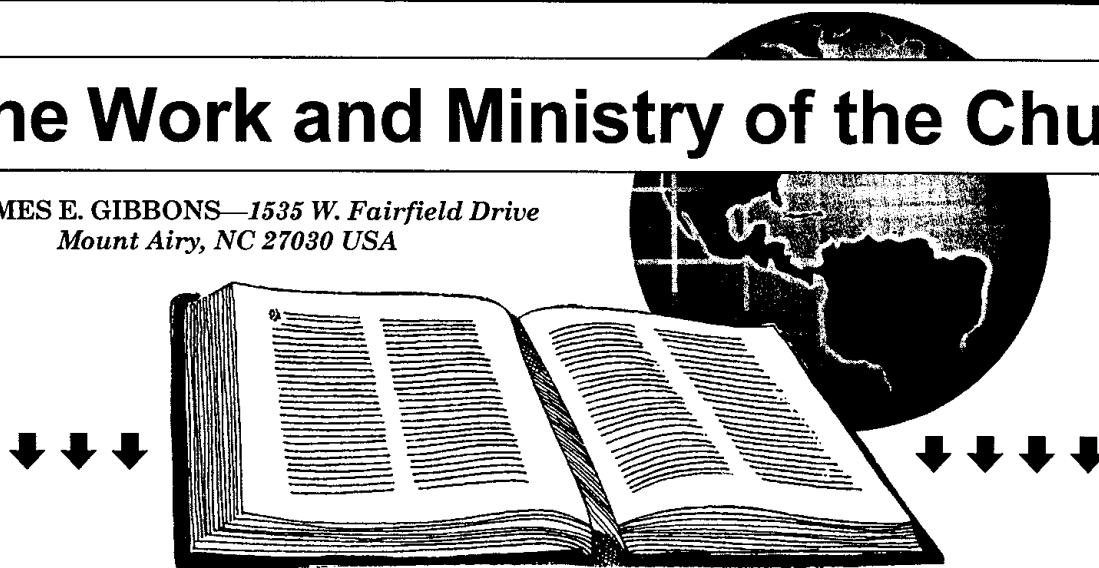


The Sword AND Staff

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

The Work and Ministry of the Church

By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 W. Fairfield Drive
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EPHESIANS 4:7-16, 1 Peter 4:10-11, Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 are Scriptures that are parallel in meaning and are best understood by studying them in conjunction with one another. Comparing different translations of these references can be helpful in understanding them better. They deal with the work and ministry of the church from the more formalized positions of leadership to the involvement of each and every member of the body of Christ. Those involved in ministry are spoken of as receiving grace, as having gifts and exercising faith. Here supernatural gifts are mentioned, along with natural gifts, and more formalized positions of ministry in the church. Even the ability to do simple acts of service is not left out, whatever one's aptness might be.

The Work and Ministry of Christ

Before making a study of these highly interesting and informative Scriptures, it would be well for us to look at the work of Christ while he was here. His whole life was underscored by the concept of ministry. He asserted that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Read John 13:1-17. Christians are people who are like Christ. The

church is the spiritual body of Christ in the world today, and in a very real sense should be engaged in the work he did. Paul says that we ought to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). The "work of the Lord" can be seen in what the Lord did while he was here and that which he has laid out for us to do. Jesus declared that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10; Matthew 18:11). Peter declared that Jesus "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38). Notice Matthew 9:35-38 and 11:28-30. Then having accomplished the mission for which he came into the world (Matthew 1:21; John 4:34; 9:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), the Lord laid out in the Great Commission the work his followers were to do. It likewise involves salvation of the lost, making disciples and teaching men to observe all things that he has commanded, as we live the good life (Matthew 28:18-20). Even as Jesus "went about doing good," we are always ready to respond with compassion and benevolence to those in need. Evangelism, edification and "doing good" constitute the work of the Lord. In fact, anything and everything we do should be the Lord's work, doing it

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

***REPENTANCE** brings salvation; impenitence, damnation.*

Christianity sanctifies all legitimate human bonds and relationships, and makes them even stronger.

Sour grapes are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

When we walk in the light as He is in the light, we are sanitized by the brightness of His illumination.

Success is determined by getting up one more time than we fall down.

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

By having second thoughts we can save ourselves from the folly of the first ones.

Some people get all bent out of shape if we don't bend the rules to accommodate them in their sins.

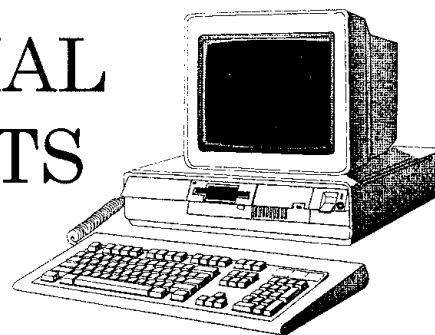
Sometimes it takes more courage to live than it does to die.

A Christian abounding in thanksgiving will be found abounding in the work of the Lord.

Put God first and you will not end up last in the end.

By victoriously abstaining from the bad, we enhance our capacity to enjoy that which is good.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



SERVANTS OF GOD, AND NOT OF MEN

COLOSSIANS 3:23 reads, "*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*" This is a very interesting Scripture and is loaded with many practical applications to Christian living. Let us consider this.

The immediate context involves instructions for servants in relation to their masters (teachings much needed back then, as a great bulk of the early church were people bound by imposed servitude). Not with a radical upheaval and convulsion in society, but like leaven silently, slowly and surely working from within, Christianity finally did away with slavery. Masters were to treat their servants in a manner "just and equal" (Colossians 4:1). Equality, and now being brothers in Christ, left no room for the severe master/servant relationship (and actually severed it). The converted runaway slave, Onesimus, now a new Christian, was to be received by his Christian master as a brother (Philemon, verse 16), possibly with the implication

Coming Soon!

LORD WILLING, David Vaughn Elliott's book, *Nobody Left Behind: Insight into "End-Time" Prophecies*, will soon go to press. Vaughn hopes his book will be available by September.

The book will have more than 300 pages enclosed in a full-color cover. It contains both a Scripture index and a subject index. In addition, there are fifteen pages of illustrations, including art work, charts, and photographs from Jerusalem and Rome.

The book is based on many of the articles by brother Elliott that appeared in *The Sword and Staff* in recent years. This former material has been extensively revised and much new material has been added. Major topics covered are the Rapture, the Tribulation, Daniel's seventy-weeks prophecy, 666: the mark of the beast, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the man-of-sin prophecy, the kingdom prophecies, an examination of the "Left Behind" series, rules for interpretation of prophecy, the second coming, and the end of the world.

The next issue of *The Sword and Staff*, Lord willing, will include specific instructions on how you can obtain your copy of this long-anticipated book.

a strong hint that he should be set free (Philemon, verse 21). We thank the Lord that slavery is not part of our modern world, but most of us still fall under the category of servants—“*hired servants*” (Mark 1:20). We work for someone else, and these principles that Paul lays out here still apply to us today.

The first thing that gets our attention that falls under the sweeping scope of “whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” has to do with the kind of service rendered as a servant. Paul says, “Not with eyeservice...but in singleness of heart, fearing God” (Colossians 3:22). In the parallel epistle of Ephesians written at the same time as Colossians, Paul says, “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Ephesians 6:6). In other words Paul is saying that we should be on the job doing our work, not just when the boss is looking, but all of the time. Put in a good days work, doing it “heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Although you may think you are not being paid and treated as you should be now, remember there is a “payday” in the sky by and by (Ephesians 6:7,8; Colossians 3:24,25). Do your work “as to the Lord,” showing the world what Christianity is all about, and the Lord will pay you for it in eternity.

Still considering this Scripture from the immediate context of employment, another important truth impacts us as we apply the principle of “whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” This verse implies and teaches that our employment must be compatible with Christianity. If we are called upon to do something wrong or questionable, it can never be right (“whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”). We cannot twist the rules and “do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” We must ever do that which is right. In sales, we cannot lie and misrepresent a product and “do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.” We cannot stock shelves and check out booze in a store (even a grocery store), and “do it heartily, as unto the Lord.” From the viewpoint of a New Testament Christian, there are many, many questionable things in our society today (from its highest echelons to the lowest). But if we are conscientious, and really want to be right with the Lord and please Him, Colossians 3:23 will ever be before our minds. There should never be a conflict with the principle laid down here. If so, we

should consider a career change. We are servants of God, and not of men. □



Created “Full-Grown”

SOME BELITTLE even the thought of a “young” earth, pointing to the stratified, molten layers in the earth’s formation and speaking of all the light years the celestial bodies are removed from the earth. They speak of millions of years. But they don’t take into account that, of necessity, different laws and principles would have to be involved in creation than that which sustains the creation after it was brought into being. We cannot judge how things came into being by what we see now. For example, God instantaneously created Adam from the dust of the earth. He was created full-grown. If this could have been observed from the sideline, Adam might have looked like he was, say, thirty years old, whereas, in fact, he would have been only thirty minutes or even thirty seconds old. The same can be said of the universe. It was created “full-grown” to fulfill the purpose for which it had been brought into being, with the rays from the heavenly bodies instantly striking the earth. If one believes in special creation, and not evolution, this is all quite simple to accept and understand. Also, even from this side of creation, there is evidence indicative of radical and catastrophic changes in atmospheric and climatic conditions that had a bearing upon the earth which would make judging the past by the present not always reliable and hard to do. □



EDITORIAL
Byways

**NONDENOMINATIONAL
NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY**

SOMEONE WROTE, asking, “What do you mean when you talk about nondenominational New Testament Christianity, not being a denomination, and being nondenominational New Testament Christians? You talk about local, undenominational New Testament churches. What do you mean?” The answer is quite simple because nondenominational New Testament Christianity is all that is found in the New Testament. Denominations, as we know them, had not come into being yet.

Meaning of “Denomination”

To understand what is meant when we speak of the nondenominational New Testament church, it is good to know what the word “denomination” means.

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EDITORIAL *Byways*

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Denominationalism signifies division and the word "denomination" itself means those who have been denominated, or named, in this division. Religiously speaking, the dictionary says "denomination" means "a particular religious sect or body, with a specific name, organization, etc." Denominations are characterized by distinctive names and doctrines that separate them from other denominations (and from the Biblical viewpoint, divergent names and doctrines from the New Testament). That's what makes them denominations.

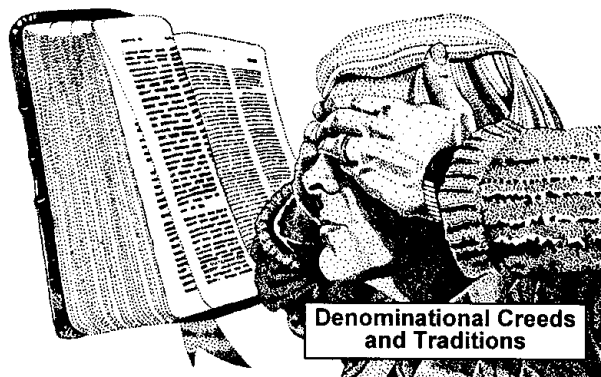
One Lord, One Body—One Church

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build *my church*" (one, not many). In John 10:16 he said, "there shall be *one fold* and *one shepherd*." Then further looking to the future, he prayed, "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). Fittingly in the second chapter of Acts, the day the church was started, we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with *one accord* in *one place*" (Acts 2:1). Those who repented and were baptized were "baptized into *one body*" (Acts 2:38-41; 1 Corinthians 12:13), having been "called in *one body*" (Colossians 3:15). There is "*one Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (Read all of Ephesians 4:4-6). In this same epistle, Paul wrote that Christ had broken down the wall of partition that divided humanity, "that he might reconcile both [all] unto God in *one body* by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:28).

Denominationalism is Wrong

Therefore, it is very apparent that denominationalism, which means division, is decidedly wrong. In fact, it is strongly condemned in the New Testament. "Heresies" (KJV), which involves the opinions of men and division, is listed as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and the 3rd chapter of 1 Corinthians. Sectarianism was raising its ugly head as the Corinthians were saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Paul raked them over the coals and said, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" Paul would even tell the Christians at Rome to "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). He also said, "A man

that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3:10). Yes, in that Scripture in Ephesians (4:3-6) that emphasizes the oneness of God's plan, he starts out by saying that we should endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Even in the Old Testament, Psalms 133:1 asserts, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"



Abiding by the Great Commission

The Great Commission stands as the fountain-head of authority and charter behind all Christian endeavor. It reads, beginning with Matthew 28:18 and going through verse 20, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" (NKJV). The resurrected Christ spoke with all authority in giving this commission. Its details were to be carried out. They were to (1) "go," (2) "make disciples of all nations," (3) "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and (4) "teaching them to observe all things" that he had commanded. The promise of Christ being with them was conditional that they abide by the particulars of the commission. The commission went beyond the immediate disciples in its execution; it was to be carried out unto the end of the "world" (age). To accomplish what the Lord wants accomplished and to be acceptable with him, we must abide by its terms today. Otherwise we are not included in the promise of him being with us (and denominationalism is not in his scheme of things).

Called into One Body (No Authority for Denominations)

As we brought out from the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord initially established one church. When the Great Commission is faithfully carried out, those who accept Christ in accordance with the Scriptures are made a part of this one church. One

doesn't join it like a denomination is joined. On the day the church was started, in Acts 2, those who repented and were baptized [immersed] for the remission of their sins were "added to the church" by the Lord (Acts 2:38-47). No one voted on them. No one joined. It was an act of the Lord that put them in the church. According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, we are "baptized into one body." Colossians 3:15 says that we are "called" into one body. If we are made a part of the "one body," which is the church (Colossians 1:18), and called into one body, why in the world join a denomination and be a part of division that is condemned in the Word of God? Anyone claiming to be working under the Great Commission has no authority to invite you to become a part of a denomination. There is no authority from Christ for even the existence of a denomination. His one church was begun in the first century. When we faithfully preach the gospel, and abide by the Great Commission, the Lord will add those who respond to this one church, the undenominational church of the New Testament. Thereby let us simply be a Christian, no more and no less. It is that simple.

The Local, Autonomous Church

Paul admonished the Ephesians to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). He is not talking about a denominational unity, or union. It is a spiritual unity that comes about by being in union with Christ (and with every other person who has been united with him, Galatians 3:27,28). This union basically is to be recognized within the bounds of the local church and therein expressed. A careful study of the New Testament Scriptures will reveal that the early church was made up of local, autonomous congregations. The universal church was not organized. There was no organization of the church beyond the local church. Evangelists were sent out to win souls and thereby start other local, autonomous churches. We are admonished to "love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17), not organize it. Any movement away from the local church, even in attaching national and regional names to gatherings, is in the wrong direction and is to be avoided. It is how denominations exercise and express themselves as denominations. The only headquarters we have is in heaven where our head is, the Lord Jesus Christ. Too many Protestant denominations seem to be headed back more and more to the mother of apostasy. Others seem comfortable in joining them.

The Word of God and That Alone

The Lord prayed for unity for whom? They who believed on him through the word of the apostles (John 17:20). On the day of the church's inception into the world, the multitudes cried out "unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren,

what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). We know what the answer was (Acts 2:38), and after they were baptized, "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..." (Acts 2:42). They were "with one accord" together (Acts 2:46). This refrain reoccurs throughout the book of Acts. In the context of them being in "one accord" we repeatedly read that "the word of God increased" (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). Their oneness, and their unity, was all brought about and interwoven with the Word of God. Paul tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Paul also tells us that people will not endure sound doctrine, and, consequently, the injunction is given to "Preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

And so with denominationalism today, another ingredient is added that causes problems, that is the doctrines and traditions of men. (What the Lord thought about such can be seen in Mark 7:1-13). In the protest against Catholicism of yesteryear, reactionary doctrines came into being among Protestants (thus, "faith only"). At the same time, not being all that removed from this system of error, certain practices were brought over and incorporated into doctrines of the new denominations. Through the years other movements have come into being, many times emphasizing one doctrine out of proportion to another. So in time, to hold their adherents together, man-made creeds or creed books in one form or another were brought into being. Many times immature thinking was crystallized in these books to be imposed upon oncoming generations, rather than just following the Bible and that alone. Many today naively don't even know that denominational creeds influence what denominational preachers preach.

THEREFORE, when we talk about simple, undenominational New Testament Christianity, we are talking about what we read in the New Testament uncluttered by denominational names and traditions. When we talk about being a part of the one church that was established in the first century, there is nothing self-righteous or arrogant about this. One church is all that the Lord started. As we have noticed, in becoming a Christian we are called into one body. If we choose to belong to a denomination, we have chosen division. We have gone against the Lord's prayer. We have chosen the narrow, sectarian way of looking at things, limiting ourselves to a denominational outlook, instead of simply being Christians and that alone.

We challenge you to be a New Testament Christian. That is the only kind you find in the New Testament. Why be anything else? □

The Work and Ministry of the Church

(Continued from Page 1)

as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17,23). His teachings permeate our lives.

I. EPHESIANS 4:7-16

With this in mind, let us notice the work and ministry of the church beginning with Ephesians 4:7-16. Paul states that "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (4:7). In the gifts that were given to the church, he logically starts with men of inspiration (apostles and prophets, the fountainhead through which the truth came) and moves on down to the continuing "offices" in the church, with the rank and file "membership." It reads, *"And He Himself [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* (4:11,12,15,16, NKJV).

Apostles and Prophets

Apostles and prophets are listed first as the impelling instruments of equipping, or "perfecting," the saints for the work of ministry. They were the source of the gospel message. Earlier in this epistle to the Ephesians, Paul lets us know that truths of the gospel before unknown, were now being "revealed unto his [Christ's] holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (3:5). And consequently, as we learn and incorporate these truths into our lives, we "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (2:20). Paul asserts in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Word of God, first coming from these inspired apostles and prophets, is the basic component in equipping the saints (every Christian) for the work of ministry.

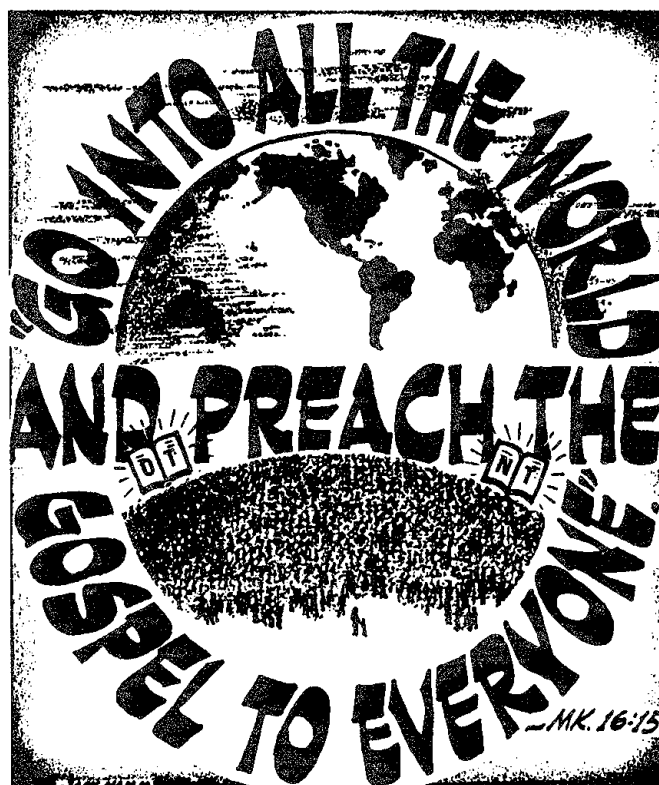
"Some Evangelists, and Some Pastors and Teachers"

In Ephesians 4:11, we next read that He gave "some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Evangelists are those who spearhead the work of

evangelism as they carry out the Great Commission. The "some," following the reference to evangelists, is spoken of as being "pastors and teachers." The "some" refers to the elders in the local church, "pastor" and "teacher" being two facets of their work.

"The Equipping of the Saints for the Work of Ministry"

The ministries of all of these formalized positions of leadership are moving in the direction of "the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry." Aside from the work of the deacon (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; "deacon" means minister in a technical sense), it is improper to speak of "the minister" or "minister" as the name of an "office" in the church (this is a generic term). The modern church with its specialized staff emphasizes the ministries available to its membership, that passively (too many times) occupy the pews waiting to be ministered unto. People look for the church that has the most services available to them. This concept is just the opposite of the Scriptures. It is not New Testament Christianity. All are to be involved in ministry.



Growth Through "Every Part" Doing Its Part

Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 4:16 that "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Every member, every part of the body, is involved in the body making increase of itself.

This should be true in reference to the body (the church) growing through soul winning or the body growing to maturity spiritually. God's plan is that every Christian be involved in the work and ministry of the church.

II. 1 PETER 4:10-11

The content of 1 Peter 4:10-11 is more brief than the other parallel references that we are considering in this article on ministry, taking more of a form as summary statement. It reads, *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen"* (NKJV). This admonition is more general as to the identity of the gifts, but more specific in reference to them being exercised ("as each one has received a gift," it was to be put to use). But he does give two illustrations as to the gifts, that of speaking and ministering. In exercising their gifts, their responsibility was according to their ability. They were to minister "to one another." Although they had leaders, this reasserts the priesthood of all believers that Peter had spoken of earlier in his epistle (1 Peter 2:5,9). All are to be involved in ministry. And the end result is the glory of God.

Admonition to Be Good Stewards

Each was to minister, according to his ability, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Yes, God looks upon us as stewards of our gifts and abilities. In reference to the concept of stewards, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Stewards must be faithful. According to other Scripture, they are accountable and must give an account (Luke 16:1,2; Matthew 25:14-30). Let us not take this matter of ministry lightly.

III. ROMANS 12:3-8

In Romans 12:3-8, starting off with himself and his gift as an apostle (which he calls "grace given to me"), Paul writes of various ministers and ministries in the church." Notice: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us*

prophecy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (NKJV). Varied gifts are given to all. These gifts or abilities should not be possessed with conceit but should be an impetus to unselfish service, each recipient humbly putting his or her heart into that which he or she is apt at doing. The exercise of the gift of prophecy may well refer to the supernatural gift of the Spirit, but most of these functions mentioned here are to be looked upon as natural endowments in doing the work of the Lord. This is especially true in the last two things listed. Paul's admonition becomes more generalized, as all are included in ministry, when he says, "he who gives," it is to be done "with diligence [sincerity]," and "he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

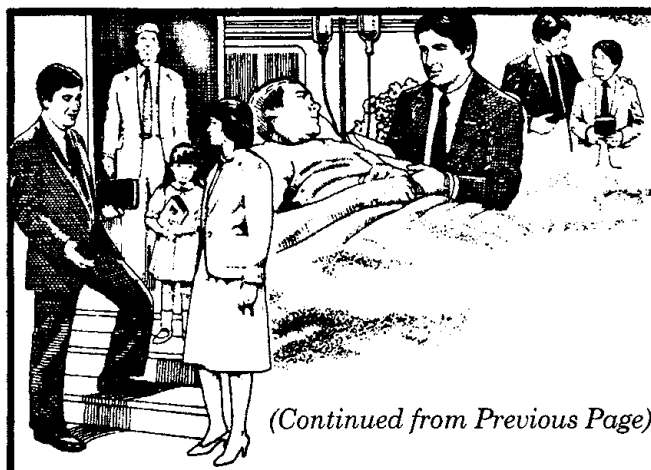
Barnabas, "Son of Consolation"

Besides his "office" as a preacher of the gospel in the early church, it seems that Barnabas was a man endowed with natural gifts that were a blessing to all. Early in the book of Acts, perhaps written as foreshadowing by Luke, we are told that the name Barnabas meant "son of consolation" (or encouragement) (Acts 4:36). That was not his original name, but one that the apostles had fittingly nicknamed him. He evidently was gifted at encouraging others. When the Jerusalem church heard of the great response to the gospel among the Gentiles at Antioch, they immediately sent Barnabas to encourage these new Christians (Acts 11:19-24). And it was not without the desired results. We read of Barnabas, "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (11:23,24). And from here Barnabas went on over to Tarsus and brought Saul (Paul) back to Antioch (11:25,26). This encouraging gesture on the part of Barnabas, no doubt, was just what Paul needed in this early stage of moving on more aggressively into his apostleship. Sometime earlier after Paul's initial conversion and coming to Jerusalem, before he had gone to Tarsus, Barnabas had reassuringly stood by him (Acts 9:26-31). The apostles were reluctant to accept Paul's conversion at face value, and, no doubt, what Barnabas did meant a lot to Paul.

Barnabas had a simple gift, but it was a blessing to all. Even today there are those who have such a gift. His or her simple, but radiating smile can make someone's day. You count for God.

(Continued on Next Page)

The Work and Ministry of the Church



(Continued from Previous Page)

The Household of Stephanas, Devoted to the Ministry of the Saints

As a matter of further interest, the household of Stephanas at Corinth is a good example of informal ministry. They had especially devoted themselves to the "ministry of the saints," which could include many things, and Paul urges the church to be aware of and recognize them in their diligence for the Lord. He said, "I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us" (1 Corinthians 16:15,16, NKJV). You don't have to occupy an "office" in the church to be engaged in its work and ministry. Like the Lord, go "about doing good."

IV. 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Read the whole 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and even chapters 13 and 14, to get a picture primarily of the exercise of supernatural spiritual gifts in the work and ministry of the early church. Here again the church is looked upon as the body of Christ with each member having his or her distinctive function. Although the church at Corinth was abundantly blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:4-7; nine are listed in chapter 12:7-11), they seemed to have been sadly lacking in that which came as a result of the basic gift of the Spirit Himself, that being the fruit of the Spirit (of which love is predominate) (Galatians 5:22,23). They were "puffed up" about who had the best spiritual gifts. This prompted Paul to write his great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13. Without love, even with supernatural gifts, they were nothing. But in his application of these truths to the body of Christ, the church, he reaches beyond supernatural spiritual gifts. All being part of the same body, they were made aware that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (12:26).

A Summary Statement

As this chapter is brought to a conclusion, Paul sort of summarizes what he has been saying. *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of heal-*

(Continued on Page 11)

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What shameful and disappointing thing did Noah do after surviving the destruction of the sinful world by the flood?
2. Who in the Bible is prophetically spoken of as being a "wild man" (literally, a wild ass of a man)?
3. What does the word "manna" mean?
4. What were the five cities of the Philistines?
5. How long was the ark of the Lord in the hands of the Philistines before it was returned to Israel?
6. Who was the mother of Solomon?
7. In the book of Proverbs to what did Solomon compare a beautiful woman who had no discretion?
8. What bald headed prophet in the Old Testament was insulted by some young people (and what happened to them)?
9. What woman tried to have all of her grandchildren killed so that she could be the ruler of Israel?
10. What Old Testament king was told to set his house in order and get ready to die, but was granted 15 extra years of life when he prayed?
11. What man did one of the Old Testament prophets say that God would make as His signet ring?
12. What three pairs of the disciples of Jesus had the same name?
13. What ruler of the Jews visited Jesus by night and was told by Jesus that a man must be born again before he could enter the kingdom of God?
14. What twofold results take place when a person repents and is baptized, according to Acts 2:38?
15. In the early church, who was Agabus?
16. Where was Paul, and who was trying to apprehend him, when he escaped over the wall of the city in a basket?
17. Is there any record of the injunction of Jesus to "shake off the dust of your feet" as a testimony against an unreceptive city literally being carried out in the book of Acts (and if so, what was the city)?
18. According to the apostle Paul, what was the verdict against a person who would pervert or preach any other gospel?
19. Although the Bible says "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26), what exception does it give, saying that it was "impossible for God" to do this?
20. In the book of Revelation who was able to open the book (scroll) sealed with seven seals that no man could open?

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

READERS'

...Response

APOLOGY: Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. □

FLORIDA:

■ *"I would like to receive your paper please...I have read several copies of your paper and think that it is one of the best I have ever read...Thank you..." (E-mail)*

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Thank you so much for your publication that has been coming to me since 1994...Please send me the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF from 1991 through 2000. The extra is a gift to help you continue your wonderful work that you do through your ministry. It is refreshing to read the truths of God's Word you share through your publication. May God continue to bless you and yours."*

■ *"Attached to this e-mail is a sermon by a local Methodist preacher [and an official communiqué from North Carolina Bishop Marion Edwards to the Methodists of the North Carolina Conference] on lesbians in their church. The part I don't understand is where he states, 'Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all.' And so we do not take a rigid judgmental stance but say that we are people of God's grace [first sentence in bold type is from the Methodist Creed Book, THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE, and the second sentence being the local Methodist preacher's words].*

"I am presently communicating with a member of this Methodist church...But this person has been brain-washed and bombarded with this philosophy of grace. Can you help me in how to explain to this person the truth that God would have them know and understand as to grace? And how do you explain the true meaning

of grace to a Methodist?

"I understand that grace is unmerited reward and mercy is relief from punishment we deserve. But this philosophy on grace that they have has really stumped me.

"Thank you for all the hard work on THE SWORD AND STAFF." (E-mail)

EDITOR'S RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT METHODIST

In responding to this letter, let us get all of this in context. The sermon referred to, involving the Methodist preacher, goes back to March of this year. It was prompted by the ruling of an official church court of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church that restored the "ministerial credentials" of a practicing, self-avowed lesbian "pastor" and consequently the *de facto* acceptance of same sex "marriage" (as she publicly was in such a union). This was contrary to the official laws of the church (denomination), and it raised questions as to how it should be dealt with. The local Methodist minister in North Carolina, referred to in the e-mail correspondence, was addressing this. The only way that the laws in the Methodist creed book could be changed would be by the General Conference of their denomination that was to meet in Pittsburgh, we were told. The newspapers tell us that it would seem that about 60 percent of the denomination would abide by the church law as it stood and about 40 percent were in favor of what happened in the Northwest.

In all kindness, but to the point, let us briefly notice the questions in this e-mail correspondence. I am a former Methodist. But now I come from the vantage point of a nondenominational, New Testament Christian (having no man-made creeds or denominational church laws to restrain me in studying and following the Bible). I find more than one thing objectionable in what has been brought up.

Homosexual Practice and Grace

The statement, "Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all," I find interesting. On the surface this almost sounds good. I likewise condemn homosexual practices (not because it is denominational law, but because it is the Word of God), and I "affirm that God's grace is available to all." But I am afraid that they mean something different from what I mean, and what I believe the Bible means. The purpose of grace is through the forgiveness of sins to bring us into a right relationship with God. Jesus came to save us from our sins, not in our sins (Matthew 1:21). Yes, Jesus forgave the adulterous woman. He said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee," but he also said, "GO, AND SIN NO MORE" (John 8:11). Read the first few verses of Romans chapter 6. Paul asked and answered, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...*Response*

(Continued from Previous Page)

How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" He went on to say, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). Jude speaks of "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" and being given over to "strange flesh" (Jude 4,7; lasciviousness mean unbridled behavior, licentiousness). Romans 1:26-32 is pretty straightforward as to what God thinks about homosexual practices. Read it. Why can't everyone understand this? Among other sins, Paul mentions the practice of homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and he says that people who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he says, "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." This is past tense, "such were some of you." This was not their lifestyle now. The writer of Hebrews says, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). The verses that follow this reference are very sobering for those who would lightly trod under foot the grace of God (10:27-30). As a professed believer, to willfully continue in sin is to cut oneself off from grace. The throne of grace is where we find help with our spiritual needs—like finding mercy, obtaining forgiveness and realizing victory (Hebrews 4:14-16); it is not a cover-up for us to continue in our sins. (And if we won't confess that sin is sin, how can the Lord forgive us? 1 John 1:9). The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins, not in our sins. Read Titus 2:11 and 12, and carefully ponder these verses. They say a lot.

What Is a Woman Doing "Pastoring" a Church?

In commenting on the situation in the state of Washington, the local Methodist minister said that "this jury has restored the credentials of a practicing, self-avowed lesbian United Methodist pastor and has judged her suitable to return to pastoring a church." Backing up beyond the question of homosexual practice and grace, which we have briefly touched upon, this raises another question for those who believe the Bible. What is a woman doing "pastoring" a church in the first place? The word "pastor" in the New Testament refers to the elder (or elders) of the local church (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). "Bishop" (overseer) is another term applied to the elders of the local church, the same person (Titus 1:5-7; Acts 20:28). Interestingly the apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:1, "If any man desire the office of a bishop [elder, pastor], he desireth a good work." Notice. He said man, and not woman. And this man was to be "the husband of one wife" (3:2). Also, Paul states in the same epistle, "But I

[as an apostle of Christ, 1:1] suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:12-14). All of this creates a problem, in view of the situation being dealt with in this little article. No woman ever got her credentials from the Word of God to be a "pastor" (elder, bishop) of a church. Only a man-made human denomination could give her such authority. God has placed the responsibility of leadership on the shoulders of qualified men.

Perhaps the mentality of many was reflected in what the wife of a local Methodist minister said to this writer. We were discussing the question of women preachers. I quoted to her what Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:12-14. She was very adamant in her response. She said, "Paul was a good theologian, but I don't agree with everything that he said." And one of the things she disagreed with was what he said in 1 Timothy 2. She even accused Paul of being a woman hater. Personally, I would back off really fast in trying to find fault with Paul's words. He said in 1 Corinthians 14:37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." That should settle it.

"Bishops" of the Church

In the attachment to the e-mail I received, as intimated, there was also the communiqué from the bishop over the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. This brings up another question and another problem for Bible believers, although this was not asked. Here we have one man called a "bishop" over a large number of churches that constitutes a conference (the North Carolina Conference). In the New Testament there was a plurality of bishops over each single church, just the opposite of the Methodist practice. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, and among those addressed were its "bishops" (Philippians 1:1), more than one over a local church. Paul met with the "overseers" (*episkopous* = bishops) of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17,28), a single church. Titus was to ordain "bishops" in every city on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5,7). Bishops were over local, autonomous churches, not one bishop being over many churches. It sounds like something is amiss somewhere, but such are the ways of denominationalism.

Our response to the questions asked in this correspondence has extended beyond what was initially brought up. But I think what I have said is appropriate. More could be said about many others things. My intentions have not been to be harsh, but to be straightforward, plain and informative.

TENNESSEE:

■ *"I have been receiving THE SWORD AND STAFF now for at least 12 years and look forward to each publication. Thank you for your great paper that gets the*

message out. I appreciate it very much for its truthful messages and edification..."

KENTUCKY:

■ "Please remove...from your mailing list." (E-mail)

VIRGINIA:

■ "Just a note of appreciation for your paper. I am particularly impressed with its balanced presentation of the truth of the Word of God." (E-mail)

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Thank you with all of my heart for giving your life and time for and to God and Jesus Christ! I wish I had found *THE SWORD AND STAFF* years ago!"

NEW YORK:

■ "I am incarcerated but would like to receive your publication. Thank you for your consideration."

OHIO:

■ "Thank you for your wonderful magazine!...I would like to send more money, but with other commitments and living on a low income, I try to pick out the best [to support]. May the Lord bless and keep you."

■ "Thank you for all your effort to publish *THE SWORD AND STAFF* as you do; plus thank your co-workers, too."

"Those of us who read it are very pleased with the teaching from Scripture that you give us in each issue."

"Please be well and use the enclosed contribution to continue your work."

INDIANA:

■ "Please discontinue our subscription." (E-mail)

■ "God bless you and your work! For the love of Christ."

■ "I have enjoyed your publication for many years. Thank you for your dedicated ministry. My prayers are with you. God bless."

■ "Really enjoy your outstanding publication. I rate it as my all-time, second place, favorite publication. Being a member of the Lord's body, you can imagine what my all-time, number one favorite is..."

ILLINOIS:

■ "We like *THE SWORD AND STAFF* very much and commend you on the work you are doing, and are enclosing a contribution to help in your work. Also, please send us two books, *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. Thanks."

TEXAS:

■ "I deeply appreciate getting the good pamphlet a few weeks ago on 'Our Great and Glorious God.' The ones I have shared them with have enjoyed them as much as I have mine. And now I need more. With all the good reading with the Scriptures to back it up, it gives renewed courage and a strong craving to read and re-read them, and so I do, along with my Bible...Thanking you in return, may the good Lord bless and help us all."

OKLAHOMA:

■ "Thank you for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Its truths are so refreshing. We tire of web site sermons and loud

music and hunger for gospel sermons. Thank you..."

KANSAS:

■ "Thank you! We appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* and your dedication!"

NEBRASKA:

■ "Love your paper!! Keep up the good work and may God bless you!!"

UNITED STATES:

■ "I enjoy your writing, but have one question. In a recent article in defense of the Bible you stated that you used the original 1611 King James Version. I know that you use good scholarship, so perhaps you would consider restating your position. You don't use the original KJV, but a revision probably the 1878 Oxford Cambridge edition." (E-mail)

Editor's Note: I was speaking loosely and was referring to what we commonly call the King James Version as it has come down to us in contrast with other translations. The reference to the date 1611 was when it initially made its appearance, not that I was using that particular edition (as it has subsequently gone through many editions and embellishments). The intended emphasis was the translation, not the date. I hope this was understood. I believe it was.

ZIMBABWE:

■ "I write to find out how to receive *THE SWORD AND STAFF*." (E-mail)



The Work and Ministry of the Church

(Continued from Page 8)

ing, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way" (12:27-31, NKJV). This summary seems to be talking about the supernatural gifts of the Spirit with the possible exception of "helps" and "administrations." With their fixation on gifts, Paul admonishes them to desire the "best gifts." Then he points them to something even better, love. It is the "more excellent way."

A Passing Phenomenon

In passing, perhaps we should say something about the passing of the supernatural spiritual gifts. They served their special purpose and became history. This is intimated in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians when Paul highlights the superiority of love over spiritual gifts. What a paradox! The Corinthians had a fleshly preoccupation with spiritual gifts, while neglecting love. They were all wrapped up in a passing phenomenon that was soon to be done away

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The Work and Ministry of the Church

(Continued from Previous Page)

with. Paul tells them that love “never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (13:8-10). These, representative of the extraordinary gifts, would soon be past tense in the life of the church. The end toward which all of them moved was “that which is perfect [complete].” This has reference to God’s completed revelation.

God’s Revelation is

Completed and Miraculously Confirmed

Even the miraculous in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ served a higher purpose beyond the accomplishment of the miracle. John asserts, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30,31). This was likewise true involving the miraculous in the ministry of the apostles. The writer of the book of Hebrews speaks of the “so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him [the apostles]; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts [distributions] of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], according to his will” (Hebrews 2:3,4).

All of this, including the distribution of miraculous gifts in the early church, served its extraordinary purpose and moved on with the goal of God in mind. His goal was His completed and miraculously confirmed revelation, “That the man of God may be perfect [complete], throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Evangelists, Elders and Deacons

Today we look upon the evangelist, elder and deacon as the continuing and permanent “offices” in the ongoing work of the church. That being the case, the more formalized focus of the evangelist is evangelism, winning the lost, and setting churches in order. The thrust of the elders’ work, who are also called “pastors” and “bishops [overseers]” in the New Testament, is teaching, edification and being pastors to the church. And the work of a deacon, among other things, involves benevolence (the compassionate arm of the church reaching out to the needy). This could be enlarged upon, but this pretty much covers their function.

While all of this is true in more of a narrow, specialized and concentrated scale with these men, there is a sense in which each should be involved in the work of the others and in which the whole “membership” of the church should be involved in the work associated with the evangelist, elder and deacon. In other words, every Christian personally should be a soul winner and do his or her part in helping the church be what it ought to be. Every Christian personally should be concerned about the well being of every other Christian. There should be mutual edification and encouragement. Every Christian personally should be involved with benevolence. All of this is just part of being a Christian. It is all part of the work and ministry of the church as a whole. Those in formalized positions of leadership, are just that (or should be), *leaders*. Leaders go before in ways that others should follow. Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). It is that simple.

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A Beautiful Life

Each day I’ll do a golden deed,
By helping those who are in need;
My life on earth is but a span
And so I’ll do the best I can.

To be a child of God each day,
My light must shine along the way;
I’ll sing His praise while ages roll
And strive to help some troubled soul.

The only life that will endure,
Is one that’s kind and good and pure;
And so for God I’ll take my stand,
Each day I’ll lend a helping hand.

I’ll help someone in time of need,
And journey on with rapid speed;
I’ll help the sick and poor and weak,
And words of kindness to them speak.

While going down life’s weary road,
I’ll try to lift some trav’ler’s load;
I’ll try to turn the night to day,
Make flowers bloom along the way.

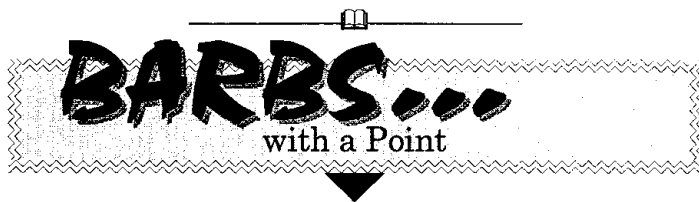
Life’s evening sun is sinking low,
A few more days and I must go
To meet the deeds that I have done,
Where there will be no setting sun.

—By William M. Golden

Take a Moment to Pray?

BEHIND the English word “moment” (1 Corinthians 15:52) is *atomos* in the Greek New Testament. We also derive our word “atom” from this word, meaning it is too small to split. It literally means indivisible (from the negative *a*, and *temno*, “to cut”). In plain language it means too small to cut or divide.

So, when someone says, “Let’s take a moment to pray,” do they mean, “Let’s spend the smallest amount of time in praying”? If so, what will we do now that they have split the atom. That’s not much praying.—*Adapted* □



SIN BY any other name is still the same.

Going the course of least resistance is what makes men and rivers crooked.

We have observed that people living in parts of the country that are “way out” politically speaking seem to be more inclined to have religious concepts that are parallel to this (not as orthodox or conservative).

If the discussion of a subject produces more heat than light, perhaps someone is in the dark.

A world that is plunging more and more into the abyss of sin and wickedness does not need a compromising church that does not know the difference between right and wrong (and would even call that which is wrong, right).

Inflation nor recession have changed the wages of sin (Romans 6:23).

Calling something that is not that does not make it that, but that which is that should be called that.

Numbers don’t count unless they have been added by the Lord.

If you are “too” preoccupied with being “cool,” you may end up where it’s not so cool, but hot.

Be sure that the light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train.

How can they talk about homosexual “civil unions” when there is nothing civil or civilized about it?

Religious “belief” and practice without knowledge is little more than superstition.

Ma’am, is what you are wearing saying that you are dressed to be chaste (pure and holy) or that you would like to be chased (by men)?

If God used a dumb donkey to speak his message, surely He could use me!

A body ought to be busy, but not a busybody (2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15).

I get very impatient with people who have no patience, but what does that say about me?

Zeal without knowledge is like getting all excited about nothing (nothing as far as our knowledge of it is concerned).

If we promote, preach and talk religion in an irreligious way, the purpose of religion is defeated.

The church that weds the world in its attempt to bring in numbers will no longer be the bride of Christ.

We should never pass the buck, but pass the bucket and get to work.

Non-moral issues become moral issues if they destroy a man’s fellowship with Christ and his fellow Christians.

The person who uses flattery really wants to use you.

Love is kind, the kind of love taught in the New Testament, and if you are not kind, you are the wrong kind.

You cannot hold another person down without being on the same level with him.

Church leaders should not be artificially imposed from the top, but should arise to the top from below (their natural qualifications and experience advancing them to their position).

One religious error is not corrected by introducing another religious error. □

The “Stop” Sign

THE SIGN said, “STOP.” I did not stop. So I told the judge:

1. Every person has the right to choose his own interpretation of this word.
2. My parents did not believe they had to stop. I would be condemning them if I stopped.
3. I have gone so long without stopping I just do not think I can start at this time.
4. My preacher says I do not have to stop.
5. My parents made me stop when I was younger, so I just do not do it now.
6. I believe that only going is essential. Stopping is optional.
7. How do you know the word really means today what it did when it was written?
8. I will stop after I get my life straightened out.
9. I will stop when my wife decides to stop. It would mean more if we did it together.
10. It is nobody’s business whether I stop or not.
11. I feel that as long as we are all sincere, Your Honor, that you will accept us no matter what we do.—*Selected*

Hmmmm? Sound familiar? □

The Work and Ministry of the Church

(Continued from Page 12)

Closing Remarks

Although much of what we have written in this article may not set well with many in the ranks of the modern day clergy, we believe it is the truth of God. Although what we have said may run counter to all of the non-spiritual activities passed off as the work and ministry of the church, we stand behind what we have written. The work and mission of the church is primarily spiritual. There may be a lot going on in some places, but is it of God? We are afraid that it caters to the flesh. What can be said about entertainment and play programs? It was said of Sardis, one of the seven churches in Asia, in Revelation 3:1, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

How we need to get the message that all are to be involved in the work and ministry of the church. Until we do, the concept of the church of the New Testament in its purity and simplicity has not been restored. The cause of Christ goes unfulfilled. □

"Is There Any Hope?"

YEARS AGO an S-4 submarine was rammed by a ship off the coast of Massachusetts. It sank immediately. The entire crew was trapped in a prison house of death.

Every effort was made to rescue the crew, but all ultimately failed. Near the end of the ordeal, a deep-sea diver who was doing everything in his power to find a way for the crew's release thought he heard a tapping on the steel wall of the sunken sub.

He placed his helmet up against the side of the vessel and he realized it was Morse Code. He attached himself to the side and he spelled out in his mind the message being tapped from within: "Is...there...any...hope?"

Do we not find ourselves, as we are drowning in the difficulties of this life, asking a similar question? We ask such things as, "Is there any hope for our nation? What hope does my family have? What hope is left for the church? What hope do I have? Is there any hope?"

We need to realize that the Bible is a message of hope. Paul declared, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The Hebrews writer states, "Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things,

in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil" (Hebrews 6:17-19).

Peter says we have been begotten unto a "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3).

True and lasting hope comes as we rely on and obey the Word of God.—*Tom Moore* □

Changing the Name Does Not Change the Sinfulness of Sin

CAN ANYONE guess what a "portable hand-held communications transcriber" might be? In the language of military contracts it is a simple # 2 pencil. However, calling it by the "high" sounding name does not alter the fact that it is still just a pencil.

When it comes to changing the names of what we call (or once called) sin, the only purpose of which is to mask the very real and tragic cost of sin. Homosexuality is sexual immorality, but when people refer to sexual perversion as simply being "gay" or "an alternative lifestyle," then the sinfulness of the sin is hidden. Often abortion selfishly takes the life of an innocent child, but when pro-abortion becomes pro-choice and pro-life is referred to as anti-choice, then sinfulness of the sin is hidden. "Checking" your answers with another student's test paper is still cheating. "Creative bookkeeping" that masks a company's real profits is still dishonest. "Living together" is still sexual impurity. "Chemical dependency is still drunkenness.

Shakespeare is the one who said that a rose by any other name is still a rose. Well, a pencil by any other name is still a pencil, and sin by any other name is still sin. God said through the prophet, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). Yet it seems as though that is the very character of our age.

Yet Jesus said to His followers, "You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). If the church is to be the

The Attitude of Many

"Please don't disturb me with the facts,
When I'm content in being lax.
I won't take time to think, you see;
If wrong, that's good enough for me."

—*James E. Gibbons*

kind of salt that makes a difference in the world, it must continue being the voice in society that refuses to call sin by any other name.—*Russell Mullins* □

Why Did Jesus Come?

JESUS CHRIST claimed to be God, saying, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30-33, ASV). Jesus used the Greek word “one” to indicate He was “one in essence or nature” with the Father. Crisply Jesus established His claim concerning His relationship between Himself and the Father. It stirred anger and it is evident that the Jews understood His claim. In fury they sought to supplant the law and go directly to execution. Repeatedly Jesus used terms which identified Him as “one” with deity (John 5:17,18). Jesus claimed to be ageless and before Abraham was (John 8:58). With the strongest of oaths, “Verily, Verily” the Lord claimed the name of a divine. These Jews recognized Jesus’ claims to an eternal existence. The eternal formula of “I AM THAT I AM” gave an absolute timelessness to Jesus (Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:29; Isaiah 43:10). The Jews were familiar with the idea of Jehovah being the great “I AM” as an eternally existing one. Their insight into the statement of Jesus prompted them to call it blasphemy. Calling Himself “I AM” fully declared His deity. Hence Jesus did not seek to explain. He did not try to convince the Jews that they had misunderstood, rather He repeated the statement several more times in various ways (John 3:34; 5:23,24; 8:19; 14:1,9; Mark 13:31).

Jesus asked for and accepted worship reserved only for God (John 4:20-23). The leper and man born blind worshipped Him (Matthew 8:3; John 9:35-39). His disciples worshipped Him (Matthew 14:33). Thomas, the doubter, said, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:27-29). Yet His disciples would not allow worship of themselves (Acts 10:25,26). Angels would not allow themselves to be worshipped (Revelation 19:10). Some called Jesus “good.” If He was not “God with us,” He was a deceiver, and if He was not God, He was not good. If when Jesus made claims and He knew He was not God, then He was lying. If He was a liar, then He was a hypocrite because He claimed honesty. If He was not God, He lived and taught a colossal lie. If He was not God, He was evil beyond description for He taught mankind to trust in Him for their eternal destiny. If He believed His own lies, He was foolish. Being crucified because of self-deceit is beyond reason. No rational person would accept this.

Jesus came to earth to become God with man (Philippians 2:1-13). Jesus was God and be-

came man (Matthew 1:18-20). Why? Jesus had a work to perform. He was sent into the world. Some have accepted Him as a great moral teacher; if He was not God, but a mere mortal and said such things, He could not be called moral. Either He was a lunatic calling Himself God, a devil from Hell, a sinner or He taught the truth.

Was He a liar? It is Christianity that presents the world the ideal character, which has molded history for over 2000 years. It has the highest of virtues, temperament, love and strongest incentives to practice what Jesus said. His preaching did more to change the world by regeneration of purity than all moralists, philosophers or teachers the world could boast. To claim Jesus was a liar is so momentous that it cannot stand in the light of His moral purity and dignity revealed in His word and work, which are universally acknowledged. Jesus’ character was so innovative, faultless, uniformly consistent, human and beyond human in greatness that he could not have been a fraud, liar or fraudster. He neither lost his moral balance, or equilibrium of character, nor was he troubled by persecution, nor did he fail to wisely answer all tempting questions, nor fail to calmly and deliberately predict the events of His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to the right hand of His Father. By foretelling of the Holy Spirit and seeing what the Holy Spirit taught, makes any claim of Jesus as a liar revolting, opposed to common sense and so shallow that the mere statement is self-condemning.

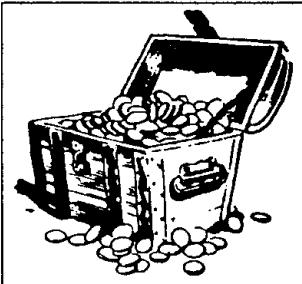
How could in view of reason, common sense or experience an imposter, swindler, selfish or depraved man invent and consistently maintain from birth to crucifixion moral purity, character and noble nature which has not been equaled? Jesus carried out unparalleled ethics, beneficence, love unequalled and a sacrifice of His own life in a time and place of the strongest prejudice. Someone, who lived as Jesus, taught such morals and died as He died could not have been a liar. *What alternative do men have? Jesus came to save them!*—*Don Hatch* □

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 9:18-21; 2. Genesis 16:12; 3. Exodus 16:14-16; 4. Joshua 13:3; 5. 1 Samuel 6:16-18; 6. 1 Samuel 7:2; 7. 1 Kings 1:11; 8. Proverbs 11:22; 9. 2 Kings 2:19,23-25; 10. 2 Kings 11:1; 11. Isaiah 38:1-5; 12. Hag-gai 2:20-23; 13. Luke 6:13-16—Simon, James and Judas; 14. John 3:1-5; 15. Acts 2:38; 16. Acts 11:27-30; 21:10, 11; 17. 2 Corinthians 11:32,33 (Acts 9:23-25); 18. Acts 13:51; Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; 19. Galatians 1:6-9; 20. Hebrews 6:18; 21. Revelation 5:1-9. □

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Horse Sense

A horse can't pull while kicking.
This fact I merely mention.
And he can't kick while pulling,
Which is my chief contention.

Let's imitate the good old horse
And lead a life that's fitting.
Just pull an honest load, and then
There'll be no time for kicking.

—Author Unknown

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