

# The Sword AND Staff

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

## THE GOOD AND WHOLESOME INFLUENCE OF THE FEAR OF GOD UPON OUR LIVES



"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE  
BEGINNING OF WISDOM: A GOOD  
UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY  
THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS:  
HIS PRAISE ENDURETH FOR EVER"  
—Psalms 111:10.

—By JAMES E. GIBBONS—

1535 Fairfield Drive—Mount Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

IN THE TIMES in which we live, an imbalanced and an inordinate emphasis placed on the love of God has left the fear of God out of most modern religion. The God that is worshipped is not the All Holy Omnipotent God of Eternity that we read about in the Bible but is like a weak and doting old man off somewhere in the sky that no one has much respect for anymore. To His finite (and wayward) creation He is a pushover. The expression "God-fearing" is not one that is commonly used in describing Christians in our day.

Contrary to what is commonly thought (and taught),

the New Testament has much to say about the fear of God. Listen to the writer of the book of Hebrews: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with *reverence and godly fear*: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28,29). The apostle Peter admonished in I Peter 1:14-17, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (all your conduct); Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in *fear*." Then in a more general statement (yet specific), Peter further admonishes, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. *Fear God*. Honour the king" (I Peter 2:17).

There is every reason that mankind generally should fear God. Just think who God is (and think who we are and are not). God is the Eternal Self-Existent One, the Almighty Creator. Out of nothing He brought everything into being, and everything is under His control (and "in him we live, and move, and have our being," Acts 17:28a). God is Perfection (He is All Holy). We are not, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). After Adam and Eve had sinned, Adam's response to God was, "I was *afraid*, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10). Because of their sin, they had to die. And, generally speaking, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but (and) after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:11,12). Yes, in a moment death can take any of us away from here to face the God who made us. The Lord Jesus, talking to his disciples, said, "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they

(Continued on Page 4)

**THE SWORD AND STAFF**  
Post Office Box 147  
Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.

**INFORMATION:**

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

## Proverbially SPEAKING...

*IF YOU THINK that you are too big to do little things, you are probably too little to be trusted with big ones.*

*"When the truth is in your way, you are on the wrong road."*

*It is good to know all that you say, but it is not usually good to say all that you know.*

*"Keep an open mind, but don't keep it too open or people will throw a lot of rubbish into it."*

*Strong preaching (which is strong in a paranoid sort of way) will draw weak people (who are weak in a paranoid sort of way) to take their stand religiously in a paranoid sort of way.*

*"Only in giving of oneself is enough taken away to make room for receiving more."*

*People don't care what you believe until they believe that you care.*

*"What are you doing while the Lord's work goes undone?"*

*There is something fishy going on when churches aren't fishing for men..*

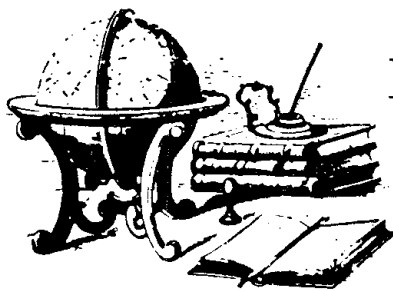
*"Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal."*

*The servant nearest to the throne of God must the more humbly bow himself.*

*"True merit, like a river, the deeper it is the less noise it makes."*

*Many times immature and insecure Christians, making an effort to appear strong, come through as self-righteous.*

*"Life is fragile; handle with prayer."*



## EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

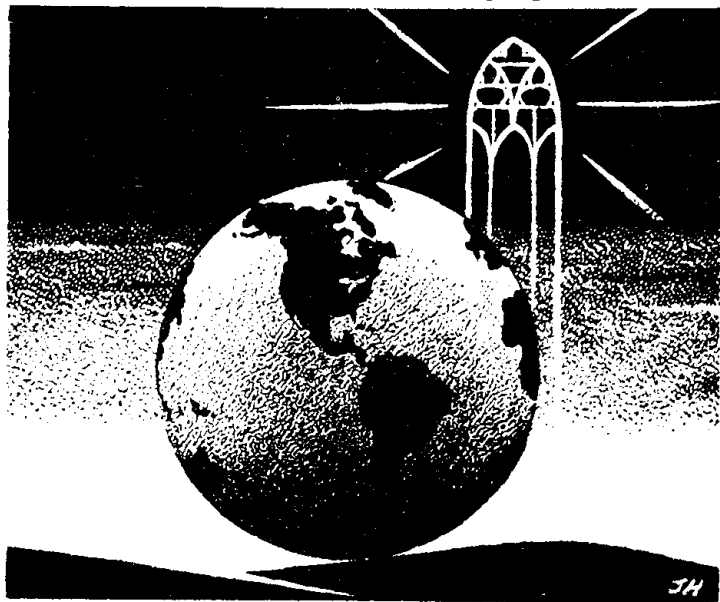
### THE BOTTOM LINE TO SIN, DISOBEDIENCE, AND OBEDIENCE

■ *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before thee. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. . ."*

—*Psalms 51:1-4.*

**THE HISTORICAL SETTING** of this (and the whole 51st Psalm) is the sin of adultery David committed with Bathsheba and ultimately, his repentance. The entire picture of this episode is very complex. While David's men were at the battlefront, he "tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass at evening-tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon" (II Samuel 11:1ff). To make a long story short, lust having conceived in his heart (James 1:15; Matthew 5:28), David commits the awful sin of adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. When it is found that Bathsheba is with child from this illicit relationship, her husband is called home from the battlefront. Obviously David's thought is that Uriah will go in to be with Bathsheba, his wife, and that in their being together it will appear that Uriah is the father of the expectant child. But Uriah would not go in to be with his wife, sleeping at the door of the king's house. Uriah was a devoted soldier. When David questioned him as to why he didn't go to his own house, we read, "And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." With an extended stay in Jerusalem David was responsible for getting Uriah drunk, hoping that he would go home to his own bed and wife. But he wouldn't go. So David sent Uriah back to the battlefront with a letter to his general Joab, "And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die." And this is just exactly what happened. This is reported to David. After Bathsheba mourned for her husband, David takes her to himself to be his own wife. Whereupon the prophet Nathan approached David with a parable (II Samuel 12:1ff) whereby David condemns himself. David, responding to the injustice portrayed in the parable, angrily replied, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. . . And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man." David was told and made acutely aware of the awfulness of his sin and its far-reaching consequence. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord." Now read all of the 51st Psalm.

David's sin turned out to be multiple and complex (as sin so often is). He not only had committed the sin of adultery, but he was guilty of getting Uriah drunk (cf. Habakkuk 2:15, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunk also..."), and murder. Didn't the prophet Nathan



## HABAKKUK 2:20

The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

say to David, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon" (II Samuel 12:9).

The sin of adultery is actually a multiple sin within itself. In the book of Genesis, Potiphar's wife had an unwholesome fixation upon the handsome young Hebrew, Joseph. "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth (knows) not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:7ff). Obviously Joseph would have sinned against Potiphar, as well as sinning against the Lord. The apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 6:18, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without (outside) the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." In adultery a person sins against his own body, he sins against

the body of the one with whom he is illicitly joined, and he sins against the mate of the one with whom he is joined (as Joseph would have sinned against Potiphar)—and he sins against his own mate if he has one. If he has children, or his illicit partner has children, he sins against them. He sins against all unborn children that will ever issue from his "seed" (including their children, etc.).

But in spite of the multiple guilt associated with adultery, David did not hesitate to say in Psalms 51:4, "Against thee (GOD), thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." And Joseph did not hesitate to say (almost singularly), "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

This is the bottom line to all disobedience and guilt. It is so awful because we have sinned against God. That is where the enormity is. God made us; He brought us into being. We are made in His very image and likeness. Therefore, the law of Moses gave this commandment of God: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15). The apostle Paul wrote, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1). Having been made in the image of God, we are to be like Him. His character is the law of the universe. To deviate from this is sin.

All sin primarily and basically is against God. Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin cuts right at the heart of the very purpose of the Eternal God and brings reproach upon His Holy Name. It is such an affront to Him that He can be looked upon as the primary injured party.

This is the bottom line to sin, disobedience and obedience. To experience genuine repentance, and the consequent forsaking of sin, we must be convicted of its awfulness from this perspective. It cannot be done simply to please parents, a wife, a husband, or anyone else. We must be heartbroken because we have injured God—the God who made us; the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being; the God who will one day judge us (Romans 14:11,12). "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." □

## The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us

- He was light coming into a world of darkness.
- He was love coming into a world of hate.
- He was life coming into a world of corruption.
- He was peace coming into a world of strife.
- He was bread coming into a world of hunger.
- He was water coming into a world of thirst.
- He was righteousness coming into a world of sin.
- He was hope coming into a world of defeat.
- He was God coming into a world of humanity.

# THE GOOD AND WHOLESOME INFLUENCE OF THE FEAR OF GOD UPON OUR LIVES *(Continued from Page 1)*

can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: *Fear him* which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, *Fear him*" (Luke 12:4,5).

In the Bible when people had a personal encounter with God, it almost always was an experience that involved fear. This makes us wonder about the flippant and casual attitude many have toward God today. There is something wrong somewhere, it seems. Do people today respect God as God?

We are all familiar with Jacob's ladder (aren't we?). As he dreamed, he saw angels ascending and descending the ladder with God at the top and himself at the bottom. God spoke to him reassuring him of the promises made to Abraham. What was the reaction of Jacob? "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was *afraid*, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is no other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:10-17). Read of God appearing to Moses, and speaking to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6). Was this a casual experience to him? He was told, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Then we read, "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was *afraid* to look upon God." At the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ (and his appearance was changed), "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." How did Peter, James, and John react? "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were *sore afraid*" (Matthew 17:1-9). Then when the women came to the tomb of Jesus that resurrection morn, the angel knew what to expect of these mortals, so he prepared them by saying, "Fear not ye." Although reassured, we read, "And they departed from the sepulchre with *fear* and great joy; and did run and bring his disciples word" (Matthew 28:1-8). Fear seems to be the natural, and expected, reaction of the human to the divine (to the supernatural). Illustration after illustration could be multiplied from the Scriptures to further verify this.

However, to get a better understanding of this matter of fearing God (from the New Testament perspective), there are certain New Testament Scriptures that must be taken into consideration. They modify and qualify. Yes, the primary Greek word for fear is *phobos* (noun), or *phobeo* (verb), from which we get our English word phobia, and it does signify fear and fright. But the apostle John wrote, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in the world. There is *no fear* in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:16b-18). Obviously John, as he writes about fear, and the

other New Testament writers have different things in mind. The blending of the love of God with the fear of God produces a modified and wholesome kind of fear, as attested to by the other New Testament writers, which John does not have in mind here. As committed Christians in the context of the grace of God (because our sins are forgiven, and Christ has conquered death), we do not fear death nor do we fear the judgment. The Hebrews writer tells how that Jesus became flesh and blood "that through death he might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through *fear of death* were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14,15). We are no longer slaves to sin (nor are we in bondage to the law), "For ye (we) have not received the spirit of bondage again to *fear*; but ye (we) have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). The fear that we now have is not that of a slave, but rather that of a child who cries out to his father. It is not a dread involving disobedience as much as it is a deep respect and reverence in wanting to please our heavenly Father. As someone has said, "Fear should act as a deterrent with love as the incentive. When love is present, the fear will be that of a child who fears to offend; when love is absent, the fear ought to be at least that of a slave, the dread of punishment. When that, too, disappears" all restraint is gone. The apostle Peter appeals to his readers "as obedient children" to be like their Father in heaven who is holy, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in *fear*" (I Peter 1:14-17).

Yes, the fear of God, conditioned by the love and grace of God, brings us into a position of deep respect and a personal awareness of the ever presence of this Almighty God that we wish to please in all things. In this article we want to call your attention to some ways in which this fear of God should be realized in our lives in a good and wholesome way.

## I. THE FEAR OF GOD BRINGS (AND KEEPS) US IN THE MERCY OF GOD

This is evident from the following Scriptures.

Mary (the expectant mother of Jesus), in her praise and thanksgiving to God as she visited her cousin Elisabeth, eloquently said (among other things), "And his mercy is on them that *fear him* from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50). In Revelation 14:6 and 7 the angel was to preach the everlasting gospel "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (evidently not a literal angel, for preaching the gospel is not the work of angels—II Corinthians 4:7). He was to preach with a loud voice, "*Fear God*, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." We read of the apostle Peter's important mission (Acts 10) of going to the household of Cornelius with the gospel (who became the first Gentile converts to Christianity). Specifically, we read, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that *feareth him*, and worketh righteousness, is ac-

cepted with him” (Acts 10:34,35).

Even in the Old Testament some choice verses can be found that couple the fear of God with the mercy of God. Psalms 103:13 reads, “Like a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that *fear him*.” Then, “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that *fear him*, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them” (Psalms 103:17,18). And these crowning words are found in Psalms 147:11, “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that *fear him*, in those that hope in his mercy.” How expressive (and how impressive)!

**IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE**



The Gentile Cornelius was told by Peter (of God), “But in every nation he that *feareth him*, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35). First, there must be that deep personal awareness that God is, and that we must give account of ourselves to Him—for “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). The fear of God, which is evidenced in our being brought under conviction of our sins, culminates in our wanting to be right with God. Logically following the beatitudes on being “poor in spirit,” mourning, and being “meek,” Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). The apostle Paul wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9). Then, almost as a supplement to this Scripture, we read Titus 3:5, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Spirit).” (Although man cannot be righteous enough to save himself—human righteousness cannot take away sin, it is necessary for the Christian to do right for “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” I Corinthians 6:9). Although Jesus had no sin, he insisted that John baptize him, saying, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). In other words, it was the right thing to do. And, unlike Jesus, we must do it to have our sins washed away by his blood (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Revelation 1:5). We are saved from the wrath of God through the love of God, and the fear of God brings us into the mercy of God. (Read Galatians 3:27, and Romans chapters 6 and 8). How wonderful!

**II. THE FEAR OF GOD HAS A PURIFYING INFLUENCE UPON OUR LIVES**

In Romans chapter 3:9-18 the apostle Paul, using various quotations from the Psalms and the book of Isaiah, paints a very unseemly picture of the universal sinfulness of man. Men were unrighteous, wicked, and ungodly. What is Paul’s conclusion about man being in this state? Why are men this way? In verse 18 he tells us: “There is no *fear of God* before their eyes.” There is a definite relationship between the fear of God and how we live. Back in the book of Genesis when Abraham came to dwell in the land of Canaan, at different times he was disposed to be deceptive about Sarah being his wife. She was a beautiful woman. He explained his actions to the disgruntled Abimelech by saying, “Because I thought, Surely the *fear of God* is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake” (Genesis 20:11). When the children of Israel were later enslaved down in the land of Egypt, and Pharaoh wanted the midwives to kill all of the newborn male Hebrew babies, the midwives wouldn’t comply. Why? “But the midwives *feared God*, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive” (Exodus 1:17). (And would to God that some of these doctors in our land today had a little of the fear of God in them, and that they would refrain from murdering the unborn through abortion!). There is a decided relationship between the fear of God in our lives and how we live (what we do). It has a purifying impact upon us to do right. Moses spoke to the children of Israel encamped at Mount Sinai, “Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that *his fear* may be before your faces, that ye sin not” (Exodus 20:20). The writer of Proverbs 3:7 admonished, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.”

What is said of Cornelius in Acts 10 is typical of men who learn to fear God (and of other Gentiles seeking God in that day). “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band (regiment) called the Italian band (Regiment); A devout man, and one that *feared God* with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway” (Acts 10:1,2). While stationed with the Roman army in Palestine, this military man had found that the Jewish religion was superior to anything his Roman paganism had to offer. Like another Roman

(Continued on Next Page)

# THE GOOD AND WHOLESOME INFLUENCE OF THE FEAR OF GOD UPON OUR LIVES (Cont. from Last Page)

centurion (Luke 7:1-10), it prompted him to seek after the true God (and God honored him to be the first out-right Gentile convert to Christianity). His servants and the soldier who had come to seek out the apostle Peter described him as, "Cornelius the centurion, a just (righteous) man, and one that *feareth God*, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews" (Acts 10:22). When the apostle Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia (on the first evangelist tour), he addressed his audience in the Jewish synagogue as, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God" (Acts 13:16). He further appeals to them in 13:26 by saying, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God." The dual nature of the group that Paul has been speaking to is brought out in 13:43, "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas. . ." Around the perimeter of many of the synagogues of the Jews in the world of the Gentiles was a dedicated cluster of God-fearing Gentiles who were seeking or had forsaken paganism for the pure worship of the true God. Some were proselytes, and others were on the verge of becoming proselytes (proselytes at the gate). They are called "God-fearing" in contrast with their countrymen (and their lives were changed as a result of this). They are called "devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city" (13:50). When Paul and Silas preached in the synagogue at Thessalonica of Macedonia, some of the Jews believed and "of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts 17:4). When they preached in the synagogue at Berea, we read, "Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" (17:12). Paul used the same approach when he first came to Athens, "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue of the Jews, and with the devout persons..." (17:17). These Gentiles who already had the fear of God in their lives, and were experiencing its godly influence, were ready-made prospects for conversion to Christ.

The words used to describe God-fearing people (whether Gentiles, Jews, or Christians) are very revealing. Among other things, they are called devout and godly, while that which they practice is godliness. All of these words overlap in their meaning. There are three words translated "devout" (KJV). First, let us notice (1) *seboumai*, which literally means to feel awe or fear; to stand in awe (Acts 13:50; 17:4,17 illustrate the use of this word "devout" applied to proselytes); next, (2) *eusebes*, which contains the root of the word just given plus the prefix *eu-* (which signifies good); therefore, this word means a good and wholesome fear (a "devout" person is one who is practicing this). This word is used to describe Cornelius, one of his soldiers, and Ananias who came to baptize Paul (Acts 10:2,7; 22:12). The words translated "godly" and "godliness" come from this same root word in the Greek (these words describing the character and conduct of the person controlled by such a good and wholesome fear of

God). The other word translated "devout" is (3) *eulabes* and is found in Luke 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2 (for example). This word literally means to take hold of carefully. A person who fears God is very careful to do that which is right. A mental picture comes to mind of an electrician. Out of much respect for electricity he is very careful with the wires as he works with them; he takes hold of them very carefully. According to the basic definition of the Greek word, he would be devout. God-fearing people are very careful about everything in their lives because they want to please God. A variation of this word translated "devout" is rendered "moved with fear" (Hebrews 11:7) and "godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Yes, the fear of God has a profound and purifying influence upon our lives.

Yes, the Scriptures abound in verifying that what we are trying to say is true. Psalms 19:9 reads, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." In the early days of the church in Jerusalem God brought instantaneous judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira for their hypocrisy as they were stricken dead (Acts 5:1-14). He did not want His infant church spotted, and for time and eternity we can see what God thinks of such sin. What was the immediate impression upon the church? "And great fear came upon the church, and upon as many as heard these things" (5:11). The fear of God had the desired purifying effect upon them, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (5:14). The evangelist Timothy was to rebuke sinning elders that others would fear (I Timothy 5:19,20). The element of fear was involved in the Corinthians being urged into a life of holiness and clean living. Listen: "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). Paul admonished Christian women to adorn themselves in "modest apparel," not being like the women of the world, for they were "women professing godliness" (I Timothy 2:9,10). And, as we said, this word "godliness" has reference to the restrained life governed by the influence of the good and wholesome fear of God. God-fearing women should (and will) dress differently from the vain and licentious women of this world. The fear of God has a most purifying effect upon us anyway you choose to look at it.

## III. THE FEAR OF GOD PRODUCES UNITY AND HARMONY AMONG PEOPLE

Generally speaking, the fear of God will be in evidence in our relationships with other people. In the parable of the unjust judge presented in Luke 18, this unjust judge had no personal regard for his fellow man. Jesus began this parable by saying, "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man" (Luke 18:2). Obviously the fear and respect a person has for God will determine his respect for his fellow man (how he will regard and treat him). Paul exhorted in Philippians 4:5, "Let your moderation (gentleness, forbearance) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." There is a relationship between how we treat other people and the possibility of the Lord's im-



mediate return. The Lord had something to say about this in Matthew 24:48-51. We will be held accountable; there is a day of judgment coming. This should be kept in mind. Consequently, we are instructed in Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the *fear of God*." The fear of God tends to produce unity and harmony among people.

This was evident in the early days of the church. Jesus had promised during his ministry in Mark 9:1, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." The fulfillment of this is recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Here we have the beginning of the church and the supernatural phenomena surrounding its inception. God was very real to these people. Following the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the inspired preaching of the apostle Peter, we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And *fear* came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common. . . And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:41-46). God was real to them, "And *fear* came upon every soul. . ." What harmony, unity, and oneness this produced!

If the fear of God produced the unity and harmony in the early church, what must be said about situations today involving church squabbles, splits, and divisions? Surely God must not be very real to people taken up in this ("God is not the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the churches of the saints," I Corinthians 14:33). As the apostle Paul said in another context, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." And didn't this same inspired man also say, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14)? And what about the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:36 and 37? Then we are confronted with the shameful denominational mess in which the religious world finds itself today! Would not a genuine fear of God (as experienced by the early church) move men to forsake the divisions of denominationalism, along with their traditions and doctrines of men, to return to the practice of the unity and harmony of the one church found in the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:1-6)? Is God no longer real to us? Do we think that we are not going to be held accountable? Where is the fear of God?

**IV. THE FEAR OF GOD HAS A BEARING UPON OUR TEACHING AND PREACHING**

The apostle Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:10 (and 11), "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror (*phobos*, fear) of the Lord, we persuade men. . ." The awful,

dreadful, and fearful prospects of people coming to the final judgment unprepared was a great motivating factor in the preaching of Paul. No doubt he had this in mind, as well as the solemn responsibility of the preacher, when he gave Timothy his farewell charge in II Timothy 4:1-5, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; and after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of (fulfill) thy ministry." Timothy was made aware of the seriousness of this charge as heaven was called upon to witness it (and in view of the coming day of judgment). This should have produced fear and reverence in Timothy's heart. Let us never forget. Preaching is a serious business.

When Christians were called upon to speak up for Christ by their persecutors, Peter tells them how to do it. Listen: "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with *meekness and fear*" (I Peter 3:14,15). Peter tells them not to fear (be afraid), then he tells them to speak "with meekness and fear." What does he mean? They were not to fear man, but they were to fear God as they gave their apologia for the faith (even as the fear of God should be in the heart of every preacher and teacher of the gospel). Man is not to be feared, but as Isaiah said long ago, "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:13).

The false teacher stands in contrast with the faithful man of God who stands before men to faithfully represent heaven with a holy fear in his heart. Jude had much to say about these false prophets and teachers, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core (Korah)," etc. (Jude 11). Then he said they moved among them "without fear."

**V. THE FEAR OF GOD HAS A BEARING UPON US BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD**

After the conversion of Saul (the apostle Paul), we read, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the *fear of the Lord*, and comfort of the Holy Ghost (Spirit) were multiplied" (Acts 9:31). The expression "walk" throughout the Bible has reference to our way of living (i.e., Ephesians 4:1; I John 2:6, etc.). The lives of Christians are to be lived continually under the good and wholesome influence of the fear of God. It has a bearing upon us being faithful. The admonition of the apostle Peter in I Peter 1:17 had this in mind: "And

(Continued on Page 10)

# Did the Coach Know More Than the Preacher? Does This Sound Like the Bible? What about Repentance? Read Titus 2:11-14.

**TELEVISION PREACHER** Robert Schuller tells of meeting University of Alabama football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant (1913-1983) on an airplane. Schuller told him, "It's always good to meet another good Christian," but Bryant answered, "I don't know about that. I'm not sure I am a Christian. . . I've talked to Billy Graham and Oral Roberts, and I never get the feeling. And I'm talking to you, and I don't get no feeling. Shouldn't I get the feeling?" Bryant went on to explain that he did not believe himself to be a Christian because he drank alcohol, smoked tobacco, and did not believe everything taught in the Bible. Schuller responded, "A Christian is someone who puts his faith in Jesus Christ, not in his own good works. You've got sins. I've got sins. I've never met a Christian who was perfect." Schuller then took Bryant's boarding pass and wrote John 6:37 on it ("He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out") along with the statement, "I believe this and I accept Christ today as my savior." The T.V. preacher told Bryant he would have the full assurance of salvation if only he would sign below the statement. Coach Bryant signed it and said, "I'll trust that's my ticket to heaven." This story was told by Schuller on a broadcast a few months later, repeated by him at a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Cullman, Alabama, and reported under the headline, "COACH BRYANT SIGNED 'TICKET TO HEAVEN'" in the *Decatur Daily* (March 8, 1989, page 1).—*Torch* □

## Two Frogs in A Bucket

**LET ME TELL** you about two frogs who jumped into a bucket of cream on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. "May as well give up," croaked one after trying in vain to get out. "We're goners!"

"Keep on paddling," said the other frog. "We'll get out of this mess somehow!"

"It's no use," said the first. "Too thick to swim. Too thin to jump. Too slippery to crawl. We're bound to die sometime anyway, so it may as well be tonight." He sank to the bottom of the bucket and died.

His friend just kept on paddling, and paddling, and paddling. And by morning he was perched on a mass of butter which he had churned all by himself. There he was, with a grin on his face, eating the flies that came swarming from every direction.

That little frog had discovered what most folks ignore: if you stick with the task long enough, you're going to be a winner.—*Selected* □

## Can You Imagine?

**IMAGINE** someone going to see a marvelous work of art, then. . . going close to the canvas to examine it down in one corner with a magnifying glass. . . trying to see if there might be some little speck on it

somewhere! This is the way some people view the Bible. They stumble at some little thing they don't understand—and they miss the great masterpiece!

—*Clyde M. Narramore*

## BIBLE QUESTIONS (over the apostle Paul)

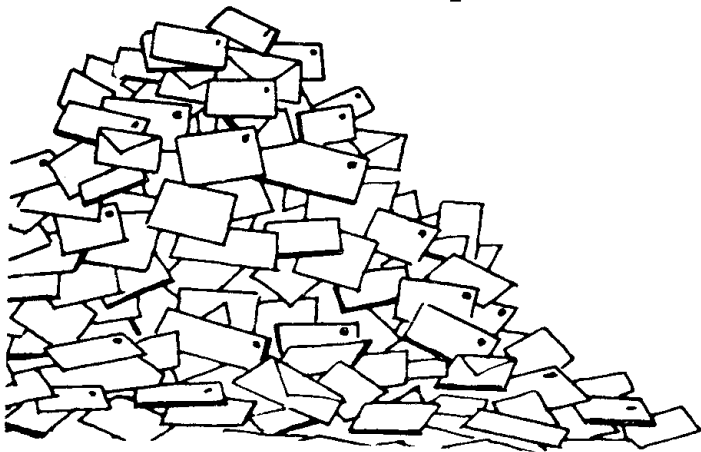
1. Where was Paul born, and of what tribe of Israel was he?
2. From whom did Paul receive his early education, and of what Jewish sect had he been a member?
3. Where in the book of Acts, and under what circumstance, are we first introduced to this man Paul?
4. In what three chapters in the book of Acts do we find a record of the conversion of Paul?
5. What was Paul's purpose in going to Damascus when the Lord appeared to him in the heavenly light?
6. Why did the Lord appear to Paul on the road to Damascus?
7. Although Paul had been praying the three days he was without sight, what did Ananias (who had been sent by the Lord) say to him about his sins?
8. Where did Paul go the first three years after his conversion to Christ?
9. When others at Jerusalem were afraid of Paul, who believed that his conversion was genuine and brought him to the other apostles?
10. With what local church did Paul have a vital relationship as he was sent out becoming the great apostle to the Gentiles?
11. Who was Paul's companion on his first preaching tour? the second preaching tour?
12. Where in the book of Acts (place and circumstance) was Paul's Gentile name (Paul) first used and his Jewish name (Saul) no longer used thereafter?
13. Once where was Paul stoned and left for dead?
14. Who accompanied Paul on his first preaching trip into what is modern day Europe (at Philippi in Macedonia of Greece)?
15. What three times was reference made to Paul's Roman citizenship as he used it to his advantage in adverse circumstances?
16. Of what craft (trade) was the apostle Paul, which came in handy at times in supporting himself while preaching the gospel?
17. Probably who was Paul's closest associate in preaching the gospel (whom he called "my beloved son")?
18. What extensive benevolent project preoccupied the attention of Paul for a time among the Gentile churches?
19. When Paul was arrested at Jerusalem how long did he remain a prisoner at Caesarea, and when the book of Acts ends how long had he been confined at Rome?
20. Which was the last epistle that the apostle Paul wrote which tells about the prospects of his impending death (second Roman imprisonment)?

(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.

### GEORGIA:

■ "A long time ago, I was added to your mailing list. Let me say that I have learned so much about God's Word from *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I want to continue to receive it. I enclose a contribution.

"Keep up the wonderful work and may God bless you in your wonderful work."

### NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Keep up the good work! You publish a good, true and accurate message."

■ "Please keep sending *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I thoroughly enjoy it. You are to be commended for all the work you do for the Lord."

■ "I have just read *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and it truly is an excellent publication. All the articles are well written and backed by the Greatest Book on Earth. . . I think your publication should be in every home in America. God bless you in your work."

### VIRGINIA:

■ "Please discontinue."

### TENNESSEE:

■ "I have thoroughly enjoyed the bound editions of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* which I have recently ordered. It is refreshing to know that there are publications dedicated to a sincere, objective analysis of the Scriptures. Keep up the good work!!

"Enclosed is a contribution to help support the continued publication of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."

"I'll be looking forward to receiving upcoming publications."

### OHIO:

■ "Please send us 100 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?' tracts. I have enjoyed reading your publication *THE SWORD AND STAFF* since March 1979, which makes over 10 years of good reading which I have enjoyed. Hope you can continue for many more years. The last issue is one of the best in my opinion."

■ "We certainly appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and sit right down and read every word as soon as we receive it each time. We wish there were more Christian papers with the sound teaching that is given in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It encourages us to stand firm in this time when I am not so sure that every Christian is standing firm.

"We think of you folks often and thank God for folks who believe and teach it like it is. Whether we believe it or accept it like God gave it to us, we can be sure that God is going to have His way, and that is the best way for us, because of His love for us. We wish more people could understand that. . ."

■ "I have just received *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and as always, it is very stimulating.

"As I was reading the 'Questions' section, the question was asked if any translations use the word immersion. I am very happy to say there is at least one. Although it may not be one of the 'major translations,' in my estimation it is *The Major Translation*. It is called *The Simple English Bible* published by Upward Publications, Inc., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It is an inexpensive Bible, I think I paid \$8.95 for mine, and I bought one for every member of my family.

"I want to thank you again, Jim, for the marvelous work the Lord is doing through you. Your publication is a ray of 'Son Shine' in this dark and dismal world. Keep it coming and God Bless You as you toil for Him."

### ILLINOIS:

■ "We find we do not read your magazine. You may remove our name from your mailing list."

### IOWA:

■ "Since I have received your publication *THE SWORD AND STAFF* I have wanted to write you. . . it has been a very rewarding adventure to receive this work. Of all the publications that come across my desk, this is the most basic and it is handled with the heartfelt Christian attitude that I believe is necessary to provoke a willing response in examination by its readers. There is no publication I have found that pulls out the stops like this one. . .

"Brother, it's important to have these pages in print, and I don't mean just for the, quote, 'worldly.' But there are Christians that need to be giving heed to increase convictions and growing. . .

"God bless and you keep your chin up. We need you out there in these times."

### CALIFORNIA:

■ "As always *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is the one paper that makes me know just where the truth is. Thank you. . ."

■ "...your work is all timely in this era of liberalism. We need Bible teaching in the church. Not watered down liberalism."

### OREGON:

■ "As usual, I sat and read the last issue when it came. I appreciate the writing very much. I am thankful for plain talk."

### PHILIPPINES:

■ "As an elder of our local congregation I find your paper a blessing to my family and to the congregation. I do appreciate your work and I'll pray for you for all your good work. . ."

■ "I have been receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I enjoy reading it. It is very informative and edifying. Thank you for your effort. . ."

■ "It's a great pleasure to have your magazine. May God bless you and your ministry. I believe He will always give and supply our needs."

### NIGERIA:

■ "Greetings in the name of Jesus our Lord.

(Continued on Next Page)

# THE GOOD AND WHOLESOME INFLUENCE OF THE FEAR OF GOD UPON OUR LIVES *(Cont. from Page 7)*

if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in *fear*."

What we are saying here overlaps with what has already been said, but the influence of the fear of God upon us should be felt in every facet of life. This includes what we do when we are on the job. The instructions the apostle Paul gives in Ephesians 6:5 and 6 apply to us. We may not be slaves ("servants in the sense as used here), but most of us are "hired servants," Mark 1:20). The teachings and principles are for us. Listen: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with *fear and trembling*, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Then, again, listen to Colossians 3:22 and 23: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, *fearing God*: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." Put in a good days' work. Everything is to be done as unto the Lord, "fearing God" (you really are working for Him—notice Colossians 3:23 and 24). "Not with eyeservice" is enjoined (not just only when the boss is looking). In Titus 2:9 and 10 more instructions are given for the worker with these additional words, "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." "Not purloining" (having "sticky" fingers) is urged upon them. Yes, governed by the fear of God (reflected in their faithful and consistent lives), they would make the "doctrine of God" beautiful before the eyes of the world.

We might add, it matters not whether a preacher is with the local church or not (is there to encourage and urge the people on), the fear of God will have a bearing upon their faithfulness. The apostle Paul wrote the Philippians, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with *fear and trembling*" (Philippians 2:12). "Work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling*"— do we hear this today? We are afraid that such an injunction is foreign to the ears of many modern religionists. But, there is a place for the fear of God in our lives. It will have much to do with whether we are faithful or not.

Let us read (and heed) Hebrews 3:12-4:1. How sobering!

## CONCLUSION

**IN CONCLUSION**, let us remember the words of the apostle John as he said, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18). There is the fear of horror, dread, and torment which is that of the sinner when he is made aware of his situation (and should be that of the backsliding and lukewarm Christian). This is the kind

of fear that John says the Christian with the "perfect love" does not have. When we come to Christ, experiencing his mercy and grace, the fear in our life is modified and qualified by the love of God. A transformation takes place. The horror and dread are no longer there as it blends into a deep reverence and respect for God, wanting to please Him in all things. This kind



of fear has a good and wholesome influence upon our lives. We become "devout" (godly), putting godliness into practice.

And to further sum it up, it is well to remember these choice verses of Scripture that follow. Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: *Fear God*, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with *reverence and godly fear*." I Peter 1:17, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in *fear*."

And remember this, the person who fears God has nothing else to fear, "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5,6). Also, notice Proverbs 29:25; Psalms 23:4; 27:1; 46:1-3. Amen! □

## READERS' RESPONSE. . .

*(Continued from Last Page)*

"In last December a friend in America presented a sample copy of your magazine *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, Volume 26, Number 3 to me. . . as a gift. It gives much pleasure to read through it, and it inspired me spiritually.

"I wish to write to subscribe for the magazine.

*"I am a Christian, and I hope the books will be useful in building me up for spiritual power.*

*"I shall be grateful if my name can be enlisted among the regular receivers of the magazine."* □

**Toward A More Spiritual Concept:**

**(8)**

**MARRIAGE IN THE LORD**

**AMONG SOME PEOPLE** there is concern when a religious non-Catholic marries a Catholic. Such marriages are called "mixed marriages." However, nothing is said when a supposed Christian marries a regular sinner or non-Christian. Furthermore, there seems to be no concern or censure when a "Christian" marries one of another "faith," although that person may have never become a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word.

But the common views or practices of our day are not what regulate our thinking. We are humbly trying to walk in the steps of the early church and somehow catch the spirit and essence of real Christianity. Compromise solves no problems but merely prolongs our difficulties, leaving it to someone else to suffer the hardships of trying to set an apostate and unregenerate church in order. We emphasize these things, applying them to the over-all picture, and not just to the subject at hand alone.

We ask: does the Bible have anything to say about the marriage of God's children? Are there deeper and more spiritual teachings that we have neglected? Yes, the Lord has revealed unto us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3), and we can expect the Bible to have something to say about this too.

God's will in reference to right and wrong can be determined in at least three different ways from the New Testament Scriptures; namely, (1) direct commands; (2) apostolic examples; (3) principles. All three categories touch upon this matter of who should be ones mate in marriage.

**Direct Commands.** "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 7:39). Here the apostle Paul tells us that the marriage of the Christian is to be "only in the Lord." What does it mean to be "in the Lord"? This expression signifies to be a Christian and to be in the state of a living, vital relationship with the Lord. We are members of his body, the church. We initially get into Christ by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13). We must continue to live the godly life and follow the apostles' doctrine, the doctrine of Christ (Acts 2:42; Galatians 1:8; II John 9; Revelation 2:10), to stay in Christ (Romans 11:22; Galatians 5:4). A person who has not been immersed into Christ, truly believing and repenting of his sins, has not put on Christ. A person who is not striving earnestly to be a Christian is not in Christ either (even though he may have been baptized). Hence, to be married "only in the Lord" is for a Christian to be married *only* to another real Christian.

**Apostolic Examples.** "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have

us for an example" (Philippians 3:17). "Have we not the power (the right) to *lead about a sister, a wife*, as well as others apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (I Corinthians 9:5). The apostle Paul informs us that if he wanted to be married he had the right to be so, but to a sister, i.e. *a sister in Christ*. More than once he tells us to follow his Spirit-inspired example.

**Principles.** "Be ye not *unequally yoked together* with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14). Principles are of such a nature that they can be applied to many circumstances, and certainly this one is correctly applied to marriage. (We might insert here that where two people have not been Christians, and one is converted while the other is not, the Lord does not necessarily command the Christian to leave the unbelieving mate, I Corinthians 7:12-16; I Peter 3:1-4. The divine directive to marry only another Christian is to those who are yet to be married. This is a command. True Christianity is so real and radical that it creates a serious problem when part of a family is Christian and the other is not, I Corinthians 7:12-16; Matthew 10:34-36; Luke 12:51-53).

Even in the Old Testament the children of Israel were strictly commanded to not intermarry with the ungodly people of the land (Deuteronomy 7:3,4). Nehemiah, in returning from Captivity, found mixed marriages common among those who were supposed to be the people of God. He dealt with the situation rather roughly (Nehemiah 13:23-27). (NOTE: The church is the spiritual Israel of God today, Romans 2:28,29; I Corinthians 10:18; Galatians 6:16).

Backing up further to the time of Noah before the flood, we find that the "*sons of God saw the daughters of men* that they were fair; and they took them wives

(Continued on Next Page)

**Think on These Things**

**YOU CAN NOT** successfully combat error by condoning it, going along with it, closing your eyes to it and pretending it does not exist.

The more you learn to love the Lord, the more you learn to hate sin.

Life is like a stone. Whether it grinds a man down or polishes him to a nice finish depends on what kind of stuff he is made of.

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

The time to teach obedience to authority is in the playpen, not the state pen.

If you do not have the time to help your children find the right way of life, somebody with more time will help them find the wrong way.

Too many modern fathers seem more concerned about their golf swing than their offspring.

The time to protect against the electric chair is while the child is still in the highchair.

Invest in eternity. The dividends are out of this world.—**The Gospel Message** □

# Toward A More Spiritual Concept:

(Continued from Last Page)

of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:2). Evidently the righteous line of Seth intermarried into the wicked line of Cain, and the results were that the whole human family became exceedingly wicked. This brought on the conditions which led to the flood. (NOTE: a good wife needs more than a pretty face).

O, dear reader, isn't it plain? A Christian is to marry only another Christian, *only in the Lord*. To marry outside of Christ is to disobey the Lord and invite all kinds of problems. You may reply that you will win your mate to Christ, but disobedience does not usually inspire obedience. These teachings have been carelessly neglected to the hurtful consequence and disintegration of the church in many places. The church and the world have come together. We bring these things out to instruct and encourage (in the right direction), not to condemn (although they may). O, young person, be a faithful Christian. Don't trade your Lord for a husband or a wife, then quit the church (which is his bride). There are enough problems in simply living without starting a marriage with a built-in one. And don't bring children into this world to see them grow up without Christ! How tragic! Yes, our God is Almighty. He can provide you with a mate. He did for Adam.

**NOTE:** Inasmuch as the New Testament presents these truths that marriage is to be "only in the Lord" for a Christian, what is the relationship of preachers to this? Are they to perform "mixed marriages" between Christians and non-Christians? And what about having the weddings of divorced people (divorced for reasons other than that stated by Christ in Matthew 19:9) as they enter into another marriage? Would it not put "the minister" in the category of a clergyman (and a hireling, as Jesus said) to disregard what the Bible says and to officiate at such weddings? Remember. The Lord has spoken. And remember what Psalms 127:1 says: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. . . ." □

## I CORINTHIANS 7:39 AND MARRIAGE "ONLY IN THE LORD"

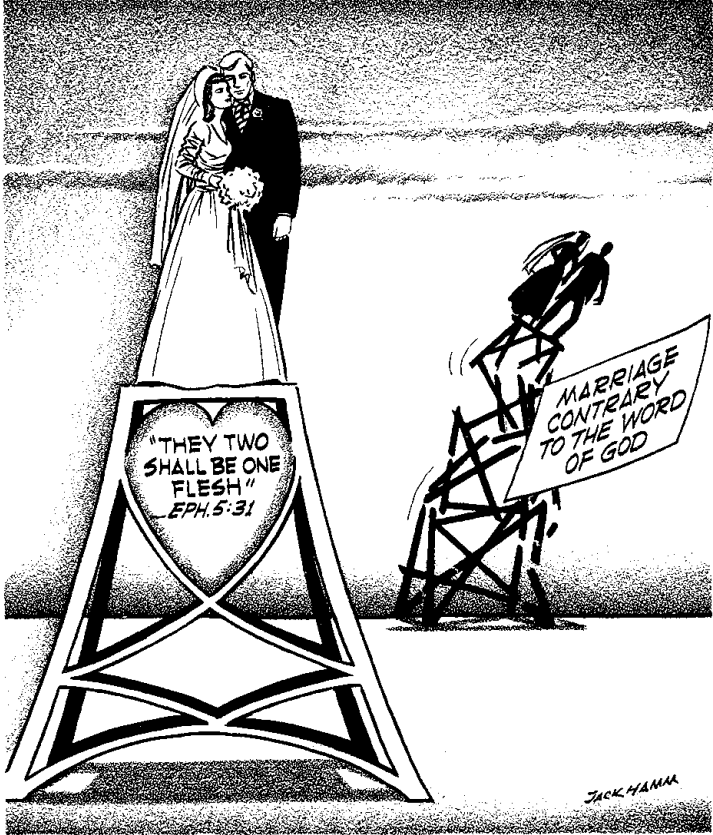
■ "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:39).

**WHEN IT IS** pointed out that a Christian is supposed to marry **ONLY** another Christian, and I Corinthians 7:39 is used to prove this, some have said that this Scripture cannot be used in this way. They insist that this Scripture only applies to the widow and her second marriage and has no bearing on anyone else.

Well, what about such "reasoning"? Let us analyze this verse from all angles, then consider the "logic" of such an assertion.

Are we to take this to mean that of all Christians who will ever be married, the Lord has singled out the poor widow and pointedly told her that if she marries again, it must be only to another Christian? The first

# The Scaffolding



marriage of a woman who is a Christian, according to this legalistic logic, could be to an infidel, a drunk—but the second, NO! She must now for some mysterious reason piously marry "only in the Lord."

And what about the male population? According to this legalistic logic, the Lord has not thus prohibited the widower, now would the single man be so encumbered either. Let them marry a "Jezebel" (according to this logic). God doesn't care, but woe be unto the widow who marries outside of Christ! However, the non-Christian, if he wishes to marry a Christian widow, must first become a Christian. This would make the non-Christian more encumbered in his plans for marriage than the Christian man (who according to this reasoning could do as he pleased).

In the light of Matthew 19:3-9, the man who divorces his wife and marries again, except for the reason of sexual improprieties on the part of his wife, has committed adultery. Notice that it is talking about the *man* putting away his wife. Here it doesn't say anything about the woman putting away her husband. Now if we applied the purely legalist logic of this reasoning, we could say that this applies only to the man. The woman is not thus bound, and a divorce for any cause and remarriage would not constitute adultery for her.

Are we ready for such legalistic logic which excludes the very spirit of the Scriptures? If we read the Sermon on the Mount we will find that this was the pitfall of the scribes and Pharisees. They kept the letter of the law, but missed the spirit of the whole thing.

The truth of the matter is, as far as moral issues are concerned, what is true for one person is also true for another. Right is right and wrong is wrong equally for

all people; likewise in reference to marriage.

But the I Corinthians 7:39 reference is not the only one that applies to marriage in the Lord (Cf. I Corinthians 9:5; II Corinthians 6:14; etc.).

Therefore, if we really love the Lord we will gladly accept and comply with his teachings on this and every other subject as we learn it. God has our (eternal) well-being in mind. □

# Paul's Concurrence with Christ on the Indissolubility of Marriage

■ *"The woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man"* (ROMANS 7:2,3). Compare I Corinthians 7:39, where an identical citation of the law occurs. See also verse 10-11.

**PAUL'S PURPOSE** in the Romans text is to demonstrate "the end of the law for righteousness," as he put it in chapter 10:4, for those who have become united with Christ. But the principle governing earthly marriage which he cites cannot be ignored or set aside, since a metaphorical application must be rooted in literal reality.

Thus, by the law of Moses, the case with a woman in relation to her husband and the liberty to remarry is as here stated. That it is so fully corroborated by the fact that the apostle brings forth the same principle in I Corinthians 7:39, where earthly marriage, not spiritual union with Christ, is the subject of discussion.

It is to be noted that, in that place, Christ himself has a specific word, in elaboration of his teaching in Matthew 19:3-12, that confirms Paul's representation of the case. "Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." That instruction, as well as that of the apostle, of course, is to be taken in view of the exception, given in Matthew 19:9 for breaking of the marriage bond—that of "fornication" by one of the partners to the marriage.

Paul's representation of the Mosaic law in these texts poses a problem for those who "know the law," as he put it (Romans 7:1). The fact of the matter is the woman was not immutably bound to her husband so long as he lived. The law provided that he could "write her a bill of divorcement" under certain conditions, send her away, and she could then "go and become another man's wife" (Deuteronomy 24:1,2; cf. Matthew 19:7). Certainly, in that case also she was "no adulteress," though married to another man while her first husband was still alive. The big question is, Why did Paul, who certainly was thoroughly conversant with

the law's provisions, so represent the matter?

The difficulty for those who acknowledge the fact that he had the Spirit and mind of Christ, and spoke as His oracle (I Corinthians 14:37), is easily resolvable. The purpose of the Romans text was to illustrate the spiritual result, as regards one's relation to the law for justification, of union with Christ. But, in the Corinthians passage, that was not the case. Why, then, did Paul there also make the above representation of the law's regulation of the marriage relationship?

When, as we have said, it is recognized that he had the mind of Christ, and was a special spokesman for him, the situation is understandable. Knowing full well of Jesus' appraisal of the marriage situation, as recorded in Matthew 19 (as well as chapter 5:31,32), the apostle simply adapted his allusions to the law to accord therewith. The Lord had pointed out that, "from the beginning," divorce was not the will of God (cf. Malachi 2:14-16), its permission by Moses being an accommodation to the hardness and unregeneracy of men's hearts and the spiritual juvenility of the times (Matthew 19:8).

Paul, therefore, recognized that interpretation of the law, especially as he applied it, in I Corinthians 7, to divorce and remarriage. In other words, he proclaimed God's original intention for the endurance of marriage until the death of one of the covenant's parties, as that intention was expounded by Jesus.

It is true that the apostle, in his citation of the rule, did not specifically recognize the ground of "fornication" as an acceptable one for divorce and remarriage by the innocent party. It cannot be said, however, that such ground is not existent, nor that Paul rejected it, since it was proclaimed by the Lord Himself.

To think or say that he did not recognize that exception to the indissolubility of the marriage covenant, is to align Paul against Christ. That, in turn, is to impeach his apostleship, and so nullify the dependability of a very substantial part of what is ordinarily called the New Testament, which was written by him.

—The Banner of Truth

## Toward A More Spiritual Concept: (9)

### IN REFERENCE TO SINGING

**PLEASE NOTICE** Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Ephesians 5:18b,19, written about the same time as the Colossian reference, reads about the same way: "... be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

From these Scriptures let us point out at least three things: (1) This religious singing is to be done by those filled with the Spirit and having the word of Christ richly dwelling in them; (2) With the word of Christ richly dwelling in them, they are to teach and admonish one another by means of singing; (3) This

(Continued on Next Page)

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

*(Continued from Last Page)*

singing is to come from the heart as worship to the Lord.

Therefore, it is plain then that singing in connection with the church is an act of spiritual worship to be engaged in and enjoyed by Christians, right? Ephesians 5:18 did say that it was to be done by those “filled with the Spirit”—these are Christians (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 8:9). Colossians 3:16 makes it plain that singing is one way of teaching and admonishing one another. How can a non-Christian fit into the picture as such a teacher to edify the body of Christ? Furthermore, it is to be done with the heart as an act of worship to God. Again, how does the non-Christian fit in here (John 4:24)? Paul told the Corinthians that when “brethren” came together as the church, different ones of their number had a “psalm” (I Corinthians 14:26). The inspired writer James likewise said, “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms” (James 5:13). Please take note, this admonition was for any “among you,” i.e., among you Christians. James calls them “brethren” Throughout his epistle (James 1:2,16,19; 2:1,5,14; 3:1; 5:7,9,10,12,19)—brothers in Christ (James 2:1).

What is the over-all significance of all of this? Obviously, there is a more spiritual concept that many are overlooking in reference to singing. If we are going to please the Lord, there is a more spiritual concept that must be taken into account. There have been and are situations where some have invited outsiders to sing “specials” with little or no consideration as to whether they were Christians or not. Even professional and semi-professional groups have been engaged to put on concerts. But if a person has not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ in becoming a New Testament Christian (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27), how can he be “filled with the Spirit” and carry out the admonition of Ephesians 5:18,19? How can someone in religious error have the word of Christ dwelling in him richly so as to “teach and admonish” us? How in the world can such be called worship and be “in spirit and in truth”? A song service of this kind can contradict in just a few minutes all that a church supposedly stands for.

(No, we don’t mean that we should restrain non-Christians in congregational singing. This is between them and God. And, we might add, the little children already belong to God. We think what has been said is clear).

To have singing groups sing without any thought of their relationship to the Lord is to put the singing purely on an entertainment level (not the high and dignified level of proclaiming the gospel and worship). And, with a generation brought up on television, that seems to be the situation in which we find ourselves. The mind-set is in the direction of entertainment, and the “worship” has become man-centered and entertainment oriented. Religious singers dress like entertainers (with all the accompanying paraphernalia of entertainers as they put on their show), sing the popular generic “gospel” songs, and seek the recognition

and applause of men (literally). “Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (And with all the amplifiers that are used, you would think that God was hard of hearing).

Let us recognize the spiritual concept of singing by believers for the purpose of worship and of teaching one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (not for the entertainment and applause of men). □

## **A WOMAN DOES HAVE THE RIGHT TO CONTROL HER OWN BODY, BUT THE UNBORN CHILD IS NOT HER BODY**

### **Baby taken from drug user**

ROCKFORD, ILL. (AP)—A woman who used cocaine hours before giving birth was convicted of prenatal child abuse and neglect by a judge who compared the drug use to giving a baby razor blades to play with in the crib.

“This is the first case of this kind to come before this court,” Juvenile Court Judge Frederick J. Kapala said Monday in finding the mother guilty.

The child was put in the care of social workers. (*The Ducas Okla. Banner*, Tuesday, May 2, 1989).

**AMERICANS**, being the “freedom loving” people that we are, always have been sensitive to the “rights” of the individual. By appealing to the “right” of making our own choices, those who would kill the unborn decided to conceal such a despicable atrocity under the guise of “a freedom of choice” issue!

Instead of “pro-abortion,” or baby-killing, they call it “PRO-CHOICE,” as if the name change makes it all right (at this point, read Isaiah 5:20)!

A judge found a woman guilty of prenatal child abuse because she used cocaine, yet aborting the child evidently would have been all right since the law (according to Roe-Wade abortion decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, 1973) permits abortion, or killing of the unborn.

What a crazy world it is in which we live! It’s wrong for a prospective mother to “abuse” the child by the mother taking cocaine, but it would have been fine for her to have killed that same child earlier by exercising her PRO-CHOICE right of abortion! Let’s pray the Supreme Court realizes the horrible mistake it made 16 years ago, and rectifies it.

Let’s say it once more: “**A WOMAN DOES HAVE THE RIGHT TO CONTROL HER OWN BODY, BUT THE UNBORN CHILD IS NOT HER BODY!**”—*Wayne Price*. (And as far as choice and control is concerned that should have taken place before conception—*Editor*). □

## **Always Meddling**

**THIS IS** a wonderful life. There are folks on every hand that seem to just thrive on helping. Just yesterday my lawyer called and pointed out a flaw in the title of my property. I commissioned him to correct it immediately. Whatever would I have done if I had lost



my house in a court case.

Last year a sanitary engineer found a number of dead rodents in our water supply. He told us of the danger. Do you realize it could have cost us lives, but he was at his post of duty and his warning turned impending disaster into just another adjustment.

Then there is the doctor. Our family physician is just the greatest. Not once or twice, but three times he has discovered potential dangers. One time my blood pressure had gone over 240, and on another occasion he removed some skin cancers that could have been very hurtful. Just a year ago this week he ordered me to the hospital and without a lot of warning performed a surgery that will extend my life for many years. He is just the greatest. I appreciate him most for his unique ability to see what is coming and his desire to help me before it is too late.

But I must mention the banker. Four times in the last year he spotted an overdraft and called me direct. It could have been a real embarrassment if any of those four checks had bounced. You really appreciate nice folks like that who warn us in time to correct the situation.

Church? Oh, I quit about five years ago. You see, the preacher we had was something else. He always seemed to be prying into my personal affairs—always warning folks about sin and transgressions. He sure was negative. People have a mind of their own—why couldn't he just leave 'em alone? "The wages of sin is death" is what he preached. I just got tired of hearing about it, so I quit. Who does he think he is anyway, always finding disease and diagnosing every case? I figure it this way, "When I need advice, I'll just ask for it."

To me, there is nothing as bad as someone who is ALWAYS MEDDLING!—*Adapted* □

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."  
Matt. 6:33**

**A Character Quiz**

- 1. If you found a wallet with \$1,000, would you give it to the owner if no one knew you found it?
- 2. If you could advance yourself by unfair methods, would you do it if no one found out you were unfair.
- 3. If there were no locks on any house, store or bank, would you take anything if no one ever found out?
- 4. If your business partner died, would you pay his relatives their fair share, if you did not have to pay them?

- 5. If you were an employer trying to hire an efficient, honest, and competent employee, would you hire yourself at your salary?
- 6. If you had your choice, would you like to live in a community with people working in a church just like yours?
- 7. If you had to live with someone just like yourself for the rest of your life, would you look forward to it as a wonderful opportunity and privilege?
- 8. If dependent on others just like yourself to give you the gospel, would you ever be saved?
- 9. If your church friends gave like you do, could the church survive?—*Selected* □

**A Fish Out of Water**

**HUMANISTS** imagine that Christianity limits man, inhibiting the full exercise of human liberty. Corliss Lamont, Chairman of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Union, wrote: "Much of the emphasis in supernaturalist ethics has been negative calling on men continually to deny many of the most wholesome impulses in order to keep their souls pure and undefiled for that life after death which is so much more important than life before death" (*The Philosophy of Humanism*, page 13).

The humanist attitude toward the commandments of God reminds me of the fable of the fish who felt restricted and bound by the banks of the shore. Deciding that he was going to break out of those restraints, he flounced out of the water and onto the shore, exclaiming, "Now, I am free!" Of course, he soon discovered he was not as free as he thought he would be, that he functioned best in water instead of out of it, and that he was only "free" to die outside of the water.

In a similar way, God's restrictions on man are for man's own good (cf. Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13). By making our highest goal to fear God and keep His commandments, we find personal fulfillment and the improvement of society.—*Selected* □

**BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE**

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

—**Frank Herbert Sweet**

# Now Ready!

## The Sword AND Staff

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



James E. Gibbons—Editor  
★ ★ ★

**VOLUMES 25 & 26**

MANY have expressed the opinion that the years of 1987 and 1988 represent two good years of Scriptural and spiritual reading in *The Sword and Staff*. Several have written, asking about the availability of these issues in bound volume form. They are now ready for you to order bound together as one book (volumes 25 & 26). Cost: **\$6.75**. Place your order today (and for other back issues too).

**Help Us Increase Our Mailing List in 1990.**

### Confused About Which Way to Go?

**GO BACK** to the Bible and the local undenominational church, and you will be right on course.

(Clip and Mail)

Gentlemen:  
Enclosed find my contribution. Please put me on the mailing list of *The Sword and Staff*; ☐ New; ☐ Renew.  
Name: .....  
Address (with zip): .....

- (Check for bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff*)
- ☐ 80-81-82 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$5.25
  - ☐ 1983-84 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$5.45
  - ☐ 1985-86 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$6.45
  - ☐ 1987-88 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$6.75

## Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Acts 22:3; Romans 11:1; 2. Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5; 3. Acts 7:58-60; 4. Acts 9, 22, 26; 5. Acts 9; 6. Acts 26:16; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:7,8; 7. Acts 9:9-11; 22:16; 8. Galatians 1:17, 18; 9. Acts 9:26-28; 10. Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28; 15:35-41; 11. Acts 13; Acts 15:40,41; 12. Acts 13:4-12; 13. Acts 14:8-20; 14. Acts 16: Silas, Timothy, and Luke; 15. (1) Acts 16:37-39; (2) Acts 22:24-30; (3) Acts 25:9-12; 16. Acts 18:3; 17. Philippians 2:19,20; I Corinthians 4:17; 18. I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8 and 9; Romans 15:25-28; 19. Acts 24:27; 28:30; 20. II Timothy, and notice 4:6-8. ☐

## Treasure

MANY WHO love the Word of God have discovered Treasure much to their liking when they obtained the bound volumes of the back issues of *The Sword and Staff*. If you like this current issue, you will likewise be thrilled with the copies in book form. Notice those still available (while they are still available), and place your order for good reading. Make them a part of your library *and your life*.



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

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

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