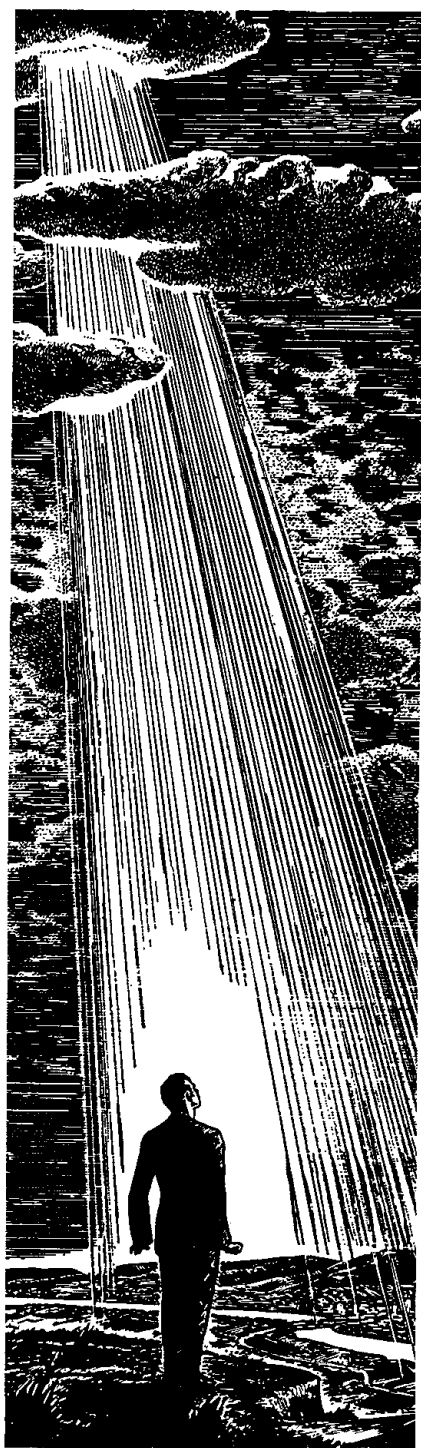


The Sword AND Staff

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



Perfecting and Exercising Faith—No. 7

The Life of Faith

By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 W. Fairfield Drive
Mount Airy, NC 27030 USA

THE CHRISTIAN life is one of faith. This is true from beginning to end. The apostle Paul, having stated his readiness to preach the gospel at Rome, plainly declares, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel [good news] of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [Gentile]. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from *faith to faith*: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*" (Romans 1:15-17). He had earlier written in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and *the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith* of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Yes, Paul had been crucified with Christ when he turned to him. Then having died to sin in his body, he said, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should *walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). And in 2 Corinthians 5:7 he states, "For we *walk by faith*, not by sight." Yes, "*The just shall live by faith*" (Habbakuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38), and this is true any way that we look at it (whether in becoming a Christian or in all phases of living the Christian life). The Christian life is a life of faith, and until we have learned to trust the Lord in every way we have not entered into the fullness of our religion, which is called "*the faith*" (Jude 3).

In this article we wish to consider "The Life of Faith" from three perspectives: (1) The Sin Problem, (2) Material Things, and (3) The Experiences in Living. In doing this we hope that it will help us to better understand and perfect our faith.

I. THE SIN PROBLEM

The Problem in Having Life And Having Life More Abundantly

Jesus avowed that he came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Theretofore the biggest problem in living was death and the prospects of death. It was the ominous dark cloud that overshadowed everyday life at all times. And with death

(Continued on Page 4)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA

E-Mail Address:
jamesgibbons@earthlink.net

Web Site Address:
<http://jgibbons.8m.com>

■ **INFORMATION:** We are totally dependent upon your financial backing in the publication of this religious paper. To get on the mailing list, send a contribution. Subsidizing gifts are definitely needed along for us to continue this unselfish labor of love for God and truth. You may use the date affixed beside your address as a reminder to send an offering (perhaps annually). No notices are sent. Make out your checks to CHURCH IN MOUNT AIRY. The extent (and frequency) of publication is determined by incoming support. James E. Gibbons is editor. (Money received for printed material is all considered as an offering). We do not assume responsibility for material from other sources and writers beyond that which appears in this paper. This publication is available in English and Spanish. Please indicate preference. □

—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

***TO GET** the most out of life, stay alive as long as you live.*

Rivers without banks to control their flow are unguided and don't know which way to go.

If you really want to be a Christian, then be a real Christian.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the purity and perfection of Christian morality speaks for itself.

The best way to get rid of your enemy is to make him your friend.

You may be handicapped, an invalid, or even bedridden, but if you are a Christian, you can walk with God every day.

Grace is not a license to sin (Romans 6:1,2; Romans 3:5-8; Titus 2:11,12).

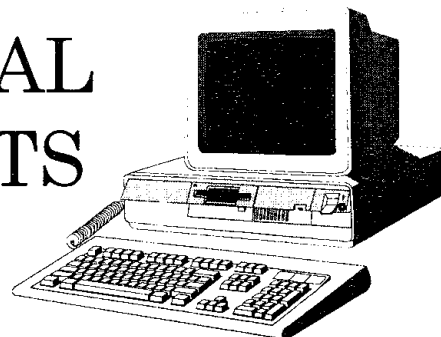
Christians look forward with an endless hope whereas sinners can only look forward to a hopeless end.

God made us with two ears and one mouth—what should that tell us?

Let us identify ourselves religiously in relation to the Bible, not in reference to a religious movement.

It is hard to walk with the Lord when we are out of step. □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



JESUS SAID, "YE ARE OF YOUR FATHER, THE DEVIL"

IN HIS EXCHANGE of words with some unbelieving and hostile Jews in Jerusalem, Jesus said, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth" (John 8:40). They had asserted that Abraham was their father and that God was their father. In response, the Lord went on to say, "*Ye are of your father, the devil*, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Children look like, and many times act like, their father. Jesus said this spiritually was true in reference to these particular Jews, and the devil, who confronted him. Two things stand out about the devil here. He is called a murderer, and he is called a liar. Actually by lying and deception he murdered all of humanity through Adam and Eve. God is the source of all life, and He is immortal, indestructible. In his rebellion against heaven, the devil knows that he cannot prevail against the Almighty God. So he "picks" on a lower form of creation that is made in the image of God, man. He blatantly lied to Eve, saying, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4), fully knowing the outcome. Murder was his intent. Thus, the Jews seeking to kill Jesus were like the devil.

Throughout history the devil has used the same tactics. Truly he is "Apollyon." Right from the beginning we are told about "Cain, who was *of that wicked one*, and slew his brother" (1 John 3:12; Genesis 4). Those who accomplish the devil's agenda are said to be of their "father, the devil." The devil is not content to have brought about death generally, he wants to continually expedite its occurrence. By the time of Noah the earth was filled with violence (Genesis 6:11). Wars and rumors of wars are the history of mankind. The 20th and 21st centuries have come up with some of the most massive ways of taking human life. The devil increasingly inspires criminal violence in our society. Abortion may be called "pro choice" and may supposedly have been made legitimate by the government, but that in no way changes who is behind such a barbaric practice (who really is the father of it all). Assisted suicide of older people, euthanasia, is more and more looked upon as a possible and an acceptable option, but we know who the father of this is.

The devil has taken his assault upon human life a step further. Could anything be more suitable for his purposes than to get right into the center of the process whereby life comes into being? He can really kick up his heels here. Immorality, sex outside of marriage, really is making a mockery of how life comes into being. If we don't respect our sexuality, we will not respect what it produces, other human beings. Homosexual practices, totally against nature and God's plan of procreation, are taunted as optional "lifestyles" (but in many cases are no more than "death styles" in the transmission of fatal diseases, as well as bringing spiritual death). Efforts at trying to clone life really is flagrant arrogance in the face of God, and the cutting off of developing human life in experimentation with embryos, no doubt, really please the devil.

Along with this in these modern times, the devil has extended his assault even more extensively in the breakup of homes and the family unit. Making homosexuality acceptable comes at the expense of destroying the family as God set it up. Strong families make strong nations, and the nations that no longer value the family endanger their very existence. Divorce enters into the destruction of our present day society (broken homes and broken lives). Along with this, as already named, are loose sexual morals. It seems that much of television is simply anti-family in its stance. We could go on. We mention these things, to stir our minds, lest the devil by his lies deceive us.

Aside from human weakness, much of this is no accident. Many have hidden agendas. But behind it all, regardless of the many faces that may masquerade before us, is that diabolical, supernatural spirit, the devil. Jesus said that he was a murderer from the beginning and he accused the Jews who desired to kill him of being of "your father, the devil." The devil has a decided agenda (and many fall in line to advance his cause). □

— ■ —

EXPLANATION OF "EASTER" IN THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION

IN THE 12TH CHAPTER of Acts we are told about Herod having the apostle James killed with the sword (the first apostle to be put to death). Seeing that it pleased the Jews, he apprehended the apostle Peter also. We are told that "then were the days of unleavened bread" (verse 3), and that Herod was "intending after *Easter* to bring him [Peter] forth to the people [the Jews]" (verse 4).

The Greek word behind this word translated "Easter" is *pascha*. The King James translation stands alone in rendering it as "Easter." All other

translations represent this word with "Passover," and the context here in Acts 12 easily shows that it has reference to "the days of unleavened bread" (the Passover). Passover is what *pascha* means, but the King James scholars translated the word as "Easter." Were they wrong in doing this? The answer is *yes*, and the answer is *no*. What is the story behind this?

The early church did not observe Easter. The Lord came forth from the grave on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1-3; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-9; John 20:1), and instead of continuing to keep the Sabbath (Colossians 2:14-16; Galatians 4:9-11), the early church met on the first day of the week (evidently tied in with memory of the resurrection of Christ). (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). But as time went by and changes began to take place, an annual celebration of the resurrection came into being in addition to meeting on the first day of the week (which we still do). The name "Easter" (originally a pagan festival in honor of the goddess of spring) was not used at first to refer to this day. In the Greek speaking world the name that was applied to this day was *pascha*, the word for Passover, but having reference now to the day set aside to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. We can easily see how *pascha* could be switched over to this day by non-Jewish people, as the time frame is the same when it originally took place. And still today in modern Greece their word for "Easter" is *pascha*, which really is "Passover."

As a matter of further interest, the Greek word in use today for Friday is *paraskeue*. In Mark 15:42 we read about "the *preparation*, that is, the day before the sabbath." Friday was the day of preparation, as the Jews were involved in getting ready for the Sabbath. *Paraskeue* is the word translated "preparation." This word was also carried over into the Greek speaking world, and it is their word for Friday.

So, were the King James scholars wrong in translating *pascha* as "Easter"? It seems they imposed a later meaning of the word *pascha* that was used in the Greek world. But for the Bible times in which the book of Acts was written, "Passover" best represents what is meant here. □

In Jesus Christ We Find

In Jesus Christ the Lord we find
Salvation, joy, and peace of mind;
All that was lost because of sin
Is ours once more when born again.

—By James E. Gibbons

“Prophetic Mysteries of The Old Testament Revealed”

MOST BELIEVERS realize we are under the New Testament, not the Old. But prophecy teachers often ignore implications of this truth. They adopt “literal” interpretations of Old Testament prophecies, even when the New Testament gives spiritual interpretations.

To Jews expecting a material Jewish kingdom, Jesus explained the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 13:11). The kingdom would be very different from what they imagined. Surely, Jesus’ explanations supersede Jewish beliefs gained from their superficial reading of certain Old Testament prophecies.

Paul told of “the mystery... in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body [with the Jews]... by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:4-6). The idea is in the Old Testament prophecies of a gospel with salvation from sin involving Jew and Gentile, but it is not so clear that a patriotic Jewish mind would catch it. The Old Testament prophecies were often mysteries awaiting further revelation.

Peter spoke of “which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently... what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify... unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things” (1 Peter 1:10-12). God did not answer many questions the prophets of old had. Rather, it was left for Jesus, His apostles and the New Testament prophets to reveal what it was all about.

We dare not build prophetic doctrine on the Old Testament text without taking into account the New Testament interpretation. We dare not build our faith on a “literal” interpretation of mysteries when the Holy Spirit has now made those mysteries known.—*David Vaughn Elliott* □

The Life of Faith

(Continued from Page 1)

was the greatest problem of all, sin that brought on death. The sin and death problems are universal (Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 Kings 2:1,2), connected and cannot be separated. Along with the guilt of sin and death is impending judgment, man being held accountable for his sins (Hebrews 9:27). It is no wonder that the writer of the book of Hebrews says that Jesus came to “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15). Having life, and having life more

abundantly, was next to impossible in the state in which Jesus found man. Now through him the sin problem has been dealt with, our consciences can be purged from dead works (Hebrews 9:14), and we can serve God in newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4). Faith, and the life of faith, is the key to all of this.



The Definitive Book of Christianity

The book of Romans is a most profound and interesting book. It is very definitive in understanding and explaining Christianity. Its theme is justification (from our sins) by faith. In the first two chapters, and much of the third, Paul establishes the fact that the sin problem is universal. Chapter 3:23 sums it up, as Gentile and Jew alike are said to have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Mankind had not attained the righteousness of God. Then continuing on through chapter 5, we learn that we can attain the righteousness of God through faith. Nailing it down, the apostle states, “Therefore [read the last several verses of chapter 4] being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1,2). Chapters 6 through 8 show us that grace is no license to sin, but the righteousness of God is to be lived out in our lives practically, not just accepted in forgiveness. It is not to be accomplished by a legal system *per se*, but in the context of grace.

Going Around in Circles

More than once Paul seems to be going around in circles then goes at length to explain what he has said lest he be misunderstood. He quite plainly says that we are disengaged from the law, being now justified by faith, but then turns right around and

asserts that we must keep the law. Notice. In chapter 3:28 he states, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Then, apparently afraid that he would be misunderstood, Paul asks a question and then answers it, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (3:31). In the last part of chapter 5 he further tells us that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20,21). Is he saying that grace, unmerited favor, is a pretext to the practice of sin? That God simply turns His head and looks the other way? Again, lest he be misunderstood, he prods our thoughts with some more questions, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (6:1) His emphatic reply: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (6:2) No, never!

**Struggles with the Law
And the Exceeding Sinfulness of Sin**

But, this simply takes us back to our original problem, like we before stated. Sin is the transgression of the law. No one has ever perfectly kept the law, and just one infraction of it seals the sinner's fate. Therefore Paul now deals with the problems and struggles involved in law keeping at length in chapter 7, which would be good to read, before bringing out more fully the New Testament way of obedience. The law cannot remove sin; it only highlights its reality and awfulness (and man's inability to keep the law). It brought out (and still does) the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Romans 7:13) and thereby was (is) a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24), showing man's inability to be saved by law. Trying to impose law upon a person, aside from Jesus Christ, is like trying to restrain a wild beast. It may agitate the animal and make him even more vicious. And even like a wild beast that has supposedly been caged, the restraining influence of the law on the unconverted is about like this wild beast in a cage that frequently breaks lose from his confinement. Paul says in another place that "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56).

Great and Wonderful Truths!

To make his point Paul ends the 7th chapter of Romans with a desperate outcry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He now makes way for the answer that he has been building up to, when he says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The first several verses of chapter 8 supply the details of this answer. These truths are indeed great! They are so great that we lay them out in print before you:

"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. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:1-15).

The first verse of this section really sums up all that follows. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Parallel with this in meaning is Galatians 5:16, which reads, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (and the rest of this chapter in Galatians is parallel with Romans 8). And 1 John 1:7 likewise reflects these truths, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Then retracing our steps again to Romans 7:6, Paul earlier asserted, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in *newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*" All of these verses nicely summarize the truth.



Understanding These Great Truths

What does all of this mean? Two things stand out here. (1) There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (2) They walk after the Spirit and

(Continued on Next Page)

The Life of Faith

(Continued from Page 5)

not after the flesh. The law that only condemned us has been taken away. It was nailed to the cross with all of our offenses (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15-18). We are now dead to the law and live unto Christ. Through faith we have entered into the grace of God wherein we stand (Romans 5:1,2; Galatians 3:26,27). As new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17), we are now cushioned by grace as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. The law that in essence demanded perfection no longer is a barrier in our approaching God, since we are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14,15). Hebrews 4:16 reads, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We are without law, but "not without law to God," being "under the law to Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21). It is no wonder that Hebrews 7:25 goes on to say, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And coupled with the cushion of grace, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit received when we repented and were baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Needless to say, there must be a spiritual change, a spiritual birth, before we can even think about walking in the Spirit (John 3:3-8). As we trust the Lord and continue to grow, we are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16-20). Being filled and led by the Spirit, we pursue that which is positive and soul enriching (Galatians 5:18-25). The law of Christ is love (Galatians 5:14; 6:2; 1 John 4:21; Romans 13:8). The works of the flesh run counter to everything that a Christian stands for, and go decidedly in another direction. The law in its basic rudimentary form and function, however, serves a much needed purpose in helping restrain unruly people given over to the flesh (1 Timothy 1:8-10), although this does not produce salvation.

"Where Is Boasting Then?"

So there is no room for self-righteousness, pride and arrogance in becoming a Christian or in living the Christian life. Paul asked, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Romans 3:27). Going back to one's initial conversion, it is no wonder that Paul asserts in Titus 3:5-7, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made

heirs according to the hope of eternal life." These words simply echo what Paul had written at another time in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." The Lord Jesus told a parable involving a Pharisee and a publican in Luke 18:9-14. It was addressed to certain ones who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." Read this parable. We need the humility of the apostle Paul who said that he was chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15,16), "less than the least of all saints" (Ephesians 3:8), and the "least of the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:9). He further tells us in Philippians 3:9 that his desire was to "be found in him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." He did not write these words in an effort to excuse himself or others, for he ever pressed onward and upward, but they were expressions of genuine humility.



Going on Our Way Rejoicing

Yes, by believing in Jesus Christ and personally accepting him as our Savior, we entered into a life of trust. We had to really believe that we were lost before we could be saved. There was no way that we could save ourselves as we have seen. Christ, the incarnation of God, lived a sinless life to become our Savior and to qualify to be our faithful high priest (Hebrews 2:14-18; 7:25). This sinless Christ personally died for us, paying the awful price of sin in death (Romans 5:5-10; 6:23). God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30). When we repented and were baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), we trusted God to wash away our sins by the precious blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5), for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" of sins (Hebrews 9:14,22). We accepted the blessed promises of God foretold long ago by the prophet Jeremiah, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12; Jeremiah 31:31-34). And like the Ethiopian baptized by Philip, we came "up out of the water" to go on our

way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39). With the problem of sin and death taken care of, we now enter into the present life better prepared to live it to its fullest. Our fixation is not upon law, which does not empower its adherents to do what it says, but only condemns them. But with our eyes now fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ victorious living is assured (Philippians 4:13; 1 John 5:4; Heb. 12:1,2). Yes, the life of trust and godliness has "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

**"I'll live for Him who died for me,
How happy then my life shall be!
I'll live for Him who died for me,
My Savior and my God!"**

□

—(Continued Next Issue)—



A Blatant Case of Botching Grace

● By James E. Gibbons

THE APOSTLE PAUL wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:1 and 2, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation.)" The verse right before (5:21) highlights this grace with the words, "For he [God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here, in his appeal to the Corinthian Christians, he meshes some Old Testament Scriptures together to get his point across. Since the fall of man, the New Testament age is the most acceptable and desirable of times in which to be alive. The Savior has come, and mercy and grace have been extended to sinful mankind. Grace is unmerited favor. By it we are forgiven, we are no longer under condemnation, and by it we enter into a relationship with God whereby we are cushioned as we grow stronger to get the victory over sin. In such a setting there is no reason why anyone should not make a go of it in the Christian life. Everything is in our favor. But in spite of all of this, the church at Corinth was in a mess. Many of the Corinthians were, in essence, botching the grace of God. They were not letting it accomplish what it was intended to accomplish in their lives. They were in danger of receiving the "grace of God in vain" (although some say today that a person cannot "fall from grace"). Grace is no license to sin (Romans 6:1,2); but should be a driving impetus to do that which is right (Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:8-10).

The epistle of 1st Corinthians was written to address many of these problems in the church at Corinth, and 2nd Corinthians is a follow-up letter to this. Some of these problems were glaring irregularities of overt sin in the church, which, if persisted in, would result in the loss of their salvation. Let us notice some of the more flagrant ones, and what is said in reference to the practice of such.

Sectarianism

Finding little for which to compliment the Corinthians in his salutation, save the grace of God that they had received, Paul hits head-on a very conspicuous wrong that was in their midst, religious division and partyism. Different sectarian groups were rallying around human names, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas..." (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). Paul fires several questions at them: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" In chapter 3:4 he says, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" He goes on in this chapter to speak of preachers as builders on the foundation of Christ, not men to be looked upon with fleshly sectarian pride. Then developing this thought further, we are told that the material (converts) the preachers had built on the foundation would be tried by fire to see what kind it was ("gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, stubble"). If it turned out that some did not pass the test, the preacher's works (errant professing Christians) would be burned, but the preacher (builder) would be saved in spite of this. Paul goes on to say, "If any man defile the temple [the church] of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye [plural, speaking collectively] are" (3:17). This section ends with the warning, "Therefore, let no man glory in men..." (3:21; Notice Isaiah 42:8; 48:11). All of this was written in context of dealing with their division and sectarianism. To continue in such a course would be infringement upon the grace of God. God would not "put up" with it. (So, what does God think about the denominational spirit and denominationalism today?)

Immorality

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you" (1 Corinthians 5). In the ancient world, Corinth was notorious for its sexual immorality. There was a saying that not every young man should go to Corinth. Here was the temple of Aphrodite, overlooking the city from the Acrocorinth, and served by 1,000 temple prostitutes. Highlighting sexual immorality in chapter 6:9, Paul wrote, "Know ye not that the

(Continued on Next Page)

A Blatant Case of Botching Grace

(Continued from Previous Page)

unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [submitting homosexual], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [asserting homosexuals]..." Then he continues, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (6:11). Paul speaks of such sins being in the past tense in their lives, since they now were Christians. But the devil doesn't give up that easily, and the flesh is weak if one has been given over to such sins. The report was not good coming from Corinth. Simple immorality was there, but it was even exceeded by incest "that one should have his father's wife" (thought to be his stepmother), 5:1. Evidently they were coming to church in this unholy union. But the church was "puffed up," too preoccupied with their fleshly sectarian rivalry to hardly notice this. Paul instructs them to disfellowship these people, in an effort to bring them to repentance, so "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (5:5). Left like they were, they would be eternally lost. Grace does not overlook such practices. (And with the loose morality [immorality] rampant in our society today the church needs to put its foot down, rather than simply going along with the world to pad its pews with unrepentant bodies).

Other Problems

The church had other problems that were not quite as pronounced as these that we have just noticed, but they were nonetheless pointing in the wrong direction. There was the matter of Christians taking fellow Christians before the courts of the land instead of simply settling problems among themselves (6:1-8). There were questions involving marriage dealt with in the 7th chapter. In the 8th chapter questions involving eating meats that had been offered to idols are answered. Various warnings are stated and restated in chapter 10. The abuse of the Lord's supper is dealt with in chapter 11. Some had abused the Lord's table to the point that they may have been eating and drinking damnation to their souls (11:29-32). Chapters 12 through 14 deal with misunderstandings and abuse of spiritual gifts. Other things could be pointed out, but this should suffice to make us realize the grace of God is to be taken seriously. It is not a cheap grace to be taken lightly. Sin is still sin.

A Call to Repentance

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was a call to repentance. God has no delight in a person being lost, and it is His desire that we get our lives back

on track. Hebrews 4:16 admonishes, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." John informs us that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Then tells us how this comes about, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7,9). Like the Lord warned a church in Revelation 2:5,

(Continued on Page 11)

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. How old was Moses and how old was Aaron when they stood before Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go"?
2. Why didn't God allow Moses to enter the Promised Land?
3. Aaron's rod that budded was of what kind of wood?
4. Where was Balaam, the false prophet that Balak king of Moab hired to curse Israel, originally from?
5. In the initial conquest of the land of Canaan by the children of Israel, how many "kings" were killed east of the Jordan and how many on the west side of the Jordan?
6. What three categories of things were prohibited in the life of a person who took the Nazarite vow?
7. What was the priestly benediction by which Aaron and his sons were to bless the children of Israel?
8. Oshea was the original name of what outstanding person in the Old Testament?
9. How did King Solomon show respect to his mother Bathsheba when she approached his throne?
10. The vision and call of the prophet Isaiah took place in the year of the death of what king?
11. What two books of the New Testament were written to a man name Theophilus?
12. What are the three occasions the man Nicodemus is mentioned in the Scriptures?
13. Who in the New Testament called the scribes and Pharisees a "generation of vipers"?
14. What was the relative value of the "penny" (KJV), Greek *denarius*, mentioned in the New Testament?
15. Where was Christ when he preached the sermon on the bread of life?
16. What was the name of the servant of the high priest whose ear Peter cut off with a sword (and which ear was it)?
17. Where did Jesus tell his disciples he would meet them after he was resurrected from the dead?
18. After the resurrection of Christ when Peter and some other disciples went fishing, and had fished all night catching nothing, how many fish did they catch after Jesus told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat?
19. In what two New Testament epistles are Christians exhorted to teach and admonish one another in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"?
20. To whom was the epistle of 2nd 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. ☐

SOUTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Your SWORD AND STAFF has truly blessed me. Please accept this money to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ our God and Savior. May God bless your ministry."*

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"I love to study from your SWORD AND STAFF. It helps me so much. Keep up the good work."*

■ *"I sure hope you...can continue to send out THE SWORD AND STAFF. I look forward to receiving mine and I read it from cover to cover. I agree with you in your teaching 100%..."*

VIRGINIA:

■ *"It is good to see a publication that speaks the truth and does not sugarcoat it. I pray you can continue on for many years."*

■ *"I want to thank you for the literature you sent. It is comforting to know some ministers are not afraid to preach the whole truth! God bless you and yours."*

TENNESSEE:

■ *"I work for the USPS and noticed your newsletter on occasion. I would very much like to subscribe to such for it does seem very informative..."*

KENTUCKY:

■ *"Enclosed is my check. It isn't much compared to how much I enjoy your paper...You are a servant who has remained faithful. I find it so difficult to find a faithful church."*

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please remove our name from your mailing list."*

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ *"Keep up the good work!"*

■ *"Thank you. We enjoy the depth of study in THE SWORD AND STAFF."*

■ *"Thank you for spreading God's love these many years...May God bless you always."*

■ *"Keep up the effort in telling the truth as it was recorded. Those who have cancelled their subscription just don't understand truth..."*

■ *"Please send me two copies of POEMS OF THE SOUL, balance as donation. May God continue blessing your dedicated good works."*

■ *"...I had just finished reading, entirely through, THE SWORD AND STAFF with 'The Moving Impetus of Faith and Grounds of Our Assurance' in it...This material should be in booklet form. Let us purchase booklets and pass them around. We need something like this material to get people back to the Bible, reading and studying it, accepting it as our only way for life. Please consider doing this. I cannot bear to part with my SWORD AND STAFF copies because I refer and refer to them, read and re-read them."*

"Yes, I read the announcement about brother Elliott's material that will soon be in a book. Let us know when it is available."

"...You surely are God's messenger for God's work. God has really blessed you with what's needed to tell us the Word plainly and clearly. I pray and pray God keeps you here with us for years and years doing what you are doing, writing THE SWORD AND STAFF."

CONNECTICUT:

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

MICHIGAN:

■ *"Hello, I thank and praise the Lord Jesus Christ and God Almighty for His guiding your mind and heart in speaking His Word and living out his Word with the Holy Spirit, for it surely is not the ways of the world you speak. I pray that you will always continue to...May the peace and love of Christ Jesus always be with you."*

■ *"Thank you for your love of, and faithfulness to, God's truth. Thank you for the solid nourishment I receive from your journal. It is a great help, and I have been blessed and encouraged greatly by it. May you be blessed with joy and peace from our Father, and may He continue to grant you wisdom, insight, discernment and love for the living and written Word."*

OHIO:

■ *"Please remove us from your mailing list. Thank you." (E-mail)*

■ *"Thank you for sending THE SWORD AND STAFF. I enjoy reading it..."*

■ *"Enclosed is a little 'oil' to keep the truth presses rolling. We appreciate your faithfulness."*

■ *"Keep up the faithful work. Sometimes in this area...I feel like Elijah. Everyone, it seems, is compromising God's Word and bringing the world into the worship. Rock musical bands have crowded the Lord's table to*

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

the side or in another room. Thank God for those that are still preaching and teaching the truth that makes us free."

INDIANA:

■ "Thank you for a wonderful magazine and ministry. I look forward to your publication and also enjoy your web site..."

■ "Enclosed is a check to help on your SWORD AND STAFF. I enjoy it very much. I know it comes from the Word of God."

■ "Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus. Thank you for THE SWORD AND STAFF and may God give you good health in the year 2003. May you keep on printing the truth. I'm sending a gift to help with your good paper. Again, may God bless you in this fine work."

ILLINOIS:

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

■ "I do enjoy the paper...I am looking forward to obtaining David Vaughn Elliott's book *Nobody Left Behind: Insight into 'End Time' Prophecies*. What he has written so far makes sense and better explains what the Bible has to say about the subject than what has been published to date."

ARKANSAS:

■ "Your 'good works' are appreciated. Titus 2:14;3:1,8."

LOUISIANA:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list. I do not want any more of your literature. Thank you."

TEXAS:

■ "Just received the latest SWORD AND STAFF. Appreciate receiving it. Enclosed is a donation to help in publishing it. Thank you."

ARIZONA:

■ "Please include me in your SWORD AND STAFF mailings. I appreciate your publication so much! Thank you for mailing a complimentary copy. May you ever be blessed!"

CALIFORNIA:

■ "I appreciate your efforts in publishing a paper that provides answers to many of our questions. Thanks for holding to the truth."

OREGON:

■ "I enjoy your paper very much and wish to continue on your mailing list. Enclosed is a check to help pay the cost."

■ "I would like to be on the mailing list for THE SWORD AND STAFF. Also, I would like a copy of the POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS."

WASHINGTON:

■ "Thank God for the good work you do. God bless you richly."

MONTANA:

■ "It has been far too long since we sent support...We are thankful for your ministry—an island in a sea of denominational error."

CANADA:

■ "Enclosed is a contribution for the paper that I receive. Thank you for this great paper. Keep up the good work."

KOREA:

■ "[Send] complimentary copy of THE SWORD AND STAFF." (E-mail, Web page response) □



It's All in A State of Mind

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you won't;
If you like to win, but don't think you can,
It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost;
For out in the world you'll find
Success begins with a fellow's will;
It's all in a state of mind.

For many a game is lost
Ere even a play is run,
And many a coward fails
Ere even his work is begun.

Think big and your deeds will grow,
Think small and you'll fall behind;
Think that you *can* and you *will*;
It's all in a state of mind.

If you think you are out-classed, you are;
You've got to think high to rise;
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later, the man who wins
Is the fellow who thinks he can.

—Walter D. Wintle



Digging for Buried Treasure

AN OLD FARMER, who was about to die, called his two sons to his bedside and said, "My boys, my farm and the fields are yours in equal shares. I leave you a little ready money, but the bulk of my wealth is hidden somewhere in the ground, not more than 18 inches from the surface. I'm sorry, but I can't tell you exactly where this is."

When the old man was dead and buried, his two sons set to work digging up every inch of ground in order to find the buried treasure. They failed to find it, but as they'd gone to all the trouble of turning the soil, they thought they might as well sow a crop, which they did, reaping a good harvest.

In autumn as soon as they had an opportunity, they dug for the treasure again, but with no better result. As their fields were turned over more thoroughly than any others in the neighborhood, they reaped better harvests than anyone else. Year after year, their search continued. Only when they had grown much older and wiser did they realize what their father had meant.—*Selected* □

A Blatant Case of Botching Grace *(Continued from Page 8)*

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick [the church] out of his place, except thou repent," the church at Corinth had this ominous option before them. From reading 2nd Corinthians, it seems that the church, for the most part, had repented following Paul's somber letter. But there were a few who were still holding out on the Lord.

Repentance to Salvation

Listen to Paul in 2nd Corinthians as he hopefully surmised the situation. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent [regret it], though I did repent [regret it]: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: [regretted]: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge [vindication]. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:8-11). It even seems that the ones involved in incest had repented and now were to be received back into their fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:4-9).

Of Whom Is Paul Speaking?

In reference to repentance, it is good to more carefully examine 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of [regretted]: but the sorrow of the world worketh

death." In the context, of whom is Paul speaking when he says this? He is talking about erring Christians repenting (the Corinthians). Repentance would be "to salvation" for erring Christians. It is implied that in their unrepentant circumstance they were not right with God, nor were they in a state of salvation. Grace didn't cover them in their persistent practice of sin. They botched it and were in danger of having received the grace of God in vain. Only in being really sorry for their sins, and returning to God in genuine repentance, would it bring about "repentance to salvation."

Some Holdouts

Even after his words of jubilation in chapter 7, Paul was aware that there were some still holding out on him. This bothered him. When he came to Corinth again he planned to have a showdown with these people. He wrote, "When I come again," that he would personally confront "many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness [lewdness] which they have committed" (12:21). In drawing the second epistle to a conclusion, he goes on to say, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove [test] your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates [disqualified]" (13:5). "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?" (Romans 6:1,2). (Let us get down to business for the Lord, too, lest we have received the grace of God in vain). □

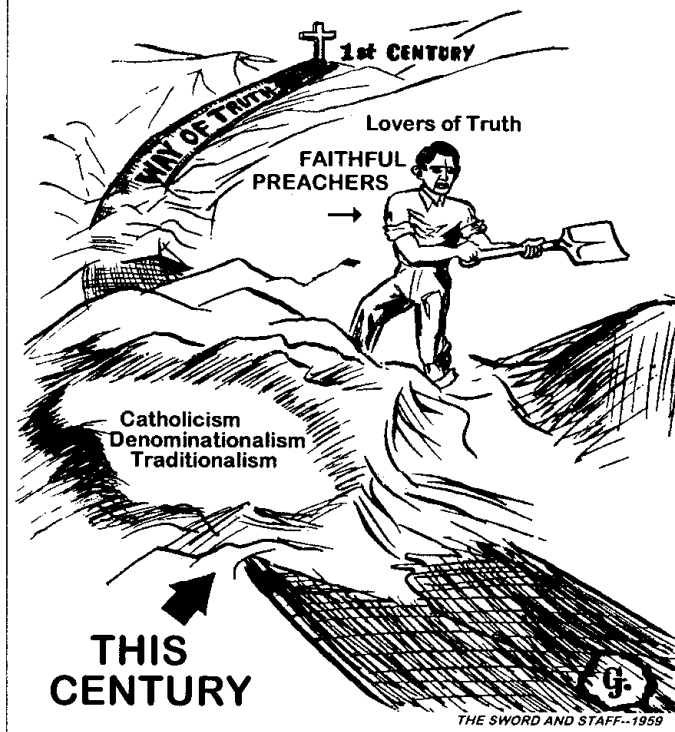
Prayer Answered, But Not in the Way Prayed

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve,
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things,
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy,
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men,
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life,
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am among all men, most richly blessed.

—*Author Unknown*

Our Earnest Desire

REMOVING THE DEBRIS OF THE AGES...



IT IS OUR EARNEST desire to see the undenominational church of the Lord emerge victorious from the unhappy state of affairs that exists in the divided, confused, ignorant and watered down religious world. The only solution is for sincere religious people to recognize and realize the folly of promoting traditionalism, then, turning their backs on it, merge into the one church already established centuries ago before Roman Catholicism or present day Protestantism ever was heard of. Yes, merge into the church of which the Lord said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). You cannot join this church. You may have joined yourself to a human denomination on human terms of admission. But this is not so with the Lord's church. The Scriptures indicate that the Lord adds you when you obey the gospel (Acts 2:38,47; 1 Corinthians 12:13). In other words, the same thing that makes you a Christian makes you a member of the church of God. Why be more? Why be less? The Bible alone makes Christians. It does not make denominations with their denominational names and systems. These names represent human parties, human systems, and human personalities. To have denominational pride or the party spirit is to be carnal, which is a work of the flesh. Paul sharply rebukes the Corinthians for wearing party labels and causing division (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:4). Why can't people see the folly of denominationalism?!

It is not enough to cast off denominationalism alone. It is not enough to give up human creed books, professing to have the Bible only as our rule of faith. One must manifest the spirit of lowliness and meekness, in love forbearing one another (Ephesians 4:1-6). Too many times men have denounced sectarianism only to become within themselves sectarian in their religious approach and outlook. A zeal to return to apostolic grounds coupled with humility will make great gains for the cause of truth. Without humility of mind, division will again raise its ugly head.

We are not necessarily presenting a "come-join-us" attitude toward the denominational world. It is not a matter of *who* is right (this is the sectarian approach), but of *what* is right. Denominational friend, we will gladly unite with you in the *name of Christ* (not some denominational name) and on the basis of the *Word of God* as we in an unbiased and humble manner study it together. No one will have to give up any present truth that they hold. Ministerial associations and interdenominational work are poor excuses for Christian unity, being neither Christian nor presenting unity in Christ. We have surrendered all party names and traditionalism, and are sincerely devoting our attention to being just the church of the New Testament. Perhaps there are many independent groups in our country moving in that direction. Many are tired of the God-denying tendencies in the present crop of clergymen, who would rob the Bible of its supernatural element. We would be happy to study with you from the Word of God. We do not have a sectarian party line to adhere to—*just the Bible*.

It is our sincere desire to see men united in the one body of Christ. It is our Lord's desire because he worded such in his prayer, which goes, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that *they all may be one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that *they also may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20,21). The position we have stated is simple, Scriptural and plain. On what other basis could sincere religious people be united? This is the true way, but traditionalists shun it like a rattlesnake. □

—The Sword and Staff (1959)

SHEEP not only graze in green pastures (Psalms 23:2; Ezekiel 34:14), sometimes they are slaughtered (Romans 8:36); so Christians shouldn't think it strange as to what can happen to them (1 Peter 4:12). □

One Excuse As Good As Another

ONE MAN says: "I do not go to church because I was never taught to go when I was young."

Another man says: "I do not go to church because I was forced to go when I was young."

So you see, one excuse is as good as another when you do not want to do a thing. ☐

—Selected

BARBS... with a Point

IF YOU are a Christian, others will know it.

When a religion knows nothing of love, it knows nothing of religion.

The person who thinks that he knows it all puts himself in a position where it is hard for him to learn anything.

The path of least resistance is not the road that leads to heaven (Matthew 7:13,14; I Peter 4:18).

If your concepts of right and wrong have been formed by what you have watched on television, you are in bad trouble.

Life without Christ is a "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," signifying nothing.

If you are a Christian, killing your enemy is antithetical to everything Christian (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 9:51-56; John 10:10; Romans 12:17-21).

Politicians seem to think that if they throw enough mud on their opponents, some of it will stick.

Every sin is, in one way or another, tainted with a lie, or the sinner never would have committed the sin in the first place, having been deceived into thinking it was acceptable.

It is all right to have a time to play, but don't play with your time.

If you had rather be at the lake fishing on Sunday instead of being in church, just remember there are no fish in the eternal lake of fire in the hereafter.

How can a foul-mouthed sinner even attempt to sing the sweet songs of Zion?

It seems that politicians look upon everyone as being motivated by selfishness, and if they can tap onto the selfishness of a particular group, they can get their votes (and there is a lot of truth to this).

There are some that seem to believe AIDS is spreading because of a lack of federal funds.

There is something basically wrong when a society is totally against capital punishment for criminals, but is for taking the lives of innocent, unborn babies through abortion if a person so chooses.

Some people believe that the best way to get rid of rats is to pour money down a rat hole.

A rock and roll concert in a church building in the name of religion does not make it religious, nor does it make it worship (the devil never ceases to come up with new ways to mock Christianity).

When you come out of denominationalism, make sure that denominationalism has come out of you.

Jesus said that "you cannot make one hair white or black" (Matthew 5:36), so underneath all of that hair coloring (and dye) people need to realize that their hair is still what it is.

When you lick your wounds in self-pity, you only contaminate them.

To penalize the rich for simply being rich is to kill the goose that laid the golden egg (in relation to the rest of the populace).

To comfort people when they have no grounds on which to be comforted is deception.

Evidently some peoples' concept of the Great Commission must be, "Go ye into all the world and fuss about religion."

People who sit on their hands many times want a hand out.

How can you "put Christ back into Christmas" (Christ MASS) when he never was in it to start with?

Some people want just enough religion to salve their consciences, but not enough really to heal their sin-sick souls.

Extravagance may be indicative of an inner-person who is very insecure and anything but extravagant.

Are religious or political systems asking too much, wanting to be tolerated, when they will not tolerate anyone else?

Gender is not a matter of choice, but of birth. ☐

"Beauty Tips" for Women

FOR ATTRACTIVE lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people. For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry. For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her fingers through it once a day. For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone. People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others.—Selected ☐

Christ, the Center And Heart of the Bible

THE Old Testament is an account of a Nation.

The New Testament is an account of a Man.

The Nation was founded and nurtured of God in order to bring the Man into the world.

God Himself became a man to give us a concrete, definite, tangible idea of what to think of when we think of God. His appearance on the earth is the central event of all history. The Old Testament sets the stage for it. The New Testament describes it.

As a man he lived the most strangely beautiful life ever known. He was the kindest, tenderest, gentlest, most patient, most sympathetic man that ever lived. He loved people. He hated to see people in trouble. He loved to forgive. He loved to help. He wrought marvelous miracles to feed hungry people. For relieving the suffering, He forgot Himself to take food. Multitudes, weary, pain-ridden and heartsick, came to Him, and found relief. It is said that if all the deeds of kindness that He did were written the world would not contain the books. That is the kind of man Jesus was. That is the kind of Person God is.

Then: He died, on the cross, to take away the sins of the world, to become the Redeemer and Savior of men.

Then: He arose from the dead; is alive now; not merely a historical character, but a Living Person; the most important fact of history, and most vital force in the world today.

The whole Bible is built around this beautiful story of Christ and His promise of life eternal to those who accept Him. The Bible was written that men might believe, and understand, and know, and love, and follow Christ.

Christ, the center and heart of the Bible, the center and heart of history, is the center and heart of our lives. Our eternal destiny is in His Hand. Our acceptance, or rejection, of Him, determines, for each of us, eternal glory, or eternal ruin; heaven or hell; one, or the other.

The most important decision any one is ever called upon to make is to settle, in his heart, once for all, the matter of his attitude toward Christ. On this depends everything.

It is a glorious thing to be a Christian, the most exalted privilege of mankind. To accept Christ as Savior, Lord, and Master, and to strive sincerely and devotedly to follow in the way of life which He taught is, certainly, and by far, the most reasonable and most satisfactory way to live. It means peace, peace of mind, contentment of heart, forgiveness, happiness, hope, life, life here and now, life abundant, life that shall never end.

How can anyone be so blind, or so dumb, as to go through life, and face death, without the Christian hope? Apart from Christ, what is there, what can there be either for this world, or the next, to make life worth-

while? We all have to die. Why try to laugh it off? It seems like every human being would welcome Christ with open arms, and consider it the proudest privilege of his life to wear the Christian Name.

In the last analysis, the dearest, sweetest thing in life is the consciousness, in the inner depths of our motives, that we live for Christ; and, though our efforts be ever so feeble, we toil at our daily tasks, in hope of, in the final roundup, having done something to lay, in humble gratitude and adoration, as an offering at His Feet.—*Selected* □

Coming Book...

Nobody Left Behind: Insight into 'End Time' Prophecies

By David Vaughn Elliott

TIME and again, readers have expressed the desire that David Vaughn Elliott publish his prophecy articles in book form. With such encouragement, he now is working toward that goal. After six years of writing prophecy articles in *The Sword and Staff*, brother Elliott has ended his series in order to devote more time toward completing and publishing just such a book.

The book will be entitled, *Nobody Left Behind: Insight into 'End Time' Prophecies*. Many of the articles which have already appeared in *The Sword and Staff* will be included, as well as a number of new chapters.

Although no precise date of publication can be given at this time, brother Elliott would like to see the book published in the spring of 2003, if at all possible. Watch future editions of *The Sword and Staff* for further details and publication information, including instructions for ordering. □

A Lesson from A Cork

IF YOU HAVE fallen away from the Lord into sin, why not turn back while you can?

A cork placed on top of the water will float on the surface. If it is pressed down ten, fifty, or even a hundred feet, it will rise again. But, if it is pressed down to two hundred feet below the surface, it cannot rise again because the pressure is too great. In like manner, if you have not gone too deep into the mire of sin, you can rise again; but beware of the day that you go so deep in the practice of sin and neglect that you cannot rise from it depths. The lower one sinks into the mire of sin, the less is the possibility of one's being able to rise again. The longer one goes in rebellion to God and the Savior, how much greater is the difficulty to rise to repentance.

It may be later than you think! If you are away from the church, make all haste to come back to God before the pressure of sin pushes you beyond the hope

of repentance. Those of us with experience in the church have seen so many go down into the depths of neglect that they are now without hope. Don't lose your soul. Don't drown in the depths of sin and rebellion against God and the church for which Christ died. Rise again while yet you can!—*Selected* □

A Very Important Question

DURING my 2nd month of nursing school our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.

Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you can do is smile and say hello."

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.—*Guideposts* □

God Hath Not Promised

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe;
He hath not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.

God hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain rocky and steep,
Never a river turbid and deep.

But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

—By Annie J. Flint

Preparing A Turnip Patch

ONCE while "Raccoon" John Smith, a pioneer gospel preacher of the 1800's, was speaking on the plainness of the gospel in contrast with the complicated religious systems of men, a note was

handed to him from someone in the audience. It read: "If the gospel is so very plain, why do you have to labor so very hard to get people to understand it?" Mr. Smith replied, "I have often prepared ground in the wilderness for a turnip patch, and though I had good soil, and the best seed and the sowing was easy, I never got top nor root till I took my axe, hoes and briar knife and cleared the ground. The Lord knows I do not esteem it hard to preach the gospel to those prepared to receive it, but it is labor indeed to root out prejudice and cut out men's systems and clear away sectarian trash that cumbers the hearts and minds of people." (And the problems "Raccoon" John Smith faced many years ago are still with us. How we need to root out of our religious convictions anything foreign to the Word of God!) □

Only God Knows This

CUT OPEN an apple.

Now count the seeds.

How many did you find there? Three? Eight? Ten? More?

That was easy! Even most kindergartners can count the seeds in an apple.

Now for something a little more challenging.

Since you know how many seeds are in the apple, go back and count the number of apples in each seed.

How did you do this time? Probably laughed at the assignment and didn't even attempt it.

You see, it's easy to count the number of seeds in an apple, but only God can count the number of apples in a seed. The same holds true concerning every kind act or dollar given out of a spirit of generosity to benefit another person. It is easy to count seeds or tabulate amounts; impossible to know the good either does.

Impossible, too, to know how far reaching any act of kindness or gift, large or small, will be. Or, how long either will travel, affecting others and multiplying as it moves.—*via The Mt. Enterprise Herald* □

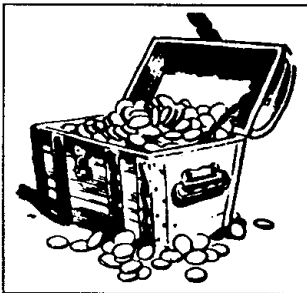
Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Exodus 7:7; 2. Numbers 20:12, Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 3. Numbers 17:8; 4. Deuteronomy 23:14 (Numbers, chapters 22-25); 5. Joshua 12:1-24; 6. (1) Numbers 6:1-4; (2) Numbers 6:4; (3) Numbers 6:6-12; 7. Numbers 6:22-27; 8. Numbers 13:16 (13:8); 14:38; 9. 1 Kings 2:19 (Genesis 48:2); 10. Isaiah 6:1; 11. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-8ff; 12. (1) John 3:1-21; (2) John 7:45-52; (3) John 19:38-42; 13. Matthew 3:1-7; 12:24-34; 23:1-33; 14. It was the sum paid for a day's work (Matthew 20:1,2), but during times of scarcity its buying power was very meager (Revelation 6:5,6); 15. John 6:24-59; 16. Matthew 26:51,52; Luke 22:49-51; John 18:10; 17. Matthew 26:32; 28:10; Mark 16:7; 18. John 21:1-11; 19. Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16; 20. 2 John 1. □

The
Sword AND Staff
Treasure

MANY who love the Word of God have discovered Treasure much to their liking when they obtained the bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff*. If you like this current issue, you will likewise be thrilled with the back copies in book form. Notice those still available (while they are still available), and place your order now for good reading. Make them part of your library *and part of your life*. You will be glad that you did. ☐



TRUE LOVE

Love ever gives—
 Forgives — outlives—
And ever stands
 With open hands.
And while it lives—
 It gives.
For this is love's prerogative—
 To give, and give, and give.
—Selected

- ☐ 1995-1996 volumen encuadernado de "La Espada y El Cayado" (en español) —\$7.75; ☐ 1997-98—\$7.75
☐ 1999-2000—\$7.95

(CLIP AND MAIL\OR WRITE)

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find my contribution. Please put me on the mailing list of *The Sword and Staff*. ☐ New ☐ Renew

Name:

Address (with zip):

(Check for bound volumes of *The Sword and Staff*)

- ☐ 1987-1988 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.50
☐ 1989-1990 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.50
☐ 1991-1992 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.50
☐ 1993-1994 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.50
☐ 1995-1996 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.75
☐ 1997-1998 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.75
☐ 1999-2000 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$7.95
☐ *Poems of The Soul and Proverbs* (by James E. Gibbons)—\$5.00; 5 or more copies, \$4.00 each

Change of Address

NOTE: Be sure to send your change of address when moving or in connection with the 911 change by the Post Office. Otherwise, you will probably no longer be getting this paper. Thanks.—*Editor* ☐

What Your Absence Will Do
(Hebrews 10:25)

1. It will cause some to question the reality of your religion.
2. It will make some think you are a pretender and not really sincere.
3. It will make many think that you regard your spiritual welfare and that of others as a small concern.
4. It will weaken the effect of the church service.
5. It will make it harder for the preacher to preach and singers to sing.
6. It will discourage some of the brethren, and therefore, rob them of the spiritual blessings that they could have received.
7. It will cause others to stay away, and give the devil more power over lost souls.
8. It will make it harder for you to meet the temptations of the devil, and will encourage the habit of non-church going.
9. It will rob you of many blessings, and may even cause you to lose your soul.—*Selected* ☐

● **HELP US REACH OUT TO MORE PEOPLE AND CHURCHES WITH THIS PUBLICATION. Thanks!**

THE SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA
Telephone: (336) 789-1044

To Addressee or Current Resident

→ E-MAIL ADDRESS: jamesgibbons@earthlink.net

→ Check Out Our Web Site: ↗ ↘ ↙ ↚

<http://jgibbons.8m.com>

Non-Profit Organ.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Permit No. 25