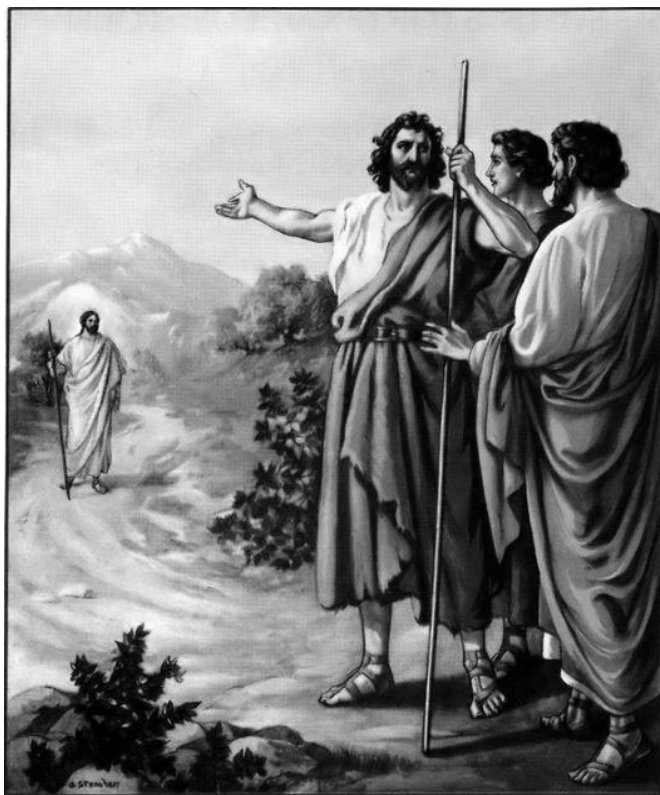


The Sword AND Staff

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

Your Example and Influence



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

WE ARE living in a fish bowl. No man is an island. Others see us. By our example we influence others, whether we know it or not, as we are being influenced by them, whether we like it or not. In a sense, we are part of every person that we have ever met, whether good or bad. Professed Christians live their lives daily under the close observation and scrutiny of the world, whether they realize it or not. The world pretty much knows if we are real Christians or not (or at least whether we are genuinely sincere). Our example and consequent influence are always there. Do we come through as hypocrites, and thus become a stumbling block to others, or are we a godly example and a wholesome influence on all

that we meet for good? Many have been brought to Christ by a godly example while others have been driven away by the lack of such. Does the world impact us or do we impact the world?

Therefore, in this day of falling away and the continued eroding influence of Christianity, it is highly fitting that we take the time and really take a serious look into this matter. Proverbs 20:11 says that “even a child is known by his doings...” To make a difference we need to be different. We can’t do as we please unless our primary aim is to please God.

I. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Redemption and More

We believe that Jesus Christ came into the world primarily for purposes of redemption, and having lived a sinless life, died on the cross to accomplish this. Today the modern unbelieving religionist discounts the redemptive part, as well as the sinless life of Christ, but sees value in the cross as an example of a good man unselfishly giving his life for a cause. Thus in that respect, to them, he is worthy of our emulation (as well as for a lot of the social aspects of his teachings). Yes, in addition to being redeemed by his precious blood, we, too, believe the cross is an inspiring example for us (1 John 3:16, etc.). But, being God in the flesh, his whole life was the embodiment of perfection. At every turn we see examples that we should follow as Christians (being Christ-like).

He Has Left Us an Example

Peter explicitly says that Christ has left “us an example, that ye [we] should follow his steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:21-22). John plainly states, “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

***GOOD ADVICE:** Know thyself; be thyself; give thyself.*

Christianity fills life with meaning, and as Christians we live accordingly and mean much to one another.

If we walk close to God, the devil can't come between us.

Frequenting the throne of grace will keep you from falling from grace as you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 1:6-10; 2 Peter 1:3-11).

It is good not to see people as they are, but to see them through the eyes of what they can become.

Paradoxically speaking, we are to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12) while our feet are "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15).

We live the good life by being "good" and going about doing "good."

The darker the shadow the more brilliant is the light that makes the shadow; so look up!

People respond better to warm truths than they do to cold facts.

If your convictions change with the weather, you will probably have a storm-filled life.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



LIKE THE BEREANS IN ACTS 17:11, ARE YOU "MORE NOBLE"?

● ***"THESE [the Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).***

WHAT is the context of this verse of Scripture? What was it about the Bereans that distinguished them as being "more noble than those of Thessalonica"? Did this characterize other conversions in the New Testament? And in the setting of our modern day world, are we finding people who, like the Bereans, are "more noble" when seen in similar situations? Personally, are we (are you) "more noble"?

Paul and Silas had just left Thessalonica. Accompanied by Timothy, for three Sabbath days in a row while there they had preached Christ in the Jewish synagogue. When Gentiles began to respond to the gospel in great numbers, the Jews, filled with envy, began to make it hard on the preachers. They got the city stirred up against them. To take the "heat" off of the new Christians, Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, the next city down the way. It is here that we read of the Bereans being "more noble than those in Thessalonica." Why are they called "more noble"? They were not like the hostile and unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily" to see if those things were so that were being preached. Indeed, they were noble—"more noble." With an open mind and an open heart, the truth of the Scriptures opened up to them in a marvelous way. They just didn't shrug off what was being said, saying that it really didn't matter, but carefully searched the Scriptures daily.

Throughout the book of Acts we find many who were "more noble" and had the spirit of the Bereans. On the day of Pentecost the great number that "gladly received his word [Peter's preaching] were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Showing the "more noble" spirit in the 8th chapter of Acts, the Ethiopian nobleman invited Philip to get up in the chariot with him and explain the enigmatic Scripture that he was reading. This resulted in him being baptized, and coming up out of the water, going on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:26-39). We see the "more noble" character of the Roman centurion Cornelius, who became the first Gentile convert to Christianity. In response to the angel appearing to him and to the coming of the apostle Peter, he said, "Immediately

therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33). Notice the "we." "We" are ready to "hear all things commanded thee of God." He had gathered "his kinsmen and near friends" to hear the message of God, too (10:24). His noble spirit reached out, including others. This word "command," coming from a military man here, has a military connotation. "Just speak the word. We are ready to obey" (just like a soldier would respond and obey). What an audience to speak to! How noble!

And, let us add two other "more noble" illustrations in the book of Acts, coming from somewhat of a different perspective. Aquila and Priscilla, a well-known Christian couple in the early church, were at that time living in Ephesus. Also at that time "a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus." He spoke fervently and diligently of the things of the Lord, but he only knew the baptism of John (which had been superseded by New Testament baptism). Aquila and Priscilla saw his incomplete understanding and took him aside "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:24-26). Although well versed in much of the Scriptures himself, he was not offended by what they said, obviously complying. Then just a little later, the apostle Paul also coming back through Ephesus, met up with twelve other disciples who likewise knew only the baptism of John (Acts 19:1-7). He questioned them about the incompleteness of their situation. Without argumentation, or gainsaying, they were baptized the right way right away. Obviously Apollos and these twelve were "more noble" in spirit (especially in contrast with modern times). In our modern world most people would be highly offended if you pointed out (even from the Scriptures) that something was incomplete about their "baptism" (or even that they basically needed to be immersed for the remission of their sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16). But, believing the Bible, love for people and love for the truth prompts us, like it did with Aquila and Priscilla (and Paul), to share deeper insights into the teachings of the Word of God.

Interestingly, most of the conversions recorded in the book of Acts are "religious" conversions. By this we mean that people were converted from one religion to another, to Christianity (to Christ). Let us name a few. The 3,000 who were converted on the day of Pentecost were religious Jews. The Ethiopian eunuch "had come to Jerusalem to wor-

ship" (Acts 8:27). Cornelius was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). Yet he was told by the angel that the coming man, Peter, "shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (11:14). Regardless how religious we are, there is no salvation outside of Christ (Acts 4:12). We need a Savior. Lydia and the women who met with her on the banks of the river for prayer on the Sabbath were very religious people. Yet we read of her giving attention to what Paul said and that "she was baptized" (Acts 16:12-15).

Whether we are just regular sinners outside of Christ, or sincere religious people who have not been taught the fullness of simple New Testament Christianity, let us be like the Bereans and the many in the book of Acts. Let us not be insulted or have a closed mind to that which we hear. Let us be "more noble" in that we receive "the word with all readiness of mind," and, yes, even search "the Scriptures daily" to see if the things that we hear are so. Fittingly, Paul later wrote to the Christians left behind in Thessalonica, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings [preaching]. Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good," and having done this, "Abstain from all appearance of evil [that which appears to be wrong]" (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). (Although the unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica had not done this, the band of Christians there should always do this). Likewise, let us take this admonition as our own. □

A Bible That Is Falling Apart



*probably belongs
to someone whose
life isn't (falling
apart).*

IF WE approach the study of the Bible like we had never read it before, although we may have read it almost all of our lives, we will continue to learn and have insights into the Bible like we have never had before.

People who gladly received the Word were baptized (Acts 2:41), and those who were baptized were glad that they had received the Word and went on their way rejoicing (Acts 8:36-39). □

Your Example and Influence

(Continued from Page 1)

to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:5-6). Ephesians 5:1-2 admonishes, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us..." And John further exhorts, in view of the coming resurrection, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).



The Impact of the Personal Example and Influence of Christ

The apostles of Christ accompanied and rubbed shoulders with God incarnate for over three years, and the impact of that association and his example is still being felt around the world. The impact of redemption and the holy religion of Christ have changed the course of history, initially impacting and dismantling the old paganism of the Roman Empire, with its accompanying brutality and immorality that made up that debased society. It is sad indeed and regrettable (beyond words) that after Christianity has given birth to modern civilization, that this civilization, now impacted by unbelief, is wanting to disown its very mother (and at the same time replace "her" with the remnants of the old discarded and decadent paganism, with its accompanying moral degeneracy, *et al*).

The Criterion of Our Example and Influence

But Bible-believing Christians will ever look to the example of Christ, the Son of God, who went about doing "good." Christianity is Christ and the long shadow of his example and influence fall across the years and pages of time unto the end of the world. We look to him as our final authority and example in everything. He is the criterion that makes the example and influence of everyone else have meaning, as we are an embodiment and a reflection of him.

II. THE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL

"Followers of Me, Even as I Am of Christ"

Preachers as harbingers of the message of Christ are to be an embodiment of their message. The preacher should so live that others can follow his example. Paul more than once said for Christians to follow him. In 1 Corinthians 4:16 he ad-

monished, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." Then again in Philippians 3:17 he asserts, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." But, know assuredly, they were following the preacher only in a secondary sense. Notice again, in particular, in 1 Corinthians how Paul admonished them, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Likewise he reminded the Thessalonians how that in their conversion they "became followers of us [the preachers], *and of the Lord...*" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). It all goes back to our prime example, Christ.

"I Have Showed You All Things"

In the pagan world into which the early preachers went forth preaching the message of Christianity, the preacher would be the first Christian that most of the people had ever seen. It was very important that they could see that the Word had become flesh all over again in the preacher's life and character. That is the whole point of Paul's emphasis. Acts 20:34-35 highlights one aspect of this, Paul speaking: "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. *I have shewed you all things*, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This same thing is brought out in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.

The Preacher's Life and Message Must Be Right

All of this being the case, what Paul says to the younger preacher, Timothy, is most significant. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of [to] the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct], in charity [love], in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). And, consequently, Paul continues, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). Timothy's life, as well as his message, had to be true.

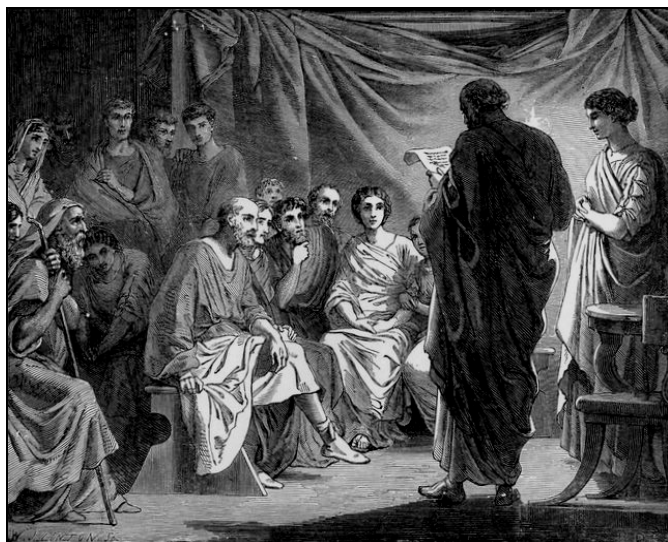
Preacher, Measure Up!

Today it's almost like some preachers could say, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say" (if they are actually saying anything substantial). They are just unspiritual "good old boys," running with the crowd, not all that concerned about their example or message. To them, if they were "too" spiritual, they would not be able to draw a crowd. Actually it would be hard for them to say with Paul, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Preacher, what can be said about your example and influence? We mean specifically from the viewpoint of being like Christ.

III. THE ELDERS AND DEACONS

Elders, “Examples to the Flock”



Of course in the New Testament “elders” (plural) are the overseers of the local church, and they are called “bishops” (Titus 1:5-7; Philippians 1:1), meaning overseers, and “pastors” (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4), signifying shepherds. These terms are suggestive of the work entrusted to them (and it is a work, 1 Timothy 3:1, not just an “office” to be held). In doing their work, Peter says that they are not to “lord” it over the church, but be “ensamples [examples] to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3). The writer of the book of Hebrews, focusing on the leadership of the church (with the elders being primarily in mind, it seems), said, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: *whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [the way that they live]*” (Hebrews 13:7). Christianity was so different from the world and the society into which it had been implanted, and transplanted, that a true model and a living example of the real thing was needful and most helpful for the new converts to see and follow. Being mature Christians, the elders served this purpose. They were not just unspiritual “good old boys,” who had patronizingly been put into this “office” for whatever reason.

“Must” Qualification for Elders

That being the case, that they are to be examples (and for other reasons), specific “must” qualifications are laid out for the elders (and deacons). (Study 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 to see these qualifications). In listing them, Paul continued in 1 Timothy 3:7, saying, “Moreover he [the

elder] must have a good report of them which are without [outside the church]; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” Besides these spelled out qualifications, the fact that these men are called “elders” and that they must be good solid family men says a lot. “Elder” implies age, and with it usually comes maturity. Then being an experienced family man, he can relate to other families and they can with more assurance look and relate to him for leadership and personal guidance in this area.

This Is Very Important

So, in being elders in the Lord’s church, one’s example and influence is very, very important to the well-being of the church. Consequently, elders must give account to the chief-shepherd in the Day of Judgment (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:4).

IV. THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN

“Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go”

Proverbs 22:6 instructs parents to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Likewise, Paul admonishes in the New Testament, “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Then later speaking in behalf of Christian women, Paul said, “She shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity [love] and holiness with sobriety” (1 Timothy 2:15). Returning to the Old Testament, Psalms 127:1 reads, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it...”

We Must First Go That Way Ourselves

This is a very serious matter. We should not be a stumbling block to our children. If we would bring them up in the way that they should go, we must first go that way ourselves. Anytime, example is decidedly the best teacher. Sometimes what we do speaks so loud that what we say can hardly be heard (and especially with children who seem to have intuitive perception). If we send a mixed message to our children, although pretending to be religious ourselves, the lives of our children will probably be mixed up, too. Is God personal in our everyday lives? Do we actually hunger and thirst after righteousness? What about church attendance? What about our kind of entertainment? If we drink, smoke and use profane language, what about that? Someone said that one thing that some children learn at their mother’s knee is to dodge hot

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Your Example and Influence

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cigarette ashes. Maybe we personally need to get right with the Lord ourselves. We cannot discount our unsolicited example, whether good or bad. Our influence is far-reaching.

Real Christianity Impacts the Rest of the Family

Peter makes it plain that real Christianity impacts others in family relationships for good. To the wives of unbelieving husbands, Peter wrote, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection [be in submission] to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [the conduct] of the wives; While they behold your chaste [pure] conversation [conduct] coupled with fear [respect]" (1 Peter 3:1-2). What does the "likewise" mean here? It refers back to the previous chapter, verses 18-25. Two things get our attention there. (1) Servants were to be in submission to their masters, even to those who did not treat them right, and (2) Christ has left us an example in circumstances like this that we are to emulate. Likewise, Peter says, wives by being good wives and practicing their Christianity with such an attitude, stood a good chance of winning their mates to Christ "without the word." Following the example of Christ, their example would make a profound impression for good on their husbands, even bringing about their salvation.

Paul Says So, Too

Paul brings out the possibility of the same scenario and its outcome in 1 Corinthians 7:13-14, including the husband, the wife and children in the family this time. He said, "And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

It Really Matters

Your example and influence profoundly matter in family relationships, whether it be of parents upon children or of husband and wife upon one another. Everyone and everything is important.

V. EVERY CHILD OF GOD

"The Light of the World"

The Lord obviously had in mind the example and influence of his disciples when he said the following in the Sermon on the Mount. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill can-

not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

"Let Your Light So Shine"

Notice. He didn't say to "shine your light," but "let your light" shine, according to our translation. What we are to do is not like the unpleasant experience of someone flashing a light into our eyes. Rather, it says to let your light shine. The lighting in our houses does not draw attention to itself, as such, by being a light fixture. But by simply being there and shining, all who come in contact with it almost unbeknown to them receive benefits from it. So, simply by being a real Christian, not ostentatiously putting ourselves on display to draw attention to ourselves, but by simply letting our light shine, we are a blessing to all with whom we come in contact. This is the practice of real Christianity, and God is glorified.

"A Pattern of Good Works" (Adorning the Doctrine of God)

As Paul gives instructions to Titus in that epistle (Titus 2:1-10) as to what he should say to different groups in the churches on the island of Crete (i.e., to old men, old women, young women, young men, and servants) in keeping with sound doctrine, notice in particular what was said in reference to the young men. "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:6-8). They were to be a "pattern of good works." A pattern is a model, example or representation that others can go by. He briefly specifies some things involved in this "pattern": adherence to sound doctrine, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech. By such an example, and its positive impact, those who opposed Christianity would be left speechless in finding fault with it. This would likewise be true involving the servants, as well as the others. By being conscientious Christians they would "adorn the doctrine of God," make it beautiful in the eyes of their masters and the world. Even without the spoken Word, by it being faithfully lived, all about them could see how wonderful Christianity really was. The cause of Christ would be and was advanced.

Being Mindful of Others

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2 Corinthians 3:2). If we are epistles “known and read of all men,” we need to be careful as to what is written therein. As Christians, we have a great responsibility. God’s name being used as a curse word in the Gentile world was brought about by the Jews saying one thing and doing another. Read Romans 2:17-24. We need to be careful how we live, what we do, and what we say as Christians for many reasons. We don’t want to be a stumbling block to others. We don’t want to dishonor God. Paul said, “Wherefore, if meat [eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols] make my brother to offend [stumble], I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Corinthians 8:13). He also said, “Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17), and “Let not then your good be evil spoken of” (Romans 14:16). Certain things may not be sinful within themselves as such, but if in the eyes of others our doing them leaves the wrong impression, it does matter what we do. Therefore Paul said, “Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Romans 15:2). Love demands that we be mindful of the tender sensitivities of others.

**The Only Bible
the Careless World Will Read**

We leave with you part of a poem written by Annie Johnson Flint that emphasizes what we are trying to say:

*We are the only Bible the careless world will read.
We are the sinner’s gospel; we are the scoffer’s creed.
We are the Lord’s last message, given in word and deed.
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?
What if our hands are busy with other work than His?
What if our feet are walking where sin’s allurements is?
What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?*

Closing Statement

Christianity is Christ. The best proof of Christianity is Christianity (Christianity lived). Christianity has no worse enemy than its uncommitted followers and its supposed friends. Be the real thing. Let your light shine in this dark world. Your example and influence really matter. □

Salvation 101

I want to praise my Jesus.
I want to glorify His name.
Since I gave my soul to Him
My whole life has changed.

My sins are all forgiven,
They’re not remembered anymore.
He’s filled me with His Spirit.
Now I can worship and adore.

I’ve got peace that passes understanding,
Joy of salvation in my life,
I’m now a holy child of God
Through obedient faith in Christ.

He wants me to share the gospel—
I’ve good news for you today.
The power of God unto salvation
Through Jesus Christ, the only way.

First, in Him I did have faith.
Then I repented of my sins.
I then confessed Him as my Lord.
Then was baptized into Him.

That is how we are forgiven.
And how we get His Spirit too.
You can read in the Bible,
God’s truth to me and you.

Forget about the sinner’s prayer,
And the raising of the hand.
You’ll not find that in the Word,
But in the mind of man.

You’ve got to be saved God’s way
‘Cause no other way will do.
Beware of the schemes of man,
And heed God’s Holy Word so true.

Then you too will praise Jesus.
You’ll want to glorify His name.
When you give your soul to Him
Your whole life will change.

In Him sins are all forgiven.
They’re not remembered anymore.
I’m so blessed to know Him,
And everyday I love Him more.

Yes, you’ll be blessed to know Him,
And everyday you’ll love Him more.

By Rafael Moreno

Playhouse Religion

PLAYHOUSE RELIGION: People are playing church when they think the mission of the church can be accomplished by play programs. □



Make Pearls Out of Them

THE ORIGIN of the pearl found within the shell of the pearl oyster was, to the ancients, a matter of deepest mystery, but today we understand it. We have learned that the pearl comes from irritation caused by some foreign substance, like a piece of sand, getting within the shell of the oyster, and results from the wonderful and mysterious power of the mollusk to obtain relief from things that irritate it by covering them with a secretion of pearl, until there is no longer any irritation.

What a beautiful symbolism and lesson here for the annoyances, irritations, and things that hurt and disturb us—to make pearls out of them instead of allowing them to go on hurting and vexing us! □

—Lee G. Tomlinson



Some Things to Ponder

1. Prayer is not a “spare wheel” that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a “steering wheel” that directs the right path throughout.
2. Why is a car’s windshield so large and the rear view mirror so small? Because our past is not as important as our future. So, look ahead and move on.
3. Friendship is like a book. It takes a few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.
4. All things in life are temporary. If going well, enjoy it; they will not last forever. If going wrong, don’t worry; they can’t last long either.
5. Old friends are gold! New friends are diamonds! If you get a diamond, don’t forget the gold! Because to hold a diamond, you always need a base of gold!
6. Often when we lose hope and think this is the end, God smiles from above and says, “Relax, sweetheart, it’s just a bend, not the end!”
7. When God solves your problems, you have faith in His abilities; when God doesn’t solve your problems He has faith in your abilities.
8. A blind person asked “St. Anthony”: “Can there be anything worse than losing your eye sight?” He replied: “Yes, losing your vision!”
9. When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them, and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
10. Worrying does not take away tomorrow’s troubles; it takes away today’s peace. Life is a coin, you can spend it anyway you wish, but you can only spend it once.

God Bless you!—Selected □

Getting It Right

PLATO wrote the first sentence of his famous *Republic* nine different ways before he was satisfied. Cicero practiced speaking before friends every day for thirty years to perfect his elocution. Noah Webster labored 36 years writing his dictionary, crossing the Atlantic twice to gather material. Milton rose at 4:00 AM every day in order to have enough hours for his *Paradise Lost*. Gibbon spent 26 years on his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Bryant rewrote one of his poetic masterpieces 99 times before publication, and it became a classic.—Selected □

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. What was the covenant that God made with Noah and mankind in connection with the rainbow?
2. What signaled the children of Israel to journey and to stop as Moses led them to the Promised Land?
3. What was the year of Jubilee, when did it come, and what were some of the observances to be kept in connection with it?
4. After talking with Manoah and his wife (parents of Samson), in what unusual way did the angel make his departure from them?
5. What does Elihu, the younger man who spoke after Job’s three friends finished, say as to why he was displeased with what Job had said?
6. How long was Jonah in the belly of the big fish?
7. What three men in the Bible wanted to die and prayed that God would take their lives?
8. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a _____.”
9. What did Simon Peter’s mother-in-law do immediately after the Lord healed her of a great fever?
10. Under what circumstances in the Bible did a man say, “I see men as trees, walking”?
11. Which is the only gospel writer that tells about the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead?
12. What was the relationship of Annas to Caiaphas, who was high priest when Jesus was arrested?
13. What finally happened to the money that was given to Judas to betray the Lord?
14. Who are five men in the Bible that we are told about committing suicide?
15. What two men became friends as a result of the trial of Jesus?
16. To what three people did the Lord make individual appearances in the days immediately following his resurrection?
17. Over a period of how many days after his resurrection did the Lord appear to his disciples before he ascended back to heaven?
18. What did the apostle Peter say is worse than never becoming a Christian?
19. What three series of sevens are used in the symbolic language of the book of Revelation in getting the message of this book across?
20. Where is the only time the word “gospel” is found in all of John’s writings?

(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:

■ *"Thank you for your labors in Christ. May God bless you and Freda."*

■ *"I have been very remiss in failing to write to you and thank you for such an outstanding publication. It is truly refreshing to see a publication that deals with the problems and issues in the church and not engage in personalities..."*

ALABAMA:

■ *"I was very happy to receive the latest SWORD AND STAFF. I wish I had known about it years ago ...I pray you will be writing for years..."*

SOUTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Please send me as many volumes (8) as you can of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I think you have done a great study of God's Word and I would like to have this information to share with the lost that I come in contact with. Thank you so much..."*

TENNESSEE:

■ *"...I'm thankful for men who are able to preach the truth and get publications out to the world. I'm thankful we are able to help with this great work. God bless you all."*

VIRGINIA:

■ *"Would you please send me two [bound] volumes of the last you put out. Sure do enjoy reading them and I pray each day for Christians who are preaching the whole council of God. Nothing else will do. God bless and supply all of your needs."*

■ *"Thank you, brother, for the good work you and your wife are doing with you good paper! All of you are in our prayers."*

■ *"I haven't sent support for some time. Your publication is 'Right on the Mark.' Please add a friend's name."*

■ *In view of our recent article, "Why Did God Become Flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ?" a reader in Virginia asked, "If Christ was God, how could God still be in heaven when Christ was on earth?"*

Editor's Reply:

"If Christ Was God, How Could God Still Be in Heaven When Christ Was on Earth?"

Before we (I) attempt to answer this question, let us say that it is mind-boggling to try to understand all about God (as lowly human beings). Yes, God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4; James 2:19)). He has his being as a definite and infinite person in a definite place. We pray, "Our Father *which art in heaven*" (Matthew 6:9). The Jews recognized that God was in heaven, and it was from there that he heard their prayers (1 Kings 8:30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49; etc.), yet he was thought of as being everywhere. Read the very absorbing 139th Psalm. Also notice Jeremiah 23:24, which says, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Think of the expanse of the universe, the sprawling galaxies, and the stars beyond that fill the vastness of the heavens. And God is greater than all of this! Of this awesome Being, Paul said on Mar's Hill in Athens of ancient Greece, "In him [God] we live, and move, and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). God is in one place, and yet God is everywhere at the same time. Just the elementary thoughts about God are utterly overwhelming to our finite minds in their limited perception.

Now getting back to Christ being God and God still being in heaven: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Then verse 3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." In Genesis 1 as creation reaches its climax with man, we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." (verse 26). The information here corresponds with the Scripture in John just referenced. At the same time the Word (Christ) is said to be with God, and then is distinctly said to be God. John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Paul later would write, "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

How can all of this be? Explanation: God is one, but works or expresses himself through three different "personalities," the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Some people call this the "Trinity," a term which, as such, is not found in the Scriptures. These great truths about the triune nature of how deity

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

works, or has his being, are seen in the Great Commission when the Lord said, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (Matthew 28:19). The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit can be seen associated together in their capacity and function as deity in the following Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; etc. The Father (it seems) always is referred to as God, and the others when viewed alone sometimes are called God. Reference to Christ is generally from the viewpoint of what took place in connection with his embodiment in the flesh and resurrection (Lord, Christ—Acts 2:36; etc), although he is called God at times (John 1:1; Acts 20:28; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8).

All of these things should be taken into consideration when answering the question, "If Christ was God, how could God still be in heaven when Christ was on earth?" In the book of Job the question was asked, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" There are many things in the realm of the spirit, which, since we presently are creatures in the flesh, are beyond our full understanding. But everything points to the reality of God. Paul stated, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead..." (Romans 1:20). Almighty Power and Supreme Intelligence are in evidence all about us. The Psalmist cried out, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalms 19:1). The Bible fills in the particulars of what God wants us to know. Moses had a very close and personal experience with God far beyond the common man, and yet he said, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

These are our humble thoughts.

KENTUCKY:

■ "If possible, I would like to have 12 copies of your article, 'Why God Became Flesh...'"

PENNSYLVANIA:

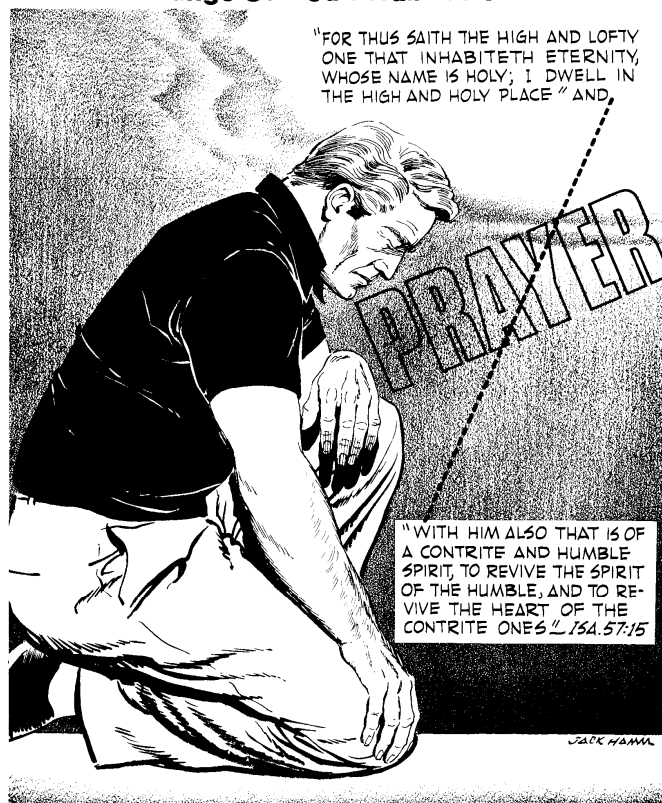
■ "...Thank you with all my heart for obeying God's call for you to do His will with *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It's a #1 wonderful real study of the Bible and God's will for us all!...

"I am sending money to order my copy of the bound book of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* 2009-2010! I will be glad to receive it! (I have all of the back bound volumes and am glad I do!)..."

CONNECTICUT:

■ "...I appreciate reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. May the Lord continue this labor of love..."

Range Of God's Habitation



MICHIGAN:

■ "Please discontinue my subscription and remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you..." (E-mail)

■ "I hope this enclosed offering helps your ministry. Thank you for all your years of service."

■ "Please find my contribution enclosed. Please put me on the mailing list for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thank you so much for all you do, lifting up the name of Jesus!"

■ "I was wondering if you could help me understand why wisdom is talked about as 'she'. Thank you!" (E-mail)

Editor's Reply:

Wisdom Talked About as "She"

I assume you have reference to the book of Proverbs where wisdom is spoken of in the feminine gender, "she" (Proverbs 1:20-23; 2:2-3; 3:13-18; 4:5-9; 8:1-5; 9:1-6; etc.). Perhaps wisdom is referred to here as "she" in contrast with the "strange woman" (the immoral, sexually "lose" woman—a harlot) who likewise is dealt with throughout the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 2:16-20; 5:3-20; 6:24-32; chapter 7; 9:13-18; etc.). As the "strange woman" is there with her evil designs to ensnare the young man, wisdom (spoken of as "she") likewise is there with words of understanding and prudence to guide him in the right direction. Throughout the book of Proverbs Solomon addresses

his “son” (Proverbs 1:8,15; 2:1; 3:1,11,21; 4:10,20; 5:1,20; 6:1,3,20; 7:1; 10:1; etc.). Whether use of the term “son” actually means his flesh-and-blood son, or is used as a literally device in writing, the end result is the same. Good and practical advice is given. These are my thoughts.

OHIO:

■ *“We are sorry to learn of your wife’s cancer, but we take great joy in hearing that the surgery went well and she seems to be recovering very well. We will definitely offer prayers of intercession for both of you. We know that prayer is a privilege we cannot neglect and is powerful because of the One who hears...”*

“Your gift of writing is enabling many people around the world to come to a better understanding of the Scriptures. This understanding is very much in need today as the so-called educated Bible College preachers are not, for the most part, doing the job. You truly are an artist who happens to draw pictures with words. You and David Vaughn Elliot are my favorite authors...” (E-mail)

INDIANA:

■ *“...I want to thank you so much for all the good you are doing. I know the Bible says a lot about leadership, but it seems like no one wants to follow it any more. More and more I see men take leadership positions they are not qualified for. Even preachers put men in the eldership and deacon positions, that use all kind of language, tell off color jokes and do as they want to. Just a group of ‘good old boys,’ taking control of everything. It just seems like money and prestige rule. In my opinion, I think we need more lessons on just what an elder or deacon should be and how they should act. Now days it is hard to find material that has not been watered down to suit the crowd. Keep up the wonderful work you are doing, and may the good Lord bless you.*

“Thanks for listening.”

IOWA

■ *“Please take us off your mailing list.”*

MISSOURI:

■ *“Praise God for every word of the last issue!”*

NEBRASKA:

■ *“We really appreciate your publication. It helps to be encouraged in the Lord...”*

TEXAS:

■ *“I received the 2nd set of bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF and leaflets. Thank you...All this is such a blessing. I hope you understand how you are appreciated.”*

■ *“Please accept this check...I have addressed it to your attention. You have reached more souls with the gospel than anyone I know. May the Lord add his blessings in your untiring efforts in getting out the great messages in each SWORD AND STAFF...”*

■ *“...The most recent SWORD AND STAFF articles were very much appreciated. However, the previous one on ‘Little Things Mean a Lot’ was one of the best. But then, I am sure I say that of each one...”*

“May God continue to bless you as you plan and prepare each new mailing of THE SWORD AND STAFF. It has been a strength and rich blessing in my life...”

ARIZONA:

■ *“Please delete from your mailing list.”*

UNITED STATES:

■ *“Thank you so much for your magazine. I am wondering if you could help me with a verse of Scripture that is being debated right now in our church. It concerns 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.*

“Do you feel that the spiritual gifts as they were in the New Testament are still with us?...Do these verses say that some of the gifts have stopped and some continue on?...”

“I have some of your bound volumes. Could you direct me in the way I should go on this matter? Is there an article or website you could direct me to?”

“Thanks so much and God bless you.” (E-mail)

Editor’s Reply: Our current bound volume of *The Sword and Staff* (one book, two years 2009-2010) now available from us has a basic over-all study in one of the issues entitled, “The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple, A Study.” It points you to Scriptures that would be helpful in answering your questions. (We have this available in booklet form, too). Also, we have an article on this very Scripture itself, 1 Corinthians 13, posted on our website. But we will present it here, following, which should be helpful in understanding this Scripture. We believe that God hears and answers prayers according to his will today, but supernatural spiritual gifts are in a different category of thought.

***Knowing in “Part” and
Prophecy in “Part” until
the “Perfect” is Come***

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13, and consider this in the light of the larger context of chapters 12, 13, and 14. Especially let us look at verses 8 through 10 in chapter 13. “Charity [love] never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

This section of Scripture is quite revealing in the light of what our Lord said in John 16:13, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Just a few words before Jesus had likewise said to the apostles (John 14:26), “But the

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READERS'...*Response*

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Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

At the time the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, they knew "in part," they were prophesying "in part," and they were looking to the time when that which was "perfect" was fully come so that the "in part" situation would be done away. The word "part" here means just what it says: a part, or a portion, in contrast and in relationship to the whole or that which is complete. In reference to the Greek word translated "perfect," the *Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines it as "complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial and limited," and it gives 1 Corinthians 13:10 as an example of this usage.

The Holy Spirit Was in the Process of Guiding Them into All Truth, Step by Step and Part by Part

But what is involved in the knowing "in part" and the prophesying "in part"? The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 3:2-5, speaks of the "mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." We make a mistake if we think of the gift of prophecy only in terms of foretelling the future. It also has the basic meaning to "forthtell" the truth of God by direct revelation, inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So, Paul is saying, the Holy Spirit was in the process of guiding them into all truth. They did not receive the revelation of the New Testament truths all at once, but "in part," or parts, along (you might say). Their knowledge was not complete, but with the gift of knowledge and in the exercising of the gift of prophecy in time they would have God's completed revelation. As we pointed out, when the "perfect" (that which was "complete, entire, as opposed to what is limited," 1 Corinthians 13:10) was come, the in part situation would be "done away." When the Holy Spirit finished guiding the apostles and prophets into all truth, this would be accomplished. To start with, this was being orally done. Now we have the full revelation and embodiment of these truths in the New Testament Scriptures.

The supernatural spiritual gifts, beyond the superior endowment of the apostles, were imparted basically by the laying on of the apostles' hands. Read Hebrews 2:3-4, Acts 8:18, and Acts 19:6, and especially let us notice the Hebrews reference. Here the writer says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with

signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], according to his own will?" The great salvation began with our Lord, and those who heard him (the apostles) confirmed the truth of it by miracles and signs. And that confirmation was further extended in the gifts of the Holy Spirit they imparted to their converts by the laying on of their hands. Here in Hebrews 2:4, it says "gifts ['distributions,' notice footnote] of the Holy Spirit [were given], according to his own will [God's will]." In other words, when the imposition of the hands took place, God would determine what gift was given to each person, "according to his own will."

With the death of all of the apostles and truth no longer needing to be confirmed (it having been fully verified and confirmed), the charismatic spiritual gifts would come to an end. Paul had said, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be [supernatural] knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Corinthians 13:8). He makes a parallel of their situation in the early church to that of a child: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (13:11). The "in part" situation was taken care of when that which was "perfect" [complete] was fully come. With the completed revelation of God we have, and can know "all truth," relative to the New Testament. And in relation to it, we can know as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:12; James 1:21-25; Hebrews 4:12,13; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul highlights tongues and prophecy (and consequently knowledge) here in 1 Corinthians 13 because the controversy at Corinth hinged around these gifts (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:1-6). They were puffed up over who had the best gift, tongues unduly being singled out as greatest, but the underlying source of their pride would soon pass away (the gifts). However, love, that in which they were sadly deficient, would go on forever (13:13).

(Therefore, to think that these supernatural spiritual gifts are available to us today would seem to be a hasty conclusion. More thought needs to be put into the subject. Some say that we do have these gifts, and especially putting the emphasis upon the "tongues" part. However, in the New Testament "tongues" was the gift of actually speaking in another human language theretofore unlearned by the person speaking, Acts 2:8; not some unintelligible jibber-jabber. If we can have one of these spiritual gifts today, it would seem that any or all of them would be avail to us. And according to Paul, the most important one was the gift of prophecy, receiving and preaching God's truth by direct revelation from heaven. If this is true (that we have the gifts today), the Bible is not a completed or a closed book. It would not be the final revelation and it

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Write Two Letters

WHEN Abraham Lincoln had to write a letter to someone who had irritated him, he would often write two letters. The first letter was deliberately insulting. Then, having gotten those feelings out of his system, he would tear it up and write a second letter, this one tactful and discreet.—*Selected* □



BARBS

...with a POINT



PEOPLE who do as they please many times don't please the Lord.

Many people have no problem about right and wrong because they have no concept of what is right and wrong.

Although the way to heaven is straight and narrow, it is not crowded.

Water seeks its own level, and that level is always downward, never upward, and that is the way of fallen man unless he purposely exercises his will and seeks "those things which are above" (Colossians 3:1).

Some people don't like for you to tell it like it is because that is the way they are.

As a Christian, from the heights of "heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6), things are made to look small and not all that important on earth.

If there is nothing distinctive about our "Christianity," it is no longer Christianity.

Once there is a hole of compromise in God's dike of truth, even a small one, it will only be a matter of time until the hole becomes larger and the whole dike will eventually be washed away.

When Christianity is "dumbed down," the cause of Christ is not built up.

People who must see which way the wind is blowing before they will take a stand will be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

People who are always preoccupied with being "cool" are in danger of ending up where it is hot.

When our "chickens come home to roost," in reference to being fiscally irresponsible, they may not find a place to roost.

Selfishness is the undoing of many marriages.

It is hard for some people to believe and accept what is right because they don't want to say that anything or anyone is wrong (including themselves).

Speed without direction only gets you to an uncertain destination a little faster.

Some people supposedly have come out of denominationalism, but it seems denominationalism has not come out of them.

You cannot make a difference if you are indifferent.

We live in a day and time when it seems that people spend more time in getting ready for a wedding than they do in getting ready for marriage.

Before you can lead you must be ahead of those you are attempting to lead.

Instead of "chewing" someone out (Galatians 5:15, wild animals do this), it would be better to chew up your words first, making them more palatable (and civil when communicated).

Do what is right and you won't have to face the consequences of doing wrong.

When we find ourselves moving away from the local autonomous church, organizationally speaking, we know that we are headed back to Rome and the great apostasy.

You will not leave any footprints upon the sands of time by standing still.

If we would bring our children up in the way that they should go (Proverbs 22:6), we must first go that way ourselves.

"Christian rock" is oxymoronic.

If the Christian armor fits a little too tightly (Ephesians 6:10-17), maybe we are overweight and bloated with the world.

Nothing can be put in the category of "rights" when it is basically wrong.

When we don't have the most, we should make the most of that which we have (not go in debt beyond our means).

Negative thoughts persisted in, produce negative results (or none at all).

If you are wishy-washy in your stand, you may end up wishing as you are washed away in tide of uncertainty and confusion.

We have a Sodom by the Sea on both sides of this country now. □



In Jesus Christ We Find

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

By James E. Gibbons

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Page 12)

could be added to by those who supposedly had the gift of prophecy. Yes, and in view of such contradictory and unwarranted claims we have confusion, denominations, and cults today!).

Illustrations of the Holy Spirit Guiding Them into All Truth, Step by Step and Part by Part

Now let us notice some ways in which the Holy Spirit guided the apostles and early church into all truth, and how they knew in part and prophesied in part until that which was perfect came.

Although God gave Moses the basic Old Testament initially, yet some things had to be spelled out more in detail along (Leviticus 24:10-23). And this was especially true in the first of the present age as people were making a transition from the shadow of the Old Testament, (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:14-17), to the completeness of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth, and they preached the truth. However, sometimes they didn't fully comprehend what they were saying, nor realize all of its implications. Sometimes it took several years for them to get around to putting it into practice.

A good illustration of this is seen in the Great Commission. The Lord had said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). And, as Matthew reads, it was to be taken to "all nations" ("nations," the word that is elsewhere translated "Gentiles") (Matthew 28:19). The day the church was set up among men (Acts 2; Mark 9:1) people were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins to enter into salvation. After which, Peter declared, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38,39). We know that those who were "afar off" has reference to the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-17).

We are made to wonder what the apostles actually thought the Lord meant in the Great Commission. It seems that Peter didn't even get the full import of what the Holy Spirit guided him to say on the day of Pentecost. For about eight years or so they stayed in close to Jerusalem and preached the gospel only to the Jews. It took the special prodding of God with the great demonstration of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius before they began to move on out and preach to the Gentile world. Along with this, earlier a persecution had nudged them in this direction as "they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

Although they accepted Christ for salvation, the Jewish Christians had many hang-ups in making the transition to simple New Testament Christianity. They thought in terms of the temple, Jewish customs,

and days. Perhaps the break that brought clarity and finality to them was not fully realized until the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Roman army. In the meantime, God led them step by step as these truths were "sinking in." Peter's vision, which led him to the household of the Gentile Cornelius, also taught him that God no longer made distinctions of clean and unclean animals (Acts 10; 1 Timothy 4:3-4). Then a few years later, the "council" at Jerusalem concluded that the Gentiles didn't have to be circumcised or keep the customs of the Jews (Acts 15). However, it was another thing with the Jewish Christians. Their clear-cut break was much longer in coming.

During this period of knowing in part and prophesying in part, we find Peter and John going to the temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1). Later in Asia Minor Paul had Timothy circumcised "because of the Jews which were in those quarters" (Acts 16:3). We see that Paul had "shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow" (Acts 18:18). To the Ephesians he said, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem" (Acts 18:21). In Acts 20:6, Luke mentions their departure from a certain place "after the days of unleavened bread" (the Passover). In the same chapter it is said that Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem for the "day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16). Acts 21:20-30 shows some of their problems and indecision in relationship to the Law of Moses.

But, God was leading them into all truth. By the time the New Testament Scriptures were concluded, there is no question mark about these things. Even in the stage of knowing in part, Jewish concepts were looked upon more as hang-ups (Romans 14); especially by Paul as he considered them in relationship to the Gentiles. Although some were still doing things Jewish, they were not allowed to connect justification to them. It was more of a matter of individual hang-ups. When such hang-ups were imposed on whole churches as their doctrine (especially among the Gentiles), they were regarded as being in an apostate condition. (Read all of Galatians).

Yes, the apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians, "For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (James used this same Greek word when he wished his readers in their trials to be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," James 1:4, thus illustrating its meaning). We have the full, final, and completed revelation of God. It is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." How great is the enlightenment and advantages we have today! We have all of God's truth laid out for us in the Bible, and especially for us as Christians in the New Testament. Let us be faithful and diligent in studying that which God has taken the time and trouble to reveal to us. We are a highly blessed people.

PUERTO RICA:

■ *"Enclosed is a check to help with the publication. Thanks for your hard work. It has been a blessing to us. May God bless you always."*

JAPAN:

■ *"Over half a century you have blessed me, for which I am grateful. Now my days are rapidly getting shorter...Please remove me from your mailing list. See you in Gloryland soon."*

AUSTRALIA:

■ *"Please note our change of address...We appreciate very much your faithfulness in forwarding THE SWORD AND STAFF to us. May God continue to bless you with the health and ability to keep this publication going."*

■ *"I have discovered your website and find what you write very significant. There is a lot there for me to explore, and I shall, but I cannot find dates later than 2007? Are you still writing and publishing THE SWORD AND STAFF? I do hope so! Best wishes from Tasmania, Australia." (E-mail)* □

**Back to the
ORIGINAL CHURCH**

THE CHURCH of the first century as established by Christ through his apostles was not a denomination, but simply and purely the church and spiritual body of Christ upon the earth. On this most all will agree. But on the necessity of returning to that status, and on the means of doing this, few will agree. Divesting ourselves of denominationalism does not come easy. But, if we really want to be acceptable with the Lord, and Scriptural, it is a necessity (John 17:20-22; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4,17; Ephesians 4:1-6; Galatians 1:6-8). Let us stop trying to justify our denominational divisions, organizations, and traditions not found in the New Testament. God does not give one person the right to believe one thing and his neighbor the right to believe another as far as salvation is concerned. In that Great Day all of us are going to be judged by the same Book, and we know what that Book is—*the Bible*. We have no authority from God to form a denomination or invite anyone to join such a denomination (no one has such authority, for it has not been divinely given to man). In fact, when we truly obey God, we are made one, not a part of any or many denominations (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:38-41,47). Therefore, let us search out the old "land marks." Let us humbly return, giving up denominational pride; yes, let us be identified only with that one church which has already been established in the first century (against such the gates of hell did not prevail, Matthew 16:18).

Let us be one in Christ. There is much divesting and returning that needs to be done, and must be done. Are we up to it?—**J.E.G.** □

**New Booklet Added to
Supply of Printed Materials**

THE article "THE CHURCH AND DENOMINATIONALISM" that appeared in a recent issue of *The Sword and Staff* has been printed in booklet form and is ready for order (and distribution). The good response to this article made us realize that it could be put to good use as a booklet for study and general distribution. Also, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" has gone into another printing, as our supply had become depleted (as well as some other materials that we have printed again). We add these to our wide selection of booklets and tracts helpful in winning people to Christ, indoctrinating them in what the Bible teaches, and helping them in their growth as a new Christian. These are good for class study, too. Find them listed on the back page of this paper. Order a supply, or request a sample packet to peruse. What we said about the bound volumes applies to this material also. *(There is no charge for the materials; just help with the expense of mailing).* Order a supply today and put them to good use.—**Editor** □

HELP US get out the message of God's Word. If this publication has been a blessing to you, help us increase our mailing list by enrolling others to receive this paper.—**Editor** □

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**Answers to:
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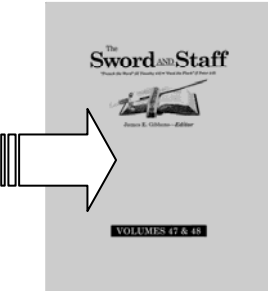
1. Genesis 9:8-17; 2. Numbers 9:15-22; 10:11 (Exodus 40:36); 3. Leviticus 25:8-17, 25-34; etc.; 4. Judges 13:2-20; 5. Job 32:2; 6. Jonah 1:17 (Matthew 12:40); 7. Job 6:8-9; 1 Kings 19:1-4; Jonah 4:1-3; 8. Proverbs 28:1; 9. Luke 4:38-39; 10. Mark 8:22-26; 11. John 11; 12. John 18:12-13; 13. Mathew 27:3-10; 14. Judas (Matthew 27:3-5); Samson (Judges 16:21-31); Saul (1 Samuel 31:4; Saul's armor bearer (1 Samuel 31:5; Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23); 15. Luke 23:12; 16. Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-17); Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5); James (1 Corinthians 15:7); 17. Acts 1:2-3; 18. 2 Peter 2:20-22; 19. Seven seals (Revelation 5:1ff); Seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2ff; Seven vials (bowls) (Revelation 16:1ff); 20. Revelation 14:6. □

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