

The Sword AND Staff

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

Thanksgiving ● THANKSgiving ● ThanksGIVING

● By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 Fairfield Drive—Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030 U.S.A.



A POSITION of plenty is a dangerous one and especially to the person who has experienced nothing but this. Losing our sense of appreciation, we cease to be thankful. It can be devastating to us spiritually. The church of the Laodiceans was a well-to-do church. However, material well-being had made them complacent spiritually. The Lord read their thoughts, and said, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched,

and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:17,18). It is strange, but the very blessings that should bring forth thanksgiving and spiritual awareness can make us forget God. It really takes a spiritual person to handle the situation.

In contrast with the person who has always experienced plenty and well-being, perhaps it is easier for the person who has not to be thankful. In the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, thanksgiving is mentioned. These people had lost everything as they were carried into Babylonian Captivity. Now by the providence of God they were returning to their homeland, and the city of Jerusalem was being rebuilt with its walls and temple. "And they sang together by course in praising and *giving thanks* unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid" (Ezra 3:11). Nehemiah 12:27 speaks of "the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem" and "*thanksgiving*." Thanksgiving is repeatedly mentioned in this chapter (Nehemiah 12:24,27,31, 38,40,46). Yes, it is easier to be thankful when we have been deprived of blessings.

I. THANKSgiving

A. God Wants Us to Be Thankful

(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 out your checks 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...*

A HOPE that's sure will produce a life that's pure (I John 3:1-3).

"A Bible falling apart probably belongs to someone whose life isn't."

I had rather be an honest dead person than to be a crook who is alive and well.

"When men speak ill of thee, live so as nobody may believe them."

Trials become temptations only when we let them pull us down; temptations are only trials, being tried, unless we yield to them.

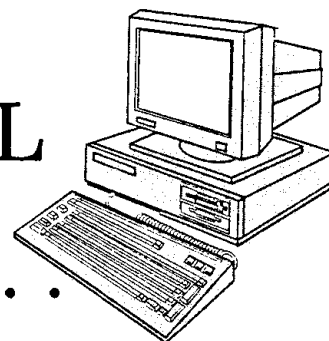
"If you want to get a true estimate of a man, observe what he does when he has nothing to do."

Our mixed up modern world doesn't seem to know this, but God made Adam and EVE, not Adam and STEVE; God made ADAM and Eve, not ADA and Eve (Matthew 19:4,5; Romans 1:21-28).

"God loves you whether you like it or not."

We may be tempted to sin, but were not created sinners; we become that by sinning (likewise a person does not become a sodomite [homosexual] until he makes a practice of sexual perversion).

EDITORIAL COMMENTS...



THE BESETTING SIN IN THE CHURCH

THE GREAT American Dream has become the great American nightmare as it has turned into a rat race and the mad pursuit of material things. We believe that materialism is the besetting sin in the church today, as well as in our society. We are materialistic to the core. Jesus had much to say about material things that has largely been neglected by the modern church. He declared, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [materialism]" (Matthew 6:24). He warned, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Paul called covetousness idolatry (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). We do not ever recall hearing a sermon preached on covetousness in our day.

The apostle John warned in I John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." James questions and asserts, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

These two parallel, yet different, verses are significant (and both sound like what Jesus said). When John said, "Love not the world," he was talking about the *agapé* love (the word used here, the love of intelligence and purpose). And when James said "that the *friendship* of the world is enmity with God," making us God's enemy, the word is *philia* (coming from the verb *philéo*, the love of affection and feeling)

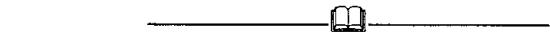
By having the *agapé* love for the world, instead of for God, it is emphatically evident that God's love is not in us. It implies that we have the mindset of the world. We are controlled by its philosophy, its value system, and its aims and aspirations. The *philia* relationship suggests that we are emotionally involved with deep feelings of attachment to the world (and what it has to offer). Consequently, John says that God's love is not in us. James says that we are God's enemy.

It would be well for us to read and heed I Timothy 6:5-19. The dangers of materialism are outlined for the young evangelist Timothy. Elders should be keenly aware of this

too, for the qualifications of an elder include that he be “not greedy of filthy lucre [base gain]” and “not covetous [literally, not a lover of silver]” (I Timothy 3:3).

The church of the Laodiceans was falling victim to the dangers of materialism. Ancient Laodicea was noted for its wealth, and the church was well-to-do. Their wealth is implied in the language, literal and figurative, the Lord used in his indictment of them. Listen to what he said. “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” They were in a very bad condition spiritually.

Remember what our Lord taught. Let us beware of the dangers of materialism. Being materially better off doesn’t mean that we are spiritually better off. Chances are it is just the opposite. Trust the Lord, do good, and “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-21). □



Thanksgiving

(Continued from Page 1)

God wants us to be thankful. There is nothing more obnoxious than the ingrate. Thanksgiving is repeatedly enjoined throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament alike. Let us listen.

The 100th Psalm

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with *thanksgiving*, and into his courts with praise: be *thankful* unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

Colossians 3:15-17

“...Be ye *thankful*. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to God and the Father by him.”

B. Reasons to Be Thankful

We have every reason to be thankful (and especially as Christians). The 100th Psalm suggests some as the writer admonishes them to be thankful and express it. This is the pattern of psalm after psalm. For example, read the 103th Psalm. Then take note of the 136th Psalm.

Now coming to the New Testament, not forgetting what the Psalms say, let us list some other things for which we are taught to be thankful.

(1) **All Things:** “*Giving thanks* always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18).

(2) **Christ, Salvation:** “*Thanks* be unto God for
(Continued on Next Page)

“Nothing for Granted”

If life has taught me anything,
‘Tis that hymn so often chanted,
To count my blessings every day,
And never to take the least of these
For granted
Life’s truest and dearest treasures,
Sometimes we just cannot hold,
And it’s not until we lose them
That we appraise their price
More than the purest gold.
Our chattering little children,
And all they do and say...
When they’ve left us—Then!
We’d gladly hear them
All the live long day.
Life goes on...Or so they say;
Yet not without regret
For taking God’s gifts for granted,
Forgetting our eternal debt.
So dear soul, walk more worthily,
As you traverse life’s transient way;
Savor the joys His grace affords you;
Pray, count your blessing every day.

—By Bob Wickline

Thanksgiving

(Continued from Previous Page)

his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15; John 3:16).

(3) **Victory Over Death:** "But *thanks* be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

(4) **Grounded in the Faith:** "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with *thanksgiving*" (Colossians 2:7).

(5) **Answered Prayer:** "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with *thanksgiving*" (Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6).

(6) **Fellow Christians:** "We *give thanks* to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (I Thessalonians 1:2; Romans 1:8; 6:17; 16:3,4; Philippians 1:3,4).

(7) **All Men:** "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and *giving of thanks*, be made for all men" (I Timothy 2:1-6).

(8) **Food:** "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and *gave thanks* to God in the presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat" (Acts 27:35; I Timothy 4:3,4; 6:8).

Of all people, as Christians, we have the most for which to be thankful. We are right with the God who made us. We have been given "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" as he has "called us unto glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). No doubt, thoughts of these things made Paul exclaim in that great doxological section of Ephesians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3-14). The God of heaven has blessed us for time and eternity. How wonderful!

We are thankful for the physical blessings too, but they are only secondary to us. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). "Having food and raiment," we are "therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8). We take seriously the admonition in Hebrews 13:5 and remember the promise. "Let your conversation [the way that you live] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

C. Results of Not Being Thankful

We must really appreciate the uniqueness of truth and the privilege of spiritual blessings. If we do not love, respect, and appreciate the truth, truth will not be ours for very long. If we are not thankful,

O Precious Truth

O precious Truth,
Thou art clear as the morning sky
And simple as a little child;
My weary spirit lingers nigh
To breathe thy freedom through a smile.

O precious Truth,
On thee my soul desires to fill;
I thirst and hunger for thy Word;
To taste the true my being thrills,
And it demands that thou be heard.

—By James E. Gibbons

we are in danger of losing everything.

The Ancient Gentiles

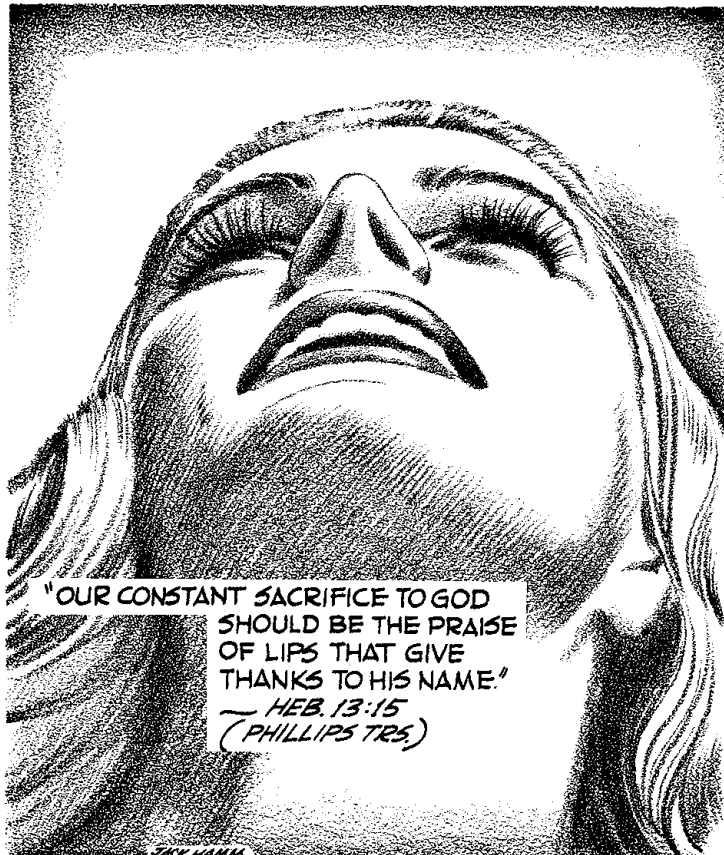
The ancient Gentile world stands as a classic example of this. Paul said, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful*; but became vain in their imaginations [thoughts], and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:21,22). Then he tells how they went into idolatry and the depths of sexual depravity as a result of this. Continuing, he further elaborated, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind [mind void of judgment] to do those things which are not convenient [proper, right]" (1:28). So, in not being thankful, man forgets and forsakes the very source of his being. Moral degeneration sets in. Modern man, beware!

Abounding with Thanksgiving

Paul learned of a potential problem confronting the church at Colosse. A hybrid heresy, which is spoken of as philosophy (yet with Jewish distinctions), was at the door of the church. Evidently these false teachers claimed superior insights and knowledge. Paul fused his letter to the Colossians with an appeal for thanksgiving (Colossians 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2). In Christ were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3). In the first chapter he expounded upon what a great thing they had in Christ. In chapter 2:6-10, he says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, *abounding therein with thanksgiving*. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the

world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Fully realizing what a wonderful thing they had in Christ, and truly being thankful for it, would ward off any possibility of apostasy. People who do not appreciate and love the truth will lose it.

LETTING IT BE KNOWN



Additional Warnings

As a result of not loving the truth, and thus not appreciating it, Paul said that people would be subjected to "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Then he continues, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). Again, Paul said that people would get to the place they no longer appreciated "sound doctrine" or "the truth." Listen: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3,4).

So, as we said, if we do not appreciate the uniqueness of truth, and the special privileges that come thereby, truth will not be ours for very long. Beware when the "old, old story" becomes old to you. Beware when you no longer thrill to studying the Bible. Beware when Bible preaching is boring to you. Beware when you think that the truth is not

adequate to bring people to Christ (and that gimmicks and entertainment programs must be used). In a pluralistic society that theoretically treats everything equally, the uniqueness and value of truth is soon lost (especially religious truth). And we will become lost too. Beware.

II. ThanksGIVING

A. The Giving of Self

If we are grateful to the God who made us, who sustains us, and who richly gives us all good things to enjoy, it will be seen in our lives. If we are truly thankful for God's great mercy, love, and grace, we will unconditionally give ourselves to Him. If we really appreciate the Savior who died that we might live, we will live for him. Thanksgiving will be expressed in genuine Christian living.

First Corinthians 15:55-58

Notice how this truth is taught and verified in I Cor. 15:55-58. In climaxing this great chapter on the resurrection, Paul questions in rapturous tones, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now listen to his answer and response, "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. *But thanks be to God*, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Thanksgiving for what God has done is tied in with the "therefore" of Christian living.

Romans 12:1,2

Another like "therefore" is found in Romans 12:1,2. Paul urged them, "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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The connection is obvious.

B. The Giving of Means

Appreciation makes us respond, and respond with liberality, in giving (to God and otherwise). Yes, if we have been blessed, God wants us not to be simply the object of blessing, but the source of blessing to others as well (both physically and spiritually). Thanksgiving will appropriately express itself in giving.

Material Means

An example of thanksgiving accomplished in this way can be seen in an episode in the life of Abraham (Genesis 14:13-24). The pillaging army had
(Continued on Next Page)

Thanksgiving

(Continued from Previous Page)

taken his nephew Lot captive with all his goods along with others of the cities of the plains. Abraham with his armed servants pursued them, rescued Lot, and recovered all the spoils of war that had been taken. Melchizedek, king and priest of Salem, met Abraham on his return and blessed him. Out of appreciation for what had taken place, Abraham gave tithes of all that he had to Melchizedek.

We see another example of this in the life of Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22). Jacob was fleeing Canaan for fear of his brother Esau. God spoke to him in a dream as he slept at Bethel with stones for pillows. He was so impressed, as he awakened, that he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not." He was afraid and called the place "Bethel" (house of God). He vowed a vow, wanting God's presence to be with him, as he was going into a far country. If God would do this, and bring him back safely, in appreciation he promised to give God a tenth of all that he had. His thanksgiving would take the form of giving.

Let us notice the early church in this respect. The early Christians didn't rejoice that they were no longer under the law of Moses and thus didn't have to tithe anymore (the bankrupt mentality of many today). Rather, overwhelmed by God's grace and their superior relationship in Christ, they sold their houses and land, and laid the money at the apostles' feet (Acts 2:44-47; 4:34-37). This was not commanded, but came as an outflowing of the liberality and thanksgiving that was in their hearts.

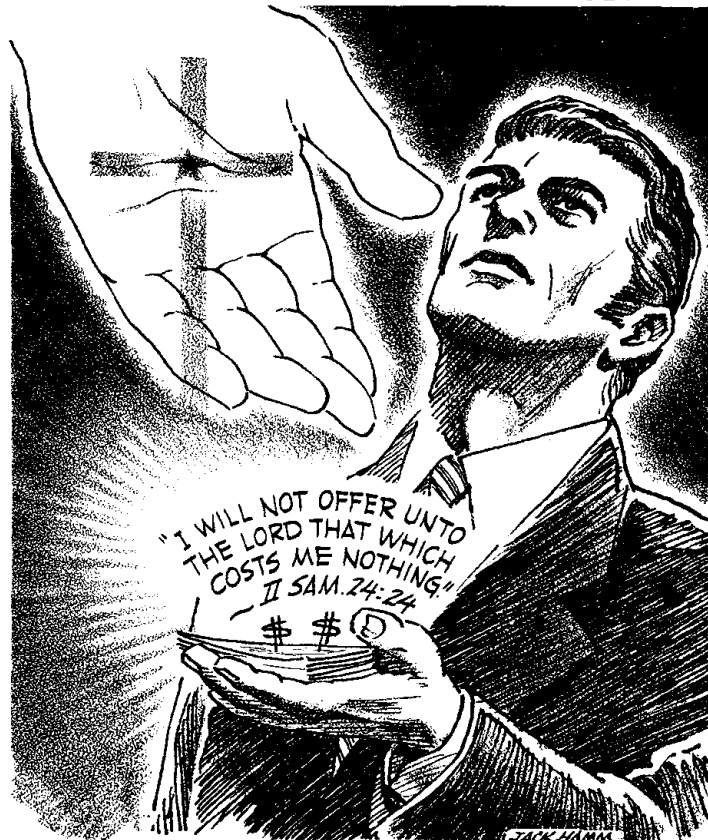
This was true of the churches of Macedonia (II Corinthians 8). They were poor, very poor, but went beyond their means in giving. They had experienced the essence of Christianity. They gave in ministering to the poor Judean Christians who had lost all they had. Paul elaborates upon this, "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Christ gave his all for us. Giving of self comes first on our part. Then, as Jesus taught, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Thanksgiving takes place.

Non-Material Means

Yes, genuine appreciation for what God has done makes us respond liberally in a material way, but that is not the whole story. All of this is in the context of the spiritual. Likewise these non-material responses are expressions of thanksgiving.

The apostle Paul was thankful from the depths of his heart. Let us listen to him as he writes in his

BECAUSE OF HEART-FELT GRATITUDE



own words; he said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 1:12-14). This deep feeling of thanksgiving, and debt, compelled him to labor "more abundantly than they all" (I Corinthians 15:8-10). Paul stated elsewhere, "I am a debtor" (Romans 1:14-16). His great debt of gratitude moved him spiritually to work untiringly for the Lord, to preach the gospel.

An outworking of this thanksgiving can be seen in other areas of our lives. Listen to Paul again in II Corinthians 1:3 and 4. "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." As we experience God's grace and share it with others, this is thanksgiving. This is likewise true as we experience His comfort and share it with others. We give spiritually as we have received. It can be seen that we are thankful in doing this.

C. The Giving of Thanks

God not only wants us to express thanks in the giving of ourselves and of our means, He wants us

verbally to say, "THANK YOU." The Bible teaches that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7; 4:23). Then further on in the Bible, to complement this teaching, our Lord taught that out of the abundance (overflowing) of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45). Therefore, if thankfulness is in the heart, it will come out. We will give thanks.

Thanksgiving Taught

In the healing of the ten lepers, and one returning to thank the Lord, a lesson in thanksgiving is seen (Luke 17:11-19). More than once under different circumstances we have the example of giving thanks in Jesus himself (Matthew 11:25; 26:26,27; John 6:11,23; 11:41; etc.). We likewise see this in the life of the apostle Paul (Acts 27:35; 28:15). Then his writings abound with expressions of thanks (Romans 1:8; I Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:15,16; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; I Thessalonians 1:2; 2:13; II Thessalonians 1:3; II Timothy 1:3-5; etc.). In more ways than one we should heed Paul's injunction, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Let us give thanks.

God is Glorified

What the actual expressing of thanks accomplishes is brought out in Hebrews 13:15. "By him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips *giving thanks* [confessing] to his name." In thanksgiving we "Praise God from whom all blessing flow." Thanksgiving for what we have, and in anticipation of answered prayer, is taught by Paul in Philippians 4:6. "Be careful [full of care] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with *thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God." A sincere, simple, and audible thanks to God for food is always in order and should be forthcoming (Acts 27:35; I Timothy 4:3-5; Romans 14:6; I Corinthians 10:30). In all of this God as the source of all good things is recognized, dependence upon Him is acknowledged, and glory is brought to His Name.

The Extended Glory of God

Our reference to the Gentile churches (i.e., churches of Macedonia, II Corinthians 8) giving for the needs of the impoverished Judean Christians pointed out that such giving was *thanksgiving* on their part. But a great byproduct beyond that was the giving of thanks to God by the Judean Christians, and thus extended praise and glory to God. As Paul gathered this special offering for the Judean Christians, he was well aware that this would happen (and was pleased about it). He said (NKJV), "For the ad-ministration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abound-

ing through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (II Corinthians 9:12-15). How wonderful! In such an ongoing cycle, glory is brought to God by continued praise and thanksgiving.

Conclusion

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."



Look Up (Appreciate)!

Look up when all seems down.
Look up, then all around.

Your lot is not that bad.
One, two; three, four; now add.

You are among the blest.
Your thoughts were just in jest.

Thank God for blessings great.
Look up (appreciate)!

—By James E. Gibbons



Don't Wait Too Late!

A MAN'S house is on fire. At the first sign of smoke, he rushes out to buy a fire extinguisher. Before he returned the roof and walls 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.

Many resent being told that they need to get ready. But when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time will be no more, it will be too late. When the Lord returns in judgment, it will be too late (Revelation 22:10-12; Matthew 25:1-13).

Accept Christ and live for him now (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; II Peter 1:4-11).—Adapted



Some Truth with Two Sides

● *“Enter by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are a few that find it” (MATTHEW 7:13,14).*

1. Two gates, one narrow—one wide.
 2. Two ways, one difficult (hard)—one broad.
 3. Two directions, life—destruction.
 4. Two groups of people, few—many.
 5. Two possibilities, stay on either way or change the way you are on.
 6. Two types of effort, few find—many go. Find implies that one went against the flow, and go implies one went with the flow.
- There are two all right, one sort of a distinct creation and the other sort of an evolution. Consider these words today, the difficult way is the path of minority (New Testament Christianity) and the broad way is the path of the majority (denominationalism, worldliness and ungodliness in general). So please don't give my regards to the broad way.—*Andrew Gibbons.* □

What is the Church?

THE CHURCH is never a place, but always a people. It is never a fold, but always a flock. Never a sacred building, but always a faithful assembly. The church is not a refrigerator for the preserving of perishable piety; it's a dynamo for charging the human will with the power of the gospel. The object of the church is not to tell men how to dodge difficulties, but to furnish strength and courage to meet them. The business of the church is not to furnish beds of ease for the lazy. It is rather to offer fitting yokes for drawing life's loads. There is no sanctuary for God here below but the soul.—*Adapted* □

This is Maturity

THIS IS maturity: To be able to have money without coveting it; to be able to bear an injustice without retaliating; to be able to do one's duty even when one is not watched; to be able to keep on the job until it is finished; to be able to accept criticism without resentment.—*Selected* □

Unto Good Works

AS THE SUN was created to shine, the rose to give forth its delightful fragrance, the bird to fly, so we are created anew to do good works and thus to

glorify Him who created us as what we are in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 2:10; John 15:8).—*Selected* □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What was the name of Noah's father?
2. What are the twofold meanings of the name "Beer-sheba" (both meanings applying to what happened in the place that came to be called that)?
3. Mount Moriah, the mountain where Abraham was called to offer his son Isaac, later became the site of what?
4. What was the ancient name of Bethel before it was called "Bethel"?
5. Into what three periods of equal length can the life of Moses be divided?
6. From where did the Philistines originate that the Israelites found already settled in the land of Canaan?
7. What were the names of the five cities of the Philistines?
8. Who said the following (and to whom): "I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man"?
9. What man's life in the Bible was increased by 15 years when he prayed?
10. Where is reference made to there being no taste in the white of an egg made in the Bible?
11. Which is the longest chapter in the Bible (and how many verses are in this chapter)?
12. Ezekiel said that even if what three righteous men of antiquity were in the land of Israel in his day they would be able only to deliver their own souls and could not hold back the judgment of God on the land?
13. What did Jesus teach that a person should first do before he became a disciple?
14. Besides being in some of the gospel accounts, where else is the transfiguration of Christ mentioned in the New Testament?
15. Where did Jesus tell his disciples he would meet them after his resurrection from the dead?
16. What two rulers of the Jews, who were secret disciples of Jesus, saw that the body of Jesus had a decent burial?
17. What was the name of the man who took the place of Judas as one of the twelve apostles?
18. The apostle Paul said, "For we walk by faith, not by _____."
19. What happened to Epaphroditus, a Christian brother from Philippi, when he visited Paul and ministered to him while he was a prisoner at Rome?
20. Before men are set aside as elders and deacons in the church what does Paul say is first to be done?

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

READERS'

...Response



FLORIDA:

■ "I am enjoying my copy of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. Would you be so kind as to forward a copy of the same to..."

"Thank you."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "I want you to know how much I appreciate the good work you are doing for the Lord. Keep it up. May God bless you always for what you are doing. Please keep me on your mailing list..."

TENNESSEE:

■ "It is with pleasure that I read *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. You are doing a great job and are to be commended..."

■ "Please send me one copy of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*..."

"I enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF* as I always get a spiritual uplift. Just wish more people would read it. Keep up the good work."

KENTUCKY:

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

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "Many thanks for the book of poems and proverbs. It is so nice. And for all the other literature too. I memorized the 'Old Gospel Preacher.' Be sure to put me on the mailing list for the paper *THE SWORD AND STAFF*..."

OHIO:

■ "Thank you for your prompt reply to my request for some of your material. I find it to be of great assistance in my day to day study as well as in sermon preparation..."

"Please put me on your mailing list as I want to be assured of getting all future issues as they become available."

"May God continue to bless you in your ministry."

■ "I am enclosing a check as a donation toward the printing of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I enjoy this paper very much."

"Your book of poems and proverbs is very good as I collect poetry and the proverbs you have written are very thought provoking. I have used some of your material in class meetings before and I'm sure I will use some of these proverbs."

INDIANA:

■ "Please cancel my subscription."

■ "Sir, we had a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* left at our house by the mailman. We are sending it on to the church to which it is addressed. We took time to look through it and we like it."

"Please put us on your mailing list. We are sending a check to cover the cost of all issues up to date. Please let us know if this is enough. Volumes 1985-86, 1987-88, 1989-90, 1991-92, 1993-94 [1993-94 not available yet—Editor] and *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*."

ILLINOIS:

■ "Please send me 50 of the *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. I will pass them out at church and give them as gifts."

■ "I gave away 60 of your books [*POEMS OF THE SOULS AND PROVERBS*] real quick and everyone thinks they are great."

MISSOURI:

■ "Thank you for your *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. It's great..."

■ "Please take my name off of your mailing list. I do not wish to receive *THE SWORD AND STAFF* any longer."

MINNESOTA:

■ "Thanks for your recent copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I couldn't put it down until I read it through."

"Yes, do send me a copy of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*."

IDAHO:

■ "...Enjoyed getting another paper from you. We have read it twice...Everyone who comes to see us reads them and really enjoys them, and we let our next door neighbor read them. But we keep them to read over. We are real pleased with them."

"Thank you. Keep up the good work."

OREGON:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list AND any lists your organization has sold or given out."

"P.S. Get a job!"

"P.S. P.S. If you have any morals you'd send me the 29 cents it cost ME to have you stop this mailing."

Editor: Strange! And the writer didn't even tell us what was bothering him, nor give us his address so

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

that we could take his name off. However, a Portland, Oregon postmark on the envelope gives us a clue..

■ *"Please send me one copy of the book entitled POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS. Also, would you happen to have any more of the little pamphlet entitled 'What Must I Do to Be Saved?' I would love to obtain about twenty of these if they are still available. They are the best I have ever seen and I'm down to my last one..."*

"May God bless you richly."

Editor: This little pamphlet, which has been used around the world, is still available. We suggest 7 cents a copy to help with printing and mailing. □

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.

Having Trouble Being Told What to Do?

SOME PEOPLE don't like being told what to do, but that's what "Christianity" is all about. Yes, doing what somebody else tells you, as long as God is the One who is doing the telling. Being a Christian is realizing that you can't run your life your own way without making a big mess out of it. You turn your life over to Christ and let him run it before you ruin it.

God tells you what to do through His Word. He also places elders, preachers, and teachers in the church to "tell you what to do." Not only them but any caring brother or sister in Christ who sees you start to stray can lovingly "tell you what to do" to get back on the straight and narrow.

You are in the Lord's army if you are saved. If you have a problem taking orders you should talk to the Captain of your salvation (Hebrews 2:10). "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [manner of life]" (Hebrews 13:7). You see, you just can't be faithful to God and live life your own way. To be acceptable to God you have to do what you're told. Those who obey God are promised eternal salvation—not those who rebel: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

If you have trouble being "told what to do" then you have trouble being a Christian. All through the Scriptures we are told to obey.—**Lewel Green** □



While Men Slept

"WHILE MEN SLEPT"—that's the explanation Jesus gave for the presence of weeds in the wheat (Matthew 13:25). "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed weeds in the wheat"—abortion became an acceptable means of population control and euthanasia is not far behind. Homosexuality came out of the closet and gained respectability, sex outside of marriage became common behavior and teenage pregnancy reached epidemic proportions. Our society grew addicted to pornography and gambling, and alcoholism became our number one health problem—"while men slept."

Individualism, pluralism, secularism, and apathy have rendered American religion impotent, totally incapable of doing anything about our moral and spiritual crisis. No one seems to know what's right and what's wrong; most people don't think there is any right and wrong, and those that do, don't think it's all that important. So everyone does what feels good at the moment, or makes him feel good about himself later on. While men slept, the weeds grew.

Don't you think it's about time we awakened out of sleep to sin not (I Corinthians 15:34; Ephesians 5:14-16; Romans 13:11-14). Let us not be part of the problem, but the answer. In the early church, by preaching Jesus Christ, New Testament Christians "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). That's what the world said, but they were really turning it right side up. It had been upside down too long. They helped change the course of history. If we were of the same conviction, and would awaken out of sleep, perhaps the same could be done again.

—**Adapted** □



Giving, An Act of Worship

THE NEW TESTAMENT presents giving as an act of worship. In Acts 2:42 when teaching, the Lord's supper, and prayer are mentioned, giving is also included. Giving (sharing) is involved in this word fellowship in the original language. Fellowship is elsewhere used in the New Testament having reference to giving too (Philippians 1:3-5; 4:15-17). Paul instructed the Corinthians, and other churches, to lay aside on the first day of every week (note Greek) as they were prospered (I Corinthians 16:1,2), even as the Lord's supper was partaken on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). This being an act of worship, the giving has

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 come from the heart (II Corinthians 9:7)—which has first been given to the Lord. The fruit of giving is to be used in the preaching of the gospel and benevolent work (I Corinthians 9:14; 16:1). It is a shame today when so-called churches stoop to begging money from the world (equivalent to asking sinners to partake of the Lord's supper, both being acts of worship). Then the element of worship is denied and distorted when so-called churches resort to all kinds of selling to "raise" money to pay their bills. The members have not yet fully given themselves to the Lord, and consequently, they are not giving as they should. Let us worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Amen! □

Who is Jesus Christ?

IN GENESIS He is the Seed of the Woman; in EXODUS He is the I AM of Moses; in LEVITICUS He is the Great High Priest; in NUMBERS He is the Cloud by Day and Fire by Night; in DEUTERONOMY He is the Law of Jehovah; In JOSHUA He is the Man with the Sword in His Hand; in JUDGES He is the Righteous Judge; in RUTH He is the Redeemer/Kinsman; In I & II SAMUEL He is the Anointed of God; in I & II KINGS He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; in I &

II CHRONICLES He is the One Coming in Judgment; in EZRA He is the Rebuilder of the Temple; in NEHEMIAH He is the Foundation of the Walls; in ESTHER He is the Deliverer of God's People; in JOB He is the Perfect Man; in PSALMS He is the Good Shepherd; the Lily of the Valley and the Bright and Morning Star; in PROVERBS He is the Wisdom of God; in SONG OF SOLOMON He is the Great Lover; in ISAIAH He is the Root out of Dry Ground, the Suffering Servant; in JEREMIAH He is the Persecuted Prophet; in LAMENTATIONS He is the Weeping Poet; in EZEKIEL He is the Wheel Within a Wheel; in HOSEA He is the Faithful Lover; in JOEL He is the Trumpet of the Day of the Lord; in AMOS He is the Farmer of God's Land and the Herdsman of God's People; in OBADIAH He is the Deliverer of Zion; in JONAH He is the Scorching East Wind; in MICAH He is the Source of Light and Salvation; in NAHUM He is the Goodness and Severity of God; in HABAKKUK He is the Splendor that Covers Heaven; in ZEPHANIAH He is the Wrath of God upon the Wicked; in HAGGAI He is the Spirit of Joshua and Zerubbabel; in ZACHARIAH He is the Spring Rain and the Fountain opened to the House of David; in MALACHI He is the Messenger of God.

In MATTHEW He is the Son of David and the King of Israel; in MARK He is a Power Greater than Caesar's; in LUKE He is the Son of Man; in JOHN He is the Word of God; in ACTS He is the Spirit in the Church; in ROMANS He is the One Who Justifies by Faith; in I & II CORINTHIANS He is the Answer to the Church's Problems; in GALATIANS He is the Freedom of God's People; in EPHESIANS He is the Manifold Wisdom of God; in PHILIPPIANS He is the Exalted Christ; in COLOSSIANS He is All We Need; in I & II THESSALONIANS He is the Coming One; in I & II TIMOTHY He is the Faithful Minister; in TITUS He is the Grace of God Who Appeared; in PHILEMON He is the Forgiver of Slaves; in HEBREWS He is the Great High Priest; in JAMES He is the Wisdom from Above; in I & II PETER He is the Precious Stone; in I, II & III JOHN He is the Word of Life, the Light of Life and the Love of God; in JUDE He is the Lord Coming in Judgment upon the Ungodly, and in REVELATION He is the KING OF KINGS and the LORD OF LORDS.—*Harry J. Bowers* □

Soon Outside of Christ

THE PERSON who does not marry "only in the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:39; II Corinthians 6:14) will soon find himself outside of Christ. □

Santa Claus: **ANOTHER "GOD"?**

THE TIME of the year, beginning at Thanksgiving and continuing until Christmas day, Santa Claus is much in the mind of American children. Books portray him, TV displays him, songs remind us of him, and the stores even give the opportunity to meet him! Just how Santa will climb down the chimney, how he will keep from becoming overheated in the warmer climate of some parts of the country, and how his sleigh will function without snow pose little problem to the imagination of Santa's admirers.

How many parents who profess to worship God and serve Jesus Christ have acquiesced to the Santa Claus myth simply because the world around us exalts him! Should it be accepted in our families and promoted by Christian fathers and mothers this time of the year? Does Scripture have anything to say about this contemporary emphasis on a mythological Santa?

The Santa Claus myth is a cruel fabrication—a fanciful, destructive lie perpetuated by parents who hypocritically tell their children not to lie! Are we justified in lying simply because a child enjoys the lie? Are we exempt from guilt simply because lying is accepted by major portions of society? Is the Santa myth simply a good "white lie" of no consequence? Scripture quite plainly affirms, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 12:22a). We read that God "hates...a lying tongue" (Proverbs 6:16,17). Paul tells us to lay aside "falsehood" and to "speak truth" (Ephesians 4:25). God assures us that "ALL liars" will have their part in "the lake of fire" (Revelation 21:8). This should settle the matter for all of those who prize honesty and truthfulness.

Furthermore, Santa Claus or St. Nicholas is not simply an overweight, white-bearded, jolly old man dressed in a red suit who lives at the North Pole. To many, Santa is elevated to the level of deity. In effect, he has become a "god." Notice the characteristics of God attributed to this supernatural figure:

- Santa is omniscient like God—knowing whether every child has been "good or bad" (to use the thought from the popular song).
- Santa is omnipresent like God—he can be everywhere in the world during the same night of the year!
- Santa is omnipotent like God—flying through the skies with his supernatural reindeer, carrying tons of toys!

- Santa is a moral judge like God—rewarding "good" little children and refusing to reward "bad" children.
- Santa is served by others like God is—he has his group of little workers at his beck and call.
- Santa personifies love, goodwill and giving—just as God does.
- Santa is revered by his worshipful subjects—a response suitable for our exalted God and Creator alone!

In these and other ways the mythical Santa Claus has become something of a "god" since he has superhuman attributes. This constitutes an affront to the true and living God of Scripture! "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols, but the LORD made the heavens" (Psalms 96:4,5). Some psychologists tell us that if parents tell their children to believe in both Santa Claus and Jesus Christ, then later reveal the mythical character of Santa, the children will also have their belief in Christ undermined. How sad to think of parents' willingness to deceive their children and weaken their children's faith simply for the sake of "fun" and a little excitement.

Nothing eternal is to be gained in believing a lie except eventual disillusionment. Nothing is more precious than truth. Let's remember the virtue of honesty at this time and all through the year. Let us love, trust, and serve the "living and true God" (I Thessalonians 1:9) rather than giving our allegiance to a fictitious Santa Claus!

—Richard Hollerman



Why I Do Not Observe CHRISTMAS

1. We don't know when Christ was born, and if God had wanted this day observed the Holy Spirit would have let us know (John 14:26; 16:13; II Timothy 3:16,17).
2. We haven't been commanded to observe Christmas, and we are commanded to teach men "to observe all things" that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. There are many false, irreligious, and pagan things tied in with the observance of Christmas which are incompatible and antagonistic to Christianity (Psalms 119:104; Ephesians 5:9,10; Philippians 4:8).

—James E. Gibbons

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE

Old Testament: Douay Version

New Testament: Confraternity Version

THIS MATERIAL appeared in print years and years ago. Since the pope has been glaringly in the news lately, and since people know so little about the Bible today, we are running it as a reprint. Even if Catholics followed their own translations of the Bible, they could learn the truth. Since this material was put together, the religious mentality has changed so much it may even be offensive to non-Catholics. Nevertheless, here it is.—Editor

BIBLE VERSIONS QUOTED BELOW WERE PREPARED BY CATHOLIC SCHOLARS AND APPROVED BY THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY. CAPITALIZATION FOR EMPHASIS IS OURS.

1. Q. **May common people understand what the apostles wrote in the Bible?**

A. "For we write nothing to you that you do not read and understand." 2 Cor. 1:13.

2. Q. **Who is God's supreme religious authority upon earth?**

A. "And Jesus drew near and spoke to them saying, 'All power in heaven and on EARTH has been given to ME. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.....teaching to observe all THAT I HAVE COMMANDED you . . .'" Mat. 28:18-20.

3. Q. **Who is the "Holy Father" spoken of in the bible?**

A. "These things Jesus spoke; and raising his eyes TO HEAVEN, he said, 'Father, the hour has come! Glorify thy Son . . . HOLY FATHER, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given to me . . .'" Jo. 17:1, 11.

4. Q. **What did Christ say about traditions?**

A. "You make VOID the commandment of God by your tradition, which you have handed down . . . and in VAIN do they worship me, teaching as doctrine the precepts of MEN," Mar. 7:13; Mat. 15:9.

5. Q. **What must one do to enter the kingdom of heaven?**

A. "Jesus answered . . . 'Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" Jo. 3:3. "If then any man is in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: the former things have passed away: behold they are made new!" II Cor. 5:17, 18.

6. Q. **If one has not repented of a sin enough to quit practicing it, has he been forgiven of it?**

A. "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that shall confess and FORSAKE THEM shall obtain mercy." Prov. 28:13.

7. Q. **When God forgives sins, does He still remember them, so as to punish the sinner for them after death?**

A. ". . . I will be merciful to their iniquities, and

their sins I will remember NO MORE." Heb. 8:12.

8. Q. **To whom is confession of sins to be made?**

A. "My sin I confessed to THEE, and my guilt I did not hide; I said: 'My iniquity I confess TO THE LORD,' and thou forgavest the guilt of my sin." Psa. 32:5. "Confess, therefore, your sins to ONE ANOTHER, and pray for one another, that you may be saved." Ja. 5:16.

9. Q. **What is the baptism which God recognizes as necessary for our salvation? Is it pouring or immersion?**

A. "For we were BURIED with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also." Rom. 6: 4, 5.

10. Q. **To receive valid baptism, what must one do first?**

A. "He who BELIEVES and is baptized shall be saved . . ." Mar. 16:16. "REPENT and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Ac. 2:38.

11. Q. **Who are the priests authorized in the New Testament?**

A. "You, however, are a chosen race, a royal PRIESTHOOD, a holy nation, a purchased people. . . You who . . . are now the PEOPLE OF God." I Pet. 2:9, 10.

12. Q. **May a bishop be an unmarried man or a drinker?**

A. "A bishop then, must be blameless, married but once . . . not a drinker . . . He should rule well his own household, keeping his children under control and perfectly respectful. For if a man cannot rule his own household, how is he to take care of the church of God?" I Tim. 3:2-5.

13. Q. **May a religious leader charge people for his services or press for certain sums of money?**

A. "These twelve Jesus sent forth, having instructed them thus: ' . . . Freely you have received, freely give.' " Mat. 10:5, 8. "Let each one give according as he has determined in HIS HEART,

(Continued on Next Page)

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 5:28-32; 2. The twofold meaning of the word "Beersheba" is (1) The well of the oath, and (2) The well of seven—Genesis 21:25-32; 3. Genesis 22:1-14; II Chronicles 3:1; 4. Genesis 28:19; 35:6; 5. Acts 7:23,30, 36; 6. Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7; 7. I Samuel 6:17,18; 8. I Kings 2:1,2; 9. Isaiah 38:1-5; 10. Job 6:6;; 11. Psalms 119 12. Ezekiel 14:12-21; 13. Luke 14:25-33; 14. II Peter 1:16-18; 15. Matthew 26:31,32; 28:7,10,16; 16. John 19: 38-42; 17. Acts 1:26; 18. II Corinthians 5:7; 19. Philipians 2:25-30; 20. I Timothy 3:10. □

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

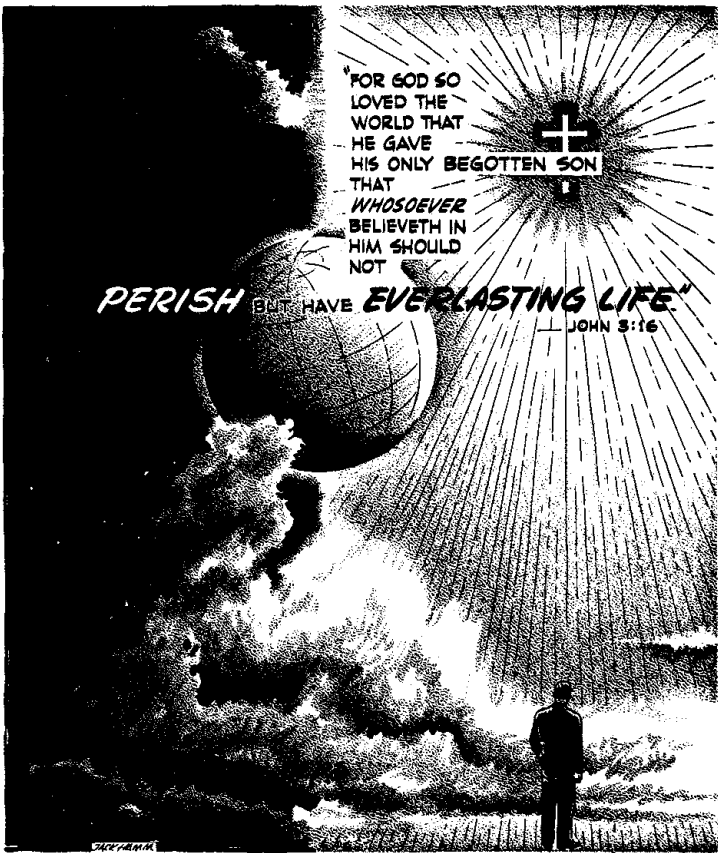
(Continued from Previous Page)

not grudgingly or from compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." II Cor. 9:7.

14. Q. **Is the sacrifice of Christ repeated through the Mass?**
- A. "... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **ONCE FOR ALL**. . . . Jesus, having offered **ONE** sacrifice for sins, has taken his seat forever at the right hand of God . . . Now where there is the forgiveness of these, there is **NO LONGER OFFERING FOR SIN**." Heb. 10:10, 12, 18.
15. Q. **Are religious leaders to be called "Father" or "Rabbi"?**
- A. "But do not you be called 'Rabbi'; for one is your Master, and all you are **BROTHERS**. And call **NO ONE ON EARTH** your father; for one is your Father, who is in heaven." Mat. 23:8, 9.
16. Q. **Were men to bow down before Peter?**
- A. "And as Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, made obeisance to him. But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Get up, I myself also am a man.'" Ac. 10:25, 26.
17. Q. **Who is the mediator between God and men? Is it Mary, a saint, a pope, or a priest?**
- A. "For there is one God, and **ONE MEDIATOR** between God and men, himself man, **CHRIST JESUS**, who gave himself a ransom for all . . ." I Tim. 2:5, 6.
18. Q. **May a man pay religious homage to saints or to Mary?**
- A. "The Lord thy God shalt thou worship and him **ONLY** shalt thou serve." Mat. 4:10.
19. Q. **What place do statues have in divine worship?**
- A. "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous . . ." Ex. 20:4, 5.
20. Q. **Does God command me to trust in a priest?**
- A. "Thus saith the Lord: **CURSED** be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Jer. 17:5.
21. Q. **What does the Bible predict about Rome?**
- A. "Come, I will show thee the condemnation of the great harlot . . . with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication . . . And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns . . . And I saw the Woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . . The seven heads are **SEVEN MOUNTAINS** upon which the woman sits . . . And the woman whom thou sawest is the **GREAT CITY** which has

kingship over the kings of the earth . . . Go out from her, my people, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues." Apoc. 17:1-3, 6, 9, 18; 18:4.

FACE THESE FACTS SQUARELY, Catholic friend. Peter said, "We must obey God rather than men." (Ac. 5:29). By so doing, you will neither remain a Catholic nor become a Protestant. You will be a disciple of Jesus, a Christian only. In this issue your eternal salvation is at stake!



Peter's Wife's Mother

IN MATTHEW 8:14-15, the Bible says, "Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she arose and served them." By looking at the context and accounts found in Mark 1:29-31 and Luke 4:38-39, we learn several interesting facts.

The first thing that comes to mind is to take note of the fact that Simon Peter was a married man. We learn from I Corinthians 9:5 that he took his wife along with him on his preaching tours. What makes this fact most interesting, perhaps, is the fact that one very large religious body claims that Simon Peter was once the head of their church. They claim that the present head of their religious organization is a direct successor of Simon Peter—and yet they insist of that so-called successor, and even of lesser church leaders, that they must remain unmarried. They deny

them the right to follow Peter's example. This is not only in open contrast to the practice of the apostle Peter, but it also contradicts the precise teachings of the apostle Paul in Titus 1:5-6 and I Timothy 3:2-4 that a bishop "must be the husband of one wife" and that he must have children.

The miraculous healing of Peter's mother-in-law took place on a Sabbath day after Jesus had taught in the synagogue in Capernaum and healed a demoniac there, Mark 1:21-28. It took place in the home shared by Simon Peter and his brother Andrew.

Another important fact to notice is that when Peter's mother-in-law was healed of her sickness, "immediately she arose and served them" (Luke 4:39). As scholar William Barclay observed, "She clearly regarded herself as 'saved to serve.' Jesus had healed her, and her one desire was to use her new-found health to be of use and of service to him and to others."

This attitude should likewise be manifested by those who have experienced spiritual healing through forgiveness of sins. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

—*Clarence R. Johnson* □

How to Determine What to Say, What to Do, and Where to Go As a Christian

I WILL say nothing that I would not want to be saying when Jesus comes.

I will do nothing that I would not want to be doing when Jesus comes.

I will go no place that I would not want to be when Jesus comes.—*Selected* □

Papa Didn't Pray

A FATHER was in the habit of reading the Bible and praying before retiring each evening. One night they had company. The people remained late, and the little girl went to her bed. The father and mother thought she was asleep, so they turned out the light and went to bed without praying. In the dark, the little girl came over to the side of her mother and said, "Mama, will God care for us tonight? Papa didn't ask Him to keep us safe tonight." The father got up, and, by the side of the little girl, asked God to care for them. Then she was happy and went to sleep.—*Selected* □

Spiritual Fellowship and Physical Fellowship Go Together and in That Order

IN THE EARLY CHURCH physical fellowship (eating food together, etc., Acts 2:46) came about as a result of spiritual fellowship first (Acts 2:41,42,46); in the modern church many times physical fellowship (eating food, etc.) is nothing more than an exercise in carnality because there is no initial spiritual fellowship nor appetite for that which is spiritual (notice the difference in attendance at purely spiritual gatherings).—*J.E.G.* □

The Wrong Measure

A LITTLE BOY came running to his mother, shouting, "Mother, I am nine feet tall!" His mother said, "Don't talk such nonsense." He answered, "I really am nine feet tall." She said, "What makes you think so?" "Because I measured myself." "How did you measure yourself?" "I took off my shoe and measured myself with that. It is just the same size as my foot, and I really am nine feet." "Oh, I understand now," said his mother, "but, Sonny, your measure was not the right one. You may be nine feet tall measured by your shoe, but you are not that tall measured by a twelve-inch ruler." The Bible says that people, "measuring themselves by themselves...are not wise."—*Selected* □

Recognizing Opportunity

A NEIGHBOR knocked at the lazy man's door and told him of a job that he could get by going after it. "Um," said the man, "it appears that considerable effort will be involved." "Oh, yes," said the neighbor, "you will pass many sleepless nights and toilsome days, but it is a good position, and a chance for advancement." "Um," said the man, "and who are you?" "I am called Opportunity." "Um! You call yourself Opportunity, but you look like Hard Work to me!" And he slammed the door.—*Selected* □

God's Mercy and Grace

THE MERCY and grace of God are really the opposite sides of the same coin: In mercy punishment is deserved, but has been withheld; in grace favor (merit) has been bestowed, but it is not deserved. □

Do You Have Your Copy?

Poems of the Soul
and Proverbs

(Book by James E. Gibbons)

WE WERE (are) pleasantly surprised by the good response for (to) our little book *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS* from all over the country. We thought people no longer read this kind of material, but have found out otherwise.

These words are found on the title page: "This little book contains poems and proverbs that ponder, praise, and preach (and even prod)." This book is about one third poetry and two thirds proverbs (short and pungent statements of truth). This kind of book fits in nicely for the busy person of today to read in a hurry.

This different format in expressing truth makes for interest and appeal. Thus, people have ordered it and are making use of it. Here are some of the ways.

- For personal reading
- For personal gifts to friends
- To give to whole churches
- For use in preparing church bulletins
- To give to the sick and people in hospitals

If you have not gotten your copy, feel free to order at \$5.00 (to help pay for printing and mailing). If you order five or more copies, they are \$4.00 each.



Great Meaning and Purpose

APPLY the great truths of God's Word to your life and watch your life become filled with great meaning and purpose (and you may even become great in the sight of God). □



(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*)

- ☐ 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
- ☐ 1991-92 bound vol. of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.25
- ☐ *Poems of The Soul and Proverbs* (by J.E.Gibbons) —\$5.00; 5 or more copies, \$4.00 each.

WHAT MORE COULD
WE ASK FOR?

TO YOU who would question the Deity of Christ, what more could we ask for, or look for, in God incarnate? His perfection in wisdom, love, and purity leaves nothing to be desired (not even considering his miracles and resurrection from the dead); truly he was (is) **EMMANUEL** (God with us)—how wonderful!—*J.E.G.* □

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!**

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