

The Sword AND Staff

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

THE BEATITUDES

Attaining the Righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven



● By **JAMES E. GIBBONS**

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MATTHEW 5-7, commonly called "The Sermon on the Mount," truly is an outstanding section of Scripture. We never cease to be amazed when we make a study of this. After noticing the background, we will single out the "Beatitudes" for consideration (Matthew 5:1-16).

Matthew 5:1 gets us ready for the sermon. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are [etc.]..."

We cannot definitely say which mountain it was from which Jesus gave this great discourse. That which traditionally is identified as the "Mount of the Beatitudes" beautifully overlooks the Sea of Galilee from its northwestern corner. From such an elevated position and vantage point, with the multitudes in the background and his disciples more immediately before him, the Lord began to speak. He sat as this was the common practice of teachers in that day.

Yes, "He opened his mouth and taught them..." Why say that he "opened his mouth"? What is so great about that? Don't all teachers open their mouths when they teach? No doubt this is intentionally emphasized to stress the great importance of what Jesus had to say. Jesus deliberately opened his mouth, and every word was weighty, profound, and full of meaning as it fell from his holy lips. In the Old Testament, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophets had said, "Thus saith the LORD." Later, the apostles looking back to the Old Testament Scriptures would say, "It is written." But Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." The incarnate WORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, was now there and speaking. This was the One who spoke, and the worlds came into being (Hebrews 11:3; John 1:1-3; Genesis 1). It is no wonder that it says the people were "astonished" at his teaching

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THE SWORD AND STAFF
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—Thank you—

Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

WHEN something is wrong, it is wrong—and for a person to continue in the wrong is to be in the wrong.

"Hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue."

Beware when we become more concerned about the sinner being offended than God being offended by the offense of the sinner.

"Wise men learn by other men's mistakes, fools by their own."

It is not from where you come, but where you are, and where you are headed that counts.

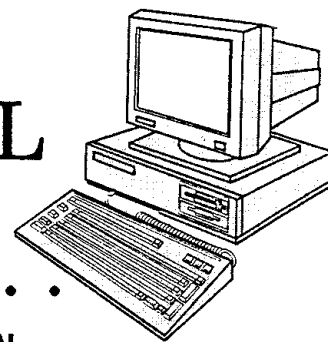
"Don't put people down unless it's on your prayer list."

As a person gets older, if he is not careful, he can let negative thoughts cloud out the beauty of the sunset of life.

"The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher."

When some preachers are too personal in their sermon illustrations involving people, it makes you wonder if you will be the person in one of their illustrations when they preach somewhere else (or if you should confide in them).

EDITORIAL COMMENTS...



THOUGHTS ON THE NEW BIRTH, LIFE, AND GROWING

THERE IS an interesting parallel between spiritual and physical birth. This parallel and comparison can be further seen in life and growing. The New Testament points out some of these parallels but not all of them.

Jesus taught that before we can be children of God we must be "born again" (John 3:3-5). Not only is this a figure of speech, it is a spiritual reality. John uses this mode of expression in talking about those who are Christians (I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18; etc.). Also it is used by Peter (I Peter 1:22,23). Although Paul in more of a general sense (involving himself) may refer to a birth (I Corinthians 4:15; I Timothy 1:2), he seems to use the figure of Christians being children of God by adoption (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:5-7).

There must be conception before there is a birth. James wrote, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). Peter speaks of Christians "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23). The Word of God is the sperm implanted in our hearts that produces faith, obedience, and the new birth (Romans 10:17 [10:8-10]; 6:17; I Peter 1:22,23). The new birth has been accomplished when we have repented, been baptized (John 3:5; Acts 2:38,41; I Peter 1:22,23), and raised to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6).

There is travail and pain associated with birth (I Thessalonians 5:3). It is no easy experience. This is likewise true with spiritual birth. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Facing up to our sins, acknowledging them, and genuinely repenting of them is a painful process. But it is all part of being born again. There can be no new birth without it (although some would seek to "soft pedal" the awfulness of sin).

Jesus said, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21). This is also true with the spiritual birth. Jesus said, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10; Read the whole chapter). The Ethio-

pian, when he came up out of the waters of baptism in Acts 8, “went on his way rejoicing” (8:39). Truly this is an occasion of great joy for all concerned.

Peter admonished, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2). There must be a birth before there is life, and because they are alive, little babies come into this world hungry. We cannot force them to eat, only supply their needs and encourage them. It is a sign of a healthy birth when that spiritual appetite is there. Jesus said that we must become as little children in our attitudes, our humility, and our openness to God (Matthew 18:3,4). They who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (Matthew 5:6). There will be spiritual growth and maturity. But the birth is only the beginning.

There are other parallels that could be brought out. However, this is enough to stir our minds about these great spiritual truths. This is not only a figure, but a great spiritual reality. The new birth and the new life must be experienced in becoming, being, and remaining children of God. We are no child of God without this.—*J.E.G.* □

“Eureka!”(John 1:41, 45)

“EUREKA!” exclaimed the Greek mathematician and physicist Archimedes (287-212 BC.) down in Alexandria, Egypt as he sat in a tub of warm water at the end of a hard day. He noticed that the volume of the displaced water was equivalent to the volume of his body. Many implications and ramifications came from what he recognized as a physical law of buoyancy. One was determining the purity of gold by applying this principle of specific gravity.

Two hundred or so years later someone else would make such an exclamation on the banks of the Jordan River. John the Baptist had introduced Christ to the world by saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The next day, personally pointing Jesus out to two of his disciples, he said the same thing (John 1:35-37). Now the exclamation is heard. We read that Andrew (one of those disciples) “first findeth his brother Simon, and saith unto him, *We have found (eureka!)* the Messiah” (John 1:41). The next day Philip made a similar declaration to Nathanael, “*We have found (eureka!)* him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth...” (John 1:45).

EUREKA!—What a discovery it was! The Messiah has come. Think of the implications and ramifications.

Salvation, forgiveness, paradise regained, and eternal life! Hope! Reason to be living!

“EUREKA!” I have found it!—*J.E.G.* □

Riches

I AM RICH. I have more than anyone can use, for I have happiness and contentment.

I live where the patter of rain on the roof drums its melody of peace, where the evening sun drops its favors on lazy clouds, and lays its twilight mantle of calmness over hills and valleys, and tips the mountain peaks.

I live where waving fields of grain and sleepy stalks of tasseled corn are bathed with sunset dyes.

I am rich in the song of birds, and the murmur of the mountain brook, and where nature’s gardens give me beauty.

I am rich in the companionship of a wonderful mate. I am rich in friendships, and in memories. I live where I have the freedom of my country, the right to worship as I choose, and to express my thoughts and opinions.

I am rich in God’s love. I would not trade or barter my riches for all the world’s material wealth, for I am rich in living.—*from an Almanac* □

Is It Too Late?

A MAN’S HOUSE is on fire. At the first sign of smoke, he rushes to buy a fire extinguisher. Before he returned the roof and wall collapsed in flames on his goods.

When one is sick, and the operation begins, it is too late to take medicine. When the battle begins, it is too late to train the troops.

You may resent this article with all other concerned efforts of warning. When the great day of reckoning arrives, it will be too late (Matthew 25:1-13). Won’t you obey the gospel now? (Mark 16:16)

—*Selected* □

Symptoms of Hunger

WE ALL KNOW how irritable we become when we are hungry. Short-tempered, unreasonable, impatient, self-centered, and mean spirited are only a few of the adjectives which could often describe our nature when hunger strikes. What most fail to realize is that spiritual hunger can manifest itself in these same symptoms.

—*Jerry Wingfield* □

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when he finished this sermon (Matthew 7:28,29).

This mount on which the "Sermon on the Mount" was delivered stands in marked contrast with Mount Sinai of the Old Testament. The language of Hebrews 12:18ff is appropriate in describing this. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more..." Even if a person touched the mountain, he was to be put to death. This law of sin and death that was therewith given put the emphasis upon the CURSE that would be upon them for disobedience. What a contrast when Jesus began his discourse by saying, "BLESSED" (and then repeats the word many times)! This prepared them for the "better things" of the New Testament spoken of in the book of Hebrews.

There are two words translated "blessed" in the New Testament. One means to be fortunate, or happy, and the other means to be praised, eulogized. The one used in the beatitudes means to be happy, fortunate, even to the point others would envy you. It is rather interesting that God is pictured in I Timothy 1:11 as being "blessed" (or happy) about the gospel (the same word as used in the beatitudes). An illustration of the other word translated "blessed" is found in I Peter 1:3. Here it says, "*Blessed* be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." We get our English word eulogize directly from the Greek word behind this. God is to be praised.

The beatitudes serve as sort of a preamble, and more than that, to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. The main thrust on how the Sermon on the Mount is developed is stated in Matthew 5:20 (as to what follows this verse and the beatitudes). Each beatitude may be considered individually, representing a complete and wonderful truth within itself, or as

part of progressive thought leading to the next beatitude. Thus, when they are studied as a whole, the overall picture is better seen. The righteousness of the kingdom stressed in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, which must exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, cannot be realized unless what we read in the beatitudes has first become a reality in our lives. The Sermon on the Mount is for the converted person, not the world.

I.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? To be poor in spirit means we have reached the point that we see our spiritual need. We have strongly become aware, as Paul taught in Romans 3:23, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This personally is realized. We are lost. We therewith declare our spiritual bankruptcy. Like the alcoholic who attends the AA meeting, we make our declaration, only it is, "I am a *sinner*." Yes, "I need help."

Unlike the self-righteous Pharisee who complimented himself to God on being such an outstanding person (Luke 18:10-12), and unlike the church of the Laodiceans who said that they had "need of nothing"

FACES

Some faces that we see are long,
Then not a few are round;
Some faces may convey a song,
While others only frown.
Some faces are freckled covered;
Some have a bushy top;
Some faces are in make-up smothered,
And thus would stop a clock.
Some faces harbor staring eyes,
Then some support a nose;
Some faces register their surprise,
Show smiling teeth in rows.
Some faces look like their mother's,
While others say it's dad;
Some faces have ugly brothers,
Then some are not so bad.
Some faces bear the mark of pain;
Others the guilt of sin;
But with all faces it is the same;
We must be born again.

—By James E. Gibbons

(Revelation 3:14-18), we come as the “beggar” (this word for poor, Matthew 5:3, is so translated in Luke 16:20), destitute before God. We know, as far as perfect righteousness is concerned, we are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). Like David, our sin is ever before us (Psalms 51). Like the publican, we come to God for mercy (Luke 18:13,14).

In any endeavor, one must start at the bottom if he would scale the ladder to the top. He cannot come as a “know-it-all.” This is even more so true in entering and attaining the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. Spiritual need must be genuinely acknowledged. Spiritual bankruptcy must be declared. Then the other beatitudes that follow naturally fall in line, one leading to the other.

II.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”

Mourning is the natural outgrowth of being poor in spirit (and logically comes with it and from it). Many times coming face to face with ourselves is a painful process. The kind of mourning, or sorrow, that he is talking about is brought out in II Corinthians 7:10. Here the apostle Paul said that “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

The people on the Day of Pentecost, when they were told that they were sinners, were “pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:38). But they gladly received the Word that was spoken to them and were baptized (Acts 2:38,41). And they surely knew comfort as they “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (2:46). The same is repeated with different conversions in the book of Acts (Acts 8:39; 16:32-34). Mourning for sin (godly sorrow) leads to forgiveness and the resultant reassuring comfort in this forgiveness.

Paul even goes a step further in II Corinthians 1:3 and 4, praising God in this connection. The experience of comfort in our lives leads us to be a comfort to others. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

III.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”

Meekness is to be found in connection with being poor in spirit and the mourning that comes with it. In it we see humility. But meekness does not mean

weakness. The Bible tells us, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). But Moses was no weak man. The idea in meekness is that of being subdued. Actually in it we see strength under control. Poverty of spirit and the godly sorrow that comes with it certainly will produce a humble, subdued person. The pursuit of righteousness, aside from humility, only results in self-righteousness.

It is interesting that the Lord says the meek “shall inherit the earth.” No doubt this shows God’s good favor upon them. The Old Testament supplies the backdrop for this concept and expression. The Canaanite tribes were expelled from the land of Palestine for their iniquity as the children of Israel were given this land for an inheritance. Cf. Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:16; 12:10,29; 28:58,63,64; 30:20; 32:46,47; etc. As they obeyed God, the land would continue to be theirs. If not, they would suffer the fate of the Canaanites—the land would “spue” them out (Leviticus 18:28; 20:22). Time and time again in the 37th Psalm reference is made to the positive, and even negative, aspect of this. The Psalmist said, “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed” (37:3). Verse 9 reads, “For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.” Verse 11 even sounds like the beatitude in Matthew 5:5, “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

The humble, subdued attitude is essential to the attaining of the righteousness that is to be in the kingdom of heaven. God’s good favor comes as the blessing for this attitude.

IV.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

How significant that in the midst of the beatitudes we find this statement. Righteousness seems to be the underlying thought behind all of them. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled. There must be that intensity of desire. And, before a container can be filled, it must be open. Before we can be filled spiritually, we must empty ourselves of self. We must get rid of the junk food of this world that curbs our spiritual appetite. This emptying, and making ourselves open, began with the first beatitude.

According to the New Testament, righteousness is something that is initially obtained and progressively attained. It is initially obtained when one becomes a Christian, and it is progressively attained as

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one lives the Christian life.

The need of obtaining and attaining righteousness from beyond ourselves is made strikingly evident by such Scriptures as the following: "There is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10); "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That is why the sinless Christ died on the cross for us. Therefore, God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Our hungering and thirsting souls are satisfied when through faith we accept Christ in repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Revelation 1:5). Paul talks about this imputed righteousness in Romans 4. In a quotation, which reminds us of the beatitude, he says, "*Blessed* are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (4:6). He says, "God imputeth righteousness."

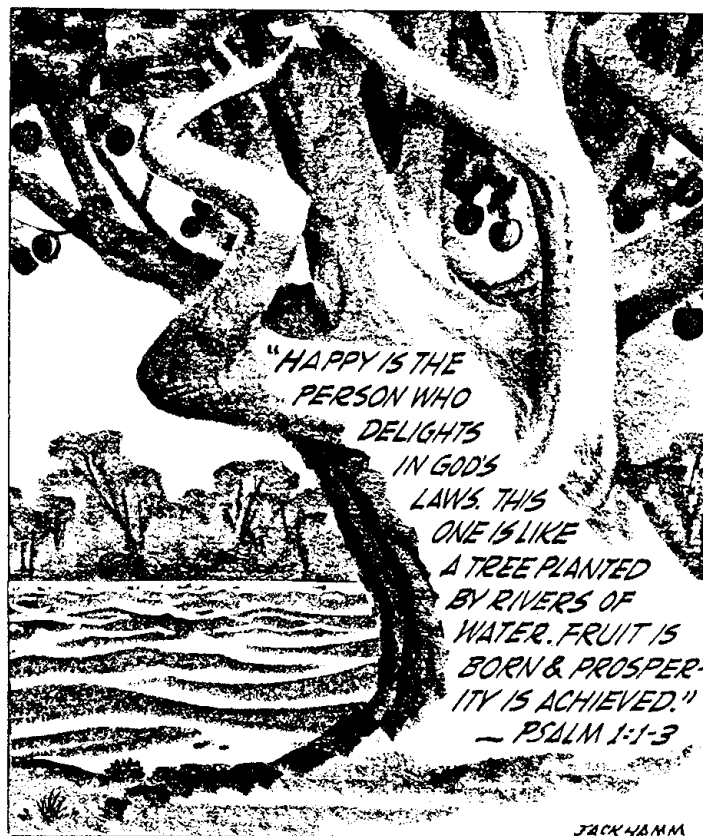
After initially being declared righteous by the blood of Christ, we live the life of righteousness. It is progressive and ongoing in our lives. We arise from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6). Paul declared, "There is therefore now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). We grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (II Peter 1). We "perfect" our holiness, our righteousness (II Corinthians 7:1). John warned, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (I John 3:7).

We notice again that Jesus said, "*Blessed* are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness..." As pointed out, blessed means to be happy and fortunate. In a world that is continually seeking after happiness, but finding it illusive and fleeting beyond its grasp, something needs to be further pointed out. Happiness does not come by seeking after happiness. It comes as a byproduct of seeking after something else. It comes as a byproduct of seeking after righteousness—seeking after God and being right with him. Yes, it is that simple. God made us for himself, and we are not right until we are right with Him.

V.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Having become the objects of God's mercy, we have no problem in having compassion and showing mercy toward others. God's grace and mercy brought us into imputed righteousness (forgiveness), and thereafter we must turn to God time and time again



for mercy in the progressive attainment of righteousness in our lives. It is easy for us to forgive because we have been forgiven. As someone has said, the person who will not forgive burns the bridge over which he himself must cross. In the prayer the Lord taught the disciples, it reads, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Then he went on to say, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:12,14,15).

Micah 6:8, that great verse in the Old Testament, puts the emphasis upon mercy. It reads, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" In New Testament times, the absence of this brought a pronouncement of WOE upon the scribes and Pharisees by the Lord himself. Listen! "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

Yes, as recipients of God's mercy, we are merciful, and we shall obtain mercy.

VI.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

There is more than one possibility as to what

“pure in heart” and seeing God mean, and each of them is true.

Pure means to be free from admixture, not polluted, uncontaminated (morally spotless). Holy, in the absolute sense, gets the idea across. Somewhat parallel with this beatitude, the writer of Hebrews said, “Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). Then “pure in heart” may have reference to one’s motives. There is no hypocrisy here. We have a “single” eye in our desire to please God (Matthew 6:22); our hungering and thirsting after righteousness is real. We are seeking “first” the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). With Paul we can honestly say, “This *one thing* I do...” (Philippians 3:13ff).

This beatitude promises that the “pure in heart... shall see God.” Literally we see with our eyes. Also, we can see through the eyes of faith. Moses, in faith forsaking the land of Egypt, is spoken of as “seeing him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27). Then in another sense to see is to perceive, to understand, and to appreciate. Jesus declared, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Peter said that a person is spiritually “blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” when he does not grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (II Peter 1:9). Only the “pure in heart” will see God (now and hereafter) and come unto an understanding of the things of the kingdom.

VII.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

The cross of Christ not only reconciles men to God, it brings about reconciliation among men. Paul said, “For he [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephesians 2:14,16-18). Not only is this true of Jew and Gentile, but of mankind generally. A man at peace with God is a man at peace with himself and his fellowman. He becomes a peacemaker. Problem people are people with problems. Sin is the problem behind it all.

Yes, spontaneously without thought, our lives become living representations of the message of peace. At the same time we consciously become ambassadors of the message of peace. In their readiness to be heralds of heaven, Paul admonished the Ephesian

Christian to have their “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). We are eager and ready to share the gospel message.

Peacemakers of this kind will be called “the children of God.” God is the one who took the initiative in removing the alienation and bringing about reconciliation between Himself and mankind (and thus bringing about peace). Paul said that “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (I Corinthians 14:33). This is true from any perspective. Therefore, to be a peacemaker is to be like God. How appropriate then to be called “children of God.”

VIII.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The beatitudes started with being poor in spirit. Then godly sorrow and humility were experienced, as there was the hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The outworking qualities of life in keeping with righteousness become evident as this righteousness is obtained and attained. And with each beatitude, some paradoxical, blessings and good fortune are promised. Now as a climax to the realization of this righteousness, persecution will be experienced. Paul later would write, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). Those in the wrong respect righteousness off at a distance, but up close they despise it. Without saying a word, the life of the godly person is a rebuke to the world. No one likes to be put in a bad light; no one likes to be rebuked, so persecution is the outcome. And this persecution is for “righteousness’ sake.”

This last beatitude is amplified with additional thought. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” “Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad [literally, leap for joy]”—*how graphic!* We find that the early Christians “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). With our modern brand of religion and righteousness, do we experience the same today? The world has always loved its own. Hum-m-m?

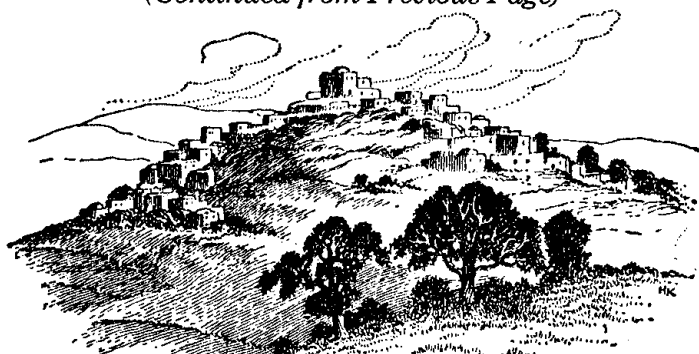
Conclusion of the Beatitudes

“Ye are the *salt of the earth*: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the *light of*

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the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Jesus is saying that with the attainment of righteousness, those who have hungered and thirsted after righteousness have now become the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They have a decided impact and influence for good in the society in which they live.

Salt purifies and seasons. Sometimes it burns when it comes in contact with an open wound. We live in a society that is corrupt and putrid. There seems to be a salt shortage today. However, the righteous follower of Christ exerts a wholesome influence. Things would be a lot worse than they are if it weren't for the faithful few who still are the salt of the earth. Their righteousness is real. They are exerting a much needed influence for good and holding back the judgment of God.

To those who have attained righteousness, the admonition of Jesus is, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Notice the Lord said to "let your light shine," not to shine it. The hypocritical Pharisees shined their own light, trying to draw attention to themselves (Matthew 6:1-5). Like a child playing with a flash light and foolishly flashing it in another's face, they ostentatiously paraded their "righteousness" so that everyone could see it. But Jesus said to "let your light shine." There is a big difference. You are in a room where the light has been turned on. The light bulb as such does not even get your attention, but you definitely enjoy the benefit and blessing of it being there. It does its job. It shines. This is likewise true of the person who is truly righteous. He is the "real thing." And as such, his righteousness is "for real." He just goes about his daily walk, being his unhypocritical self. He simply lets his light shine for he cannot do otherwise. The

Father in heaven is thereby glorified.

May the blessings and good fortune of the beatitudes be ours as we hunger and thirst after righteousness and are thereby filled. At the same time the Father in heaven will be glorified. How wonderful! The beatitudes truly present an interesting and profitable study. Amen! □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

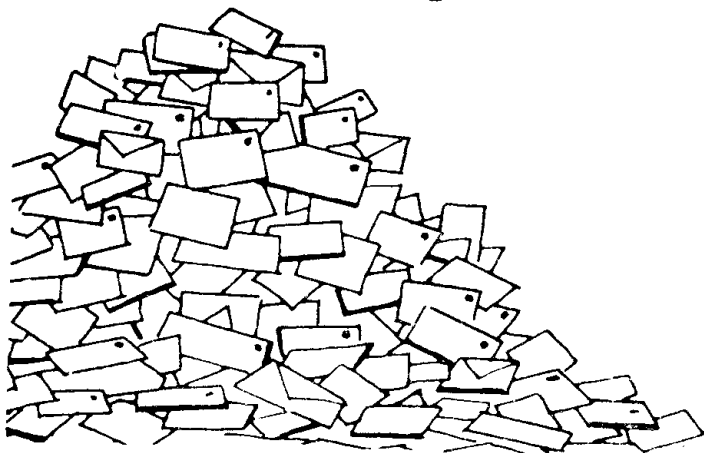
(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who was the oldest man who ever lived mentioned in the Bible, and how old was he when he died?
2. Of all the people who were living in the time of Noah, only how many were saved from the flood in the ark?
3. What does this describe in the Bible: "It was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey"?
4. During what three feasts (or holy days) during the year were all male Israelites to appear before God?
5. Where was the brass gotten whereby Moses had the laver of brass made that was placed before the tabernacle wherein the priests washed before entering, and later where was the brass gotten whereby Solomon had the brassen sea laver made which was before the temple?
6. What finally became of the brasen serpent that Moses made in the wilderness for the children of Israel to look upon to be healed from the fiery snakebite?
7. Who said, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (and to whom was it said, and what was the circumstance)?
8. Why did the LORD God plan "little by little" to put out the nations before the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan, rather than all at once?
9. When king Saul died following the battle with the Philistines, and he was found the next day by them, what did they do with the head and body of Saul after cutting off his head?
10. How many years did Saul, David, and Solomon rule Israel (each being the same number of years)?
11. In the dedication of the temple in the time of Solomon, how many oxen and sheep were sacrificed to the LORD?
12. What man was fed by an angel and the strength derived from that food lasted for forty days?
13. How many wives and concubines did king Solomon have?
14. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, how long did this last before the city fell into his hands?
15. Where is the only time that a "pulpit" is mentioned in the Bible and of what is it speaking?
16. Besides its basic meaning of dislike, detest, and abhor, how is the word "hate" used at times in the Bible (as a Hebrew idiom)?
17. What seems to have prompted Jesus to give the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and prodigal son?
18. To which churches did Paul write that he had never visited (or been among)?
19. Who took Paul's dictation in the writing of the book of Romans?
20. In the book of Revelation which one of the seven churches in Asia is spoken of as being "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot"?

(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 sincerely appreciated.

SOUTH CAROLINA:

- "Thanks for such a wonderful paper. Keep up the good work. We enjoy the truthfulness of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."
- "I am truly thankful that there are men left who will not shun the 'old Jerusalem gospel,' continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Thank you for adhering to II Timothy 2:15, urging us to study and rightly divide the Word, for if we do not apply the teaching of the cross, then we are no different from...the denominations. Please send 6 copies of the 'Old Gospel Preacher.' There are not many of this type of men around today. . ."

NORTH CAROLINA:

- "Please remove us from your mailing list. Thanks."
- "Please send me 6 copies of the (3 x 10) poem about 'The Old Gospel Preacher.'...Thanks for the new copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. This is good, solid material. May God bless as you continue this vital work."

VIRGINIA:

- "I am a widow of low income but would like very much to get *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. God's blessings to you."
- "Thanks so much for your dedication to such a worthy cause. *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is the best composite of good reading I have ever received. May God bless you with good health to continue. . ."
- "I am pleased to learn of your compilation *POEMS OF THE SOUL*. Please be assured I would want to receive your renderings of the heart and enclose my check to further assist in your cause."

"Go for it. Please do put them in book form. Let the Lord take it from there. Hopefully, many souls will be touched and won because you ventured forth."

"Can't wait to receive my copy. Keep up the 'good work'!"

you do so well with the Lord's guidance. May He continue to bless your efforts."

KENTUCKY:

- "I really enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is great to see those who are still clinging to Biblical teachings of restoration. I am writing to ask if you would send a copy of the poem, 'The Old Gospel Preacher.' Thank you for your publication. Our prayers and support will be there."
- "Thank you so much for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, and for sending it to me over the years. It is a great publication of the Word of God. I appreciate it very much."
- "If you still have the poem/plaque I sure could use about a dozen of them ('The Old Gospel Preacher')."
- "Keep up the good work. Thank you so much."

PENNSYLVANIA:

- "I wish to thank you for the articles in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. They are helpful and enlightening. As Christians we are all desirous to know love and do His will. We all need much encouragement. . .May God's will be done in all things."

NEW YORK:

- "We enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* very much and look forward to each new paper. Thank you for your faithful work; our prayers are with you. . ."

MICHIGAN:

- "Please accept my thanks for such a truthful publication... Thank you for your unfailing strides in preaching the truth."

INDIANA:

- "Please remove us from your mailing list and quit sending your printings of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."
- "We just want to send our appreciation for the inspiring work that you do in putting together *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. There are many spiritual blessings and helps that many of us receive. May the Lord continue to bless this work."

ILLINOIS:

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

(Continued on Next Page)

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 5:27; 2. Genesis 7:13; I Peter 3:20; 3. Exodus 16:31; 4. Exodus 23:14-17; II Chronicles 8:12,13; 5. Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8; I Chronicles 18:8; I Kings 7:23-26; II Chronicles 4:2-6; 6. Numbers 21:4-9; II Kings 18:4; 7. Numbers 32; 8. Deuteronomy 7:22; 9. I Samuel 31:8-13; I Chronicles 10:8-10; 10. I Kings 2:11; I Kings 11:42; 11. I Kings 8:63; II Chronicles 7:5; 12. I Kings 10:1-8; 13. I Kings 11:1-8; 14. I Kings 25:1ff; 15. Nehemiah 8:4-8; 16. To love less—not actually to detest or despise (Luke 14:26; Genesis 29:30-33); 17. Luke 15; 18. Romans 1:7-13; Colossians 1:1-8; 19. Romans 16:22; 20. Revelation 3:14-22. □

READERS' . . . Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

■ "I know that if I paid for a subscription to *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, it would be less than the benefit I receive from it. The last issue on 'The Love of God' is very deep and enriching to one's life. Thank you for the good gospel articles you have in your publication.

"I don't know how long it's been since money was sent, but I want to give this bit to help a little. . ."

OKLAHOMA:

■ "First of all let me tell you how well your poem was received! If your other poetry is like that, we would love to have a copy. My husband made barn board frames and gave them to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Each Lord's day someone else mentions how much they enjoy reading it. . ."

TEXAS:

■ "I sure do enjoy receiving your *SWORD AND STAFF*. The subject matter is very uplifting. Keep up the good work."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "Enclosed you will find a check...to pay for 2 volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for 1983-84 & 1985-86... Please put me on your mailing list. I am a new subscriber.

"I saw my first *SWORD AND STAFF* a month or so ago and I enjoyed reading it very much. I also learned quite a bit from both issues that I read. I am anxious to read more—much more..."

■ "Enclosed is a small check to help with the printing and distribution of your inspiring, spiritual publication *THE SWORD AND STAFF*.

"We have appreciated each issue and passed them on to other Christians.

"Just want to tell you that since we are 73 and 70 years our eyesight has failed somewhat, so we truly like the print size!

"God bless you and all who have a part in this ministry."

PHILIPPINES:

■ "Greetings to all of you in the name of Jesus! I'm glad that there are people like you. *THE SWORD AND STAFF* has been such a help to me in getting closer with the Lord.

"I can't count my many blessings. But one thing is for sure, you're one of them!" □

Apology for Long Hair

WE hereby apologize for the long hair on the representation of Jesus in the illustration of the article beginning on the front page. With the apostle Paul we believe that it is a shame for men to have long hair (I Corinthians 11:14), and consequently we believe Jesus didn't have long hair. We have editing tools to correct this, but haven't learned how to use them yet. For the time being accept our apology, as we learn how to make such corrections in the future.

WAY TO START THE DAY



A Dinner of Herbs

FEW BOOKS of the Bible are read as frequently as Solomon's Proverbs. It matters not how familiar we are with its treasures, there is always a freshness in these maxims, always new truth to uncover. There is likely more benefit in the study of these short, succinct proverbs than can be obtained from the most voluminous work of modern wisdom.

One of Solomon's greatest truths is that little line found in chapter 15, verse 17: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." In shirt sleeve English, that simply means, It's better to eat cornbread and beans with people who love you than corn-fed beef where folks can't get along. Friend, *that is an unmitigated fact*. I Corinthians 13:13 tells us love is absolutely the most important thing. Now personally, I love cornbread and beans, but even if I didn't I could still see the wisdom in the words of Solomon. It is better to be rich in love and in spiritual things, even though poor materially.

First, Solomon says something is better "where love is." In this application, we can make good use of Jesus' words in John 14:21. He said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." So what do we learn?...that it is better to be poor with God loving you for your godly life than to

have a lot of money with God angry with you. (And if you think God never gets angry with anyone, you need to remember Psalms 7:11..."God is angry with the wicked every day.")

Sometimes people think Christianity is a "dinner of herbs"; a drag...blah...blah...has nothing going for it. Well, it all depends on how you look at life. If high moral standards, a spirit of love and concern, and a grateful heart turned heavenward—if *that* is "blah" then so be it. I'll take the dinner of herbs.

Christianity has done great things for this old world, primarily because it has its foundation rooted in the very Mind of God, as it is revealed in His Word. No wonder the morality our founding fathers built so much of their civil legislation around has served our nation well. A great many of them—perhaps the majority—were religious people. Although Christians make their share of mistakes, the lifestyle of the sincere follower of Jesus is indescribably superior to the loose and licentious choices of those who reject Christianity. Yes, Christianity has contributed to our good.

It may be that worldly living presently has the appeal of the well fed beef in the stall...sirloin ready for the grill, and further, the world may look upon Christian living as a dinner of herbs, but the by and by will tell it all. Things may look a little differently standing face to face with Jesus Christ in the judgment.—*The Minute Messenger* □

The Light That Shines the Farthest

THERE IS a well-known saying, "Charity begins at home." Perhaps it has its origin in the Scriptures. Paul admonishes the children and grandchildren of destitute widows to supply their needs. He wrote, "Let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (I Timothy 5:4). The saying, "Charity begins at home" (coming from this), is applied more generally.

There is another saying and illustration that gets this point across well, "The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at its source." A light is seen shining on a mountain that is far, far away. For it to be seen at such a great distance across the many miles, it must be very bright at its source.

This principle must be true if we are real Christians. It is not enough to talk about Christianity or even sound it abroad. The light must be the most brilliant at its source. Christianity must be practiced in our homes and in our everyday lives, or it is not

the real thing. Christian is as Christian does.

What estimation do our friends have of our Christianity? What would our immediate family honestly have to say? If we are an old grouch, and hard to get along with, is there much brilliance at the source of our light? Are we unselfish, kind, and considerate? Are our lives pure and devoted?

As the saying goes, "Charity begins at home." Remember, the light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at its source.—*J.E.G.* □

Pithy Points to Ponder

"THE TRUE MEASURE of a man's wealth is whether or not he has it invested in eternity."

When we are zealous and outspoken on a religious subject, which subject really is not Scriptural, that which appears to be contending for the faith is merely being contentious, sectarianism.

"The devil has many tools, but a lie (deception) is the handle that fits them all."

The Lord's church cannot be joined; men are born into it (John 3:5), and are added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:38-47).

"Christian people, if they are what they profess to be, are all conservatives and all liberals: conservators of all that is good [Matthew 5:13], and diffusers of all that is of the nature of light [Matthew 5:14]."

Don't give up; if we don't stick in there, we will become unglued!

"Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: If you are alive, it isn't!"

One person's definition of a "nice" sermon: A nice sermon is one that is preached by a nice preacher in a nice church on a nice Sunday morning, telling nice people how nice it is to be nice.

"Excuses are really so small that a person can be seen every time that he tries to hide behind one."

The only way that we can acceptably serve an all-wise, all-knowing, all-holy, Almighty God is with our all.

"There are no degrees in honesty." □

Doubt Versus Faith

Doubt sees the obstacles: Faith sees the way!

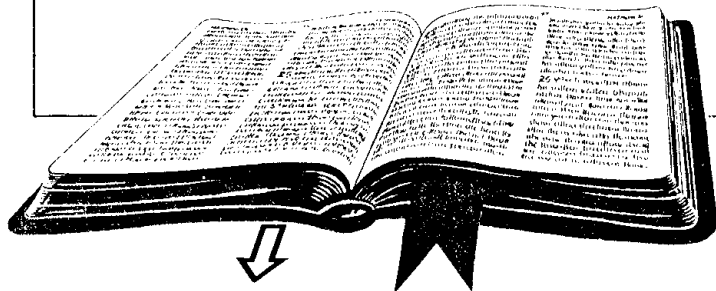
Doubt sees the darkest night: Faith sees the day!

Doubt dreads to take a step: Faith soars on high?

Doubt questions, "Who believes?": Faith answers, "I."

"Some of life's biggest disappointments come from getting what we insisted on having." □

Putting the Word of God on the Torture Rack



II PETER 3:16 is very graphic in its picture of those who would abuse the Scriptures, trying to make them say something that they don't. Peter had been writing about false teachers and those who belittle the teaching of the Second Coming of Christ (chapters 2 & 3). In rebuttal, he continued, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [of the Second Coming], as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (3:9). They should be alert, looking to that day of the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the world, in godly living. Then Peter admonished, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest*, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:14-16).

Peter classified Paul's writings with other Scriptures as the Word of God. In them some things were harder than others to be understood, and there were those who would "*wrest*" them, along with the other Scriptures, to "their own destruction." This word "*wrest*" (*strebloō*) is highly interesting. It basically means to torture, put on the rack. The noun from which it comes has reference to "an instrument for turning or winding, a windlass, roller...a screw press ...a rack or instrument of torture." There are those foolish enough to treat God's Word as if it were some poor soul placed upon the torture rack, trying to make it say something that it does not say (or mean). With the turning of the rollers, the rack, the screws, the victim's joints and limbs were dislocated or crushed. Some people are this reckless with the Word of God.

First the difficult things are chosen for torture

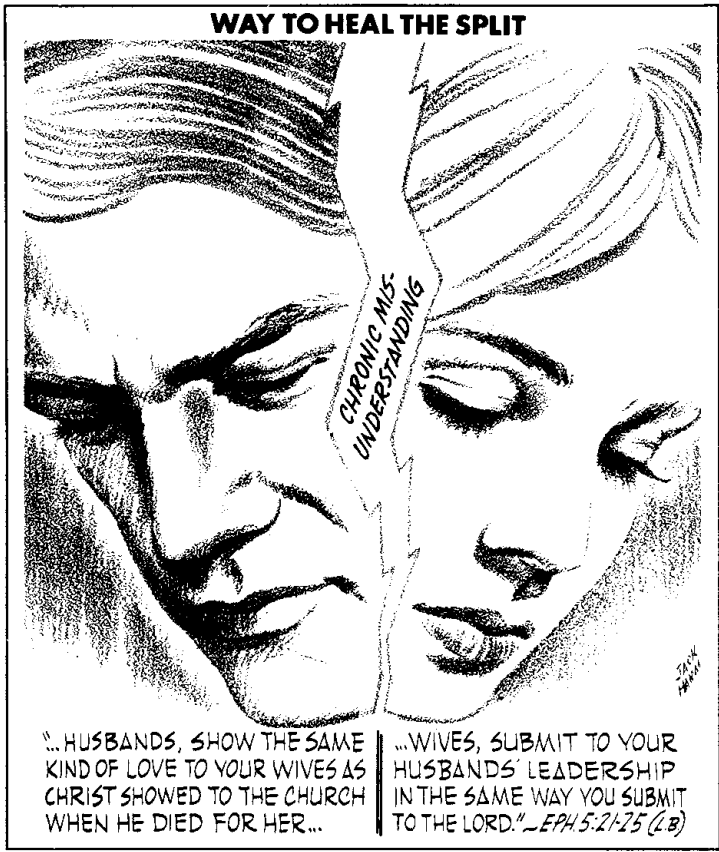
because the easier ones cannot as readily be forced and twisted. The immediate context is the Second Coming of Christ. Today Scripture like the book of Revelation is often found upon the torture rack. Obscure language is used to try to prove way-out theories (which have become dogmas). In the torturous process the rest of the Bible, although in plain everyday language, suffers also. And difficult Scriptures are not the only ones that fall victim to the torture rack. Such a simple reference as Acts 2:38 is twisted and disjointed by those who refuse to accept what it says. Matthew 19:9 is very plain, but the torture rack is brought out by those trying to make it say more than is there. People heretofore had no problem with this Scripture. But preachers today, like Balaam, go back hoping the Lord will have more to say. Let us not attempt to be wiser than that which is written. Let us respect the silence of the Scriptures.

Peter says the end result is that they who use the torture rack will twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. Remember the warning that is found in Revelation 22:18 and 19 about adding and taking away from this book of prophecy. The apostle Paul said it was an awful thing to pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:6-10). Let us honor and respect the Word of God. —J.E.G. □

As a Christian Wife, with God's Help, I Have Made Up My Mind:

- ♥ to be humble instead of proud;
- ♥ to demonstrate love rather than selfishness;
- ♥ to overcome evil with good instead of revenge;
- ♥ to be submissive rather than bossy and motherly;
- ♥ to be obedient rather than rebellious;
- ♥ to be serene rather than irritable;
- ♥ to have a meek and quiet spirit instead of having a nagging tongue;
- ♥ to pray rather than fret;
- ♥ to do all with faith that God will help me.

—Margaret Elliott



How to Prevent A Divorce

● By HAROLD BUCKLES

♥ *“Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).*

DO YOU really want a marriage that will last *all* of your life? Then make sure that you are a true Christian, and marry a true Bible Christian. The divorce rates are the lowest among true Christians. Remember that “an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.”!

The marriage ceremony is not a “cure all,” not a cure for drug addiction, and not a “reform” measure. The marriage *rites* will not make a wrong man or woman *right*. Neither will a trip to the *altar* be able to *alter* anyone who is not right with God!

If you want a Christian home, do not even consider marrying someone who is not a faithful Christian. A lot of the “O promise me’s” have been broken by evil, worldly, carnal minded people after marriage. Our files bulge with horrible true life stories. Then, too, do not “date” a person that you would not marry. Many well intentioned people have been “swept off their feet” by some clever talker. Love may be blind, but the neighbors surely aren’t!!

How to Minimize the Possibility of A Divorce

In the beginning, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He said, “I will make a help meet

for him” (Genesis 2:18). After God created Eve, He called them husband and wife (Genesis 3:16,17), thus establishing the first home or family. Christ recognized this and added this statement, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). Divorce has never been a part of God’s plan (Malachi 3:15,16 and Matthew 19:8). Divorce rates are very high among those already divorced one or more times, and among the “teen” marriages. Why marry in haste and then repent at your leisure?

Christ is interested in your home, to make it the very best it can possibly be. Home is the No. 1 place where you practice your Christianity (provided that you do). It was at a wedding that Christ performed his first miracle (John 2:11).

Before You Marry Decide to Prevent A Divorce

1. The number one cause of divorce is fornication. Notice that we did not say “sex,” because that word means whether a person is male or female. The Bible word for “fornication” includes ALL forms of sexual impurity or immorality. The word “sex” has been misused and perverted in this ungodly and immoral age. Homosexuality and lesbianism are called an ABOMINATION in the Bible. Simply stated, fornication is nothing but a down payment on a divorce. All sex acts outside of marriage are dirty, and degrading. Our text at the beginning of this lesson, Hebrews 13:4, applies here.

2. The number two cause for divorce seems to be money mismanagement, or finances. It used to be, “Until *death* do us part” in the marriage ceremony. Now it seems to be, “Until *debt* do us part,” because so many divorces are being caused by money troubles. Prevent a divorce? Watch how your prospective mate manages his/her money matters. A person who cannot manage their obligations before marriage is not apt to change after marriage.

3. Do not marry someone who drinks alcohol in any form, or uses other forms of soul and body destroying drugs. Alcohol and tobacco are drugs, even though they have been “legalized” by greedy politicians and governments. “Social drinking,” or drinking “just for fun” leads to drunkenness which has ruined many homes.

4. Prevent a divorce? Is he or she truthful? Good marriages are built on confidence and trust. Absolute honesty goes a long way towards keeping a marriage intact. Honesty is needed in every aspect of a good home.

5. Watch how your prospective mate’s parents treat each other. After all, they have been his/her

(Continued on Next Page)

How to Prevent a Divorce

(Continued from Previous Page)

model. The way they treat each other could well be the way that you will be treated. To a certain extent, when you marry, you marry the "family" as well as your mate. Sometimes inlaws have become "outlaws."

6. If your parents or closest spiritual, sensible friends object strenuously, find out why. Take time to convince them of either your prospective mate's character, or yours. Many marriage problems can only be prevented, and probably never solved!

7. What about the job record? A young man who cannot get and keep a job may have a few flaws. Frequent job changes might indicate instability. Then too, a wife who *insists* on working away from home is only weakening her marriage. Homemaking is a full time job. Children deserve a mother who stays at home...

Preserving Your Present Marriage

If you are married, and you find yourself caught up in a situation that is far from pleasing to God, there is hope for you! Many marriage "situations" have been completely reversed for the good when Christ has been given first place in the lives involved ...Christ can help with every problem for those who will let him. Will you? □

Suddenly Success

I BELIEVE God wants us to be successful...and yet success is not always obvious. The Chinese bamboo tree does absolutely nothing—or it seems—for the first four years. Then suddenly, sometime during the fifth year, it shoots up ninety feet in sixty days. Would you say that bamboo tree grew in six weeks, or five years? I think our lives are akin to the Chinese bamboo tree. Sometimes we put forth effort, put forth effort, and put forth effort...and nothing seems to happen. But if you do the right things long enough, you'll receive the rewards of your efforts.

—S. Truett Cathy □

The Continual Resurrection

THE CONTINUAL resurrection of Christ continues through each of us who are baptized in the likeness of his death as we rise to walk in newness of life. Paul sets this forth in Romans 6:4 when he states: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." This resurrection is

also to a life of promise as Paul further states in verse 5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Our resurrection to Christ is a life of sacrifice as stated in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Christ's resurrection did not occur until after his sacrifice. Our final resurrection will also occur after our sacrifice is over. Our final resurrection will also be our victory that Christ has promised to the faithful.—Walt Wilson □

TEN COMMANDMENTS for HUSBANDS

1. Thou shalt not think that thy business is none of thy wife's business. Remember that thy wife is thy partner, not thy property.

2. Thou shalt hold thy wife's love by the same means that thou didst win it.

3. Thou shalt not deal grudgingly with thy wife. Thou shalt not ask an accounting for every cent she spends unless thou makest a similar accounting to her. Remember she probably maketh a quarter go farther and last longer than thou canst a dollar.

4. Thou shalt make the building of thine home thy first business.

5. Thou shalt cooperate with thy wife in establishing family discipline.

6. Thou shalt not nag thy wife concerning dieting, lest it bring discord in the family harmony. And besides, it will profit thee not.

7. Thou shalt enter into thy house with cheerfulness. Always remember that thy wife assumed she was marrying a man and not a bear.

8. Thou shalt not let anyone criticize thy wife to thy face and get away with it; neither thy mother, nor thy father, nor thy brethren, nor thy sisters, nor any that are thy neighbors.

9. Thou shalt not take thy wife for granted.

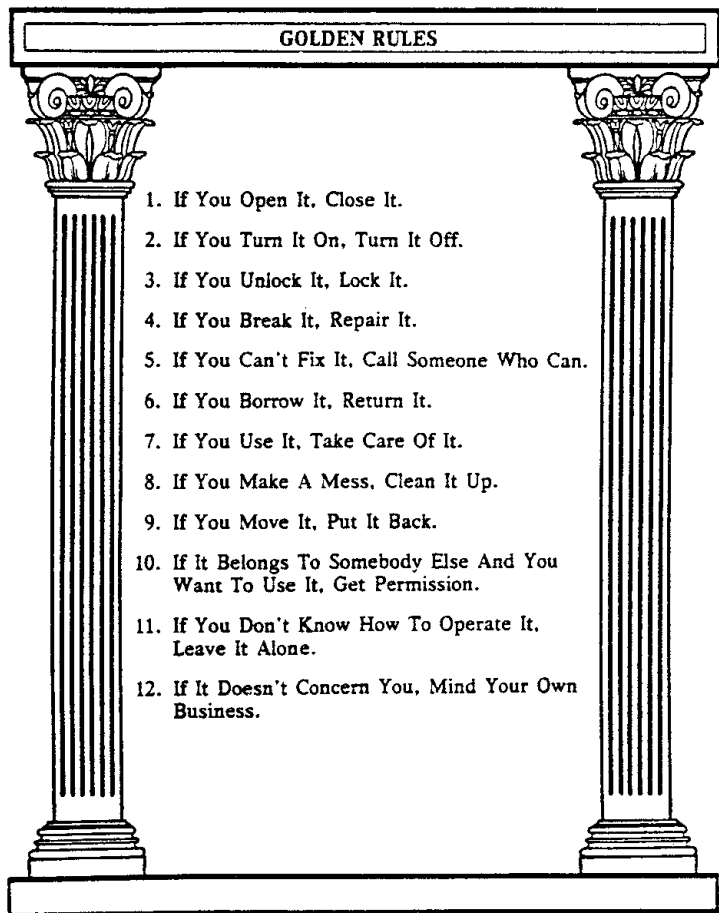
10. Remember thine home to keep it holy.

—Selected □

Stagnation is Bad

ONE of the greatest enemies in the world of both man and nature is stagnation.

Swift running streams purify themselves; no rubbish or refuse remains in the rushing currents of great rivers which hurry along on their course to the



1. If You Open It, Close It.
2. If You Turn It On, Turn It Off.
3. If You Unlock It, Lock It.
4. If You Break It, Repair It.
5. If You Can't Fix It, Call Someone Who Can.
6. If You Borrow It, Return It.
7. If You Use It, Take Care Of It.
8. If You Make A Mess, Clean It Up.
9. If You Move It, Put It Back.
10. If It Belongs To Somebody Else And You Want To Use It, Get Permission.
11. If You Don't Know How To Operate It, Leave It Alone.
12. If It Doesn't Concern You, Mind Your Own Business.

sea. Stagnant pools develop thick, evil-smelling scums which breed mosquitoes, pestilence, and disease. . .

Let us take heed to this lesson. Let our individual lives be like the swift-running stream; let our lives be fed from the eternal springs of learning. Create new ideas, new dream, new hopes. Turn these ideas into actions and keep them moving into our every activity and every phase of our lives.

The man who is ever learning something new and applying that knowledge to the betterment of himself, his work, and his fellowman will never find time for the evils which thrive among idle and indolent men. He will be a leader of men. A nation built of such men will be a leader of nations.

—*Author Unknown* □

TIME

MY NAME is TIME. I haven't always been and I won't always be, but right now I'm on the move, measuring out life.

Men wait for me, submit to me, fear me; but no one can stop me...

Except God. He is in control and He says I am running out.

Most men couldn't care less. They think I'm on the move forever. But I'm not. When I stop, eternity will

keep right on going...

And it will be too late...too late for repentance; too late for getting right with God through Jesus Christ, His Son; too late for faith. Just "forever" left for tears and anguish and regrets...*NOW is the day of salvation*. Will it be that day for you?

My name is TIME and I'm on the move. I'm nearing the end. And I'm taking you with me...into Eternity.—*Selected* □

Antidote for Apostasy

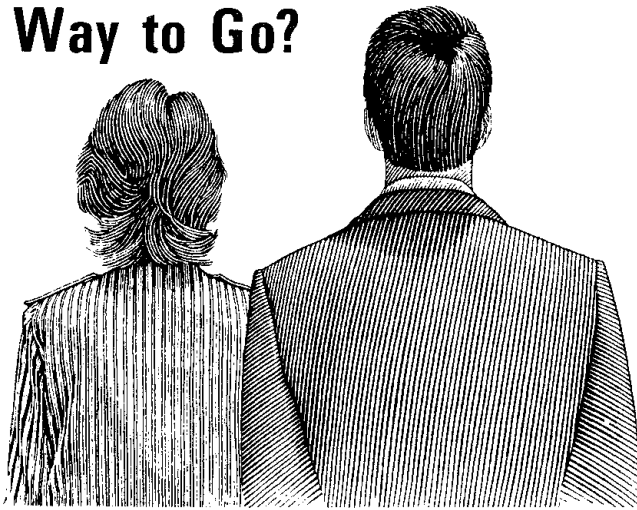
THE EPISTLE of II Peter puts the emphasis on knowing God. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through *the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ*, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through *the knowledge of him* that hath called us to glory and virtue" (1:2,3). By growing in the graces laid out in verses 4-7, and abounding in them, they would "neither be barren nor unfruitful in *the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (verse 8). Then having dealt with the problem of false teachers in chapters 2 and 3, he concludes by saying, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...*" This is not just factual knowledge alone (although very essential), but spiritual knowledge of God as the heavenly Father. God is a definite reality to them. From the apostle Peter's perspective, the best defense against false teaching is a good offense. The person who personally knows God and has found peace for his soul in Christ is not looking elsewhere. He is not even a candidate for deception.—*J.E.G.* □

Reaching the Lost

DON'T TRY to add men to the church. God will do this if the material is right. Don't beg people. If you once begin this way, when you have ceased begging, they will go pouting. Don't try to pull them in, for if you do, when you quit pulling, they will backslide. Don't try to fiddle people into the church, for if you do, when you quit fiddling, they will fiddle out. Just teach the gospel plainly to people and keep right on teaching the gospel. Fill the honest heart full of truth and such will obey. Dishonest-hearted people the devil will keep and God can't reach. Teach the gospel and be happy; never quit.

—*A Church Bulletin* □

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.

Poems of the Soul and Proverbs

WE WERE PLEASED at the reception of our poem, "I Saw Him Standing There (or, The Old Gospel Preacher)." It is still available free of charge, printed on heavier 8" x 10" paper, and suitable for framing.

Thus encouraged by the reception of this poem, we made available complimentary copies of other poems we had written (and put in theme binders) called *Poems of the Soul*. This was offered free of charge to those who had contributed to *The Sword and Staff* effort.

That supply is now all gone, although requests are still being received. Here is what we are considering doing. We are thinking about putting these poems with a few others we have written, along with over 777 Proverbial sayings that we have also written, together to make a little book. The book will be called *Poems of the Soul and Proverbs*. Be on the lookout for an announcement about this in *The Sword and Staff*.—J.E.G. □

(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*)

- ☐ 1983-84 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$5.95
- ☐ 1985-86 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$6.95
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Thanks for Your Support

THANK YOU for your support. Several thousand dollars are involved with each issue that goes into the mail, and all contributions are deeply appreciated. Again, thank you! □

More Pithy Points to Ponder

A cool head and a warm heart make a wonderful combination in a person.

"The less religion a church has, the more entertainment it takes to get people there." □

Treasure

MANY who love the Word of God have discovered Treasure much to their liking when they obtained the bound volumes of the back issues of *The Sword and Staff*. If you like this current issue, you will likewise be thrilled with the 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!

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