

# The Sword AND Staff

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

## OUR CURSE

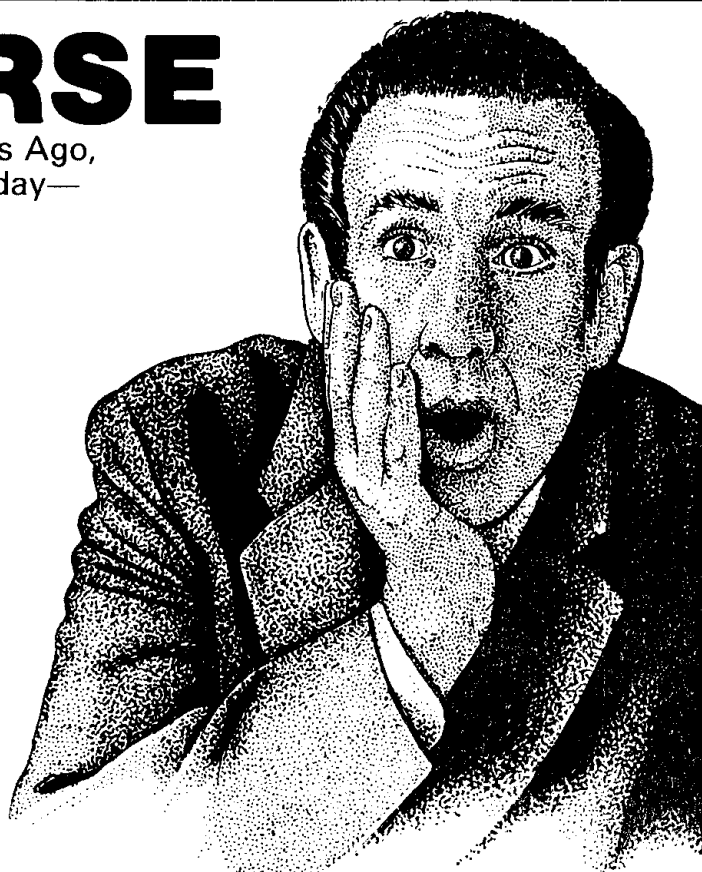
—Written Over Thirty Years Ago,  
But Even More Timely Today—

By James E. Gibbons

**RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS** were deplorable in the days of the prophet Ezekiel! The judgment of God was coming down, and they were confronted with captivity in a strange land. Even those left behind in Jerusalem had not learned their lesson. In the Spirit, Ezekiel visits back in Jerusalem and sees the idol worship and lack of concern among the professed people of God. God said to the appointed ones, "Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 9). To some others, He said, "Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." Those who were not concerned and bewailing the terrible condition of Israel were to die the death! The curse of God was coming upon these unconcerned, irreligious souls!

Some will say, "How can God do such a thing? God is the God of love." True, promises were given, but commandments had to be obeyed! Sooner or later the hand of God's judgment comes down upon the wicked, and especially among His professed followers who are not in the least concerned nor faithful! The apostle Peter declares, "For the time is come that the judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:17,18). God is love, but also "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

The curse of God was on the Jews in Jerusalem in the day of Ezekiel because of their unconcern! We are cursed with the same thing today! Where are those who "sigh and that cry" for the terrible conditions that exist in the divided religious world? Where are those who are concerned about a sin-sick, lost and dying world? We are cursed and plagued today by (1) Cold Hearts!



(2) Dry Eyes! and (3) Empty hands! All of these follow one another.

### I. COLD HEARTS

We are cursed with cold hearts today all the way from the pulpit to the pew in many places! The spiritual heart includes our emotion, intellect, conscience, and will. Our heart also is the place of our inward feeling—our zeal and enthusiasm about a matter. To have a cold heart is to have a lack of concern about the work of the Lord. It is awful to talk to sinners outside of Christ who are not concerned about religion, but it is even more discouraging to approach supposed church members and find a lack of concern about things eternal! Today it seems that most "members" have a cold heart!

Why are "church members" so cold-hearted today? A lot of things go into answering this question, but it all amounts to the fact that their hearts are in the

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## Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

*ALTHOUGH THE WAY of truth is straight and narrow, there are no traffic problems.*

"Happy is the one who walks so close to God that he leaves no room for the devil."

*The LIVING GOD is more a Person of DYNAMIC WILL than of Static Intelligence.*

"When you give another a piece of your mind, you will lose your peace of mind."

*King Saul thought Goliath was too big to fight; David thought he was too big to miss.*

"Paul was so positively committed to the will of God that both life and death held certain attractions" (Philippians 1:22)—how about us?

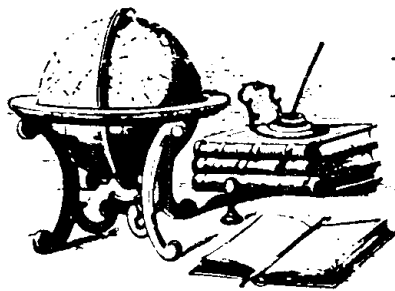
*You can drive around in a limousine, but if you don't know where you're going it doesn't mean a thing—do you have purpose in living?*

"Truth by its very nature cannot be imposed by external compulsion, nor can it be validated by anything other than itself."

*A good practice as a Christian: Practice frugality when dealing with yourself, but liberality when dealing with others.*

"Many people these days want to reach the promised land without going through the wilderness."

*God feeds the birds of the air but He doesn't put the food in their nests.*



## EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

### TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

ON AUGUST 24, 1989 unprecedented excitement filled the air. After traveling through space for 12 years, and covering 4.43 billion miles in its arched pathway of journey, the spacecraft Voyager II made its predestined rendezvous with the distant planet Neptune as it hurled on through outer space to leave our solar system. Radio waves relaying pictures of this spectacular encounter back to earth, traveling at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second), took 4 hours and six minutes to span the 2.8 billion miles.

Scientists are really excited about everything as new knowledge of the solar system comes in. We stand in awe and respect at the science and technology that makes this accomplishment possible. Man was quick to laud and applaud himself in what was taking place. But after all has been said, there is something very conspicuous and obvious by its absence (that which has not been said). There is something more wonderful and awesome than seeing Neptune up close and having that information sent back to earth over the expanse of billions of miles (taking over 4 hours to get here). Neptune is only one planet on the outward edge of the immediate solar system of our sun. The heavens are literally full of such suns (stars) greater and more wonderful in size and magnitude than our sun (we are told). It is overwhelming; it is mind-boggling to try to think of the Galaxies, the Milky Way, and the countless heavenly bodies in that boundless expanse that seems to be out there.

The something more wonderful and awesome than all of this is that there is the Almighty God of Eternity who is greater than all and created it all. It seems that our humanistic, Godless, and (yes) ungodly world will not even consider this, let alone mention it (and give God the glory). They have missed the point. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Ps. 19:1). "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead (deity); so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Everything points to God. We see Almighty Power in nature (as planets reeling through space, etc.). But this power is not erratic, unpredictable power (like exploding in all directions, etc.). It is governed by intelligence (intelligence so fantastic that nothing short of Supreme will describe it). Where there is intelligence this is evidence of an intelli-

gent being. Where there is Almighty Power and Supreme Intelligence, you have SUPREME BEING. Yes, everything points to God. Science is only possible because of intelligence in nature. Natural laws have been discovered, understood, and applied. They can be relied upon. Scientists are simply rethinking the thoughts of God after him. Why then cannot they acknowledge his existence and reality? The Creation points to the Creator.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY! □

**CHURCH OF CHRIST, AWAKE!**

**WE REMIND YOU.** We are told that it took the world to almost 1900 A.D. to reach the population of 1 billion. Now about 100 years later the population of the world is over 5 billion, and again we are told that by the year 2000 it will number around 6 billion.

Furthermore, it is predicted that the world population will be almost three times its current size by the end of the next century. "New projections from the United Nations Population Fund say the world's population, currently 5.2 billion, could reach 14.2 by 2100. Previous estimates had predicted growth could level off at 8 to 10 billion" (*Christianity Today*).

*All of this is staggering and mind-boggling! The self-centered and self-indulgent 20th century church, paralyzed by materialism and unbelief, must wake up. It is time to quit playing church. The church must completely believe in the verity, validity, and vitality of its message. It must again accept its Great Commission and realize it is greater than it ever has been before.*

CHURCH OF CHRIST, AWAKE! □

**Without Christ**

**Christ is the way.** Men without Him are like Cain, wanderers, vagabonds.

**He is the Truth.** Men without Him are liars, like the devil of old.

**He is the Life.** Men without Him are dead in trespasses and sins.

**He is the Light.** Men without Him walk in darkness and know not whither they go.

**He is the Vine.** Men who are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire.

**He is the Rock.** Men not built on Him are carried away by the flood of judgment.

**He is the Bread and Water of Life.** Men without Him will hunger and thirst through all eternity.

**He is the Alpha and Omega.** Men without Him have neither beginning of good nor end of misery.

—Selected

**THE NINETY AND NINE**

**The greatest problem  
in the church today  
Is the 99 "sheep" who  
have gone ASTRAY.  
They have left the church  
to frolic and PLAY  
While ONE little "lamb"  
is left to PRAY!!!**

—Selected

**The Man  
With a Can of Oil**

A MAN was known to carry a little can of oil wherever he went. If he passed through a door that squeaked, he put a drop of oil on the hinges, and if a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. So he passed through life lubricating all the creaking places, and making it a

little more pleasant for those who followed after him.

There is no telling how many lives we could keep from "rusting and squeaking" and how many gates we could open to happiness, if only we would carry a little oil of brotherly love and human kindness in an effort to prevent lives of Christians from rusting away in sin (I Thessalonians 4:9).—Selected □

**What About  
Infant Baptism?**

1. The Bible does not mention it.
2. The person must depend upon the testimony of others in later years as to whether he was baptized or not.
3. It is done in the name of the Father, yet the Father says nothing of it.
4. It is done in the name of the Son, but the Son never taught it.
5. It is done in the name of the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit never authorized it.
6. It is not only practiced without the will of the child, it is often against it.
7. Men say it comes in the room of circumcision; if so, only male children can be baptized.
8. Teaching or preaching must precede baptism (Matthew 28:18,19; Mark 16:15,16). An infant cannot be taught in this way.
9. Faith must precede baptism (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 8:37). An infant cannot believe.
10. Conviction of sins precedes baptism (Acts 2:37). An infant has no sins to be convicted of (Matthew 19:14).
11. Repentance must precede baptism (Acts 2:38). What is it that an infant should regret and turn from?
12. Baptism follows a confession of faith in Christ (Acts 8:37). An infant knows nothing of Christ and cannot speak to confess even if he did.
13. Only those who received His Word were baptized (Acts 2:41). An infant has not the mental capacity to understand and obey.
14. Those who were baptized continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). An infant is helpless humanity on its mother's knee. A child cannot engage in such acts of faithfulness.

—Selected

# OUR CURSE

(Continued from Page 1)

wrong place! Jesus touched upon this in Matthew 6:19-23. He said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If we really value and treasure the kingdom of God, our hearts will be in it. If our treasure is elsewhere, our hearts will be elsewhere. And if they are elsewhere, they will be cold concerning Christ. Paul describes such as "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Even a lukewarm heart, which is neither hot nor cold, brings the curse of God upon us and results in losing Christ (Revelation 3:15,16).

Too many times people are cold-hearted because they have never been converted in the first place! When one becomes a Christian, his heart must be changed! If it isn't changed, he will live no differently. If we live like the world, we are of the world (I John 3:6-9). Christian is as Christian does. Friend, have you done anything this month, this week, or this day that you wouldn't have done if you weren't a Christian?

Every preacher of the gospel is confronted at times with cold-hearted elders and deacons it seems. Some times elders and deacons come up against cold-hearted preachers. There seems to be a general misunderstanding of the work of the elders and deacons, and preachers have been reduced to "pastors." Elders have not been told of their work, and when a preacher endeavors to tell them of their work, he usually has a rebellious group with which to contend. Most churches want to look to a preacher as "THE PASTOR," disregarding what the Bible says about it.

How elders, deacons and preachers need warm hearts about the work of the Lord! One elder missed the services of the church for two or three months straight. Peter says that elders are to be "ensamples (examples) to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). If the church had followed the example of this elder, the church would have dismissed three months before. There are cases where deacons seldom come to any services of the church. There have been times when young preachers were "on fire" with the gospel of Christ only to have that enthusiasm dampened by cold and traditional churches. They have gone out into the world with a warm heart and a holy fear in preaching that message which is from above and not of men only to be discouraged by unresponsive churches who should be behind them! How we need warm hearts! Our curse is cold hearts!

## II. DRY EYES

We have dry eyes today! This is the expression of our heart, our sincerity or lack of sincerity! A religion without any emotion or tears is heartless and has little influence in our living. We need more tears. This does not mean we are weaklings. The only begotten Son of God wept time and time again. He shed tears of concern over Jerusalem. It behooves us to be like Jesus.

God knows our eyes are dry because our hearts are cold concerning things spiritual. We have not tears, but when we do, they are not really for important matters! The little dog is run over—we cry! We lose a football game, a basketball game, the players and friends cry—tears for immaterial things! We don't get

## FIRST THING LAST



what we want—we cry! We suffer under the consequence of sin—we cry, but don't repent! TEARS, Tears, tears, but all for the wrong things!

Our religion is our life as channeled in its right relationship to God. Utter unconcern for true religion is all about us, but does it bring tears? Cold-hearted "church members" neglect the church that the Lord purchased with His own blood! Does it break our hearts? The land is flooded with denominationalism and division in the religious world as men follow the doctrines of men, but we are told that it doesn't make any difference what one believes or practices in the name of religion? Oh, where is the warm-hearted concern for Truth? A world is lost in sin and going to a Devil's Hell to be lost for ever, but who cares about that? Oh wretched, cursed people that we are! God, give us broken hearts for lost souls that will disturb us in our complacency!

## III. EMPTY HANDS

Our curse is brought home to us because we have empty hands. Hands express the action of the intent of the heart. They are symbolic of our work and labor for Christ. Nothing in our hands we bring because we have nothing in our hearts; thus, our eyes are dry; therefore, our hands are empty! The fruit of our labor is none!

We are empty when it comes to the fruit of the Holy Spirit simply because our hearts are cold! Paul says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22,23). Too many times our lives and hands are full of just the opposite—the works of the flesh. About this Paul says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are

these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

We are empty when it comes to speaking for Christ. So many things would make our hearts cold and divert us from the great work of the church, but all are to speak for Jesus! In the early church every Christian was a soul winner (Acts 8:4). If we are going to be the New Testament church today, we must get to the place where every Christian is concerned about soul winning and doing something about it!

It doesn't matter about our circumstance in life—we can speak anywhere! Talk about Jesus on your job! Do you feel that you are not qualified to speak about Jesus? Religion? Moses felt that he couldn't talk, but God used him in a mighty way. Are you a shut-in? Don't excuse yourself! You can write letters, send tracts, or get on the phone. It is amazing at the things that can be done. Are you a child? God can use you! You think you don't have any opportunities? Friend, the world is lost in sin all around you! Pray that God will open the way. There have been cases where Christians have prayed and hungering souls have been directed to them by the hand of God. Pray that God will give you a passion for lost souls. Our curse today is not trying to win anyone, and thus our hands are empty!

Friend, will the curse of God come down upon us because of our unconcern? If we continue in apathy, we can know assuredly that it will! Hebrews 2:3 states, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" As long as our hearts are cold, eyes dry, and hands empty, the wrath of God is upon us! We are cursed children! Our lot will be as recorded in Matthew 25:30!

If we are among those "that sigh and that cry for all the abominations" that are about us, and are striving to please God in God's way, we look forward to the day when we can hear the Father say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

Paul gives some good advice to all: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13:11,12). □

**Toward A More Spiritual Concept:**  
**(5)**  
**ON OFFENDING PEOPLE**

**WE ARE LIVING** in an age of weak, watered down, and anemic preaching. People, for the most part, had rather "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (II Timothy 4:3) than to "endure" sound, wholesome and vigorous doctrine. They want smooth (and sickly) sermons and sayings. Therefore, in the midst of these circumstances of compromise it is no wonder that when a person really preaches the Word of God

with the love and fear of God in his heart, bearing down on sin and indifference in no uncertain terms, that it will sometimes be said that he is offending people. His detractors will vigorously appendage this statement by saying that the Lord said not to offend anyone.

Sound preaching must have more than sound to it. And, yes, wisdom demands that we not be unduly abrasive, but really now, what do the New Testament Scriptures have to say about this? What did our Lord actually say about it? Should we "offend" people? What is the more spiritual concept?

The English dictionary gives two definitions of this word offend: (1) To transgress the moral or divine law; sin; (2) To cause dislike, anger, or vexation; displeasure. In other words, the basic definition of offend is to sin, and secondly to displease.

Because the New Testament Scriptures were written in Greek we go to that language to examine the words translated "offend." The two main words rendered "offend" really are the same root, one being a noun and the other a verb. They are respectively *skandalon* and *skandalizo*. *Skandalon* (the noun) has this definition, beginning with the root meaning: (1) Trap; (2) Temptation to sin, enticement to apostasy; (3) That which gives offense or causes revulsion, that which arouses opposition, an object of anger or disapproval.

As stated, the root meaning had reference to falling into a trap. Hence it is easy for us to see how this word is primarily used in connection with falling into sin, sinning; then the last meaning, arousing another's displeasure. The meanings are not unlike that given in the English dictionary for offend, the first being that to sin. Even in a nonreligious context, we speak of offenders of the law (those who break the law). With these things in mind let us notice the Scriptures.

Some people hold this Scripture over the head of a godly preacher, trying to "tame" him down a little in his preaching. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Jesus had been talking about actual children, and perhaps it is also applied to spiritual children (those starting out in Christ).

Now what is the nature of the offense as the Lord speaks here in Matthew 18? He goes on to talk about cutting off the hand or casting out the eye if these things offended them (Matthew 18:7-9). The word offend is here used in reference to breaking God's law, sinning. The little ones would be offended, or caused to offend, by falling into sin; not someone trying to teach them the Word of God. But people today have it turned around. If the preacher tries to get the "little ones" to give up their ungodly ways and quit sinning (they are the offenders, i.e. the "little ones"), the preacher is offending them (bless their "little" hearts). How absurd! But such is the "reasoning" of some. Read Luke's account in Matthew 18 (Luke 17:1,2). Notice how Jesus used the same word in Matthew 16:23. In reality Peter was unwittingly trying to get the Lord to sin.  
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## ***Toward A More Spiritual Concept:***

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Surely a person has not thought Matthew 18:6 all the way through when using it to curb strong gospel preaching because some people do not like the message. Jesus is talking about children. Even in fleshly relationships the parent does not hesitate to correct his child, or "hurt his feelings" in discipline, if it is needed. It is obvious that offend here refers to something other than that. This is expected in a good parent. Offend in Matthew 18:6 signifies *to cause one to stumble into sin*. Paul said that if doing a questionable thing caused his brother to offend (sin), he would not do it as long as the world stood (I Corinthians 8:13). Some of the so-called preaching that "offends" is that which tries to get people to stay away from sin or to remove that which really does offend (in God's estimation).

But please notice what is said of Jesus and what Jesus said (in view of the last meaning of offend, to excite the disapproval of another).

1. Christ is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense (he offends people), even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient. . ." (I Peter 2:8).

2. The Pharisees were *offended* because Jesus taught against their human traditions (Matthew 15:12; notice 15:1-14).

3. The spiritual teachings of Jesus *offended* many of his disciples (they were "hard sayings"), and they followed him no more (John 6:60-66).

4. Of one type of believer, Jesus said that "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is *offended*" (Matthew 13:21).

5. Jesus told his disciples that all of them would be *offended* because of him (Matthew 26:31), and Paul speaks of the *offense* of the cross (Galatians 5:11).

6. Jesus said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be *offended* in me" (Matthew 11:6).

Beloved, this whole matter of a faithful man of God preaching the Word, and so-called Christians becoming offended because the preacher loves their souls enough to try to get them to remove that which really does offend (and they say we should not offend), is a very ridiculous and mixed up proposition. If a person preaches the Bible some people are bound to disapprove, and this is taking offense. According to the Lord Jesus (and the apostle Peter), these people are offended because they don't believe and are disobedient. Jesus experienced this, and taught that men would forsake him because they were offended by the Word. Instead of being proud and rebellious when we hear the Word of God, James in his words of wisdom says, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:19-21). Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Men, by being offended at the preaching of God's Word, are showing their true caliber—they are an offense unto God! Jesus said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

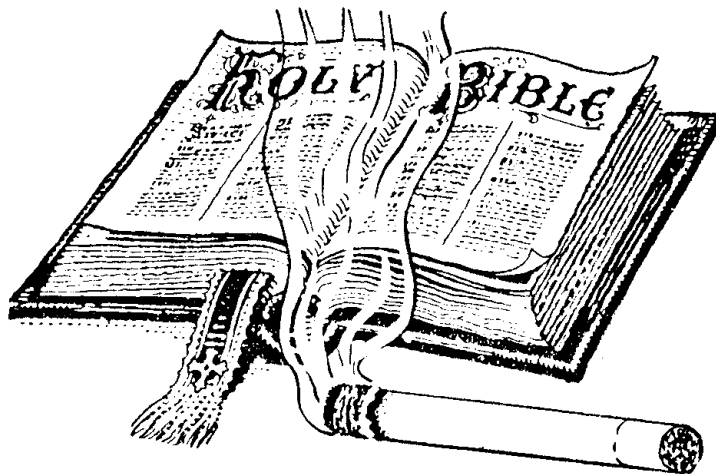
Yes, to be faithful to God we must take our stand for the truth and how that truth relates to our lives. It should be preached with conviction and boldness, yet seasoned with love. Jesus has already told us that not everyone would accept it. It is an affront to them. Because people don't like what is said is no reason for us to compromise lest we "offend." Paul very aptly and plainly said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

This is the more spiritual concept. □

## ***Toward A More Spiritual Concept:***

(6)

### **THE CHRISTIAN AND THE USE OF TOBACCO**



**IS IT WRONG** for a Christian to smoke and use tobacco in any form? Does the Bible by principle, or direct command, have anything to say upon this subject? Really, is there a more spiritual concept that should be considered? These questions seem to have never entered the minds of many professing religious people, but a real Christian will be concerned about them. He wants to please His Lord in every way and in all things (Colossians 3:17,23).

In recent years the medical world has said much about smoking and the use of tobacco. Their indictment and verdict against tobacco comes through loud and clear. As well as the great harm that is done to the human body, the substance is very addictive (more addictive than marijuana, we are told). It is a primary cause of lung cancer, and it is a great factor in heart diseases. The use of tobacco produces many maladies, not to mention the fact that it aggravates almost any health problem that a person may have. It even has been figured out statistically how many years of a person's life are shortened by the use of tobacco. The evidence is so overwhelming that the U.S. government requires this warning (and variations of it) to appear with cigarette advertizing (and similar information on cigarette packs): "WARNING: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health." The medical knowledge concerning the harmfulness of the use of tobacco is so common that we will not attempt to try to prove anything that we have said. Only companies, growers, and other special interest groups (motivated by selfish concerns)



would try to deny this.

The “Christian world” for the most part has been silent on the subject of tobacco. Even in the face of the terrible truth of its danger to health and life, most enslaved souls (it seems, but not as many as once did) will try to justify its use—and *still claim to be faithful Christians!* One man said that when his conscience bothered him, he would quit smoking. A more discerning brother, who was also more spiritually inclined, said, “If I committed adultery as often as you smoke, I wouldn’t think that adultery was wrong either!” Yes, there is such a thing as having our “conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:2), or would it be better in this case to say, with a hot cigarette?

But, what we are concerned with is the Bible. Do the Scriptures say anything that would throw any light upon this issue one way or the other? Is there a more spiritual concept governed by New Testament principles that we need to consider?

First, we would like to say that *the use of tobacco is tempting God* (for the Christian).

Jesus was tempted of the devil to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple. After all, God would take care of him lest he “dash his foot against a stone” (Matthew 4:5-7). The immediate reply of Jesus was, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matthew 4:7).

In other words, it would be the same thing if a person threw himself in the front of an oncoming car, then asked the Lord to save him. It likewise would be tempting God. We are commanded NOT to tempt God.

How can this be applied to smoking? the use of tobacco?

The Christian’s life is one of trust and commitment, committing our all unto the Lord (I Peter 5:7; Philipians 4:6). We look to the Lord for His watch-care and our well-being in everything. This we are commanded to do, as well as it being our special privilege.

Now, in view of the serious hazards to one’s life involved in smoking, and the definite prospects of a premature death, we would be tempting God by continued use of tobacco. To ask the Lord to look out for us and to take care of us, then use tobacco would be really presumptuous in the sight of God. It is the same thing as jumping in the front of the car, then asking the Lord to take care of us. It is the same principle that is involved in the temptation of Jesus to leap from the pinnacle of the temple (although, perhaps not as sudden and dramatic). Jesus said in no uncertain terms, and may we listen, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

Second, there are several other Scriptural reasons we could list against smoking. We will not take the time to examine them in detail, but simply give them.

Paul says in I Corinthians 3:17, “If any man defile (or *destroy*—footnote) the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” He has reference to the collective body (the church) being the temple of God, but you will also notice that individually we are the temple of God, i.e. of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19,20). Our bodies belong to God. The warning here is that if we destroy the temple of God, He will destroy us. What does tobacco do to the body?

Listen again to the apostle Paul: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from ALL FILTHINESS of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Corinthians 7:1). The promise of God being our Father and us being His children (and Him living within us) should make us clean up our lives in every way. Besides the other factors involved, at its best we must admit that the use of tobacco is a filthy habit. We are commanded to cleanse ourselves of ALL FILTHINESS of the flesh and spirit.

Let us ask this question: Can you visualize Jesus using tobacco? a cigarette hanging from his lips? Be honest now! He is our example in every way (I Peter 2:21). John says that every Christian must “purify himself, even as he (Jesus) is pure” (I John 3:3). O beloved, look to Jesus. He is our example. We can’t go wrong here.

Then in addition to its destructive nature, tobacco is habit-forming. It contains an addictive drug, nicotine (more addictive than marijuana, we are told). There is no question about the drug element. We have heard people in tears say that they would like to quit, but they just couldn’t (they said). They were under control by tobacco. Even if it were just a matter of opinion, from this perspective it would no longer be a matter of opinion—it would be wrong for a Christian. Again listen to Paul: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I WILL NOT BE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF ANY” (I Corinthians 6:12). Then again: “I can do all things though Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Beloved, if we profess to belong to King Jesus, and have been enslaved by king nicotine, we had better take steps to become unshackled. Let God help you break the chains that bind you. He will, and through His grace you can get the victory.

Finally, all will have to admit, whether they accept all that has been said or not, that there is a BIG QUESTION MARK surrounding the use of tobacco. Just from a surface examination there is room for *much* doubt. Paul, stressing a principle, declared, “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).

THEREFORE, any way you choose to look at it we must conclude that the use of tobacco is not for the Christian. The only way to sum it up is: IT IS WRONG! That’s all we can make out of it. If we profess to be a child of God (or have been thinking about becoming one), we need to quit the stinking habit right away and that without delay (once and for all). God will help in getting the victory, and you will be pleased with yourself for what you have done. The medical and Scriptural evidence are too overwhelming to do otherwise. Let us do nothing to impair the promise of everlasting life. Let us truly be a spiritual church (without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—Ephesians 5:27), one that the Lord can accept (Revelation 21:27).

(AFTERTHOUGHT: Some have asked why God made the tobacco plant if we can’t use it. After He had made everything, He said that His creation was good. But we ask: why did God make rattlesnakes? Why did

(Continued on Next Page)



## **Toward A More Spiritual Concept:**

*(Continued from Last Page)*

God make poison ivy? Why did God make a lot of other things? We don't see people wanting to "use" these things. The truth of the matter is that everything seems to have its place. We don't know all that God had in mind when he made the tobacco plant, but the tobacco worm thrives very well on it. . . and it doesn't shorten his life either. Also, we have seen the tobacco plant in a dried, crumbly and powdered form used as an insecticide).

This is the more spiritual concept. □

### **GLUTTONY IS WRONG TOO**

**WHEN** the possibility of wrong is pointed out in the use of tobacco, it is not at all uncommon for the person on the defensive to point out that gluttony is wrong too. You can eat too much. And in the light of the Bible this is true. The wrongfulness of the use of tobacco is in no way lessened. Two wrongs don't make a right (as they say). Gluttony just happens to be one of the sins that is never preached upon today.

Gluttony and being a drunkard are usually coupled together in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 21:20). "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rages" (Proverbs 23:20,21). As a person by drinking could become drunkened, likewise by eating too much food he could become a glutton.

The Hebrew word translated "glutton" means "to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; fig. to be loose morally, worthless or prodigal:—blow down, glutton, riotous (eater), vile." Evidently the word literally means to shake, to quake. The person is so carried away with his much eating that he "shakes" and "quakes" as he vigorously gorges himself. Obviously a person can "shake" and "quake" while eating without being a glutton, and he can eat without shaking and still be a glutton. This is just the basic meaning of the Hebrew word that came to be applied overall to gluttony. "Riotous" as in "riotous eaters of flesh" is the same as gluttonous (same Hebrew word) (Proverbs 23:20; 28:7).

In the New Testament Paul gives a quotation about the inhabitants of Crete, which is not very complimentary: "The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (Titus 1:12). A more modern translation renders this, "The Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (NIV). "LAZY GLUTTONS"—how unsavory!

When we think about the harmfulness of tobacco, and consequently its evil, let us not forget gluttony. Over-eating (and of the wrong kinds of food) can ultimately bring all kinds of health problems and premature death. We are not about to draw the line on exactly where gluttony begins, but in a land of plenty and

of overweight people someone along the line just might have committed the sin of gluttony. We have yet to hear a sermon preached on the sin of gluttony (or it even being mentioned). □

## **BIBLE QUESTIONS** *(over epistles in the N.T.)*

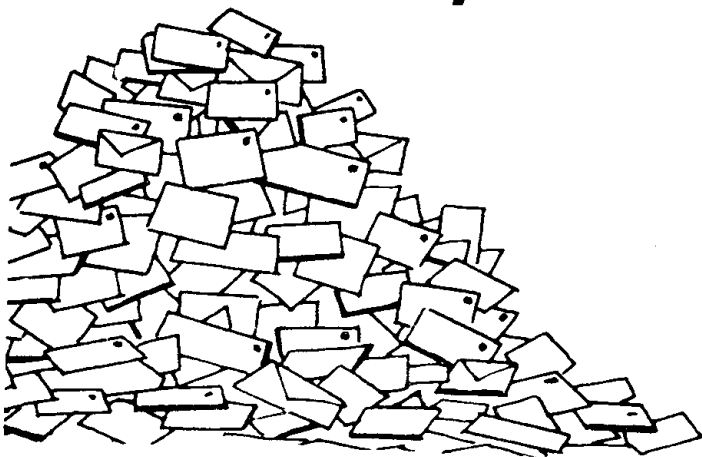
1. What is an epistle?
2. How many epistles appear as books of the New Testament?
3. Which of the epistles in the New Testament were the earliest ones written by the apostle Paul (and where was he when he wrote them)?
4. Where was Paul when he wrote the epistle of I Corinthians?
5. Where was Paul when he wrote the epistle to the Romans?
6. Very likely who carried the epistle to the Romans?
7. What epistles did Paul write during his first Roman imprisonment?
8. What epistle of Paul involved a runaway slave?
9. Which two epistles of Paul could easily be called twin epistles?
10. Who seems to have carried the epistle to the Colossians?
11. Who seems to have carried the epistle to the Ephesians?
12. Which epistle seems to have been written by Paul right before he was released from his first Roman imprisonment?
13. Which epistles did Paul write to preachers?
14. What two New Testament epistles do not bear the name or identity of their authors?
15. Which epistles were written by two of the Lord's half brothers?
16. What epistles are found in the book of Acts?
17. In what book do we find epistles written to seven churches?
18. What two epistles deal with misunderstandings about the second coming of Christ?
19. What two epistles were written to get all kinds of sinful problems straightened out in a Gentile church?
20. What epistle was written to Gentile churches that were going back under the law of Moses?
21. What epistle explicitly shows the superiority of Christ and the New Testament over Moses and the Old Testament system?
22. Which epistle was the last one that the apostle Paul wrote?
23. To whom were two epistles written by the apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit has not preserved for us?
24. In the book of Acts an epistle of commendation was written for what new Christian when he left to go to another place?
25. What people did Paul say were his flesh and blood epistle of commendation in reference to himself?

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



# READERS'

## ... Response



**APOLOGY:** Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are appreciated.

### NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list. I NO LONGER want to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF."

### VIRGINIA:

■ "I look forward to THE SWORD AND STAFF. I really like the Bible Questions. I hope this check will help toward getting the true Word of God to more people."

■ "I feel like I should call you Jim. I have been a subscriber to THE SWORD AND STAFF for over 2 years now, and I have four of the bound volumes. I really enjoyed the Question and Answer section in Vol. 27, Number 2, 1989. Please make this article a regular column... Thank you for your contribution to my spiritual growth."

### PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Truly it is pure pleasure to once again ask you to place a Christian brother on your mailing list for THE SWORD AND STAFF..."

### RHODE ISLAND:

■ "We have been receiving your paper THE SWORD AND STAFF since January and have enjoyed much that you have written. We do appreciate the straight forward delivery even if we do not agree with every jot and tittle."

"In the latest issue you ask (answer) the question, Do any translations use the word immersion? There is one! The Emphasized Bible by Joseph Bryant Rotherham, Kregel publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501. It is excellent."

"In regard to the question about the meaning of water in John 3:5 you kind of 'steam-rollered' over some of us. When we say that waters refers to natural birth we do not mean that he is saved by the combination of water birth and spiritual birth but that as Jesus responded, that which is born of the flesh (natural birth) is flesh and that which is born of the spirit (spiritual birth) is spirit. Put in an old cliché "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once!"

And finally a question. What baptism is Jesus referring to in Luke 12:50, when he says, "But an immersion have I to be immersed with, And how am I distressed until it be ended!" By this time he had already been immersed in the Jordan.

"You must be commended for your work of faith and faithfulness of work."

"And something to ponder: 'As there is a second and higher life, so there is a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no death, so after that death there is no life.' This was spoken by the well know Dean Alford."

"Will be looking forward to the next issue."

**Editor's Note:** In John 3:5 there is a conjunction linking two things ("water" and "Spirit"), and the conditional word "Except" is found before this. Note: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. Scripture is best understood in the light of other Scripture on the same subject. Parallel Scriptures are very illuminating. Notice Acts 2:38-41; I Corinthians 6:11; I Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:22,23 (all of these references in connection with John 3:5). Also, take the following Scriptures at their face value: Mark 16:15,16; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 2:11,12; I Peter 3:21.

Obviously in Luke 12:50 (and other places) Jesus is talking about the baptism of suffering that he had to experience.

I have high respect for such scholars as you mentioned, Dean Alford. Included in this number would be R.C.H. Lenski and A.T. Robertson. However, we must always realize where they are "coming from" (this is true of all denominational scholars). Otherwise, we are headed for trouble. Although they have great insights on many Scriptures, other Scriptures are filtered through denominational strainers.

Thank you for your kind letter.

### OHIO:

■ "I recently came across one of your publications. I was grateful to see such fresh material which is use-able. Please add me to your mailing list."

■ "Your paper is so excellent! I learn from many of your articles plus refresh my memory after reading the other articles. Please keep printing!"

■ "We are always happy to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF, and we hope you can continue publication."

"When we hear of what is happening in some of the large liberal churches and this year at the North American Christian Convention, your SWORD AND STAFF becomes more and more encouraging because of your conservative teaching."

"Thank you all very much."

■ "Keep up the good work. There is a great falling away among the preachers of the Lord's church. They do not declare the Whole Counsel of God anymore. They are giving in to the pressures of those who sit in the pews and want teachers having itching ears and back scratchers."

"Thank God—The Bible is still true and the Highway to Heaven is still 'strait and narrow.' May God continue to bless you in your labors for Him."

### INDIANA:

■ "Just a few lines to let you know I am pleased with THE SWORD AND STAFF. Enclosed you will find my contribution to help with the printed Word. You are doing a good job. Thank you again for your labors."

■ "We appreciate getting THE SWORD AND STAFF very much. You are right about it being the age of falling away. We have been to almost every Christian Church and Church of Christ in our area seeking for a N.T. Church only to be deeply disappointed. . . From what we get fed at Church we would starve on. Your newsletter helps a lot. Don't give up. The end is in sight."

"May God richly bless you." (Continued Next Page)

READERS' RESPONSE. . .

(Continued from Last Page)

MISSOURI:

■ *"I received a box of previous issues (bound volumes) of THE SWORD AND STAFF in September of 1988. I have had many hours of pure pleasure in reading them. Yours is the best commentary that I have ever studied. Thank you for the simple, but profound answers concerning Jesus Christ and His Word."*

■ *"God bless you! Especially for your diligent devotion to the ministry God has called you to. I wish many more men would be as obedient to proclaim God's truth uncompromisingly as you do. My wife and I are praying for you. . . We're looking forward to being a supporter of THE SWORD AND STAFF. Keep up the great work and go even stronger for the Lord. Once again a big THANK YOU!"*

OKLAHOMA:

■ *"First, I want to say 'Thank You' for the wonderful way you present God's Word. I have been receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF for quite some time though I do not know who gave my name. Yet I am thankful to them. . ."*

PHILIPPINES:

■ *"Thank you for sending me your magazine THE SWORD AND STAFF. Your publications are doing a good service to the members of the church of Christ as well as to others. What is commendable to your publishing efforts is your emphasis on obedience to God, His Word: the Bible. . ."*

■ *"Greetings to you in the name of Christ! . . . I have been reading THE SWORD AND STAFF magazine for quite some time. I am very happy to inform you that your publication has been such a big help and inspiration to me with the very straightforward articles it contains. It has actually been the next best thing to the Holy Scriptures which I have read. It presents not only the truth but also the real foundation of the church and of Christ, our Lord and King. . ."*

■ *"I really appreciate so much THE SWORD AND STAFF and your efforts and ability that you have. I appreciate your stand for Christ and the Lord's church. May we continue to serve him all the days of our lives."*

*"Please keep sending me THE SWORD AND STAFF. It helps me a lot in my ministry and in propagating and sharing God's Word in our community."*

*"Thank you once again for the magazine. . ."* □

Toward A More Spiritual Concept:

(7)

THE BIBLE ON NUDITY AND MODESTY

WE ARE LIVING in an age of immodesty and nudity. Exposure of the human body in lesser or greater degrees seems to be thought as "smart" and high style. Even among the ranks of supposed and professing Christians people are seen falling in line without any protest with the "standards" of an ungodly world. But does the Bible have anything to say upon such a subject? Is there a more spiritual concept that we ought to consider?

Yes, from Genesis to its final book of Revelation the Bible does have something to say about modesty and immodesty. Let us examine this.

God placed our original parents in the beautiful garden home of Eden. They were created and placed here in a state of innocence. Although they were created as adults, there were many things morally that they did

not know. They were even as little children. Divinely they were prohibited from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16,17). We know the sad story of their temptation and falling into sin by eating of this forbidden fruit. We don't know all that was involved about their knowledge of good and evil, but in some sense the sensitivity of their understanding was quickened when they ate. Here was the birth of conscience.

We don't know all that was involved in their knowledge of good and evil. But from what we read, what was Adam and Eve's immediate realization concerning their situation? (1) They were deeply aware of the fact that they had done an awful thing in breaking the one law that God had given unto them (and they tried to hide from God). (2) They recognized the fact that they were naked and tried to cover their bodies with leaves (Genesis 3:17-11); this was especially obvious as they were to go out and form human society.

As the story unfolds God made it plain that their clothing made from leaves was not enough, although it had been a step in the right direction. Listen: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats (tunics) of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

Thus, from the very beginning the principle of decency and modesty is stressed in the Bible. It is implied that if we know (understand) right and wrong, we will know that our bodies are to be covered. But in this age of indecency, immodesty, and immorality it seems that most people are insensitive to this teaching.

Many centuries removed from the garden of Eden the Law was given to Moses. And in the same chapter with the ten commandments, God declared: "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, *that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon*" (Exodus 20:26). The principle of this teaching is found throughout the Old Testament.

As we approach the New Testament, the Lord Jesus himself said, ". . . Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). According to Jesus, this sin in the heart will cause a man to go to hell (Matthew 5:29), as well as the overt act of adultery (Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8). King David, although the Bible says that he was a man after God's own heart, was guilty of this sin after looking upon Bathsheba in her immodesty. After lust had conceived in his heart, he actually became involved in the act of adultery itself.

Realizing this, the gist of the New Testament teaching on this is "that women adorn themselves in *modest apparel with shamefacedness*" (I Timothy 2:9). The apostle Peter also mentioned the "chaste" adornment which should be that of every woman who is a Christian. Although talking about spiritual nakedness, our Lord also in Revelation 3:18 revealed the truth of the natural state when he warned "*that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.*"

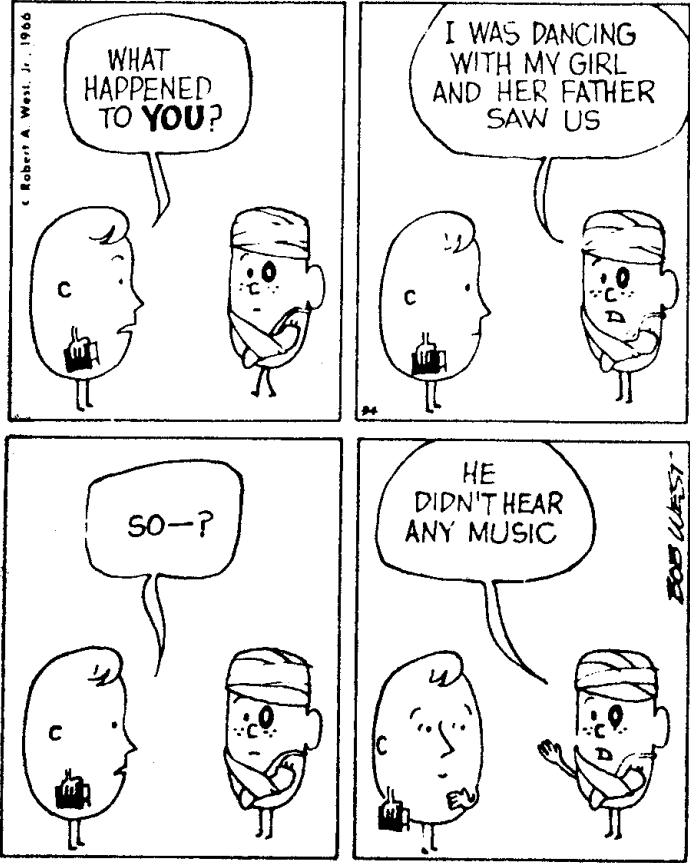
Therefore, we ask again: Does the Bible have anything to say on such a subject? Obviously the answer is in the affirmative. The Scriptures have spoken. Do we believe them?

Let us be emphatic to say that in the light of the

Scriptures (and human nature) it is very unseemly and improper for the Christian to engage in mixed-swimming; to wear so-called shorts, mini-dresses, and tight fitting or otherwise revealing clothes (anything that would exaggerate the body sexually).

Oh Christian, let us set an example for the people of the world instead of being intimidated by them. Let us not be careless (and insensitive) and conform to the mold of an ungodly world (Romans 12:2). Let us be spiritual enough and have backbone enough to stand up for that which is pure and holy.

This is the more spiritual concept.



### Decline of Ballroom Dancing

"...IN A RADIO INTERVIEW, the famous dancing instructor, Arthur Murray, was asked why there has been a decline in the popularity of ballroom dancing. His response confirmed what many believed for a long time. He said that since dancing is based on sex and since young people have few qualms about going ahead with sex relations, there is really no need now for dancing." This quotation simply confirms that the basic appeal of the dance is to fleshly passion.

—From *Dancing and Immorality*

### Get Into the Wheelbarrow!

YEARS AGO a strong wire was stretched across Niagara River, just above the roaring falls. It was announced that a tightrope walker would walk on the suspended wire from the American to the Canadian side.

The thrilling moment for the death-defying fete arrived. Great crowds watched with the wide-eyed won-

derment as the man performed, with calm deliberateness, the awesome stunt. The people cheered wildly! Then the performer did an even more daring thing. He began to push a wheelbarrow with a grooved wheel across the suspended wire. At the conclusion of this breath-taking performance, thunderous applause went up. The performer observed a boy whose wonderment was clearly discernible on his bright face. Asked the man, "My boy, do you believe that I could put you in this wheelbarrow and push you over the falls?" "Oh, yes," said the boy quickly. . . "Then, get in the wheelbarrow," said the man. Instantly the boy dashed away. In reality he did not believe that the tightrope walker could take him safely across the falls.

How like many of God's children was this boy! We say we believe in the power of Christ to pilot us safely "o'er life's tempestuous sea," yet we fail, at times, to utterly commit ourselves into His pierced hands.

—*Christian Companion*

### "Have You Seen a Christian?"

THE STORY is told of a lad who asked his dad, "What is a Christian?"

The father began to explain by enumerating the things he thought a Christian ought to be. He told the boy the Christian attended church every time the doors were opened; he read the Bible daily, prayed at every meal, had family prayer daily, gave at least a tithe (and more) to the Lord's work, was kind to everyone, helped those who were in trouble, never gossiped, and loved the Lord and His people more than anything else in the world.

The man was surprised to find he knew so much about what a Christian ought to be and do, and he felt he had answered his son quite well. The boy was silent for a moment, then responded in a perplexed and disturbed tone, "Daddy, have I ever seen a Christian?"

Often we do not live what we know and what we preach. Others can see what we are. What do they see?

—*Selected*

### The Truest Christianity

I SAW somewhere the other day a sentence like this: "The truest courtesy is the truest Christianity." This is not simply saying, I take it, that a Christian will be a gentleman. It teaches that the spirit of self-denial, or foregoing personal advantages for the sake of favoring another, is the root and substance of the regenerated life. Now, here is a practical test, brought near to us in all the scenes of our intercourse with our fellows, showing what manner of spirit we are of. If we are truly—that is sincerely—courteous and polite, we are serving Christ, showing his example, and exhibiting his spirit. If in the collisions of personal interests throughout the day we are more careful to favor ourselves, to secure the best, to be served first, than to gratify and serve others, I care not what names we bear, or what professions we make, or what religious exercises we engage in, the spirit of the Master is not in us.—*Selected*

### WHAT USED TO BE. . .

*What used to be called modesty is now called a sex hang-up. What used to be called Christian discipline is now called unhealthy repression. What used to be called disgusting is now called adult. What used to be called moral responsibility is now called neurotic inhibitions. What used to be called living in sin is now called a meaningful relationship. What used to be called perversion is now called alternate lifestyle. What used to be called depravity is now called self-expression. What used to be called an unborn baby is now called choice.*

—*Restoration Herald*

### Drinking of Wine in the Bible

A CORRECT understanding of wine in the Bible depends upon the meaning of the original words which are translated as “wine” in our English Bibles. There is not one but thirteen different words which are translated as “wine.” Nine of them are found in the Old Testament and four are found in the New Testament. The word “wine” to the twentieth century American mind conveys the idea of an intoxicating drink. Such does not necessarily inhere in the original words however. Passages such as Isaiah 65:8 where the grape still in the cluster on the vine is referred to as “wine” clearly show to the English reader that “wine” does not always mean that which inebriates.

A careful study of the passages where the word “wine” occurs will reveal that the word is used in three different ways: 1. Its use is condemned. (Genesis 9:20-21, 19:30-35; Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4; Daniel 1:8; Isaiah 5:22; 28:7; Habakkuk 2:15; etc.). 2. Its use is approved. (Genesis 14:18; Amos 9:14; Zechariah 10:7; etc.). 3. It is spoken of with indifference.

How can we reconcile this? If the Bible is true, it cannot contradict itself. How can wine be both condemned and approved? William Patton, in his informative work, *Bible Wines*, on page 75 quotes Professor Moses Stuart as follows: “Whenever the Scriptures speak of wine as a comfort, a blessing, or a libation to God, and rank it with such articles as corn and oil, they mean, they can only mean, such wine as contained no alcohol that could have mischievous tendency; that whenever they denounce it, and connect it with drunkenness and revelling, they can only mean alcoholic or intoxicating wine.”

“Wine” in the Bible is a generic term which can mean fermented wine (that which inebriates) or unfermented (that which cannot intoxicate). Non-intoxicating wine is recommended while intoxicating wine is condemned. Therefore, the drinking of alcohol for pleasure cannot be supported by the Word of God, but rather is condemned by it. Long ago the wise man warned, “Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).—*Sound Words* □

### Herald of Hope



### Lights in a Dark World

A PREACHER proclaims the Word of God in its truth and simplicity.

A teacher imparts Bible stories to a class of children and fills their minds with a reverence toward God.

People gather at a church building to worship the Lord, to edify one another, to instruct the unlearned, and to show forth the Lord’s death until He comes again.

The church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, seeks to reach every soul it can with the gospel of salvation.

Christians go about their work with dedication and commitment as serving the Lord and not men.

A godly mother graces her home with her skills in homemaking and her prudence and love as she guides her household.

A youth firmly resists temptation hurled at him by his peers.

A factory worker teaches the Bible to his fellow-workers during the lunch hour.

A family gathers in the evening time for a period of devotion, study and prayer.

A man helps his neighbor in time of need, and uses the opportunity to talk to him about his concern for the man’s soul.

A lady returns to a store to pay the amount she was undercharged and thereby shows the clerk that God desires that we all be absolutely honest.

In all things that we do, we may be an influence for righteousness and be as lights to the world for the sake of our Lord and for the sake of the influence that we may be in the redemption of souls our lives may touch.

# “He’s My Brother”

I AM SURE most of us have seen the picture of the young boy carrying another smaller boy and he is saying, “He’s not heavy, he’s my brother.” This scene has always had an emotional appeal since everyone recognizes that there is something special about brothers. However, I saw another cartoon recently which seems to reflect the attitude that brethren in Christ sometimes have toward one another. The cartoon opens with a picture of one little boy on top of another beating him unmercifully. Another child approaches and says, “Love your enemy.” The boy doing the beating replies, “He isn’t my enemy, he’s my brother.”

The moment I read that cartoon I thought about the attitude some brethren show toward one another. They, like the little boy in the cartoon, often treat their enemies with more love and compassion than they do their own brethren. Nearly any wrong or problem is quickly resolved if it involves a brother in Christ and instead of trying to resolve the matter we try to destroy the brother. This ought not to be.

Paul said, “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Galatians 5:15). What thoughts come to your mind when you say, “He’s my brother”?—*Words of Life* □

## Some Statements You Aren’t Likely to Hear

1. “Sunday is the only day we have to rest so we are not going water skiing this week.”
2. “No, it’s raining a little, we’ll not be going to the ball game.”
3. “The movies? No, we don’t get out at night much anymore.”
4. “I’ll not be coming to work for a few days because I don’t like the way things are run down at the office.”
5. “I can’t come to work. Company just came in from out of town.”
6. “If I make him go to the dentist he might develop a complex about the dentist when he is older.”
7. “I don’t know how long we will live in this town, so we won’t hook up the electricity.”—*Selected* □

## BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION

(1 Corinthians 3)

By JAMES E. GIBBONS

### Introduction:

1. Christ is the foundation. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:36; I Cor. 3:11)
2. Christ is the motive for building on the foundation. (John 12:32; I Cor. 2:2; Acts 20:7)
3. False motives in building: Preacher’s personality; entertainment; contests; sports; sensationalism; bag-of-tricks; etc.
4. These do not really build—just wood, hay and stubble. (I Cor. 3:4, 12-15)
5. What does it take to build an enduring work on the

solid foundation?

### I. IT TAKES THE WORD!

- A. What This Word Is. (John 1:1-2; II Tim. 3:16, 17)
- B. What This Word Can Do. (John 12:32; Heb. 4:12; James 1:21; John 17:17; Romans 12:1, 2)
- C. How This Word Must Be Used. (Rom. 10:17; II Tim. 2:15; Eph. 6:17; II Tim. 4:1-5)

### II. IT TAKES WORK!

- A. There is No Substitute for Work (James 2:26)
- B. Those Who Are to Work. (Eph. 4:11, 16; Phil. 1:1)
- C. How We Are to Work. (Eph. 6:15; Acts 8:4; Heb. 10:25; Matt. 5:16)

### III. IT TAKES PRAYER!

- A. Church Born in Prayer Meeting. (Acts 1:13, 14; 2:41, 42; 4:31)
- B. Preaching and Prayer Cannot be Parted. (Acts 6:3, 4; Rom. 10:1)
- C. All Are to Pray for the Work. (Matt. 9:37, 38; etc.)

### Conclusion:

1. It took centuries for God to complete His revelation to men—Are we willing to take the time to study His Word and use it?
2. It wasn’t easy for God’s only begotten Son to go to the old rugged cross—Are we willing to pay the price of self-crucifixion and get to work?
3. It takes determination and effort to humble ourselves and spend much time on our knees in prayer—Are we willing to at least do this?
4. Paul said: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” (I Cor. 3:6)
5. Let us build “gold, silver, and precious stones” (true converts) on the foundation of Christ and not “wood, hay and stubble” which will be burned by fire!

## Faithful to His Duty

“OPEN the gate, my boy,” said the rider who was at the head of the hunting party. “I’m sorry, sir,” answered the boy, “But my father sent me to say that you must not hunt on these grounds.”

“Do you know who I am?” demanded the stranger gruffly. “No, sir,” answered the boy.

“I am the Duke of Wellington.”

The boy took off his cap to the great man but he did not open the gate. “The Duke of Wellington will not ask me to disobey my father’s instructions.”

Slowly the man took off his hat and smiled. “I honor the boy who is faithful to his duty,” said the great man as he and his party rode away.

Are we as faithful as this boy to our heavenly Father regardless with whom we are dealing? □

## What Pap Says

WHEN Pap saw a car or truck pulling a boat, he would say, “There’s someone looking for water.” When we see those who are pulling boats on Sunday it brings to mind the rich man in hell who wanted water touched to his tongue. Let’s hope that we all put Christ first in our lives so that we will not be looking for water on the day of judgment.—*Selected* □

## THE DEVIL TO PAY

When Adam and Eve in the Garden walked  
In the cool of the evening with God and talked,  
They needed for nothing. Perfection was there—  
No labor, no sorrow, no pain, and no care;  
But the Serpent was subtle, and caused them to doubt  
The Word of the Lord, and they went about  
Ashamed and sorrowful. Quickly they made  
Garments of fig leaves. They could have prayed  
For pardon, for great was the love of the Lord.  
They trusted themselves, and a flaming sword  
Kept them away from the Tree of Life,  
And the beautiful Garden. Sorrow and strife  
Was the lot of the sinners, and even today  
Willful ones have the Devil to pay.

By Alta McLain

## Ten Most Wanted Men

1. The man who puts God's business above any other business.
2. The man who brings his children to church rather than sending them.
3. The man who is willing to be the right example to every boy he meets.
4. The man who thinks more of Bible class on Sunday than his Sunday sleep.
5. The man who measures his giving by what he has left, rather than by the amount he gives.
6. The man who goes to church for Christ's sake rather than for himself or for someone else.
7. The man who has a willing mind rather than a brilliant mind.
8. The man who has a passion to help rather than a passion to be helped.
9. The man who can see his own faults before he sees the faults of others.
10. The man who is more concerned about winning others for Christ than he is about winning worldly honor.—*Selected* □

## A Beautiful Way to Live

LIFE IS a brittle thread; brief, fleeting. You may not like my saying this, but we are all becoming old men and women. What I am concerned about is what KIND of old man I will become if I live to see that day. I know a number of good and pleasant, kind and loving elderly people. But I've lived just long enough to know the bitter, the cynical, the disillusioned—older people who are soured on the world. This is the kind of old man I don't want to be. But I also know that what I am today is only a projection of what I will be tomorrow. If I only live for self, I can only become smaller, more selfish, and likely, more crabby and hard to live with in old age. I can't expect to be too much different tomorrow than I am today. Here is yet another reason to read God's Word. It is a beautiful book describing a beautiful way to live. We need to live it today, so we can be loved tomorrow.—*Selected* □

## Our Most Dangerous Explosion



## UNMARRIED COUPLES

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS recently released a report concerning the rising number of unmarried couples in the United States. The report, released by the Census Bureau contained the following information:

1. "The number of unmarried couples in America has topped 23 million, including more than 700,000 couples who are raising children.
2. "There are more than 1.5 million couples of the same sex living together, including 92,000 with children."
3. "Among children under 18 nearly one in four (23.9 percent) lived with just one parent up from 23.5 percent in 1985."
4. "There were 130 divorced Americans for every 1,000 still married and living with their spouse."
5. "Of the 1987 unmarried couples, 1,412,000 listed a man as the householder—formerly known as the head of the household. Of those, 395,000 households included children."

The crisis in the American family is epidemic. Bible teaching on the family is being ignored. How many families do you know that are composed of a bread-winning father, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8); a woman who is a "keeper at home" (Titus 2:4,5); and children, "Lo, children are an heritage of Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. . . happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalms 127:3-5)? The Bible roles for the man and the woman



are being rejected in our society and in the Church!

How long can a nation survive that (1) continues to take lightly the marriage commitment, (2) produces a generation of shiftless, unambitious men who refuse to work to provide for their families, (3) encourages women to leave the home to find "self-fulfillment," (4) has shunned the producing of children and chosen the almighty dollar instead, and (5) has left the raising of children to television, the day care center, a babysitter, or the grandparents? Yes, my friend, we live in perilous times!—*Glenn Seaton* □

## WHO GETS ABORTIONS?

A STATISTICAL SURVEY conducted by the Alan Guttmacher Institute of 9,480 women who had abortions in 1987 contained the following information:

The marital status of those getting abortions was 63.3% never married, 18.5% married, and 17.2% (divorced, widowed, or separated). The leading age group of those getting abortions were those aged 20-24 (33.1%). The age group 25-29 accounted for 22.3%. Ages 15-19 accounted for 24.6% of abortions. Income breakdown was even, approximately 33% in low, middle, and upper income classes. Religiously, the breakdown was Protestant (41.9%), Catholic (31.5%), Jewish (1.4%), No religion (22.2%). Other (2.9%). Racially, 68.6% of those getting an abortion were white, and 31.4 non-white.

### A Composite Picture

If I have read the statistics correctly, the *average* composite picture of an individual getting an abortion would be as follows: white, never married, religious (Protestant or Catholic), and about 22 years of age.

### The Issue

My conclusion is that abortion is not about "rights," "choices," "sick women who must have an abortion or lose their life," or even "invasion of privacy." Abortion is basically a solution (?) for fornicators. It is no wonder the babe (this is what the Bible calls it, not a "fetus," see Luke 1:41) is so easily ripped from the womb and destroyed. The babe was never wanted, was conceived without love or commitment, and brought life in an act of lust and not love by a "religious" person. When a person has gone this far away from God, buying a "surgical procedure" to destroy life, to cover sin, and erase unwanted obligations is not such a great leap. Positive words like "rights" and "choices" give a ring of decency to a hideous crime.

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8, NAS).

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalms 127:3).

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).—*Glenn Seaton* □

## No Excuses for Excuses

I ONCE HEARD this interesting definition of excuses: "Excuses are the tools with which persons with no purpose in view build for themselves great monuments of nothing."

Perhaps you have heard—or used—one or more of these excuses: "I'm too old."—"I'm too young."—"I'm handicapped."—"I'm in poor health."—"I don't have enough education."—"I don't have enough time."—"I'm just not lucky."—"I'm too short."—"I'm too tall."—"My parents didn't love me."—"I was born on the wrong side of the tracks."

Ponder the challenge of Elbert Hubbard: "Don't make excuses; make good!"

Consider the wisdom of Rudyard Kipling: "We have forty million reasons for failure, but not a single excuse."

Think soberly on the words of Benjamin Franklin: "He that is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else."

Have you ever known a truly successful person who was adept at making excuses?

Have you ever known a failure who was not an expert excuse maker?

The successful person is too busy to make excuses. The failure uses excuses for crutches, as coverups for lack of effort, for shortage of persistence, and for an absence of enthusiasm.

Helen Keller had many reasons to make excuses, but she was too busy for such exercises in self-pity.

Abraham Lincoln could have excused himself because of his ungainly appearance, poor background and seeming lack of opportunities, but he was too wise for that kind of nonsense. Lincoln's self-respect left no room for excuses.

Refuse to build for yourself great monuments of nothing; rather, use the tools at hand and build for yourself—and for posterity—lasting monuments of achievement, service and success.—*Wm. Arthur Ward*

## Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. A letter, *epistle* (*epi-stello*, upon to send);
2. 21 epistles (14 called Pauline epistles, and 7 General epistles);
3. I and II Thessalonians, Corinth;
4. Ephesus (I Corinthians 16:7,8);
5. Corinth (Romans 15:23—I Corinthians 1:14; Romans 16:1);
6. Phoebe (Romans 16:1,2);
7. Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians;
8. Philemon;
9. Colossians and Ephesians;
10. Tychicus and Onesimus (Colossians 4:7-9);
11. Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21,22; he was from Asia, Acts 20:4);
12. Philippians;
13. I and II Timothy, and Titus;
14. Hebrews and I John;
15. James and Jude;
16. Acts 15:23-29 and Acts 23:26-30;
17. Revelation (chapters 2 and 3);
18. I and II Thessalonians;
19. I and II Corinthians;
20. Galatians;
21. Hebrews;
22. II Timothy (4:6-8);
23. The Corinthians (I Corinthians 5:9-11) and the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16);
24. Apollos (Acts 18:24-27);
25. The Corinthians (II Corinthians 3:1-3).

# Now Ready!

## The **Sword AND Staff**

"Preach the Word" (1 Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (1 Peter 5:2)



James E. Gibbons—Editor

★ ★ ★

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Say, what is the gospel according to you? —*Selected*

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## Negative Material —A Positive Solution—

**PERHAPS** this issue of *The Sword and Staff* contains much material of a negative nature. Sometimes it takes a little negative preaching to combat a little negative living (contrary to modern thought along this line). But all negative teaching should serve to point out the need of a positive solution. Paul said that where sin did abound grace did much more abound. The positive answer to the negative problem (sin problem) is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look to him.

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