

The Sword AND Staff

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

SIN, TEMPTATIONS, AND HOW TO OVERCOME

(Hebrews 3:12-14)



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

All Are Tempted to Sin

THIS ARTICLE deals with sin, temptations, and how to overcome. There is not a professed Christian reading this (or any person, for that matter) who cannot relate to what is said. Hebrews 3:12-14 was spoken generally. May we listen: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." The warning is "lest there be in *any of you* an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." All are subject to temptation,

and victory over sin and steadfastness are necessary to be partakers with Christ in eternity.

Regardless who we are, temptation can take place. Paul admonished Timothy, "Flee also *youthful lust*: but follow righteousness, faith, charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22). Satan customizes his temptations to fit the youth or an adult, the middle aged person or an older person. None of us are beyond his schemes and his reach. Even the apostle Paul recognized this personally, as he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). Yes, even the Son of God who became flesh was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). So, don't think that you are exempt from temptation. The Bible says that not only are we tempted, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We need this lesson.

It is Hard to

Live the Christian Life Today

It is hard to live the Christian life today. The Scripture in Matthew 24:11-13 comes to mind. The Lord said, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The context of this Scripture shows conditions leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and finally the end of the world. False teaching and iniquity would be in abundance (and they are today). But in spite of this, "he that shall endure unto the

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

E-Mail Address:
102100.1727@compuserve.com

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

THE DOOR of happiness opens outward.

Conversion to Christ is an experience of love (Romans 5:5-8; I Peter 1:22,23; I John 3:14; 4:7).

The good life and all that is good comes from following the Good Book.

The Christian race is not won by the fast, but by the steadfast.

All things come to them who wait, but then again if you wait too long the world may pass you by.

If you can't see the forest for the trees, then maybe you are not out of the woods yet.

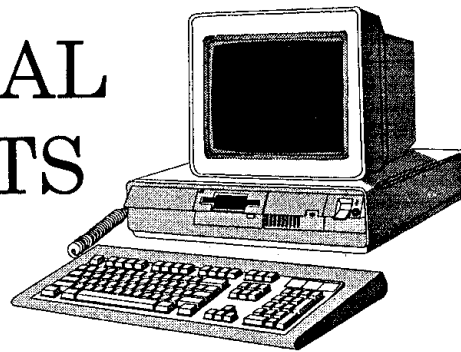
The fact that we have a conscience as human beings indicates that we are accountable, moral beings.

To have a negative mental attitude is to negate the purpose and working of God in your life; faith is positive in affirmation and action.

You will have no problem in getting the last word if the last word is an apology.

The inactive "church member" is a "sitting duck" for the devil.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



A MOST SOMBER, SERIOUS MATTER

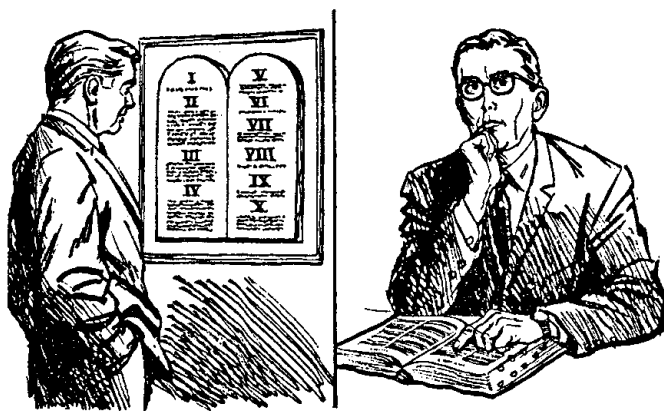
THE ALMIGHTY and Holy God made everything and saw that it was "good" (Genesis 1:25), even "very good" (1:31). This included the crowning act of His creation, mankind, who was made male and female (1:27). After Eve was created, and presented to Adam, we read, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (2:24). God instituted marriage, and in this relationship man and woman are to become "one flesh." "One flesh" refers to the sexual union, and what that sexual union produces, another human being. After the initial creation, sexual union in marriage was God's way of producing life, and also at the same time God's way for man and woman in this holy union to celebrate life in their love one for another (Proverbs 5:18-20). Hebrews 13:4 reads, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Also the seventh commandment reads, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." God has placed hetero-sex in marriage, and being there, it is tied in with the sanctity of life. We are not amoral promiscuous animals.

However, today, every way a person turns, there seems to be a concerted attack on the sanctity of life. The media would belittle Christian values, as it glorifies and promotes promiscuous sex, sodomy, and abortion. This actually is an attack on the family and the home. Nothing is absolute, as the old moral standards are being discarded. Divorce and illegitimacy are rampant. But if a person does not respect his sexuality, how can he respect what his sexuality produces, other human beings? Consequently there is a lot of cheap humanity today, as the quality of life degenerates.

This is a most somber, serious matter. God made male and female, heterosexual beings, and all sexual fulfillment is assigned to the context of marriage (a union entered into for life). We cannot change God's moral laws. They are absolutes. God said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." When the King James translation of the Scriptures was printed in 1611, there was a typographical error made by the King's printer. The word "not" was left out of the seventh commandment, and it read, "Thou shalt commit adultery"! The King's printer was fined 300 pounds for this mistake. Some would try to change God's moral code for sexual conduct today (intentionally!). The fine is greater than 300 pounds. God says if we add or take away, the plagues of the book will be added to us (Revelation 22:18,19). And those who practice adultery, fornication, and sodomy will not go to heaven (Rev. 21:8; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21), but will be cast into the lake of fire. □

● *One of Three Articles on [1] the Ten Commandments, [2] the Sabbath, and [3] the Lord's Day...*

Are the Ten Commandments Binding Today?



● **By D. VAUGHN ELLIOTT**
Apartado 1209
01901 Guatemala

THICK DARKNESS, lightning, thunder! A trumpet blasting louder and louder! Fire, and the whole mountain smoking like a great furnace! Earthquake! And then it came: the very voice of Jehovah God, Creator of heaven and earth! No wonder the Israelites begged that God not speak to them any more! No wonder Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling." But before it was all over, the God of heaven had pronounced on earth "the ten commandments."

These "ten commandments" contain some of the basic laws that govern all civilized peoples: do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery. When the New Testament quotes examples of "the law" or of "commandments," it frequently selects from among "the ten."

But 3,500 years after the giving of the ten commandments, and 2,000 years after the coming of the living Word of God to earth, thoughtful God-fearing people ask some vital questions: Are the ten commandments God's greatest commandments? Are "the ten" in their totality binding upon Christians today?

"THE LAW OF GOD" AND "THE LAW OF MOSES"

The Bible frequently speaks of "the law of God" and "the law of Moses." Are these two different laws? Are we to understand that "the law of God" is eternal, whereas "the law of Moses" was done away on the cross? Does "law of God" refer to the ten commandments, while "law of Moses" refers to the other commandments which Moses wrote in a book? What does Scripture say?

Let's first look at 2 Chronicles 31:3, "The burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and

the set feasts, as it is written in the Law of Jehovah." Note that the text refers to "the law of Jehovah," but it is not quoting "the ten."

The Old Testament often uses such expressions as "in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which Jehovah commanded" (2 Kings 14:6). Thus we see "the Law of Moses" was not composed of Moses' ideas. It was God's law from beginning to end! Moses was just the scribe.

In Nehemiah 8, Ezra reads the law to the people. As the account is told, the book of the law is called both "the Law of Moses" (vs. 1) and "the Law of God" (vss. 8,18). The same is true in Luke 2:21-24,39, relating what Mary and Joseph did after Jesus' birth in order to fulfill the law. The requirements of Leviticus 12 are called both "the law of Moses" (2:22) and "the law of the Lord" (2:23,24,39).

Thus we see that there was only one law before the death of Christ. It was interchangeably called "the law of God," "the law of Moses" and variations of "the law of Jehovah given by Moses." It included the ten commandments and all the rest of the commandments found in Exodus through Deuteronomy. *One law!*

CAN GOD'S "EVERLASTING" LAW CHANGE?

Various texts in the New Testament say that God's law was changed in Christ (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12-19, etc.). But other texts in the Bible say things like: "All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever" (Psalms 111:7,8). How can we harmonize this seeming contradiction? Does "forever" mean "forever"?

We read in 2 Chronicles 33, "Jehovah had said, 'In Jerusalem shall My name be forever' " (vs. 4). Verse 8 adds, "And I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—*only if* they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law." **ONLY IF!** God's "forever" includes conditions. God changes His "forever" when man sins.

Jeremiah prophesied a change of covenants. Note a reason for the change: "My covenant which they broke" (31:32). Israel broke the covenant; God planned "a new covenant" (vs. 31).

God also changes His covenants according to His eternal purposes. In Genesis 17:9-14, God said, "This is my covenant...Every male child among you shall be circumcised...My covenant shall be in your

(Continued on Next Page)

Are the Ten Commandments Binding Today? *(from Previous Page)*

flesh for an everlasting covenant." And yet in Galatians 5:6 we read, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything." God's "everlasting covenant" of circumcision ceased when Christ died.

Over and again in the Old Testament "forever" and "everlasting" indicate that a covenant or law will continue in force, year after year and generation after generation. However, the "forever" is frequently conditioned, on the one hand, by man's faithfulness and, on the other hand, by God's own plans. Many times, in the light of total Bible teaching, "forever" can only be understood as meaning "continuously" *UNTIL* the arrival of God's Son into the world, to die for our sins and be raised from the dead.

God's commandments and law can change, did change, of necessity had to change. God had said that the Aaronic priesthood should "surely be an everlasting priesthood" (Exodus 40:13-15); but that priesthood was changed when God made Christ our High Priest. And God adds, "For the priesthood being changed, *of necessity* there is also a change of the law" (Hebrews 7:12).

"NOT TO DESTROY BUT TO FULFILL"

Jesus came to Palestine, teaching as no one had ever taught before. He taught with authority. He brought new teachings. Some might have thought that Jesus was not showing respect for the old law, so he said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17,18).

"The Law" here clearly means more than "the ten." Look at the following verses where six times Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said..." (vss. 21,27,31,33,38,43). Only the first two are quotes of the ten commandments. The other four are from other parts of "the Law."

"To fulfill." What a claim! Who has ever fulfilled the Law? "None of you keeps the law" (John 7:19). "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in *all* things which are written in the book of the law" (Galatians 3:10). We must all admit: no one has fulfilled the law.

No one? The Word says, "He who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). Jesus always acted in love. He said, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you...Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:9,13). And lay it down He did! For you; for

me. Jesus loved and always loves; He fulfilled the law.

Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him" (John 19:4). The Hebrew writer said, "Jesus the Son of God...in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (4:14, 15). Jesus did what no one in human flesh had ever done. He lived without sin. He, and He alone, fulfilled the law.

Jesus also fulfilled the prophets. The Gospels so often say, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets." After his resurrection, Jesus told his apostles, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that *all things* must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44). "All things!" Jesus fulfilled the prophets: all that was written of Him.

Jesus did not destroy the law. He did not set it aside. Jesus lived under the law, kept the law, fulfilled the law! Nor did Jesus belittle or set aside the prophets. Rather, Jesus fulfilled the prophets.

"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law." But the sentence does not end there. There is a second "till": "till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). Not the smallest letter would pass from the law, ***TILL ALL WAS FULFILLED!***

And Jesus fulfilled it all! That's why "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4). He is the end in two senses. The end (purpose) of the law was to prepare the way for Christ (Galatians 3:19,24). The end (termination) of the law came about through Christ's death (Colossians 2:14). The law made nothing perfect; but Jesus perfectly kept the law, and died on the cross in order to make us perfect. Jesus fulfilled the law, and the prophets, for us. And having fulfilled them, He brought in his "new" Gospel, thus making the law and the prophets "old."

"THE MINISTRY OF CONDEMNATION"

The New Testament often quotes individual commandments out of the "ten." But 2 Corinthians 3 is a text which discusses "the ten" as a simple unit. When verse 3 says, "tablets of stone," the ten commandments are the only thing that come to mind. Deuteronomy 4:13 says, "So He declared to you His covenant which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and He wrote them on two tablets of stone." In the entire Bible, nothing else is mentioned as written on tablets of stone.

Then 2 Corinthians 3:7,13 adds, "So that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance" and "Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the

children of Israel could not look steadily." Exodus 34:28-35 narrates that at the giving of "the two tablets," "the ten commandments," Moses' "face shone," so "he put a veil on his face."

Thus there can be no doubt that 2 Corinthians 3 is talking about the ten commandments in their entirety. The chapter presents a contrast between the ten commandments (the old covenant, old tes-

tant," in which were "the How could the ten commandments be done away? Is it all right today to tablets of the covenant" (vs. 4). We have already identified these tablets as containing the ten commandments.

So the "tablets of the covenant" (the ten commandments) were an integral part of the covenant which, when Hebrews was written, was "becoming

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- vs. 3 Written on tablets of stone
- vs. 6 Of the letter, which kills
- vs. 6,14 The Old Testament
- vs. 7,8 The ministry of death
- vs. 9 The ministry of condemnation
- vs. 10 No glory in comparison
- vs. 11 Passing away
- vs. 13,14 Given through Moses
- vs. 15-17 A veil lies on the heart

THE NEW COVENANT

- Written on tablets of flesh, the heart
- Of the Spirit, which gives life
- The new covenant
- The ministry of the Spirit
- The ministry of righteousness
- Excelling glory
- Remains
- Given through Christ (compare John 1:17)
- Veil is taken away, there is liberty

tament) and "the new covenant" (new testament). Study the contrast in the box.

The ten commandments—in their totality, as a code of law, as a covenant of God with his people—were a ministry of death and condemnation. Yes, it was a glorious covenant; but as the sun outshines the moon, so the new covenant outshines the old. On the basis of 2 Corinthians 3, we can affirm that whatever parts of the Old Testament may not have been done away, one thing was clearly done away: the covenant of the ten commandments!

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
IS OLD; WE HAVE A NEW TESTAMENT**

The words "testament" and "covenant" are the same word in the Greek. In each text where the Greek word is found, the various Bible versions may translate the word either way.

Some 600 years before Christ, Jeremiah prophesied the coming of "a new covenant" (31:31; Hebrews 8:8). Hebrews 7:22 and 8:6 says that the covenant of Jesus is "a better covenant." Then Hebrews 8:13, making a contrast, says, "In that he says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete."

Since the Bible speaks of various covenants before Christ, it is important to correctly identify the "first," "old," "obsolete" covenant. Hebrews 8:9 says that it was the one God made with Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. Hebrews 9 further identifies "the first covenant" (vs. 1), by giving many details. There was a tabernacle and a lampstand (vs. 2). There was an "ark of the cove-

nant" and growing old" and was "ready to vanish away" (8:13). [This was true back when Jeremiah wrote these words—*Editor*] Hebrews 9:14-17 explains that the new testament came into effect at the death of Christ. And 10:9 says, "He takes away the first that He may establish the second."

Ephesians 2:11-22, addressed to "Gentiles in the flesh," explains that before Christ they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants." Verse 14 explains that before Christ there was a "wall of division between us," (between Jews and Gentiles). But Christ broke down the wall, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (2:13-15). Thus it is clear that the old commandments ("the ten" and the rest) formed a divisive wall between Jews and Gentiles. But Christ, dying on the cross, put an end to the old covenant, thus breaking down the wall, so that in its place we could receive a glorious New Testament!

**NINE OF THE TEN COM-
MANDMENTS ARE COMMANDED
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

How could the ten commandments be done away? Is it all right today to steal, to murder, to disobey parents? Of course not. Nine of "the ten" are repeated in the New Testament. Some are repeated in identical words, while others are found in synonymous expressions. The ten commandments themselves are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. In the box they are shown in abbreviated form. (Continued on Next Page)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1. Have no other gods
- 2. Do not bow down to a carved image
- 3. Do not take the name of God in vain
- 4. Observe the Sabbath Day: no work
- 5. Honor your father and mother
- 6. Do not murder
- 7. Do not commit adultery
- 8. Do not steal
- 9. Do not bear false witness
- 10. Do not covet

THE NEW COVENANT

Luke 4:6-8; I Cor. 8:5,6; I Tim. 2:5
John 4:24; Acts 17:29; I Cor. 6:9
Matt. 15:19; Romans 2:24; I Tim. 1:20

Matt. 15:4; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9
Matt. 15:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9
Matt. 15:19; Lk. 18:20; Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:9
Matt. 15:19; Lk. 18:20; Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:10
Matt. 15:19; Lk. 18:20; Rom. 13:9
Matt. 5:28; Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:10

The fourth commandments of "then ten" is not commanded in the New Testament. Jesus, indeed, living under the law, kept the Sabbath. He also corrected some false concepts held in his day regarding the Sabbath. But there is no record of Jesus ever commanding anybody to keep the Sabbath. Nor did the Apostles ever command it. Today we must obey *nine* of "the ten," **NOT** because they were in "the ten," but because they are part of the New Covenant.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

The ten commandments were written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18), and placed in the ark (Deuteronomy 10:5). The other commandments were written by the hand of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24), and placed beside the ark (Deuteronomy 31:26). Does this make "the ten" the greatest of all the commandments? We don't have to try to figure it out, because Jesus has already told us!

Jesus said, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength' (Mark 12:29,30). In Matthew 22:38, Jesus says, "This is the first and great commandment." Another reading in Mark says, "The foremost of all the commandments." The second commandment is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Where did Jesus get these two commandments? Was Jesus, with these words, giving his own summary of the ten commandments?

Please read Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Leviticus 19:18, to see that these are exactly the verses which Jesus quoted. "The ten" are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, but these two are found in Deuteronomy 6 and Leviticus 19. So we can see that Jesus, when identifying the greatest commandments, did not mention any of those which were written by the finger of God and placed in the ark. Rather, Je-

sus selected two which were found in the book of the law, written by Moses and placed beside the ark.

Jesus said, "There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31). He also said, "On these two commandments hang *all* the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:40). These two commandments are not just a summary of "the ten," they are a summary of **ALL** the law and the prophets. The whole law does not hang on the ten commandments. The whole law hangs on the two "love" commandments.

The first, great and foremost command is "love"! "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love starts the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Love is the top rung in the ladder of Christian growth (2 Peter 1:5-8). "And if there is any other commandment, are all summed up by this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'...therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:9,10). Keeping the ten commandments is not the fulfillment of the law; **LOVE IS!**

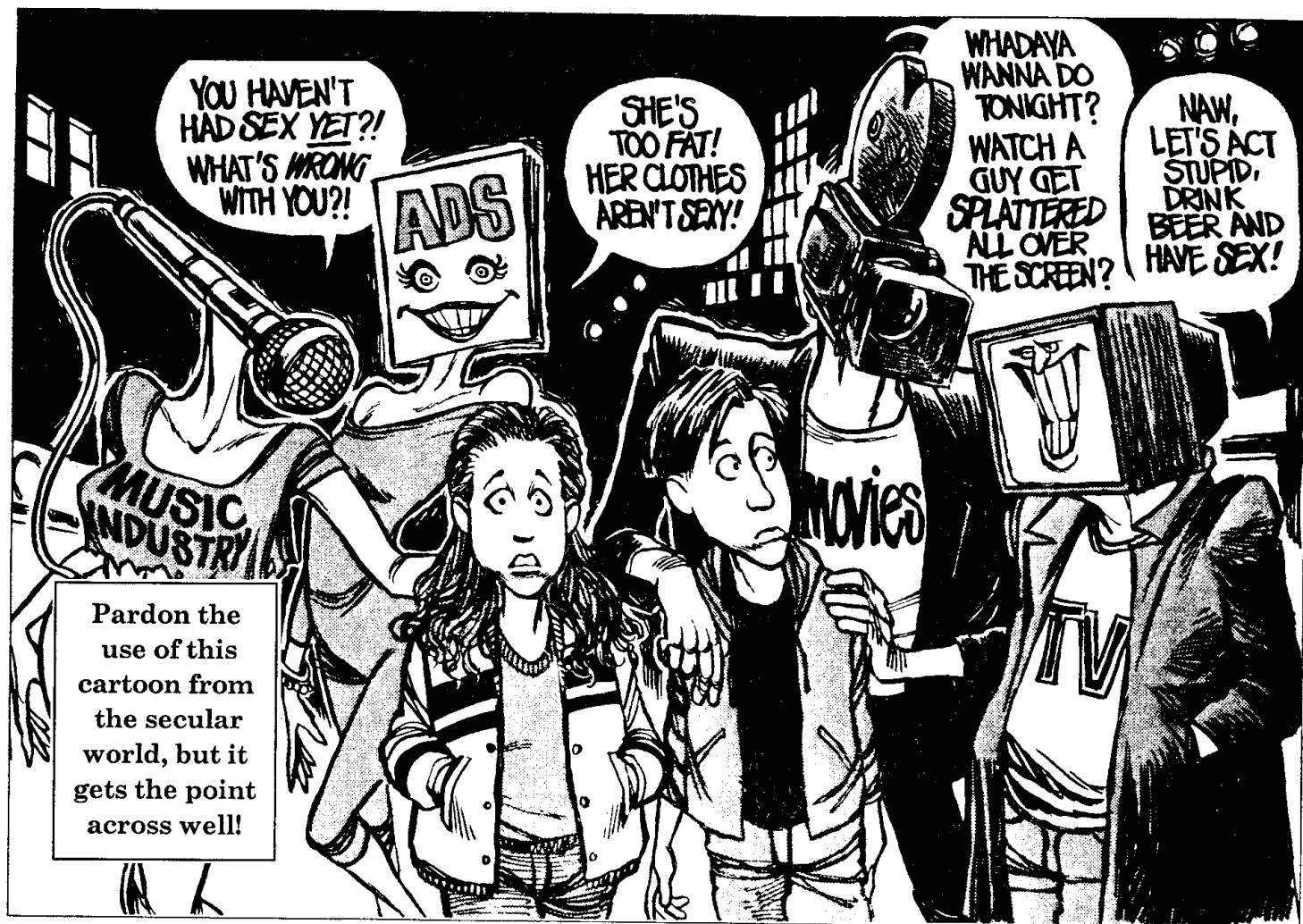
No, the ten commandments in their entirety, as a code of law, as a covenant, are not binding on us today. As a code of law, they are old and done away. Nevertheless, nine of "the ten" must be obeyed, *not* because they are part of "the ten," but because they are a part of the New Testament. The ten commandments were never the highest expression of God's will for man. The highest expression of God's will for all men for all ages is found in one word: love. And no wonder, for "God is love!" □



MY GOOD NAME

Good name in man or woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse steals trash,
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

—Selected



It's 1995. Do you know where your children are?

DAVID HORSEY, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

SIN, TEMPTATIONS, AND HOW TO OVERCOME

(Continued from Page 1)

end, the same shall be saved." The Lord had said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14). This is even more so the case today. Truly, as Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING AWAY AND BEING LOST AFTER HAVING ONCE BEEN SAVED

Contrary to what is taught by a large segment of the religious world, there is the possibility of falling away and being lost after having once been saved.

We Can Fall from Grace

We can fall from grace. Ephesians 2:5 and 8 teach that we are saved by God's grace. Grace

means unmerited favor from God in saving us. If we can fall from that which saves us, that means we are then in an unsaved condition. In Galatians 5:4 Paul pointedly said to these errant people, "Ye are fallen from grace." Thus, they were in an unsaved condition. The writer of Hebrews in warning his readers, admonished them to be "looking diligently lest any man fail of [footnote: fall from] the grace of God..." (Hebrews 12:15).

Names Can Be Blotted Out of the Book of Life

Names can and may be blotted out of the book of life. As Christians, our names were enrolled in heaven when we were initially saved from our sins (Hebrews 12:23; Acts 2:47; Philippians 4:3). However, notice the possibility of our names being removed from this book. Revelation 3:5 reads, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." The implication is that if we don't overcome this world, our names will be blotted out of the book of life. Revelations 22:19

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SIN, TEMPTATIONS, AND HOW TO OVERCOME

(Continued from Previous Page)

tells us that if any man take away from God's Word, "God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." To be more explicit, what does it mean to not have our names in the book of life when we come down to the Day of Judgment? "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). This is a serious matter.

We Reap Everlasting Life "If We Faint Not"

According to the New Testament, there is a sense in which *we are now saved* (Mark 16:16; II Timothy 1:9); there is a sense in that *we are being saved* (Philippians 2:12; II Peter 1:5-10); and there is a sense in that *we will be saved* (Matthew 10:22; Romans 13:11; I Peter 1:5). The New Testament teaches that we will reap everlasting life (this is in the future), and that the reaping of it is conditional. Read all of Galatians 6:7-9, and take Paul at his word. If we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption. Then Paul said, "But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit *reap everlasting life*. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap [reap everlasting life], *IF we faint not*." The conditional "IF" also is found in I Corinthians 15:1,2; Hebrews 3:6,14; and many other places in the New Testament.

Scriptural Definitions of Sin

Before getting into the heart of what we have to say about overcoming sin, perhaps it would be good to consider the meaning of sin so that we can know what we are up against. What is sin? Are there Scriptural definitions that we can "nail down" in a practical way? Yes, there are such references which are helpful, and we categorize them as follows.

(1) *Sins of Commission*: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

(2) *Sins of Omission*: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

(3) *Questionable Matters*: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

Keep these definitions in mind in recognizing sin, in dealing with it, and in overcoming it. And with all of these things said, let us get into our

subject of "Sin, Temptations, and How to Overcome."

I. HOW WE ARE TEMPTED

Deception

The devil, so to speak, doesn't raise his old ugly head, and say, "I am the old devil. Come on and sin."

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who was the first and last judge of Israel in the period of the judges (in the sense of the book of Judges)?
2. After God remembered Hannah in her barrenness with the birth of Samuel, did she have any other children?
3. What city is called the city of Samuel (and he was buried there)?
4. What were the names of the five cities of the Philistines over which there were five lords?
5. In ancient times when the leaders "inquired of the LORD" to know His will on a matter, how did the LORD answer them?
6. When David was fleeing from King Saul and lived among the Philistines for a while, what city did they give him and his men in which to live?
7. What end came to Absalom, the son of David who led an insurrection against his father to make himself king?
8. After the abortive insurrection and rebellion of Absalom, who led another such uprising against David and what happened to him?
9. Which son of David took steps to make himself king when David was old, infirm, and approaching death (without David's approval)?
10. In the book of Daniel, why were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cast into the fiery furnace?
11. What O.T. prophet said that Israel was like a "back-sliding heifer"?
12. Did Mary have any other children after the birth of Jesus, and if so, do we know any of their names?
13. Who visited Jesus by night and was told that man must be born again?
14. How many times is it recorded that Christ healed on the Sabbath, and who were the people healed?
15. According to Jesus, what was the twofold reason that he taught in parables?
16. What three different occasions were Peter, James, and John given the privilege of being with Christ when something extraordinary happened?
17. What three different occasions do we read in the Bible of people escaping danger through a window (and who were they)?
18. As Paul writes the epistle of I Corinthians, what people from that church had visited him during his prolonged stay in Ephesus?
19. Which epistle of Paul has the shortest benediction in closing of all his epistles?
20. What does Paul instruct Titus to have the older women teach the younger married women in the church?

(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. □

FLORIDA:

■ "Another copy of your fine publication has reached my desk. Across the years I have been inspired and encouraged by your articles and comments. You have the ability to preach the truth in love while contending earnestly for the faith..."

TENNESSEE:

■ "Please remove from your mailing list."

KENTUCKY:

■ "Thanks so much for your continued blessings through *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Hope this small check will help. Our love and prayers are with you and your great work."

■ "We would like to be removed from your mailing list. Thank you."

OHIO:

■ "Thank you for your work of love. Keep it up and God bless."

■ "Enclosed check to help continue your excellent publication."

■ "I would like to receive *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in Spanish..."

■ "...My friend and I both appreciate your handling of the Word of God. Keep preaching and contending for the faith once delivered."

■ "Enclosed is my check to help your work continue as it is so necessary and appreciated by us who want to keep learning the truth...God bless you and your work."

■ "Enclosed you will find a contribution to keep me on your mailing list of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Keep

up your blessed work; it is so needed. May God continue to inspire your efforts."

■ "...When I read your article on individuality, how often I have thought and looked at trees and have known and see basic groups but each one different or people being basically alike but each one different. How great our God is!...Thank you for putting out an interesting paper."

INDIANA:

■ "Please remove the above from your mailing list. Thank you!"

ILLINOIS:

■ "...Enjoy your publication and look forward to each issue."

■ "Thanks for continuing to produce such a wonderful paper called *THE SWORD AND STAFF*..."

■ "Thank you for sending me *THE SWORD AND STAFF* since '91. I enjoy the articles very much; also the print is easy to read..."

■ "We have been receiving duplicate copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* each printing recently. Please check your mailing. I have been passing them on to different members of the church and they really enjoy them."

IOWA:

■ "Please send me one copy of the bound volumes 31 and 32 of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Am enclosing a check for these bound copies in book form; also for *THE SWORD AND STAFF* I'm receiving..."

"Truthfully, my heart gives a leap to see that publication in my mailbox. Wish it could come more often. I love to read Westerns, etc., but lay my book down to read my new copy [of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*]. Love all the articles..."

■ "Enclosed find a check for the volumes I checked and the *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*...I also was wondering about the older volumes (1969-1976). Do you still have any of those? My volumes start with 15, 16, and 17 or 1977-79. If you do have any of these, please let me know... [Sorry, the only ones available are those listed in *The SWORD AND STAFF—Editor*]

"I really appreciate your articles you write and especially the shorter ones because I make up the bulletin for the church...and I use quite a few of them. They are so good. Keep up the good work..."

MISSOURI:

■ "Keep up the good work. Keep preaching the church that started on the Day of Pentecost—Acts 2."

■ "Please send me your book of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*...Keep up the good work of putting out this magazine. I enjoy it very much."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

OKLAHOMA:

■ "...I'm so pleased that your sermons via the written form are always deep and give us spiritual food that we need. I'm also pleased to share financially in this way, because you are reaching souls that the rest of us would never have opportunity to reach again. Thanks."

TEXAS:

■ "Please send me 3 copies of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*."

■ "I am sending a small contribution for...who started receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in March, 1991.

"It is helping me very much in my life. I truly want to be obedient to our Heavenly Father.

"My heart's desire and prayer to God is that He will continue to help you to send out His Word faithfully."

ARIZONA:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list."

CALIFORNIA:

■ "Enclosed is my check for \$15 for 1 copy of the 1993-94 bound copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for my self. Another bound copy should go to..."

"We sure do enjoy your paper and the efforts that go into printing it.

"Thank you so much."

■ "Keep up the good work. Look forward to volume 1993/1994 bound. Send only one and use the rest for the good work."

OREGON:

■ "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you."

WASHINGTON:

■ "Thank you very much for your article entitled 'Knowing in Part and Prophesying in Part Until the Perfect is Come.' I've never been so fully in agreement with any article on this subject as I have been with yours! It says what I've always tried to say and explain to others about I Corinthians 13:9-13, but could never put it quite so clearly and Scripturally as you have in this article. Reading it was a very uplifting moment in my day! It will be a continual help in my service as a preacher... My wife and I thoroughly enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and it's Scripturalness! ...Please send us a copy of your book entitled *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS* by James E. Gibbons. Please continue to send us *THE SWORD AND STAFF*! Thank you once again, and God bless you in your endeavors!"

HAWAII:

■ "In order to help your stewardship of resources, please remove us from your mailing list. Thanks."

PUERTO RICO:

■ "May God bless you greatly. This letter is to tell you that I have read a copy of your magazine, and it has greatly impressed me. It is just what the brotherhood needs, magazines that bring more spirituality and knowledge..." (translated)

NORTHERN IRELAND:

■ "For some time now we have been receiving and enjoying your magazine. As we have no preacher and none of us can teach well, we find the articles you publish very helpful to us in trying to teach ourselves and in reaching others..."

CAMBODIA:

■ "Thank you for faithfully sending me copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I hope to continue receiving copies of your publication and other materials...Thank you very much for your dedication in this ministry. You've been a blessing to many lives. God bless you all."

PHILIPPINES:

■ "Thank you very much for...a copy of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. I really appreciate it. In fact, I've already used some part of it in my preaching. Also it gives me encouragement and inspiration during the past months following the death of my beloved father.

"I'm praying that more and more people will be blessed by your excellent magazine. Your works are one of the best.

"Thank you." □

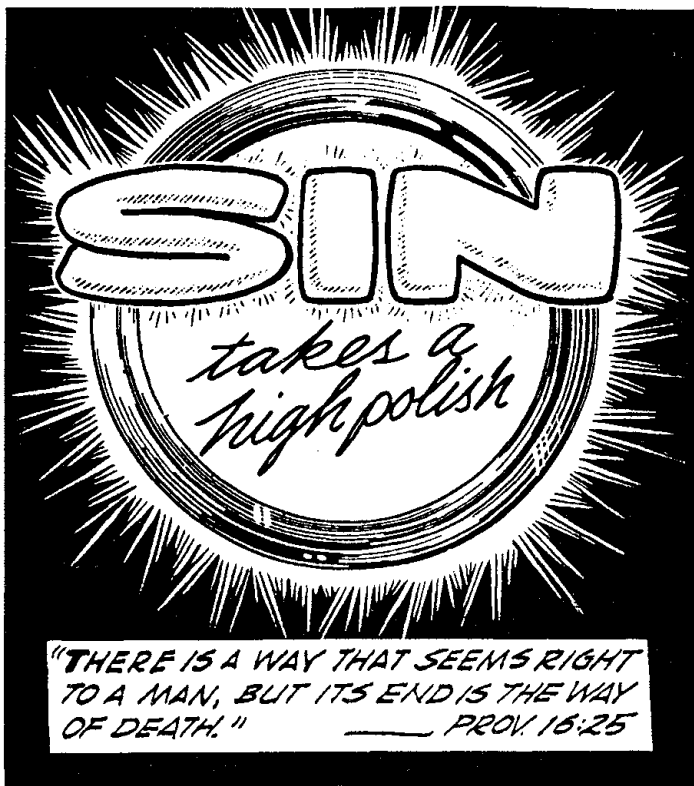
SIN, TEMPTATIONS, AND HOW TO OVERCOME

(Continued from Page 8)

Follow me and go to hell." No. In II Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul speaks of "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light..." Deception is the devil's tactic. So it was in the Garden of Eden, and so it will ever be. The only reason he will tell you the truth is to get you to believe a lie.

In retrospect, the apostle Paul contemplates in Titus 3:3, "For we ourselves also were sometimes [at one time] foolish, disobedient, *deceived*..." Sinners are pictured as being in a state of deception. Our initial Scripture in this study, Hebrews 3:12-14, speaks of departing from God and being "hardened through the *deceitfulness* of sin."

Time and time again the Scriptural injunction and warning, "Be not deceived," is found in the New Testament. Listen to the somber words of the apos-



tle Paul in I Corinthians 6:9 and 10. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. *Be not deceived:* neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [homosexuals], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [sodomites], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." The words, "Be not deceived," are likewise found in Galatians 6:7. Sin is still sin regardless of the deceptive camouflage the devil may throw about it. The enormity of it is great.

Avenues of Approach

The apostle John admonishes in I John 2:15-17, "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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Notice he says that (1) *the lust of the flesh*, (2) *the lust of the eyes*, and (3) *the pride of life* are of the world. A background study of this will bring us to see a parallel in Genesis 3:6 in the temptation of Eve. Notice: "And when the woman saw that the tree was [1] good for food, and that it was [2] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be [3] desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." And, likewise, the temptation of Jesus as recorded in Luke 4:1-13 can be seen through these

three avenues of approach. Evidently in tempting man the devil has found these avenues of approach to be effective in his tactics of deception, so he has capitalized on them. Beware!

II. HOW TO OVERCOME WHEN TEMPTED

By Walking in the Spirit

The apostle Paul gives the most basic of instructions concerning overcoming sin in Galatians 5:16. Making it emphatic, he says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." There is nothing like being prepared. That old saying holds true: "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." The Lord had his second coming in mind in Matthew 24:43, but another truth is evident in what he said. "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Any way that you look at it, it is better to be prepared, to be ready. It is better to have your house securely bolted and locked than to have to confront the thief after he has already broken in. It is better to be spiritually strong so the devil cannot enter our hearts than to have to try to throw him out after he has made inroads. Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation..." (Mark 14:38).

When a person becomes a Christian, he is born again, born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Yes, upon genuinely repenting and being Scripturally baptized, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39). God not only takes care of the past with forgiveness, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell in our lives. The power and presence of God is thereafter with us in accordance to our obedience (Acts 5:32) and faith (Ephesians 3:16,17). Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians that they "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," and then he elaborates on what he means by saying, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith..." In total surrender, as we possess salvation and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, we soon find that salvation possesses us. In our aspirations, with the apostle Paul we say, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12b). And by walking in the Spirit we find that we can get the victory over temptations and sin.

Walking in the Spirit has to do with seeking the leadership of God in our lives, doing spiritual things, and having a spiritual mind. Romans 8:6 reads, "For to be carnally minded is death: but to be

(Continued on Next Page)

SIN, TEMPTATIONS, AND HOW TO OVERCOME

(Continued from Previous Page)

spiritually minded is life and peace.” Such activities as found in Acts 2:42 involve walking in the Spirit: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Consequently, faithful church attendance is included in this (Hebrews 10:25). All of this helps us keep our minds under the control of the Holy Spirit. Philippians 4:6 and 7 talk about prayer and the peace of God keeping (guarding) our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And in the same breath it is no surprise that the writer says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (4:8). How beautiful! How excellent! How positive, good and wholesome is this admonition! Victory over sin and the peace of God prevail in a mind that is exercised in this way. This is walking in the Spirit. However, if we keep our minds filled with the garbage of this world through television, we cannot have a spiritual mind, nor can we walk in the Spirit. Remember, “For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

By Knowing God’s Word

The first Psalm is full of great spiritual truth. It reads, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season...” Notice, the godly man meditates upon God’s law, God’s Word, day and night. It is his delight. And, consequently, “he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.” Like the mighty oak with its roots going down deep, he is stalwart, he is anchored, he is steadfast.

Psalms 119:9-16 deals with the young man and sin. The question is asked, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” Then the answer follows. “By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee...” The apostle John presents the same theme when he writes in I John 2:1, “My little chil-

dren, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...” In the latter part of verse 14 of this same chapter, he further wrote, “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” Yes, the Word of God will keep us from sin, and sin will keep us from the Word of God.

The Word of God dwelling in us falls under the heading of being prepared, keeping the devil out, but it also involves actively engaging the devil in combat when we confront him. In Ephesians 6:10, these Asian Christians are charged, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Then they are instructed to put on the whole armor of God to engage the devil in combat. Part of that armor is “the sword of the Spirit” (6:17), which is to be used as an offensive weapon. The Lord Jesus was successful in putting the devil to flight in this way. Each time he was tempted, he responded with, “IT IS WRITTEN” (Matthew 4:4,7, 10). How we, too, need to know and use the Word of God! Victory can and will be ours!

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, we remind you that sin is an awful thing. We are dealing with the all-holy God of eternity, who says, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Peter 1:16). The Lord did not come to save us in our sins, but from our sins (Matthew 1:21; Titus 2:14; Romans 6:1-6). The wages of sin is death, and this is true for the erring Christian as well as the non-Christian (Romans 6:23; James 1:14-16; 5:19,20). Also: “And there shall in no wise enter into it [the heavenly city] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie...” (Rev. 21:27). I Corinthians 10:12 warns, “Wherefore take heed lest ye fall.” Let us not be high-minded and think that we are beyond temptation.

We have tried to give some practical instructions on overcoming sin and temptations. Always remember that we are dealing with that archdeceiver, the devil, whose tactics involve deception. The best way to overcome temptations is to be prepared. Walk in the Spirit and meditate upon God’s Word. If we keep God’s Word, God’s Word will keep us. We will get the victory. Revelation 12:11 asserts, “And they overcome him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

There is much more that could be said, but if at first you don’t get the victory, don’t give up. The Lord will not give up on us unless we give up on Him. If we will repent, he wants to forgive us and get us on the right track again. Heaven can be our

home. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Thank God for His mercy. Thank Him for His grace. Press on. But take heed, beware, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13b). Overcome sin and temptations. You can. □



BARBS...

with a Point

THE PERSON who is always damning things is in danger of damnation.

If it is easy to "get your goat," this could mean that you are not one of the Lord's sheep, spiritually speaking, but a goat.

Little people in high places, not used to such heights, become high-minded, and thereby show their littleness.

As the rapidly moving stream is shallow, dashing on in its movement to lower levels, so there is little depth in modern man taken up in the "rat race" for material things who has little time for that which is spiritual and moves on to lower levels.

Apologizing for the truth is not the kind of *apologia*, defense, that the apostle Peter had in mind in I Peter 3:15.

Apostasy is a mind-set, or lack of one, as much as anything else; if our mind is not set on pleasing God and following His Word at any cost, we are already in a state of apostasy.

If a person cannot see anything wrong with denominationalism, he either doesn't know much about the Bible or about denominationalism (or about either).

The Bible does not say to "earnestly contend for the faith" until you have trouble with your children and then change your convictions.

It seems senseless to talk about restoring and getting back to the church of the New Testament then bypass that church and set up organizations besides the church to do the work of the church.

You never hear of women naming their little girls "Jezebel," yet they personally do not hesitate to adorn themselves like her.

We freely embrace and fellowship compromisers as they are without really trying to teach them the truth, and then we wonder why Christians and churches are losing their convictions and going to the dogs.

The waters of baptism cannot put out the flames of hell if we have never repented.

The old ship of Zion is not a cruise liner filled with pleasure bent people that's really going no place of consequence.

Many people who suppose they are open-minded are really empty-headed.

Beware! Television will obscure your spiritual vision.

When people who have built you up let you down, it really is a letdown.

Any old dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a real live one to go against the current.

If you are a selfish, brutish person, you can't expect your wife to respond as an affectionate, loving mate.

Consistency is a jewel of great price for which many are not willing to pay the price of being consistent. □



Airplanes, Aerodynamics and Reaching Our Destination

AN AIRPLANE is kept airborne, moving on toward its destination, because of its forward thrust that is kept under control and governed by the pilot in keeping with the principles of aerodynamics. Without the mighty, forward movement and everything being done according to these principles, the plane would fall to the earth and crash.

There is a lesson here for human beings. Forward movement guided by the right principles is absolutely necessary for us to reach our goals in life. Without that drive and motivation we will not get off the ground, let alone reaching the desired destination. Then forward movement after we get going if not controlled and guided by the right principles, like with the airplane, will only result in shipwreck. And how emphatically true is this lesson in reference to our lives and the things of God.—*J.E.G.* □



Let Each Day Be New

FINISH every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear with its hopes and invitations to waste a moment on the yesterdays.—*Selected* □

A Hike in Early Spring

I walked amid the newly sprouted wheat;
It was a morning cool with breath of Spring,
And I about with nature at my feet,
With gladness filled, the birds and I did sing.
Then there I was amid the wooded hills
With all the trees newly leafed and flowered,
Which gives a fragrance of perfume that fills
Your being with fuel for delights or prayers.
The day has now advanced to make it fit,
With skies of blue, to see the glowing grace
Foretold before the dawn by nature's prophet,
The frogs (and lizards) from the swampy base.
—By James E. Gibbons

ENTERTAINMENT

THE PENCHANT for entertainment that has gripped much of our society appears to have affected the contemporary church. A growing number of churches are offering a morning of entertainment to the people. A highly professional presentation is submitted in the name of the Lord. But the effects are not lasting—at least that is how it appears. With a professed growing interest in “worship,” a marked decline has simultaneously occurred in evening services, both Sunday and Wednesday. The absence of sustained interest in the things of God reveals that much of what is called “worship” is nothing more than psychological hype. It is time that we do something about this condition. □
—Selected

Am I a Selfish Person?

(Some Prodding Questions for Self-Examination and Spiritual Growth)

1. Am I always on the receiving end and never giving?
2. Am I preoccupied with getting and getting, but never giving?
3. Am I only friendly to people because I anticipate getting something from them?
4. Are people always doing things for me and I never do anything for others?
5. Do I do things for others without expecting anything in return?
6. Do I have to have recognition for everything I do, or I am reluctant to do anything?
7. Am I nice only to people who are nice to me?

8. Am I content to live without letting God be in my life, or first in my life?
9. Am I pleased with myself in attending only one service of the church a week, or attending occasionally otherwise?
10. Am I content to enjoy the manifold blessings of heaven without being a liberal giver myself?
11. Am I content to continually indulge myself and not even give 10% to the church?
12. Do I look after my own interests before those of my wife/husband and children?
13. Am I always “right” and must have things my way, and never consider the views and feelings of my mate or others?
14. Do I find myself dominating the conversation and letting others talk very little?
15. Do I have to have everything my way or I will not play?
16. Do I always try to get at the head or front of the line?
17. Do I always take the biggest piece of cake and the largest serving?
18. Do I know what it is to say “thank you” and really mean it; are these words a natural part of my life?
19. Do I show interest in the activities of other people and not just in my own?
20. Do I have any real regard for the problems, cares, and needs of others and not just my own?

—J.E.G. □

Thoughts from a Blood Donor's Table

I gave my blood.
Christ gave his.
I give a pint.
He gave all.

The needle is small, sharp.
The nails were large, dull.
The table soft, restful.
The cross rough, painful.
The nurses kind, gentle.
The soldiers cruel, mean.

The crowd applauds my sacrifice.
“They that passed by reviled him.”
Mine is for O Positive.
His for positively all.

Mine, at best, will prolong a life for a while.
His, without doubt, can save all forever.

—An impressive appeal for blood by the AMERICAN RED CROSS in a small town in Oklahoma (would secular America tolerate such an appeal elsewhere?)—

Spiritual Food for Thought

By Andrew Gibbons

Evolutionists Are Baffled at His Song



AS I SIT at my study early in the morning I can hear the birds start to sing with the coming of the sun. It is almost like they are singing a song of praise for another day.

I think I have noticed more birds in the last two years of my life than in all the time before. As I ponder "why," the answer comes to me. As one gets older many times one's perspective changes. This is true in my thoughts regarding birds and many other things that I once did not value. What are some of the other things? With me and probably many others as well, family, the brevity of life, eternity, nature as a whole, time, and many more come to mind. What about you? Has life's viewpoint shifted with time? I hope so. If not, maybe the next point will help.

The second thing that has helped me realize the beauty in God's creation of birds is that of slowing down. Too many times we go through life and we don't take time to smell the roses. We don't take time to enjoy God's beauty in nature. When I think of all the different kinds of birds and the care that went into each one with its different characteristics, colors and sounds, it makes me realize that God must truly love us to do so much in just one little feathered friend. Just multiply that by all the kinds of animals and ponder the details. Amazing! These thoughts of the Great Creator should bring us to our knees to thank Him for His care and loving kindness. Slow down! Take time to enjoy life and it's beauty. Hopefully slowing down will help you tune in to a better relationship with God. □

Suppression/Depression

IF YOU continually suppress negative and hurt feelings inside of you that should be aired and shared with someone who has empathy and understanding, they will smolder and smolder and eventually engulf your life in depression (or perhaps erupt in violent behavior).—J.E.G. □

Time and Meditation

THE BIBLE makes the following promise to us:

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

—Psalms 1:1-3

Time is crucial for making meditation effective. In the Scripture above David wrote that the blessed man meditates on the Word of God day and night, not just two set times, but all of the time. Scheduled times during the day help with constant meditation. The psalmist had set times for meditation (Psalms 16:7; 42:8; 63:6; 77:6; 119:55,148 (See the ASV on this last verse). The importance of setting aside time for meditation is seen in the life of the successful godly man Isaac: "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening" (Genesis 24:63).

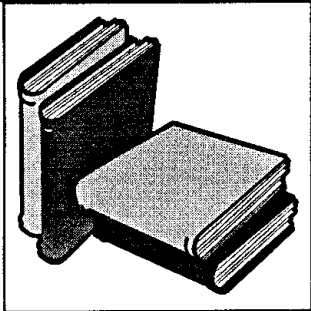
Therefore choose a time when you will not be rushed, but a time that will allow you to relax and focus on the thought of Scripture. You must be able to dwell upon the meaning of Scripture. You will be blessed for it.—*The Bible Mediator* □

Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. First, Othniel; Last, Samuel; 2. I Samuel 1:1-20; 2:21; 3. I Samuel 28:3; 4. I Samuel 6:17,18; 5. I Samuel 28:6f; 6. I Samuel 27:1-7; 7. II Samuel 15-18; 8. II Samuel 20; 9. I Kings 1; 10. Daniel 3; 11. Hosea 4:16; 12. Matthew 1:24,25; 12:46,47; 13:55,56; 13. John 3; 14. Seven times: (1) Man with withered hand—Matthew 12:9-14; (2) Man with unclean spirit—Mark 1:21-27; (3) Peter's mother-in-law—Mark 1:29-31; (4) Man who had been impotent 38 years—John 5:1-9; (5) Man blind from birth—John 9:1-15; (6) Woman who was bowed together 18 years—Luke 13:11-17; (7) Man with dropsy—Luke 14:1-6; 15. (1) To reveal, and (2) to conceal (veil)—Matthew 13:10-17; 16. (1) Matthew 17:1-9 (II Peter 1:16-18); (2) Matthew 26:36-46; (3) Mark 5:35-43; 17. (1) Joshua 2 (2) I Samuel 19:12; (3) II Corinthians 11:33; 18. I Corinthians 1:11; 16:17; 19. I Timothy 6:21; 20. Titus 2:4,5 □

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Sword AND Staff
VOLUMES 31 & 32

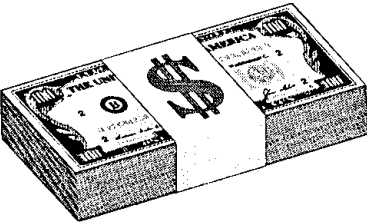


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