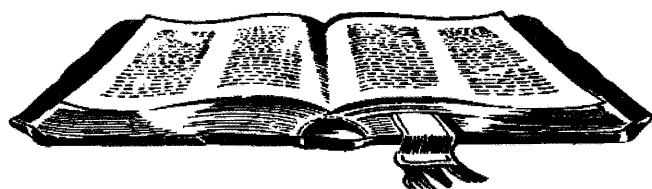


The Sword AND Staff

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

The TRUTH

Love It, or Lose It!



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

BEFORE a person can be saved, he must respect and love the truth as an integral part of believing it. He must recognize and appreciate its value for what it is, and especially in contrast with that which is false. Christ plainly declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). In praying to God the Father, Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Christ was the living embodiment of truth when he was upon this earth, and the Word of God, the Bible, is the revelation of it. The Holy Spirit, who gave us the Word of God, is called "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13). If we do not love and appreciate the truth of God, we will lose it (even after accepting it). It is that simple. Delusion and error will take its place.

—I—

The Great Apostasy

The truth of these assertions is brought out when the apostle Paul told the Thessalonians about the great falling away that would come before Christ came back. Having warned them of this coming apostasy, he concludes what he had to say with these words, "...Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had

pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12). Nothing could be plainer, could it? The truth—*Love it, or lose it!*

The End Product, Paganism

The same truth about truth is alluded to in the first chapter of Romans; only here Paul goes back to the earliest of times in history to illustrate it. From creation, all of mankind knew (or knew of) the one true God. However, that was not true for long; the situation changed. We are told that with the passing of time "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (1:21). They "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature, more [rather] than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up..." (1:25, 26). "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Men sank into the depths of delusion and depravity. They became totally enmeshed in idolatry and the unthinkable practices of homosexual perversion (accompanied by wrong doings of every kind). (Read Romans 1:18-32). That describes the Gentile world in Paul's day (and very much, the present day in which we live).

"Buy the Truth"

How we need to recognize the priceless value of truth, appreciate it, and love it! This is most important. Proverbs, that great book of practical wisdom, admonishes, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). Jesus gave two great parables along this line that vividly illustrate this. He said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially **SPEAKING...**

IT TAKES a good man to give good advice.

Genuine repentance can never be realized until we accept full responsibility for our actions.

If we tolerate wrong, and learn to live with compromise, the next step is to accept it.

The Old Testament divulges man's imperfections and the law's imperfections in being able to do anything about it.

Our worship should correspond to the likeness and attributes of God, not to our fleshly tastes for entertainment.

Many times O.T. imagery is used to foretell N.T. truths ("a shadow of good things to come," Hebrews 10:1).

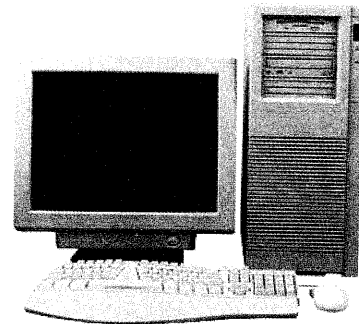
Fiscal responsibility is a Christian responsibility.

When leaders will not lead and followers will not follow, needless to say, we are not going anywhere.

It is better for your horn to go untooted than to toot it yourself.

We need to take a stand, and withstand the devil, because one day we will stand before the judgment seat of God (Revelation 20:11-15). □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



PARTAKERS OF EVIL DEEDS, FELLOW-HELPERS OF THE TRUTH, AND THEY WHO APPROVE OF THOSE WHO PRACTICE THEM

THE FOLLOWING two sections of Scripture, one from 2nd John and the other from 3rd John, complement one another, capture our attention and better set the stage to understand what is written in each. They are negative and positive flip sides of the same subject. Let us consider them, with emphasis upon the words in bold italics.

● "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is **partaker of his evil deeds**" (2 John, verses 9-11).

● "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be **fellow-helpers to the truth**" (3 John, verses 5-8).

It would be good to read both of these short epistles from which these Scriptures are taken. The situations are similar in both of these references above in that religious teachers are visiting the churches and how they are to be treated. In the first reference, the visitor in 2nd John represents false teachers, and the visitors in the second reference, 3rd John, are faithful evangelists traveling through in spreading the gospel. In 2nd John, the readers are told not to receive the false teacher nor bid him "God speed," sending him on his way, and thus wishing him well. Why? "For he that bideth him God speed is **partaker of his evil deeds**." In 3rd John, it is just the opposite. They are commended and instructed to receive these faithful preachers and to help them with their traveling expenses as they journeyed on. In doing this, as they carried the gospel message to other places, it is said that they would be "**fellow-helpers to the truth**."

In each situation, in 2nd John and in 3rd John, the brethren were potential partakers in what the visiting teachers were standing for. To receive and support the false teacher was to be a "partaker of his evil deeds." (Yes, the dispensing of false doctrine is labeled as "evil deeds"! To receive and send him on his way was to share in his guilt. But, with the principle being the same, those who received the faithful gospel preachers and supported

their faithful efforts are called “fellow-helpers to the truth” (just like Paul spoke of the Philippians having “fellowship in the gospel” with him, Philippians 1:5, in their faithful support of his work. At different times they were vital helpers and partakers in that which was being done in the kingdom of heaven. With Paul, they received recognition and credit for what was being accomplished.)

And today, dear reader, this principle still holds true. A person is partaker in that which he supports religiously, whether good or bad. If he belongs to and supports a “church” that doesn’t believe in the deity of Christ, and consequently denies the virgin birth and the miracles, it is just the same as if he personally was an unbeliever (regardless of the nature of his personal views). He is sharing in the presentation of error and consequently in the guilt thereby incurred. A person may say that he believes all of the Bible, that he doesn’t go along with the unscriptural doctrines and traditions of his particular denomination (like “faith only,” sprinkling, infant baptism, etc.), yet he remains a part of this system of error. There is no getting around it, he is a partaker. This is likewise true in the involvement with all religious systems of error and networks of compromise. We are responsible and accountable.

(Beloved, Christ died on the cross because of the difference between right and wrong. He made this declaration, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” John 14:6. He prayed in that great high priestly prayer the night before his crucifixion, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth,” John 17:17. The church is supposed to be “the pillar and ground of the truth,” 1 Timothy 3:15. That being the case, let us be satisfied with nothing less than the truth in all of its purity, simplicity and fullness. Take a definite and decided stand for truth.)

They Approve of Those Who Practice Them

Now, as an appendage and extended thought to what we are writing here, briefly notice Romans 1:18-32. In our crazy, senseless, mixed-up and ungodly society today, that seems to have lost its moral moorings, what the apostle Paul says here needs to be examined and then reexamined (and especially by professing and believing Christians, lest they become brainwashed). “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” This was spoken of the ancient Gentile world, but it sounds very much like the world today. The ancients, divorcing themselves from the concept of the one true God, went into paganism. With this, they sank deeper

and deeper into depravity. We read, “God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves...God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet [was due]. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind [a mind void of judgment], to do those things which are not convenient [proper, fitting]: Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them [but also approve of those who practice them].”

All of these sins of the ancient Gentile world are laid out before us here, with homosexual perversion topping the list. The apostle speaks of this practice as “against nature” and as “dishonoring” their bodies. In keeping with what he writes elsewhere about sin (Romans 6:23), he says that they who “practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (1:32, NKJV). Did you get the impact and import of what he is saying? Guilt is not only involved in committing these loathsome acts, but by simply going along with them (approving and tolerating them), even though you don’t do them yourself, is to put yourself in the category of deserving death. Like with the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the wrath of God is subject to come down upon you.

In view of what we have just learned here, the situation in America today is sobering. In years gone by, the law books of the land plainly spoke of homosexual practice as sodomy and “crime against nature.” Abortion in these law books, in being dealt with, was with a heavy hand and treated as the taking of human life. Gambling was looked upon as not being in the best interests of the citizenry, and outlawed. Not only have such practices as named been decriminalized, they are presented as

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

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acceptable behavior. There is even talk, and practice, of same sex marriage(!). Abortion is regarded as a sacred choice by some for women, we are told. And many states are in the gambling business. The president of the United States proclaimed June to be "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month"(!). (What a slap in the face, as June is usually associated with people getting married). In God's sight, all of this is unacceptable. Our nation is being brainwashed into regarding such behavior as acceptable, even honorable. But remember, Paul said that people who "practice such things **are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them**" (1:32, NKJV). (Likewise, remember 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). □



SPIRITUAL LESSONS USING THE SMELTING FIGURE OF SPEECH

- "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the LORD trieth the hearts" (Proverbs 17:3).
- "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise" (Proverbs 27:21).
- "Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer [silversmith]" (Proverbs 25:4).

USING the smelting of metals as a figure of speech in getting across spiritual truths is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Initially, crude ore went through the process of smelting. This ore or metal, when in more of an unfinished form, was placed under intense heat until it became liquid. By doing this, the impurities came to the top and as dross were skimmed away. Metals were tested as to their genuineness, as well as being brought to a higher level of purity. In this language God is pictured as testing and purifying us spiritually. And the refining process takes place in what happens to us and how we respond.

Praise as Smelting

Interestingly, Proverbs 27:21 says, "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise." Such a simple thing as to how

we respond to praise cultivates and is indicative of our character. Do we become puffed up or humbled when people would speak well of us? Do we get the "big head"? Does it enhance and increase our virtue as we try to live up to it, honestly realizing our limitations, or are we thereby inflated by vanity? We are put to the test.

Two Vivid Illustrations

Two illustrations from the Scriptures come to mind in this connection, one good and one bad.

Following the slaying of the giant Goliath, David became very popular and famous in Israel (1 Samuel 18:5-16). The women came out of the cities singing and dancing, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This didn't set well with king Saul. But we read, "And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways: and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them." David handled the praise in a good way that enhanced his character.

However, that was not the case with Herod in the 12th chapter of Acts in the New Testament (12:20-23). Herod made a pompous speech before the state visitors from Tyre and Sidon who had come to see him at Caesarea. Seeking his favor in behalf of their country, they praised and flattered him. We read, "And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory..." Instead of disavowing their words, he let them stand as if they were true. He totally failed the refining test. In fact, it was glaringly manifest that he was nothing more than dross, and God therewith disposed of him.

The Figure Expanded

Speaking from this more enlarged perspective, the psalmist said, "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried" (Psalms 66:10). The next verse indicates that afflictions have been laid upon them, and this seems to have brought about good result spiritually. Isaiah 48:10 relates the same theme, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Jeremiah takes this a step further, saying, "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them" (Jeremiah 6:29-30). Ezekiel, in his application, like Jeremiah pictures the smelting process as being judgment from God, as they are found to be "dross"

(Ezekiel 22:18-22). "As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you." The expanded figure includes judgment itself.

Like Gold Tried by Fire

The apostle Peter makes a positive application of this figure in 1 Peter 1:7. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." In more of direct spoken language, Paul elaborates, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope. And hope maketh not ashamed [doesn't disappoint]; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). This is the positive outworking of the refining process in tribulations experienced by Christians.

There are other thoughts to be thought on this subject. In fact, every experience in life has a direct bearing upon our Christian character, its refinement and development (as well as its manifestation). Let us come out of the refining pot and fiery furnace purified, suited and ready for "the master's use" (2 Timothy 2:20-21). □

"Wellington Defeated..."

THE ENGLISH people were anxiously awaiting news of the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815. Their only means of communication was a system of signals. One of these signal stations was on the tower of Winchester Cathedral. Late in the day it flashed the signal: "WELLINGTON DEFEATED..." The fog became so dense that only a part of the message could be made out as it was being relayed. Gloom settled heavy over England. But imagine their joy when the fog finally lifted and they received the rest of the message, "WELLINGTON DEFEATED THE ENEMY."

When Christ was crucified, his disciples were so overcome by despair that they saw but one meaning to the sad event, "CHRIST DEFEATED." All hope was gone; Christ was dead. But three days later the rest of the message came through, clear and plain, "CHRIST DEFEATED THE DEVIL." Victory! How wonderful! Through death

and the resurrection, Christ conquered the grave; by as-cending, he made possible our ascension to heaven, too. Hallelujah! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?...Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Adapted* □



"My Name is I AM"

I WAS regretting the past and fearing the future. Suddenly my Lord was speaking.

"My name is I AM."

He paused. I waited. He continued. "When you live in the past with the mistakes and regrets, it is hard. I am not there. My name is not I WAS.

"When you live in the future with its problems and fears, it is hard. I am not there. My name is not I WILL BE.

"When you live in this moment, it is not hard. I am here. My name is I AM."

—*Selected* □

THE TRUTH—Love it, or Lose It!

(Continued from Page 1)

found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matthew 13:44-46).

"No Greater Joy"

The apostle John knew this unexcelled joy in association with truth. He wrote to Gaius, "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John, verses 1-4). Yes, Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

Complementary Elements

Truly, love and truth complement, highlight and amplify one another. Psalms 85:10 has other elements, besides the love of truth, beautifully merging with truth. Notice. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." How expressive. Then love and truth

(Continued on Next Page)

THE TRUTH—*Love it, or Lose It!*

(Continued from Previous Page)

combined have a bearing on the way truth is spoken. Not only are we to love the truth or lose it, Ephesians 4:15 says that we are to be “speaking the truth in love.”

—II—

Love It, or Lose It

Let us get back to what we initially were saying. Great and wonderful as truth is, we will lose it if we don't love it. If we do not truly love and appreciate the truth, realizing its uniqueness, we will become bored by that “old, old story we have heard so long” and lust for something else. We will want to be in vogue with the times. We may think it is too dogmatic, too “strait and narrow.” Not “modern” enough. That we have outgrown the faith of our fathers. A worldly mindset and an inclination of wanting to reshape Christianity into a more accommodating man-made mold may be a factor. “Let's make Christianity more palatable and more compatible for the world.”

The Solemn Charge to Timothy

The possibility of thoughts of this nature may have been in Paul's mind when he wrote the second epistle to Timothy. The apostle would soon die a martyr's death. Hard times were in store for the infant church. A modified message might be better, less antagonistic to an ungodly world, some might think. And the less spiritual might be already disposed in that direction. In view of this, having written the things that he did in chapter 3, Paul solemnly admonished, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant [ready] in season [*eu-kairos*, good seasons], out of season [*a-kairos*, no season at all]; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time [*kairos*, season] will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry [fulfill thy ministry]” (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Lusting for Something Else

Did you notice what Paul said here? It was because of “their own lusts” they would turn away their ears from the truth and be turned to fables. That was the factor involved. Men LOVE the truth,

but when they tire of it, they LUST for something else. Lust is unlawful desire.

This is what happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness. The LORD God graciously provided them manna from heaven, as they had their needs met, but they became tired of it. We read, “And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes” (Numbers 11:4-6).

And that is just exactly what happens when men no longer love the truth. It may be the mixed multitude in our midst that lusts first and cries out for fleshly things. They have little appetite for the spiritual. The flesh must be pampered. “Give us entertainment.” We “need” all of these “new” things that cater to the flesh. (And the mixed multitude of unconverted people seem to be always with us). Then, it isn't long until the whole church can be carried away with this mentality. (After all, “Everybody is doing it”). “The Scriptures are boring; we need something more exciting and different. The Bible doesn't really mean that.” Obviously they don't love the truth and are ready to lose it.

Problems in Our Society

Yes, there are so many things in our society today that would make man inclined to lust after something else, or not really highly esteem or love the truth in the first place. In fact, the very nature of our pluralistic society itself is part of the problem. Our society is multi-cultured with hundreds of religious denominations. Couple that with the mindset of subjective relativism, and we really have a mess. The unique and distinctive edge of truth is lost as truth and error are homogenized to make up the mixed-up, mushy, modern mindset. In such a context, truth and error are equally esteemed. The need to distinguish truth from error doesn't seem to enter the average person's mind. “I'm okay, you're okay” seems to be the great American way. “It doesn't make any difference what you believe, just so you are sincere.” But truth is absolute, or it is not truth at all. When truth is not loved, highly esteemed, and distinctively and exclusively recognized, it will be lost.

There is a lot more expounding that needs to be and could be done on this subject, but we think the point has been well established by our repeated emphasis in this little article: THE TRUTH—*Love*

it, or lose it! Initially, if we do not esteem and love the truth, we cannot be saved. Then if we do not continue to highly esteem, love and appreciate it, we will not keep it for long. We will be deceived and enter into a state of delusion as we lust after things other than the truth.

Yes, THE TRUTH—*Love it, or lose it (otherwise, in the meantime we may lose our souls)!* □

Where Have All the Faithful Preachers Gone?

Say, where have all the strong and faithful preachers gone?

Who stately stood and spoke the truth with thund'rous tone?

They were stalwart and unashamed, with message sound,

And though few followed them, they knew where they were bound.

Tell us, where have the strong and faithful preachers gone?

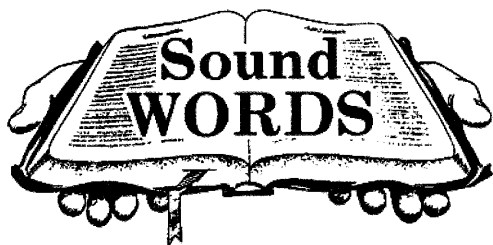
Who with backbone were unafraid to stand alone?

God's Word is still the same—man's needs are greater still.

Will none step up and take a stand their place to fill?

By James E. Gibbons

"Hold fast the form of sound words..."



*"...Sound speech, that cannot be condemned"
(2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:8).*

WE would like to add another word study to our "sound speech" series that we started sometime ago. In our careful efforts to return fully to simple New Testament Christianity in its purity, we need to use the words of the New Testament when talking about New Testament matters (and in the way that the New Testament writers use them). The apostle Paul, speaking in contrast with human philosophy, said, "Which things also we speak, not in word's which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] teacheth, **comparing spiritual things with spiritual**" (1 Corinthians 2:13). The NIV translates the last part of this verse thusly, "**expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.**" Then today besides the high sounding philosophical terms, we have to deal with

theological and denominational terms not found in the Scriptures (as well as other innovative expressions). It is our conviction that God knew best how to express himself in the truth he wanted to get across. So, we will just stick with the simplicity of the Holy Scriptures.

The Corporate Identity of Believers

In the New Testament followers of Christ, speaking generally, are called many things, such as disciples, Christians, believers, brethren, servants, and saints. These are all fitting and expressive in their proper context. But speaking more specifically as a corporate body of believers, how are they identified in the Scriptures? That specific word by which they are identified as a corporate entity, is the word "church." The word "church" in our translations is representative of the Greek word **ekklesia**. The word **ekklesia** is a compound word with two parts, **ek** (out) + **kaleo** (call), signifying those who are called out (or an assembly).

The word "church" (**ekklesia**) is used in three different ways in the New Testament. (1) It is used in an informal sense, having reference to the whole body of believers in the world. We can see this when Christ said that he would build his church (Matthew 16:18), and when Paul said that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25). These references are all in this category. (2) The term church is used as the corporate identity of believers in a city or place. This can be seen throughout the book of Acts (Acts 11:22, 26; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:4, 22; 20:17; etc.). It can be seen in the epistles being addressed to churches (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; etc.). The book of Revelation is likewise addressed to the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). We find no other term used as a corporate designation of believers in the New Testament. (3) And, then, the term "church" is sometimes used even more specifically in an assembled sense, applied to believers met together more formally for worship (Colossians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 14:19, 34).

This article is not dealing with denominational names as such, but, more basically, in what the corporate body of believers, as such, should be called. We have seen that the term "church" is exclusively used in the New Testament in this respect. (No other word was found). That being the case, we are made to wonder how that different religious groups come up with what they call themselves. Checking the "yellow pages" of the phone directory, even in

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Sound WORDS

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the small town in which the editor lives, we ran across a variety of designations. What these folk call themselves is their business, but it is almost like they are trying to run away from the term "church." Today people who apparently look upon themselves in some sense as a "church" call themselves ministries, like "Firehouse Ministries." They call themselves a "Temple" or a "Tabernacle." (We thought this was Old Testament terminology and concepts. How did this get into the picture?). Then how do such designations, looking at it from the corporate perspective, like "The Sanctuary," and "The Upper Room Fellowship" come into play? And add to that "Fountain of Life" and "Words of Life International"? The list goes on.

Christ declared, "I will build my **church**" (Matthew 16:18). The Spirit-inspired writers of the Scriptures tell us that he loved the "church," gave himself for the "church" (Ephesians 5:25), and purchased the "church" with his own blood (Acts 20:28). That being the case that he so designated its identity and that this mode of reference is continually used throughout the New Testament for the corporate body of believers, why should we call it anything else but the "church"? And he said, it is "**my church**." That settles it for this writer. □

Put Christ Back in Christmas?

COMMONLY HEARD among many professing Christians this time of the year are the words, "Let's put Christ back in Christmas." My thought is, "Was he ever in Christmas?" How can we put him back if he was never there in the first place? How can we say he was never in Christmas? Simply because Christmas is not a Christian holiday. It is not Scriptural. In fact, there is only one day that is given any preeminence over another in Christianity and that seems to be the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). There is no indication that the birth of Christ was intended to be celebrated by a special day. The problem with special days is they are too limited. Every day should be special and a celebration for the Christian, a celebration of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and present ministry on our behalf, and a celebration of who we are in him.

Put Christ into Christmas? No, don't make him a part of the Santa and his reindeer myth, don't include him in the unwise and foolish spending that is so rampant, don't look upon him as a babe

in a manger and neglect him as LORD of Lords. Put Christ into every day of your life. Don't just celebrate his birth; celebrate the fact that he is the Christ and is alive forever more, and don't just celebrate a day or a season. Celebrate life; every day is Christ-day! —*Adapted* □



BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What is the first verse and the last verse in the Bible (and what do they say)?
2. Who was the mother of Samuel?
3. In the Bible, why was a child named "Ichabod" and what does this name mean?
4. How tall was the giant Goliath who defied the armies of Israel and was slain by David?
5. Of what city did the people boast that it could be defended by "the blind and the lame," but it was taken by David and his men?
6. What king of Israel disguised himself as he went into battle, thinking that he would stave off the words spoken by a prophet, only to die from an arrow shot at random?
7. Who said the following words and under what circumstances were they spoken: "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace"?
8. What book in the Bible says more about laziness than any other book in the Bible?
9. According to the book of Proverbs, "good news from a far country" and what are alike?
10. Which Old Testament prophet is known as the "weeping prophet"?
11. How long was the southern kingdom of Judah in Babylonian Captivity, who prophesied this, and what does the number of years signify?
12. Which one of the four gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) does not have the word gospel in it?
13. How old was Jesus when he was baptized and began his earthly ministry?
14. How many times did Jesus use the unusual procedure involving "spittle" (salvia) in healing people (and what were the healings)?
15. What did the Pharisees finally do with the blind man who had been healed by Jesus when he washed in the pool of Siloam?
16. What two men in the New Testament were named Lazarus (identify them)?
17. Who did Jesus send to prepare for the final Passover that he would eat with his disciples, and how did they determine where it would be?
18. After the original church in Jerusalem, what church in what city became a center for intense Christian activity?
19. Phebe, who seems to have carried the epistle to the Christians at Rome, was from what local church?
20. Can you find and name seven "beatitudes" (i.e., "Blessed" so and so) in the book of Revelation?

(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. □

NOTE: We receive e-mail at two different e-mail addresses, (1) theswordandstaff@embarqmail.com and (2) jamesgibbons@embarqmail.com. In some strange way the address, theswordandstaff@embarqmail.com, became disengaged earlier this year and we didn't discover it until in August. It has been corrected. But when we did get it straight, down came all this correspondence going back several months. We regret this and apologize for not being able to answer before now. Consequently, some of these Readers' Response letters date back to earlier this year.—**Editor**

FLORIDA:

■ *"I have enjoyed reading your publication for some time now. I particularly appreciated your recent article on 'The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple, A Study,' which was Scripturally sound.*

"Enclosed please find a gift in support of your ministry. I have also included payment for a copy of the book NOBODY LEFT BEHIND..."

"I am praying for your continued strength and funding to keep fighting the good fight in proclaiming the Truth..."

TENNESSEE:

■ *"I just saw that you have 1989 through 2008 available in hardback. I would like to order them for our library [school of preaching]. Please send a bill with shipment." (E-mail)*

■ *"Thank you again for the work you do in the kingdom. THE SWORD AND STAFF is wonderful. What a great study on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Your article proves just taking the Word will teach us what we need to know."*

■ *"Although I have never met you, I love you. The way you understand and explain the Scriptures is simply exhilarating. I thank God for you. If only every gospel preacher spoke with the knowledge and wisdom that you do, surely it would be a different world.*

"I have several people to add to your mailing list..." (E-mail)

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Oh! How blessed I am to receive so many of the bound books [bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF]. Thank you so much."*

MARYLAND:

■ *"You really did a superb job on the Holy Spirit in the latest issue of SWORD AND STAFF...Thanks." (E-mail)*

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ *"Thank you for your strong stand on the Word and your good publication."*

■ *"A few years ago, I asked you to put my cousin on your mailing list. He passed away a little while back, and I believe that he knew Jesus, and part of it may have been because of THE SWORD AND STAFF ...Thank you." (E-mail)*

■ *"This recent publication is wonderful! Your article, 'The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple, A Study,'—I loved reading every word and will re-read the article several times! Thank you, Mr. Gibbons...I thank God for giving you the mind to help us study and understand His Word. May God bless you and bless you and continue to keep you here for us all for years yet! We need you and your SWORD AND STAFF publication."*

NEW YORK:

■ *"Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus! I would like to request tracts from you. Could I have 10 of all your various tracts. Please tell us how much it cost for shipping and we will gladly pay. Interested in the plan of salvation, the Sabbath, the church, holy living, the second coming of Jesus, the refutation of cults, especially Jehovah Witnesses and 7th Day Adventist. Thanks in advance." (E-mail)*

OHIO:

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

■ *"Please send a copy of NOBODY LEFT BEHIND. Enclosed is the suggested amount to cover expenses."*

■ *"I really appreciate THE SWORD AND STAFF periodical. I have learned a lot from the many Biblically sound articles. God bless you for your efforts in this mission that you have taken on!..." (E-mail)*

■ *"In reading the book THIS LITTLE CHURCH WENT TO MARKET, which exposes today's market-driven churches, we are again reminded (and thankful) for publications such as THE SWORD AND STAFF, and others that remain faithful—printing the*

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

truth of God's Word—strengthening us to remain faithful against the infiltration of the world and its influences into the church.

"Enclosed, please find a contribution to use toward the expenses of printing and distributing THE SWORD AND STAFF..."

■ *"Will you please send to me one copy of the book NOBODY LEFT BEHIND, along with the offered 20 years of the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF? I am a preacher of the Gospel...and have been a Christian since '74, and I attribute much of my early years of development to THE SWORD AND STAFF publications. What a blessing that you are for God and His Kingdom. Your reward will be beyond human description. Thanks again, and may God continue to bless you and THE SWORD AND STAFF publication."*

INDIANA:

■ *"Quit sending this disagreeable SWORD AND STAFF...stop mailing this crap. Stop it!"*

IOWA:

■ *"I think your newsletter THE SWORD AND STAFF is top drawer. Keep up the good work."*

MISSOURI:

■ *"Thank you for your steadfastness and faithfulness. We thank God for you..."*

ARKANSAS:

■ *"Thank you so very much for the box of reading material! Your generosity went away beyond my expectation."*

"For a shut-in like me, you have provided hour upon hour of reading material and Bible study. Words cannot express how much I appreciate it. I know the Bible teaches it is more blessed to give than to receive, but I'm the one that feels like I've been blessed!"

"I've enclosed a check to cover the postage plus a little extra...Your kindness will never be forgotten."

MISSISSIPPI:

■ *"I recently saw one of your issues in a home in Oklahoma. I would like to be placed on your mailing list...I would also like to receive the bound volumes going back to 1989. I will be happy to pay the shipping and other costs incurred..." (E-mail)*

TEXAS:

■ *"Please remove this listing from your mailing list."*

■ *"I am trying to locate a copy of your POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS...It is so inspirational that I would like to purchase a copy for myself."*

■ *"Thank you so very much for your great magazine, THE SWORD AND STAFF. The Scriptures have always spoken the truth in love. May you have a long and useful life in His services...Please accept enclosed*

check which shows our appreciation."

■ *"Thanks. I appreciate your writings in THE SWORD AND STAFF...the direction some seem intent to bring upon the church is alarming. Somehow 'change' has become a sacred cow. The older I get, the more I appreciate the old paths and God's wisdom in insisting that this is the 'good way' (Jeremiah 6:16)." (E-mail)*

OKLAHOMA:

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

NEBRASKA:

■ *"Thank you for your continuing work, publishing the Good News. THE SWORD AND STAFF is possibly (I think probably!) the best periodical today for the church. If I may, I would like to add a name for your mailing list..." (E-mail)*

CALIFORNIA:

■ *"I would like to ask you to kindly remove our address from your mailing list..." (E-mail)*

OREGON:

■ *"Enclosed is a contribution. Keep up the good work."*

UNITED STATES:

■ *"A friend directed me to your web site some time back. I enjoy the articles and appreciate the in-depth knowledge you put into your studies..." (E-mail)*

■ *"I read your article on prophecy, if it should be taken literally or figuratively, and really enjoyed it. There was a link to request more articles related to prophecy...So I am trying this e-mail in the hopes that it will enable you to send the additional articles to my e-mail address. Thank you and I would like to let you know what a blessing your site full of great articles has been..." (E-mail)*

■ *"Hello...I want to let you know that I really enjoy your paper. It has come to our church house for many years and I have read them over and over. I visit your website often also. You have unknowingly helped me with many sermons over the years. I have talked to a large number of people over the years about Jesus and his Word and have had my heart broken over people just not wanting to hear or read the truth. It is so refreshing to know that there are others out there that hold the truth and are willing to share it with the world. I have not been able to find much material out there to read that I can trust to recommend to others. However, your articles are some that I do recommend. And I still tell them to read the Bible also. You have been an inspiration to me for many years now and I just wanted to let you know that your work is making a difference in this world. I hope that you are well and have a great day. Please keep up the good work." (E-mail)*

MEXICO:

■ *"Greetings from Mexico. God bless you. I would like to know if I could receive...THE SWORD AND STAFF or Spanish edition? In last version is better*

for me.” (E-mail)

(We are sorry, but the paper is no longer available in Spanish except for 10 years of bound volumes, starting with 1995, 2 years in each book—**Editor**)

GHANA:

■ “I write to inform you I have been reading the bound volumes you sent and I’ve been enjoying them very much!

“I was invited by the Radio Station to deliberate on the topic, ‘Who Rules the World, God or Satan?’ on the 25th of February. I received a lot of bothering questions on the fact that, why should Christians suffer? I requested from the presenter whether he could permit me to come the following week on the topic, ‘Why Bad Things Happen to Good People.’ I was invited on the 4th of March and used your ideas on the subject. It was well received. Some people even requested I make it into a booklet form so they could read with the verses! This only shows how your ministry is going beyond your imagination! We rejoice in the Lord for that!...” (E-mail)

NIGERIA:

■ “Dear Man of God, love and greetings. Thank you for the great work on God’s Word...Please if you still have the bound volumes for the past 20 years you offer for libraries and churches, please do send to our ministry. We will really appreciate this excellent material” (E-mail)

PHILIPPINES:

■ “Thank you so much for keeping me on your lists as one of the recipients who receive *THE SWORD AND STAFF* materials. Yes, it helps me a lot in the area of my ministry. May God continue to bless you...”

■ “Thanks so much for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It’s a wonderful help. If you don’t mind, I’m making a sermon right now on Job, from your recent article. *THE SWORD AND STAFF* has been an inspiration for me in the Philippines...” (E-mail) □

Excerpts from...



“A fool and his money are soon parted.”

“A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose to the grindstone.”

“A penny saved is a penny earned.”

“A sleeping fox catches no poultry.”

“At the working man’s house hunger looks in but dare not enter.”

“Be always ashamed to catch thyself idle.”

“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

“Beware of little expenses, a small leak will sink a great ship.”

“Diligence is the mother of good luck.”

“Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that’s the stuff life is made of.”

“Ere you consult fancy, consult your purse.”

“From saving comes having.”

“Frugality is a fair fortune; and habits of industry a good estate.”

“God helps them that help themselves.”

“Good management is better than good income.”

“Haste makes waste.”

“He shall never want more who is thankful for, and thrifty with, a little.”

“He that does not save pennies will never have dollars.”

“He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing.”

“He who multiplies riches multiplies cares.”

“He who saves in little things can be liberal in great ones.”

“If you know how to spend less than you get, you have the philosopher’s stone.”

“If your means suit not with your ends, pursue those ends which suit with your means.”

“Let honesty and industry be thy constant companions, and spend one penny less than thy clear gains; then shall thy pocket begin to thrive; creditors will not insult, nor want oppress, nor hunger bite, nor nakedness freeze thee.”

“Little strokes fell great oaks.”

“Many have been ruined by buying good bargains.”

“Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day.”

“No gains without pains.”

“Plough deep while sluggards sleep and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.”

“Poverty wants some things, luxury many things, avarice all things.”

“Rust wastes more than use.”

“The harvest and vintage come not every day, therefore be provident.”

“The most important element in success is economy—economy of money and time.”

“The true philosopher’s stone is to have means and not to spend injudiciously.”

“Thrift is better than an annuity.”

“Trouble springs from idleness and grievous toil from needless ease.”

“Waste not, want not.”

“Who dainties love shall beggars prove.” □

—Benjamin Franklin

Mankind's "I" Problem

SIN basically is an "I" problem. This is true whether we look at it from the spectrum of eternity, the Garden of Eden, the history of mankind, or the human situation in particular in which we find ourselves today. It is an "I" problem in man's relationship to God (and to his fellow human beings). We will elaborate.

God distinctly used the personal pronoun "I" when he spoke to Moses, identifying himself as the great "I AM." Notice Exodus 3:14-15. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Keep this Scripture in mind as we go into this article.

"The Condemnation of the Devil"

The apostle Paul, in listing the qualifications of would-be elders, said, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 John 3:8; 2 Peter 2:4). Pride seems to have been the "condemnation of the devil." He got his eyes off of God, forgetting that he himself was a created being (howbeit, an exalted one, being an archangel), and with a fixation on himself led a rebellion against heaven (evidently thinking he could replace God). With an inflated estimation of himself, he had an "I" problem. He wanted to usurp the very throne of God.

"You Will Be Like God"

Although Adam and Eve were beings with a lower status than angels, they were highly honored and were created in the "image" and "likeness" of God (Genesis 1:26-27). They were spirit beings (clothed with a body), moral and eternal. As such, being responsible beings, they were placed over God's creation on earth (Genesis 1:28; Psalms 8:4-8), and they were initially favored to live in the earthly paradise of Eden. But, enter the scene, the devil. Adam and Eve in a very special sense were already like God, but the devil plants contrary thoughts in their mind. Eat of that forbidden tree, and "you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5, NKJV). God is holding back on you in some way. God is the great I AM, and you can be like him (although "I AM" is singular and uniquely refers to the One Eternal Self-Existent One, yet they were already in

this category on an abbreviated scale). Eve, in believing the lie of the devil while thinking in terms of the "I" of self, clashed with the eternal great I AM. All sin is of such a nature. It is an "I" problem.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD



How Sin is an "I" Problem

Pride enters the picture as man, in one way or another, tries to usurp the position of God with all of its prerogatives. Humanism fits this picture. Man may try to push God entirely out of society and live like he was the only "I am," like the great I AM was non-existent. He wants to be totally in the driver's seat. Decidedly, selfishness is part of the picture. Or men may simply disregard that we are created in God's image and ignore that the likeness of God is to be reflected in every aspect of our lives. God's character is the law of the universe. Didn't he say, "Be ye holy; for I AM HOLY" (1 Peter 1:16)? And aren't we taught that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16) and that we are to "walk in love" as God's "dear children" (Ephesians 5:1-2)? Also, righteousness and all of the other moral attributes come to mind when we think of God. All of these traits are to become an integral part of us. However, just the opposite seems to have largely taken place. Paul noted, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). When we sin, not being like God, and his character not being reproduced in our lives, we thereby "come short of the glory of God." We fail (and Paul says that "all" have

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A Bible Bookworm

IT IS SAID that Charles Spurgeon found an old worm-eaten Bible on the table at a Scottish wayside inn. Carefully holding it up to the light, he noticed only one hole through which the light shone. One worm, it seems, had begun at Genesis and eaten all the way through to Revelation, and this moved Spurgeon to say, "Lord, make me a bookworm like that." Such a book-worm never turns into an earthworm. It will have wings by and by. □



BARBS ...with a POINT

WEAK people want strong drink.

When people play the blame game, it may be simply another name for not accepting responsibility themselves.

*You are not **right**-eous without being **right**.*

If you don't love the truth, it won't be long before you will believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

You can't live the "good life" without being good.

We live in a time that when something bad happens in our society, our "learned" men assign collective guilt to all of us and individual guilt and responsibility to none, it seems.

There are none so blind as those who will not see.

The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), not a forum for the airing of the diverse opinions and doctrines of men.

The flesh ultimately seeks the lowest common denominator.

A rising tide lifts all boats, and if they are not securely fastened, will take them out to sea.

Nothing deadens and destroys spirituality like materialism.

The closer Christ got to the cross the more his supposed followers distanced themselves from him.

If you stand for nothing, you are likely to fall for anything.

It is hard to get along with people who cannot get along with themselves.

People who "sit on their hands" are more inclined to want a "hand out."

Too many religious people have made peace with the devil oblivious to the fact that a war of eternal consequence is still raging.

If you really take a stand for the truth, by doing this you thereby take a stand against all that is false.

When men fail to heed the counsel of God and mess up their lives, their problems are not corrected by seeking the inferior counsel of men.

Religion that thrives on hatred and ill-will is not of God.

So-called "worship" in many modern-day churches has decidedly moved in the direction of entertainment with the accompanying applause, et al.

The people who are the most unlovable need love the most.

It is really pathetic when religious people are more concerned about sinners being offended than God, when the God of heaven is the one who has been offended by the sinners.

Sometimes it takes a little negative preaching to get positive results.

Religion must be practiced in its presentation and promotion, not stooping to fleshly and worldly tactics, if we wish to get religious results.

People who are honorable will show honor and respect to others.

Many modern day "churches" take pride in accommodating the sinner in his carnal taste for music, his unseemly dress, and his crude way of talking (and, yes, even in his sins).

Silence is golden, but then again sometimes it is just downright yellow.

If our forefathers thought taxation without representation was bad, they should see it today with representation.

You can run from God, but you can't hide.

Man himself is thereby greatly devalued when he gears his value system to material things. □



That Which Time Cannot Efface

LIFE IS a matter of building. Each of us has the opportunity to build something—a secure family, a good reputation, a career, a relationship to God. But some of those things can disappear almost overnight due to financial losses, natural disasters and other unforeseen difficulties.

What are we to do? Daniel Webster offered excellent advice, saying, "If we work on marble it will perish. If we work on brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust. But if we work on men's immortal minds, if we imbue them with high principles, with just fear of God and love of their fellow-men, we engrave on those tablets something which time cannot efface, and which will brighten and brighten to all eternity." —**Selected** □

Mankind's "I" Problem

(Continued from Page 12)

sinned). Any way that you look at it, sin is an "I" problem (and it is a universal one). Man must be dethroned in his attempt to compete with God and in his rebellion against heaven.

Biblical Illustrations of the "I" Problem Involving Sin

The "I" problem involving sin is well-illustrated throughout the Bible. In the 7th chapter of Romans as Paul deals with his struggle with sin under the law, getting us ready for the answer to the sin problem to be found in Christ, the personal pronoun "I" is found 32 times. Notice the repeated use of personal pronouns in the story of the rich farmer who tore down his barns and built larger ones. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall *I* do, because *I* have no room where to bestow *my* fruits? And he said, This will *I* do: *I* will pull down *my* barns, and build greater; and there will *I* bestow all *my* fruits and *my* goods. And I will say to *my* soul, Soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). King David's prayer of repentance in the 51st psalm in connection with his well-known sin of adultery is filled with personal pronouns. It was highly personal, as his sins were. He regarded what he had done as an outrage and personal affront to God. Then, coming face to face with the great God of eternity in his vision, with the angelic beings crying, "Holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6), Isaiah tells us how he responded. "Then said *I*, Woe is *me*! For *I* am undone: because *I* am a man of unclean lips, and *I* dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for *mine* eyes have seen the king, the LORD of hosts" (6:5). Here we see the human "I am" in sharp contrast with the great I AM.

Confronting the "I" Problem

So, the "I" problem (the sin problem) is one that needs to be fully faced by all and dealt with. Proverbs 16:18 asserts, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." These words were written far removed from the fall of Satan and later man in the Garden of Eden. But they well-describe what took place with the evil One and Eve back then. More dramatically, sudden de-

struction came to Herod in the 12th chapter of Acts with a kindred sin (Acts 12:20-23). This "I" problem continues today. The word "sin" itself has "I" right in the middle of it (s-I-n), typifying what we are saying. Instead of the great I AM being all, too many times man worships the unholy trinity of me, myself and I. Man must be brought low and God fully enthroned in our outlook and lives. We are told in 1 Peter 5:5 that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (NKJV). The "I" problem must be soundly dealt with. This takes place when we fully come to Christ, emptying ourselves of self. Paul stated, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). The "I" had been marked out, and in being marked out, now appeared as a cross ("†"). Luke 9:23 was now a reality in Paul's life. He was practicing what he taught in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. With James, he could say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15). God was all.

Concluding Admonition

Dear reader, personally now, have you dealt with the "I" problem? It is universal (Romans 3:23). Pride, self-centeredness and selfishness will have to be conclusively dealt with. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Read all of Romans chapter 6 and take it to heart. Identify yourself with what Paul declared in Galatians 2:20 and personally make his words your very own. In doing this the human deity of self ("I am") will be dethroned and replaced by the great I AM of eternity (who is revealed to us in Christ, John 8:58; 14:9). In this I AM we "live, and move, and have our being," spiritually and in every way (Acts 17:28). Amen.—*J. E. G.* □



The Word "Amen"

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."


—2 Corinthians 1:20

THE WORD "amen" is a most remarkable word. It was transliterated directly from the Hebrew into the Koine Greek of the New Testament, then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. It has been called the best-known word in human speech. The word is directly related—in fact, almost identical—to the Hebrew word for "believe"

(aman), or “faithful.” Thus, it came to mean “sure” or truly,” an expression of absolute trust and confidence. When one believes God, he indicates his faith by an “amen.” When God makes a promise, the believer’s response is “amen”—“so it will be!” In the New Testament, it is often translated “verily” or “truly.” When we pray according to his Word and his will, we know God will answer, so we close with an “amen,” and so also do we conclude a great hymn or anthem of praise and faith.


The word is even a title of Christ himself. The last of His letters to the seven churches begins with a remarkable salutation by the glorified Lord: “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14). We can be preeminently certain that his Word is always faithful and true, because he is none other than the Creator of all things, and thus he is our eternal “Amen.” As our text reminds us, every promise of God in Christ is “yea and amen,” as strong an affirmation of truth as can be expressed in the Greek language.

It is, therefore, profoundly meaningful that the entire Bible closes with an “amen.” “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Revelation 22:21), assuring everyone who reads these words that the whole Book is absolutely true and trustworthy.

Amen!—*Selected* 


A Great Section of Scripture


(Romans 5:1-11)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed [disappoint]; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth [demonstrated] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”—*The Apostle Paul* 

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




Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 1:1; Revelation 22:21;
2. 1 Samuel 1:19-23;
3. 1 Samuel 4:10-22;
4. 1 Samuel 17:1-51;
5. 2 Samuel 5:6-10;
6. 1 Kings 22:29-37 (22:1-28);
7. 2 Kings 7:3-11;
8. Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4-5; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 22:13; 24:30, 34; 26:13-16; etc.;
9. Proverbs 25:25;
10. Jeremiah (Lamentations, Jeremiah);
11. 2 Chronicles 36:20-22;
12. John;
13. Luke 3:21-23;
14. (1) John 9:1-7; (2) Mark 7:31-37; (3) Mark 8:22-26;
15. Read all of John chapter 9, and then notice verse 34;
16. (1) Luke 16:19-31; (2) John 11:1-12:11;
17. Luke 22:7-13;
18. Antioch—Acts 11:26; 13:1-3;
19. Romans 16:1-2;
20. (1) Revelation 1:3; (2) 14:13; (3) 16:15; (4) 19:9; (5) 20:6; (6) 22:7; (7) 22:14. 

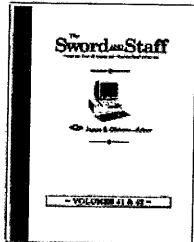
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