

# The Sword AND Staff

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

## **"THE CHARTER OF THE CHURCH"** *(Matthew 28:18-20)*

### ***The Preamble:***

"And JESUS came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth..."

### ***The Commission:***

1. "Go ye therefore..."
2. "And teach [make disciples of] all nations..."
3. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] ..."
4. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

### ***The Promise:***

"And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]. Amen."

**O**N THE PEAK of his resurrection glory the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these great and imperative words to his disciples. The cross was now behind him, and the great work of human redemption had been accomplished. Now the world was to hear the good news.

First, as a preamble to all that follows, Jesus declares by what authority he could make such a great commission. The authority of heaven and earth is behind these commanding words. There is no greater statement of authority.

Next, the heart of the commission itself appears. It represents the thrust of the great work that is to be done. Go, make disciples of all nations, baptize them, and then teach them to observe all things that Christ has commanded. All men have sinned.

All men are lost. All men need the Savior. This commission is to be carried out until the end of the world. That is beyond the death of the apostles. That being the case, this commission involves others besides the apostles. And inasmuch as they were to teach men to observe all things he had commanded, that means the great commission would be taught over and over again as this was one of the things he commanded. Indeed, this is the charter of the church.

Finally, a wonderful promise follows. It is given to all who faithfully carry out the great commission and work under the charter of the church. If we are going, teaching the true gospel, baptizing as he taught, and teaching men to observe all things he commanded, he is with us.—*James E. Gibbons* □

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#### **INFORMATION:**

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—**THANK YOU**—

## **Proverbially SPEAKING..**

**THE PURPOSE** of being alive is to live (and to live for God).

Baptism is more a matter of being baptized into the death of Christ (a total experience) than being baptized into his burial.

*Truth is unbending, and will not and cannot be compromised and still be the truth.*

Some kinds of prayer will cease in eternity, but thanksgiving will go on for ever and ever.

*When you help others climb the ladder of life, you can't help but go higher yourself.*

A heart thankful and full of the Word of God makes worship spontaneous and natural (Colossians 3:15,16).

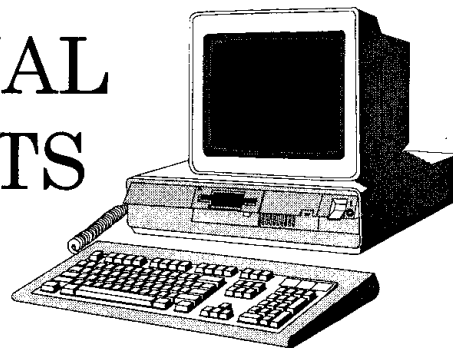
*When we get in traditional ruts, the cause of truth is bogged down.*

The only ecclesiastical organization the New Testament authorizes beyond the local church is another local church.

*Stubbornness sanctified by the Holy Spirit becomes steadfastness.*

When we magnify problems, they get no smaller.

# **EDITORIAL COMMENTS**



## **THE TERM "CHURCH" AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

**A**DMITTEDLY the term "church" was not the best translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* (as initially "church" had reference to a building). But the word is solidly a part of our language now. So we go from here in making practical use of it in the light of the meaning of the word it represents and what the context implies in its New Testament usage.

Of course the meaning of *ekklesia* as we break the word down into its stems, *ek* (out) + *klesia* (*kaleo*, to call), has reference to those called out, an assembly. In the New Testament it is almost exclusively used in the context of Christianity. However, Stephen speaks of the "church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) in talking about Israel, and the word is used in describing the multitude that came together in the theater at Ephesus, being translated "assembly" (KJV, Acts 19:32,39,41).

In connection with Christianity we find the word *ekklesia* (church) used in at least three different ways. It is used in (1) a universal sense, in (2) a local sense, and in (3) a local assembled sense. Let us look into this.

(1) Jesus declared, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18); here it is easy to think of this in terms of the universal church. Then when the Ethiopian on his way back to Ethiopia was baptized in Acts 8, he certainly was not a part of a local church yet, but he was in the universal church (I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18). Contrasting the Old Testament system and the New, and speaking of the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews states in Hebrews 12:22,23, "But ye are come...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [Greek plural, *firstborn ones*], which are written in heaven..."

(2) Next, the term church is used to speak of a community of believers in one location, bound together as a single unit; the local church. This is quite evident in the New Testament, whether reading the book of Acts or the epistles that follow. Paul addressed the epistle of I Corinthians to the "church of God which is at Corinth" (I Corinthians 1:2).

(3) Finally, the term church is used of the public assembly of Christians in one locality. Paul speaks of the church coming together at Corinth (I Corinthians 5:4; 11:17,18,34) and coming together in one place (I Corinthians 11:20; 14:23). It is in this context that this coming together is called the "church,"

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## OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

ORDER	TIME	TO WHOM	WHERE	RECORD
1	Early Sunday Morning	Mary Magdalene	Near the Tomb at Jerusalem	Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18
2	Sunday Morning	Women Returning from the Tomb	Near Jerusalem	Matthew 28:9,10
3	Sunday	Simon Peter Alone	Near Jerusalem	Luke 24:34
4	Sunday Afternoon	Two Disciples Going to Emmaus (Cleopas and Companion)	Between Jerusalem and Emmaus, and at Emmaus	Luke 24:13-31
5	Sunday Evening	Apostles with Thomas Absent	Jerusalem	John 20:19-25
6	Sunday Evening of the Next Week	Apostles with Thomas Present	Jerusalem	John 20:26-29
7	Unknown	Seven Disciples Fishing	Sea of Galilee	John 21:1-13
8	Unknown	Eleven Disciples on Mountain (and Probably the 500 brethren)	Mountain in Galilee	Matthew 28:16-20 I Corinthians 15:6
9	Unknown	James Only	Jerusalem, Probably	I Corinthians 15:7
10	Unknown	All of the Apostles at the Ascension	Mount of Olives Near Bethany	Luke 24:50,51 Acts 1:6-12

### POSSIBLE SEQUENCE OF HAPPENINGS MORNING OF RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

1. Women come to the tomb.
2. Mary runs to the city to tell about something happening to the tomb.
3. Other women look around and entered the tomb—saw one angel and other after entrance.
4. They leave to go tell the disciples and Peter (evidently a different route from Mary).
5. While they are gone, Peter and John come running and examine the tomb—then leave.
6. Mary has come and is there alone, looks in the tomb, sees angels, and JESUS.
7. Jesus appeared to other women as they went to tell the disciples.

# THE FOLLOWING CARTOONS WHICH APPEARED IN SECULAR NEWSPAPERS SHOULD TELL US SOMETHING

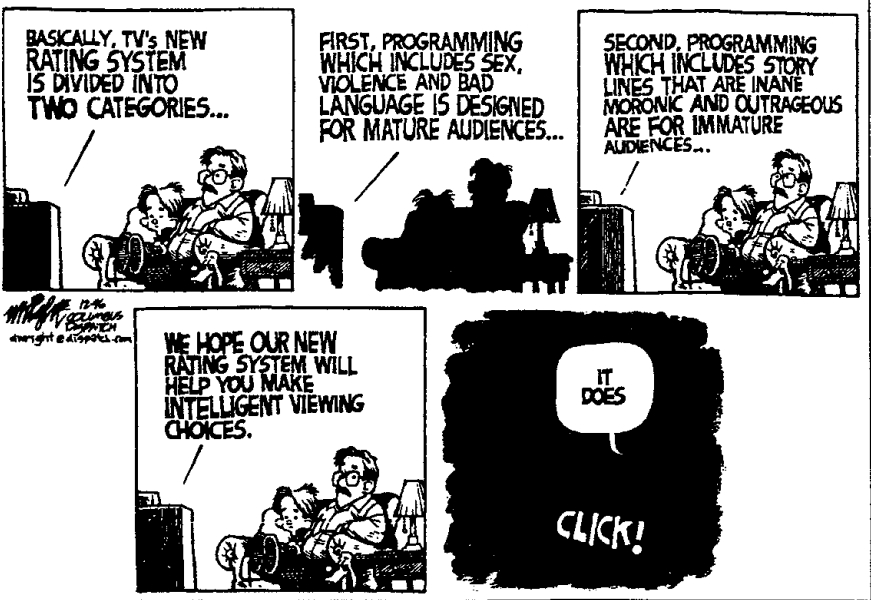
MANY CHRISTIANS don't even seem to be concerned, but the secular press is taking note of what is taking place on TV.



CHRISTIAN, the apostle Paul wrote this very timely admonition: "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" (Philippians 4:8).

Then let us remember the writer of Proverbs said that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Also he wrote, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Furthermore, as we take them to heart, let us likewise remember the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." □



## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

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when Paul said, "Let your women keep silence in the *churches*" (14:34), meaning they were not to teach or usurp authority over the man (I Timothy 2:11-14). "Church" refers to the assembly, not church in a general sense, otherwise the prohibition would be universal (which is unthinkable). In this same 14th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul, in regulating the assembly so everything would be "done decently and in order," asserted, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all *churches* [assemblies] of the saints" (14:33). Likewise the term church seems to refer to the assembly in Colossians 4:16.

The universal church is not organized, nor is it to be organized. We are to "love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17), not organize it. The extent of the organization of the church is the local, autonomous church. That is all that there is to it. Local bodies of believers were organized under the oversight of men called elders. Paul and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church" (Acts 14:23), i.e. in every local church, as they visited the new body of believers in each city. In talking to "the elders of the church" at Ephesus, a local church in Asia, Paul admonished them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:17,28). Peter admonished the elders in I Peter 5:2 to "feed the flock of God *which is among you*, taking the oversight..." This is referring to a local church. The jurisdiction of the elders is not beyond the local body of Christians. The simplicity of the local unit is likewise seen in Philippians 1:1. Paul and Timothy were preachers who had been sent out from local churches (Acts 13:1-3; etc.), and with others had been instrumental in starting this church. The only ecclesiastical organization started beyond the local church was other local churches.

However, apostasy came early to the original church in their getting away from the simplicity of the local church, setting up district and national organizations, and finally a universal one with the pope at the head of it. Men have never learned their lesson, and the unending cycle continues with each generation and with each denomination in varying degrees. To get away from the local church is to head back toward Rome and denominationalism. It is to presumptuously assume authority beyond what has been given. It is to usurp the responsibility

and prerogative of the local church. We need to beware. Even in the name of co-operation men set up denominational organizations and agencies that are antagonistic to God's plan for the local, independent, and autonomous church. Then unindoctrinated people always take things a step further and solidify a denominational structure. It is always just a matter of time. Even in having religious conventions and gatherings beyond the local church men are presumptuous and speak with audacity when they would appendage and name their gatherings with district, state, or national designations. The universal church is not organized, and no one has the authority to put a name for anything beyond the local assembly in an organizational context. The implication is that they have the authority to do this and are in some sense representing Christians nationally or regionally. It is intimidating to those who do not choose to be part of such gatherings, implying they are out of step. The unindoctrinated think so. It is denominational and represents a denominational mindset (further promoting division).

We humbly admonish you to consider these things. Let us have the New Testament concept and understanding of the term "church" and how it is properly used. Then let us accordingly comply with it if we claim to be the New Testament church. □



## EDITORIAL *Byways*

### ARE WE UNDER LAW?

**T**HE FOLLOWING material was recently presented by the editor in an inter-computer, e-mail exchange of thought. Here we amplify and enlarge upon it for purposes of clarity and explanation. There are two extremes that may be taken on this subject. (1) One is a sterile "letter of the law" legalism that limits us to the mechanics of what is written in God's commands and misses out on the very spirit behind the words (and thus the great principles and implications accompanying the teaching). (2) The other is to unscripturally emphasize grace to the point of there being no law, and thus no personal responsibility and accountability. In either case, in a sense, God's commands are circumvented, nullified, or watered down as far as practice is concerned. The question before us is: *Are we under law?*

1. Obviously we are not under the Law of Moses (John 1:17; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Galatians 5:4). (Continued on Next Page)

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2. But this does not negate law as such (Romans 3:31).

3. We are under the law to Christ (I Corinthians 9:21; Hebrews 7:12; 9:15-17).

4. It is called the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

5. It is the law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2-7).

6. It is the law of Love (Galatians 5:14; 6:2; Romans 13:8-10).

Paul asks in Romans 6:1 and 2, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in SIN, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

May I ask? What is SIN? I John 3:4 reads, "Who-soever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW." These words are a representation of the Greek word *anomia* (from *anomos*, A + NOMOS, literally "no law"). Do a word study of this in the New Testament.

So, Paul is saying, "Shall we continue in SIN [no law, lawlessness], that grace may abound?" His answer is quite apparent. "GOD FORBID!" *Anomia*, this word for lawless, is commonly translated "iniquity" throughout the New Testament. Even in Romans 6, it is found in verse 19. The falling away from the original church was characterized as the "mystery of INIQUITY [*anomia*, lawlessness]", which was already at work (II Thessalonians 2:7). And at the summit of all of this would be the "man of SIN [one who transgresses the LAW, I John 3:4]."

Let us say that we are not under law in the sense of the Law of Moses. The Law *per se* cannot be a system of justification, for "all have sinned [I John 3:4] and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We are under the law to Christ (the law of Christ). That law is LOVE. Love is the fulfilling of the law (Galatians 5:14) for the essence of the law is accomplished through love (Romans 13:8-10). That being the case, we don't have to have the law like a club hanging over our heads to be coerced into doing right. We are not under law in the sense that we are not under the penalty of the law. Now in the context of love and grace we render obedience. Paul said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1,2). Paul further said that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity [*anomia*, lawlessness],

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). It makes us wonder about some people's concept of grace when they start emphasizing it, then let up on their devotion and consecration to the Lord. Notice also Titus 2:11 and 12.

Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). John echoed, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous [burdensome]" (I John 5:3). Love is the fulfilling of the law in that the law is fulfilled in love and through love.

Notice the Sermon on the Mount; especially Matthew 5:21 and following. The kind of righteousness Christ wants includes the letter of the law, but is not limited by it; it goes further. It involves the heart. There is nothing righteous about disregarding the letter of Christ's teaching, and calling those who want to carefully follow it LEGALISTS. But the letter of the commandment is not enough. We must from our hearts practice the very spirit of what Christ taught, and with what he taught there are principles and ramifications tied in with each command that cannot be ignored. God's law said, "Thou shalt not kill" (Cf. Matthew 5:21-26). The New Testament teaches that we can be guilty of murder in the heart by hating our brother (I John 3:15), and anger and name calling are put in the same category. God's law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Cf. Matthew 5:27-32). The Pharisees, the old "letter of the law" legalists, probably felt self-righteously pleased with themselves. They were not guilty of breaking this commandment. However, Jesus taught that there was more involved than just the letter of the law, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The law as such would not prohibit watching the garbage on television or the movies, but the teaching of Christ goes beyond the letter of the law, and would prohibit anything that would ensnare us in this way. Immodesty of dress, and many other things, would fall under this command. Yes, the spirit behind the command, with the ramifications and principles, cannot be ignored.

Men, throwing the term around in a derogatory way, may call Christians who wish to follow the Scriptures closely LEGALISTS, but we don't want to be ILLEGAL, do we? To be without law is to be like a leaf falling from a tree, unattached. No, Christ is not teaching the abandonment of law. To be without law, and to have no respect for law, really, in the final analysis, is to be an outlaw.

Actually many who call others LEGALISTS, in the way they use the term, are more legal than

*A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...*



**U**NDER this caption, “A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy,” three timely articles have already appeared in this publication by David Vaughn Elliott. The articles were, “Why Study Prophecy?”, “Five Ways to Unravel Prophecy,” and “Prophecy: Literal or Figurative?” One does not appear this time. However, the Lord willing, the series will be resumed in the next issue of this paper. Very important subjects relating to prophecy, and questions typical to such a study, will be dealt with. In this era flooded with many apparent “way out” theories involving prophecy, we would do well to follow these studies. We just want to know what the Bible actually teaches. If you have questions, direct them to the author.—*Editor* □

## EDITORIAL *Byways*

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those upon whom they heap the appellation. They hold to the letter, and won't be bounded by thought beyond the mechanics of what is said. Then some are only legal with the prohibitive commands, and the positive ones they throw to the wind. Let us recognize the spirit and principles that go with all of God's teaching.

What kind of obedience do we render to the Lord? Is it only a bare bone's, “letter of the law,” legalistic obedience like that of the scribes and Pharisees in the Sermon on the Mount? Or, do we go beyond the rattling of the dry bones of a skeleton to add muscle and sinew? With muscle and sinew on the bones, it would be like recognizing the principles and implications that accompany the command. We are posed for movement and action. However, there must be more than bones, muscle, and sinew. There must be the heart and vital organs within. The very spirit of the command must be obeyed from the heart. With

all the components of the body “fitly” joined together, there now is life, and we are ready for concerted movement, obedience, and action.

Let us look to, *yea, we point you to*, the person and personality of Christ to obey the LAW OF CHRIST, which is the LAW OF LOVE. It is a different kind of obedience from that of the LAW OF MOSES, but nonetheless obedience, and of the highest order.

Hearts that are right with Christ are quick to obey (and will not gainsay). □

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## Hospitality, A Forgotten Practice

**WITH ALL** the turmoil, bitterness, danger and decay swirling about in the world, it is no wonder that families like to hide themselves away in the privacy of their dens and patios. We note an increasing pattern of isolationism behind the walls of our houses. We seem to be saying, “This is my own little lair. I want none to enter. There is only room for me here. If you want to see me, I'll come *out* to you.”

Forgotten is one of the oft mentioned Christian attributes [and practices] of the New Testament. This is the Christian grace of hospitality.

In Paul's list of Christian responsibilities (and immediately following upon the mention of sharing with those who are in need) is the admonition to be “given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13). Hebrews 13:2 admonishes us to “be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Peter told Christians to “use hospitality one to another without grudging” (I Peter 4:9).

We need to open our hearts and our homes to the stranger and to our brethren. We need to share our tables and our comforts with others. This is Christianity in action. This is love demonstrated. Many a soul began his journey to the Lord from the friendship originated at the dinner table. Hospitality will open many doors to greater service in the Lord. Let us resurrect this forgotten grace.—*Selected* □

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## Work Upon Human Souls

“**IF WE WORK** upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into the dust; but if we work upon human souls, if we imbue them with principles, with the fear of God and the love of fellowman, we engrave on these tablets something which brightens all eternity.”—*Daniel Webster* □



# Proverbial Statements

**GOOD WORDS** are worth much and cost little.  
If all men were just, there would be no need of justice.

Education without God makes men clever devils.  
When our capabilities are of God, we are never incapable.

You cannot have everything, but you can make the best of everything you have.

Character is what you are in the dark.

Unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything.

Freedom is not the right to do as we please, but the liberty to do as we ought.

When you flee from temptation, don't leave a forwarding address.

The greatest use of life is to spend it on something that outlasts it.

No man ever ruined his eyesight by looking on the bright side of things. □

—Submitted by Rose Elliott



## “Bring Me the Book”

**DID YOU KNOW** that in the United States alone there are over 600 book publishers, publishing upwards of 30,000 books per year? (And that statistic is probably grossly out of date now.) This ought to make Americans the most “well read” people in the world. But did you also know that wise Solomon wrote of books like this: “...of making many books there is no end” (Ecclesiastes 12:12). How strange then, the request of Sir Walter Scott from his death bed. Turning to a friend, he said, “Bring me the Book.” When the perplexed bystander asked, “What book?” he simply replied, “There is but one Book!” Isn't that true?! Let fifty years pass bringing us a million and a half new publications, and Walter Scott's words will still ring true: “There is but ONE Book!” The Bible. Have you read it today?—*The Minute Messenger* □



## “My Name is Gossip”

**MY NAME** is gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious, and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name or face. To track me down is virtually impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I

become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish your reputation, it is never quite the same. My name is gossip.—*Selected* □



# BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. How old were Abraham and Sarah when Isaac, the son of promise, was born to them?
2. Why were the children of Israel to eat only unleavened bread during the feast of the Passover?
3. What extraordinary thing is said about the clothes and shoes worn by the children of Israel during their forty years of wilderness wandering?
4. When Aaron died, who succeeded him in the “priest's office”?
5. When Israel came into the Promised Land, where was the first place that became home for the tabernacle where God placed His name and they worshipped?
6. The city of Jerusalem (Jebusi) was located in the territory of which tribe of Israel?
7. What laws involving what a king was not to do were to be copied in a book and read by the kings of Israel so that they would not be lifted above their brethren, nor turn from the commandment of the Lord?
8. Where was Samuel buried?
9. Which psalm talks about what a good thing it is for “brethren to dwell together in unity”?
10. The writer of Proverbs says that “it is better to dwell in the wilderness” than with whom?
11. What book in the Bible speaks of things done “under the sun” and repeatedly says that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit”?
12. When the Jews confronted Jesus after the first cleansing of the temple, how long did they say the temple had been involved in being built at that time?
13. What was the message preached by John the Baptist and likewise by Jesus when John was cast into prison?
14. What Gentile cities did Jesus say would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done there?
15. To whom did Jesus say, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”?
16. What man said to Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian”?
17. What brother from the church at Philippi visited Paul while he was a prisoner at Rome, bringing him help from the church and personally ministering to his needs?
18. What book in the New Testament speaks of Christians now being in “heavenly places” as Christians?
19. What did John say as to how we could know “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error”?
20. To whom was the epistle of II John written?

(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:

■ "Today I received a copy of your publication. It was refreshing! I enjoyed the article on 'Five Ways to Unravel Prophecy.' [and other articles have, and will, follow—*Editor*] The author hits the nail on the head..."

### ARKANSAS:

■ "I have been enjoying *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, as you know, for a good many years and I still like what you are doing. So I hope the offering will help to keep *THE SWORD AND STAFF* going."

### TENNESSEE:

■ "Please continue sending *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Your publication has the best lessons of any publication I receive. I keep each one and read them again and again. May God bless you for your good work."

### VIRGINIA:

■ "My husband and I thoroughly enjoy your publication..."

■ "...May the Lord bless you and keep you. You are much needed in these wicked times."

### DELAWARE:

■ "*THE SWORD AND STAFF* is a great and edifying magazine. Thank God for your steadfast and unmovable stand on God's Holy Word, and for proclaiming it in all of your writings..."

### PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "I get *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I don't know who subscribed for me. I want to comment on what you have said about prophecy by David Vaughn Elliott. He apparently is not looking for the kingdom of which all the

prophets spoke and which both John the Baptist and Jesus said was near but they never said it was here..."

[We urge you to continue to follow this series on the Bible and prophecy, and you will see this subject of the Messianic kingdom more fully developed. We believe the kingdom has come and that we are now in it as Christians, Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 16:18,19; Mark 9:1; John 18:36; Acts 2—notice all of this chapter and especially verses 30-36; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9. If you have a question, or disagreement with an article, write the author; or wait, and likely your question will be dealt with in a later article—*Editor*].

■ "...I pray God will continue to bless you to strengthen you for this great work you are doing. To explain the Scriptures in such a way that all can understand, and take heed to the warnings. I pray I might be able to glean all from your writings that I might have a better understanding of the Word of God. That I might apply these beautiful truths to my everyday life, that I might be a better Christian. In Jesus Name! Pray for me that I might not be ashamed at His appearing..."

■ "I would like to order the last bound volume of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I have five volumes. As I finish reading one volume I start all over. I have been really enlightened about many things. I pray God is strengthening that physical man. May He grant you much time to continue so great a work. Make no compromise! We give God the glory. Thank God for any brother who can and will declare the Whole Counsel of God..."

### NEW HAMPSHIRE:

■ "Please send *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in English. I read the magazine in Spanish in the church I go to."

### OHIO:

■ "Reading each publication of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is a blessing for me. There is so much information and continual knowledge of the Bible to be had from each issue. I thank you for your work for our Lord..."

### INDIANA:

■ "I have appreciated receiving several copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* this year [1996]. You are right on target, and I pray you can keep up the good work..."

■ "I hope this will help you print your next *SWORD AND STAFF* paper. I enjoy reading your articles. We need more writers who will tell the whole truth..."

"It amazes me how few people are interested in what God's Word has to say."

■ "...Planning to use the entire prophecy study by David Vaughn Elliott as an insert in our bulletin. I find it most effective to do this way for getting it read by our people, much more than leaving it up to them to pick up a copy from the literature table in the foyer..."

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# READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

## ILLINOIS:

■ "...I appreciate your efforts and persistence with getting the Word of God out. I pray that mankind may be changed because of such publications. It seems not many care to deal with the truth anymore. I pray their eyes and ears be open to God's message. May God bless you in your efforts."

■ "I am surprised that as much as you have condemned Masonry that you would quote Will Rogers, a Freemason, Scottish Rite member and a Shriner. I am also a member of all three bodies. Also I am a leader in my church. Masonry will make a man a better Christian."

## WISCONSIN:

■ "We really do enjoy your publication, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We have received it for the last two years. It is difficult to find Christian publications that are as straight-forward and to-the-point like *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is. Thank you!!!!..."

## MISSOURI:

■ "We enjoy your paper so very much. It has taught us so much. It makes me very sad when I read of cancellations and people that have ears and don't hear. Please keep up the good work. It is the best information paper we have ever read and studied..."

■ "It is that time of the year when people are going crazy, spending their money like it grows on trees. Well, I don't have money to throw away and to spend foolishly, but was thinking how good it would be to give you a little support and the good I'd get out of your publication of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*..."

■ "I have been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ for 28 years, and I do believe, know, you are speaking it right. I plan on seeing you in that heavenly mansion. Plan on it..."

## OKLAHOMA:

■ "I appreciate the good, sound teaching in your paper."

## KANSAS:

■ "This is to express a note of appreciation for your magazine. I have found it to be a valuable source of reference material for sermons."

## SOUTH DAKOTA:

■ "I have been enjoying my bound volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. And thank you so very much for the precious book, *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. I've read all of the Proverbs and most of the Poems...I appreciate and will use all you have sent; and will continue to pray for you."

## MONTANA:

■ "Please remove these names from your mailing list as we do not want *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."

## OREGON:

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

■ "You do a wonderful job of writing, teaching and encouraging..."

■ "Your publication is the most Scripturally dependable one we can find. We hope things are going well for you...We appreciate the unmodified truth. \_\_\_\_\_ lived (and died) for it, and you are like an island in the sea of those who don't. Keep up the 'good fight'—you are needed."

## CALIFORNIA:

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

## PUERTO RICO:

■ "I'd like very much to receive your magazine or devotional, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. As I visited a friend of mine, she showed me how much she enjoyed reading the devotional. I was interested as I looked, and I was pleased, if you don't mind to send it to this address."

"Thank you so much. I am a Christian, and I like to read; also my husband, a new born Christian. Thanks again. God bless you."

## GHANA:

■ "Not so long ago, I received...copies of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...Brother, I cannot explain how the books have uplifted and changed the lives of so many brethren here. Presently I have 32 leaders that are undergoing *SWORD AND STAFF* training...where I preach."

"We continue to enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and it is my daily prayers that you keep on doing this wonderful work of God..."

## ISRAEL:

■ "Shalom! Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior."

"I'm really thankful for your informative and God-fearing paper (*THE SWORD AND STAFF*). I do learn a lot upon reading it; as a matter of fact, we used some of the articles in our Bible study..."



## Why Jesus Came

Jesus came from up above,  
With his holy precious love.  
He came to die on Calvary;  
He came to die for you and me.  
He came and died so we could win  
The victory over all our sin.  
He came and died and cleansed our soul,  
So we could be made whole.

By John-Mark McLaughlin  
Mt. Airy, N.C.

## The "Old Rugged Cross"

### Versus

## The New Polished Cross

● By *HAROLD BUCKLES*

**D**ID YOU KNOW that the words of the song, "The Old Rugged Cross," when first published were unpopular? The author asked a friend why this was. He said, "You've never gone through any great time of suffering. That would make a difference." The time came when this man did go through a time of great trials. It was after this that he rewrote the words as they now appear in "The Old Rugged Cross." It has become one of the most loved and well known of all gospel songs.

#### FIRST BLEED, THEN BLESS

This is how it took place in the life of Jesus. "The Spirit of Christ...did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Peter 1:11). This is the order: first you suffer, then you can be a blessing to others. The apostle Paul experienced the same thing. "I have been crucified with Christ, and Christ now lives in me" was how he described himself (Galatians 2:20).

The original "Old Rugged Cross" of the New Testament had NO agreements with the world. To the proud flesh of man, the cross meant the END of the journey. The apostle Paul could say the world had been KILLED (crucified) as far as he was concerned (Galatians 6:14). Likewise he was DEAD to the world. It was the cross of Christ that made the difference in his life.

#### NOW A NEW POLISHED CROSS

The new "polished" cross is a pal and a buddy with the ways of the world. It lets the fleshly nature of life be UNDISTURBED. Then it "enjoys" short SERMONETTES all about birds, bats, bees, bugs, and butterflies. The accent is on entertainment. This is why LOUD music, fun, and feeds draw a much larger crowd than the preaching of the CROSS and the Word that it upholds. This modern "new" cross has an entirely new approach to evangelism. The new modern preacher tries to "motivate" his hearers with psychology. He tries to key into public interest by showing that his "new polished cross" makes no unpleasant demands on the sinful nature of man. Whatever the sinful world is

clamoring after at the moment is cleverly shown to be the thing the gospel offers, only the new way is nicer. The new "cross" does not kill the old man of sin (Romans 6:6). Rather it says, "Come and assert yourself for Jesus. Come enjoy the fun and THRILLS of religion." The NEW message is slanted in the direction of whatever is popular in order to make it acceptable to the crowds.

#### THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

The cross of the New Testament was a symbol of death. It stood for the abrupt end of human sufficiency. The man who took up his cross and started down a Roman road had already said good-bye to his friends. He had made NO provisions for coming back. His life was not going to be redirected—it was going to be ENDED! There was to be NEW LIFE in its place. We who preach the gospel must not think of ourselves as "public relations" men sent to make Christ acceptable to worldly business men or carnally minded religionists.

#### CHRIST AROSE!

Wicked men could nail Jesus to a cross, but they could not keep him in the grave. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witness" (Acts 2:32). Baptism is into Christ's DEATH (Romans 6:3). Even as Christ was buried and came forth victorious from the grave, so we too are buried with him in baptism to rise with him and walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; etc.). But this glorious "resurrection" will not take place unless we have accepted Christ as our LORD and repented of all sin PRIOR to our baptism. Salvation is not by baptism only any more than it is by faith only!

What does all of this mean to the guilty sinner who wants to find life in Christ Jesus? Simply this: he must believe in Christ as his Savior and Lord. He must forsake ALL sin, making NO COMPROMISE with the world, the flesh, or the devil. He must be baptized into Christ's death so that he may receive salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### WALK BY THE SPIRIT

It is not right for a Christian to sit down on the edge of the baptistery and DRY UP! Baptism is the beginning of the new walk, NOT the end. "But this I say, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk" (Galatians 5:16,24,25).

After Peter had written the very powerful and helpful list of II Peter 1:3-9, he was inspired to write, "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence

(Continued on Next Page)

# The “Old Rugged Cross” Versus...

*(Continued from Previous Page)*

to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:10,11).

I don’t know about you, but I’m going to pin my faith on the Christ of the “Old Rugged Cross.” He is alive forevermore, and he lives to make intercession for those who come to him the Bible way (Hebrews 4:15,16 and Hebrews 7:25). You can have your “New Polished Cross,” for anyone who understands both the Bible and human nature doesn’t want it! It can neither save nor give strength to the pilgrim who is on his way to the PROMISED LAND. □



## Getting Past Denial

*“Once we truly know that life is difficult—  
once we truly understand and accept it—  
then life is no longer difficult.”*

**—M. Scott Peck**

**MANY TIMES** we make problems worse by not wanting to even admit they exist. It seems easier to simply avoid the problem, rather than face up to it and deal with it. Ultimately, the avoidance becomes more painful than the original problem.

Ironically, the best way to limit life’s pain, is to accept that some pain is necessary. Accept that life is full of problems, and that it is through the pain of resolving these problems, that we learn and grow.

Many people live in a constant state of denial, afraid of the pain it would cause to look their situation straight in the eye. Yet, as soon as you get past that denial, your situation has already improved. You’re able to see the mistakes you’ve made in the past, and to learn from your experience. You’re able to clearly evaluate your current situation, and construct a workable, realistic plan for your life.

Realize that, though you are responsible for your actions, who you are is not defined by what you have done. Everyone makes mistakes. Detach yourself from your problems, and then look at them realistically, with the goal of solving them.

Life is full of challenges. Have the courage to look at them clearly, and you’ll see that they are all opportunities in disguise.—*The Daily Motivator* □



## KINDNESS

**I OFTEN WONDER** why it is that we are not kinder than we are. How much the world needs it! How easily it is done! How instantaneously it acts!

How infallibly it is remembered! How superabundantly it pays itself back! For there is no debtor in the world so honorable, so superbly honorable, as love.—*Henry Drummond* □



## Why and How Do You Read the Bible?

It is one thing to read the Bible through.  
Another thing to read, to learn, and do.  
Some read it with design to learn to read,  
But to the subject pay but little heed.  
Some read it as their duty once a week,  
But no instruction from the Bible seek;  
While others read it with but little care,  
With no regard to how they read nor where.  
Some read it as history, to know  
How people lived three thousand years ago.  
Some read to bring themselves into repute,  
By showing others how they can dispute;  
While others read, because their neighbors do,  
To see how long ‘twill take to read it through.  
Some read it for the wonders that are there—  
How David killed a lion and a bear;  
While others read it with uncommon care,  
Hoping to find some contradictions there!  
Some read as though it did not speak to them,  
But to the people at Jerusalem.  
One reads it as a book of mysteries,  
And won’t believe the very things he sees.  
One reads with father’s specs upon his head,  
And sees the thing just as his father said.  
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed—  
Hence understand but little that they read:  
For every passage in the book they bend,  
To make it suit that all-important end!  
Some people read, as I have often thought,  
To teach the Book instead of being taught.  
And some there are who read it out of spite—  
I fear there are but few who read it right.  
So many people in these latter days,  
Have read the Bible in so many ways  
That few can tell which system is the best,  
For every party contradicts the rest!  
But read it prayerfully, and you will see,  
Although men contradict, God’s words agree.  
For what the early Bible prophets wrote,  
We find that Christ and His apostles quote:  
So trust no creed that trembles to recall  
What has been penned by one and verified by  
all.—*Author Unknown* □

## Father Throws Little Girl Over Niagara Falls

A SPOT is pointed out at Niagara Falls from which a father threw his little girl headlong into the seething torrent without having the slightest thought of doing so. He took her in his arms and gave her a playful swing over the abyss merely to see if it would frighten her.

The child in a paroxysm of fear, gave a sudden jerk and fell with a shriek into the great abyss.

You say he had no business to trifle with her that way. And no more have YOU a right to trifle foolishly with your soul by carelessly swinging it out over the great chasm of eternity.—**Selected** □



### **BARBS...** with a Point

**WHEN** a happening is no longer a current, ongoing reality, it is written as history.

*The purpose of grace is not to excuse sin, but to take away the guilt and practice of sin.*

The book of Acts initially was not written as history, but as a *moving and ongoing report* of what was then happening.

*If it is easy for someone to "get your goat," that could mean that you are not one of the Lord's sheep.*

There is nothing like competition to bring the price of anything down, and churches, in a sense, are doing the same when they lower God's standards trying to get new "members."

*When you feel an affinity and identity with compromisers (as such), that means you have become one.*

A church that must rely on bake sales, dinners, and rummage sales to financially survive probably is as dead as the chicken, as cold as the drinks, as worthless as the rummage, and obviously is not sold out to the Lord.

*One of the pitiful things about a dishonest person is that it is hard for him to be honest with himself.*

Some of the worse enemies of Christianity are its uncommitted friends, and its overzealous, and sectarian, advocates.

*Little sins become big problems and major issues when we won't forsake them.*

As water seeks its own level, so sinful and fallen man takes the course of least resistance; man left to himself takes the low road and not the high.

*Compromise may be good in politics, but in religion it is totally disastrous.*

The Bible knows nothing of missionaries starting missions in foreign countries, but it does know of winning souls and establishing churches.

*According to the Bible, only a fool says all that he thinks (Proverbs 29:11).*

Sprinkling could never take the place of baptism because sprinkling is not baptism; baptism is a burial and a resurrection, both literally and spiritually (Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-5).

*A lopsided ball hurled through the air veers off course (be well-rounded).*

If the older you get the grumpier you get, you need to "get with it"—you are not moving in the right direction.

*Little cliques in small churches cause big problems.*

By rejecting Jesus Christ we put ourselves in the position where one day we will finally be rejected by God for all eternity. □



## What Will Today Bring?

**TODAY** is full of opportunity. Everywhere you go, everything you do, every person you meet gives you the potential to make a difference—in your life, in the lives of others, in your community and in the world at large.

Welcome the challenges. Look for opportunities, in every situation, to learn and to grow. Delight in the beauty that is around you. Offer your sincere kindness and caring to others. This is the stuff of life.

You are fully alive and capable of making this day into whatever you want it to be. Though you often cannot control the situations that come along, you always can control the way you deal with them.

Every moment is your opportunity to express the wonderful, unique person that you are. Life is not in the fondly-remembered past. It is not in the hoped-for future. It is here and now. What you are now, is what you are.

Anything that may have previously held you back is now behind you. Today is your golden opportunity to fashion your life into what you want it to be.

Take a deep breath, put a smile on your face, and make it a great day.—**Ralph Marston** □

**"Gambling is the child of avarice,  
the brother of iniquity, and the father  
of mischief."—George Washington**

# *Because I Love You*

*A Meditation On 1 Corinthians 13 for Husbands and Wives*

Because I love you I will be slow to lose patience with you.

Because I love you I will be kind in action and gentle in spirit.

Because I love you I will not treat or view you as something to be possessed or manipulated.

Because I love you I will never try to falsely impress you; I will neither put on airs nor act a part before you. And I will not belittle you to boost my own ego.

Because I love you I will be tactful, gracious and concerned never to embarrass you.

Because I love you I do not seek primarily to get my own way or fulfill my own needs and desires; I respect your individuality and I choose to trust your good judgment.

Because I love you I am not touchy or easily offended. I do not take things personally nor do I store up resentments.

Because I love you I deeply grieve when you are troubled, and I find great joy in your successes and achievements.

Because I love you I am anxious to protect your feelings, character and reputation.

Because I love you I will always believe the best about you.

Because I love you I will always, even in the midst of struggle and adversity, courageously hope for the best in our relationship.

Because I love you I will never abandon you.

—*By Dale Pauls*



# Spiritual Food for Thought

~By Andrew Gibbons~



## RECIPE FOR REVIVAL

IF ALL the sleeping folk will wake up  
and all the lukewarm folk will fire up  
and all the dishonest folk will confess up  
and all the grumpy folk will sweeten up  
and all the depressed folk will look up  
and all the discouraged folk will cheer up  
and all the estranged folk will make up  
and all the gossipers will shut up  
and all the delinquents will pay up  
and all the dry bones will shake up  
and all the members will study up  
and all the preachers will speak up  
and all the true soldiers will stand up,  
THEN there will be a great revival!

**FOR SOMETHING** to be revived it has to have once had life. So as we talk about spiritual revival, one would have had to have spiritual life at one time to get it again. The problem with all too many is the lack of true conversion. This is what the Scriptures refer to as being born again or being converted; they are one and the same.

John 3:5, *"Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say unto you, unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

Acts 3:19, *"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out so the time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*

Have you ever been asked to describe a place you have never been? It is impossible! It is just as hard to return to a state or condition that you have never possessed. It starts with being converted!

There is a lot of talk about Promise Keepers these days, and, yes, we all need to be a people of integrity by keeping our promises. But remember it is hard to keep a promise that you have never made. One must start with truly being converted to Jesus Christ, and living true to Jesus, and then you will be a true promise keeper. □

## Where "U" Are Needed

"U" are needed in Bible ST\_DY, not in ignorance.

"U" are needed in S\_PPORT, not in neglect.

"U" are needed in \_NITY, not in partyism or division.

"U" are needed in D\_TY, not in irresponsibility.

"U" are needed in B\_ILDING, not in tearing down.

"U" are needed in the CH\_RCH, not in the world.

The CHURCH needs "U", and more than that, "U" need the CHURCH.—Selected □

## Sin and Squid Alike

THE SQUID with its eight tentacles and two large arms, resembles an octopus, but is also a lot like sin.

Squid live wherever there is sea—sin will grow anywhere.

A squid may measure as much as twenty feet or be full grown at two inches. People think of some sins as little and others as big, but big or little, both squid and sin prey on their victims.

A squid can change colors and the pattern of its body quickly to blend with its surroundings. Likewise, sin changes its appearance to dupe people about its evil nature. It sometimes looks "good."

When a squid thinks it is about to be caught, it empties its ink sac, clouds the water and dulls its scent. Clouding the issue and dulling the senses are also part of sin's tactics.

One can be freed from the squid's clutches by killing the squid. Thank God, through the cleansing blood of Jesus and our obedience to his will, we can also destroy sin and be freed from its overpowering clutches.—Selected □

## Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 17:17;21:5; 2. Deuteronomy 16:3; 3. Deuteronomy 29:5 (8:4); Nehemiah 9:21; 4. Numbers 20:28; Deuteronomy 10:6; 5. Jeremiah 7:12; Joshua 18:1; Deuteronomy 12:11; 6. Joshua 18:11,28; 7. Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 8. I Samuel 25:1; 28:3; 9. Psalms 133; 10. Proverbs 21:19; 11. Ecclesiastes 1:3,14; 2:11,17,26; 4:4; 12. John 2:18-20; 13. Matthew 3:1,2; 4:12-17; 14. Matthew 11:21; 15. John 11:24,25; 16. Acts 26:27,28; 17. Philipians 2:25; 4:18; 18. Ephesians 1:3,20; 2:6; 19. I John 4:6 (John 8:47); 20. II John 1. □



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MANY TIMES human institutions of "higher learning," bearing the stamp of religion, get top heavy and in condescension look down with disdain upon the church which is God's religious institution of higher (heavenly) learning (Ephesians 3:10; 1 Timothy 3:15). □

### Up With It!

Get up when you are feeling down;  
Don't just lie there to sulk and frown;  
Take charge as master of your fate;  
With God you're more than second rate.

Up with a smile and greet the sun;  
Look up, take hold, and get things done;  
Each day awaits its use for good;  
Up, up with it; do what you should!

—By James E. Gibbons

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