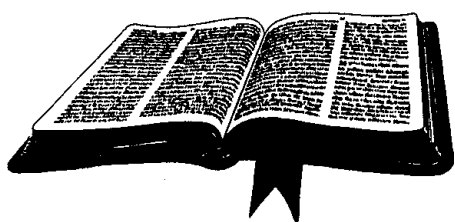


The Sword AND Staff

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

THE GOAL OF THE COMMANDMENT



● *"Now the end of the commandment is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5, KJV).*

● By JAMES E. GIBBONS

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THE WORD translated "perfect" in the New Testament, *teleios*, is a most interesting word. It signifies reaching the goal. It is cognate with or comes from the word *telos*, which means the end or goal. Thus, God is perfect in the absolute sense, but man only in a relative sense in reaching the goal of maturity (not sinless perfection).

Paul makes use of this word as he spoke of his aspirations for Christ in Colossians 1:28, "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus" (NKJV). Initially through Christ we reach the goal of forgiveness and right relationship with God. The righteousness of Christ in sinless perfection is declared to be our righteousness (Romans 10:4; I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21). Through God's grace we put on Christ in baptism (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27). We are now in Christ, a Christian, and our goal is to be like Christ. Or in the language of Paul, "a **perfect [teleion]** man," attaining unto "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). This is God's plan from eternity (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4,5).

In one great, simple, and practical statement the apostle nails it all down in I Timothy 1:5, "Now the **purpose** [*telos*, goal, end) of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere [unfeigned] faith." The end result of God's commands and instructions is realized in the context of love, initially and thereafter (I Peter 1:22). That's what it's all about. In this context there must be a **pure heart** (a singular heart that has no sinful admixture or selfish motive), a **good conscience void of offense** (we are not dabbling in sin and questionable things; we have tender sensitivities about right and wrong), and **sincere faith** (one that is real, unfeigned; we are not hypocrites). John (I John 4:17,18) speaks of love being "perfected among us" (and it is when it is in accordance with I Timothy 1:5).

The goal of Christianity is very simple, to be reconciled to God through Christ and to be like Christ. Christianity is Christ. When we are sidetracked into sectarian wrangling and denominationalism, we have missed the mark. Even as Paul said here: "From which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle [fruitless] talk" (I Timothy 1:6). □



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INFORMATION:

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

A JOB well done is its own reward.

There is no way that we can lift people up unless we come down to their level to help them.

Beware lest when we give out we give in and then give up (Galatians 6:9).

Being intoxicated, or drunk, is not just a single sin, but it is one that opens the door to many others.

Know God—know hope, know peace; no God—no hope, no peace.

The man who makes the best of that which is less than best will come out the best.

In an atmosphere of ill will the will of God will not and cannot be accomplished.

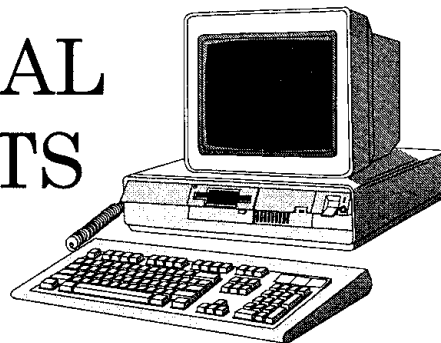
We can give without loving (I Corinthians 13:3), but we cannot love without giving (I John 3:16-18; John 3:16).

Difficulties are obstacles only to the weak.

God is Spirit (non-physical), John 4:24, and any reference to Him otherwise is an accommodation to the limited mind of finite man.

We best keep God's Word when we give it away—EVANGELIZE! □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



THE CHURCH, NOT OF THIS WORLD

THE CHURCH is composed of the "called out" ones. II Corinthians 6:17 reads, "Wherefore come out from among them [the people of the world], and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." Then the word "holy" means separate, and "saint" (applied to all Christians) means those who have been separated, set apart.

In talking to the Father, Jesus said that his disciples were not of this world, but realizing that for now they had to live here, he prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Consequently the apostle Paul admonishes in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." In the same vein, he further admonishes in Colossians 3:2, "Set your affections [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth." We are strangers and pilgrims here (I Peter 2:11). We are not to love this present world (I John 2:15-17).

Ideally, we are in the world but not of the world. But whether we like it or not, no man (or church) is an island. We rub shoulders daily with those about us and are continually bombarded by the concepts and mindset of this world. Simply by living in a particular country or society presented its problems in early New Testament times. Evangelizing on the island of Crete, Titus was to be mindful of what he was up against. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies [lazy gluttons]. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:12,13). Likewise, Corinth was a degenerate city, and reference to Corinth was a byword for degeneracy in the ancient world. One only has to read the epistle of I Corinthians to see how it spilled over into the church. We could present other illustrations from the Scriptures.

Special problems confront Christians living in America today, as well as in other societies. Overall, materialism is destroying the church. Divorce, immorality, and loose living abound (and are not uncommon in religious circles). Then the fuzzy, tolerating mindset of a pluralistic society is a great hindrance to coming to strong religious convictions. And the spiritually neutralizing impact of humanism is subtly felt more in some parts of the country than others (and the church doesn't even know it).

We could go on, but let us be warned. Be not deceived. Ungodly influences subtly bombard us from every angle. But the church is not of this world. If we don't realize this, we are in trouble. □

A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...



UNDER this caption we are running timely articles by David Vaughn Elliott on prophecy. One does not appear this time. However, the Lord willing, the series

will be resumed in coming issues of this paper. Very important subjects relating to prophecy, and even questions associated with such a study, are being dealt with. You would do well to follow these studies. We just want to know what the Bible actually teaches and not fanciful theories. If you have related questions, direct them to the writer of these articles on prophecy.—*Editor* □

**Giving Considered As
An Expression of Worship**

IT IS our conviction that giving in the church should be regarded and treated as worship, not relegated to one side. It is not just a matter of “raising” money, but it involves the worship of the Most High God of Heaven (just as participation in the Lord’s supper is thought of as worship).

Here are some random pinpoints for you to consider on giving as an act or expression of worship.

- The wise men came to worship Jesus (Matthew 2:2,8,11). In their gesture of worship they fell down and presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Giving is a part of worship here.
- Paul said that the offerings the Philippians had sent to him were “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18). Sacrifices are involved and presented in worship in the Bible. Thus, their giving was regarded as an expression of worship.
- Paul mentions also the “fellowship” of the Philippians in the gospel from the beginning until when he was writing (Philippians 1:5). Fellowship is one of the items mentioned in Acts 2:42. Of course this is the Greek word *koinonia*. It involves giving and sharing together. In Hebrews 13:16 the word is found, and the writer says that “with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (sacrifices = worship).
- Of course, more generically, Paul speaks of giving our bodies as a living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service (worship as in “worship service,” as the priest serving in the temple [Hebrews 9:1,6], and meaning our rational or spiritual worship in con-

trast with the animal sacrifice) (Romans 12:1). The way that we live in our bodies is the ultimate expression of worship. James 1:26 and 27, using another Greek word for worship, calls it “pure *religion*” (another more generic reference, the same word translated “worshipping” in Colossians 2:18, KJV).

➤ However, worship is also spoken of as specific acts or expressions limited to time and place (Matthew 2:11; John 12:20; Acts 8:27; 24:11; I Corinthians 14:25; Revelation 4:10,11; 11:1; 19:10; 22:8,9). We are not in error is speaking of the worship services, as we assemble for this purpose.

It is not an either/or proposition. Generically the Christian life is an act of worship, but worship also speaks of specific things we do (coming from a heart drawing near and presenting itself to God), and giving seems to be one of them.

Yes, we believe that GIVING is an act or expression of worship and should be emphasized and treated accordingly in the assembly, not put off to one side. Nor should the church have the mindset of simply “raising” money, reverting to all kinds of sales and unspiritual gimmicks. People should give because they have first given themselves to the Lord, and their lives as Christians thereafter are characterized by giving.—*J.E.G.* □

**Another Version
Of “The 23rd Channel”**

The TV is my shepherd, I shall not want.
It makes me lie down on the sofa.
It leads me away from the Scriptures.
It destroys my soul.
It leads me in the paths of sex and violence for the sponsor’s sake.
Yea, though I walk in the shadow of my Christian responsibilities, there will be no interruption for the TV is with me.
It’s cable and it’s remote control, they comfort me.
It prepares a commercial before me in the presence of my worldliness.
It anoints my head with humanism.
My coveting runneth over.
Surely laziness and ignorance shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I would dwell in the house watching TV forever.—*Selected* □

“GOD grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can, and
wisdom to know the difference.”

EDITORIAL

Byways (# 1)

(Because the Muslim religion is continually in the forefront involving the nations of the Middle East, and because of the fuzzy mentality of the modern American mind to be unduly tolerant of almost anything, we present this "EDITORIAL BYWAYS" reprint from the past for your serious consideration).

MOHAMMED'S NOCTURNAL TRIP TO PARADISE AND THE MOHAMMEDAN CONCEPT OF HEAVEN

SOMETIME AGO while teaching the book of Genesis (the account of Abraham and Ishmael was before me) and teaching the book of Revelation (in sections thought to apply to Mohammed, Mohammedanism, and Mohammedan conquests), and with the fact that the Arabs are continually in the news (one way or another), I was sufficiently provoked to do additional research and study involving Mohammed and the religion that came into being through him (in the seventh century this side of Christ). Several trips to Moslem countries, Jerusalem, and the Mosque of Omar were behind me. A copy of the *Koran* had been on my library shelf for many years untouched except by dust.

In spite of how many writers like to speak of the dignity of the Moslem religion, and their lofty monotheistic concept of God, I was not impressed. Could a religion that had to depend on the ravaging sword for its expansion have much going for it? To read the Bible, and then to *try* to read the *Koran*, one is strikingly and refreshingly impressed by the Bible. There is no question mark about which one is from God. (Oh what a Lord and Savior! And the purity of His religion!) The *Koran* to me in many ways, thrusts us back to the Old Testament and to *pre* and *sub* Old Testament levels. Some concepts may sound good [perhaps borrowed from Christianity], but then these are contradicted by others. Regardless how they may talk about the one God, Allah, we are back in the dingy shadows. Books written in the last century picture the extreme poverty and backwardness of the Moslem nations with the ex-

pectant demise of their religion (the contributing factor). However, because of the oil wealth now flowing into some of these Moslem countries it appears that somewhat of a renaissance is being experienced (and the religion is becoming more attractive in the eyes of some uninformed westerners).

Mohammed's Nocturnal Trip to Paradise

Those who have visited Jerusalem and the Mosque of Omar (located on the temple mount) learn that Mohammed was supposed to have ascended to heaven from Jerusalem. If we think it like unto the Lord Jesus Christ, we are away off base (there is no similarity). Following is what I found from my study and is said to be believed by followers of Mohammed.

This is supposed to have happened in the twelfth year of the acclaimed mission of the prophet Mohammed. He was in Mecca in bed with his most beloved wife Ayesha (she was one of thirteen wives he had—some say 21 wives besides concubines). He

was espoused to Ayesha when she was six years old, but did not consummate his marriage until she was eight. Although Mohammed's law as found in the *Koran* allowed his followers to have only four wives, he had many, many more. He has God saying in the *Koran* chapter 3, "This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers.") The angel Gabriel, who was said to have seventy sets of wings, politely knocked on Mohammed's door. Having gained admittance, he informs the prophet that he had been sent to conduct him into the very presence of God to receive finishing touches involving his mission. A glorious milk-white horse called Al Borak (like prophets



in more ancient times) was waiting to carry him on his way. For some reason while Gabriel held the bridle for Mohammed to mount, the animal became very desperate and wild. He was brought under control by Mohammed promising him (the horse) a seat in paradise. This accomplished its purpose. Mohammed mounted, and they were off like lightning on the first leg of their journey to Jerusalem. Here the horse was left fastened at the foot of a rock, and Mohammed is said to have ascended to Heaven. All of this (the trip to Jerusalem, to Heaven, and then back to

Jerusalem and Mecca) was supposed to have happened in one night.

In ascending to paradise Mohammed found it to be divided into seven heavens. The *first heaven* was composed entirely of solid silver. Here he found a decrepit old man who turned out to be Adam. Adam was very pleased with him and thanked God for such a person. It was from the first heaven that Mohammed was supposed to have seen the stars hanging by golden chains suspended from the roof. When he reach the *second heaven* (it was a 500 years journey, normally speaking, between the heavens), we are told that it was all of pure gold. Here he meets Noah, who seems to feel very inferior and wants the prayers of the prophet. The *third heaven* was of precious stone, and this was the residence of Abraham. But here his attention seems to be more directed toward an angel which he saw. It is said that the distance between the angel's eyes was a 70,000 days' journey, and "consequently his whole height was five million forty thousand days' journey, or four times as high as all his heavens put together, since each was distant from the other five hundred years' journey." The *fourth heaven* was of emerald; here Joseph lived. The *fifth heaven* was of adamant. Moses was here, and with him Mohammed had a conference. The *sixth heaven* was of carbuncle. Here was the abode of John the Baptist. The *seventh heaven* was of divine light, and none other than Jesus Christ was here. It is said that in each of the other heavens all whom he saw wanted the prayers of the prophet, but here he saw that he requested the prayers of Jesus.

It is said that in the highest heaven, "There was also a very remarkable angel...for he had no fewer than seventy thousand heads, in each head seventy thousand tongues, and each tongue uttered seventy thousand distinct voices at once. That is, he spoke audibly three hundred forty three millions of words in an instant." Here it is said that Mohammed finally arrived within two bowshots of the very throne of God. The face of God was covered with 70,000 veils. As he came near through water and snow, and the hand of God was placed on his back, it was so cold it penetrated to his very marrow. He got important secrets from God, was informed that he would be the greatest man upon the earth, then he was conducted back to earth by the angel Gabriel. His horse was waiting just where he left him, and he was back in Mecca in no time (all in one night).

"What really is radically different is the sensual paradise promised to the faithful Moslem. Here a great number of youthful and beautiful dark-eyed women have been especially created for the sensual pleasure of each man; they will continually attend unto him with no detraction or distraction..."

(NOTE: another source has Mohammed riding the white horse to heaven and back).

To say the least, this is different from the Christian's belief in Christ ascending to Heaven after his glorious resurrection. Everything about Mohammed's story sounds a little *way out*. (!!!) Truth and error stand in sharp contrast.

The Mohammedan Concept of Heaven

The Christian is set somewhat aback by Mohammed's *Koran* on this matter of Heaven and Hell in the hereafter. Hell is no less a place of punishment like taught in the Christian Scriptures, but therewith is added such things as the drinking of stinking and boiling water, the eating of briars and thorns, etc. What really is radically different is the sensual paradise promised to the faithful Moslem. Here a great number of youthful and beautiful dark-eyed women have been *especially created* for the sensual pleasure of each man; they will continually attend unto him with no detraction or distraction. (When I read this I wondered where the faithful Moslem women of earth were supposed to fit into the picture of such a paradise; also, men like the apostle Paul who chose not to be married). And they will drink delicious liquors and wines and not become drunk (although Moslems are forbidden to drink such on earth).

Let us notice some direct quotations from the *Koran* to show that what I am saying is not misrepresentation.

The *Koran* chapter 55: "...This is hell, which the wicked deny as falsehood: they shall pass to and fro between the same and hot boiling water. Which, therefore, of the Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny? But for him who dreadeth the tribunal of his Lord are prepared two gardens: (Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny?) [EDITOR'S NOTE: This question is found between every statement throughout this section, so we will supply three dots, or ellipsis, rather than repeat it each time] planted with shady trees. (...) In each of them shall there be of every fruit two kinds. (...) They shall repose on couches, the finings whereof shall be of thick silk interwoven with gold: and the fruit of the two gardens shall be near at hand together. (...) Therein shall receive them beauteous damsels, refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their spouses: whom no man shall have de-

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EDITORIAL *Byways*

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flowered before them, neither any genius. (...) Having complexions like rubies and pearls. (...) Shall the reward of good works be any other good? (...) And besides these there shall be two other gardens: (...) Of a dark green (...) In each of them shall be two fountains pouring forth plenty of water. (...) In each of them shall be fruits, and palm trees, and pomegranates. (...) Therein shall be agreeable and beauteous damsels: (...) Having fine black eyes, and kept in pavilions from public view: (...) Whom no man shall have deflowered before their destined spouses, nor any genius. (...) Therein shall they delight themselves, lying on green cushions and beautiful carpets. (...) Blessed be the name of the Lord, possessed of glory and honor!"

The *Koran* chapter 56: "When the inevitable day of judgment shall suddenly come, no soul shall charge the prediction of its coming with falsehood: it will abase some, and exalt others. When the earth shall be shaken with a violent shock; and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad and ye shall be separated into three distinct classes: the companions on the right hand; (how happy shall the companions on the right hand be!) and the companions of the left hand: (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!) and those who have preceded other in the faith shall precede them to paradise. These are they who shall approach near unto God: they shall dwell in gardens of delight: (There shall be many of the former religions; and few of the last). Reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths which shall continue in their bloom forever, shall go around about to attend them, with goblets, and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed: and with fruits of the sorts which they shall desire. And there shall accompany them fair damsels having large black eyes; resembling pearls hidden in their shells: as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! Peace! And the companions of the right hand (how happy shall the companions of the right hand be!) shall have their abode among lote-trees free from thorns, and trees of mauz loaded regularly with their produce from top to bottom; under an extended shade, near a flowing water, and amidst fruits in abundance, which shall not fail, nor shall be forbidden to be gathered: and they shall repose themselves on

lofty beds. Verily we have created the damsels of paradise by a peculiar creation: and we have made them virgins, beloved by their husbands, of equal age with them; for the delight of the companions of the right hand. There shall be many of the former religions, and many of the latter. And the companions of the left hand (how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be!) shall dwell amidst burning winds, and scalding water, under the shade of a black smoke, neither cool nor agreeable... Then ye, O men, who have erred, and denied the resurrection as a falsehood, shall surely eat of the fruit of the tree of al Zakkum, and shall fill your bellies therewith: and ye shall drink thereon boiling water; and ye shall drink as a thirsty camel drinketh..."

SO MUCH for this little excursion on an intriguing, but alien, byway from my regular study pattern. It proved disturbingly interesting (and there are a lot of others things we could have related). How much better to get back on the main highway (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Matthew 24:11-13). We have no doubt about where it will take us.

I am so thankful (and that by God's grace) to be a Christian. Aren't you? □



EDITORIAL *Byways* (# 2)

"CHRONICLE OF THE POPES"

I HAVE belonged to the History Book Club off and on for years. I have appreciated getting the reviews of a wide range of books and occasionally buying one.

A current review of a book just got my attention—the book, *Chronicle of the Popes* by P.G. Maxwell-Stuart (former head of the History department and Classics faculty at Chester College, Cambridge). It is asserted that the book is "the Reign-to-Reign Record of the Papacy from St. Peter to the Present." On down in the review it states, "*Chronicle of the Popes* recounts the lives and deeds of the 266 popes. Here are the martyrs such as the very first pontiff, St. Peter..." etc.

We never cease to be amazed at the fallacies that undergird much of the accepted, even respected, thought in our modern world. One of these fallacies is the blind assertion that the apostle Peter was the first Pope and the acceptance of so-called apostolic succession (a false premise held by a major segment of so-called Christendom). And typically, but erroneously, the History Book Club and the former head of a college History department present Peter as

the first pope, although this is not history nor is it scholarly. The papacy and apostolic succession are not taught in the Scriptures, let alone the apostle Peter being the first pope.

Consider the following thought:

WAS PETER A POPE?

Since the entire structure of Catholicism rests upon the premise that Peter was a Pope, this claim will be considered in detail.

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern, because he was married. (See Matthew 8:14). In following Christ, Peter “left all” (Matthew 19:27), but he did not leave his wife (I Corinthians 9:5). Peter was an elder, as well as an apostle (I Peter 5:1). It is required that elders be married men with faithful children (Titus 1:6).

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern because he was poor. When asked for alms, he said, “Silver and gold have I none” (Acts 3:6). Peter was unable to pay a half-shekel tax until provided with the money by a miracle (Matthew 17:24-27). He did not dwell in palaces, surrounded by gold and jewels.

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern because he was humble. He would not allow anyone to call him “Father,” since this was condemned by Jesus (Matthew 23:8-11). The only title he ever claimed for himself was “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:1). Peter was never carried about on a throne for throngs to bow down before him. When Cornelius bowed before him, Peter said, “Stand up, I myself also am a man” (Acts 10:26). Foreseeing the arrogance and pride of false religious rulers who would be powerful, he exhorted elders not to lord it over the church (I Peter 5:3). He spoke of himself humbly as a “fellow-elder” (I Peter 5:1), and when he used the term “chief Shepherd” he was referring not to himself but to Christ (I Peter 5:4).

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern since he did not teach that he was the head of the church. Peter taught of only one “Chief Shepherd” (I Peter 5:4), and that was Christ. Peter taught that the “stone” and “rock” upon which the church was built was not a man but Christ (I Peter 2:6-8). This teaching agreed with the conversation that Jesus had with Peter (Matthew 16:15-19) where they were not talking about on which man to build the church, but the great question Jesus asked was, “Whom say ye that I am?” When Peter gave the correct answer, Jesus answered, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven with the power of binding and loosing. This power was shared by the other apostles

(Matthew 18:18; John 20:21-23). Since Peter did not consider himself the head of the church, he made no provision for anyone to succeed him. He said nothing about successors.

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern because the other apostles did not regard him as their superior. Paul said, “I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (II Corinthians 11:5). And it was Paul who publicly rebuked Peter for his erroneous conduct (Galatians 2:11-14). Peter was referred to as one of the pillars of the church (Galatians 2:9). Note, Peter was ONE of the pillars, not head of all the churches. The church had been “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). The church was built on the “apostles,” plural, not on one apostle. Although false teachers have attempted to build the church on Peter, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 3:11). Peter was one of the favorite three of the Lord—Peter, James, and John. He was impulsive and a natural leader. He was a beloved and faithful apostle. He was prominent but he was not pre-eminent.

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern because he was not in Rome. There is no Biblical evidence that he was ever in Rome. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians and saluted 27 persons (Romans 16:3-15) but did not mention Peter. In the last letter Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome, he said, “Only Luke is with me,” and “At my first defense, no one took my part, but all forsook me” (II Timothy 4:11,16). Where was Peter? He was not in Rome?

Peter did not fit the Papal pattern because Peter taught doctrines different from that of the Pope. Peter believed in baptizing only those who had been taught, and who believed and repented (Acts 2:38). There is no record of his baptizing anyone who was too young to understand what he was doing. Peter taught that disciples of Christ should wear the name “Christian” (I Peter 4:16). Peter did not believe in traditions, but taught that God’s Word contains “ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). Peter agreed with the doctrine that Jesus Christ is the only head of the church (Colossians 1:18; 2:10; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23), and that Christ nowhere authorized any man to be head of the church on earth since “ALL authority in heaven and on earth” had been given to Christ (Matthew 28:18).

SUMMARY: Peter did not fit the Papal pattern, because:

1. He was poor.

(Continued on Next Page)

EDITORIAL *Byways*

(Continued from Previous Page)

- 2. He was humble.
- 3. He did not consider himself infallible.
- 4. He did not teach that he was the head of the church.
- 5. The other apostles did not consider him their superior.
- 6. He was not in Rome.
- 7. He differed in doctrine from the Popes.

When it is proved that Peter was not a Pope, the whole structure of Catholicism falls, with the so-called "successors" of Peter. Catholicism has no true foundation. The doctrine of the supremacy of Peter, and that he had successors is contradictory to the Lord's teaching and plan.

DO WITNESSES HAVE SUCCESSORS?

Let us say a little more about apostolic succession and bring in the testimony of the apostle Peter himself. There are no apostles in the church today, nor can there be apostles in the sense of the apostle Peter. Although Judas was replaced as an apostle, the idea of succession doesn't enter the picture. The very purpose and work of an apostle would make it next to impossible for them to have successors today. Please notice. "In those days" after Jesus had ascended back to heaven Simon Peter stood up and addressed his fellow-disciples about the need of replacing Judas. Illustrating from the Psalms, he says, "Let another take his office." Then he gives the qualifications: "Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a *witness with us of his resurrection*" (Acts 1:15-22). Thus, apostles had to be witnesses and were Christ's official eyewitnesses of his resurrection from the dead. Their unique mission as eyewitnesses had been stressed before his crucifixion (John 15:26,27). Then again in Acts 1:8 Jesus said they would be witnesses. Throughout the early pages of the book of Acts this is continually mentioned. Notice Acts 2:32; 4:33; 5:29-32; 10:39-42; 13:31. The testimony of the apostle Peter is seen again in Acts 10:39-42, when he said, "We [the apostles] are witnesses..." These special witnesses are represented in this capacity again in Hebrews 2:3 and 4. It is very elementary to see that eyewitnesses can have no successors. When they die, they are gone. And there are no apostles, nor apostolic succession, in the church on earth today. These men have done their part in confirming the truth and getting the church started among men. Their writings, as

well as that of other inspired men, constitute part of the New Testament Scriptures to guide us today.

Many fallacies undergird many of the accepted concepts in our society today. However, let us not be naively taken in by such. To speak of the "Chronicle of the Popes" and include the apostle Peter is not history, nor is it scholarly. □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

- 1. Who are the first persons mentioned in the Bible as tearing their garments in dismay in reaction to something bad happening?
- 2. What occasioned Moses to make the brazen (bronze) serpent in the wilderness, and, finally, what happened to it in the time of the kings?
- 3. What was the occupation of Heman the grandson of Samuel?
- 4. What two cities in the Bible are called "the city of David"?
- 5. Besides in the Book of Psalms, where else in the Bible is the 105th Psalm found?
- 6. According to the Book of Proverbs, how can a young man make his dad glad?
- 7. Where in the Bible is the only place angelic beings are called "seraphim"?
- 8. Where in the O.T. Scriptures is the prophecy twice found about men beating "their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks"?
- 9. Daniel, the prophet who prophesied in Babylonian Captivity, was from what tribe of Israel?
- 10. Who said: "Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength"?
- 11. Who said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"?
- 12. There are records of how many people being raised from the dead by Christ in the gospel accounts, and who were they?
- 13. Who were the two men selected as possible replacements of Judas as an apostle?
- 14. Barnabas, who was outstanding in the early church, was from what country?
- 15. In what language did Christ speak to Saul (Paul) when he appeared to him in the brilliant light outside of Damascus?
- 16. After his conversion in Damascus, where did Paul (Saul) spend three years?
- 17. Where in the N.T. is the first record of followers of Christ being called "saints"?
- 18. Where are the last times the apostle Peter is mentioned in the book of Acts?
- 19. The apostle Paul was from which tribe of Israel?
- 20. According to the apostle John, what casts out fear?

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

"Love One Another" (John 13:34)

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:

■ "As always I enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is wonderful reading, literature true to the Bible..."

■ "Mr. Gibbons, it has been far too long since I sent you a little offering on the wonderful work you do. I really look forward to receiving it each time..."

■ "Enclosed is check for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is a wonderful blessing in our home and we are all happy when it is delivered to the church. May God continue to bless and make it possible for you to continue this good work."

GEORGIA:

■ "I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate the information contained within the periodical. I recently graduated from...and enjoyed reading it then...I wish to be put on your subscriber list..."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Please cancel."

■ "Please remove this name from mailing list."

■ "Since I received the first volume of this publication I have enjoyed reading the challenging articles. I am a New Testament Christian and member of an undenominational church..."

■ "I would like to have a copy of the book of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. If it's anything like the ones in your news pamphlet, I'm sure they will be enjoyed..."

■ "I have been enjoying your publication for a good while, but do not match my reading with help in a monetary way. Enclosed find check...to help out a bit. It bothers me to see some of the directions the churches

seem to be taking. I think perhaps more emotional directions than Scriptural. Thank you."

TENNESSEE:

■ "Quite by accident I received your publication. I have passed it on. However, I enjoyed it so much, I am enclosing...for the 1995-96 bound edition, and also a current subscription..."

VIRGINIA:

■ "Just a note to let you know I am online now and I visited your web page. It looks very good. God bless!" (e-mail)

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "It has been some time since I sent money to help with *THE SWORD AND STAFF* paper. I very much want to keep getting this magazine. May God bless you to keep doing this work."

OHIO:

■ "Thanks for the truth."

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

ILLINOIS:

■ "I visited your web site today and thought it was really nice. I printed out a couple of articles that I will use. Thanks for provoking thought..." (e-mail)

■ "Thank you for an inspirational paper. I'm glad you can get it out and spread it to other places like Spanish speakers. I know they rejoice that it is so..."

■ "I want you to know that I read *THE SWORD AND STAFF* from cover to cover. I thank God for you and your publication. I pray for your health and strength to keep up the good work you are doing. I am enclosing a check to help with mailing costs. I would also like to order the 1995-1996 bound volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I also want to order seven (7) copies of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. May God continue to bless you."

IOWA:

■ "I really do enjoy receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. There is so much there to help strengthen your faith in Christ and doing his work. So many things to be brought out in the Bible classes and Bible school. I feel guilty not sending more money to help with the publication...My prayers are with you and may the Lord bless and keep you close to him."

MINNESOTA:

■ "Thank you very much for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. We appreciate the good articles..."

■ "Thank you for your work in publishing *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I enjoy your articles for their Bible truth and for having depth. May God continue to use you to proclaim His truth to all who "have eyes to see and ears to hear."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

"Please send me a copy of the last two years of THE SWORD AND STAFF..."

"God bless you and your family!"

MISSOURI:

■ *"You have been faithful to keep THE SWORD AND STAFF coming my way, and I have enjoyed them very much. The truths you present are needed very much. Compromising won't get the job done. Thank you for your efforts..."*

■ *"Please send me THE SWORD AND STAFF bound volumes 1995-1996..."*

"It is one of the best publications among us today..."

"Please give me permission to use some of the articles in our local newspapers and over our radio program. They are the best..."

"Keep up the good work and may God bless you in spreading His Word. If you give me permission, I will spread the material in our area over radio and newspaper."

ARKANSAS:

■ *"I want to send you a small donation because I appreciate the work you are doing for the Lord. I have read THE SWORD AND STAFF myself for years and I have handed them out at church to our visitors and delivered them to our neighbors."*

"May God continue to bless you. We love you with the love of the Lord. Continue the good work. God is love..."

■ *"Enclosed is my check for the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF, dating from 1985-1986 through 1995-1996."*

"My daughter has loaned some of her volumes to me to study. I would like to say, thank you for the wonderful work that you are doing in publishing these articles on God's teaching and the thorough explanations of the Scriptures. It has helped me to understand several things better. Thank you. Please keep up the good work for our heavenly Father."

TEXAS:

■ *"I am enclosing eight new subscribers...love your deep articles and for preaching the Word"*

■ *"Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus. Over a year ago I moved and so I lost track of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I enjoyed your paper more than any paper I received...I would be glad to receive the paper again..."*

■ *"I received THE SWORD AND STAFF yesterday and as usual it was good from cover to cover. I especially liked the articles 'Principles Governing the Public Assembly of the Church,' 'The Son of David,' and the 'BARBS' are always good..."*

■ *"Enclosed please find check to try and help get out the next issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I appreciate the work you are doing with THE SWORD AND STAFF. Would like to see more issues of it, but all of us can do just so much. There never has been a time when the truth is so badly needed in my lifetime. The world just keeps getting more wicked each day. So few seem to think that the TRUTH is important any more. Sometimes I wonder if we should not have another good old time book burning, as in Acts 19:19. So much of the things written today is far from what God has said..."*

"I am sending a little 'Food for Thought.' You may use if you like:

We need very badly to try and find out what kind of fruit it was that Eve ate of, and gave to Adam and he ate of it, and immediately they realized they were naked. The world could use several TRAINLOADS of that fruit today.

"Please keep up the good work..."

OKLAHOMA:

■ *"I have been reading your publication for years now and wish to express my appreciation to you for your work in the kingdom. Keep up the good work." (e-mail)*

COLORADO:

■ *"I would like to order [bound volumes]...I am enjoying volumes 33 and 34"—Wonderful study material."*

CALIFORNIA:

■ *"Please remove us from your mailing list."*

OREGON:

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

CANADA:

■ (1) *"Hello from Canada...I am very pleased with your article on 'Unity, God's Kind and God's Way.' I am publishing a newsletter for local pastors to read. I believe that your article will bring much truth to them. Would it be all right to publish your article without any changes? I could send you a copy as we go to press, as well as place your name on the editorial..." (e-mail)*

■ (2) *"I saw the article on your web page. Out of interest where do you live, and how long have you been writing this type of material? I want to spend some time personally focusing on other papers you have written. I sense you are a man after God's own heart..." (e-mail)*

CHINA:

■ *"My suggestion is that I'm able to translate your THE SWORD AND STAFF and print it in the language of China. Here, I can distribute it to my school-mates and all people I know...Yes, I'm a Christian believer. God bless you." (e-mail)*

AUSTRALIA:

■ *"I saw your home page, looks great..." (e-mail)*

■ *"...Keep up the good work; it is worthwhile." □*

—————
Jesus died on the cross because of the difference between right and wrong.
—————

The Scriptures The Lord Expounded

● *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).*

TO THE ENLIGHTENED heart and mind this is an intriguing passage of Scripture. It is a wonderfully profitable exercise to imagine and consider the Scripture that Christ most likely employed and opened up to the two hearers on this occasion.

This, of course, is the account of the Lord Jesus speaking to the two on the road to Emmaus, to whom He had appeared after His resurrection. Luke records that Christ expounded to them *“in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”* This approach is characteristic of the Lord in His dealings with His disciples (cf. Matthew 11:2-5), particularly with those who are of little faith, as Cleopas and his partner at this time were. Christ could have simply said to these doubting ones, “Yes, I am the One” (cf. Luke 24:21), “doubt no more!” But no, the Savior instead expounded to them the Scriptures concerning Himself so that they could draw their own conclusions regarding His Person and validity, and most importantly, so that they would “be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27).

We will here employ some sanctified imagination as we consider some of the Scriptures that, in all likelihood, the Lord Jesus ministered to the two mentioned here. As we devote ourselves to the contemplation of these words from “Moses and all the prophets” which are pointing to the Savior, let us seek to have our faith strengthened anew regarding the Lord Jesus Christ: particularly about who He is, and the purpose for which He came into the world.

THE TESTIMONY OF MOSES

Christ, the Seed of the Woman. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15; cf. Romans 16:20). And to Cleopas and his partner, the Lord Jesus no doubt affirmed that He was and is that seed of the woman who bruised the serpent’s head. As a matter of fact, He was at this point newly risen from the dead, having “through death” destroyed “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

In Him All Nations Blessed. “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18; 26:4). “And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 28:14; cf. Galatians 3:16).

The seed referred to here was not the entire nation of Israel, as some might have thought, but rather the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised seed. As Paul clarified in the Galatian epistle, “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” And it is very likely that Christ made this same distinction to the two mentioned above.

Identified with the Tribe of Judah. “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall

bow down before thee” (Genesis 49:8). “The septre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (v. 10; cf. Hebrews 7:14).

Here is another Scripture that was no doubt “expounded” there on the Emmaus road. Paul also tells us, “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” The vital significance of Christ proceeding from the tribe of Judah (*and not of the tribe of Levi*) appears to be this. Christ is to us a great High Priest, but not after the order of Aaron! He is rather a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (cf. Psalms 110:4), and this distinction qualifies Him to be a Priest, not upon earth, but in Heaven. He thus now has an unchangeable priesthood; yea, He is a priest forever! And He does not offer to God, in our behalf, the blood of animal sacrifices, as did the Levitical priests, but rather He has entered into Heaven itself with His own blood!

The Prefigurement of the Brasen Serpent. “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Numbers 21:9; cf. John 3:14).

Here we see foretold the availability and accessibility of God’s salvation in Christ to whomsoever will. As it is written, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). Jesus affirmed this comparison to Nicodemus, and perhaps He did so again to the disheartened travelling pair.

Balaam’s Prophecy Concerning Him. Consider yet another prophecy of the Savior which may have been expounded on this occasion. “I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth” (Numbers 24:17).

Balaam was a mysterious character in Scripture being a man of great inconsistencies. But in the above instance he spoke the truth as we must learn to receive and acknowledge the truth even when it proceeds from an unlikely source.

The Prophet Like unto Moses. “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 18:15). “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him” (vv. 18-19; cf. Acts 3:22-23).

The Jews had a high and reverent esteem for Moses, the great lawgiver. But, alas, the professed church has a disgraceful and unworthy regard for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of their salvation. He is the One who has come to save us from the wrath to come! Cleopas and

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The Scriptures the Lord Expounded

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his friend, no doubt, had a good understanding of this matter after Christ had spoken to them here.

The present generation also would do well to consider and take to heart this aspect of the blessed Savior. He is still "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9), despite men's rebellious spirit and present disregard for authority. If men refuse to unreservedly submit themselves in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, there is then no way that they can possibly be saved! Let us submit ourselves to Him wholeheartedly!

THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS

Christ's Resurrection. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalms 16:9-10; Acts 2:27).

Christ's very appearance to the two on the Emmaus road was a confirmation and fulfillment of this word of the Psalmist. His soul was obviously not left in Hades, neither was God's Holy One permitted to see corruption.

The Crucifixion. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?" (Psalms 22:1; cf. Mark 15:34). The Lord Jesus most probably told the two travelers that it was He who was forsaken of God and also the reason for that forsakement. It was for their sakes and ours! It was so that we would not have to be rejected of God!

Christ's Ascension to God's Right Hand. The Twenty-fourth Psalm. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalms 24:7-10). Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ being received back into Heaven after His resurrection and ascension. The angelic hosts are here seen examining the credentials of the One they are admitting into Heaven. He is the Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory!

The Sixty-eighth Psalm. Here is yet another prophecy regarding Christ's ascension to Heaven. "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast lead captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them" (Psalms 68:18; cf. Ephesians 4:8-10). It was necessary that Christ ascend up on high, so that he might fulfill all things, or, in the words of the Psalmist, so that He might "dwell among" and in His people. For the Emmaus pair Christ's appearance and abiding would be momentary, but now that He is ascended to God's right hand, He is able to abide with us forever (cf. John 12:34; 14:16).

The Savior's Throne. The Forty-fifth Psalm. As Paul tells us in Hebrews chapter one, this word spoken by the Psalmist is actually the Father addressing the Son. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right septre. Thou lovest righteousness, and

hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Psalms 45:6-7; cf. Hebrews 1:8).

The One Hundred and Tenth Psalm. "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power...The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalms 110:1-4).

The One Hundred and Thirty-second Psalm. "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; Of the fruit of Thy body will I set upon Thy throne" (Psalms 132:11; cf. Acts 2:30).

And as Peter tells us in his sermon in Acts chapter 2, Christ is presently sitting upon this throne in the heavens. From there He is overseeing the salvation of men from the power of the enemy. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). This, of course, is contrary to much of the present-day "fundamental" theology which asserts that Christ's rule will be yet in the future from a throne in Jerusalem.

Cleopas and his friend, no doubt, after hearing the Savior expound the Scriptures, had a good understanding about this throne in the heavens to which He was about to ascend.

Other Scriptures Which Were Possibly Expounded. Time and space would fail us to include all of the things which the Savior very likely expounded to the two travelers, but we shall mention the following Scriptures in passing.

The Birth of the Savior Foretold. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14; cf. Matthew 1:23).

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Christ the Shepherd. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11).

"And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:23). This great Shepherd was seen here on the Emmaus road, gathering these two disheartened travelers, as it were, in His arms and feeding them with the good knowledge of the Lord.

The Sufferings of Christ. Isaiah has aptly been called the gospel Prophet because he often speaks so graphically about the sufferings of Christ. It is almost as if he person-

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Not Taking Undue Advantage

A PIONEER PREACHER was called upon to preach at the funeral of a man who had refused to come to church. As the pallbearers neared the door of the building, the old preacher stood in the doorway and beckoned to them, saying, "Gentlemen, I have never taken undue advantage of any living person, and I will not begin by imposing on the dead. If this man were living, he wouldn't enter this building. Put him down right there and let's respect him enough to finish his earthly pilgrimage as he lived it." The services were conducted from the door, while the remains rested on the lawn.—*Selected* □



BARBS... with a Point

WHEN we esteem and lift men just a little too high, we will eventually see their clay feet.

"Can't" never did anything, and "Won't" never will.

If ignorance is bliss, a lot of people must be having a gay old time as far as their knowledge of the Word of God is concerned.

We cannot pull together, or even walk together, unless we are going in the same direction.

A man of small stature physically is still small though he stand on the highest mountain, and men of little character are still little though they be found in the highest places of society.

We cannot drag our feet and walk as Jesus walked (I John 2:6).

When the attention of religious people is placed upon a religious movement instead of the religious truth that produced that movement, the movement has fizzled out.

If peacemakers are called "children of God" (Matthew 5:9), what would troublemakers be called?

If hearing God's Word preached in its fullness runs people off from church, they really didn't have far to go.

Have you ever noticed, an empty container makes more noise than a full one.

Some people proudly esteem themselves to be advanced Bible students when really they are only secondhand clones of sectarianism and have never actually approached the Bible independently on their own to understand it.

When people who do not practice self-control are in control of our country, things get out of control.

Criticism coming from those in error, considering the source, many times should be looked upon as a backhanded compliment.

Hope is the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:18,19), and those without it are adrift upon a troubled sea.

If today's church cannot accomplish what it is trying to do through the individual Christian and the local congregation (and must resort to other means), chances are that it has gotten out of the range and authority of its commission.

Freedom, if it is not in the context of purpose and responsibility, has no meaning and is harmful to all concerned.

The Word of God is the seed of the kingdom and does not produce tares of a denominational hybrid; consequently Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

We need to present the truth in a good solid affirmative way; reactionaryism produces reactionaryism

Contrary to what the word might seem to suggest, when people are "high-minded," their thoughts do not come from above but from below. □



Tree 400 Years Old Falls

SOMETIME AGO a huge tree in Colorado fell to the ground with a resounding crash after having stood majestically on a hill for over 400 years. A mere sapling when Columbus landed in San Salvador, over the centuries it had been struck by lightning 14 times, braved great windstorms, and even defied an earthquake. In the end, however, it was killed by some little beetles. Boring under the bark, they chewed away its mighty fibers until one day that lordly king of the forest came thundering down. So, too, apparently insignificant sins often make substantial inroads into our spiritual lives, and if left unchecked may cause our downfall. The idle word spoken, the prayer time omitted, and the occasional fleshly pleasure indulged—these things "spoil" the vineyard much more than we realize. If Satan gets an entering wedge on inconsistency, the leverage he then exerts is greatly increased.—*Selected* □



Since We Have to Work

SINCE we have to work, it is better to do the job well and be rewarded for doing it, than to do shoddy work, then be penalized for it. Let your work be a praiseworthy reflection of you and not a reflection upon you.—*J.E.G.* □



The Scriptures the Lord Expounded

(Continued from Previous Page)

ally was a witness to those sufferings. Let us consider again the words of this one who prophesied some 800 years prior to the enfleshment of Christ. "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed""(Isaiah 50:6-7).

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:3-6; see also all of chapter 53). This was God's suffering Servant, mentioned again and again by this Prophet, who was there standing in the midst of the two weary travelers. He had laid down His life for them as well.

The Lord our Righteousness. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

The Accomplished Redemption Foretold. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Daniel 9:24).

We live in a day when sin has been made an end of and when reconciliation has been made for iniquity and transgressions. Let us ever give thanks to God for the great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins. Reconciliation was made for men when we were yet enemies in our mind by wicked works (Colossians 1:21)! Cleopas and his friend, no doubt, were made to rejoice because of the exceeding glad tidings!

The Eternality of Christ. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). We praise and thank God that we have a Savior and High Priest who has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life" and who "abideth a Priest continually" (Hebrews 7:3).

The Messenger of the Covenant. "Behold, I will send My messenger [that is, John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant [that is, the Lord Jesus Christ], whom ye



Confused About Which Way to Go?

GO BACK TO THE BIBLE AND THE LOCAL, UNDENOMINATIONAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, AND YOU WILL BE RIGHT ON COURSE.

delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1).

In Conclusion. These, no doubt, are some of the Scriptures employed by the Savior as He spoke to the two on the road to Emmaus. To reiterate, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He *expounded unto them* in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Let us learn from this example of the Savior to not give over-much regard to personal experience (either our own or that of others) or to that which professes to be of a miraculous nature, but rather let us hang all of our hopes upon the very words of the Scripture, and let us seek to have a good understanding of them!

As we earnestly devote ourselves to these matters, our hearts also shall "burn within us" (cf. Luke 24:32), as was the case with Cleopas and his partner. We shall be given to rejoice in the great salvation which God is preparing "before the face of all people" (Luke 2:31-32).

—Albert G. Stoner



I Will Do More Than...

I WILL do more than belong—I *will participate.*

I will do more than help—I *will care.*

I will do more than believe—I *will practice.*

I will do more than be fair—I *will be kind.*

I will do more than forgive—I *will forget.*

I will do more than dream—I *will work.*

I will do more than teach—I *will inspire.*

I will do more than earn—I *will enrich.*

I will do more than give—I *will serve.*

I will do more than live—I *will grow.*

I will do more than be friendly—I *will be a friend.*

—Selected



Spiritual Food for Thought

~By J. Andrew Gibbons~

DIRECT DIALING COST-FREE



IN A DAY and age of cellular phones and super saver long distance carriers, it is still good to know there is a direct dialing that is cost free: Prayer.

Prayer is a privilege! It is not just for times of emergencies or a "National Day of Prayer." Prayer is for every day. It is the glue that holds one's life together. It is what keeps families together and marriages from falling apart.

You have heard it said, "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." Yes, prayer can be and is more than a Band-Aid for the scrapes of life, but I would rather think of prayer as being the shock absorber of life. Yet words alone are not profit. Belief that God hears and answers according to His will is needed.

Jean Ingelow once said, "I have lived to thank God that all my prayers were not answered for God knows what is best for our lives." So if we don't get things our way, remember, God our heavenly Father still knows what is best. May our prayers reflect a true belief, a faith that will lead us to obedience to God's Word in our daily lives. May we not be foxhole or deathbed prayer warriors, making our requests known only in times of desperate need. Think of it this way. If a child would only talk to his parents just when he wanted or needed something, what kind of a child would you think him to be? Now transfer that thought to you and your heavenly Father.

Luke 18:1, "Men ought to always pray and not lose heart." □

"Be Thou Faithful Unto Death" (Revelation 2:10)

IN REVELATION 2:10, the Lord promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Although we are to be faithful *until* death, this passage emphasizes that we are to be faithful, even though it might cost us our physical life.

An outstanding example of being faithful unto death was in the life, and death, of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. According to reliable history, he was burned at the stake in 155 A.D. He had been asked to say, "Caesar is Lord," but he refused. When Polycarp was brought to the stadium, the proconsul urged him, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty; reproach Christ."

Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" When the proconsul again pressed him, the old man answered: "Since thou are vainly urgent that I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian."

Then the proconsul said, "I have wild beasts at hand, to these will I cast thee, except thou repent." Again, "I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent."

Polycarp replied, "Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, after a little is extinguished; but are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly."

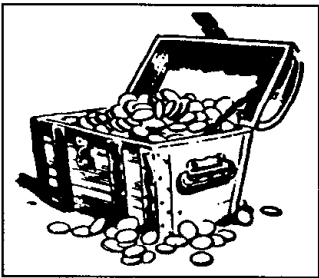
Shortly thereafter, he was burned at the stake. In Matthew 10:28 the Lord said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." Thus we see that physical death is not to deter us from faithful service and devotion to Him.—*Via Gospel Truths*

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 37:29-36; 2. Numbers 21:4-9; II Kings 18:1-4; 3. I Chronicles 6:31-33; 4. Bethlehem, Luke 2:4; Jerusalem, II Samuel 5:7 (I Kings 2:10); 5. I Chronicles 16; 6. Proverbs 15:20; 7. Isaiah 6; 8. Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3; 9. Daniel 1:6; 10. Nehemiah 8:9-12; 11. John 1:29; 12. Three—Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11; 13. Acts 1:23; 14. Acts 4:36; 15. Acts 26:14; 16. Galatians 1:17, 18; 17. Acts 9:13; 18. Acts 12:17, 18; 15:7; 19. Philippians 3:4-7; 20. I John 4:18. □

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Have You Learned to Live?

If always you are eager to receive,
But know not what it is to give,
Regardless what you say that you believe,
You still have yet to learn to live.

—By James E. Gibbons

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—Selected ☐

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