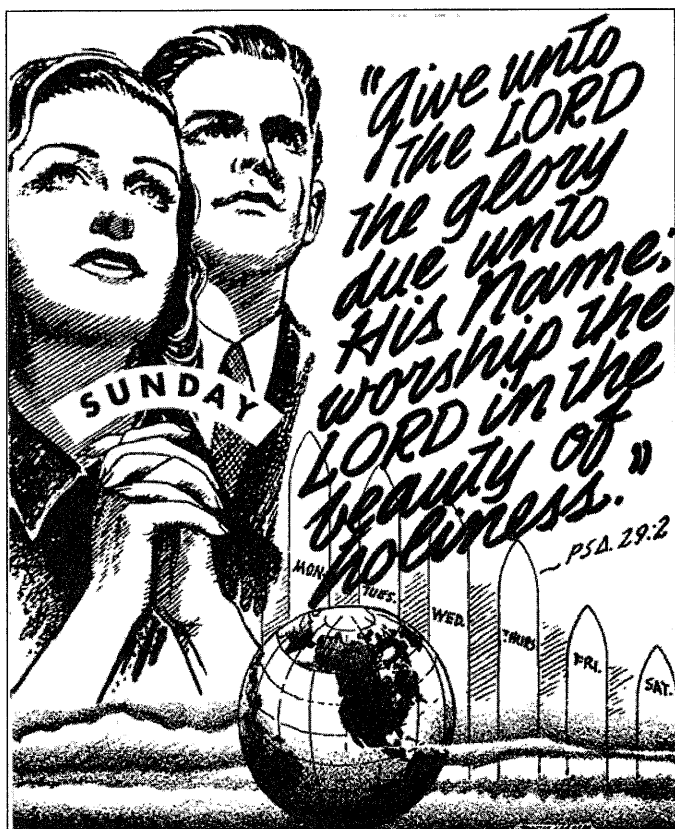


The Sword AND Staff

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

What Is the Meaning of John 4:24?

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"



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

WE BELIEVE that the so-called "Christian world" today desperately needs to make a serious study of the subject of worship. A lot of strange, unusual and irregular things are "going on" in the name of worship. And, tragically, so much of it seems to be carnal, man-centered and in the category of entertainment (thus, contrary to the Scriptures). A generation brought up on television is more disposed toward entertainment. Somewhere along the way dignity and respect have given way to the ways of the world.

A good place to begin such a study would be in John chapter 4. In anticipation of the coming New Testament, which was imminent, Jesus profoundly said to the Samaritan woman at the well, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24, NKJV). What does this mean, in the light of the immediate context, and what are more extended thoughts from the New Testament that need to be considered on this subject?

I. THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

Going Through Samaria

In his early ministry, Jesus and his recently selected disciples were returning from Judea to Galilee. They chose not to go the route of the blue-blooded Jews, up the Jordan Valley to avoid contact with the scorned Samaritans, but they went directly through Samaria.

The Woman at the Well and Her Question

While they had arrived in the midst of the land at Sychar, and his disciples had gone to get food, Jesus became engaged in conversation with a Samaritan woman who had come to Jacob's well to draw water. When Jesus asked her for a drink, she was somewhat startled and set aback. He, a Jew, was talking to her, a Samaritan and a woman (and asking for water). Wasn't he stretching the social mores a little far? "For the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." Whereupon the Lord channels their thoughts in the reverse direction, offering her "living water." As the intriguing dialogue continued, guided by Jesus, it became apparent that she

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially *SPEAKING...*

LET US do right because it is the right thing to do.

We should love the truth and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Knowledge points the way; wisdom gets us there.

We must come to ourselves (Luke 15:17) before we can come to God (Luke 15:18).

It is hard for the person who is not at peace with God (and, consequently, with himself) to be at peace with others.

When the apostle Paul said, "Let all that you do be done with love" (1 Corinthians 16:14), he really said, "Let all that you do be done with unselfishness."

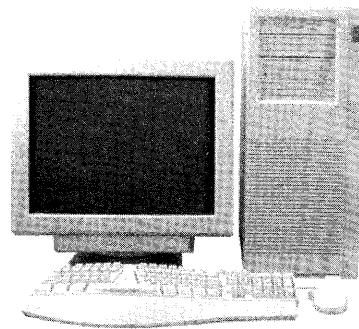
If you think that you have lost your "luck," you might try looking for it at the workman's bench.

It is hard for the old ship of Zion to navigate in shallow waters (be a sincere, serious and an "in-depth" student of God's Word).

The practice of good manners basically is being unselfishly mindful of and actively showing respect to others.

If we look at everything through the eyes of love (unselfishness), we will the more readily see opportunities to do that which is good.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



WATCH AND BE FOUND FAITHFUL

READ the Bible. From Adam and Eve onward, even from the beginning, man has never been faithful to God for very long. Remember the universal flood, and what lead up to it. Consider the nation of Israel under the judges. It seems to be one unending cycle, with judges having to be raised up to deliver Israel and call them back to God. Stephen in his defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7 makes it plain that Israel in its history by and large had never been faithful to God (although there usually was a faithful remnant). The prophets continually had the thankless task of calling the nation back to God. And because of the nation's continued unfaithfulness they experienced God's wrath by being taken into Babylonian Captivity. His ultimate wrath was seen in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans.

With the coming of the Redeemer and Savior into the world, we would think that things would be different. But the Lord warned of "false Christs" to come and said that "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:11-13). He even asked the question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) The apostle Paul repeatedly warned of a "falling away" that was coming (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-7; 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5). He even said to the Ephesian elders, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, **watch**, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31). In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the Lord addresses problems of departure and potential apostasy in the seven churches of Asia. Much of the New Testament was written to deal with "falling away" and unfaithfulness.

These words are not written to be pessimistic or to discourage, but to be realistic. It is true that Paul affirmatively asked, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), and Christ said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18). (Yes). But, at the same time, remember, we are a fallen race of people. Our inclination, if not averted, is toward apostasy. (A child does not have to be taught to do wrong; he just does it—Proverbs 29:15). We must live close to the Lord and be on guard. In view of Paul's warnings in Acts 20:28-32,

elders, who are the pastors of the flock, were instructed to **“watch”** to safeguard the church. (And in this connection, they were pointed to the Word of God, Acts 20:32). Hebrews 13:17 says that “they [the elders] **watch** for your souls.” This is their solemn responsibility. Likewise, in view of coming apostasy and in the same vein, Paul said to Timothy, “But **watch** thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5). Then, speaking more generally, Hebrews 3:12-14 reads, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” More than once, Jesus said to his disciples to **“watch and pray.”** Then these words are expanded to include us: “And what I say unto you I say unto all. **Watch**” (Mark 13:37).

Any way that we look at it, we need to watch. Because men are not watching, the church may plunge into darkness. Noble religious movements may fizzle out. Doctrines may erode and be lost. The trappings and ways of the world may be brought into the church. We may lose our convictions about right and wrong.

Remember. History bears out that man has never been faithful to God for very long. Let us watch and be found faithful. □



What Is the Meaning of John 4:24?

(Continued from Page 1)

had been married five times and was then living with a man who was not her husband. Because of the Lord’s penetrating insight into her situation, she concluded that he must be a prophet. Whether in earnest, or simply trying to take the flak off of herself, we know not, she now brought up a popular religious question for Jesus to answer. Where was the proper place to worship God, on Mount Gerizim (in Samaria) or in Jerusalem?

Disdain for the Samaritans

The disdain for the Samaritans had its beginning back in Old Testament times. When the people of the northern kingdom were carried away into Assyrian Captivity, misplaced people from other lands were brought in to populate Israel and especially Samaria (2 Kings 17:6-41). They were heathen in their religion, but adapted a modified, mixed and corrupted version of the Jewish religion.

Then years later when Jews were returning from Babylonian Captivity, and were rebuilding their temple in Jerusalem, these people wanted to be involved with them (Ezra 4:1-6). The Jews would not allow this, and bad blood continued between these people up into New Testament times. Sometime before the Christian age, these mixed people in Samaria had built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. However, it was no longer standing when the Lord was here, but they still revered the mountain as a place of worship.

The Full Exchange of Words

With that said, here is the full exchange of words between the Samaritan woman and Jesus about worship.

The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:19-24, NKJV).

II. THE MEANING AND APPLICATION

Heart of What

Jesus Said About Worship

At the very heart of what Jesus said here, these words stand out: **“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”** What does he mean by “in spirit and truth”? This must be understood in the light of the rest of the conversation.

“The Hour Is Coming, and Now Is...”

By saying, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth,” he is implying the situation spoken of by the woman and worship up to that time had not been “in spirit and truth.” The Patriarchal age and the Old Testament age following the fall of man were imperfect periods of time as far as man’s relationship to God was concerned. They were simply preparatory, getting man ready and looking forward to the coming of the Savior and the New Testament age. They were merely shadows of the spiritual reality that was yet to come (Hebrews 10:1). Paul said the law was a tutor or “schoolmaster” to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). John wrote, “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus

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What Is the Meaning of John 4:24?

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Christ" (John 1:17). With the death of Christ upon the cross the Old Testament ended (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15; Galatians 3:24-25), and the New Testament began (Hebrews 9:15-17). Therefore, our appeal is not to the imperfect Old Testament, in matters of worship or Christian doctrine, but to the New Testament (this side of the cross). Having said that the temporary Old Testament requirements were removed (Colossians 2:14), Paul stated, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17). The hour that was coming when men would worship "in spirit and truth" was ushered in with the death and resurrection of Christ.



Worship "in Spirit..."

"God is Spirit"—that is the key to understanding the first part of worshipping God "in *spirit* and truth." Our worship should correspond to the likeness of God. Being spirit, God is not physical. His presence is everywhere. However, the Old Testament put the emphasis upon the physical, being a shadow and antitype of the New Testament. In the Law of Moses God told the children of Israel that when they got established in the Promised Land, He would choose a place where He would "put his name" (Read Deuteronomy 12:5-11). That place was later embodied in the temple in Jerusalem. In 1 Kings 8:13-53ff in the dedication of this temple by Solomon, he continually makes reference to this. God's name was there and God's presence was there. This impressive building was central in their worship of God. Even when they were not there, they would pray toward that place.

In the New Testament God is not assigned to one place and to a temple "made by hands." Read what Stephen said to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:47-50) and what Paul declared on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:24-25). The Samaritan woman and the Jews had a hang-up about a place, in "this mountain" or "in Jerusalem." The Lord said, "Neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem"—*this was not the issue*. Yes, as Christians we assemble and worship (Hebrews 10:25), but the place is inconsequential. God is spirit. God's presence is everywhere. Paul as-

serted, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8). And if we worship only when we assemble, we miss the point. God's presence is everywhere. Worship is a way of life every day (Romans 12:1-2; James 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). And the excessive and embellished emphasis upon church buildings, how obscene!

Worship "in Spirit and Truth"

What is meant by the second part of the Lord's statement, saying that worship must be in "spirit and *truth*"? What is truth? Truth simply means truth, as that word is commonly understood. Jesus pointedly said to the Samaritan woman, having reference to her mixed up and perverted religion, "You worship what you do not know..." And salvation was "of the Jews," not as a people, but because of their religion. They were God's tool in the unfolding of His plan of salvation for all of mankind. He had personally revealed Himself and the Scriptures to them, whereas the Samaritans didn't even know who they were supposedly worshipping. God is a God of truth and our worship must be in keeping with the truth. Even in the Jews' deviation from their Old Testament revelation, Jesus said that in vain they were worshipping God, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:7-9). How much more is this true today in God's completed and final revelation to man! The hour "now is." We must worship God "in *spirit* and *truth*."

"True Worshipers"

(And, as an added observation, Jesus spoke of "*true* worshipers." Likewise, the worshiper must be right before the worship can be right—before it can be "in spirit and truth." This eliminates the non-Christian entertainers.)

III. EXTENDED THOUGHTS

The Greek Word for Worship

The primary Greek word translated worship in the New Testament is both interesting and strange in its origin. The word is *proskuneo*. Breaking down the root syllables of this word, we have *pros* (toward) + *kuon* (dog). The picture in the word is that of a dog licking its master. Then its practical and extended application to humans is to show homage, honor and respect. This may be done physically, as in bowing, and spiritually, by having the feeling of homage in our hearts. It is an external and an internal thing. These combined ways of expressing homage (i.e., worship) are found throughout the New Testament (Acts 10:25-26; 1 Corinthians 14:25; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9).

The English Word "Worship"

Our English word "worship" really is the part of another word that has been merged with the suffix "-ship." That other word is worth. The combination is worth + ship, or worthship (worship). When we worship the Father, or Christ, we declare their worthiness. We glorify their name. What John saw in the heavenly vision in the book of Revelation illustrates this.

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

***"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"***

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things,

And by Your will they exist and were created."

(Revelation 4:8-11, NKJV)

Blessed, Bless, Blessing

Our English word "eulogize" actually comes from the basic part of one of the Greek words that many times is translated "blessed," "bless," and "blessing" in the New Testament. We are told in the lexicons that this word means to adore and praise. In English when we eulogize someone we praise and say good things about them. From what James writes in James 3:9-12, we see bless is just the opposite of curse. The apostle Peter wonderfully uses this term in 1 Peter 1:3 when he says, "Blessed [eulogized, praised] be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Paul likewise says about the same thing in Ephesians 1:3. Then he repeatedly says many great and wonderful things about God and what He has done. Peter likewise extols God. The following quotation from Revelation vividly illustrates this as being a part of worship.

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

***"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."***

Worship That Is Dignified and Distinct

When that which some may call worship is all "souped up" as a lot of loud, indistinguishable noise

and commotion, is God being "blessed"? Is He being eulogized? Is He being glorified? Really, is He being worshipped? Where is the dignity and respect that should be manifested before the most Holy and High God of Heaven? Having reference to the public assembly and worship, Paul admonished the Corinthians, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Likewise, in this same chapter he makes it plain about singing and blessing in a "tongue" (language) that can be understood and not understood. He said, "I will also sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?" (14:15b-16) Paul went on to say, "Let all things be done for edification" (14:26). Whether in worship or edification, the words must be intelligently and distinctly presented. God is not glorified when that which is spoken or sung cannot be understood. He is not glorified by crude, indistinctive noise.

The Twofold Nature of Singing

Colossians 3:16 shows the twofold nature of what should be taking place in our singing as Christians. Paul admonishes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The twofold aspect: (1) We are "teaching and admonishing one another," and (2) we are singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19 words it, "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"). So this implies that the songs we sing must be Scriptural, audible and understood if we actually are to be teaching and admonishing one another. And singing is not a stilted and empty formality that we are engaged in, for we are wholeheartedly involved in warm and spirited worship of the Lord. God is real and very much alive. Let us praise Him with all of our hearts.

IV. FURTHER EXTENDED THOUGHTS

Back to John 4:24

Now let us return to the original conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well. In response to her question, Jesus said in essence that worship, which is in spirit and truth, must correspond to the likeness and attributes of God. We touched more exactly upon what this meant in connection with "in spirit and truth."

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What Is the Meaning of John 4:24?

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Worship Corresponding to the Likeness of God

Although we have not specifically pointed it out, we have implied that worship corresponding to the likeness of God goes far beyond what is stated in John 4:24. The likeness of God can be seen in many ways. God is omnipotent (almighty). God is omniscient. God is holy, and the list of such statements goes on and on (God is love; God is a God of order, etc.). Before the Almighty God we humbly bow in awe and submission. Before the all-knowing, omniscient God, we humbly and knowingly submit to truth; we intelligently praise His name and magnify His attributes. Before the God who said, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16), we are made aware of our sins. We submit, cleanse ourselves, and humbly draw near in holiness. We love the God who loves us.

Corresponding to the Likeness of Holiness

Yes, if we would worship God "in spirit and truth," in this matter of holiness, we must respond in a way that corresponds to His likeness in this respect. The worshiper must be right before his worship can be right. Jesus talked about the "true worshiper" in the words he exchanged with the Samaritan woman. Writing about prayer and worship, Paul said to Timothy, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up **holy hands**, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8). Even in the imperfect and incomplete Old Testament sense, Psalms 29:2 reads, "Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; **Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**" Psalms 24:3 and 4 asks and answers, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in his holy place? He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol [vanity], Nor sworn deceitfully." James 4:8 reads, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands**, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." The lesson Jesus taught in the parable about the Pharisee and the publican praying illustrates what James has said (James 4:8; Luke 18:9-14). Consider Isaiah chapter 6. God is holy and we must respond in kind.

Worshipping God Acceptably

Lessons from all the different periods of Bible history (Patriarchal, Old Testament and New Testament ages) can be gleaned, showing principles of true worship and the necessity of being a "true



worshiper" of God. Remember the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:2-12; Hebrews 11:4). Recall what happened to Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3). Look at what happened to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-14). The worship of the Almighty and Holy God of Heaven is a most holy and awesome experience, and not something to be tampered with, nor carelessly entered into. It is not worldly entertainment, as the world is mimicked. Then when the worshiper is not right, the worship cannot be right. God even hates such "worship" (Read Isaiah 1:10-15 and Amos 5:21-24). Considering these great truths, Hebrews 12:28b admonishes, "Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably [render religious homage] with reverence and godly fear." And at the same time, thankfully, let us remember Hebrews 4:15 and 16, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." Amen. □

(Scripture in this article was from the New King James Version of the Bible)



Happiness in the Beatitudes

SCOTTISH scholar, William Barclay, has provided a most interesting study of this word in the original language. He says that *markarios* “describes that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and the changes of life.”

By way of contrast, mere human “happiness” reveals its own character. The component “hap” suggests “chance” [as in “happenstance”]. Happiness, as we commonly evaluate the term, is that which depends upon the difficulties of life. Happiness changes with one’s circumstances; today one may be happy, but tomorrow he may be forlorn.

At the commencement of his renowned “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5:2-12), Jesus taught that the truly “blessed” (happy) are those who acknowledge they are spiritual paupers without God, who weep over their sins, thus seeking Heaven’s pardon.

The happy are those who meekly submit themselves to divine control, who incessantly hunger and thirst for the spiritual righteousness that truly satisfies.

They lovingly extend mercy to others, just as they have received it from the Lord. They happily maintain pure (unmixed) motives that are focused upon God; they strive to live at peace with their Maker and others.

These are so spiritually dedicated that even persecution cannot extinguish their joy. One cannot but think of Paul and Silas, singing praise/prayer to God—even with bloody backs in a Philippian dungeon (Acts 16:23-25).

How very foolish we are when we allow ourselves to be enticed from godliness by the temporal and exceedingly shallow emotions of passing mirages that will prove to be nothing more than cruel illusions in the eternal order of things.

As devout Christians, we need to pray that we enter not into such temptations (Luke 22:40). In reality, they are far more common than we realize, and are becoming more so in an increasingly crass world.—*Selected* □

A Prayer to Pray in Growing Older

“**LORD**, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it at all—but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details—give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others but help me to endure them with patience. I dare not ask for improved memory but a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep my reasonably sweet.

“Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. Give me the grace to tell them so. Amen.” □

—*Author Unknown*



The Lord Knows Why

I may not know the reason why
Dark clouds so often veil the sky,
But tho’ my sea be smooth or rough
The Lord knows why, and that’s enough.

I may not know why I am led
So often in the paths I dread,
But, trusting Him, I’ll press my way;
The Lord knows why—I will obey.

I may not know why death should come
To take the dear ones from my home,
But, tho’ mine eyes with tears be dim,
The Lord knows why—I’ll trust in Him.

So, tho’ I may not understand
The leading of my Father’s hand,
I know to all He has the key,—
He understands each mystery.

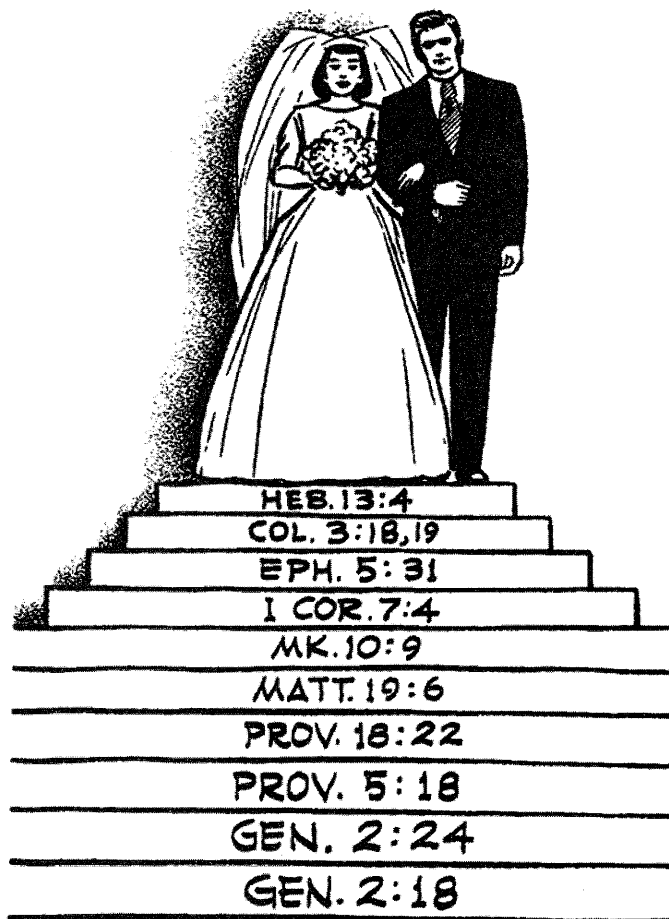
O yes, He knows, the Lord knows why
These things are ordered from on high,
And tho’ dark clouds may hide the sun,
The Lord knows why—His will be done.

—*Johnson Oatman, Jr.*

We need to have a fixation on Christ, the Savior and Perfect One, to get our lives fixed.



Random Thoughts and Suggestions on LOVE and MARRIAGE



1. If you want to have a good wife, be a good husband; if you want to have a good husband, be a good wife. Make your mate glad that she/he married you, and at the same time you will be made glad that you married your mate. The kind of marriage you have is up to you.

2. Ideally, your relation to your mate should be one unending relationship of unselfish deeds, kindness, and being nice; then when your intimate moments of marriage come, this will be the most natural and unselfish expression of love and fulfilling pleasure. However, if your dealings with your mate are selfish, unkind, and not governed by personal concern, when the intimate moments come, on your part the experience will be more like selfish gratification of lust (probably met with reluctance on the part of your mate).

3. Marriage is not a 50/50 proposition and relationship; it is more like 75/75 or better still, a 99/99 proposition (or even 100/100 in unselfish attitude).

4. John said, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19); it is easy to love someone who unselfishly loves us and shows it.

5. After the honeymoon is over, and the initial infatuation wears off, we must build on the reality of what we are (yes, we now see faults) and go and grow from there.

6. Learn to love (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:2, 15, 28, 33; Titus 2:14)—in Bible times they lived in a society where marriages were arranged by contract by the parents; they had to learn to love their mates after they got married.

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. How old was Methuselah, the oldest recorded age, when he died?
2. Where in the Bible is it first recorded of someone rending or tearing their garments as an expression of dismay?
3. Of the twelve spies that Moses sent to "spy out" the land of Canaan, who were the only ones that gave a favorable report?
4. What person praying in the Bible was thought to be drunk (and what was the prayer all about)?
5. How many books of the Bible bear the names of women?
6. How many years did Jeremiah say the Jews would be in Babylonian Captivity (and what was the significance of this number)?
7. Who were the Rechabites, and what distinguished them?
8. What Old Testament prophet in the Babylonian Captivity was taken by the Spirit in visions back to Jerusalem to prophecy?
9. All of the Old Testament Scriptures were written in Hebrew except what part of what book (and in what language was it written)?
10. What king in the Bible was so frightened and troubled that his knees knocked together?
11. Of the four gospel writers, which is the only one that tells us about Nicodemus?
12. What are the first two recorded miracles of Christ?
13. Where in the New Testament is the first declaration of Messiahship made by Jesus?
14. What was the name of Simon Peter's father?
15. Is there a record anywhere in the New Testament that Jesus ever sang?
16. In the book of Acts the apostle Peter was involved in raising what person from the dead, and likewise of whom was the apostle Paul involved?
17. On one of his preaching trips, where was the apostle Paul stoned and left for dead?
18. Which one of Paul's epistles was written to deal with the problem of Judaizers coming into the church?
19. Prayer is mentioned in some sense in all of the books of the New Testament except what three books?
20. How did the apostle Paul, quoting from a Cretian writer, characterize the Cretian people?

(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:

- "Please remove my name from your mailing list..."
- "Thank you for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I like the many good ideas in what is written and the true to the Bible stand. Keep up the good work."

SOUTH CAROLINA:

- "Keep *THE SWORD AND STAFF* coming. Sorry for my lack of support, but I seem to forget about you until I receive a new issue. Best Christian publication in this fallen world."

DELAWARE:

- "Thank you for the volumes of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. They will help me in my ministry...Next to God's Word your letters are welcomed in my house..."

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- "Thank you and anyone else involved in putting *THE SWORD AND STAFF* out for a Biblical based paper. We have been blessed by it through many years."

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- "Please send me all the bound volumes (sorry I missed the first)...Thanks so much."

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- "I would like to re-subscribe to your wonderful and informative paper, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. My family will be living at this address for a good while, and I hate to miss any more of your issues. Thank you again for your great effort for the kingdom, and may God bless you and all who endeavor in this great work."

OREGON:

- "...We do appreciate you and the fact that you still stand for strong convictions and the absolute truth of the Bible, The Word of God. So many are compromising today. We don't find anywhere in the Scriptures that the church needs to change with the times. It is the gospel that is the **power** of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

"Keep up the good work. We pray for your continued spiritual, mental and physical health."

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(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

zine. A copy of the book called **NOBODY LEFT BEHIND: END-TIME PROPHECIES** by David Vaughn Elliott.

"Your name and the address of the magazine was obtained from your website link..."

"Do feel free to recommend the names and addresses of pastors, elders, evangelists, college professors, magazines, newsletters, theological journals, booklets, books, special studies, audio tapes, audio CDs, DVDs, ministries, who promote the historical position on Bible prophecy, the minor prophets, the major prophets, Daniel and Revelation.

"Your help with the matters raised in this letter would be greatly appreciated and very much welcomed at any time."

"It's time for me to close; here's looking forward to hearing from you and to receiving your kind reply."

"May God abundantly bless you!; in every area of your life and ministry for Him, in these very exciting days. Numbers 6:24-26."

GHANA (WEST AFRICA):

■ "I thank our gracious Lord upon every remembrance of you.

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"I thereby express my heart of thankfulness, gratitude and appreciation to you for all you are, out of love and concern, doing for me and many others.

"It is my humble prayer that the gracious Lord will grant you the strength to continue to serve Him in this special way. May He grant you His blessings of provision and protection so others like me would continue to benefit from your storehouse of knowledge; and, much more importantly, be able to preach the truth in love." (E-mail)

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"I am a student in Bachelor of Theology...I am in deep touch with the sermons and messages which were in the last issues [of **THE SWORD AND STAFF**]. Sir, most sincerely I really want to subscribe to your magazine regularly and this is my prayer, too. I hope God will answer my prayer...Thanking you." (E-mail)

MALAYSIA (EAST INDIES):

■ "Please do send me a complimentary copy of **THE SWORD AND STAFF**..." (E-mail) □



Random Thoughts and Suggestions on LOVE and MARRIAGE

(Continued from Page 8)

7. Getting married is like becoming a Christian; it is not something you do and straightway forget about (if you do, look out for trouble!)—it is just the beginning. The courtship must continue (Revelation 2:4)—a great marriage just doesn't happen; you have to work at it.

8. Husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge as the weaker vessel (they are more delicate and precious); be nice to them (I Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5: 28-33).

9. Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5)—yes, the husband is the head, and the role of the wife is a submissive one; but all are under submission to God, and all should have the submissive attitude (not be harsh); the man who seemingly must be always asserting his headship (even unkindly) surely feels insecure about himself and his position.

10. Never criticize one another publicly (this is degrading, and you are degraded in the eyes of others and lose your good influence with them)—and if criticism is in order, let it be done privately more in the form of a suggestion seasoned with love and concern.

11. Never both of you be angry at the same time—being human, we do sometimes get angry, but someone has got to accept the responsibility and keep a cool head (Remember Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous

words stir up anger”—also, it takes two to have a quarrel).

12. Remember I Peter 4:8, love covers a multitude of sins (none of us being perfect, we need to let humility and love govern our relationships in dealing with one another); remember, God is certainly longsuffering with us.

13. Build one another up: privately by encouragement (recognizing the others good points), and publicly by speaking well of one another (by emphasizing the good and positive we will draw out the good and positive in the other, making it easier for the “bad” to fade away).

14. Remember, you are now one; you are on the same team, and this is to be for a lifetime (Matthew 19:5-9)—don’t pull in different directions (Ephesians 5:28-31); if you don’t pull together, you will come apart.

15. Differences in personality, ability, and areas of learning, etc., need not be a problem—the strength of one may be in one area, and the other another; thus, you compliment one another and make a stronger team (never feel insecure, threatened, or intimidated by the strength of the other; you are on the same team, think accordingly, and use all your strengths to your united and mutual advantage (and the glory of God)).

16. Respect one another and pull together—otherwise your spiritual life and prayers will be hindered (I Peter 3:7); your personal well-being, salvation, and eternal destiny are at stake.

17. Charity begins at home; the light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home (at its source; practice your religion in the privacy of your own home—otherwise it is not real; treat one another like Christians (I Peter 3:8,9) and faithfully live the good life (I Peter 3:10-12)—how beautiful it is!

18. Remember the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you, Luke 6:31), and practice it always.

19. Seriously consider and reconsider the characteristics of love (I Corinthians 13).

20. Seriously study Ephesians 5:21-33.

(Do these things faithfully and the faithful God of love and peace will bless your life and marriage with love and peace in all things that you may “rejoice with the wife of thy youth,” Proverbs 5:18, all the days of your life and she with you).

—James E. Gibbons



This article, RANDOM THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE, is available in printed leaflet form from *The Sword and Staff*. Ask for it.



“Bible Predicts GLOBAL WARMING”

GLOBAL warming is a hot topic these days. The evidence clearly indicates that our globe is experiencing a warming trend. But what is the cause of this trend? Are we experiencing a normal long-term warming/cooling cycle, or is something new taking place: warming caused by human activity?

On the increase are those who predict catastrophe if the people and nations of the world do not take immediate drastic steps. Such dire predictions are nothing new on planet earth. Remember the grave warnings preceding the year 2,000? All the hype about Y2K, “the millennium bug,” was just another in a long series of scares that never materialized. In my younger years, Communism was the cause for world alarm. Today, militant Islamic terrorism is the threat. There always seem to be prophets predicting a dire future.

According to current computer predictive models, how warm will the earth become by 2050, by 2100? Will so much ice melt on Greenland and Antarctica that the oceans inundate vast costal areas with millions of inhabitants? Will the increasing heat cause drought and famine, wiping out huge populations? Could global warming threaten the end of life as we know it?

What does the Bible have to say about it all? Does it predict global warming? Definitely! Tremendous heat? More than civilization can tolerate! Destroying the earth? Absolutely! “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

Of course, that is not the global warming people are concerned about. But why not? Which of the following three scenarios is more pertinent to our daily lives and our futures? 1) Mankind may end civilization with nuclear bombs;—or—2) Mankind may destroy life on earth by disregarding the global warming trend;—or—3) The God who created the earth will one day burn it up. Which of the three should sensible people be more concerned about?

Do you realize that scenarios one and two are materialistic concerns, while issue three is a spiri-

(Continued on Next Page)

Outline of the Epistle to the ~HEBREWS~

(Hebrews shows the supremacy of Christ over things pertaining to the Old Testament religion)

Introduction (1:1-4)

I. The Superiority of the Son to Angels (1:5-2:18)

- A. The Proofs from the Old Testament (1:5-14)
- B. The Obligations Resulting Therefrom (2:1-4)
- C. The Reasonableness of the Humiliation of Christ (2:5-18)

II. The Superiority of the Son to Moses and Joshua (Chapters 3 & 4)

- A. The Superiority of Christ to Moses (3:1-6)
- B. The Failure of Israel under Moses and Joshua (3:7-4:2)
- C. The Proofs that the Rest is Still Available (4:3-10)
- D. The Need to Strive to Enter This Rest (4:11-13)
- E. The Triumph of Christ, Our High Priest, and Incentive to Drawing Near (4:14-16)

III. The Nature and Scope of Christ's High-Priesthood (Chapters 5-7)

- A. The Qualifications of Christ as High-Priest (5:1-10)
- B. The Need of Effort to an Understanding of Spiritual Truth (5:11-6:20)
- C. The High-Priesthood of Christ Prefigured by Melchisedec (7:1-25)
- D. The High-Priesthood of Christ Contrasted with the Levitical (7:26-28)

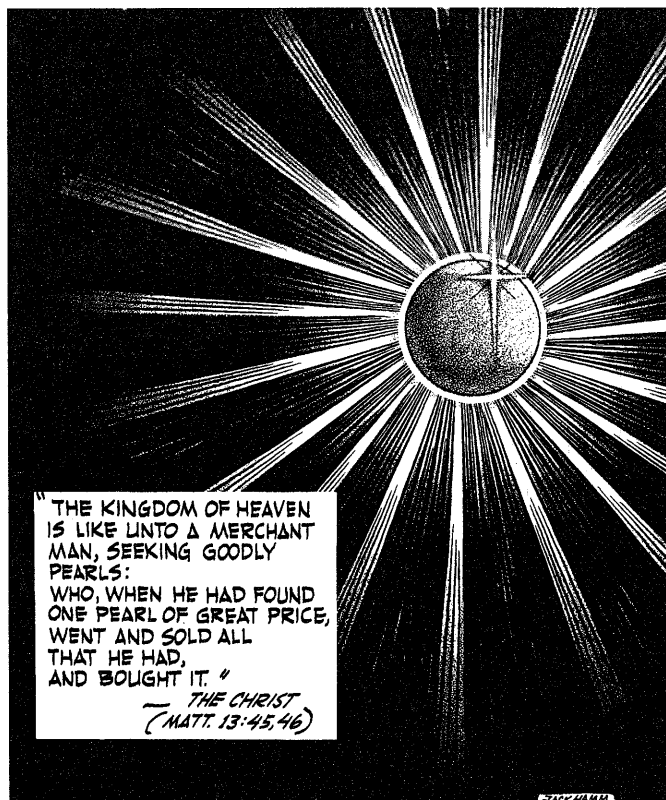
IV. The Ministry of Christ as High-Priest (8:1-10:18)

- A. The Circumstances of His High-Priestly Ministry (Chapter 8)
- B. The Sanctuary and Service Under the Two Covenants (Chapter 9)
- C. The Contrast between the Levitical Sacrifices and the Sacrifices of Christ (10:1-18)

V. The Application of These Truths to the Readers (10:19-12:29)

- A. The Exhortations to Faithfulness to the New Covenant (10:19-39)
- B. The Encouragement by the Achievements of Others (11:1-12:4)
- C. The Consolation by the Fact of Sonship (12:5-13)
- D. The Warning Against Failure and Apostasy (12:14-17)
- E. The Enforcement by the Greater Position of the Christian (12:18-29)

Conclusion: Social and Religious Duties; Personal Instructions (Chapter 13)—*Selected* □



"Bible Predicts Global Warming"

(Continued from Previous Page)

tual concern? No matter what humans do to "save planet earth," God has scheduled the planet for destruction, and God has scheduled us for judgment. In verse 9, Peter says that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And verse 11 says: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy living and godliness."

God calls us to make more drastic changes than recycling plastics and burning less fossil fuels. God is calling us to quit cheating, lying, stealing, fighting, drinking, gambling, complaining, aborting babies, having affairs, living luxuriously, and the like. God is calling us to live holy lives, spiritual lives, lives that put Christ first, others second, and material things last. Are you ready for God's day of global warming?—*David Vaughn Elliott* □



Making Use of Time

TIME gives a sinner a chance to repent or to fill up the full measure of his guilt.

Time gives the righteous man a period to exercise his faith, develop patience and persevere. □



The only thing certain about life is death.



Little Nuggets of Truth

There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations.

Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled.

If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.

"Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present."—*Selected* □



BARBS ...with a POINT

THERE is more to Christianity than saying "amen."

When you try to stretch the truth, it gets "all bent out of shape."

Perhaps it is harder for the dishonest person to be honest with himself than with any other person.

Grace does not compromise and bend the rules, but it forgives when there is repentance.

If you live life in the fast lane, you may come to the end of life's journey a lot faster than you thought you would.

If you throw your life away, you better fear where it will land.

The person who worries about what other people think about him perhaps wouldn't be as worried if he really knew how little other people think about him.

It takes a real man to say that he is not the man he ought to be and then do something about it.

When you are lifted too high by pride, and then you fall from such an elevated height, greater your destruction will be.

When straight-laced people, who seem to have been a little too tightly laced, become unlaced, they may go all to pieces.

It seems, in essence, that the modern church is saying to the world: "Come check us out. We are really like you. See how unreligious our religion really is. You will enjoy being with us."

Sometimes it takes a little negative preaching to combat a little negative living.

We need to beware when we hesitate to be hard on sin that our motive really is to not be hard on ourselves.

Making noise, regardless how loud it is, is not necessarily worship.

If love and grace do not prompt us to want to carefully follow God's Word, there is something wrong with our concept of love and grace.

When we see what happened to Nadab and Abihu when they "offered strange fire before the LORD" (Leviticus 10:1-3), we are made to wonder what the LORD thinks of all the strange things that are being done in the name of worship and religion today.

The person with a "chip on his shoulders" may indicate there is wood a little higher up.

Much of modern religion believes that if you believe in God and feel good, that means you are good, and there is no need to be all that concerned about being good.

People who are always "harping" about something are usually out of tune with the Lord.

If we do not believe in the wrath of God (Hebrews 12:28-29; Romans 2:4-5), we are going to have a hard time fully appreciating the love of God (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9), regardless of how much we may talk about the love of God.

Any religious movement that puts the emphasis on human personalities is moving in the wrong direction.

I read somewhere where someone said that the word "compromise" should not be in our vocabulary when talking about religious matters (like saying someone compromises) since it is not found in the Bible; however, we ask the question, since the word "responsibility" is not found in the Bible, does that mean we should never talk about being responsible? Hmmm?

Preachers who always have "an axe to grind" don't "cut it" with the Lord.

The purpose of worship is to distinctly, reverently, and respectfully glorify God, not to obscure it with screams and drown it out with loud, rude, and abrasive noises. □



A Punk Preacher Who Curses

"**MANY** of you may remember former PTL leader Jim Bakker. Now his son is hitting the news. Pastor of the Revolution Church in Brooklyn, NY, Jay Bakker does not meet in your typical church setting. Instead of a church building, he and his congregation choose to meet at a local bar. He also looks like a punk rocker, sporting tattoos and lip rings. In a series aired on the Sundance channel called 'One Punk Under God,' Bakker says, 'I'm trying to be a pastor who loves people. I feel like I've been successful in helping people understand that God loves them the way they are. It seems like the media wants to say 'You're a punk rock preacher'. (But) if I pull anything from punk, it's loyalty and friendship. I might seem like a punk because I may curse every now and then, but wouldn't seem like a punk to most punks'." □

—*The Voice in the Wilderness*

Taking Inventory

MANY businesses take inventory at the end of each calendar year. Others take inventory at the end of a fixed fiscal year or at other times they may set. Some people would seem to take inventory at the end of the year and make New Year's resolutions. In this article let's talk about Christians and churches taking inventory.

The Need for Inventory

Paul sternly admonished the Christians at Corinth, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5) They were solemnly told to "examine yourselves," to "prove your own selves," and to "know" what their standing was with the Lord.

Paul had written the epistle of 1 Corinthians to these people and had taken inventory of their situation. Shortcomings and sins had been uncovered and exposed. In the follow-up epistle of 2 Corinthians we see the first epistle had accomplished much good, leading many to repentance. Paul noted that he had made them "sorry" with his first letter. But that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of [regretted]: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Paul's inventory and their personal inventory of themselves had produced good. He continued, saying, "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge [vindication]! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:8-11).

This is the desired end result of taking inventory spiritually. We ascertain where we stand with the Lord and take steps to be sure that we are right with him.

When We Take Inventory

Our religion is so designed that we are continually confronted with self-examination and inventory. We are to be growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

When we hear or read the Word of God, we are faced with inventory. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came, "he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit came and guided the apostles and other inspired men into all truth, and now we have the New Testament Scriptures. By the very nature of the Scriptures, we are compelled to take inven-

tory when we are exposed to them. "For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

When we pray, we take inventory (or at least this is the way it should be—Notice how the Lord taught that we should pray, Matthew 6:9-13). And we are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Notice the parable of the Pharisee and the publican and sinner (Luke 18:10-14). Drawing near to God, we are made to realize just how far away from Him we are. The publican cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In talking to God, we confess our sins (1 John 1:8-10). Inventory must come before confession.

Whenever we partake of the Lord's Supper the way the Lord intended, we take inventory. Paul wrote, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). The Lord's Supper was to be eaten, not as a regular meal, but as a solemn occasion of discernment and examination. This is a time of personal inventory, not to see if we are good enough to partake (that is the wrong concept), but to prompt repentance, seek forgiveness, and to go forth with renewed love and zeal for the Lord.

Churches Need Inventory

The epistles of 1 and 2 Corinthians, as we noticed, involved churches taking inventory. The same is true of Galatians and other New Testament epistles.

However, what the Lord said to the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation especially stands out. Each church is focused upon for examination and inventory. Each one is personally addressed, and the Lord says, "I know thy works" (Revelation 2:1-2, 8-9, 12-13, 18-19; 3:1-2, 7-8, 14-15). Then he divulges his personal appraisal of each situation, and tells them what is needed and expected of them. They are told of consequences and results of taking heed and not taking heed to what is being said. One church is told, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (2:5). The seven churches are each addressed according to their local circumstances. Read Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

Although many times it may be a thankless task (and even a neglected and shunned one), it is the preacher's responsibility to take inventory of

local church situations and to help the “members” personally take inventory. Then it is his job to take steps to set things in order. Paul instructs Titus along this line (Titus 1:5 and what follows in most of this epistle).

Fittingly, we could ask this question: If every church “member” were just like me, what kind of church would the church be? And when you get right down to it, it is a matter of every Christian taking a personal inventory.

Concluding Remarks

There is a great Day of Judgment and final inventory coming. Revelation 20:12 reads, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

That day of inventory will make known the final and eternal destiny of every human being who has ever lived. We find the scene of the Day of Judgment taking place in Matthew 25:31-46, and it concludes with these words, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”—*James E. Gibbons* □

If You Were Busy

If you were busy being kind,
Before you knew it you would find,
You'd soon forget to think, t'was true
That someone was unkind to you.

If you were busy being glad,
And cheering people who are sad,
Although your heart may ache a bit,
You'd soon forget to notice it.

If you were busy being good,
And doing the very best you could,
You'd not have time to blame some man
Who's doing just the best he can.

If you were busy being true,
To what you know you ought to do,
You'd be so busy you'd forget,
The blunders of the folks you've met.

If you were busy being right,
You'd find yourself too busy, quite,
To criticize your neighbor long
Because he's busy doing wrong.

—*R. Foreman*

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The Seven Modern Sins

- Politics without principles.
- Rest without conscience.
- Wealth without work.
- Knowledge without character.
- Industry without morality.
- Science without humanity.
- Worship without sacrifice.

—*Frederic Donaldson*

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**Answers to:
BIBLE QUESTIONS**

- 1. Genesis 5:27 (969 years); 2. Genesis 37:29-36; 3. Numbers 13:1-14:10; 4. 1 Samuel 1:10-15; 5. Two (Ruth and Esther); 6. 2 Chronicles 36:14-23 (Leviticus 25:4-5); Daniel 9:2 (Jeremiah 25:8-12; 29:10); 7. Jeremiah 35; 8. Ezekiel 8:1-4; 11:1; etc.; 9. Daniel 2:4 through chapter 7 (Chaldee or Aramaic language); 10. Daniel 5:1-6; 11. John (John 3:1-8; 7:50-52; 19:38-42); 12. John 2:1-11; John 4:46-54; 13. John 4:25-26; 14. John 1:42; Matthew 16:17; 15. Mark 14:26; 16. Acts 9:36-42; Acts 20:6-10; 17. Acts 14:6,7,19; 18. Galatians; 19. Titus, 2 Peter, and 2 John; 20. Titus 1:12-13. □

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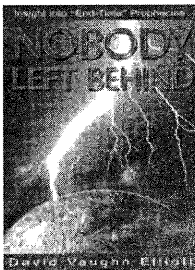
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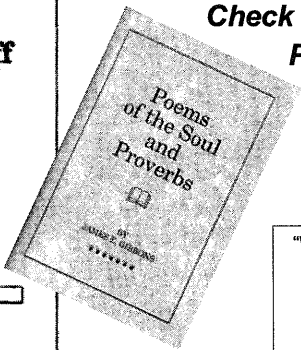
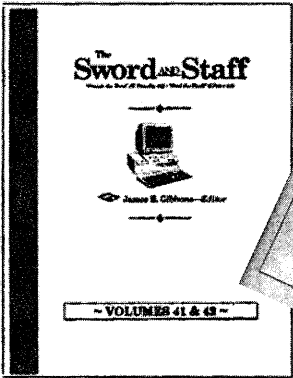
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