

The Sword AND Staff

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

• Another article written 44 years ago and still timely.—Editor

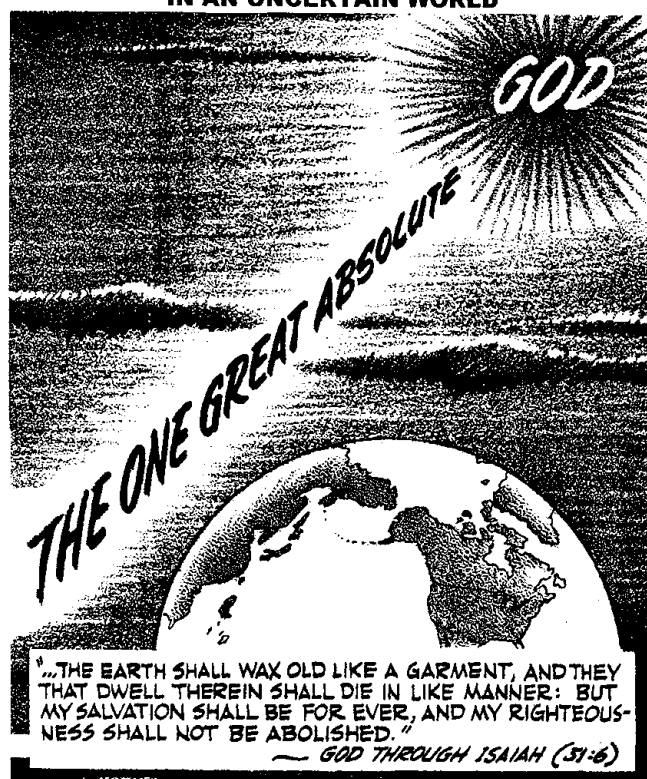
Unchanging Things in A Changing World

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

WE ARE living in a changing world. Perhaps that is the least disputed assertion that we could make. The changes that have been wrought in this world and within this country, looking back in the lifetime of many, are astounding. Nationally, within a little more than a century, America has leaped from an unexplored frontier to become one of the most modern countries in the world, and during the same period of time has taken the position of world leadership. Perhaps during this time, scientifically, there has been more rapid and intensified progress in the field of learning than in all the centuries before. Man has left the horse and buggy to take wings and fly with supersonic speed. The old oil lamp has been replaced by electricity. Modern inventions and discoveries have placed man at the brink of mass annihilation. One sudden miscalculated move could usher much of humanity suddenly and unceremoniously out into eternity. During this same period many things have been happening within the religious world, too. One hundred or more years ago men were bound behind denominational walls with iron-clad creeds. The doctrine of Calvinism was strongly felt in the circles of denominationalism. Men's convictions were strong, although many times wrong. Today religious tolerance is the fad of the day. Denominational walls have somewhat disintegrated, but the element of pride still remains, and convictions are not necessarily the basis for fellowship. Great convictions seem to be a thing of the past, and many denominations find themselves with leaders who are little more than infidels hiding behind the word "scholarship" and "higher education."

In the midst of all of this, we are certainly made to exclaim that we are living in a changing world. Change has brought good things, but at the same

IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



time change has brought many bad things. Things of man are subject to change. Man is shifting, moving with the sands of time. Everything is being questioned, and man is found to be like a ship at sea with no rudder, anchor or sail. Ancient landmarks have been removed. But there is something, and someone, that we can anchor our weary souls to. The things of God do not change. They are eternal.

I. GOD IS UNCHANGING

The Psalmist speaks of God in this manner: "But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations" (Psalms 102:12). Then, in reference to the things of earth, he

(Continued on Page 7)

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...*

A JOB well done is its own reward.

The lowest ebbs come right before the highest tides—*have faith, better things are in store.*

A person all wrapped up in himself is not properly clothed.

Before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must be emptied of sin and ourselves.

"CAN'T" never did do anything, and "WON'T" won't even try.

A man cannot do all that he can until he tries to do more than he can.

Delay is the best course of action when we are angry.

A faith that's strong will keep you from wrong (1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:4).

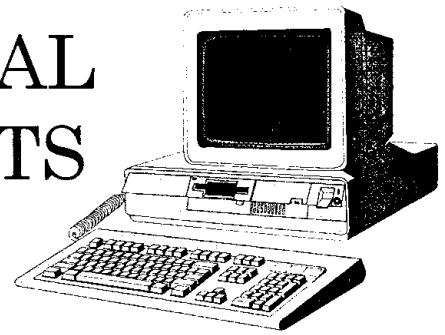
Difficulties are obstacles only to the weak.

Failure is not falling down; it is not trying to get up after we have fallen.

Weak in Actions

*To be strong in words
While weak in actions
Is but to count the numbers
And only do the fractions.*

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



ABOUNDING IN THANKSGIVING

IN THE MIDST of the Colossian epistle, the apostle Paul writes, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, **abounding therein with [in] thanksgiving**" (Colossians 2:6,7). Paul, in his first Roman imprisonment, had been visited by Epaphras (preacher from Colosse). He told Paul about the conversion of the Colossians and about possible problems that confronted these new converts. The problems involved false teaching. Paul, being the apostle to the Gentile world, saw it fitting to write to them. This was to encourage them and to fortify them against false teaching. The word "thanks" and "thanksgiving" stand out in this epistle, being found in every chapter (Colossians 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2). Here in chapter 2:7 he presents thanksgiving as a bulwark against false teaching. He lays out before the Colossians the richness of the religion into which they have entered, as he earnestly prays for them. It is his desire "that their hearts might be comforted [encouraged], being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2,3). He goes on to say of Christ, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:9,10). There was nothing lacking in the relationship they had entered as Christians. In Christ are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"—*why even be tempted to look elsewhere?* How amazing! Christ was God incarnate! And the Colossians were complete in Christ—*why look elsewhere?* Their salvation could not be improved upon. All of their spiritual needs were met. The grass was not greener, nor could it be greener, on the other side of the fence. They were to fully understand this. And in understanding, they would be moved to abound in thanksgiving for what a good thing they had in Christ. A thankful Christian is not a "candidate" for apostasy. With that being said, Paul goes on to say, "Beware lest any man spoil [corrupt, plunder] you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiment of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). A lack of being thankful initially is what had plunged the Gentile world into idolatry and the depraved sins that followed (Romans 1:21-32).

There is a problem of lack of thankfulness and thanksgiving in our modern world. Great men who were unashamedly influenced by the Bible, and who had deep respect for Christianity, founded this country (USA). Laws that governed this land were brought into being through men holding such views and were incorporated into the very fabric of our society. With a sense of justice and equality, having its roots in religion, this country moved in the direction of prominence and even greatness. But today, Christianity, that played such a prominent role, is being pushed aside by the secular humanists as irrelevant. All traces of God must be removed. How strange that the Ten Commandments cannot be tolerated publicly by the government any more (at least, by certain radical judges), saying that they would be offensive to some (a small number), and at the same time the issuance of marriage licenses to people of the same sex is being allowed (which is offensive to a far greater number, and most of all to God). How unthinkable, strange and weird! A generation that has been brainwashed by humanism, and at the same time no longer knows the Bible, voices little opposition. They little know, and care, that the orderly foundation and function of society is being destroyed. They need to know the part that religion has played in bringing this country to where it is now, and be thankful.

If you are in a church that seeks to be identified as the nondenominational church of the New Testament, and that alone, be thankful. The church taught in the Bible is not a denomination, just simply the body of Christ (Colossians 3:15; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 1:12,13; 3:4). If you are in a church that deeply respects the Word of God, you need to be "abounding in thanksgiving." Some believe that the preaching of God's Word will drive people away. They compromise, hoping to bring in numbers. Others get bored by much Bible preaching. They want entertainment and play programs (and they seek out such "churches" to satisfy their fleshly appetites). But, beloved, if we don't love God's Word (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12), nor appreciate it, we are a sitting duck for the devil. We are not just a "candidate" for apostasy, we are well on the way there. Be thankful.

The apostle Paul admonished Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure [put up with] sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having

itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things..." (2 Timothy 4:1-5b).

Beloved, God has given us His eternal truth. Let us be a thankful people, "abounding therein in thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:7) and "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Error will find no place with us. □



The Thankful Heart

For all that God in mercy sends —
For health and children, home and friends,
For comfort in the time of need,
For every kindly word or deed,
For happy thoughts and holy talk,
For guidance in our daily walk;
— In everything give thanks!

For beauty in this world of ours,
For verdant grass and lovely flowers,
For songs of birds, for hum of bees,
For the refreshing summer breeze,
For hill and plain, for stream and wood,
For the great ocean's mighty flood;
— In everything give thanks

For the sweet sleep which comes with night,
For the returning morning light,
For the bright sun that shines on high,
For the stars glittering in the sky —
For these and everything we see,
O Lord, our heart we lift to Thee;
— In everything give thanks!

—By E. I. Tupper



EDITORIAL *Byways*

COLOSSIANS 1:28, A Great Verse of Scripture

RECENTLY, in teaching the book of Colossians, some truths impacted me with a freshness and vitality that I had not experienced before. Colossians 1:28 is the verse in particular I am talking about (and there are others that stand out). There is a lot said here. This verse reads: "*Whom [Christ] we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus.*" Two things stand out that especially

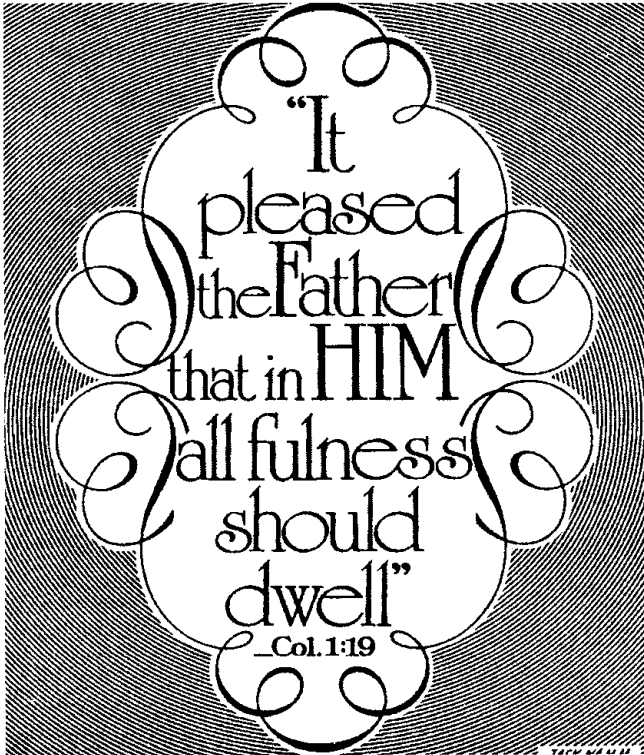
(Continued on Next Page)

EDITORIAL *Byways*

(Continued from Previous Page)

impacted me (although we will consider the whole verse). (1) One is the warning and teaching of “every man,” and the other is (2) who was doing this warning and teaching of “every man” (who the “we” are that is spoken of here). A proper understanding of this verse should arouse and prod us into considering if what the Lord had in mind in the Great Commission is actually taking place today.

Brief Background of Colossians



Perhaps a brief look at the background of Colossians would be in order before we zero in on this verse. (Read the entire epistle). Paul is experiencing his first imprisonment at Rome when he writes this letter (4:3,18). He is being visited by Epaphras (1:7; 4:12), preacher from the church at Colosse. Colosse was located inland from Ephesus in Asia Minor (up in the mountains where the snow line begins). It seems that Paul had never been here (1:4,9). Epaphras, who had brought the Colossians to faith in Christ (1:4-7), tells Paul of their conversion and of potential problems confronting these new Christians. Paul thanks God and prays for them. The problems facing them took the form of false teaching embodied in “philosophy” (2:8) and possibly Jewish tenets (2:16-23) (two different doctrinal errors, or, perhaps a single hybrid combination of the two). Being in particular the apostle to the Gentile world (1:23,25-29), Paul felt compelled to write them and fortify them against possible apostasy (2:1ff). Before

briefly touching upon the doctrinal error, he lays the positive foundation of the great and wonderful truths that they had in Christ (2:2-10). Appreciating these truths should anchor their souls. Then, after dealing with the error, he gives practical admonitions about living the Christian life (3:1-4:6). Christian living actually has its roots in the great doctrines of which he has spoken. Then he signs off with more of a personal section as he winds down in the last chapter.

The Immediate Context

In the immediate context leading up to Colossians 1:28, the verse we are considering, Paul highlights the great and wonderful truths about Christ, how this had been widely preached, and that he was God’s minister in making this gospel known. That which had been kept under wraps in the ages and generations past, was no longer a secret. “God would make known [and had decidedly made known, 1:23] what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus:* Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Colossians 1:27-29). The Colossians were recipients and beneficiaries of this mystery and were now participants in its disclosure.

THE IMPACTING TRUTHS

1. The Warning and Teaching of Every Man

Now let us notice the first thing that sprang out and captured my attention as I studied Colossians 1:28. In preaching Christ, Paul was “warning *every man*, and teaching *every man*.” In other words, Paul was literally carrying out what Christ had commanded in the Great Commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every creature*” (Mark 16:15). All have sinned and personally have come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and appropriately each personally is to be warned and taught in the preaching of the gospel. Christianity is intensely personal, and the gospel message is to be personally presented. Yes, there is the public proclamation of the gospel, but to get the message across effectively, there must be that personal appeal; person to person evangelism; one on one. It is Christ’s intention that every person in the world be personally approached with the good news of salvation. Paul was “warning” and “teaching” every person that he knew, that he met, or that he ever would meet. This was the driving impetus of his life. It is no wonder that Christianity spread like it



did in the first century. It was not kept behind four walls, but individuals were excitedly telling individuals the good news of the resurrection, salvation and everlasting life (Acts 8:4; Colossians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 15:2-4).

2. Those Warning and Teaching Every Man

Notice that Paul said, “Whom *we* preach, warning every man, and teaching every man.” Of whom was Paul speaking here when he said “we” (the “we” doing the preaching, which also involved warning and teaching every man)? (Finding the answer proved very interesting and refreshingly impacted me). Is Paul speaking of Timothy who jointly sent greetings in Colossians 1:1, Epaphras from Colosse who is named in 1:7, and himself personally when he says “we” (*we* preach)? That is a possibility. Or is he simply using the editorial “we,” a common practice in writing? This is a possibility, but I think not. In the verses leading up to this (1:23,25ff) he had used the singular pronoun “I,” referring to himself. But now in verse 28 he uses the plural “we” in the expression “whom *we* preach.” Then in verse 29 he jumps back to the singular pronoun “I,” again referring to himself. So, “we” must distinctly mean “we.” If I were standing before a church group and said, “We will now sing,” would this be hard for those who heard to know who the “we” were? Paul writes to the Colossian Christians and says, “*we* preach, warning every man...” Is it hard to grasp who the “we” could be? It would include the Colossians. Overall, the “we” could well be inclusive of Timothy, Epaphras, himself, and the church at Colosse (and every Christian who would read this).

A Grassroots Movement

Christ’s plan seems to be that every Christian tell the gospel story to everyone with whom they come in contact, and in so doing, “warning every man, and teaching every man.” The Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28 is envisioned as a continuous, ongoing experience. The original disciples were to go, teach, baptize and teach those who had accepted the gospel to observe all things he had commanded. He had just commanded the Great Commission, and thus this would include the new converts being given the Great Commission all over again. Doesn’t Revelation 22:17 read, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”? The rank and file membership of the Jerusalem church that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4). Paul in describing the spiritual armor that every Christian is to wear while engaged in spiritual combat includes having “your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). Every Christian is to be “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” New Testament Christianity knows nothing of a stilted and artificial clergy system with its “right reverends.” The entire church is a priesthood of believers, with each individual being personally involved (1 Peter 2:5,9; Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16). Yes, there are leaders, but each and every Christian does his part. Christianity in its inception was a grassroots movement.

Too Long!

Too long I’ve laid me down to sleep
And prayed the Lord my soul to keep.
I should awake before I die
And realize time is passing by.
I should arise and go and tell the lost
Despite my plans, despite the cost!
Too long I’ve laid me down to sleep
While multitudes around me weep.
I must awake before I die
And realize my time is passing by.

—Dan Truax

Additional Thought on Colossians 1:28

“Warning” and “teaching” are involved in every Christian sharing the gospel message with “every man,” according to our Scripture. Contrary to modern so-called evangelism that appeals to the flesh with gimmicks, entertainment and sports, there

(Continued on Next Page)

EDITORIAL *Byways*

(Continued from Previous Page)

must be the personal warning and teaching of every person. The Great Commission by saying, "He that believeth and is baptized [immersed] shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) explicitly implies that humanity is lost outside of Christ. People must be made aware that they are sinners, that there is a Day of Judgment coming and that they need a Savior—*first the bad news, and then the good news*. Solid conversions require teaching, not just being enticed by an entertainment program. In the early church the growth of the church was described in terms like "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied" (Acts 6:7), "the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24) and, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20), and not just numbers alone. Evangelism was regarded in relation to the Word of God.

And, according to Colossians 1:28, "wisdom" is another important factor in talking to others about Christ (also check out Colossians 4:5,6). It is necessary, to be an effective soul winner. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).

The Rest of the Verse

The end result to which the preaching, involving warning and teaching, is moving, is "that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus" (1:28). The presentation may be when "every man" (each person) becomes a Christian, and/or Paul may be looking forward to eternity when we shall meet the Lord and present those we have won to Him. This being made perfect [complete] takes place initially when a person repents and is baptized [immersed] for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27). Christ's righteousness is counted to be our righteousness in forgiveness, "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" (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30). We put on Christ. Then as a second possible application of presenting "every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus," each person is being encouraged as he works toward that end in his sanctification, becoming more Christ-like and complete in Christ, as he grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Peter 3:18).

Are "We" Measuring Up?

So, in the light of what we have examined here, we are made to ask if the modern church is measuring up to what is taught in Colossians 1:28. Are "we" ("we," meaning each and every Christian) teaching and warning "every man"? Are "we" even concerned about the lost? Personally, not only was I pleasantly

impacted by freshness of insight into this verse of Scripture, I was very much disturbed. (I was disturbed by the world situation and my inaction). With the exploding world population (now over six billion), and with secularism and unchristian forces on the ascendancy, Christianity is on the wane. We have to run just to stand still. Materialism, denominationalism, unbelief and just plain unspiritual living have sapped the vitals of the church. Many, wanting something to happen, have settled for less than the spiritual, appealing to the flesh to attract numbers. Many times we are made to wonder if they have forgotten that the business of the church is spiritual (1 Peter 2:5).

A Prodding Prayer Implored

To prod our outlook, I call your attention to Matthew 9:36-38. "But when he [Christ] saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." His disciples were to pray that laborers would be sent into the harvest. The word from which "send" is translated is a strong word, in some places being rendered "cast out" (as in the casting out of demons). In the language of the New Testament, the word for "send" here is *ekballo* (*ek*, out + *ballo*, throw). This highlights the urgency of how the Lord looked upon the situation. They were to pray for "laborers" to "get with it" and bring in the harvest.

A Forthright Challenge

When we pray this prayer in view of the world situation, and then read Colossians 1:28, we will realize that every Christian must be involved in the answer to this prayer today. How we need a living and vital relationship with the Lord! How we need to be thankful for our salvation! How we need to be soul-conscious! I challenge you. Just think, if each and every Christian would continually have it upon his heart to talk to each and everyone that he knows, to each and everyone that he meets or ever will meet, we would experience New Testament evangelism again. We need to pray that we will indeed be soul-conscious, be soul-winners, seeing every person who crosses our path as someone who needs the gospel. We want to talk to them and will talk to them about the Lord when we have the chance. Let's face it. The world is lost in sin, and we have the only message of hope and salvation. □

"...CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners..."—1 Timothy 1:15

Unchanging Things in A Changing World

(Continued from Page 1)

continues, "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Psalms 102:26,27). James has this to say about God:



"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Looking at these Scriptures, here is the teaching. The things of earth shall fade away and become old and be no more, but God goes on and on throughout all eternity. God is from everlasting to everlasting. Not only that, James tells us more. He is the same from everlasting to everlasting. He uses the figure of no shadow being cast by God turning. In other words, God is the same at all times. He can be depended upon. He continues as the eternal self-existent One.

God is the Great Omnipotent Power behind the universe. As time continues, He can be depended upon to enforce His laws of nature. The law of gravity holds true, the earth turns, and we see the sun "rise" every morning. Man in his scientific ventures is only finding out the natural laws of God—discovering the laws of God set into operation eons ago with His great acts of creation. The exact function of these natural laws is always a marvel.

God continues to be the same as the loving heavenly Father. James well said, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father..." The old preacher's version of God making man was that God was lonely and wanted someone to love; thus, He made man in His own likeness. God loves man and is concerned about his well being. One unbelieving religious leader has accused God of being "an old bully" in the Old Testament, but God was making his point about sin. He speaks of the "idea" of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The love of God can be seen in the Old Testament. Certainly He had patience with the rebellious and stiff-necked people He was working with (the people He had chosen through whom He would bring the Savior into the world). Then He spared and showed mercy to the Gentiles when they would believe, repent and turn from their idolatry. It is hard for us to conceive of just how degenerate the

idol worship was. God would have everyone be saved, and if they aren't, it will be in spite of what He has done (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9).

God is unchanging in His attitude toward sin. God is perfection, the embodiment of all that is pure and good. Consequently, He has a holy hatred and distaste for all that is wicked and evil. He cannot tolerate sin in any form. Sin always brings separation from God, which is death. Sin will not go unpunished, although man may think he will not be held accountable. The Day of Judgment is coming for all of mankind. Yes, God is holy, and He says, "Be thou holy for I am holy." Only the pure in heart will see God. Always remember the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

II. CHRIST IS UNCHANGING

The Hebrew writer declares: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). This verse shows the unchanging nature of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Deity. Of course, Christ took the form of man, being clothed with flesh, as he lived upon this earth and identified himself with the human race. He lived a life as a human being, yet without sin. He came to seek and save the lost. In God's plan he would taste death like every man, though sinless, and for every man on the cross of Calvary. But, unlike sinful man, he came forth from the grave victorious. In all that he experienced, he established his Deity as the Son of God (Romans 1:4). Now he is back in heaven, living forever to make intercession for those who call upon the Father. He is unchanging in who he is and in his purpose for mankind.

Yes, Christ is unchanging. Inasmuch as Christ is unchanging, that means the gospel is changeless, unchanging. Christ is the gospel, as the great gospel truths hinge around his death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). But many today, in essence, say, "Let's streamline the gospel." We are tired of that "slaughter house religion." (How blasphemous!) A man dying on a cross is just too crude for the modern mind to accept, it is claimed. Let us hear "nice" things. Thus, these men have come up with a "do good" social gospel as they seek the betterment of society with improved living conditions, etc. (not emphasizing a blood, redemptive gospel). But the gospel of Christ does not need streamlining. It is far ahead of this age, or any age to come, for Jesus said it would be "unto the end of the world." Degenerate and fallen man needs to streamline his life and get in step with Jesus. Perhaps we are using the wrong terms when we talk about "the old time religion" and "the old fashioned gospel." There is

(Continued on Next Page)

Unchanging Things in A *Changing* World

(Continued from Previous Page)

nothing old fashioned about the gospel of Christ. It does not have the mark of time upon it. (Man-made religions do, though). It is always new, vital, and the timeless good news. It is just as fresh as if the apostles had penned the message this morning. Men simply need to put the "old man" to death and bring their lives up to date with Jesus.

III. THE WORD IS UNCHANGING

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Jesus further said that "the Scripture cannot be broken." We read in 1 Peter 1:25, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Yes, friend, when God speaks, it is for eternity: God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). If God is perfect, His word as given to man is perfect. If God is eternal, His word is eternal. We have no doubts about the Bible being the word of God. We have the divine promise that the word of God would be with us forever. God has communicated His Divine will and purpose to us, and we have it embodied in the Bible.

But men have reproached God and His word. They imply that God's word is not plain enough. They have formulated their man-made creeds and crystallized their prejudices into denominational rulebooks imposed upon their followers, usurping the authority of the Bible. The man-made creeds afflict oncoming generations. The study of the Bible is stifled by preconceived dogmas. False doctrines have been endeared and canonized in the hearts of people because loved ones have died in that religion. Thereafter, their descendants have a closed mind to any new thought or further investigation of the Scriptures. How sad the situation becomes as men seek to justify denominational division, saying it doesn't actually matter what one believes.

Then modern so-called "theologians" have terribly disgraced God's Word. Along came the highly theoretical theory of evolution. So, some "theologians" revised their approach to the Bible to fit this theory and thus have destroyed the Bible. Many are so obsessed with the idea that they are trying to make the Bible itself fit into an evolutionary pattern. As this artificial theory is becoming more and more unattractive, being unproved and irrational, these "change-with-the-weather" "theologians" will be left holding the bag. The Word of God is unchangeable and unchanging.

Jude strongly admonishes us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once [and for all] delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The wrath of heaven is pronounced against any and all who would add to or take away from the words of this book (Revelation 22:18,19). It is a very, very serious matter. Paul charged, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Yes, God's Word is unchangeable, changeless, and it will be opened on the Day of

(Continued on Page 12)

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who in the Bible said, "Am I my brother's keeper"?
2. What was the name of the woman Abraham took to be his wife after Sarah died?
3. How many sons did Ishmael the son of Abraham have?
4. What was the name of the firstborn son of Jacob?
5. What was the name of the brother and sister of Moses?
6. Who were the first people to engage the children of Israel in battle after they came out of Egypt?
7. When did God cease supplying the manna to the Israelites in their Exodus journey?
8. What was the origin of the feast of Purim observed by the Jews and what was the significance of what it was called?
9. What Old Testament prophet had his lips touched with a live coal from the altar?
10. Which are the only two gospel accounts that record the birth of Jesus?
11. Where did Joseph and Mary go with baby Jesus to live after they came back from Egypt?
12. Which disciple after his call had a feast for Jesus and invited tax collectors and sinners?
13. In what unusual way did Jesus get the money to pay his temple tax?
14. Didymus was another name for which one of the twelve disciples?
15. Who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus, and what were the names of his sons (who evidently later became Christians)?
16. Which disciple was entrusted with the care of the mother of Jesus after his crucifixion?
17. Tabitha was another name for what woman in the book of Acts?
18. Where was the apostle Paul stoned and left for dead?
19. Through whose preaching had the Colossians become believers?
20. Which of the seven churches in Asia in the book of Revelation did Jesus refer to as being lukewarm?

(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. ☐

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"I certainly do like this paper. I wish more people stayed with the Word the way you do. Thanks and I hope that I can continue to stay on the mailing list. Pray for us always as we pray for you and your ministry."*

■ *"I have received several issues of your publication and until this week never really paid it much attention. Mainly because it was sent in the name of a previous resident. I read the latest issue this week from cover to cover and found it to be just what I needed. The writings are wonderful and very encouraging. Please keep up the good work...Thanks again and may God bless you as the words of your paper have blessed me." (E-mail)*

TENNESSEE:

■ *"I enjoy reading THE SWORD AND STAFF and would like to thank the person who put my name on the list."*

"Please send me 1 copy of the bound volumes of the 1999-2000 SWORD AND STAFF. And one copy of your poem book POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS..."

"I hope to be able to purchase more of the bound volumes."

"May the Good Lord bless you."

KENTUCKY:

■ *"Please send me the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF that I have marked. I use a lot of your material in my church paper."*

"Thank you for your sound doctrine and the Word. I receive a duplicate mailing but just pass it along to my church brethren."

"Thank you so much."

■ *"Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I want you to know I very much enjoy receiving*

THE SWORD AND STAFF. I entered the ministry late in life and have only been serving in this capacity 3 years. I find your newsletter to be a very helpful resource for study and preparing messages/lessons..."

VIRGINIA:

■ *"We love THE SWORD AND STAFF. Thank you for the good work you do. Enclosed is a small contribution toward the printing. Please continue to send it to us..."*

■ *"I would love for you to send me the bound volumes of 2001-2002. I love to read these papers. I enjoy all of them so much—it's like getting a good gift from heaven when I read them. I'm sending a small offering—wish I could send more."*

■ *"[I] appreciate so much the work you are doing for the Lord through THE SWORD AND STAFF."*

"I would like to receive your publication on a regular basis; also the bound volumes and poems. Please find check...to cover cost and help to send the publication to others."

"Keep up the good works."

■ *"I would like to procure volumes # 39 and 40 or the latest; I have 37 and 38..."*

"You have very good lessons. I would like to have permission to make copies of a few of your lessons to give to non-church members for additional outreach here...I have used several of your articles to help me when I have filled in for our preacher, but I would like to give this material to other people..."

INDIANA:

■ *"Enclosed is \$...to help on THE SWORD AND STAFF. I read it from cover to cover and enjoy every word of it. I know it is all truth from God's Word the Bible."*

ILLINOIS:

■ *"Enclosed is a contribution. Please send us 5 copies of POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS. We like your volumes very much."*

■ *"Enclosed you will find a check for the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF that I have marked. Please use any extra for the benefit of your fine work..."*

"Thank you and may God richly bless you."

■ *"I am thankful for the good work that you are doing for Christ's church. May He richly bless you and keep you going strong!"*

"Thanks for the Word of encouragement and Biblical instruction you give via THE SWORD AND STAFF." (E-mail)

■ *"Please forgive me for not sending an offering for receiving your publication sooner. I noticed on the mailing label 9/13/97. It is hard to believe it has been that long since I sent money..."*

We appreciate your labor for the Lord. Your use of the Scriptures to back up your well-written articles makes your publication worth having..."

"Keep up the good work!"

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

"...Will my next publication have the date on it that my subscription will be up?"

(Editor Note: The date on your address label simply indicates when you were first entered into our records, and sometimes re-entered if moving. It does not indicate the date when a subscription expires. We do not operate on that kind of basis, but simply rely on offerings along as readers feel like giving. We do not have time to re-enter names every time, so we leave it up to individuals to help when they feel disposed to do so. We are not a company or a commercial endeavor. All that we are concerned about is paying our bills and "keeping on keeping on" sharing God's message. All help is sincerely appreciated).

MISSOURI:

■ "Enclosed is some money for your 'the Lord's' paper...God bless you."

TEXAS:

■ "Please do not send THE SWORD AND STAFF literature..."

■ "...A few years ago...I received some papers of THE SWORD AND STAFF which we enjoyed very much. I also received one of the best pamphlets I have ever read entitled 'Our Great and Glorious God' by James E. Gibbons. God is emphasized in white and black print on a black background. It contains 20 pages of truths, encouragements, etc., a treasured pamphlet. On the back page I found additional copies could be ordered. I would like to order 12 copies of this good pamphlet to pass on to my dear grandchildren. Also, a late copy of the good paper...I trust I can still get copies of this great pamphlet. How good it would be if every home in America had a copy..."

(Editor Note: Yes, we still have copies of this pamphlet available for those who want them and request them. If any other readers would like to get this material that has proved to be an encouragement to many, just let us hear from you.)

OREGON:

■ "Please remove from mailing list."

UNITED STATES:

■ "I really liked the Editorial Byways 'Strange Doctrine' and would like to know if you have any other articles that teach you can fall away?" (E-mail)

■ "I am so thankful one of my friends from Texas sent me this site. It is beautiful and I appreciate your faith and willingness to share this with others. I hope you and your wife will continue to be a blessing to others. Again, 'Thanks!'" (E-mail, Web page response)

■ "God is good, and I trust in His promise that you also are enjoying the benefits of God's grace! Your ministry of the publication has been a blessing through the many years that you have sent it to me..."

"I had a particular interest in your lead article on Hell. I read your disclaimer in paragraph one but that did not cut the mustard. Luke 16 is not talking about Hell, but Hades. These are two different places. All the things you said are true of both, but true exegesis would have talked about 'Four Things in Hades.'"

"Anyway, there are so many teachers who want to make this story a parable. When they do, they can justify any idea they can dream up, including soul sleeping, which always seems strange to me, since Lazarus was definitely alive."

"May God bless your ministry...We will probably not meet in this life, but I do look forward to meeting in the next, not in Hades, but in Heaven!" (E-mail)

(Editor's Note: What you say is true, but the said article was not intended to be an exegetical study. As it was written 44 years ago, it was sermonizing to get across a spiritual point. Some of the parallels don't match. We should have edited the article before printing it, or had an explanatory footnote. But the spiritual lessons are there, whether talking about **Gehenna** hell or the place of discomfort antedating this.)

"HELL" IN THE KING JAMES VERSION

Although many translations of the Bible have been made into English (some good and some not as good), the King James Version of 1611 is still widely used by many people (among them being the editor of this paper). When there are possible question marks about words that seem archaic, we try to supply parallel words that would be helpful in getting the meaning across. This term "hell" is one that needs our attention. The KJV scholars used the one word "hell" to represent several different words in the original Scriptures. This can be confusing unless one makes a background study as to which word is behind the word "hell" appearing in our KJV. Consequently, some have misrepresented the Scriptures and have tried to teach that the grave is the only hell (and that there is no place of fire). What about this? What are the words in the original Scriptures, what do they mean, and why did the KJV translators represent these words by only one word in English? Following are gleanings, impressions and conclusions from our study on this.

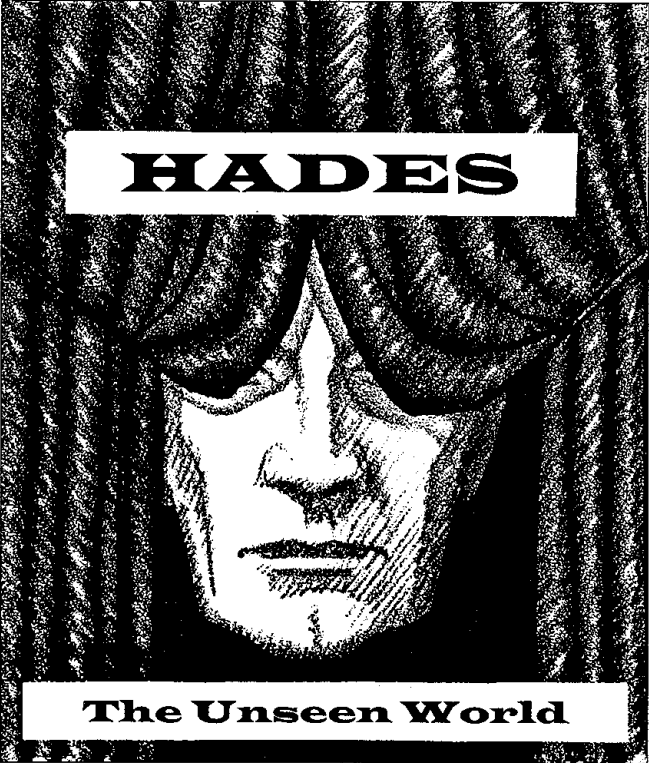
Three Words as "Hell"

In the New Testament, the KJV translators used the word "hell" somewhat generically to represent three different Greek words. The Greek words are (1) **gehenna**, (2) **hades** and (3) **tartaros**. **Gehenna** is found 12 times in the New Testament (Matthew 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). **Hades** is found 11 times (Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14) and **tartaros** 1 time (2 Peter 2:4).

Gehenna, Hell Proper

(1) **Gehenna** had its origin in association with the valley of Hinnom, actually meaning this. In the Old Testament times, when Israel went into idolatry, human sacrifices took place in this valley next to Jeru-

saalem in the worship of Molech as they would “burn their sons and daughters in the fire” (2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; Jeremiah 7:31). The valley was looked upon as being polluted and unclean, and in New Testament times was used somewhat as a city dump with continual burning, we understand. It was with that backdrop the term *gehenna* was adopted and applied to the place of eternal punishment. Such is its coinage and use. This is hell in what the modern usage of the term “hell” conveys.



Hades, The Unseen World

(2) We are told that *Hades*, in its etymology, properly means unseen. The basic stem of the word means seen, but it has the little *a* privative before it, thus making it signify unseen. All behind and beyond the veil of death is unseen. Thus, it is fittingly called *Hades*. At death the spirit enters into the unseen world of the dead. The word itself does not necessarily specify whether this state is bad or good. By itself it is generic, but it can be more specific, according to the context and other Scripture. Interestingly, in the account of the rich man and Lazarus, it is said that in “hell” (*Hades*, KJV) the rich man lifted up his eyes being in torment. With his death, Jesus is said to have gone to *Hades* (Acts 2:27,31). (This is the word behind the KJV’s translation of “hell” here). Jesus had earlier said to the thief on the cross, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Evidently, the story of the rich man and Lazarus unveils the situation as it was (and perhaps is). The good and the bad are partitioned by a great gulf, it would seem, one being in comfort and the other in discomfort. All of this anticipates the Day of Judgment when eternal heaven and hell will begin.

Tartarus, The Abyss

(3) *Tartarus* is only referred to in one place in the New Testament, 2 Peter 2:4. It is found in the words “cast them down to hell” (to send into *Tartarus*). It is the bottomless abyss, the confinement place of the wicked, fallen angels.

The English Word “Hell”

But what is the actual and literal meaning of the English word “hell” used repeatedly in the KJV of the Bible? This may come as a surprise to many, but the English word “hell” back in 1611 meant about the same as *hades*, that being covered or unseen. *The Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (John McClintock and James Strong) that first came out in 1867, says this of the term, “Hell, a term which originally corresponded more exactly to *HADES*, being derived from the Saxon *helan*, to cover, and signifying merely the covered, or invisible place—the habitation of those who have gone from the visible terrestrial region to the world of spirits. But it has been so long appropriated in common usage to the place of future punishment for the wicked, that its earlier meaning has been lost sight of.” This does not negate the teaching of a place of future punishment and fire as seen in the word *Gehenna* and the umbrella word, *Hades*. It just throws more light on the use of the word “hell” in the King James Version.

The O.T. Sheol in the KJV

Sheol is the Hebrew word in the Old Testament that corresponds to the word *hades* in meaning (referring to the unseen world of the dead). The use of the English word “hell” in translating *sheol* is quite interesting (and confusing for the uninformed). In the KJV *sheol* is rendered “hell” 31 times. It is rendered “grave” 31 times, and “pit” 3 times. This is quite revealing. “Hell” would be the more generic representation of *sheol*, pointing only to the unseen world. Evidently the scholars thought the context justified a more narrow meaning in the translation when they used the terms “grave” and “pit.”

Sheol Equals Hades in

The O. T. Septuagint Translation

Further interesting and revealing is to see how the Septuagint scholars of the Old Testament Scriptures brought this word *sheol* (what they conceived to be its meaning) over in their Greek translation. The Septuagint is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek that took place in Egypt about three centuries before Christ. It was quoted and used by the New Testament writers. Reportedly in this translation, the word *sheol* is found 65 times and is represented 61 times by the Greek word *hades*, 2 times by *thanatos* (death), and 2 times not translated. This shows us that they decidedly regarded *Sheol* and *Hades* as meaning the same thing. (But Peter’s quoting from Psalms 16:10 in Acts 2:27 and applying it in

(Continued on the Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

verse 31 makes it even more emphatic that *Sheol* and *Hades* are the same in meaning).

Thus in a circle we have come back to "hell." In our modern vernacular, this signifies a place of fire and punishment. And this is indeed taught in the Scriptures. (Woe be to those who would teach otherwise!). But it is more exactly defined in the word *gehenna*.

Yes, in the way we looked at it, as we spiritualized in the said article, there are "Four Things in Hell That the Church Needs!" But to more exactly understand what is meant by "hell," keep in mind the things we have tried to bring out here. □



■ "Please send me your articles on 'DANIEL'S 70 WEEK PROPHECY.'"

"You are a breath of fresh air in an area where so many seem to be out in left field. Why are so many Christians always trying to 'read' something into a Biblical passage rather than accepting what it says? I think much of the problem is simply new Christians spending too much time reading books about the Bible, especially popular prophecy books, rather than reading the Bible itself."

"Thank you for sharing these wonderful truths." (E-mail, Web page response)

(**Editor's Note:** This Bible material will be available in a book that is in the making. A notice will be posted when it is ready. Thanks for your e-mail).

■ *"My dad has been taking THE SWORD AND STAFF for years and I've enjoyed it very much. Here's a little story that I think you'll get a kick out of."*

Map of the World

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl. Finally, he tore a sheet out of his magazine on which was printed the map of the world. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to Shelby, and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together." After a few minutes, Shelby returned and handed him the map correctly fitted together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then the world came together."

CHILE:

■ *"An affectionate greeting in the name of the One who lives forever."*

"My most sincere gratitude for sending the three volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF numbers 1-2 and 3-4 and 5-6. They contribute greatly to knowledge. They are very useful to me. I shared them with my mother... Without a doubt for a long time I will have material to teach and preach on the radio like I am doing"

"Thank you. Thank you very much." (translated) □

Unchanging Things in A Changing World

(Continued from Page 8)

Judgment. The unlearned and the unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Let us respect the Word of God.

Concluding Admonitions

In the midst of a world of uncertainty and change, let us keep our souls anchored to the Rock of Ages. Our social pattern of civilization is in the process of change. People change constantly. They may say one thing one day and do another the next. But in the midst of a society in upheaval and a restless moving world, let us ever keep in mind that God is unchanging. He is still on His throne, and His purpose is still the same for mankind. The earth still moves on its axis. While man may think that the gospel needs streamlining and that he is his own savior, Christ is still Christ. He is the unchanging Son of God and the only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved (Acts 4:12). Men may say they no longer believe the Bible, that it is a book of fables, but we believe it! It would be mighty stupid to think that Supreme Intelligence couldn't or wouldn't communicate with His intelligent creation. Yes, that grand old Book read by our mothers still is the roadmap to heaven. Let us anchor our souls to the truths in the Bible, and we will find them anchored to eternity. Heaven awaits. These are unchanging things in a changing world. □

Correction in Last Issue

FOLLOWING is a little correction to a section of *The Sword and Staff* (that appeared in the last issue of 2003, page 4). In the Editorial Byways article it says that the seed fell on three places—*obviously it is four*. We don't know how this got into print, but below find the way the paragraph needs to read:

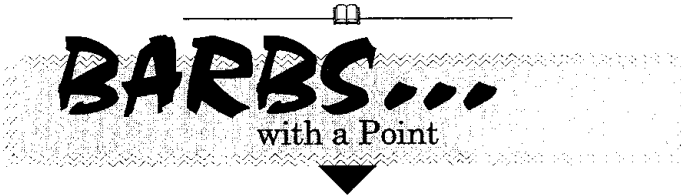
CAN A PERSON FALL?

"In Time of Temptation Fall Away"

The parable of the sower used by the Lord in getting across his teachings stands out very vividly (Luke 8:4-15). The seed fell in four different places by the way side, the stony place, among thorns and on good ground. In each case, possibly aside from the first one, there was life as the seed germinated. However, in reference to the stony place, or the rock, he said, "They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). So, a person can fall, having once believed. □

Seven Indispensable Things

1. Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22).
2. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
3. Without works faith is dead (James 2:26).
4. Without sanctification (holiness) no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).
5. Without love I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).
6. Without discipline you are not a son of God (Hebrews 12:8).
7. Without me (Jesus) you can do nothing (John 15:5).—*Selected*



LIFE MAY be short, but it is not little.

Be nice if you want to be treated nice.

Knowing the Bible is not the same thing as knowing God (although it is of utmost importance); the devil could even quote Scripture (Matthew 4:6).

Those who can be counted on, count.

Water left to itself goes to the lowest level, and if there is no outlet, with time becomes very stagnant—and what about man?

People easily bored can be very boring.

When we feed our insecurities and frustrations with food, our insecurities and frustrations don't go away and we get no slimmer.

Let your speech be better than silence or be silent.

In its inception without the aid of church buildings Christianity spread and filled the earth; today, too many times, it is kept behind the walls of church buildings in its proclamation and practice.

If you are proud of your virtue, you are not virtuous.

People who insist upon their rights when they are in the wrong have no right to do wrong.

If some people had to swallow their pride, it would probably choke them.

Those who identify themselves religiously by a religious movement, and not just the Scriptures, have a denominational mindset and desire some denominational identity.

Much of modern preaching can be characterized as "sweet nothings."

It is hard for the person who does not respect himself to respect others, and it is hard for the person who does not respect others to respect himself.

If you had to put your money where your mouth is, could you afford it?

Today is the first day of the rest of your life (but, then again, it could be the last one).

Educated ignorance is the worse kind (especially in religious matters).

"The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32:6) (sounds like many modern-day churches).

It is harder to stumble if you are walking in the light.

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

A thankful Christian is not a "candidate" for apostasy (Colossians 2:3-10).

If we don't pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), we will de cease without praying (Luke 18:1).

Desperate people do desperate things.

Righteousness exalts the nation that exalts righteousness (Proverbs 14:34).

In the New Testament elders were selected, not elected.

Zeal without knowledge is like driving at a high speed without knowing where you are going.

When all is said and done, there is usually more said than done.

Your parents brought you up, so don't let them down (especially in their old age).

Christ is real and if you want to be right with him, you must be a real Christian.

If you must talk about others, it would be better if you talked to God in prayer about them.

Negative thoughts produce negative results (and lack of results). □

Bank Account for One Day

IMAGINE there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening there is deleted whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out all of it, of course.

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purposes. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against "tomorrow."

You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success. The clock is running. Make the most of today.—*Selected* □

How to Overcome A Habit

HABIT is hard to overcome. If you take off the first letter, it does not change "a bit." If you take off another, you will have a "bit" left. If you take off still another, the whole of "it" remains. If you take off another, "it" is destroyed; all of which goes to show that if you want to get rid of habit you must throw it off altogether.—*Selected* □

"Lead Me to Some Soul Today"

IN OUR WORSHIP services we sing, "Lead me to some soul today," and march right out the doors, get into our cars, drive by thousands who are lost, stand with them in the cafeteria line, work with them, and even have lost souls living under our roof, but never say a word about the Lord and the Gospel. What would God have to do, more than He's doing, to lead us to a soul? The souls are there. All we need to do is confront them with a Gospel conversation. We must not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It is the ONLY POWER of God unto salvation (Romans 1:14-16).—*J.J. Turner* □

How Close Can You Drive?

THERE IS a story of a county superintendent of education who had three applications to fill a vacancy among the school bus drivers. According to the story, he devised this scheme for selecting the proper driver.

The superintendent took the first applicant to a sharp curve on a steep grade along the road and asked, "How close can you drive the bus to the edge of the road on the curve without going over the cliff with the children? The potential driver looked and replied, "I believe I can go to within a foot and still be safe."

The second person that had applied for the job heard the same proposition. He checked the curve and told the county official, "I believe that I can drive within six inches of the edge and not go over the cliff."

When the superintendent took the third driver to the same highway scene and made a similar proposition to him, the applicant immediately responded, "Do you think I'm crazy? I'm not interested in seeing how close I can get to the edge with the bus. I'd be trying to see how far I could keep away from the precipice with the bus." He got the job.

There is a lesson here for us. Too many professed Christians are like the "would be" drivers who thought in terms of how close they could come to the edge without going over. That is the way they live their lives religiously. Instead of taking the ut-

most care to be certain they are doing what is right, they engaged in questionable practices. It may be worldly amusement, careless habits, or the way they dress (or undress). There are so many questionable things in our modern society. They need to realize that the Bible says to "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" (Romans 12:2). And that we should "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrew 12:1). How we need to "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).—*Adapted* □

Good News for You

ADMIRAL ROBERT PERRY spent 23 years in pursuit of the North Pole before he finally reached it—the eighth time.

Winston Churchill's career was thought to be over as a public servant in the 1930's. He stayed alert and was fully prepared when the opportunity for leadership came his way—at age 66.

"The biggest mistake people make is giving up. Adversity is an experience, not a final act."

As Christians we must realize God desires the best in life for us because He sees in us the image of Jesus Christ. He is molding and making each one into the image of His Son. When disappointments come and plans are destroyed, rejoice in the Lord, greater things are in store for you in higher places.

Remember: When the night has passed, the morning dawns bright and glorious.

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us

*"Do all the good you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you can!"*

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39)

If you are walking in the will of God, there are no real “final acts” but only opportunities to improve your walk with Him.—*Larry Sullivan* □

Who Crucified Jesus?

WE AS CHRISTIANS

often meditate on the great love that Jesus had for us in that he shed his blood on the cross of Calvary. As the prophet Isaiah foretold (Isaiah 53), Jesus would be pierced for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds, we are healed. As we wonder at this mystery of godliness, we tell ourselves what a cruel act it was to crucify our Lord. We self-righteously point the finger at Judas and condemn him for selling out our Lord for a few pieces of silver. And then the weak-kneed Pilate who would rather please the people than to see an innocent man justified. The Roman soldiers also had their part, they nailed our Savior to the cross of Calvary. While the treacherous Jewish leaders, who were the cause of his death, sneered and mocked our King, asking that the killer Barabbas be released and the innocent man Jesus executed. Yes, it was all their fault, or so we convince ourselves.

The truth is that Jesus was pierced for OUR transgressions, he was crushed for OUR iniquities. We cannot escape the reality that it was because of us that he was mocked and murdered. Certainly Judas and the others were guilty, but let us not shift the burden of the responsibility. We’re as guilty as the same people who put Jesus on the cross.

Jesus died for all men and all of the sins of the world. The punishment that was put upon him brought us peace. That is, it brought us into the right relationship with our heavenly Father. Jesus in his death provided purification for our sins.

It is by his wounds that we are healed. The stripes and wounds that were inflicted upon Jesus were of the cruelest sort. He was continually beaten, slapped about the head and spit upon. He was given the most humiliating of punishments in being flogged. Criminals are often thought of as heroes when given fines and assessments and they brag



about the acts they get away with. But when a man is publicly beaten he loses all his pride and self-esteem and is looked down upon as a bad child being spanked for wrongdoing. The chagrin, from such an experience, within itself is terrible. Jesus suffered in this way. He was beaten, flogged, and brought down to humiliation before the people.

Christ was wounded that we might be healed. We were sick unto death, but he the sinless one, took upon himself suffering unto death for OUR transgressions and OUR iniquities. Christ became the source of our healing.—*T. Mulhollan* □

What If God...

WHAT if God wouldn’t take the time to bless us today because we didn’t take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn’t follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?

What if God hadn’t sent His only begotten Son because He wanted us to pay the price for sin?

What if the door of the church was closed because we didn’t open the door to our hearts?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him of our lives?—*Adapted* □

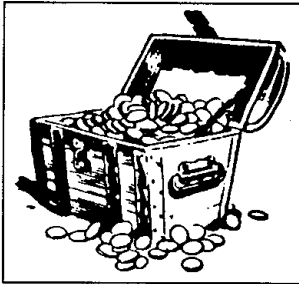
Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 4:9; 2. Genesis 25:1; 3. Genesis 25:12-16; 4. Genesis 49:1-3; 5. Numbers 26:59; 6. Exodus 17:8-13; 7. Joshua 5:12; 8. Esther 9:20-32; 9. Isaiah 6:1-7; 10. Matthew and Luke; 11. Matthew 2:14-23; 12. Luke 5:27-30; 13. Matthew 17:24-27; 14. John 20:24; 15. Mark 15:21; 16. John 19:25-27; 17. Acts 9:36-42; 18. Acts 14:8-19; 19. Colossians 1:4-8; 20. Revelation 3:14-20. □

*“Although God demands a whole heart,
He will accept a broken one if He
gets all of the pieces.”*

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. □



📖 **Bound Volumes of
THE SWORD AND STAFF
for 2001-2002 Are Now Ready!**

BOUND VOLUMES covering the years 2001-2002 (in 1 book) are now ready to be ordered. The pages are literally covered and filled with timely and timeless Scriptural material. Bound together with an index, the material is in more of a permanent and handy form to keep for future reference and study. Also, this is really nice for new readers who have just begun to receive the paper. They can read that which they missed out on. To receive this valuable material, please submit a contribution of \$8.25 per book to help pay for preparation and mailing. Thank you.—*Editor* □

- 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
□ 2001-2002 bound volume of *The Sword and Staff*—\$8.25
□ *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* □

I Thought of You

This morning when I awakened
And saw the sun above,
I softly said, "Good morning, Lord;
Bless everyone I love."

And right away I thought of you
And said a loving prayer
That He would bless you specially
And keep you free from care.

I thought of all the happiness
A day could hold in store;
I wished it all for you because
No one deserves it more.

—*Author Unknown*

**"Life would be more fun if we stopped
adding to our troubles and turned
to counting our blessings."**

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

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

➔ **E-MAIL ADDRESS:** jamesgibbons@earthlink.net
➔ **Check Out Our Web Site:** ➔ ➔ ➔

To Addressee or Current Resident

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

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