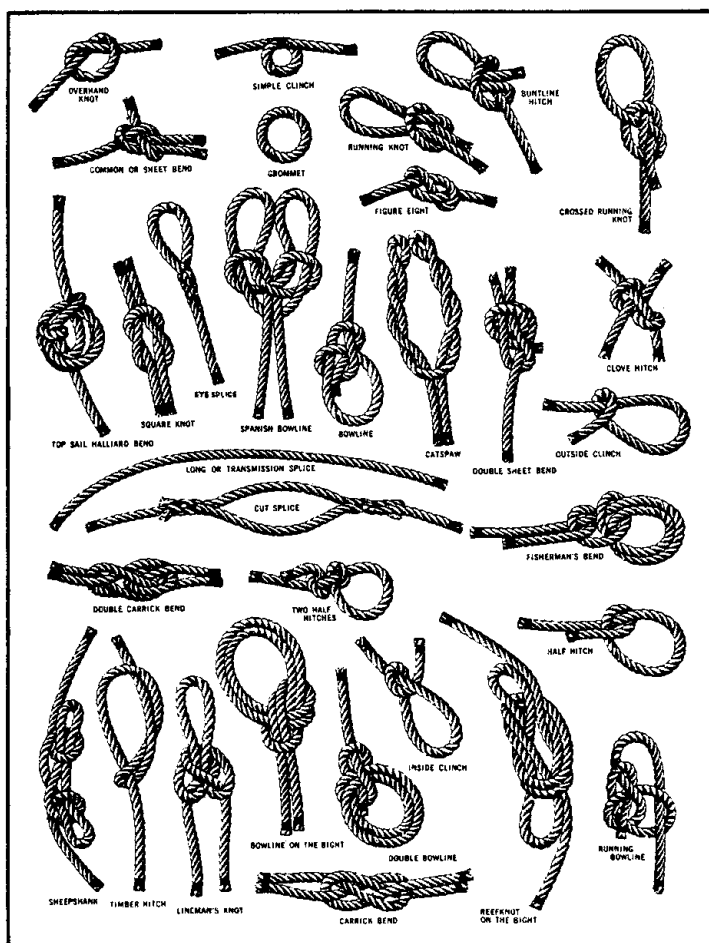


# The Sword AND Staff

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

## DON'T TRY TO UNTIE THE KNOTS (AND "NOTS")



**By JAMES E. GIBBONS**

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AFTER SIMON PETER made that great confession in Caesarea Philippi, and the Lord had declared that "upon this rock I will build my church," he said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt **bind** on earth shall be **bound** in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Matthew 16:21 reads, "From that time forth

began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he **must** go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." In his early Judean ministry Jesus had said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye **must** be born again" (John 3:7).

### The Words "Must" and "Bind"

The words "must" and "bind" (as found in these references) have much in common, coming from the same root word. In the Greek New Testament the word for "must" is *dei* which is from *deo*. *Deo* means to bind, tie, fasten, or fetter. By the leading of the Holy Spirit Peter was to "bind" the truth of God on earth as it was being (and had been) bound in heaven. He **had** to die ("must," it was binding) on the old rugged cross for the sins of the world, and men "must" (it's binding) be born again to be saved. God has tied the knots (and "nots"), and they are binding.

This is well illustrated in what Jesus taught about marriage. In Matthew 19:4-6, he said, "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain (two) shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain (two), but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Restating this teaching (or law) of Christ, Paul wrote in Romans 7:2, "For the woman which hath an husband is **bound** by the law of her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." Then I

(Continued on Page 4)

## THE SWORD AND STAFF

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## Proverbially SPEAKING...

*GOOD MANNERS simply involve being courteous, unselfish, and the practice of the golden rule.*

*"A man that prepares for this life only is wise for a moment, but a fool forever."*

*The Lord gave each of us two ears and one mouth—that should tell us something (and our ears work better when our mouth is shut).*

*"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.*

*Humility is a garment that wears well on all Christians (1 Peter 5:5), and especially on preachers and leaders in the church.*

*"Sometimes we do not learn that Christ is all we need until we reach that place where he is all we have."*

*The purpose of preaching is not necessarily to tell people off, but to tell people.*

*"Divine truth is a stream in which a child may wade and an elephant must swim" (it is at the same time simple and complex).*

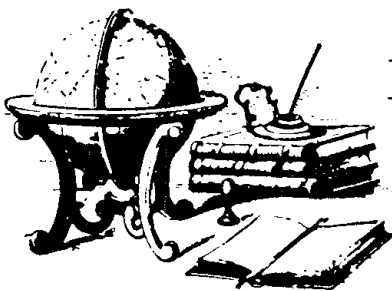
*When we determine what is right, at precisely the same time, we learn what is wrong.*

*"Pray. It's difficult to stumble while on your knees."*

*All sunshine without rain is what makes a desert.*

*"The greatest remedy for anger is delay."*

*Jesus says (in essence): "You can't come after me until you come to me."*



## EDITORIAL

## COMMENTS...

### SUMMARY VERSES OF SCRIPTURE ON THE ESSENCE OF TRUE RELIGION

**THERE ARE** two verses of Scripture in the Bible that get our attention at this time, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New Testament, and both very outstanding. The one in the Old Testament is to the Old Testament what the one in the New Testament is to the New Testament, stressing the same great basic truths. These verses are worthy of our consideration as to the very heart of true religion.

**The Old Testament:** "He hath shown you, O man, what is good: And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (MICAH 6:8, NKJV).

**The New Testament:** "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (JAMES 1:27, NKJV).

In Micah's day God had a controversy with his people. Eventually they would be carried away into Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity because of their sins. In their seeking to appease God in the present, the questions were asked, "With what shall I come before the LORD, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams Or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:6,7). The value and magnitude of each of the potential (and supposedly), appeasing offerings suggested is increased with each question. But this did not address the problem and the issue at hand (nor the answer to it). Animal sacrifices and the externals meant nothing unless they were backed by true religion. These things could not appease God.

Therefore, the prophet Micah said, "He hath shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). This is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 10:12 when Moses said, "And now, Israel, what does the LORD require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Then reminiscent of Micah 6:8, Jesus, speaking to those under the law of his day, said they had "neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Matthew 23:23). Nothing can take the place of the manifest essence of true religion. It must be real. It must have a heart.

James' New Testament declaration (and definition) of true religion is well expressed: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in

their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). This can be summed up under (1) benevolence and (2) clean living.

In saying “pure” and “undefiled” in reference to religion, he in essence is saying the same thing. “Pure” puts the emphasis upon the positive and “undefiled” the negative (the pure in contrast with the defiled). This is the way it must be. Jesus said in John 4:24, “God is Spirit, and those that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Our religion is “before God and the Father,” because all things are done in the sight of God (and especially religion, worship), and “all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). God is to be thought of as “Father” (and especially is this significant when mentioned in connection with “orphans and widows”). Pure religion will prompt us in loving concern to “visit” the orphans and widows in their “affliction.” This word “visit” comes from the same root that is translated “overseer” and “bishop” (KJV). It signifies upon to look. Of course, the idea is conveyed of looking upon their situation with the view of helping. John wrote, “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (I John 3:17,18). And, as we go about doing good, we are to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world.” Remember, as Hebrews 12:14 says, “Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

Yes, unless religion translates itself into everyday terms of kindness, compassion, and mercy-deeds (while at the same time producing genuine righteousness and purity), it is not the real thing. We may have the right form. But if these elements are not there, though we speak loud and long about “sound doctrine,” what we have to say will only have a hollow ring. (Even as Paul said, we have “become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal,” (I Corinthians 13).

Micah 6:8 and James 1:27 teach a lot. Let us be good students. □

### “I Will Lead on Gently”

A GOOD LEADER will display tender consideration for the old, young, weak and unfortunate. Jacob knew this when he said to Esau, “I will lead on gently.” He realized, “If they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die” (Genesis 33:14). A good leader will not overdrive.

We may overdrive by continual controversy about “words to no profit” (II Timothy 1:14). It is easy to reject the weak if they have not reached the heights of the strong (Romans 14:1). It is tempting to condemn

the young if they do not know life as we who are older know it. We may require of the young and weak a degree of courage and other graces which in their case may be only buds.

We may “overdrive” by preaching nothing but severe truths, threatening and punishment, and never emphasize the great promises of God. It is ours to console as well as to condemn. The great comforting passages of the Bible should not be reserved for funerals only.

We may “overdrive” by manifesting austerity, suspicion and harshness toward those who disagree with us. We must do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10). To return good for evil is indeed a golden rule (Matthew 7:12). Faultfinding has a place, but not to the neglect of worthy praise. “Fathers, provoke not your children that they be not discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). We may discourage even the strong by dwelling upon the woes and trials of Christianity and saying little or nothing about its joys.

Jesus had a special place in his heart for the poor and downtrodden. He was tender and kind to the most sinful. Even to those who would become leaders he said, “I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). We should not drive like Jehu, but lead like Jesus. We move a lighted candle slowly lest it go out. A fire almost expiring can be put out by a strong wind. A tender plant can be watered too much. In dealing with the weak we would do well to follow the hospital rule: “Walk softly and speak quietly.” We were all children first and had to learn to walk. “The Lord’s servant must not strive.” We must have “a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another. . . and love which is the bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:12-14). These qualities help to make a good leader.

—Wallace

### The Storm Serves a Ministry

WE WERE GOING through a great furniture factory, when our guide, the superintendent, pointed out to us a superbly grained and figured sideboard in the natural wood. “I want you to observe the beauty of this oak,” he said. “It is the finest selected timber of its kind, and the secret of the intricate and beautiful graining is just this: that the trees from which it was taken grew in a spot where they were exposed to almost constant conflict with storms.”

What a suggestive fact! The stormbeaten tree develops the closest and finest and most exquisitely figured grain, the cabinet maker selects it as the material for his finest work.

So with human life beset by sorrows, tests, and trials. If it stands the storm, how the wind of God strengthens and beautifies it! We need life’s stress.

—Selected

### A Cabin in the Mountains

JIM: We bought a cabin in the mountains, and we spend all our weekends there.

SLIM: How do you think the Lord likes your cabin?

## DON'T TRY TO UNTIE THE KNOTS (AND "NOTS")

(Continued from Page 1)

Corinthians 7:39 is a resonance of this: "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." Yes, men need to realize that when the knot of marriage is tied, God doesn't want anyone untying it. We are **bound** by this teaching.

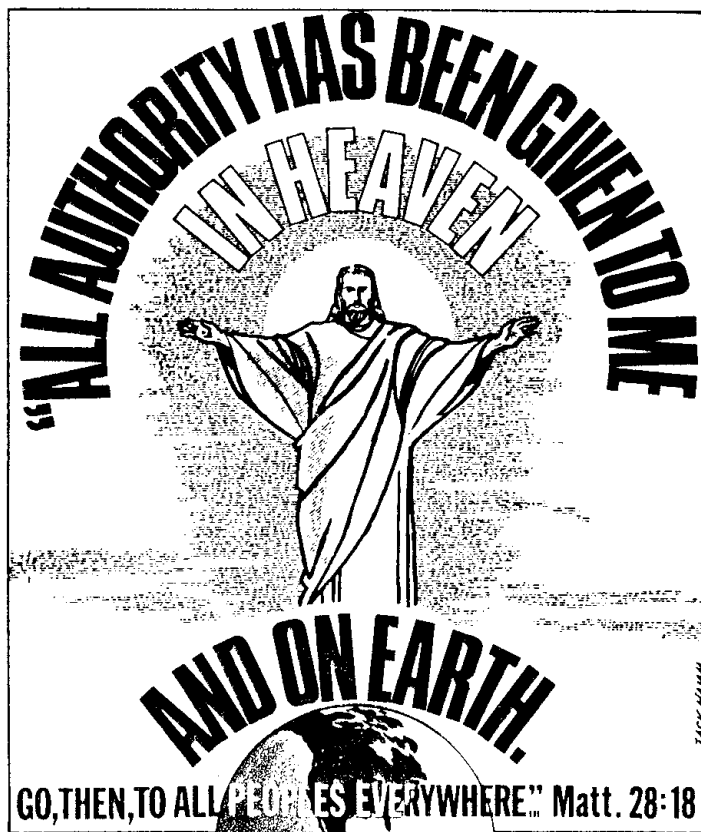
### Authority and Binding in Modes of Expression

There is a compelling mode of expression found many times throughout the New Testament Scriptures when an appeal is made to the Word of God. The expression: "IT IS WRITTEN." Jesus used it. In forcefully answering and rebuffing the temptations of the devil Jesus quoted Scripture, prefixing each quotation with, "IT IS WRITTEN" (Matthew 4:4,7,10). At other appropriate times he used this manner of speaking during his ministry (as well as Paul and the other apostles, I Peter 1:16). The force, or meaning, of this expression seems to be that it is written and therefore stands. It is on record. It is written, and thus as the Word of God it stands for time and eternity ("For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven," Psalms 119:89). This Word is authoritative and binding, and thus appealed to.

Then when Jesus began to address the eagerly listening multitudes, we read, "And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying. . ." (Matthew 5:2). Yes, to teach a person, one must open his mouth. What is so great about saying that Jesus opened his mouth then? No doubt, this is worded in this way to emphasize the point that the opening of the Lord's mouth was deliberate, a momentous occasion, stressing the great importance of every single thing that he said. Every single word that passed through his holy lips was profound as it fell upon waiting and listening ears. The words were filled with the divine authority that was resident in him. He would repeatedly say, "You have heard it said. . .but **I say unto you**" (Matthew 5:21,22,26,27,28,31,33,34,38,39,43, 44; etc.). As Jesus ended the great sermon on the mount, we read, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28,29).

A more amplified version of this authoritative mode of expression is found throughout the gospel of John. John 10:1 is a good illustration of this: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you**, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Here is found the forceful "I say

THE GLOBAL MESSAGE IS UNDERWRITTEN



unto you" made even more emphatic by the double "verily" which goes before it. "Verily, verily" simply means truly, truly (a statement asserting verity and truth). In reality the representation in the original language is the Hebrew "amen, amen" brought over into the Greek New Testament Scriptures untranslated (transliterated) as the same words, but commonly rendered into the English as "verily, verily."

Yes, truly, truly, the words of Jesus Christ the Son of God are authoritative and binding. And on the peak of his resurrection glory he made this conclusively and exclusively emphatic by saying, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore; and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Spirit): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18b-20). May we listen to such a one who not only asserted his authority, but proved it. His words are binding.

### Not Trying to Untie the Knots

Everything that Christ said was authoritative and binding, having all authority (inherent in himself and emphatically verified by his resurrection from the dead). In view of his going back to heaven, Jesus promised his disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you" (John 14:18). He came in the presence of

the Holy Spirit, who directed the apostles into all truth (John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:13). That which would be “bound” and loosed on earth took place (Matthew 16:19). Through himself and his disciples the Lord has tied the knots. The words of the apostles disclose the binding of the Lord (I Corinthians 14:37). The apostle Paul declared, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). And the last book in the Bible warns that we are not to “add” to this book (tie knots of our own), and the writer goes on to say, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18,19).

All things that are necessary in the religion of Christ, when spoken of in the New Testament, are not always accompanied with the word “must” (the word which in its root meaning signifies a binding, as we have seen). Nonetheless, the word “must” does occur frequently itself, and it is worthwhile and interesting to notice some of these references. Of Christ, Peter declared, “Neither is there salvation in any other name: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we **must** be saved” (Acts 4:12). Hebrews 11:6 affirms, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God **must** believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Christ in his post resurrection appearance to Saul of Tarsus commanded, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou **must** do” (Acts 9:6b). (And one thing that was **binding**, a “must,” that repentant Saul was to do, as well as everyone else, Acts 2:38,39, is found in Acts 22:16). Another “must” was spoken during the ministry of Jesus to the woman at the well, “God is Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Then, looking to the consummation of all things, Paul wrote, “For we **must** all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

Yes, the word “must” stands out strongly in this sampling of Scriptures. The Lord has bound many things in reference to what we are to believe and do. Let us not try to undo the binding or to untie the knots. What he has spoken stands.

#### Not Trying to Untie the “Nots”

Then from another perspective, let’s think about not untying the “nots.” When the LORD God puts a “not” in a commandment or teaching, that is just the way he intended it to be. And

when he leaves “not” out, we should not try to put a “not” into it. In his command to Adam and Eve God said, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt **not** eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). God put a “not” in the first part of the command, but not in the last (just the opposite). In the old devil’s approach to Eve he reversed the order of things. According to the devil, she was to eat of the fruit. And in connection with the last part he said, “Ye shall **not** surely die” (Genesis 3). Therefore, when men try to undo the Lord’s “nots,” and to rearrange his teachings, we know for certain that they are playing into the hands of the devil.

“Nots” are used in warning about sin. The use of the word “not” in I Corinthians 6:9,10, should sober the mind of a sinner, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall **not** inherit the kingdom of God? Be **not** deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Then listen to the words of our Lord in Matthew 7:21, “**Not** every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Then again, “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall **not** enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

Other Scriptures have “nots” not only in connection with condemnation, but salvation. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should **not** perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent **not** his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is **not** condemned: but he that believeth **not** is condemned already because he hath **not** believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18). (How sad, and how wonderful!). Paul writes, “Know ye not,” then speaks of death to sin, burial with Christ by means of baptism, and the new life in Christ (Romans 6)—and then, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should **not** serve sin” (6:6). And after beseeching the same people in Romans 12:1 to present their bodies a living sacrifice, he continued by admonishing, “And be **not** conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Yes, the Lord has many “nots” in the New Tes-

(Continued on Next Page)

## DON'T TRY TO UNTIE THE KNOTS (AND "NOTS")

*(Continued from Previous Page)*

tament, things that are prohibited and things that are a certain way (and not another). The Lord has spoken. Let us not try to untie his "nots," and at the same time, let us not have "nots" of our own making.

**DON'T TRY TO UNTIE THE KNOTS (AND "NOTS").** The point has been made. Christ has all authority, and he is the one who has done the binding. His bindings, or knots, don't have to do with bondage (just the opposite). On one occasion he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). The apostle John wrote, "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (burdensome)" (I John 5:3). Jesus spoke of his teachings as being "spirit" and "life" (John 6:63). Then he said, "If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31b,32).

**DON'T TRY TO UNTIE THE KNOTS (AND "NOTS").** What Christ has said stands. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: for he cannot deny himself" (II Timothy 2:13). If we try to untie the knots, we will fail, and it will only result in our own undoing (when all is said and done). Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

In this day of laxness and tendencies toward apostasy, let us take these words to heart. □

### Faith in Her Father

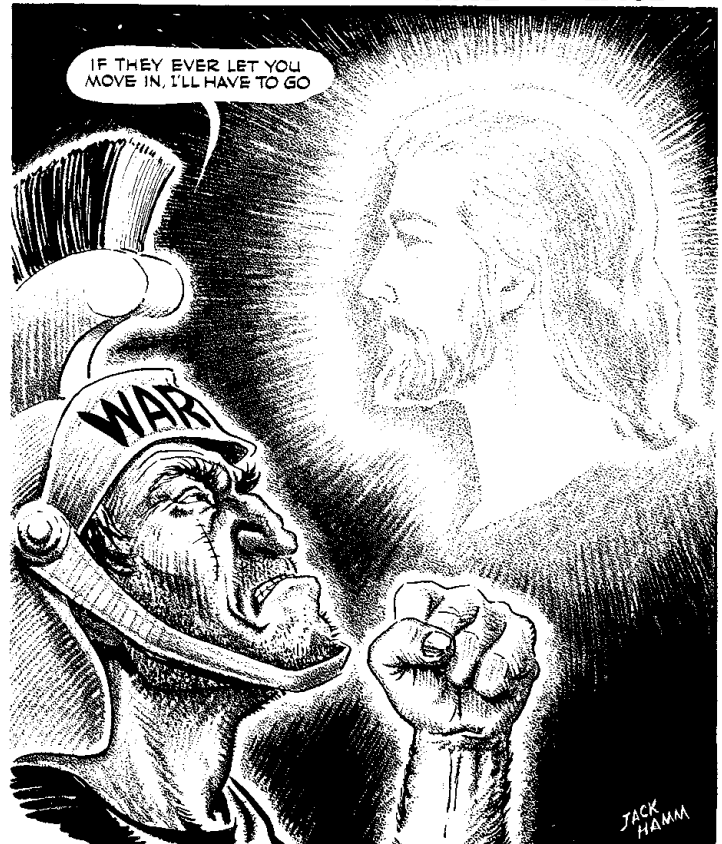
A **PASSENGER** train was going down a steep mountain. It went faster and faster down the grade. As it roared around the many curves, the coaches would sway violently from side to side. The passengers became greatly alarmed. They were afraid there was something wrong with the engineer, or that he had lost control of the locomotive, or that the brakes would not work. One of the passengers noticed a little girl on the seat across the aisle from her. The child was playing with her doll and, as she laughed and sang to it, she seemed utterly unconscious of any danger that might be in store.

The passenger leaned over and said to her, "Little girl, are you not afraid?"

"No," she replied, "My father is the engineer."

—Selected

## GOD OF WAR AND PRINCE OF PEACE



### THE BIBLE

**THIS BOOK** contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, doom of sinners, and happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its Grand Subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be open at the Judgment and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.

**"This Book unfolds Jehovah's mind;  
This Voice salutes in accents kind;  
This Friend will all our needs supply;  
This Fountain sends forth streams of joy.**

**This Mine affords us boundless wealth;  
This Good Physician gives us health;  
This Sun renews and warms the soul;  
This Sword both wounds and makes us whole.**

**This letter shows our sins forgiven;  
This Guide conducts us safe to Heaven;  
This Charter has been sealed with blood;  
This Volume is the Word of God."**—Selected



# A Twisted WORLD

IT WAS a horrible and ungodly command that Pharaoh issued when he commanded the male babies to be killed (Exodus 1:22). It was a dastard and evil Herod who commanded the death of the babies in Bethlehem.

There was not the modern news media to publish those events, or television reporters to interview the parents whose babies were slain, but the deeds were recorded in both the Word of God and on the pages of history. We can only imagine the sorrow and tears, and the emotional drain.

Helpless and innocent little babies have been victims of brutality on so many occasions. We cringe at the very thought of people cooking and eating their children at the time of Benhadad's siege of Samaria (II Kings 6:24-29) or when Jerusalem was in a state of starvation (Jeremiah 19:9; Lamentations 2:20; 4:10; Ezekiel 5:10). How absolutely horrible!

Jesus showed his love for little children when he took them up in his arms and blessed them (Mark 9:36; 10:16). He used them as an example of humility and purity that we should imitate (Matthew 18:3).

God demonstrated his concern even for the unborn when he decreed punishment upon a man who would injure a woman and cause her to suffer miscarriage or to give birth prematurely (Exodus 21:22,23).

Yet in our modern corrupted society literally millions of babies are killed, some by what is legally termed as "child abuse" and many more by abortion.

Among the developed and civilized nations of the world abortion has traditionally been considered immoral and illegal, but in these latter days civil authorities have legalized abortion. However, legalizing the practice has not removed the immoral stigma.

The large dictionary at hand was printed a number of years ago. Included in the definition it gives for the word "abortion" are these words: "In law the term abortion usually implies criminality in producing miscarriage, the latter term denoting any premature birth irrespective of the cause." But the dictionary is old, and the modern set does not look upon abortion as a criminal deed. It is just a convenient method of "terminating unwanted pregnancies."

And have you noticed that the advocates of the evil practice prefer not to identify themselves and their movement as "pro-abortion" or as "baby killers." They much prefer to use the term "pro-choice." It does sound nicer. But sin is sin, regardless of how nice a label is tacked on it!

It was an interesting case that was brought to court in Illinois sometime ago as reported by the news media. A woman was convicted for prenatal child abuse and neglect because of her use of cocaine before her child was born. The judge in the case compared her behavior as being as irresponsible as one who would give razor

blades to a baby in a crib. Yet if she would have chosen to have had an abortion somewhat earlier it would have been perfectly legal! Yes, she was wrong and she deserved punishment, but we ask is it wrong to endanger a child's life and cause it to be addicted to drugs from its birth, but perfectly legitimate to kill it?

We aren't killing babies and eating them as was the case in Samaria and Jerusalem. We're just killing them because they are not wanted. Their flesh is not used to ward off starvation, but fetal tissue is being used in various ways, and mothers who have abortions have their conscience soothed by those who tell them tissue from their baby can be used to help someone medically. But it is not all being used medically either. We are reluctant to repeat some reports of what is being done with some fetal material. It is simply too repulsive to publicize. People once mourned and sympathized with a woman who experienced a miscarriage. Motherhood was esteemed. But now killing babies is rather popular.

Oh, but they don't call it "killing babies." It is "terminating pregnancies" or at the worst "destroying a fetus." Calling the unborn baby a "fetus" somewhat removes the guilt complex. It sounds better than "killing a baby." It is suggested that people read Luke 1:41 and 44. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, "the babe" leaped in the womb of Elizabeth. Maybe "fetus" sounds nicer if you're going to purposely kill it, but the Word of God calls the unborn a "babe." That's good enough for me.

Just remember, whatever standards the world may set, we who are concerned about pleasing God must abide by the rules that he has established.

—Thomas D. Dennis

## Can You Imagine Such a Family?

SUPPOSE you visited in a home, became well acquainted with the family, and then didn't see them for a year or so. Upon your return visit, you notice that someone is missing. So you ask them, "Didn't you have a little boy named Johnny here before. I haven't seen him around. Where is he?"

The members of the family look at one another in a puzzled manner and scratch their heads in bewilderment. One finally says, "Oh, yes—now I remember him. . . ." "Yes," says another, "we did have a little brother by that name, but you know, I just don't know what ever happened to him. I haven't seen him around for several months now—and he was a nice kid, too."

The other members of the family smile and nod pleasantly, for they, too, now remember Johnny. They exchange a few pleasant remarks about him and wonder where he might have gone, but no one can remember having seen him in a long time. No one, however, appears to be upset by his absence.

*Can you imagine such a family?* Yet this sort of thing happens in the church. Beloved, the church is the family of God, and we should have as much care for our spiritual brother or sister as for a fleshly one!

—Selected

# From Wages to Riches

**HOW DO** you go from wages to riches? Examine Romans 6:23 carefully. It reads, "For the *wages* of sin is *death*; but the *gift* of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord." What a difference! If we serve Satan we receive wages. Wages are something that you receive in return for some type of work that you have done. But if we serve God, he gives us the gift of eternal life.

This is interesting! Let's look further at what we can receive depending upon whom we serve. During this life we are going to have troubles and trials, whether we serve God or Satan. However, let's look at what is waiting for us after this life. What can Satan give his servants? (1) a permanent home where it never snows, (2) a chance to spend an eternity with their master (after all, those who spend eternity in hell will have served Satan), and (3) the opportunity to never have to worry about some nagging Christian telling them the plan of salvation. Now let's see what God has to offer his servants: (1) eternity in a mansion, (2) the ability to be with faithful loved ones who have died, and (3) the gift of eternal life with God himself.

Even though God gives us the gift of eternal life if we serve him, this gift will cost us something. When we receive a gift from a friend in life, we receive that gift because we are a friend to them. God wants us to be a friend to him. God tells us in James 2:17-26 that we must work for him. The thing that makes eternal life a gift is the fact that no matter how much work we do, we cannot attain heaven through our good deeds. Ephesians 2:8-9 reads, "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."

Romans 6:16 says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

If all have sinned, and we know that no sinner can enter heaven (Ephesians 5:5), then there must be a way that we can serve God. But how do we go from serving Satan to serving Christ? We must *believe* (Mark 16:16), *repent* (Acts 2:38), *confess* (Romans 10:9,10), *be baptized* (immersed in water) (Acts 2:38; 8:38,39), and *serve Christ until death* (Romans 6:4; Revelation 2:10).—**Hank Ballinger** □

## THINGS THAT IMPRESS PEOPLE NEGATIVELY WHEN THEY VISIT A CHURCH

**MUMBLED** announcements, or prayers, or comments in Bible study classes which cannot be heard.

Poor reading of the Holy Scriptures, with mispronounced words.

Teachers or speakers who show lack of preparation and enthusiasm.

Arguing and lack of respect for the thoughts of others during Bible discussions.

Members who appear inattentive and bored, either

sleeping or busying themselves with whispering, writing notes, passing pictures, etc. during study and worship.

Members who sit mutely during the singing.

Members who habitually come late.

Mothers who do not take care of the situation when little children become a distraction or interference in the worship.

Parents who permit children to play noisily, or abuse the song books or Bibles.

Floors littered with gum wrappers, scraps of paper, and babies' cracker or cereal crumbs.

Members who fail to speak to visitors in a sincere effort to make them feel welcome and to invite them back.

These things do indeed impress people, but not for good. Let our behavior not be a stumbling block to people but an influence to encourage people to follow Jesus.—*Selected* □

## BIBLE QUESTIONS (over miracles in the O.T. Scriptures)

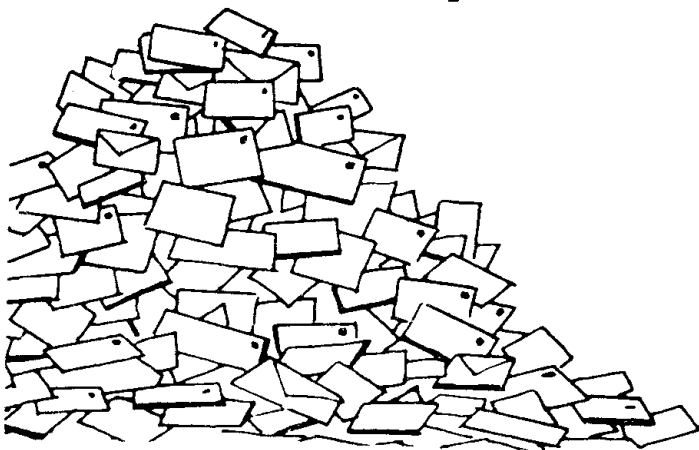
1. What miracle was involved in the call of Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage?
2. What miracle happened in connection with Moses' rod (which instrument would thereafter be used for signs)?
3. After this, what ten different times is the rod of Moses and Aaron mentioned in connection with the happening of miraculous things?
4. What were five different occasions in the O.T. Scriptures where a miracle (or the miraculous) occurred involving leprosy?
5. What miracle happened in connection with the serpent made of brass that Moses put upon a pole for the people to look upon?
6. What about the food and clothing of the children of Israel was miraculous while they were in their wilderness journey?
7. Although water came forth from the rock when Moses hit it with his rod (the second such miracle in the wilderness), why was God displeased and Moses not allowed to go into the promised land?
8. What occasioned the miracle of Balaam's donkey talking to him?
9. How did man participate in the miracle of the fall of the walls of Jericho?
10. What two miracles involving the sun in a radical way are recorded in the O.T. Scriptures?
11. What happened to the idolatrous king Jeroboam at Bethel when he put forth his hand, saying "lay hold" on the man of God?
12. What five different miracles are mentioned in connection with the prophet Elijah (not counting him being taken to heaven in a fiery chariot)?
13. What ten different miracles are mentioned in connection with the prophet Elisha?
14. What three miracles of resurrection are recorded in the O.T. Scriptures?
15. What miracles involving the Hebrew children and Daniel are found in the book of Daniel?

(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.

### FLORIDA:

- "Thanks for a paper that isn't ashamed of the Word of God! Papers such as yours are hard to find."
- "Enclosed check for your good work. I hope you will always be able to publish it for it is special and a blessing to all of your readers. . ."
- Your SWORD AND STAFF is the best paper. It helps me to walk closer to our dear Lord. Our preacher here fellowships with all kinds of denominations. They go to them to learn to pray and live. Almost makes you sick sometimes. . .  
"Thank you. Keep up the good work."

### NORTH CAROLINA:

- "I am writing to let you know how much that I enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF. I have been using the one on the Ten Commandments to teach on Wednesday nights, and everyone is really enjoying it. . ."
- "Thank you so very much for the good work you are doing. I certainly do enjoy reading THE SWORD AND STAFF. Please keep it up. That's what we need. You have my prayers."

### VIRGINIA:

- "The issues of THE SWORD AND STAFF no doubt contain and spread the living Word, God's Word, rightly and carefully divided. My prayer is that these issues and efforts be supported. This country needs more of this material, Words of Truth. The cost is small and should be supported. . ."
- "Please remove my name from your mailing list."

### TENNESSEE:

- Stop sending this publication. . ."

### KENTUCKY:

- "It is a pleasure to receive your magazine THE SWORD AND STAFF. It is also a pleasure and privilege to know that there are people like yourself who are willing to take the time to study and learn God's Word and then teach it to others. . .  
"Continue to 'contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints'."
- "I appreciate your articles very much. They are informative and very interesting. They have plenty of meat to them,

but are simple enough that anyone who is willing can understand them. . .

"THE SWORD AND STAFF should be a magazine in every Christian home. Your faithful dedicated work is greatly appreciated by our family and friends. Continue your labor in the Lord. WE NEED YOU!!!"

### OHIO:

- "I think you are publishing the truth which is badly needed now. Keep up the good work. . ."

### MICHIGAN:

- "I want to thank you for all your work in bringing about God's truths. I would like to order all of your bound volumes and add a friend to your mailing list. Keep up the great work. It has been invaluable in increasing my knowledge."

### INDIANA:

- "Your paper helps me to get what I don't get in my church. . ."
- "We are a new congregation. . . Many of us have been avid readers of THE SWORD AND STAFF. We would appreciate it very much if you would send us (20) magazines each time you make a new publication. We can always notify you when we need more.  
"Please accept our contribution toward the subscription. Thank you!"

### ILLINOIS:

- "Enclosed you will find my order for all bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I can't tell you how much I enjoy reading and digesting the material they present. I have used many different articles as references and as helps and encouragement for myself and others in our congregation. . . My hope and prayer is for your excellent work to continue. May God richly bless you and yours."

### MISSOURI:

- "We thank you so much for a paper that upholds the Word of God to the very highest, standing for the church that Jesus was nailed to the cross for, the church that the Lord Jesus bought—his side was pierced; the church he shed his blood for; the only church we read about in the Bible, the Word of God."
- "I have been preaching the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ for nearly 50 years, and I find every article in THE SWORD AND STAFF to be very enlightening and helpful to me. It would be a sad day if THE SWORD AND STAFF should fail in its effort to publish the pure truth. It has upheld the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ for many years. I read it from cover to cover as soon as I receive it. . ."

### TEXAS:

- "I was reading with interest your paper THE SWORD AND STAFF. I read until I came to the part where you condemned the 'Masonic Lodge.' Anyone who condemns the 'Masonic Lodge' is either unlearned or a communist. I do not care to receive literature from either one. . ."

### NEW MEXICO:

- "Remove our name from your list. Thank you."

### MONTANA:

- "Please continue my subscription to THE SWORD AND STAFF. . .  
"If at any time you have articles on the Freemasonry religion, I will give it extra attention. I believe it to be perhaps a greater threat to our beliefs than even the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses efforts. The reason being, that people over-

(Continued on Next Page)

# READERS' RESPONSE. . .

(Continued from Previous Page)

look this 'cult' and give them utmost praise because of their good works through Burn Centers and Crippled Children's Hospitals. At the same time, they preach of a different God, and almost detest the Word 'Jesus Christ' . . .

"Keep up your strong efforts for the Lord. I know it's tough publishing a paper. I do our monthly church newsletter. . ."

## IDAHO:

■ Your paper is truly excellent! In fact, it is one of the best I've ever read. If you still want to expand your mailing list, I'm sending you lots of names (and plan to send also a list of preachers' names later). . ."

## CALIFORNIA:

■ "Please discontinue sending us your publication."

## ALASKA:

■ "I cannot recall when it was that we sent a check. It has been too long! Enclosed, find our offering to help with the continuing of THE SWORD AND STAFF. . .

"In your most recent discussion concerning baptism, you presented the issues as well as we have ever seen it done.

"We have said often that men tend to look at salvation in a secular way, that is, 'What is it going to cost me?' They tend to think of it as joining something, such as a fraternal organization, or society. 'What are the dues? How much is the initiation fees? Do I have to memorize anything?' In other words, everything is considered in the terms of, 'What is the least that I can get by with?' It is easy to go from that understanding to teaching that Jesus wants us to deal not in minimums, but rather in maximums. So then instead of thinking in terms of, 'How little can I get by with?' it becomes, 'What more can I do?' Once this concept is accepted by an unbaptized believer, then not only is baptism usually desired, but a great lesson about Christian service learned. . ."

## PHILIPPINES:

■ "I write to you because I want to be put on the mailing list of THE SWORD AND STAFF. A local preacher handed me an old copy of the magazine, which has impressed me. Your attachment to the New Testament is quite highly commendable. . ."

# EPISCOPALIAN BISHOP SAYS THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS A HOMOSEXUAL

BISHOP John Shelby Spong of the Episcopal Church has written a book in which he says that the apostle Paul was a self-hating, repressed homosexual.

"Nothing else could account for St. Paul's self-judging rhetoric, his negative feeling toward his own body and his sense of being controlled by something he had no power to change," wrote Spong, who heads the Newark, N.J., diocese.

The book, *Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism*, published Friday (2/1/1991) by Harper Collins, contends that Paul was a "self-loathing and repressed gay male."

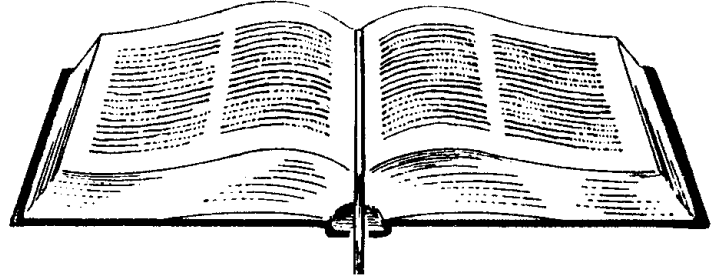
Spong has championed the integration of blacks, women and homosexuals into his church.

Spong told *The New York Times* in an interview. . . that his interpretation helps explain what he called

St. Paul's hostility to women, such as when he ordered wives "to submit to your husbands," as well as the fact that he never married. *Winston-Salem Journal*

(How startling that someone would write such things! Well did the apostle Paul, Peter, and Jude write of such men. Philippians 3:17-21; I Corinthians 14:37; II Peter 2 and 3; Jude) □

# INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS



(NOTE: The following short series appeared in print several years ago. Obviously, the truths are still timely and needed today. Do you agree?—Editor).

## I. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:

"Believe Whatever You Like...Just So You Are Sincere"

"Believe whatever you like. . . just so long as you are sincere" we are told on every side today. This is a false teaching, but it is an index showing a far greater evil than the teaching itself. It shows the shallowness of this generation when it comes to religion. It shows how this irreligious age is trying to excuse itself from putting forth any effort to know the truth. This age is lazy, slack and unconcerned about any deep, soul stirring search in spiritual matters. By saying, "Believe what you like," or, "It doesn't make any difference," the basis of authority is placed within each individual. We know this is not right. Christ and the Bible are our only sources of authority. It matters very little what I think. Suppose that I was starting to school. I go into the classroom, and my first teacher tells me that two plus two equals four. In the second classroom the teacher says two plus two equals seven. Then another teacher, to add to my confusion, says two plus two equals minus three. I am thoroughly confused. Then I meet my last teacher. He pats me on the back and says not to let it bother me, two plus two equals five, but it really doesn't make much difference, just so long as you are sincere in your studies. Yes, we see the folly of this situation here, but the sad part is that the religious world is just like this today. This common and accepted opinion of our day truly is an index to a far greater evil.

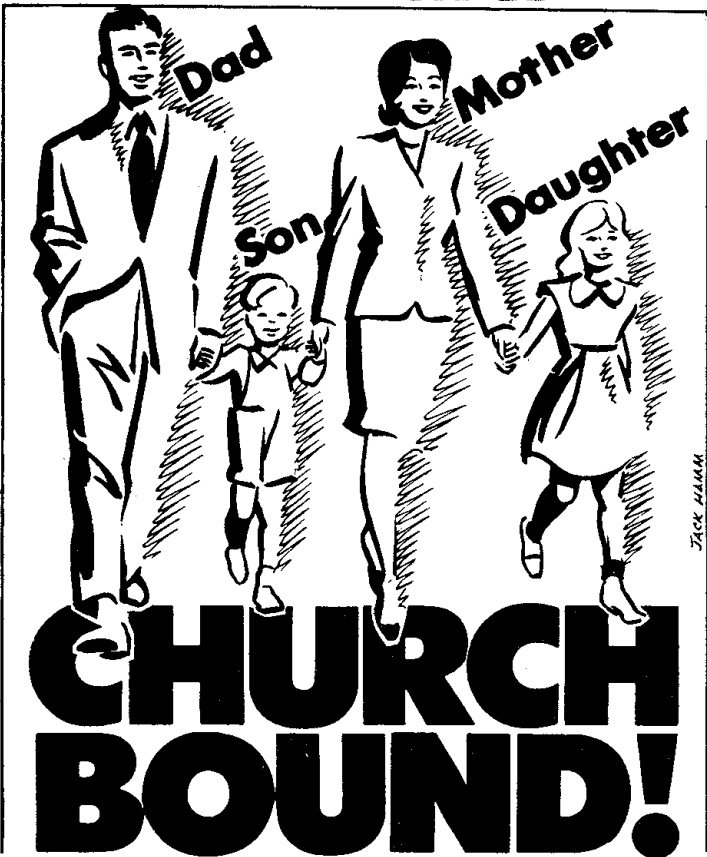
## II. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:

"Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth Speaketh"

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." In other words the way we talk reveals our heart. Our words are the index to our character. Evil words simply reflect an evil character, a

far greater wrong than the words. The person who is guilty of speaking profane language, telling dirty stories, and using the name of God in vain, has shown by his words that his heart, character, or moral make up is black, corrupt and evil. The person who is guilty of gossip tells those who hear that his uncontrolled tongue is the same as his life, which also is uncontrolled and unorganized. It is an index to his shallow, thoughtless, and weak spiritual life. It has been said that still water runs deep. A noisy splashing stream is always shallow. The same is true in reference to the tongue and the character. Furthermore, the words from a lying and deceitful mouth give us a window to look into a dishonest heart. Truly any way you look at it our speech is an index to our character. Evil speech shows us the greater evil. . .that of the evil heart and character. James gave us the Word of God faithfully when he said, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

**AS IT SHOULD BE**



**III. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:  
Empty Church Pews on the Lord's Day**

Empty pews on Lord's day mornings and other appointed times of meeting make obvious something is wrong. God's Word says we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). It is wrong for an able-bodied Christian to be absent from the church house when he can be there. Not only is it evil, it suggests there is some other wrong involved. It seems to reflect that his love and zeal for the work of the Lord have grown cold. It is an index to the fact that something else has taken God's place. Such people have time to go to questionable places, indulge in ques-

tionable pleasure, stay out so late on Saturday nights that they find it impossible to be at the Lord's house on Sunday mornings. Then if they do make it they are doing everybody a favor. You cannot expect to see them at the mid-week service. As Paul told Timothy, they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The greater evil is that they have lost their first love or first faith. They worship another God which is not the true and living God. The writer of Hebrews asks, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). Our Lord said, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

**IV. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:  
Missionary Societies and the Work of the Church**

In the New Testament we read about the church of Christ. Its mission was to evangelize the world. The church existed only in a local sense. By that we mean the organization of the church did not extend beyond the realm of the local church, and elders governed the local church. There were no religious overlords over a certain number of churches. Evangelists were sent out from the local church to evangelize the world. This was God's plan, and the intensity of its effectiveness is seen in the fact that the Great Commission had been fulfilled in the first century (Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:23). Today we find arrangements other than the God-revealed way of evangelizing the world through the church. Today we find missionary societies (and the same thing by other names) within and beyond the local church, and the world goes unconverted. This is not the method the early church used, since the church itself was the missionary society, but this is an index to perhaps a greater evil. The local church is not doing the work it should and in the way it should. Christianity is wonderfully personal, and from person to person it should spread as a chain reacting force. The local church should feel its God-given opportunity and responsibility of evangelizing the world and then do something about it. The work should not be put off in some remote abstract organization, but the God-given organization should be put into operation. A crystallized missionary society beyond the local church is a reflection on God's wisdom, and one within the local church is a misrepresentation because the church itself is the missionary society (Ephesians 3:10; 4:11,12).

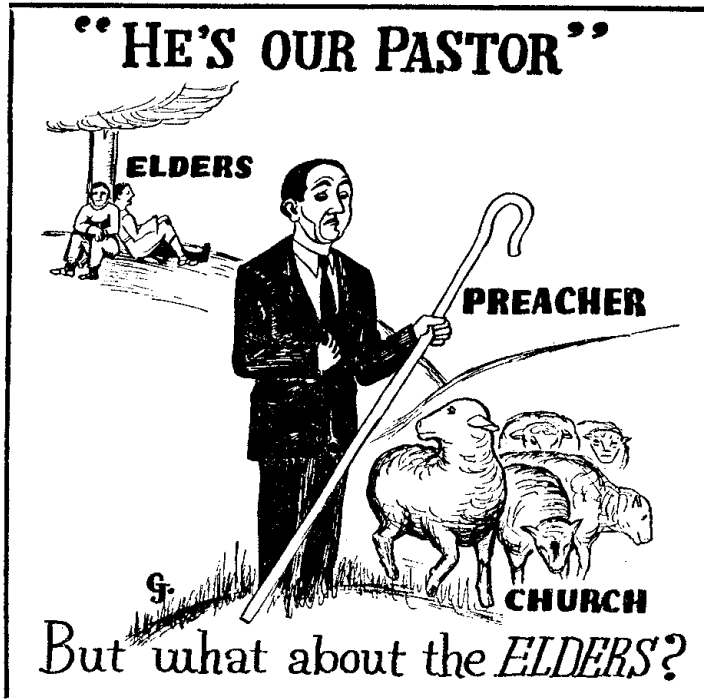
**V. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:  
The "Pastors" of the Local Church of Christ**

Today we hear people talking about so and so being the "pastor" of "their" church. They are speaking in reference to the preacher. There is a mistake in saying this, but it suggests that there is some greater wrong involved too. The word "pastor" simply means shepherd. The word "pastor" as used in the New Testament refers to the eldership of the local church (Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 5:1-4). There was more than one elder or pastor in each church. People today call a preacher who is working with a local church, "the pastor." "The" is a definite article implying only one and excluding others. To use the term in connection with the preacher is to rob the elders of their God-

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## INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS

(Continued from Previous Page)



given title, and suggest that the preacher is the only pastor in the church. The preacher is an evangelist and should be regarded as such. To call him "pastor" is to let go of the form of sound words (II Timothy 1:13). Apparently the greater evil is that the preacher has not taught the eldership their responsibility and they have not been doing their work as pastors. Preachers have usurped the work of the elders, failing to train them, and have become the one man pastor of the local church. Certainly while the preacher is associated with the congregation already established, he will do many things that coincide with the work of the elders, but that does not make him "the pastor." His primary concern as an evangelist is to evangelize, set things in order, train leadership, encourage the brethren, and open up new fields. The elders are the pastors of the church.

### VI. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:

#### Raising Money to Pay the Church's Bills

It is certainly wrong when churches have to resort to bake sales, bazaars, auctions and what-have-you like this to pay their "bills." God's Scriptural plan of supporting his kingdom has been laid aside. Church "members" look to someone else to foot the expense of the kingdom. It is certainly cheap when the world must be enticed in to pay the "bills." If people would give as they should, and they will if they love the Lord, there would be no problem whatsoever. There is something wrong in the lives of so-called Christians when they don't.

Perhaps one of the greater evils involved is that the whole point of giving is missed. Giving is an expression of worship. We give as we purpose in our hearts (II Corinthians 9:7). We are to lay aside on the first day of every week as God has prospered us (proportionate giving) (I Corinthians 16:2). In the Patriarchial Age

before the Law was given to Moses, men like Abraham gave a tithe to the LORD. Then tithing was included as part of the Law of Moses. Today, under the New Testament, it is a shame and a disgrace for a Christian to give less than a tenth of his income. Our superior relationship to God should prompt a superior response.

Today men have made God's meeting place a house of merchandise. They have robbed God of his tithes and offerings. Once there was a man in debt, as a lot of people are. He said that the income he received was not his own because he owed it. He excused himself from giving at the church on this basis. But a strange thing could be seen. He had the best of everything for his family, not hesitating to go further in debt for these things. His children went to the movies several times a week. He had money for useless and questionable pleasure while in debt, but not any for the Lord. In the meantime the church was using unscriptural and anti-scriptural methods of support.

Truly this is an index to a greater evil. The church that makes a practice of the heretofore mentioned things is at a spiritual low. If we would stop playing church and get down to business for the Lord, money would be one of the minor problems of the church, if a problem at all.

### VII. INDEXES TO GREATER EVILS:

#### Report of Increase in "Juvenile Delinquency"

More and more we hear of increasing juvenile delinquency, that the youth of our land are leading us in crimes and sins. This is indeed shocking! But is there more than that which meets the eye? Is there some greater evil involved that goes deeper than that which we see? In this writer's estimation, there is an underlying problem of adult delinquency. If parents would be Christian parents as they should be, and train their children, we wouldn't have so many problems. But today divorce rates have skyrocketed. A child, whose life has been bruised by a broken home, has something missing in his life, and many times has a warped outlook on life itself. We are living in an age of rebellious wives and slacker husbands. Many women frown upon the thought that the place for a woman is in the home, and especially when she has children. Too many times children are left to roam the streets while both parents are at work, or away at pleasure. Then children are not taught in the way of the Lord, nor taken to church. As one woman's son was being executed as a criminal, we heard, she said that she couldn't understand what went wrong in her son's life, she had always sent him to church. Her very words reveal part of the trouble. . . she had not taken her son to church, but sent him. Yes, many times the real problem confronting us is adult delinquency. "Juvenile delinquency" is the aftermath of the degeneration of adult morality. When adults awaken to their sober responsibility in child rearing, discipline their children before they become unruly; when parents start behaving themselves like mature people, and teaching their children so, then delinquency will recede. Then encouragements to delinquency, such as the movies, drinking, and the dance, will vanish away. Truly "juvenile delinquency" is an index to a greater evil.—J. Gibbons □

# Mark Twain and Evolution

ONE OF the fallacies that has led to a belief in evolution is a failure to recognize that one cannot always project backwards on the basis of the current situation. Many evolutionists ignore the effect such would have on the formation of fossils, the origin of coal and soil and consequently reach conclusions that far miss the mark. In fact, Peter talks of those who argue that “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” and shows how it had led to wrong conclusions in his day (II Peter 3).

That great American humorist Mark Twain vividly points out that one cannot always know the past simply by looking at the present. The following is from his pen:

“Since my own day on the Mississippi, cutoffs have been made at Hurricane Island; at Island 100; at Napoleon, Arkansas; at Walnut Bend; and at Council Bend. These shortened the River, in the aggregate, 67 miles. In my own time, a cutoff was made at American Bend which shortened the River ten miles or more.

“Therefore, the Mississippi between Cairo and New Orleans was 1,200 miles long 176 years ago. It was 1,180 after the cutoff of 1772. It was 1040 after the American Bend cutoff. It has lost 67 miles since that time. Its present length is only 973 miles.

“Now if I want to be one of those ponderous scientific people, and ‘let on’ to prove what has occurred in the remote past by what has occurred in a given time in the recent past, or what will occur in the far future by what occurred in late years, what an opportunity is here! Geology never had such a chance, nor such exact data to argue from. Not ‘Development of the Species,’ either. Glacial epochs are great things, but they are vague.

“In the space of 176 years the lower Mississippi has shortened its self 240 miles. this is a trifle over one and one-third miles per year. Therefore, any calm person who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, the lower Mississippi was upwards of one million three miles long and stuck out over the Gulf of Mexico like a fishing rod. And by the same token, any person can see that 742 years from now the lower Mississippi will be only one and three quarters of a mile long, and that Cairo and New Orleans will have joined their streets together and be plodding along under a single mayor.

“There is something fascinating about ‘science.’ One gets such a wholesale return of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact.”—*Dan Jenkins* □

# An Amazing Story —AND IT IS A STORY—

A CHURCH was interviewing a prospective “candidate” as they were looking for a new preacher. One of the questions asked was, “What part of the Bible do you like best?” His reply, “I like the New Testament.” The interview continued, “What book in the New Testament?” “The book of Parables, sir,” was his response. Then this request followed, “Would you kindly relate one of these parables to this group?”

The uncertain “candidate” bluffed with this response: “Once upon a time a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, and the thorns grew up and choked him. And he went on and met the Queen of Sheba, and she gave that man a thousand talents of gold and silver and a hundred changes of raiment. And he got in his chariot and drove furiously, and when he was driving along under a sycamore tree, his hair got caught in a limb and left him hanging there. And he hang there many days and many nights, and ravens brought him food to eat and water to drink. And one night while he was hanging there asleep, his wife, Delilah, came along and cut off his hair, and he dropped and fell on the stony ground. And it began to rain, and it rained forty days and forty nights. And he hid in a cave. He went on and met a man who said, ‘Come in and take supper with me,’ but he said, ‘I can’t come for I have married a wife.’ And the man went out into the highways and byways and compelled him to come. He went on to Jerusalem and saw Queen Jezebel sitting high up in a window, and she saw him. He laughed and said, ‘Throw her down out of there.’ They threw her down seventy times seven times, and of the fragments they picked up twelve baskets full. Now whose wife was she in the judgment?”

The church marvelled at this man’s knowledge of the Bible and immediately voted to “hire” him, and everyone was very happy.—*Selected* □

# MORE WAYS THAN ONE

There are more ways than one, to deny our Lord,  
Just do nothing all day—don’t speak His Word.  
And when they curse and in vain take His name  
Just sit there—mouth closed, and share in their shame.  
And when they sit down—no thanks for their food  
Don’t bow your head—it might offend if you should.  
Do you think it is so bad that you might lose a friend  
Because you were a Christian right up to the end?  
Would you rather be lost, than to have it said  
That you lived for your Lord, and by Him were led?  
At the close of our lives there’s no turning around  
As we’ve lived so we die—and then to the ground.  
Now is the time to speak—live—and pray  
If we’d be with our God on the Great Judgment Day.  
So, make your decision while time’s on your side  
And live every day for the True Friend and Guide.

—By Lois McPhail

# While His Beer Commercials Were Playing

IT IS IRONIC that the Baseball Hall of Fame Honoree, Billy Martin, died as a result of the abuse of alcohol, while his beer commercials were still playing across America on TV.—*Letter* □

## ONE DAY AT A TIME

One day at a time, with its failures and fears,  
With its hurts and mistakes, with its weakness and tears,  
With its portion of pain and its burden of care;  
One day at a time we must meet and must bear.

One day at a time to be patient and strong;  
To be calm under trial and sweet under wrong;  
Then its toiling shall pass and its sorrow shall cease;  
It shall darken and die, and the night shall bring peace.

One day at a time—but the day is so long,  
And the heart is not brave, and the soul is not strong,  
O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way;  
Give courage and patience and strength for the day.

Swift cometh His answer, so clear and so sweet;  
“Yea, I will be with thee, thy troubles to meet;  
I will not forget thee, nor fail thee, nor grieve;  
I will not forsake thee; I never will leave.”

Not yesterday’s load we are called on to bear,  
Nor the morrow’s uncertain and shadowy care;  
Why should we look forward or back with dismay?  
Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day.

One day at a time, and the day is His day;  
He hath numbered its hours, though they haste or delay.  
His grace is sufficient; we walk not alone;  
As the day, so the strength that He giveth His own.

—Annie Johnson Flint

## A Child of a King

**THE JEWISH** people have a way of expressing their sense of distinctiveness—they are Jews; all others are Gentiles, which just means non-Jewish. If you are not a Jew, then no matter what your nationality you are a Gentile.

The Greeks too understood their cultural and intellectual distinctiveness. They called themselves Greeks and all others were barbarians which simply meant non-Greek; it applied to all who did not speak Greek and had not come under the influence of Greek culture and learning. A barbarian might be quite civilized but he was not a Greek. This language grew out of the Greek consciousness of themselves as a distinctive people, separated culturally and intellectually from all others.

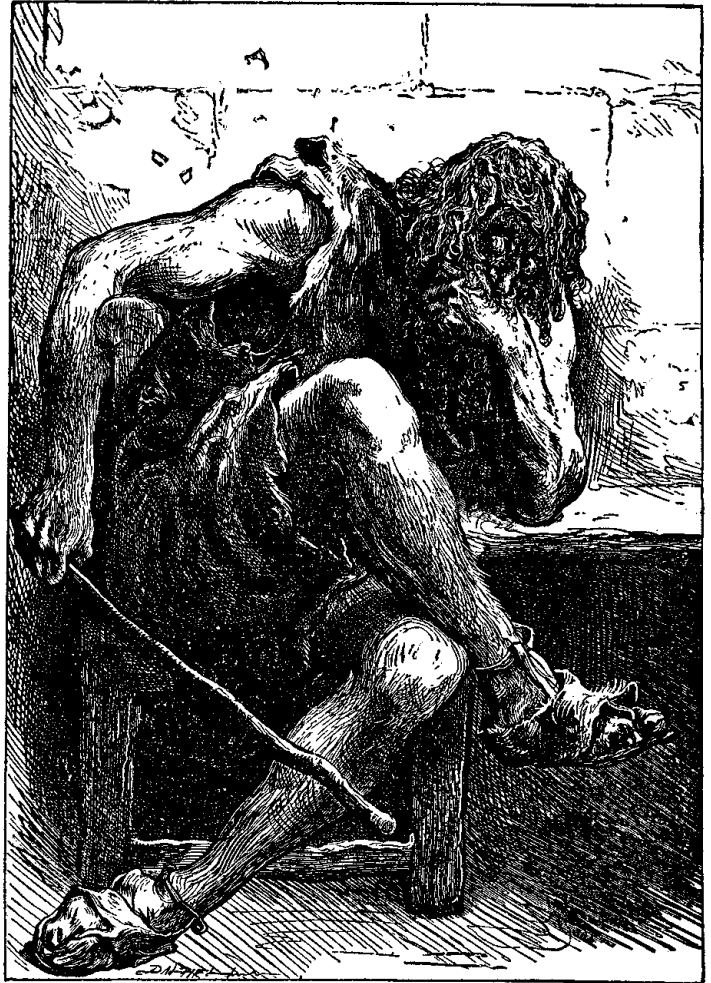
Christians are likewise a distinctive people—“an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people peculiarly belonging to God...the people of God” (I Peter 2:9,10). They belong to a class chosen by God before the world was (Ephesians 1:3-5). They are the saints—the *called* saints (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; where *called* is an adjective in Greek, not a verb), “the called ones belonging to Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:6; same construction). They were made saints by divine call (II Thessalonians 2:13,14).

It is important for Christians to have a sense of their distinctiveness—to understand that they are not like all the other people of the world. No doubt such a sense can be abused and perverted, and so it was by the Jews, who often came to feel contempt for others in the con-

sciousness of their own superiority, forgetting that they were a people of mission, chosen for a purpose, in fact for the sake of others (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Isaiah 43:7,10,12,21; Book of Jonah; Mark 2:16); judgment being something for the nations, from which they would certainly be exempt (Amos 5:18; Romans 2:1-3; and Amos 3:1,2 for how mistaken they were). But we can take warning from them and understand that what we are, we are by divine grace and divine call, and therefore have no ground for any pride in ourselves.

This understanding of who we are can have a positive influence, first in its demand upon our lives to walk worthily of our calling (Ephesians 4:1); to live “as becometh saints” (5:4); being “light in the Lord,” to “walk as children of light” (5:8). Listen to a king’s appeal to his son: “You are not peasant. You are the son of a king. So act like one.”

Finally, we are a people of mission. In the world but not of the world, yet we have a mission to the world. We are saved to save others; blessed to be a blessing. And if we are a special people, we have a special responsibility, for what we have we must share (Read especially I Peter 2:9 as compared with Isaiah 43:21



**Don’t let the giant of doubt, despair, and depression get you down (and dominate your life); trust the Almighty God, accept victory, and live it out in your life (accenting the positive and doing good)—VICTORY WILL BE YOURS! (Romans 8:31,35-39; Philip. 4:6-8,13; I John 4:4; 5:4)!**



in its context from verse 1). And so the consciousness of who we are demands that we live with a spirit of urgency. We are not animals, simply to live till we die. We are a people of purpose and mission.—*Selected* □

## The Lone Ember

**ONE COLD** winter's day a caller went out on behalf of Christ and the church to the home of a man who had not been faithful in his church attendance. As the two men talked they sat in front of the glowing embers of the fireplace.

The man who had been negligent regarding his faith said, "Well, I don't see what difference it makes whether I go to church or not. After all I can still be a Christian without going to church, can't I?"

The caller said not a word but took the poker from beside the fireplace and pushed one of the glowing embers out away from the other coals. That ember, being separated from the heat of the other coals, soon lost its glow and went out.

As the two sat there watching this lesson the host said thoughtfully, "Mmmm. Yes, I see what you mean. I'll be in the assembly next Sunday."—*Selected* □

## Just for Today

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life's problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said that, "Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will adjust myself to whatever is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes, and fit myself to it.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will exercise my soul two ways. I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit; not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will save myself from two pests. Hurry and indecision.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself, and relax. During this half-hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

**JUST FOR TODAY:** I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful; and to believe that as I give to the world. . .so the world will give to me.—*By Dr. William S. Hendrie* □

## Did You Know Methuselah Died in the Flood?

**DID YOU KNOW...** Methuselah died in the Flood? Well, we may not be absolutely certain, but everything points in that direction. He was 187 years old when he begat Lamech (Genesis 5:25). From that date, Lamech was 182 years when he begat Noah (verse 28) which made Methuselah 369. In Genesis 7:11 we learn that the great flood came when Noah was 600 years old. Add that all together and you have Methuselah 969 years old when the flood came, and the Scripture says he died at that age (Genesis 5:27). Does anything else shed light on this? Yes. It is not unreasonable to believe he died in the flood, for he was evidently unrighteous. When God determined to destroy mankind because of wickedness, it is only said Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (6:8). While Noah is recognized as righteous, no mention is made of his grandfather being so. Moreover, Noah's own father Lamech, was not so recognized. In fact, you can do a little calculating and find Lamech died only five years prior to the flood.

So, what does all this prove? Nothing really. But it does illustrate a point or two, viz. (1) age does not guarantee godliness; (2) a son or daughter can rise above the influences of bad upbringing; and (3) children can please God even if their parents refuse. It also illustrates that when we are faithful, God is interested in even a single individual or family, regardless of our "roots." He is concerned even if our ancestors were ungodly, or even wicked. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezekiel 18:20).—*Selected* □

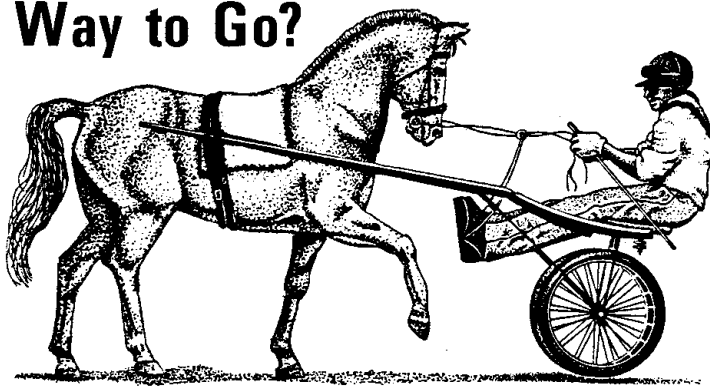
## Going to Get Even

**THE YOUNG BOY** rushed up to his daddy and said, "Dad, Tom did me wrong and I am going to get even with him if it's the last thing I do." The father scratched his head and then said, "Son, if you want to 'get even,' why not 'get even' with someone who has done something good to you?"—*Selected* □

### Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Exodus 3:1-10; 2. Exodus 4:1-5,17; 3. (1) Exodus 7:10; (2) Exodus 7:19-21; (3) Exodus 8:5,6; (4) Exodus 8:16-19; (5) Exodus 9:23-25; (6) Exodus 10:13-15; (7) Exodus 14:16; (8) Exodus 17:5,6; (9) Exodus 17:8-13; (10) Numbers 20:9-12; 4. (1) Exodus 4:6; (2) Numbers 12; (3) II Kings 5:1-14; (4) II Kings 5:20-27; (5) II Chronicles 26:16-21; 5. Numbers 21:4-9; 6. Exodus 16:11-26 (Numbers 11:31,32); Deuteronomy 8:2-4; 29:4; 7. Numbers 20:7-13; 8. Numbers 22; 9. Joshua 6; 10. (1) Joshua 10:12-14; (2) II Kings 20:8-11; 11. I Kings 13:1-6; 12. (1) I Kings 17:9-16; (2) I Kings 17:17-24; (3) I Kings 18:30-39; (4) I Kings 18:41-46; (5) II Kings 2:8; 13. (1) II Kings 2:14; (2) II Kings 3:11-20; (3) II Kings 4:1-7; (4) II Kings 4:18-37; (5) II Kings 4:38-44; (6) II Kings 5:1-14; (7) II Kings 5:20-27; (8) II Kings 6:1-7; (9) II Kings 6:8-25; (10) II Kings 13:20,21; 14. (1) I Kings 17:17-24; (2) II Kings 4:18-37; (3) II Kings 13:20,21; 15. Daniel 3 and 6.

# Confused About Which Way to Go?



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## This and That

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## “I Had a Dream”

I DREAMED I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to me, the other to the Lord. When the last scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest saddest times in my life. I questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, You said that once I decided to follow You, You would walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why in times when I needed You most, you would leave.” The Lord replied, “My precious child, I would never leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”—*Selected* ☐

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