi 3:10)—there was nothing to glory of here because every Jew was expected to do this.
 - (4) Almsgiving was benevolent giving in excess of, and above, the ten percent.
 - (5) So, when it speaks of Christians doing alms

(Continued on Next Page)

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS WEALTH

(Continued from Last Page)

(Matthew 6:1-4), it is implied that a Christian will be giving more than the tithe.

B. Spiritual Reasons for Giving

- 1. If, as some say, the Jews under the bondage of the Law gave a tithe, and we are now under grace (not the bondage), it is a disgrace to give less than a tithe.
 - 2. The New Testament standards are never lower, but higher than the inferior Old Testament (Hebrews 2:1-3; Matthew 5:20).
 - 3. Those on Pentecost didn't rejoice that they were free from giving 10 percent (being no longer under the Law), but sold their houses and lands and laid the money at the apostles feet (Acts 2:41-45; 4:34-36).
 - 4. Our standard of giving is the cross of Christ (John 3:16), and we should never fall below the inferior Old Testament standard of the tithe.
 - 5. Christ's standard of giving is not determined altogether by how much we give, but by how much we have left over after we have given (Mark 12:41-44).
- C. What Is Your Standard of Giving (Personally)?
- 1. Some people give like when they eat out at a restaurant—they TIP.
 - 2. Some people give like movie-goers, just when they are there.
 - 3. Some people give ten percent, they tithe—they are on the right track.
 - 4. Some people give above a tithe—they are beginning to get the spirit of New Testament giving.
 - 5. How much do you give (personally)? Remember Matthew 6:33. —J. Gibbons □

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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Answers to:
BIBLE QUESTIONS

- 1. John 2:1-11; 2. John 3:1,2; 3. Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-11; 4. Mark 2:1-12; 5. John 5:18; John 5:1-16; Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 9:2-6; 6. Matthew 8:5-13; 7. Three: Luke 7:11-17; Mark 5:21-43; John 11:1-46; 8. Mark 5:35-41; 9. Mark 5:1-20; 10. The woman had her problem for twelve years and Jairus' daughter was twelve years old—Mark 5:21-43; 11. Matthew 14:13-23; Mark 6:30-46; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15; 12. Mark 6:47-56; 13. Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; 14. Matthew 17:24-27; 15. John 9:1-7; 16. Mark 7:31-37; Mark 8:22-26; 17. Matthew 8:28-34; Matthew 20:29-34; 18. Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-25; 19. Luke 22:50, 51; 20. John 20:30,31.

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