

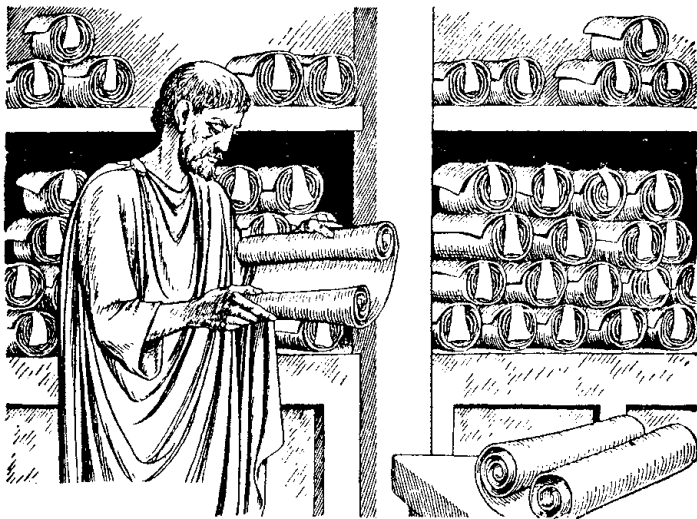
The Sword AND Staff

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

COMMENTARY AND EXHORTATION OVER ROMANS 8:26-39

• By JAMES E. GIBBONS

1535 Fairfield Drive—Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030



THE EPISTLE to the Romans is truly one of the great books of the Bible (all of the Bible is great!), and right at the heart of this wonderful book is the eighth chapter. Paul's crescendo of thought begins with chapter 1:16, and 17, when he said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile). For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Having made this dramatic declaration, he precedes to establish the definite need of this salvation of which he has spoken. After a careful consideration of fallen humanity, he will say, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Jew and Gentile alike). Whether under the law, or without law, man was made to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from

the body of this death?" (7:24). Human experience made emphatic man's hopelessness and crying need. Man needed to be saved from the guilt and power of sin. Paul comes back to the answer to this need by saying, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (8:1). There is victory in Jesus! By the grace of God through faith in Christ man can know total cleansing from his sins by the power of the blood of Christ. And cushioned by grace, with an obedience centered in the Holy Spirit, he can get the victory over sin.

Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christians can look forward to a glorious resurrection from the dead (8:11). But for the present our bodies are still under the curse of sin, which prompted Paul to say, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (8:22). Yes, this was true even of Christians who had the "firstfruits of the Spirit." But the situation in which they found themselves served a good purpose. It made them cry out for something better. It enhanced and made alive hope as they looked forward in anticipation to the redemption of their bodies (8:18-25). This hope produced patience.

With this in mind as a backdrop to our thoughts, we eagerly come to Romans 8:26-39. The crescendo of our interest and excitement intensifies even the more as we enter this exciting and choice section of Scripture.

"All Things Work Together for Good"

Paul now continues. **"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself**

(Continued on Page 3)

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...**

IT IS sad to say, but people who are always damning things (in curse words) will one day find themselves among the damned (in hell).

"Whoever has a heart full of love always has something to give."

Your life must relate to something greater than you are, or you will become a less person than you are.

"People are also judged by the company they keep away from."

Words are the vehicles of thought, and to understand the meaning of words is to understand the thought.

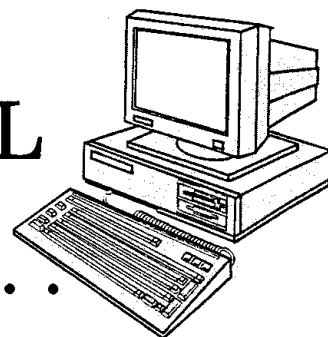
"It is possible to be so broadminded we cannot pass through the narrow gate."

Modern teachers can be so preoccupied with gimmicks, props, and aids to teaching that they never get around to doing much real teaching.

"Those that *ridicule* religion will thereby but make themselves *ridiculous* before all the world " (when the day of Judgment comes).

Instead of "putting others in their place" it would be better to put ourselves in their place.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS...



THIS AND THAT (AND THE OTHER)

The Purpose of This Publication. What this paper is all about, its purpose, is readily seen in what it is called, *The Sword and Staff*. This has reference to the Word of God. The Word of God is a sword of conquest and a staff of comfort to the Christian (and it should be so used too). It cuts and it soothes. Therefore, under the heading on the front page are found parts of two verses of Scripture: "Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2), and "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2). This paper is strictly a preaching/teaching publication (and that alone). We believe that the pure and unadulterated Word of God (in all of its fullness) is what is needed today (and always). We are aligned with no sectarian school of thought (always approaching the Word of God with a fresh outlook).

About Advertising, News Items, Etc. Hardly a month goes by without us receiving correspondence from someone wanting to put advertisements, announcements, news items, etc. in *The Sword and Staff* (although public statements of our policy have been made about this before). This paper is not a commercial endeavor, so paid advertisements are not solicited or accepted. And inasmuch as this paper is strictly limited to its mission of preaching/teaching (of the Word of God), announcements and news items involving church related activities (or people) are not solicited or accepted for publication. This doesn't mean that we are unsympathetic to your cause, but that it is simply outside of the scope of why we are getting out this paper. So, remember this. Again: This paper is strictly a preaching/teaching publication (and the news item in which we deal is the good news of the gospel of Christ). Okay?

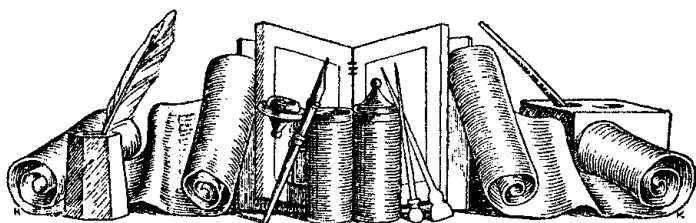
Widely Used Material Back in Print. There are two tracts (leaflets, booklets, or whatever you wish to call them) that we have that have been widely used and distributed, "Every Sunday?" and "What Must I Do to Be Saved?". The first concerns the Scripturalness and need of the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and the other, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" is simply loaded with relevant Scripture on this all important matter of salvation. Our supply of both of these titles had been depleted for sometime as we had to defer requests for them. We are now happy to say that they are back in print. Possibly you would like to make use of them too. The amount stated after each title is what is suggested as remittance to help with the cost of printing and mailing them to you ("Every Sunday?"—3 cents each;

"What Must I Do to Be Saved?"—7 cents each).

Rate of Postal Increase. Earlier this year we said that the postal rate had increased 25% for sending out this publication. Actually when we went to mail the paper, it was more like 33%! That is rather hefty, to say the least! For the time being (at least) this seems to have curtailed some of our aspirations in expanding this outreach for the LORD. And, yes, your support is much appreciated!

New Computer in Use. We are thankful for the new equipment used this time in getting out *The Sword and Staff*. Many things are in the process of being learned about its use, including the software. The paper has more of the "standard" look for us this time, as we have acquired the schoolbook type font (similar to the kind we had used before). We consider this type very readable. Also, we hope to eventually get our mailing system (at least the new addresses) set up on the computer.

Change of Address. It is much appreciated when you send a change of address when moving. Also, please send your old address along with the new address. Thank you. □



COMMENTARY AND EXHORTATION OVER ROMANS 8:26-39

(Continued from Page 1)

maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (8:26-28).

As we have just noticed, there is a groaning in the Christian in his present imperfect state, and his hope is thus enhanced as he looks forward to the redemption of his body (the new eternal body). This helps sustain him as he continues on life's rugged journey with patience. Likewise, there is another groaning going on within the Christian. Many times he is at a loss as to knowing "what" he should pray for as he "ought." That is when the Holy Spirit "helps" (and this does mean to help, he doesn't do it

all). He takes our sincere and earnest prayers, our yearnings, (perhaps ignorantly and improperly expressed, or not expressed at all) and correctly conveys the real message and need to the throne of grace through Christ. He puts it all within the range of the will of God.

That is the reason why Paul can now make such a positive declaration in verse 28. He had said, "**We know not** what we should pray for as we ought," but now can state with certainty that which we know: "And (but) **we know** that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." "We know"—this was common knowledge among the early Christians! God can orchestrate; yes, God can synchronize, all things that happen to us for good—good things, bad things, big things, little things. . . all things! Notice he didn't say that all things worked together for our comfort, our pampered pleasure, but for our good. God knows what is best for us as far as his purpose is concerned. Yes, he knows what is best, and he can take the most unlikely and adverse of circumstances and turn them into good. Joseph's heartless and jealous brothers sold him into slavery, leaving the impression with their heartbroken father that he was dead. It seemed such an awful thing that had happened. But the providential workings of an omniscient God were behind the scene. Years later when the whole world was engulfed in famine, Joseph was the man of the hour down in the land of Egypt saving lives (and preserving the Messianic line). Finally reunited and with his family in later years, he would say to his apprehensive brothers, "...Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20; 45:5-8). With the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen, the devil probably thought that he was really destroying the infant church in Jerusalem. But God had something else in mind. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Instead of there being only one church, and it largely confined to the city of Jerusalem, churches immediately "sprang up everywhere." Truth prevailed. The apostle Paul had a disturbing "thorn in the flesh" which he besought the Lord three times to remove. But the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness. . ." (II Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul's annoying physical handicap was used of God to keep him humble and to make him more dependent upon his Maker. God may not send the evil (James 1:13), but he can turn it around and make something good out of it. That is

(Continued on Next Page)

COMMENTARY AND EXHORTATION OVER ROMANS 8:26-39

(Continued from Previous Page)

the kind of God we worship. The things that happen in our lives may not be as obvious and pronounced as these Bible examples, but if we keep our faith (and love the Lord, realizing that we are called according to his purpose), he will make "all things work together for good." With James, let us "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations (various trials)" and likewise pray for wisdom that we may get the most good out of our experience (James 1:2-5). The worst thing that ever happened to us may be the best thing that ever happened to us if we don't let it get the best of us. God can orchestrate "all things" together for good. Let us believe this and be resigned to his will.

Foreknown, Predestinated, Called, Justified, and Glorified

To these wonderful truths that have thrillingly captured our imagination, the scope of thought is enlarged and expanded even further to the most profound and mind-boggling of concepts. Yes, there are things that we don't know, but God knows (and the unique ministry of the Holy Spirit assures us of this). Then because God knows, we can know. Yes, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." As if this amazing truth were not enough, Paul unveils eternity for the next. God was cognizant of the Christian before time began. More than that, in one panoramic view he sees everything as if it had already been accomplished. **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"** (8:29,30). Truly, "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

Five separate and distinct words stand out here in reference to what God did (and is doing): (1) *foreknow*; (2) *predestinate*; (3) *called*; (4) *justified*; and (5) *glorified*. God, the great I AM, is from everlasting to everlasting without beginning or ending of days. He is not hemmed in by time. He sees the beginning and the end, as far as man is concerned, all in one sweep. All who will be Christians, which is involved in being called and justified, has not fully taken place yet. And being "glorified," although spoken of in the past tense, will not take place until the resurrection. But from God's vantage point he sees whatever will be as if it had already been accomplished (his knowledge is

that complete). But these five things that God is spoken of as doing in reference to Christians are separate and distinct. Even as the calling and justification are decidedly different things from being glorified (which has not taken place yet), the first two mentioned (foreknow and predestinate) are separate matters also, one taking place before the other. Keep that in mind and it will help us better understand what is being said here.

First, it says that God *foreknew*. From our earthly point of reference, we believe that God knows everything that is, everything that has been, everything that will be, and he even knows what might have been (Isaiah 40:28; Matthew 10:29,30; 12:36; I Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 11:21,23). That being the case, when it says that God foreknew, this includes everything. Peter says that we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained (*proegnoscmenu*, literally foreknown) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:19,20). If Christ was foreknown before the creation of the world as the lamb of God to take away our sins, that means that God foreknew man would sin (and the whole plan of redemption was formulated from eternity). Here in Romans 8:29, it says "whom he did foreknow." As the words that follow indicate, he is talking about every Christian. This lamb of God that Peter says was foreknown from the foundation of the world was presented on the banks of the Jordan by John the Baptist as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John 3:16 reads, "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." And of this omniscient God who foreknows all, Paul writes, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). So, back to our Romans 8:29 consideration, when it says "whom he foreknew, he also did *predestinate*," we must conclude that he is talking about the "whosoever will" who of their own volition and free will would become Christians (and consequently "be conformed to the image of his Son"). As we said, keep in mind that "foreknew" and "predestinate" are separate and distinct actions. First he foreknew, and then he predestinated. He didn't predestinate, and then foreknow. In other words, contrary to the extreme Calvinistic view (in essence), he didn't decide to create man with the express purpose of a certain number pegged to go to heaven and a certain number to go to hell (and then, secondly, irrevocably decide who they would be). The foreknowledge comes

first. Predestination is not a matter of arbitrary decree, but of foreknowledge. And, hence, the apostle Peter says in I Peter 1:2 that we are "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied." How amazing!



And now, consequently, in Romans 8:30 Paul continues, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Those that God foreknew as accepting the gospel, and thus are dubbed as his "elect," are now called, justified, and glorified. It is not some mysterious and irresistible call of the secret ones that God has especially created to go to heaven, in contrast with those poor creatures that were only brought into being to burn in hell; NO! It is in response to the appeal of the universal gospel that was to be preached to "every creature" (Mark 16:15,16). Even as Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 2:14). If the New Testament teaches anything, it teaches that God is no respecter of persons. "Whosoever will" may come. Yes, God "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9b). This calling is not irrevocable, overriding the will of man, for Peter admonished, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:10,11). Yes, how wonderful to be justified from all of our sins in the sight of God and eventually to be glorified in the new resurrection body.

Notice again. Called, justified, and glorified are in the past tense. Plainly all who will ever respond to the call of the gospel to be justified from their sins have not done so yet. And the glorification will not take place until the resurrection. But in the context of the mind of God (in the setting and from the per-

spective of timeless eternity) everything is seen as if it has already happened. That is why there can be such a thing as prophecy, foretelling that which is to be before it actually comes to pass. God does not necessarily and arbitrarily decree everything that will come to pass, but he foreknows (and it is as good as done). How utterly amazing!

"What Shall We Then Say to These Things?"

These astounding and wonderful truths are mind-boggling and overwhelm us, to say the least. But we shouldn't let them baffle us. Just believe them and accept their marvelous implications. Looking back in Romans 11:33, Paul will later exclaim, "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Although so many things are beyond our finite grasp as human beings, Paul is quick to respond with a series of questions that bring out the consoling and practical outworkings of these wonderful truths. Listen to him now.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:31-39).

"What shall we then say to these things?" (8:31a). In the book of Romans this is Paul's cue that expanded thought on the subject he is treating is at hand (3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14). And the successive questions following this bring out the thought here.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (8:31b). If God is on our side (or better, if we are on God's side), regardless how many may be on the other side, we have a "majority." That being the case, no one can ultimately prevail against us. It is glaringly evident that God is for the Christian. This has been

(Continued on Next Page)

COMMENTARY AND EXHORTATION OVER ROMANS 8:26-39

(Continued from Previous Page)

made emphatic by the profound truths that Paul has brought to light. God makes all things work together for good to them that really love him (and such are known to him from eternity as his very own). And to further highlight this reassuring truth, Paul makes a statement that turns into another question. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" (8:32). If God would go so far as to give the greatest of gifts, the supreme sacrifice of his Son, to accomplish our salvation, he will not hesitate to give whatever we need (which would be immeasurably less) to sustain this salvation. In reality all other gifts would be included in the gift of his Son. Peter tells us that God "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). May we then never feel defeated or alone. God is for us!

More questions (and more answers): "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?...Who is he that condemneth?..." (8:33a,34a). Yes, who? Is it possible? On earth, men may attempt to bring charges against us; in heaven, angels (and in particular, the devil, whose name means slanderer). The devil tried to bring charges against Job before God (Job 1 & 2). Revelation 12:10 says, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night." In that final day of Judgment, who can successfully bring charges against real Christians? Paul said, "It is God that justifieth." And in answering the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" he said, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Yes, he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," 4:25). If the Judge of the court of heaven is for us (even vindicates and justifies us), and his Son personally represents us before this court, really who is he that can condemn us? Christ died to take away our sins, and God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17). Fantastic! "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). What a wonderful position it is in which Christians find themselves! Amen!

Now comes the climaxing question and the cli-

THE FIRST AND THE LAST



maxing answer. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?..." (8:35a). In the extension of this question that follows he gives a series of crushing, harsh, and related experiences that might make them wonder if God had actually forsaken them. "...Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Had God forsaken them in the midst of these terrible experiences, some even resulting in death (the sword perhaps anticipating Paul's own death)? "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (8:36). Sheep not only are led through green pastures, sometimes they are slaughtered. Did this mean that the Christian had been forsaken by his Lord and that his faith had only brought him to a fateful and an untimely end?

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (8:37). What a strange mentality (the world would say)! Paul declares that we are more than conquerors (and in the face of death and dying, looked upon by the world as the ultimate defeat). This forceful expression, "more than conquerors," actually is one word in the Greek language, *hupernikomen*. In this word we see the prefix, *hyper*, which means above or over (or the obvious secondary meaning, super; hence, "more" as in "more than conquerors"). In the rest of the word we see the basic stem, *nike* (victory). So Paul dog-

matically and triumphantly proclaims that Christians are over-victors; that they are super-victorious. They are excessive in victory as they tower triumphantly over all. Paul will later carry this figure of military and athletic victory to its conclusion in II Timothy 4:6-8 (having reference to himself as he is facing death). "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This "crown" that he was looking forward to receiving is represented by the word *stephanos*. This originally was the victory crown (or garland of flowers or leaves) worn by the conquering military leaders in their victory parades (and carried over today in the stylized olive leaves on the hats of military officers). The one who won the race in the Grecian games likewise received such a coveted crown. It all symbolized victory. And that is what Paul is talking about when he looks forward to receiving the crown. The Lord said in Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown (*stephanos*, the victory crown) of life." We are more than conquerors! Victory is ours through Christ!

Paul continues (and now concludes) as he states his settled conviction in Romans 8:38 and 39. Let us listen intensely. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." We will not make an effort to elaborate upon each, or any, of these things in particular, but all (whether actual or not) seem to be presented as persons. Personification or animation (i.e., "creature") is involved. All together they seem to encompass most anything, or everything, imaginable that is *external* to the Christian. None of them are "able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Only we ourselves can do this as we sin and continue in sin (James 1:14-16; 5:19,20; Isaiah 59:1,2). But still, in a sense, although sin separates us from God, as long as the breath of life is in us we are not separated from the potential of his great love. He wants us to repent. How wonderful to know that God loves us so intensely through Christ.

In I Corinthians 3:21-23 Paul goes beyond stating the negative in reference to God's love as he has done in Romans 8:38 and 39 (where we have seen what all of these things cannot do). In Corinthians

the positive is asserted in connection with such things. Let us hear Paul. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ's is God's." Different factions in the church at Corinth were claiming the different preachers as their own personal possession as they identified themselves by their names ("I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas..." 1:12; 3:4). Paul lets them know that the preachers belonged to the whole church. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours." First he says, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas..." (yes, they belonged to all of them for the common good of all the church). He enlarges upon the concept: "...or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." All things, everything, should be looked upon by the Christian as his servant, or servants, in the cause of Christ to accomplish the purpose of God in his life (the glory of God). He should not look upon himself as the victim of any circumstance, but the circumstance should be considered as a challenge to this end. "For all things are yours." Yes, even death itself should serve to bring glory to God (John 21:19), and at the same time being a servant of the Christian otherwise. It will serve to remove us from this veil of wrath and tears to usher us into the very presence of God and eventually all of the wonderful things he has in store for them that love him. What a concept! With such a belief a Christian can be nothing less than victorious (any way you look at it). Just keep your faith and the right attitude. Yes, "in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Concluding Remarks

IN THE LIGHT of all of these wonderful truths in Romans 8:26-39, how wonderful to be a Christian! How reassuring to know that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." What a mind-boggling truth to understand that God knows all about us from eternity, and from this vantage point see us "glorified" in heaven. Consequently, "if God be for us, who can be against us"! (Oh, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"). How wonderful! We are no longer under condemnation, and who is he that can condemn us? And to know that nothing external to us can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"! We are "more than conquerors" in Christ! Victory is ours! "Blessed assurance; Jesus is mine." With such consolation of the soul, let us press on. Heaven will surely be our home. Amen! □

Titles of Our Lord

THE NEW TESTAMENT lists at least 99 titles or metaphors attributed to our Lord. They range all the way from "Advocate" to "Word of God." The fact that there are around 100 of these descriptions given is not nearly as impressive as the fact that all tell us something of the character of the Christ—that they are appropriately descriptive.

While most of us go through life filling several different roles, none but Christ can be said to fill the needs of all men. Whatever man's vocation, or avocation, he cannot say that Christ doesn't understand him. The many terms used to describe the Lord belie this. He indeed does understand men—all men. That does not mean that he approves of all our actions, or that he would have ever succumbed to some of them, but he does understand them.

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:5).

He is a path, if any be misled.

He is a robe, if any naked be.

If any chance to hunger, he is bread.

If any be a bondman, he is free.

If any be but weak, how strong is he!

To dead men life he is, to sick men, health.

To blind men he is sight, and to the needy, wealth.

A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.—*Giles Fletcher, Jr.*

Not only is Christ all things to all men, he is what man needs rather than what man wants. Knowing our needs even better than we know them, he fulfills them as only he can.

Because we children of Adam want to be great

HE BECAME SMALL.

Because we are always seeking to climb higher

HE STEPPED DOWN.

Because we will not stoop

HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF.

Because we want to rule

HE CAME TO SERVE.

—*Leroy Sedgwick* □

Giving in Secret

CHARLES SPURGEON and his wife according to a story in *The Chaplain* magazine, would sell, but refused to give away, the eggs their chickens laid. Even close relatives were told, "You may have them if you pay for them." As a result some people labeled the Spurgeons greedy and grasping.

They accepted the criticisms without defending

themselves. Only after Mrs. Spurgeon died was the full story revealed: All the profits from the sale of eggs went to support two elderly widows. Because the Spurgeons were unwilling to let their left hand know what the right hand was doing (Matthew 6:3) they endured the attacks in silence.—*Selected* □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

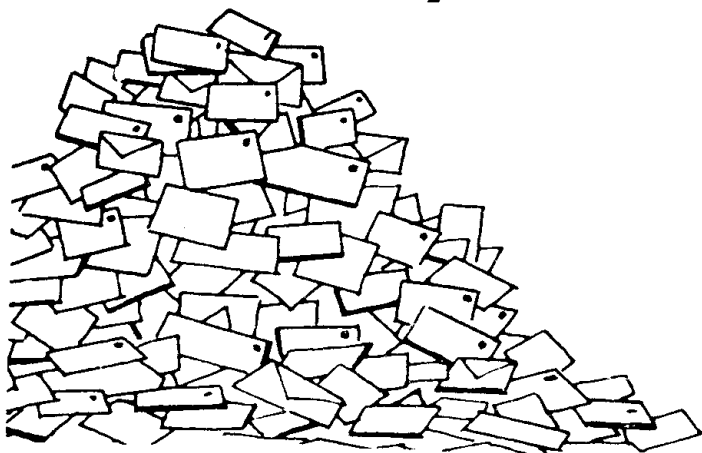
(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who in the Bible "fell from grace" but didn't backslide?
2. What man is said to have "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"?
3. What was the size of the ark that God commanded Noah to build?
4. How old was Moses when he died and where (and by whom) was he buried?
5. What was the circumstances under which the feast of the Passover was instituted, and why was it called the "passover"?
6. In an Israelite family, in comparison with the rest of the children, what portion of the inheritance did the first-born son get?
7. What woman was barren, and having prayed for and been given a son, gave him to the LORD as long as he lived (and what was the son's name)?
8. Which prophet had an unfaithful wife, yet he loved her, which typified Israel and God's love for Israel?
9. How many years did Jeremiah say the land of Judah would be desolate and the people be in Babylonian Captivity (and in particular why that number of years)?
10. According to the book of Proverbs, what is the beginning of wisdom?
11. What prompted Jesus to say to Martha that Mary had chosen the "good part" (and what was it)?
12. How many times is the word "church" found in the gospels, and where are the references?
13. What two members of the Sanhedrin, that great counsel of the Jews (their highest court), were sympathetic toward Jesus?
14. In the book of Acts what person did the apostle Peter raise from the dead, and what person did the apostle Paul raise from the dead?
15. How had Paul learned about the divisions in the church at Corinth, and who else from Corinth had visited him at Ephesus?
16. What was the name of the violent storm which made shipwreck of the vessel in which Paul was being carried to Rome as a prisoner?
17. What brother in Christ from the church at Colosse visited Paul while he was a prisoner at Rome?
18. What is the definition of faith found in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1?
19. As salutations are being given at the end of the epistle of I Peter, what person gives his greetings whom Peter calls his "son"?
20. In one of his epistles John said that he had "no greater joy than to hear" what?

(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 THE SWORD AND STAFF. The dignified and soundly doctrinal format has been a blessing to my wife and me.*

"I am 76 years old—your literature takes me back to an age of Scriptural soundness too often overlooked in today's Babel of voices. Keep up the good work.

"May the Lord's blessing rest on. . .the ministry in which you are engaged."

VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please send THE (1989-1990) SWORD AND STAFF in book form.*

"We hope you will be able to print THE SWORD AND STAFF for many more years. We always look forward to getting it. . .

"Best wishes in Christ."

TENNESSEE:

■ *"Thanks again for the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I thoroughly enjoy the scope of topics covered, as well as the intensive analysis which supports the final conclusion(s). . .*

"Enclosed is a contribution to assist you with expenses. It's a privilege to be able to support THE SWORD AND STAFF publication. We need more such publications that are dedicated to Biblical truths.

"Thanks again for your continuing dedication. May God bless you and yours."

KENTUCKY:

■ *"Sirs, please delete from your mailing list. Thank you."*

OHIO:

■ *"I have recently read a couple copies of THE SWORD AND STAFF and words cannot describe the blessing I received.*

"I was beginning to believe that I was the only conservative left. Thank God there are others.

"I wondered how I might be able to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF on a regular basis.

"Please continue the good work."

■ *"It has been some time since I have sent you some help with your paper. I have appreciated receiving it through the years. Please keep up the good work. May God bless and keep you and yours."*

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ *"Thanks for publishing such clear encouragement to stay true to the Word. . ."*

MICHIGAN:

■ *"Please take us off your mailing list. Thank you."*

INDIANA:

■ *"Thank you for sending THE SWORD AND STAFF all these years even though we have not done our part in helping to pay for it. We appreciate your stand on the TRUTH. God bless you in your effort to teach the gospel to all the world.*

"I have enclosed a check. . .to help in the publication of THE SWORD AND STAFF.

"Thank you very much."

IOWA:

■ *"Please take this name off your mailing list. Thank you!"*

TEXAS:

■ *"Please mail to me at address enclosed 1985-86 bound volumes. Also 1987-88 bound volumes. Please find check enclosed. . .use what is left to keep getting out THE SWORD AND STAFF. You are a gifted writer, and I appreciate very much what you are doing. You tell it like it is, and, OH, if we had many more that would do that in our wicked world today. May God richly bless you as you keep doing His will."*

CALIFORNIA:

■ *"Please send bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF (1989-1990) to the address below. Also please send THE SWORD AND STAFF for another year. I'm enclosing check for same.*

"I've learned so much from reading THE SWORD AND STAFF and do hope you keep up the good work.

"Thank you so much."

GHANA:

■ *"My warmest greetings to you in Christ's name. I am a regular receiver of your soul winning magazine. . .I cannot thank you enough for what the paper has done for me. I enjoy reading it and it encourages me tremendously in my teaching and preaching work. . ." □*

If the mentality of a lot of modern church "leaders" had been that of Noah, he would have built a gymnasium instead of an ark (and Christ would have started a bakery instead of the church).

Mr. Nic O. Demus

IN THE THIRD chapter of the gospel of John we read a story of a man named Mr. Nic O. Demus. Now Mr. Nic O. Demus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a very religious group of people that lived during the time of Christ. This man, being religious, went to see Jesus. He thought it best to go by night. He knew that the rest of the Pharisees would not approve of this meeting because they did not agree with Jesus' teaching.

Mr. Nic O. Demus' first statement to Jesus was, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." At this point, Jesus could have asserted himself and said, "Yes, I am from God, and I am the only begotten Son of God. No other man in the world can do the things I do or the things that I am going to do." Jesus, however, did not say this. He got right to the point. He didn't make any small talk. He told Mr. Nic O. Demus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

At this point, Mr. Nic O. Demus was confused. He questioned Jesus, "...How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus explained how a man could be born again. He said to Mr. Nic O. Demus, "...Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus told Mr. Nic O. Demus what he had to do to enter the kingdom of God, and he told him in very simple, easy to understand language.

Today, some people are much like Mr. Nic O. Demus. They may not understand what they have to do to become a Christian. Since there are people like Mr. Nic O. Demus, there should be people like Jesus, who are willing to tell them the truth. They need to be told that they must be born of the water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Just in case there is a Mr. Nic O. Demus that comes to you in the night, and you know that he or she is not a Christian, maybe you could let them know how to become one. You could tell them that they must:

- (1) First, **HEAR** the Word (Romans 10:17).
- (2) Next, they must **BELIEVE** that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 16:16).
- (3) Then, they must **REPENT** of all of their sins (Acts 2:38).
- (4) Next, they must **CONFESS** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37).
- (5) They must be **BAPTIZED** (immersed in water) to wash away all sin and to receive God's Spirit within them (Romans 6:1-4; Acts 2:38).

(6) They must **ARISE TO WALK IN A NEW WAY OF LIFE** (I John 5:3).—**Hank Ballinger** □

The Sign of the Fish

THERE it was etched, or more like it was crudely chiseled, on a section of one of the stone streets that still provided a way through the dilapidated ruins and debris of ancient Ephesus. In outline form, there was that which plainly represented a fish and a wagon wheel. The Turkish guide said that this had been a message left by departing Christians for other Christians, the fish representing Christ and the wheel indicating that they were going elsewhere. And still, even today, Christians remember and associate the sign of the fish with Christianity.

What is the significance of this? Actually, the letters from the Greek word for fish were used by the early Christians as sort of an acrostic, having reference to great cardinal truths in connection with Christ and Christianity. The word for fish is *ἰχθῦς* (*ichthus*), made up of five letters from the Greek alphabet. Following you see the word acrostically arranged and what each letter stands for:

- I** = *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iesous*), Jesus
- X** = *Χριστός* (*Christos*), Christ
- Θ** = *Θεός* (*Theos*), God
- Υ** = *Υἱός* (*Huios*), Son
- Σ** = *Σωτήρ* (*Soter*), Savior

How interesting that a lowly fish could be used to represent such wonderful truths! Would you have thought that the word for fish could be so full of weighty meaning?—**J.E.G.** □

Open Barn Door Mentality

MODERN MAN prides himself in having an open mind (or at least this seems to be the case in certain academic circles). However, the mentality of this so-called open mind is much like an old barn door that has been left open all winter long. For the purpose which doors are made it should have been closed at times, as well as opened. By remaining open all winter the hinges have become rusted (and the position of the door has been frozen). The screeching stiffness makes it evident that closing the door now is almost impossible. Likewise, this is true with the human mind. If we have an open mind, and have no concept of absolutes (looking at everything as relative), ultimate truth will be hard to recognize. We will find it almost impossible to close the open door. We will forget what doors are for. They close as well as open.—**J.E.G.** □

SNAKEBITE!



HERE in Tennessee we have some dangerous snakes. The timber rattlers, copperheads, and cottonmouths are, of course, poisonous. And people do from time to time get snakebite. The best way to avoid snakebite is to stay away from snakes, but that isn't always easy to do.

In the book of Numbers (Numbers 21:4-9) we read of God's people getting snakebite. Why? "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people: and much people of Israel died" (Numbers 21:5 & 6).

These people then admitted that they had sinned in speaking against God and Moses, so they told Moses to pray. Moses did pray, but God didn't take the serpents away from them at this time. He did tell Moses what to do though, so that anyone bitten by one of the serpents could look upon a serpent of brass (which God told Moses to make and set upon a pole) and live. Can you see the lesson here? You can't escape the consequences of sin. You reap what you sow. You may beat your wife until she leaves you and gets a divorce. If you repent and are truly converted that does not mean that you will automatically get your wife back. You're still divorced. If you get angry at someone and "pop a cap" on them and then you realize what you've done and truly repent of this murder, that person is not less dead. Even though the Lord forgives you, you would probably still rot in a jail cell. If you drink booze for 30 years and then become a Christian, that won't stop you from having cirrhosis of the liver. If

you smoke for 40 years then *quit* that won't keep you from having lung cancer. These people spoke against God. You can't do wrong and get by!

God's people were told the cure for their snakebite—look and live! What if someone said, "I believe God will cure me without looking at the brass serpent?" A snake on a stick can't save you! All I have to do to be cured is to believe. There's no reason a reptile of brass would have anything to do with curing snakebite. God is so good and kind and merciful, as long as I'm sincere I don't have to look. All I have to do is believe and I'll be healed. That wouldn't work then and it won't today. We must obey! Notice two things about this account: 1. Prayer didn't directly save them. 2. Faith only would not heal either. Now notice a third thing, obedience would bring the healing.

Satan is called "that Old Serpent" (Revelation 20:2). And since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), we have all been snakebite one way or another. But there is a cure for this kind of snakebite. Read John 3:14 & 15. The serpent in the wilderness was a type of Jesus hanging on the cross. As the brazen serpent was lifted up, even so Jesus must be lifted up so those who have been bitten can look and live. If you are lost, then simply "asking Jesus to come into your heart" won't get the job done. Now pray to God, but you can't substitute it for obedience. You must look to Jesus! And Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

If you look at II Kings 18:1-4 we find that the serpent of brass was destroyed. Why? Because the Jews had started worshipping the serpent of brass rather than the God of heaven. We should not worship the cross on which Jesus died, but rather the Christ who died on the cross.

Some have been bitten by the serpent of strong drink. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23:31 & 32).

Moses showed us what to do when there's a snake around. God spoke to Moses from the burning bush about Moses' "rod." And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent and Moses fled from before it" (Exodus 4:3). Flee from the serpents!

I came upon a snake one day. I ran one way and the reptile went the other. That snake might have been scared of me, but no more than I was of him. He might have been afraid I would smother him

(Continued on Next Page)

SNAKEBITE! *(Continued from Previous Page)*

with heel dust. We need to stay away from the fangs of alcohol. We've been warned about wine, it bites like a snake. Alcohol makes some people walk, it makes them talk, it makes them crawl on their belly like a reptile. It makes them stagger like a three-legged elephant. It makes them sick as a dog and puke like a buzzard! It makes them clumsy as a tricycle, and yet they don't have enough sense to stay away from it.

I still say the best way to keep from getting snakebite is to stay away from snakes. Watch out for those human snakes (Matthew 12:34; Matthew 23:33). There are a lot of snakes out there. One snake-in-the-grass is all it takes. Watch out for alcohol, it's a cobra! Sex sin is as deadly as a rattlesnake. Gossip is like a copperhead—don't get involved in it. Greed is like a boa constrictor, and it will choke the spiritual life right out of you. Stay out of the high weeds of temptation, and you won't be as likely to get bit. But if that old serpent gets hold of you, do like the apostle Paul and shake it off into the fire (Acts 28:3-5)—**Lowell Green** □

The Sluggard

1. **THE SLUGGARD HAS LOTS OF EXCUSES...** The slothful man in Proverbs 22:14 says, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets." Proverbs 20:4 says, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

2. **THE SLUGGARD SLEEPS TOO MUCH...** "How long wilt thou sleep, o sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (Proverbs 6:9). "As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed" (Proverbs 26:14).

3. **THE SLUGGARD NEGLECTS HIS WORK...** "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down..." (Proverbs 24:30,31).

4. **THE SLUGGARD ALWAYS WANTS MORE THAN HE CAN PAY FOR...** "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not" (Proverbs 21:25,26). Chapter 13 and verse 4 also makes this point: "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

5. **THE SLUGGARD IS ALWAYS BORED...** "The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it

grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth" (Proverbs 26:15).

6. **THE SLUGGARD THINKS HE IS SMARTER THAN THE REST...** "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Proverbs 26:16).

7. **THE SLUGGARD IS ALWAYS IN TROUBLE...** "The way of the slothful man is an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain" (Proverbs 15:19).

8. **THE SLUGGARD ALWAYS HAS MONEY AND WORK PROBLEMS...** Proverbs 12:24 says, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute." Paul wrote that Christians were not to be "slothful in business" (Romans 12:11).—**G. Seaton** □

Beatitudes of Mother

BLESSED is the mother who understands her children, for she shall inherit a kingdom of memories.

BLESSED is the mother who knows how to comfort, for she shall possess her children's devotion.

BLESSED is the mother who guides by the path of righteousness, for she shall be proud of her offspring.

BLESSED is the mother who is never shocked, for she shall receive confidences.

BLESSED is the mother who teaches respect, for she shall be respected.

BLESSED is the mother who emphasizes the good and minimizes the bad, for in like manner her children themselves make evaluations.

BLESSED is the mother who treats her children as she would be treated, for her home shall be filled with happiness.

BLESSED is the mother who has character strong enough to withstand the inconsiderate remarks and resentments of the growing child for again, in due time, she shall be honored.

—**Selected** □

Never Chase a Lie

"**NEVER** chase a lie. Let it alone and it will run itself to death. I can work out a good character much faster than anyone can lie me out of it."

—**Henry Ward Beecher**

"**I WILL** not permit any man to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him"

—**Booker T. Washington**

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS (Supportive of Calvinism?)

● By Philip Y. Pendleton

AS THIS NINTH CHAPTER of Romans is the stronghold of Calvinism, the arsenal of that disappearing remnant who believe in eternal foreordination according to the absolute decree of the sovereign will of God, we feel that a word ought to be said about the doctrinal trend of its sections. We therefore submit a few points.

1.

It is rather odd that this chapter should be used to prove salvation by election when, so far as it bears on election at all, it is wholly an effort to justify God in casting off an elect people (Jews) and choosing a non-elect people (Gentiles). If, therefore, the chapter as a whole teaches anything as to arbitrary election, it is plainly this, that those who depend upon God to show partiality in electing some and condemning others, will either be disappointed as were the Jews, or surprised as were the Gentiles, for election will never work out as they suppose. For, after showing favor to Abraham's seed for nineteen hundred years, God adjusted the balances, and, turning from Jews to Gentiles, made the first last, and the last first; the elect, non-elect; and the non-elect, elect. And now, the non-elect, having enjoyed the favors and privileges for a like term of nineteen hundred years, are now being called to account, and will (or may), in their turn be cut off. But if they are, it will be wholly their own fault, just as the rejection nineteen hundred years ago was by Israel's fault, and not by arbitrary decree of God.

2.

Moreover, Paul is not discussing salvation, or foreordination as to eternity. [In this chapter we see election in God choosing between Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob; and next between a third pair, Moses and Pharaoh. These elections had nothing to do with salvation. Although Isaac was God's elect, he blessed both Isaac and Ishmael. In the second case, Jacob was blessed as the Messianic line, he would "rule" over his brother, but both experienced material blessings. In the third case, he granted favor to Moses, and meted out punishment to Pharaoh (who already was a wicked heathen), bringing glory to his name]. As stated, Paul is not discussing salvation, or foreordination in reference to eternity. There is not one word on that subject in the entire ninth chapter. The apostle is introducing no new doctrine, no un-

heard-of and strange enormity like Calvinism. "The difficulty," as Olshausen aptly puts it, "and obscurity of the whole section before us are diminished when we reflect that it by no means contains anything peculiar; since the same ideas which so startle us in reading it, are also expressed throughout the whole of the Old as well as the New Testament. It is only their conciseness, their bold and powerful utterance, that lends them, as it were, an unprecedented appearance here." The apostle is speaking of the bestowal of temporal advantages and benefits, and is showing that these, even when relating to Messianic privileges, are bestowed according to God's free will—they have to be! . . . Now, as God gave a promise to Eve, the same law of necessity made it compulsory that he choose arbitrarily what household should be the repository of that promise and thus perpetuate a lively expectation of its fulfillment. God therefore first chose the Chaldees among the nations, then, as second choice, he elected Abraham among the Chaldees; third, he chose Isaac from Abraham's seed, and, fourth, Jacob from Isaac's offspring. Up to this time there was a marked *separation*, both spiritual and geographical, between the elect and the non-elect, so that there was no confusion in anybody's mind as to the inherent exclusiveness of election. But with Jacob a change came. His sons all dwell together, and during his lifetime till his last sickness no election was announced as to them until on his deathbed Jacob gave Judah the pre-eminence (Genesis 49:8-12). But Moses passes over this pre-eminence (Deuteronomy 33:7) and there was no segregation of Judah. In fact, other tribes seem to have overshadowed Judah in importance, notably that of Levi, all of whom were set apart as Levites for God's service, and of which tribe also came Moses the law-giver and Aaron the father of the priesthood. Moreover, many of the great judges came from other tribes, and the house of Benjamin furnished the first king. This community of interest, this privilege of enjoying the appurtenances and collaterals of election, should have taught Israel the *blessing promised* was greater, wider and more gracious than the mere privilege of being the repository of that blessing, but, instead, it begot in them the mistaken idea that all the twelve tribes were elect. So, indeed, they were as to possessing the land, but they were not elect as to being repositories of the Messianic promise, which honor was first limited to Judah (I Chronicles 5:2) and afterwards to the house of David (II Samuel 7:12; Micah 5:2; John 7:42). Now, this is what Paul is discussing. With him it is a question of fixing a promise so that men may watch for its fulfillment in

(Continued on Next Page)

THE NINTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS

(Continued from Previous Page)

a certain race and family—a promise which, when fulfilled, brings blessings and benefits not confined to any race or family, but open and free to all who accept them, and denied to all who refuse and reject them, yea, even to the very race and family which have been the age-long repositories of the promise. And the point of Paul's whole argument is this: As God was absolutely free to choose who should be the repositories of the promise, so is he absolutely free to fix the terms by which men shall enjoy the blessings promised, even if those terms (because of rebellion against them on the part of the repositories) work out the failure of the repositories to enjoy the blessing so long held by them in the form of unfulfilled promise. And what has all this to do with electing infants to eternal damnation (as in extreme Calvinism)? No more than the election which makes one child of one race and another of another, when both are born at the same moment. In short, *no temporal election, no matter how blessed, included salvation to the elect or necessitates damnation upon the non-elect*, for it is apparent to all that the election of the Gentiles as repositories of Christian truth does not save half of them, and the rejection of the Jews from this holy office damns none of them. Salvation is accorded the Jew who believes as freely as it is to the Gentile, and the unbelieving Gentile is damned with the unbelieving Jew, and rests under heavier condemnation because he sins against greater temporal privileges and advantages. In either case the temporal advantage or disadvantage will be duly considered in forming a just judgment (Luke 12:48).

3.

It should be noted that Paul proves God's right at any time to limit his promise. Thus the blessing of Abraham's seed was first "nakedly and generally expressed," as Chalmers puts it. Then it was limited to one son, Isaac. Again it was limited to Isaac's son, Jacob. Therefore, as God established his right of limiting the promise to those whom he chose in the inner circle of the promise, so he could in the gospel age limit the promise to spiritual to the exclusion of fleshly seed. This is not just what he did, but this is what he established his right to do, for if he could disinherit Ishmael after he had apparently obtained vested rights, and if he disinherited Esau before he was born, there was no limit to his right to disinherit, providing only that he kept within the promise and chose some one of Abraham's seed, or the seed of some one of his descendants to whom a like covenant was given. —Adapted □

EVERY Sunday?



JANUARY							FEBRUARY							S	M
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
			1	2	3	4						1		2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28		30	31

ER	T	F	S	NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
				S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4								1	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
30	31			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			
				30													

By JAMES E. GIBBONS

● "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. . ."—Acts 20:7

HERE we have an example and pattern authority for the weekly observance of the Lord's supper. If it were left entirely up to the account of Jesus instituting the Lord's supper (Matthew 26:26-29), we would be at a loss as to knowing the frequency we should partake of this supper. However, Jesus promised the apostles that not only would the Holy Spirit bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:16), he would guide them into all unrevealed religious truth (John 16:13). Now in Acts 20:7 the church at Troas, operating under the very sight of an inspired apostle, came together on the first day of the week "to break bread." It is incidental that the apostle Paul was there and preached; the purpose of their coming together was to have the Lord's supper. Every week has a first day, and it is implied that this was their customary practice. Under the Old Testament the Jews were commanded to, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." They didn't ask, "Which sabbath (seventh) day?" Every week had a seventh day and they understood this to mean they should keep every sabbath unto God. The same is true as we read Acts 20:7 of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week.

We are not left to this Scripture only for evidence of the practice of weekly communion; it is evident in I Corinthians. The church at Corinth was a problem church rent asunder by partyism, immorality, and the abuse of divine worship. It seems they had reduced the Lord's supper to a drunken feast. Notice: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another drunken" (I Cor. 11:20,21). The Amplified New Testament's application of verse 20 is a little plainer, "So when you gather for your meetings, it is not the supper instituted by the Lord that you eat." In other words, they were supposedly observing the Lord's supper, but had reduced it to a common meal and a drunken feast. What we wish to emphasize is that they were doing this "WHEN" they came together; in other words, every time they were regularly assembled. They were keeping the Lord's supper, although in a greatly degenerated fashion, every time that the church met. When was the regular meeting time? If we can establish this, we can know the frequency of the Lord's supper observance. I Corinthians 16:2 gives the answer: "*upon the first day of the week.*"

It is also of interest to note, and not without significance, that the Lord's supper was observed on the day the church was established, the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). On what day of the week was this Jewish holy day celebrated? Check Leviticus 23:15,16. Seven sabbaths followed the Passover, and the next day after the seventh sabbath was Pentecost (50th). Thus, it was celebrated on the first day of the week. The church had its beginning on this day, and the church first observed the Lord's supper on this day. Having reference to their worship on this day, the record reads, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Furthermore, it is a fact from outside history that the early church observed the Lord's supper every Lord's day, and competent scholarship (even denominational scholarship) is agreed to this. The following, as examples, will illustrate the latter. These are comments made by denominational scholars (in their well-known commentaries) on Acts 20:7, explaining why the church at Troas came together on the first day of the week.

ALBERT BARNES (*Presbyterian*): "Evidently to celebrate the Lord's supper. . . It is probable that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the Lord's supper every Lord's day."

ADAM CLARKE (*Methodist*): "To break the Eucharist, as the Syriac has it: intimating by this that they were accustomed to receive the Holy Sacrament on each Lord's day."

KIND READER, in the light of this array of information, we are made to ask why modern "churches" are not having the Lord's supper every Lord's day. Yes, *why not?* Obviously this a neglected Scriptural teaching which has been replaced by tradition. But, as we are seeking unreservedly to return to the divine pattern to be simply the

Lord's "New Testament" church, we will have this supper each Lord's day as the very center of our worship. Faithful Christians will be there to remember the supreme sacrifice made for their salvation. . .to worship the Lord in the way he would have them to worship.
Will you? ☐

[NOTE: Look under "Editorial Comments" on page 2 of this issue. "Every Sunday?" (above material) and "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" are available in tract form from *The Sword and Staff*.]

HOW MANY TIMES?

How many times has He spared your life, when you really deserved to die?

And how many times did He comfort you, when in mercy He heard your cry?

How many times have you broken His heart, brought tears to the Son of God?

How many times has He forgiven you, when in sins path you often trod?

How many times have you thanked Him for His mercy, His love and His care?

How many times has He longed to meet you in some secret place of prayer?

How many times will you neglect your soul, because of sin and pride?

How many times will He wait for you?—it is for you He died.

HOW MANY TIMES?

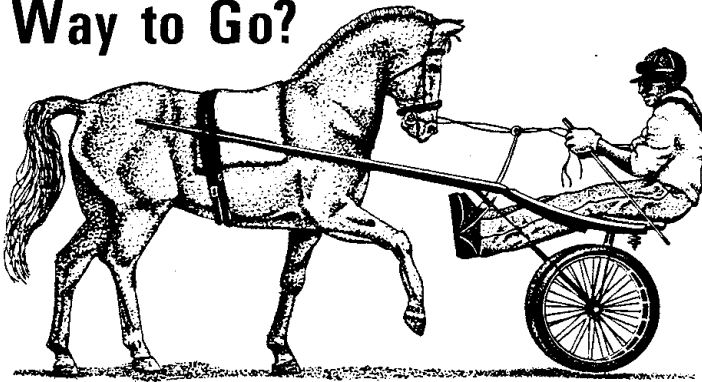
God's mercy is great; His love is too; but how many times? it all depends on you!

—By LOIS McPHAIL ☐

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Adam and Eve fell, but they didn't backslide. Backslide means to go back into sin where you have been before. Adam and Eve had never been in sin before, as they were created sinless. Thus, they only fell.
2. Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5; 3. Genesis 6:15; 4. Deuteronomy 34:5-7; 5. Exodus 12; 6. Deuteronomy 21:7; 7. I Samuel 1; 8. Hosea 1:2,3; chapters 2 & 3; 9. Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10; Daniel 9:2; II Chronicles 36:21; 10. Proverbs 9:10 (1:7); 11. Luke 10:38-42; 12. Matthew 16:18; 18:17a,b; 13. Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42 (John 3:1,2; 7:50-52); 14. Acts 9:36-42; Acts 20:6-12; 15. I Corinthians 1:10-13; 16:15-18 (8); 16. Acts 27:14-44; 17. Colossians 1:7,8; 4:12,13; 18. Hebrews 11:1; 19. I Peter 5:13; 20. III John 1-4. ☐

Confused About Which Way to Go?



Go back to the Bible and the local
UNDENOMINATIONAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
and you will be right on course.

To often a man's whole life is evaluated by words
he may or may not have spoken at a certain
place and time.
No two words will mean more to lift that
evaluation, **THANK YOU!**—Joe Atchley

Reading the Bible

DO NOT read anything into the Good Book if
you wish to get anything out of it—just take it
straight. Instead of trying to alter your Bible to fit
you, change yourself to fit it: otherwise you will have
religion's conformity in reverse.

What you think of the Bible does not affect it—
just you. If it appears too deep, you surely need the
exercise it affords to think deeper. If it looks too
exacting, you definitely require its influence to keep
from straying. And if it seems dry, it might be that
you have allowed too much dust to accumulate on it.

I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible.
Take all of this book upon reason you can and the
balance upon faith that you will live and die a better
man.—**Abraham Lincoln** □

(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*—\$5.75
☐ 1983-84 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$5.95
☐ 1985-86 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$6.95
☐ 1987-88 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.25
☐ 1989-90 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.25

Bound Volumes Moving!

WE WON'T say they are moving like "hot
cakes," but many are seeing the value of ordering
the bound volumes of the back issues of *The
Sword and Staff*. Besides those going back to
(through) 1980, the bound volumes for the last two
years (1989-1990) are now available in book form.
Suggested remittance for the 1989-1990 book is
\$7.25. The amount for the others is also listed be-
low. We think that you will be glad that you or-
dered this timely and timeless Scriptural material.

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 like-
wise be thrilled with the
back copies in book form.
Notice those still available (while they are still available),
and place your order now for good reading. Make them part
of your library and part of your life. You will be glad that you
ordered them. □



● **HELP US REACH OUT TO MORE CHURCHES AND
PEOPLE WITH THIS PUBLICATION—Thank you!**

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